CONSULTATION OF FRIENDS ON MINISTRY:

DISCERNING, NURTURING, RECORDING AND RELEASING

Quaker Hill Conference Center
Richmond, Indiana

November 19-22, 1981

Sponsored by:
Earlham School of Religion
and
Quaker Hill Conference Center
This booklet contains material assembled from the Consultation of Friends on Ministry held at Quaker Hill Conference Center in Richmond, Indiana on November 19-22, 1981. The Consultation was co-sponsored by Earlham School of Religion and Quaker Hill Conference Center, and was patterned after a similar Consultation on Quaker Services held December 11-14, 1980.

The Table of Contents provides an outline of the materials in the booklet, including the four major papers presented at the Consultation. No attempt has been made to edit these papers; they are duplicated as presented. A copy of the Program of the Consultation is included, together with a list of attenders. A broad spectrum of participants geographically and in terms of their Quaker affiliation made up the more than forty persons gathered.

There were no "Findings" as such which came from the Consultation, although a Summary Report was prepared by two Participant-Observers and approved by the group for distribution. This booklet constitutes a record of the proceedings, except for the plenary discussions which were taped. A short bibliography on Quaker ministry and leadership is included at the end. The purpose of the Consultation was to stimulate fresh thinking about ministry among Friends, and to encourage further consideration of this subject on a regional and Yearly Meeting basis.

For the Steering Committee,

Wilmer Cooper
Eldon Harzman

Please Note: Additional copies of this booklet are available from Quaker Hill Conference Center, 10 Quaker Hill Drive, Richmond, IN 47374. Cost: $5.00 (including mailing)
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Background and Purpose of the Consultation

The background for this Consultation began with a concern and interest in re-examining the Quaker historic practice of "recording" and "releasing" Friends for ministry. Yearly Meetings which discontinued the practice of recording more than fifty years ago, as well as those who still continue the practice sense the need to encourage the development of leadership which can help Friends realize a vital and living ministry for today. But Friends also realize that ministry is a gift of the Spirit which has to be "discerned" and "nurtured" before it can bear fruit in service to others.

The purpose of this Consultation is to bring together a representative group of Friends to seek together how we can discern and nurture gifts for ministry, and how we can record and release gifted persons for ministry. Furthermore, what are the appropriate guidelines and standards for Friends to adopt in achieving these goals, and to what extent can there be a common practice among Friends with respect to recording and releasing for ministry and service.

Thomas S. Brown - Presiding Clerk

Thursday, November 19

6:00 pm  Dinner - Friends gather
7:30  Welcome - Eldon Harzman

Background and Purpose of the Consultation - Wilmer Cooper
8:00  "Discerning Gifts for Ministry" - Howard Macy
9:30  Worship Epilogue - Ann Carter

Friday, November 20

7:30 am  Breakfast
8:30  Morning worship - Unprogrammed
9:15  "Nurturing Gifts for Ministry" - David Castle
10:15  Break
10:45  Panel Response to "Discerning and Nurturing Gifts" - Dorothy Craven, Jan Wood, Ben Richmond, Elwood Cronk
**Friday, November 20 - continued**

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<td>&quot;Friends History of Recording Gifts for Ministry&quot; - Patricia Brown</td>
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<td>Panel Response to Paper - Charles Thomas, Earl Reddin, Donna Bales</td>
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<td>10:00</td>
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CONSULTATION OF FRIENDS ON MINISTRY:

DISCERNING, NURTURING, RECORDING, AND RELEASING

Quaker Hill Conference Center
Richmond, Indiana

November 19-22, 1981

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In his novel, Lion Country, Frederick Buechner presents as the main character a certain Leo Bebb, founder of the Church of Holy Love, Inc., president of a religious diploma mill, and ex-con. By mailing a suggested love offering in response to Bebb's ad—"Put yourself on God's payroll--go to work for Jesus now"--one could be ordained by Bebb to the ministry. Further donations could secure academic credit and degrees from Bebb's Gospel Faith College, administered out of a garage in Armidillo, Florida.

Mr. Bebb's assistant, Brownie, said of him, "Mr. Bebb ordains everybody who applies as long as they are of the male sex and over eighteen years of age. He may have negative vibrations about a certain individual himself, but he knows that the Lord moves in mysterious ways, dear, and that judgment is his. Mr. Bebb says there is a priest in every man. All you have to do is lay your hands on it, and the Lord will do the rest."

Bebb responded in his own defense when criticized for ordaining people indiscriminately (except "females"): "When people say I've ordained all kinds of crooks and misfits--pimps, sodomites, blackmaillers and pickpockets for all I know, you name it--I say judge not that ye be not judged. That's God's business."

Leo Bebb with his tax-exempt, mail order ministers reminds us that there are many approaches to the Christian ministry and to the question of who, in fact, is a minister. This is the topic which claims our energies for this weekend, and rightly so, for it is one of the most critical issues Friends must face if we are to be faithful to the best insights of our heritage and to our mission in the world today. Put more bluntly, I feel that our failure to live our Friends insights on ministry is undermining us within and compromising our service in the world at large.

Though I will not try to make the first word the last word in this time together, I will try to consider again some central ideas in the Quaker view of ministry and, in particular, their implications in discerning gifts in ministry. This address, then, has basically four parts:

I. Assumptions about ministry
II. The need to discern gifts in ministry
III. The process of discernment
IV. Some contemporary problems which have complicated the discernment of gifts in practice

Assumptions About Ministry

Most of my remarks here will not strike you as novel. They shouldn't. Instead they should remind us of our common ground. For clarity's sake, however, they should be shared, even if too briefly at points.

First, genuine ministry is the work of God's spirit. It cannot be learned, taught, or bought, at least in any ordinary sense. This view goes back to one of George Fox's earliest openings when he saw that "ministers are not made at Oxford and Cambridge." Ministers are made only in the school of Christ under the patient teaching of God's Spirit within them.
As a corollary to this fundamental insight is the assumption that the Spirit not only chooses people for particular ministries, but also prepares and empowers them for the ministries to which they are called. This spiritual preparation includes a variety of means and experiences of which formal education may or may not be a part.

Joseph John Gurney stated the classic position well in writing: "...it is the sole prerogative of the Great Head of the church himself, to choose, prepare and ordain, his own ministers" (A Peculiar People, pp. 214-15). The work of God's grace in this preparation is, in Gurney's words, "indispensable and sufficient" (p. 220). In fact, he is so confident of this point that he adds: "...our religious principles prevent our instituting a course even of scriptural study, as a preparation for the office of preachers..." (p. 226). Though Gurney, like Robert Barclay before him, was a learned man and encouraged education, he is eager to make plain that ministry is fundamentally the Spirit's work both in call and preparation.

A second major point, rising principally from Pauline teaching in Romans, Corinthians and Ephesians, is that God distributes a variety of gifts in ministry. All of these gifts are important. Each has a role in achieving God's purpose both in the church (particularly, building the Body of Christ to mature strength in love) and in the world at large.

As a consequence of God's work, we see that each person is given a place of service, though the types of service vary widely. This is what Friends have called the "universal ministry." In a very important sense, the gospel ministry is to be shared by us all.

Among the gifts which the Spirit distributes are some which are particularly significant in their usefulness in building up the Church as a whole. A basic text for us, Ephesians 4:11-12, talks of the ministry of pastors and teachers, who equip others for the work of ministry. Because gifts of this sort are so important to us all, we have come to rely on them and to encourage their full expression, sometimes to the neglect of other gifts. These strengthening gifts we have come to identify with public ministry, particularly the gifts of preaching, teaching, and pastoral care. It is these gifts which have been traditionally regarded as the "recordable" gifts of public Friends.

There has always been some tension between the ideas of universal ministry and a special ministry among Friends, yet we have affirmed both. Robert Barclay in the Apology (Book X, Article 26), after arguing for the universal ministry, goes further: "We do believe and affirm that some are more particularly called to the work of the ministry, and therefore are fitted of the Lord for that purpose; whose work is more constantly and particularly to instruct, exhort, admonish, oversee, and watch over their brethren; and that...there is something more incumbent upon them in that respect than upon every common believer."

Gurney equated these particular gifts with the New Testament gift of prophecy consisting, in his interpretation, of "exhortation, edification, and comfort." An excellent modern statement of this tension and ideal is Elton Trueblood's "The Paradox of the Quaker Ministry."

Undoubtedly this paradox will figure prominently in our discussions together. However, for the purposes of this paper I will give specific attention to identifying gifts in public ministry as they have been traditionally understood. In doing so, I do not intend to confer a special holy status on them, but only to acknowledge their particular function.
A third major assumption, again drawn from the New Testament as well as our tradition, is that the Spirit distributes gifts in ministry according to the divine will and with little regard to human expectation.

We cannot predict in advance to whom which gifts of ministry will be given. Gurney's comment regarding the selection of persons for public ministry is apt: "Man is no adequate judge beforehand of the capacity of his brother for such work (i.e. the ministry); and often are the individuals, whom in our own wisdom, we should be prone to prefer for the purpose, passed over by the Lord" (Peculiar People, p. 216). He comments further that "by taking the choice of their ministers into their own hands" the church has imposed ministry on those for whom it was not intended.

One of the reasons that we cannot predict to whom particular gifts will be given is that gifts in ministry may or may not coincide with apparent natural abilities, interests, or training. A Friends pastor with vital ministries in preaching and counseling remarked to me recently about how much he sees this as God's work in him, for in neither one of these areas has he had any formal training at all. Many others can witness to unusual or unexpected empowerment for the ministries to which they have been called.

It may be more than merely mischievous to go even further. If we are to suggest that there may be a pattern in the Spirit's distribution of gifts, we would be closer to the truth to suggest that God favors choosing the least-likely-to-succeed rather than those apparently on the success track of life. The Biblical examples of this are legion: Moses, the hardened, stuttering shepherd; Gideon, a not-so-brave warrior hiding in a winepress; David, the youngest son whom the family least expected to be the one Samuel was seeking to anoint; Jeremiah, who protests his youth; and, not least of all, Jesus, the "can-anything-good-come-out-of-Nazareth" carpenter's son. The Bible is also clear about why God does things in this way. It is simply to make it clear that it is indeed God at work in these persons and not merely the human resources of intellect, prowess, and courage. We have in our own history many examples of the least likely being chosen for God's special work, most notably perhaps in the Valiant Sixty, a rag-tag collection of farmers, milkmaids, glovemakers, craftsmen, and the like. In a work, God's will and human expectation regarding ministry have often run in opposite directions.

This is all to say that at God's choosing, the gifts of ministry, including public ministry, may be given to anyone, regardless of age, gender, racial or national background, education, profession, or any other factor. Though stated briefly at this point, we must not underestimate the critical importance of this truth for discerning rightly gifts in ministry. If we automatically assume that some persons cannot be given the work of ministry, then we will fail to recognize or even frustrate the work of God around us.

A fourth major assumption is that the identification and nurture of gifts in ministry is to be done in the context of the fellowship of faith. The meeting is indispensable in the recognition, building, and liberating of ministry.

The nurturing of gifts takes place at least at two levels. At one level, the meeting must provide a context of nurture in which people learn to be receptive to God's work within them. The corporate life of worship, study, and service need to be shaped to facilitate this. At another level, the meeting needs to nurture particular gifts in ministry once they are seen to be at work in individuals' lives.

It is right for us to separate in our thinking the tasks of nurture and discernment. Nurture can be an ongoing task of building ministry both in
general and specific ways. Discernment, or the identification of gifts in ministry, is very specific and always related to particular individuals. It has to do with recognizing what God is already doing in someone's life. It cannot anticipate. Discernment can take place only after giftedness begins to be evident. The meeting can only identify specifically visible giftedness, whether emerging or already well established.

A further point which I find of critical importance is that spiritual gifts can only be spiritually discerned. This is precisely what we ought to expect and what we witness to at our best. But we are not always at our best. The backhand of this principle is that mechanical or formal means of determining giftedness are irrelevant and ineffective at best. In this I would include appeals to educational background, professional position, creedal statements, psychological testing, or any other human means which substitutes mechanics for discernment. Put in more radical form, a person can have a superb seminary education, an excellent appointment as a church professional, be winsome and psychologically healthy, yet not have a gift in public ministry. Similarly, a person is not clearly more likely to be so gifted if he or she does not have education, position, and so forth. Some Friends have lost sight of the principle that spiritual gifts must be spiritually discerned, and we are poorer for it.

Finally, we should remind ourselves again that gifts in public ministry do not confer special honor or status on those with these gifts. Individuals should not seek such honor; meetings should not offer it. We have, however, not acted on this as clearly as we should, again to our harm. On the one hand, some Friends very nearly accord priestly status to ministers with all the trappings of honorific titles, services of recording which are virtually ordinations, and more. On the other hand, in dread of conferring status on ministers, some refuse to recognize any ministers at all. There can be and must be some middle ground which will call out gifts of public ministry and allow them to be used freely.

The Need to Discern Gifts in Ministry.

We should be eager, of course, to recieve any and all gifts which God intends for the Church and to liberate them for their full expression and usefulness. This includes, of course, gifts of public ministry. If we are to allow these gifts to function in their greatest power and usefulness, we need specifically to identify and encourage the work of God in individuals. General encouragement directed to the meeting as a whole, though necessary, is not enough. We need to give particular attention to individuals in discerning their gifts. When we do, this increases the power and the resource of ministry and of the meeting. There are several ways in which specific attention to discernment of gifts, including the gifts of public ministry, may be helpful to individuals. For some individuals, such discernment will encourage them to follow a call to service already felt. The affirmation of the community of faith does not merely permit the expression of a gift, but urges individuals to give particular attention to their specific service.

Ideally, individuals should not rely alone on their personal judgment about their gifts. Some are able to do so, particularly when the meeting is slow to encourage. Others follow their sense of "call" mistakenly and even defiantly, even when evidence of giftedness is lacking. The spiritual wisdom of the meeting needs to be linked with the personal hearing of the call within.

In some cases, individuals may be slow to recognize the work of God within them. Here the meeting's function in discernment is to call attention to these
emerging gifts. This may well put a person on the path of a lifetime of effective ministry. We have had in our history times when people had a sense of dread about being given the service of a public Friend, a dread compounded by an exaggerated sense of humility and personal unworthiness for this task. The meeting's work of discernment can help at this point by turning people away from a false humility which would keep them from God's service.

A further function of discernment is to give specific shape and guidance to emerging gifts in ministry. It is not uncommon that a person should feel drawn toward public ministry but at the same time have little clear direction about what specific service that might involve. The meeting, through its observation and guidance, can help at this point.

Along with these positive reasons to be faithful to discern gifts I want to suggest that there is danger in neglecting this task. Failure to identify and encourage gifts in ministry may damage individuals who are not bold enough in themselves to follow their call in the face of opposition or who are strangely unfulfilled because the workings of God within them were not brought to focus and effective exercise. When spiritual gifts languish, everyone is weaker, and the meeting may well be more at fault than individuals who bury their gifts in fear or lethargy.

Failure to discern gifts is tragic in any case, but more tragic still when this insensitivity to the Spirit's work is carried forward almost systematically. One of the most glaring examples of this today is the virtual refusal of some Friends to acknowledge gifts in public ministry in women. One of our yearly meetings has not recorded a woman as a minister for more than twenty-five years. Has the Spirit been absent from women there in that time? In another yearly meeting a young woman with a clear call to public ministry was counselled by a prominent yearly meeting leader to marry a young man who intended to be a pastor. In yet another yearly meeting I know of a woman who did that now several years ago. She was called to ministry though he was not, in fact, called. For years she wrote his sermons. For years he was frustrated because he was not in the place God intended. That tragic situation continues, she still unfulfilled in her call, he occupying important roles as a pastor in their yearly meeting.

Other examples could be offered. My concern is that failure to recognize God's work in whomever it may occur is tragic and debilitating. The balkiness or stubbornness of Friends and their recording committees, at this point, is in my judgment akin to hardness of heart, and we pay a dear price for it.

We must discern and recognize spiritual gifts and the people who receive them in order to liberate and empower them in God's service. If we do less, we simply are not faithful.

The Process of Discernment

I have not found it easy to talk about the process of discernment in a neat five-point outline or the like. However, in the context of a few general remarks, I want to suggest three types of activity which belongs to discernment.

Briefly, let me review two or three points. First, discernment is carried forward by the meeting as a whole and more particularly by its spiritually mature leadership, individually or in responsible bodies such as the Ministry and Counsel. Secondly, spiritual gifts must be spiritually discerned. If this is done lazily or in a spiritually unconcerned or immature manner, it harms the meeting. This sets a high standard, I am aware, but any other way is not the
Now consider three aspects of the discernment process. In some ways they are overlapping and they may not always occur in the order in which I present them.

The first activity in discernment is observation. The meeting needs always to be attentive and alert, always expecting ministry to emerge. We often fail to call out God's gifts in ministry simply because we aren't looking for them. Some fall into this trap because they are persuaded they already have a ministry and are satisfied that the professional ministry is sufficient. Others overlook gifts in public ministry because they would not desire to call them out. In contrast to both errors, we must expect ministry to emerge and must be on the watch for it.

When a person carries out functions of public ministry such as vocal ministry, prayer, teaching, or pastoral care consider questions like these:

a. Is this ministry consistent, persistent, and not merely occasional?

b. Is this ministry consistent with truth, not merely in a doctrinaire way? (Anyone can learn to say the "right" words, whatever those words may be to particular groups of Friends.)

c. Is this ministry characterized by compassion and love?

d. Is it characterized by "life and power," "authority," "true energy," not by "words without life?" People said of Jesus that he taught with authority, not like the scribes and Pharisees. Those who have a heart toward God know the difference between a living and a lifeless ministry. They know when words have life and when words spoken fall to the floor, shrivel up, and stink of their mockery of the life and power of God.

When a person ministers publicly consider also whether these traits characterize him or her:

a. Is there a Christian character of "more than ordinary depth" which will be seen in every aspect of daily living?

b. Is there genuine humility? Is there holiness of life, the kind of life which by its purity testifies to the power of God? Is there a tendency to be careful about words—not wordy, but speaking under the influence of the Spirit?

c. Is this person's life one lived in "the fear and love of God," a life dominated by a clear hungering for and devotion to God?

d. Is there an eagerness for the task of ministry and an eagerness to meet its demands?

e. Is there wholeness, fulfillment, and joy in this service rather than grudging service filled with complaint (Jeremiah's "Confessions" to the contrary)?

The person, and not merely the task, is critically important if one is to be a minister of Christ.

A second activity in the process of discernment is dialogue. This is an interactive process between the meeting and gifted individuals, initiated at various times by either side. In a sense, it is a mutual asking of "Do you hear what I hear?"

On some occasions the individual may seek the meeting's response to his or her call. She may say, "I am feeling drawn to public ministry. Do you hear that too? Do you see stirrings in me that would confirm that to you?"

On other occasions the meeting may need to say to the individual, "We believe we see in you gifts of ministry. Have you heard God's call to you in
this? Won't you seriously contemplate what God's work is within you?"

So the dialogue goes forward, observing, seeking together, refining the sense of leading and mission. This can be a very powerful experience for individual and meeting alike where it is carried out responsibly in spiritual sensitivity.

A third activity in discernment is testing through experience. Its purpose is to provide a sufficient history of experience to be confident that there is consistently "life and power" in the individual's ministry. Part of this work is to open the way for individuals to serve in situations that are consistent with "the person's leading and observed giftedness." The person should be encouraged and supported in this service and not merely observed from a distance. In such circumstances the meeting should encourage persons and patiently allow gifts and their exercise to grow to maturity. Yet there also needs to be honesty in evaluating and guiding the expression of gifts.

Some individuals may need to be deterred from following certain kinds of service if over time they do not show evidence of genuine giftedness. Channeling individuals' energies into those areas of service for which they are suited is of great benefit to both the individual and the meeting. This can be difficult, but we must have the bold love to do it.

Under the guidance of the community, the individual with emerging gifts needs to be humble and patient, often despite an eagerness to be on with the task as quickly as possible. There is a time to learn the "day of small things," and to be faithful in such service. This can be a time for learning of many kinds including the lessons of gentleness and submission.

This is not uniformly easy. I have known of committees concerned with these matters who have themselves been petty, arrogant, and operating out of selfish concern rather than out of spiritual sensitivity. I have seen the aftermath of their work and have known how damaging it has been. Yet the true minister, recognized or not, will in word and deed show the tenderness of spirit and the love which should be characteristic of those who belong to Christ. We can hope that committees on ministry will encourage rather than frustrate and rebuff, but let any minister always lead a life worthy of the Gospel.

So the movements of observation, dialogue, and testing seem to be part of the work of discernment. Perhaps there are more, but there are at least these.

Some Contemporary Problems

This manner of proceeding in discerning gifts in ministry is not without problems, largely due to our failure in several areas.

First, often the local Ministry and Counsel and monthly meeting are weak and ill-equipped for this important work. Many of them would blanch in fear if someone would come to them asking their guidance about a divine call. Some propose that persons be recognized as ministers for very superficial reasons, such as wanting the person to be legally able to perform marriages. It is not necessary to address this problem at length here. Let it suffice to say that if we are to have a strong ministry and adequate discernment we must strengthen our Ministry and Council bodies along the way.

A second problem in some areas is that the process of discernment, especially as it relates to recognizing persons as ministers, has been wrested
out of the hands of those who know the individual's ministry best. In many places the monthly meeting plays a relatively small role in the process of discernment while yearly meeting committees play an ever-increasing role. In my observation, the more discernment has moved away from the monthly meeting, the more mechanical or formal means have been substituted for spiritual insight into the person's gifts.

A third contemporary problem is the falsely narrow understanding of public ministry because of our confusion about the role of the pastor. Our best rhetoric aside, in many areas there is a virtual equation between the words "pastor" and "recorded minister." Pastors should be recorded, many think, because they are pastors. Conversely, only those should be recorded as ministers who either are, are able to be, or intend to be pastors. This way of thinking is false both to the New Testament and to our heritage.

Similarly "vocal ministry" is taken by many to mean that one must have a weekly (at least) sermon from a pulpit. Again this presents a very much too narrow view of what public ministry means.

Other similar misunderstandings grow out of our still confused concept of the role of the pastor.

A fourth, and related, problem is that the transience of the professional ministry coupled with the failure to develop a strong local public ministry has contributed to weakness and vulnerability in our meetings. Many places are almost wholly dependent for spiritual vitality on the pastors who serve them. This produces a sort of rollercoaster effect in the spiritual vitality of meetings, an effect which has been documented in some yearly meetings. We would do well to encourage gifts in public ministry in all meetings, whether pastoral or not and whether persons feel called to be professionally engaged in ministry or not.

A fifth area of concern is what I would call the professionalization of the ministry. This is not so much a matter of whether or not some Friends are released economically for ministry. It has to do, instead, with a set of attitudes toward education, training, and recognition as a church professional. While I do not oppose excellence for Christ's sake, I do find offense in a professionalism which displays arrogance over learned skills, which lusts after the stroking of the priestly figure's ego which too many would readily give, which skillfully maneuvers in church power politics, and so on. Occasionally I will hear pastor or people complain that we ought to carve our ministry out after the fashion of the Presbyterians or the Baptists or after someone else (as they see them). Usually the thing they desire, in my view, is a kind of slick but corrupt professionalism—perhaps even a hireling ministry—which is a lot safer than the ministry Christ calls us to and which we have cherished at our best for over 300 years.

Other problems of discernment of gifts could be mentioned and surely will be brought out the conference.

Postscript Regarding a Living Ministry

I hope you will indulge me in a few more brief comments.

One of the things that brings us together is our desire for a living ministry. I suspect in part that we are brought here by our yearning that it will indeed be so rather than by our eagerness to report that the life and power of God are spreading through the Society of Friends like wildfire.
At this point in my life I find myself deeply dissatisfied with the business-as-usual, did-we-gain-2-members-or-lose-2-members-this-year religion which surrounds us by and large. Where is the life?

Some students at our campus have come into God's life in wonderful new ways over the last months. I gave a copy of Fox' Journal to one of them not long ago and she responded—not "I wish I could have that kind of experience of God," but "I know what he's talking about. It's been happening in me. Wow!" Yet the same student, as well as others, come to me asking where they can find sound, life-giving ministry in a church, and I have to pause over whether to suggest that they might attend a local Friends meeting. Maybe that sounds harsh—and maybe it's changing—but nonetheless I had to pause. It bothers me a lot that I even had to pause.

If we can't have a living ministry, one full of authenticity, authority, and the life and power of God, then I suggest that we have all who aspire to be ministers send their dollars to Leo Rebb and the Church of Holy Love, Inc. to get ordination papers. It would save a lot of time and money, uprooting of families, and so forth—and the results would be pretty much the same. Ministry attempted out of the life and power of God is not merely harmless, goodhearted activity. It is mischievous. It is death.

I yearn for us to be a people who long absolutely and continually for God. I deeply desire for us to be a people wholly abandoned to the will and the life and power of God. How much we need to abandon our conventional gray niceties of whatever sort and give ourselves to holy obedience. It can happen. Whether it will happen I don't know. We can't answer that question at this conference. However, part of the answer to that question may depend on what happens at this conference. And on what each one of us allows to happen within us.

May God lead us into life.
NURTURING THE GIFT OF MINISTRY
David Castle

Introduction

Enroute to this gathering two people asked why a conference on ministry. In the quiet of my room I asked myself the same question and evolved five reasons:

1) Our Quaker way of thinking and practicing ministry needs an update. In preparation for this conference I read again Elton Trueblood's Your Other Vocation published in 1952. He talked of the new movements of that time to train for ministry. As impressive as that was, that story has changed with new insights and experiments since that post-war burst of energy.

2) My faith seems to serve me well at the moment. I like it until I try rigorously to practice it. Then I am too often in trouble. My theoretical goodwill is then confronted with conflicts, differences, my inadequacies, and prejudices. I need this conference to learn how to better practice my faith which is what ministry is all about.

3) Dahl's book Work, Play, and Worship suggests that most of us worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship. This conference will help us get our priorities ordered.

4) The Quaker concept of ministry is the word for our time. Ministry is the function of all members without the distinction of clergy and laity. Quakerism is a "live option" (Trueblood) or a "third force" (Douglas Steere) amid the traditional approaches today. This does not mean we are trying to save Quakerism, but we are seeing that the Quaker movement is a special way of being Christian.

5) Ministry can keep us from wallowing in our faith when we could be building on it. Many fear ministry for fear they will lose their Christian experience. They play it safe without risking ministry.

To help us formulate our own understanding of ministry I want to read some excerpts from a letter from Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourner Magazine. As I read, you respond with your own statements, your own reactions which reflect your concept of ministry. In this writing each of us can define in a few statements our own notion of ministry. This is a letter to subscribers.

"It has been a memorable fall. Seven members of the community, three women and four men, have been serving jail sentences for civil disobedience at the Air Force Association's nuclear 'arms bazaar' this past September. Six of those work on the magazine, almost half the Sojourners staff, myself included. So I'm writing this year's fall appeal letter from jail.

"The boyish faces of some of my fellow prisoners don't look more than 15 or 16 years old, but their eyes are sad and scared. Every day they get tougher and tougher just to survive. In the D.C. jail the talk is tough, but at night grown men cry. This well of human sadness is also a cavern of fear. Here are
men who have lost control over their lives. They are at the mercy of a system that has never treated them well and now doesn't care about them at all. Parole officers and counselors forget about them, lawyers never come back, families and friends give up, and the guards have a standard reply to every request, "We'll see what we can do about it."

"Everybody talks in jail but nobody listens. To listen, really listen, is a genuine pastoral ministry. I have seldom been in a situation that is more opportune for honest personal talk, true pastoral work, confession, prayer, and biblical reflection. A 40 year old man who has shot heroin since he was 18 speaks of his children and weeps. Another asks a painful, probing question: 'Can God forgive you if you've killed someone?' Men wonder aloud if God hears the prayers of prisoners lying on their bunks at night. On the back wall of one cell a tangle of endless graffiti surrounds a beautiful pencilled portrait of Jesus. Jesus is indeed here among the prisoners, but you have to know how to look for him.

"Most of the crimes for which the men have been jailed are economic crimes done for money or crimes arising out of problems people get into when they are poor. The very obvious fact in here is that the vast majority of these men would not be in jail if they were not poor. That does not justify their crimes, but race and class are undeniably the most important factors in these men being in jail.

"Being white in D.C. jail is an experience of extreme minority status. The prison population of the D.C. jail is black and poor, and everything is geared to that fact. The forms we fill out each week with our vital information and fingerprints already have two lines filled in: eyes—brown, hair—black. On my forms those two lines must be crossed out and blue eyes, brown hair filled in instead. The expectation that dominates everything is that this institution was built to lock up poor black people.

"We've found strong support from many fellow prisoners for our protest of nuclear weapons and budget cuts. For all the lack of formal education in here, the level of political consciousness is remarkable. These men have a far more realistic view of how this country is run, why and for whom, than did the young men with whom I went through those years of higher education. The perspective from the bottom of any society is always clearer and truer than the views from the top. To make more and more bombs when there is not enough bread to go around seems particularly senseless and cruel from their vantage point.

"Having brothers and sisters in jail has driven the whole community to a deeper experience of prayer and faith and a greater dependence on God. Unusually heavy sentences were given for a simple and peaceful sit-in, the judge stating his intention to discourage such protest. Instead, the experience has only strengthened our resolve and built up our faith as a community. Many other friends of Sojourners have been in jail these last few months for protesting nuclear preparations, resisting dictatorial regimes around the world, and standing with the poor. In each case, greater suffering has resulted in deeper faith. The powers that be should have learned that by this time...."

I have stated this quote at length because you can find all of the seeds for ministry in it and your own power statements about it will bring your own ministry into focus.

Also, in following Howard Macy's presentation on "Discerning the Gifts of Ministry" I have a base for doing what I hope to do. He gives us a theological ground for my own practitioner mind which can lack the depth I seek.
Ministry and the Current Scene

If we do not love because we want to, we will learn love because we have to. That is history in a nutshell. Loving out of necessity comes at a price. Nations fight wars in order to find the thread that makes living together possible. People say "Love me; I'm in turmoil; I cannot figure it out," and in so many varied ways—some by lying, cheating, stealing, resenting, fearing and a myriad of other ways. Many would walk across town in the bleakest weather for a "thimble" full of love. Others kick and scream, stand alone in a state of pseudo-paranoia, so that love will not touch them. Christians tend to have a great capacity to love, but in walking this earth as a human we are at every point in a continued state of unfinishedness in practicing love.

The purpose of ministry is to live love out of choice so that God is empowered and dehumanization loses its hold. Paul reminds us that gifts are charactistically Christian through love. Isaac Penington would call it a principle of life. The ministering person "thinks truth and lives love." Ministry is the building on one's Christian experience rather than wallowing in it.

A society is always a reflection of the state of health of ministry. The Gospel is only as good as its fruit, that seen quality lived out. The fruit of the Gospel shows in two ways: personal redemption and social change. At this point in history we seem to be more effective in the former than in the latter. Nurturing is the process of introducing persons to the life source so the person's gifts can be released and enabled.

Quakers are at their best as a frontier religion. We began as a non-conformist church and have been especially alive when our ministry shows in the social scene. Following the period of the 18th Century Quietism, the rebirth of Quakers came about mainly because of a new social conscience—prison reform, ministry to the mentally ill, the advent of modern adult education which they started, Christian education for children, facing the slavery issue, and the equal rights of women. These Quakers were creative, innovative thinkers who were open to the Spirit and ahead of their time. Their ministry shaped society rather than society shaping them. They emphasized the Incarnation and made grace available in a way that people could make use of grace in their lives.

It seems that the church's influence has been declining, particularly in the last two decades, and we have not been able to find handles to do enough about it. The systems of society have become overpowering. The oil companies control oil resources. They tell us whether there is a shortage and we believe them because we have no other source for good information. Richard Barnet, author of The Lean Years, thinks we are caught in systems that manipulate us. The government is a powerful system that holds sway over many parts of our lives. The utility companies, manufacturers and other systems are heavy on our life plans. Some of these systems produced the Viet Nam war, the tragedy of which is what it did to the thinking of our citizens. The acceptance of the military way as a way of changing people's ideas is more nearly a reflection of the fears of affluent people. Can a ministry of any kind dent the mental armour of the system to see that persuasion might be better than force? Except for the powerlessness so many of us feel, Dwight Eisenhower's statement would still be taken seriously: "Every dollar spent on the military when people are hungry, without clothing, and without fundamental security in their lives is 'theft.'"

The church's ministry, once well defined, now has been complicated by the secular pursuits taking on helping roles through social work, psychology, law, medicine, and education, making the church a kind of junior partner. When those efforts to help lose their Christian foundation, there is an accompanying
sacrifice in redemptive potency. The mission too often is made difficult by those who claim to be Christian but who seem immature or use poor methods in ministering. I hope to make some observations about Quakerism that shows it as a more mature and live option for a fearful, emotionally hungry world than most other religious options and to have a natural ground for ministry. Douglas Steere says we are not Roman Catholics or classical Protestants or simply prophetic left-wing Puritans, but a third force, a profoundly new movement for our time.

Four reactions in the church since World War II have kept her ministry circumscribed: 1) the administrative and public relations functions have become too prominent; 2) the theological mission has been too much directed toward the individual, separating sheep from goats, making for right people more than big people; 3) the social gospel, even with all its faults, died; 4) with all this, the role of the pastor becomes fuzzy. I have personally been a part of these forces, baffled by their power, leaving the pastorate to pursue a ministry in other forms, yet, taking my marching orders from the following powerful quote: (If you catch the meat of this quote you will catch much of where I am coming from in understanding ministry.) (From Jaeckle and Clebsch, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, p. 66.)

There is no place in the structure and rhythm of the life of modern congregations where a serious discussion concerning the state of one's soul is expected. At one time confession and penance in the Catholic tradition, and in the Protestant church the pastor's periodic inquiry about one's readiness for the communion, served that purpose. The clergyman met his people for a kind of conversation that did not mistake itself for idle chit-chat or organization talk but concerned itself with the current issues of the world and one's place in it as a Christian. With the loss of this role, the clergyman must extemporize as he goes along.... This extemporizing virtually deprives the church of pastoral reconciling at a time when alienation is at the root of much human woe and anxiety.

The main ingredients for nurturing are "equipping" and "enabling" both of which augur for a way of thinking about ministry and a climate for making it work effectively. I am assuming that we know that our first order is our commitment to God as seen in Jesus. Our calling is to discover and respond to the divine call within. This is the springboard for ministry. My personal dilemma is that I want to be open to God, waiting for His voice, waiting and then acting, but not waiting so long that I do not risk acting. It is a paradox in me that is always there. I want to be God led but not wait so long that I miss what I am being asked to do. If that can happen then we can proceed with John Wilhelm Roventree: "The state of our meetings generally justifies the belief that our greatest outward need is a ministry--fearless and direct--able to deal with life in its various aspects...." He went on to say, "Our present deficiencies can not be overcome by...reserving for the ministry the loss of our energy and the fag-ends of our time." Most of my life has been spent keeping Christians honest, so that our theological terms track our performance. When that happens we are in authentic ministry. The things that seem to be helping me most are the reading of the Bible, the devotional classics, and Quaker journals.

At this point I want to stop and involve each of us personally in what this gift of ministry means, to tie these comments to our lives. Pair with a person next to you, preferrably someone you do not know very well, and I will give you a question to share together for two minutes. (Four questions were used, each for a two minute time of sharing. They are as follows:)}
1. What are your personal strengths (or resources) that augurs for ministry?
2. To what degree are you using your potential? (The Human Potential Movement tells us that most use less than 10%.)
3. Every decision we make and each characteristic we have has an accompanying fear. In terms of ministry it may be as useful to know what holds us back as to commit. What are your accompanying fears?
4. In what sense would you like to be known as a "spiritual" person? How do you respond when it is said, "He/She is very spiritual?"

Foundation Stones for Ministry

Seven recipes or foundation stones are offered here as a ground for nurturing the gift of ministry. With each I have added a Query as a motivator to action.

1) Ministry is Spirit at work, and is nurtured by having a workable understanding of Spirit. Belief in Spirit is not the same as having an experience and workable understanding of Spirit. In the Wholistic Health Centers located in churches and promoted on the theme of body, mind, and spirit, only 6 out of 1182 patients alluded to a problem that was talked about as spiritual in nature. It seems unfortunate that a word that has such important meaning should escape our constant usage as a major part of common life.

Since 1970 there has been a new interest in Spirit as noted in several movements. Quakers can lead in this new interest. I would like to push Howard Nacy's profound emphasis on Spirit last evening to help us see how unique and special the Quaker way of thinking about Spirit really is. This unique concept is at the heart of the way we approach ministry. Our forefathers made Spirit everyday, practical, an attractive life entity, even earthy. It was not a commodity that some had and some did not, but was within each person as a seed or light ready to grow and break out. Spirit was the life force translated into action.

Recently I was with a known family therapist who said that to do that work one needed to have a sense of the absurd. Then he added, "And leave something for God to do." I thought to myself that a Quaker would not make that statement. To assume that we do all we can to right the wrongs and then turn the situation over to God is not with it. God was in the situation before we got there and while we were there. That difference in the way we think about Spirit makes a lot of difference for ministry.

A friend of mine was in a conference with Carroll Wise, a retired professor at Garrett Theological Seminary. He told of his recent accident in which he was burned badly. His theological thinking that he had talked about in the classroom for years was not serving him well in his healing. Finally, he said that he found that he would have to participate personally in his cure if it were to be. He said he had to put aside his theology in order to be cured. My reaction to that experience was that at that moment of becoming a participant in his cure and putting aside his theology, he discovered the Quaker idea of Spirit. Spirit as the central aspect of one's life, as participation from within, as useful and workable, as not turned on or off but as always there in some fashion, as God in us, is the Quaker reality.

In the Gospels Jesus kept telling people that the Kingdom is already here but they did not recognize it. The truth and the life (Spirit) are in Him, the
Christ. Sam Keen says the Holy Spirit is more like a wild dove than a tame pigeon.

Confessional theology and Fundamentalist thinking tend to have difficulty with that idea of Spirit, which in turn limits their ministry. The Quakers have something--a concept that is daily, inescapable, a concept of Spirit that turns people out into the world to change it--ministry. The challenge for Quakers is to accept the fact that God gets into the market place before we do, and our task is to recognize the holy where it is. Most Christians think they take God there. Every situation has something of the holy in it, and every situation has the possibility always of a lot more of the holy than it now has. The excitement comes in believing that God is there waiting to be born or known. "Walk cheerfully over the earth answering that of God in every man," Fox said.

T. Edmund Harvey states: "If the Society of Friends is to realize its ideal of a community of priests in the service of humanity, the dedication of certain times to prayer is not enough. The best thoughts, the highest and deepest thinking of which all are capable must be brought to the service of God and man (people) in a ministry which must be as wide as life itself." (Silence and Worship, London: Swarthmore Press, Ltd., 1923, p. 64.)

A pastor friend says there is a difference between being "born again" as in the Nicodemus story and being "saved." The first moved toward something and the latter away from something. Spirit for those early Quakers was a freeing and a moving toward new life experiments. If we are to have ministry we best have not only an experience of Spirit but a Quaker concept that makes ministry more nearly possible.

The Query when thinking about Spirit is one question: For what purpose...? For what purpose health, eyesight, government, social welfare, money, etc.? The Spirit question is this: If you have health what do you plan to do with it? What is the Christian purpose of social welfare?

2) Ministry gets thwarted by the way one thinks about life and faith. Freeing up some mind sets could improve ministry. Furturing ministry is enhanced when one learns to think existentially, which in philosophy is contrasted with essence. These are two heavy terms for distinguishing two ways of thinking that become ways of ministering. Most of history has used the essence mode. What is of value? Plato said we should decide what the good citizen is and train people for it--essence. Four hundred years ago religion made premises and then tried to prove they were right. The inductive method in science was introduced to give another way of inquiry. In its modern version Christians become moral more than relational, emphasizing beliefs more than love.

Edward Dowsett wrote: (Pendle Hill Bulletin, No. 166, August, 1963.) "The mystical experience of Friends is not to be understood in such terms as 'the flight of the alone to the alone,' or 'the absorption of the individual into the absolute,' or, even, as 'union with the ground of being.' Rather, it is to be understood in terms of meeting--a meeting with God in the circumstances of daily life."

One problem with the church today is that she finds herself in an existential era with an existential tradition. Essentialists are doctrinaire, product-oriented more than life-as-process oriented. They emphasize absolutes and will power. By contrast, existentialists are realists, seeing an idea as being only as good as one's capacity to make it useful in actuality. They emphasize personal experience, relationships, participation, personal growth. They ask the "how" question more than the "what." The church's traditional
methods of confession and discipline have too often kept her bogged down in
moralisms when she could break out, opt for bigness more than rightness, which
starts with how members think.

If you would understand what I am saying here, review again why Quakers
rejected the Puritan stance in the first hundred years. Puritans write about
sin and fears, even the fear of not being chosen or elected by God which drove
some to insanity, whereas Quakers emphasized the positive seed of the inward
light. For the Puritans Indians were of the devil but Quakers saw them as
people. Rather than perdigation Quakers tended to see frivolity as a waste of
time and non-Christian religions as immature. William Dewsbury decided if many
give their bodies in war why not give one's body to the God of truth instead.
The same contrast is seen by comparing Milton and Whittier.

Quakers have more of this existential—a meeting with God, related to
daily life, and future oriented. Fox telling Penn to wear his sword as long as
he can in good conscience. People with deep commitment in time grow weary if
that commitment does not get expressed in ministry. Move from the "tyranny of
the should" to "what needs doing."

The beauty of the existential is that it frees one to experience growth,
particularly in terms of one's own unique gifts. Quakers came to the place
where they could affirm a person as Christian without insisting they be
Christian on my terms. One thing I learned early in life was that there are a
lot of ruts in the world but one need not live in any of them. Life is either
a growing process or it is lagging and deteriorating. My early memories in my
rural community was that too many of us found a pattern and lived in that
pattern day after day until not only the pattern became worn but the person
became thread-bare. That led to a stifling moral relativism that was
dis-spiritng. Grow to make one's Christian faith more mature and one's spirit
alive.

Query: What is your growing edge? I am intending to be loving--how am I
doing?

3) Ministry is matured and motivated by the servant in each of us. Most
people don't like to be servants. Most often we think the servant role is more
like the child role. Robert Greenleaf has a powerful book, Servant Leadership,
which he says we cannot be genuine leaders until we first have been a
servant.

Ministry as helping is always an investment in the future. In early
experimental forms one may say "I tried to do something," and that is a step up
from "I couldn't do anything." With nurture the "I tried..." gives way to the
higher plain: "As a servant of God I did this."

The beauty of the servant is that the demeanor challenges the
de-humanizing biases and does it by making one's self vulnerable. Servants
know that they do not cure the ills of people as much as they walk with
people.

Query: Does this path have a heart?

4) Ministry is nurtured by making innovative use of an oft used
term--"concern." For 30 years education (including Christian Education) and
psychology have been on a need emphasis. Start with what people need or where
they are hurting. We will get more production if we will start with
motivation. What are you concerned (motivated) to do? What would you act on?
Nurturing is useless without vision, and without vision the people perish.
Gordon Cosby when asked what he would do differently in retrospect in the Church of the Savior, said that he would do two things—take more risks and be more loving.

The Dream Workshops that Ben Brantingham spurred on a few years ago had a fascination in them because they defined concerns and made the enabling ministry possible. Ben would go to the head of a business and ask how he could help him/her be more successful in business. Soon they were talking more about the purpose of the business and how it could be a ministry through internal relationships as well as through the product they produced.

Query: What needs doing? What are you concerned to do? Where are you a "publisher of truth"?

5) Participation is the nurturing ingredient. I mention it here because participation is the key element in the enabling ministry whether it be the actor or the recipient. Ministry is not a spectator role. Where effective it brings people into participation. Keith Esch reminds us that leadership must not replace participation. Participation is the art of being totally present and creatively alive. One can make a difference when one is a participant. One group format called Participation Training is based on training participants and allowing leaders to evolve. Unprogrammed Worship makes for better participants.

Quaker history is very much a story of some big persons. They were keenly participative. We can be better than what someone called "disinterested goodwill."

Query: Where are you a participant? How is God working in and through you in that situation?

6) To minister to the power systems of our time will require prophetic, imaginative innovations. I feel a numbing within when we talk about our power structures and how to get their attention. What is required is a full load of equipping, enabling, and re-cycling ministries. The systems dictate too much our thinking and our lives.

Two things occur to me. First, it will be helpful to realize that guilt is in my opinion no longer the major psychological dimension of life in the late Twentieth Century. Rather, it is fear. Power systems are even more grasping when motivated by fear.

Comparatively, Quakers tend not to have much guilt. We are more future oriented. We adopt simplicity more out of a practical, sensible way to live than out of guilt. We come to faith out of a "bloating emptiness." Sometimes existential guilt is created by becoming concerned, that is, we feel guilty when not acting on concerns. It can be argued that we become concerned to create some guilt in order to experience meaningfully the grace of God. In most Quaker circles Fundamentalism does not work well because there is not enough conscious guilt in persons involved.

I suppose the challenge to Evangelical Quakers is to grasp the uniqueness of our heritage and to birth a life that is not a replica of any other evangelical denomination and to guard against a Fundamentalism that limits ministry because it is cemented in concrete and you can't do much more with it than preach it. An Evangelical Social Activist is a real treat and a real Christian. When we meet one we hardly know what to do with them because they are so rich for us. On the other hand, the challenge for Christian mystical Quakers is to study your actions in the Scriptures so you know why you're doing
what you are doing, show us more demonstrations of ministry, and in the name of God Almighty get on with it now.

A second thing that occurs to me is that there is a strange power in truth. In our therapy groups we have no problem moving them to the good. Why do they invariably move in that direction? It is as if all life when nudged moves toward humanization, toward God. Where there is truth, fear crumbles.

Query: Is our ministry overcoming dehumanization? Is it moving persons from fear to faith?

7) Nurturing is best in the experimental mood and experimental climate. Fox said of the events of his conversion that he knew this experimentally. An experimental approach would enlarge our options, give us a chance to test ways of ministering. Greenleaf says that we should study George Fox not in terms of what he believed but "How did he learn?"

One approaches ministry differently depending on whether life is experienced as a push or a pull. The push has a lot of the ought in it and is motivated by guilt. It is like a parenting role. The pull is an invitation, an attraction, charisma. Being experimental is more nearly a pull than a push. The Ten Commandments have the push in them—"Thou shalt not..." The Beatitudes have a pull, an invitation, and experimental "what's next" in their "Blessed are..." climate.

The experimental is enhanced by two things: a warm heart and a clear head. In specific terms being experimental means being in touch with Christians who have generative minds and do creative thinking along with some notion of basic research or data sifting. Creative thinking enlarges the number of options and research thinking helps one make the better choices. Just as it is possible to use one's mind without swelling the head, so it is possible to gather information in a pseudo-scientific way without losing the mystery and the mystic.

Query: How did we learn? How do we risk?

Handles for Ministry

These seven recipes describe some foundations for nurturing ministry. They are offered to suggest what a rich ground Quakers have for ministry compared to some other stances. To make the recipes workable some of the following practical suggestions are hereby made. In these I am trying to get away from housekeeping. I grow weary of being the "standard brand" in practice.

1) Meetings need to be organized along the lines of ministry rather than patterned after "General Motors." The Meetings are organized to perpetuate and save the organization first with ministry as a secondary goal. Pastors and Meeting Secretaries are generally expected to keep the organization functioning much like any business. If we want ministry let us organize for ministry.

Meetings that nurture the gifts of ministry should nurture at three levels: equipping, enabling, and recycling. Equipping is the birthing of an opus. It is the preparation or training phase, coming into an awareness of one's gifts and educating for fuller expression of them. Enabling is more like orchestration of energies. It is the freeing, the unbinding, the "confirming the other" in their ministry. It follows from a worthiness, a trust from others that affirms. Recycling allows one a fresh start, a new
birthing in order to move to a new form of ministry. In recycling we are given the freedom to live several lives or to live our lives in phases, to be re-tooled out of a "burned out" life to a new "particularized cosmic tenderness" (Thomas Kelly's definition of concern).

These three nurturing levels tend to be sequential. Equipping and enabling differ in four ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipping</th>
<th>Enabling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Based on an awareness of and the discovery of one's gifts. Ministry is elevated to the level of a &quot;call.&quot;</td>
<td>1. A readiness to act on what one feels called to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Based on skill development and training.</td>
<td>2. Based on confirming another, a trust in and a nudging of another. Sending them out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Centered in a need emphasis. What needs doing?</td>
<td>3. Centered in a motivation emphasis. What are concerned (motivated) to do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Operational foundation is a set of disciplines.</td>
<td>4. Operational foundation is one's dreams and hopes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recycling is necessary to the above as a reminder that equipping and enabling never completes the life process and, therefore, is needed because in each phase of life our potential is limited by our hidden prejudices, our masquerading, our mental health, even our theology. To stay on the growing edge new ways of love, or re-love, are needed.

Each Meeting could take this ministry model: equipping, enabling (releasing), and recycling. Help individuals in dialogue become aware of their present level of ministry using this model. Before you can do this, help individuals talk personally out of their life. Warm people at the beginning of committee meetings by pairing on personal questions like we have done here. Use Group Conversation and other methods which free people to personalize. Every group has a life, a personality. Help the group describe that life. A group needs two things: an awareness of process in it, and a non-threatening way to give feedback (eldering). Ask the group: "Would it be helpful for us to look at how we are together, our life as a team?" Any group needs four things to be successful: high participation, high personalization, high interaction, and a high pace. If these suggestions are operative in your group, you have a climate for dialogue to follow this model for ministry.

2) Hold Concern Meetings. Make the Monthly Meeting for Business a Concern Meeting where ministry is the focus. Use the "dream" approach or creative thinking methods to generate new options. One Presbyterian Church has a time each week in Sunday worship for concerns and invites members to speak, a big step for them. Then gather those who have common concerns to continue the dialogue. The group is needed to refine, clarify and assess whether the concern is from God or self-generated. For early Friends many of their week day gatherings agured for generating concerns and building up each other for ministry.

One Meeting was successful in gathering those interested in mission and ministry. They met every two weeks for six months until they found unity on a special ministry. By then the bond was so great between them that the implementation became a shared mission. They could stand the risk as long as
they experienced affirmation from God through each other. This pattern is seen in the Church of the Saviour.

3) Educational services. I want to think with you about education. I may be too hard on our colleges and want your reactions. In the '50's and '60's some of us agreed that the life-blood of the Quaker movement was in the colleges. Then something happened. Colleges sacrificed innovation, became traditional, particularly in teaching methods (which tells us a lot about their concept of the learner). They experienced budget crunches amid inflation which meant that program dreams got side-tracked, professors got more interested in tenure than ministry, and some colleges chose doctrine over persons and vocational preparation over life preparation. They entered a phase of "stagflation." I believe the retreat centers then became especially meaningful and the Earlham School of Religion became a main stream of hope for ministry. I anticipate our three headquarters for the Meetings will come into more prominence in this decade if our colleges cannot recover. With the side-tracking of vision and enthusiasm the challenge for the colleges is to get back into the stream of leadership for ministry Quaker style. Quaker colleges, unlike most other early educational colleges, were not founded to train the clergy. They were started to train everyone for ministry with a follow up of other schools for children that were based on the four R's: religion, reading, writing, and arithmetic—and in that order.

Doug Death begins our thinking in his article in the Friends Journal entitled: "Wanted: A More Radicalizing Quaker Education." The seven recipes mentioned earlier form a base for Quaker education for ministry. Within the colleges a way of working would be most helpful. Let me mention an off-the-cuff model: participation, purpose, and a plan. Participation is effective when a person can learn by doing. People will participate at the point of their interest and motivation. In this process let students learn who they are and to whom they belong. Ministry is a participation activity requiring practice. "Faith and Practice" are two Quaker terms most needing re-definition. I am opting for teaching methods based on participation.

Purpose: education for what? It is really a question of application; how to use what we learn in ministry. A case approach works well toward this end. Plan: To implement a plan one needs to know what skills are needed to do effectively what needs doing whether it be communication, human relationships, commitment, community building, etc. I am aware of all the good things that are now going on in some colleges and hope they have a new burst of energy. I am also aware that this would in most cases require a retooling of faculty, a task that one college president said is more difficult than organizing a cemetery.

We now look to ESR as a life blood for the movement. The retreat centers are so special to the Meetings and serve such a special role by staying on the cutting edge of new thrusts and preparation for more personal enrichment. Let us encourage them more in such things as enabling ministry conferences, journal keeping, gift discovery, imaging workshops (take a lesson from the mystics such as Ignatius Loyola and the Spiritual Exercises as well as recent cancer treatment methods), wholistic health, stress and mediation, etc.

4) Specialized ministries. Especially for Meetings that have secretaries or pastors I would suggest we develop the use of the Spiritual Checkup. We are quite sophisticated in the physical checkup and the mental assessment, but we hardly know how to begin with a look a spiritual health. Pastors need to be brought back into the role of physicians again as they once were.

For many of us who have been in the Christian mission for many years, we need a fresh diagnostic look at our "calling." Many of us would like to be
more than "well intentioned," knowing that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Could someone help me know what my job is doing to my person and my spirituality, whether my growing edge is resulting in effective loving, and what I could do to keep spirit alive in and through me?

In a meeting recently with the Wholistic Health Centers it was pointed out that patients can read their medical charts anytime and are invited to add their own notations. Over time they provide a history of one's medical health. I thought, "Why not a spiritual health chart showing over time one's developmental cycles?" A Spiritual Checkup is possible and can be done for one's self by one's self or with the aid of a pastor or helper. It is a chance to be informed of what's going on with me, you, the group, the organization, the community, the nations.

Family Therapy in-home treatment is big in my geographical area now and some other states. I believe it would be a natural for churches that are family-centered, have groups for all ages, and a unique access system to member's homes. Some Seminaries are adding training courses in family therapy. The staff can be the professional in services without taking on a professionalism.

The church needs to recover influence in the community by filling roles of the helping professions. We would fill those roles differently than most because we approach it with an existential way of thinking. That means we would make participants out of those we serve. It means our enabling stance would start with "what do you need to be more than you now are?!" We are seeing now a miniature interest in community development much after the pattern of the 1940's which in the next decade will be the new thrust in social welfare. What a delight if the church would lead this ministry. Quakers would bring a higher degree of health than government can ever bring to such a movement. The helping people roles are always in need of those who are committed Christians. The mileage we get out of social welfare, prison work, etc. needs the dimensions that Christians can bring to it.

Another area that we have not been able to make more readily available and meaningful is meditation. In an age of stress when the four major illnesses have high stress factors, meditation is practical and a curative. The Herbert Benson studies along with others show that there are two activities that produce a body substance that helps one adjust to pain and feel joy. Those two activities are exercise and meditation. I wish Quakers with our tradition in creative silence were making such discoveries and prompting them. I wish we could make meditation as enriching for many as the TV people have.

5) We need a Ministry Data Bank to have a better idea what it is that makes for effective ministry, to answer the question how we learn, and to better recognize the holy where (and how) God is at work. We have a head start in our tradition in journal keeping. Why are so few current journals available to us? A computer data collection would help make people's lives more available to us in a pseudo-scientific sense.

This is especially needed because the church tends not to deal with her failures. Churches talk only about their successes and tend not to face their conflicts and failures with many people. That's why churches are so ripe for splits, and why we are learning so little from our failures.

I have a new group now that are ready for journals with the intention of seeing over time what it is that nurtures ministry. We plan to meet about every three months to see if we are on target toward our objective.
6) In this presentation I have struggled hardest with ministry in the power systems of society and feel I have not dealt with this part of ministry adequately. Some people are born into the Christian life and are then opened to a specific ministry, while others do good works and are thereby born into the faith. Both ways are possibilities.

We could take a lesson from the Church of the Saviour, from the peace program designed to challenge the Pentagon at Riverside Church, New York, under William Sloane Coffin, or the ministry of people like Sam Shoemaker who helped found Alcoholics Anonymous and the Pittsburg Experiment, and others. Some publications such as Sojourners Magazine give us leads to incorporate.

Could we recover and expand the Work Camp, the Vigil, the Quaker Project on Community Conflict, and other methods that could be extensions of our past adapted to the present with innovations? Could the AFSC help smaller groups with relief work in their communities? If we could come to a climate in which we ask Quaker service organizations what they could help us do, without our usual approach of trying to change them, we both could discover ministry.

7) Nurturing ministry needs a theology. I suggest a focus on an Event Theology which would help understand experimental and experience-centered religion. Learning from events lines up well with growing edge living and learning from experience. It gives life a participation base. Event theology also is strikingly the way Jesus seemed to minister. The contacts people had with Him were events. They experienced events before they wrote them as Gospels.

Our time needs badly a theology of social welfare, of economics, work, play, family life, education, and a theology of ministry. Keep in mind that any theology is only about as good as one's psychology. Psychology keeps theology on an event level where theory gives way to practicality.

Postlude

Recently there were three one-hour programs on television consecutively. The first was about Linus Pauling, who helped make the atomic bomb and then saw the import of his work and did an about face to undo his doing. His religious background was not clear, but the interview was convincing. The second program was about Mother Teresa who was given the Nobel Peace Prize for feeding the starving Hindu people even though she is Roman Catholic. She seemed more interested in caring for their bodies than telling them about her faith. The third was a Billy Graham Crusade. These programs were a contrast with each ministering in his/her own way. I am not prepared to say which is more Christian. Perhaps, we need them all. There seemed to me to be no doubt that each was involved in ministry.

So, the sum of these comments is that a new epoch could be born. Quakers are one group with a history and an imagination to lead the movement. My impression is that the issues of the times never hungered more for a clear ministry yet seldom were harder to infuse. How is faith possible when fears engulf "life on a powder keg"? How can we mobilize the people of Christian goodwill for a breakthrough, a watershed, a new page in history, a birth of an opus, and an orchestration of energies—a quantum jump? Where people see the real Jesus they will tend to want Him. He could be the vanguard that shows the world how to make a difference through both our faith and practice. No longer will we be "birthright" Quakers but rather "forthright" Quakers.
If this verbiage gets to be too much, be reminded of these words that were hanging on the wall in my sister’s home:

**ANYWAY**

People are unreasonable, illogical and self centered.
Love them anyway.
If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.
Do good anyway.
If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.
Succeed anyway.
The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.
Do good anyway.
Honesty and frankness makes you vulnerable.
Be honest and frank anyway.
The biggest men with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest minds. Think big anyway.
People favor underdogs but follow only the top dogs.
Fight for some underdogs anyway.
What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.
Build anyway.
People really need help but may attack you if you help them.
Help people anyway.
Give the world the best you have and you will get kicked in the teeth.
Give the world the best you have got anyway.

—Karma
THE HISTORY OF RECORDING OF MINISTERS
IN THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Patricia Ann Brown

Preface

My research for this paper began with the general subject of the history of the recording of ministers in the Society of Friends. My search in the minutes of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, at Swarthmore and Haverford libraries, was not productive—very little discussion of recording was found. So I turned my efforts to London Yearly Meeting minutes, to see exactly when the recording of ministers was abolished. I discovered that the task of a complete history of recording would be greater than I had anticipated, and this paper developed, primarily, into the history of the recognition of vocal ministry in London Yearly Meeting.

So far in the research which has been done on this subject very little has been published. Three important exceptions should be mentioned: the Meeting for Sufferings' report of the York Conference on Ministry, 1903; William C. Braithwaite's address to the Meeting of Elders, 1921; and Harold Walker's doctoral dissertation concerning the concept of Quaker Ministry, 1955. In addition to these the reader is referred to the bibliography for other references.

I recognize the fact that there is much more research to be done on this subject, particularly among the Yearly Meetings here in America. This paper is only a beginning toward a complete picture of the recording of gifts in our Yearly Meetings.

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Quakerism arose in the mid-17th century when the giant figure of George Fox appeared on the scene. He went forth and the public ministry of Friends began.

Fox preached with fervor and sincerity, in communion with a living Christ, proclaiming a message that proved to answer the needs of many seekers. His gift in the ministry was expressed as an experience given in obedience to the call of God. His spiritual enthusiasm was so contagious that in a short time he gathered a group of over sixty ministers who joined him, in 1654, in a preaching mission of such magnitude and power that within ten years approximately 40,000 people in England were in the Quaker Fellowship.

From this beginning, Friends have continued to emphasize the importance of a vital spiritual ministry in the life of the Christian community. We have gone beyond the other groups in the tradition of the Free Church by giving the fullest practical application to the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. The first Quaker leaders "based their claim to give guidance upon their own possession of the Spirit of Truth and upon the witness to the Spirit in the hearts of those they addressed. They took the position of inspired leaders, not of spiritual superiors."

The First Publishers of Truth were men and women who had left their homes and work. No formal ties of organization bound them together. They did have
a common spiritual fellowship uniting them in a supreme mission of publishing truth to which they devoted their lives. What the Society has done, throughout our history, is to express its recognition of the fact that particular Friends are thus called and qualified.

The first such acknowledgement, of which we have a record, is a certificate that was issued by Bristol Friends in 1655 on behalf of Edward Burrough and Francis Howgill, who were travelling in Ireland. It certifies that the two Friends are not vagabonds or disorderly persons, or popishly affected, or disaffected to godliness—but are well known to the writers to have been and to be men of a sober, honest, and godly conversation, always faithful to and acting for the Commonwealth, and are of a settled principle in religion, sound in faith, having Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages, for their foundation, in obedience to whom they have borne their testimony in this nation at London for several months, and in this City of Bristol, and in divers other parts of this nation, having free liberty, travelling up and down, and preaching the gospel freely, according to the example of the saints recorded in the Scriptures of truth.2

In the first days of the Quaker Movement, the terms "Publick Friends" or "Publishers of Truth" were applied to those who engaged frequently in public testimony with the general approval of Friends, especially those who travelled from meeting to meeting. These ministers were in close fellowship with one another and with the leaders of the movement which made any more formal recognition unnecessary. By letters to one another, or to Margaret Fell at Swarthmore, they reported their work and procured such monetary assistance as they needed. From 1659 onwards, they held annual meetings for conference together, with some interruptions during the years of persecution. In London, Gerrard Roberts welcomed traveling Quaker ministers into his home which became an unofficial headquarters.3

The early history of the Morning Meeting probably gives the best clue to the development of a system of recording ministers. Bristol and London were the two places where the recording of travelling ministers was most fully developed. But it was in London in 1675 that a system was instituted by which the movement of preachers among the meetings was reduced to some sort of order. This constitutes the first "official recording" of ministers. The minute reads as follows:

It is desired that all Friends in and about the city that have a public testimony for God or ministry do meet with the Brethren on every first-day and second-day morning when they can; otherwise to send a note signifying what meetings they intend to be at on first-days.4

Out of this arrangement sprang the "Second-days' Morning Meeting" or "Morning Meeting," the existence of which was continued until laid down by London Yearly meeting in 1901. The records of the Morning Meeting date from only 1673, though it is known that regular weekly meetings of these public Friends were held from 1670.5 The Morning Meeting held the concern for the care of the ministers and for their distribution to various meetings. It also was concerned with the oversight of manuscripts for publication.

The records of the arrangements made were kept by Ellis Hookes, clerk of the Morning Meeting, and its first recording clerk.6 The names of the ministers were written in a book either personally or by proxy. (In 1904, twenty-two volumes of these books were in the possession of London Yearly Meeting, dating from 1699 to 1793. The records prior to 1699 have been lost,
with the exception of one volume, bearing the date 1672-83, which was in the possession of the Committee of Friends' Library, Philadelphia.) The unchallenged permission to write his or her name in the book of the Morning Meeting was equivalent to acknowledgment or recognition as a minister. Dissatisfaction on the part of a monthly meeting, or the Morning Meeting itself, with the ministry of a Friend was expressed by an objection to the appearance of the name in the book.

The objections mentioned in the minutes refer to both men and women. "Women Friends having a public testimony for the Truth sometimes met on their own account on Seventh-day. The Morning Meeting declared, in 1700, that it had never given any instruction for the establishment of this meeting, and did not consider there was any necessity for its continuance. At the same time, it advised 'publick approved Women Friends' who had a concern to visit a particular meeting, to leave their names 'at the chamber' [with the recording clerk]. They were at the same time cautioned to be careful not to interfere with the brethren in 'publick mixt Meeting.'"

TheMorning Meeting evidently kept a tight rein over the proceedings of all its members but was especially strict with respect to the women preachers. At a Second Day’s Morning Meeting the 10th mo. 1700. This meeting finding that it is a hurt to Truth for women Friends to take up too much time as some do in our public meetings, when several public and serviceable men Friends are present, and are by them prevented in their services. It’s therefore advised that the women Friends should be tenderly cautioned against taking up so much time in our mixed public meetings. Benjamin Nealings to give a copy of this minute to Sarah Plumley and Mrs. Munro, for them to communicate to other women Friends, and that it may be prevented for the future.

In 1698, women visitors were invited to attend the more general Quarterly Meeting of ministers, and there is evidence of their presence at the Morning Meeting in 1735. At the beginning of the 18th century, Quaker women took no part with the men in the legislative activity of the Yearly Meeting but their energies and abilities were directed into social service with great efficiency. They were recognized of equal worth rather than equal status or power with the men.

The Morning Meeting, in 1723, had occasion to object to William Gibson entering his name in the minister's book. He appealed to the Quarterly Meeting and then to the Yearly Meeting, which appointed forty-three Friends to hear his appeal against the action of the Morning Meeting. The Appeal Committee reported that the Morning Meeting had no intention to disown him as a minister, nor did it believe it had a right to do so. The Yearly Meeting laid it down that neither the Morning Meeting nor any other Meeting of Ministers had the right to disown any minister or other person, but that the sole right of disowning belonged to the Monthly or Quarterly Meeting. No name was to be entered in the minister's book till he or she produced a certificate from the meeting to which the minister belonged. As a result of this decision for the request of formal recognition of ministers, the Morning Meeting entered on its books the names of nearly 150 Friends who had produced certificates from their Monthly Meetings. "Formal" recognition was thus required; this ruling may be considered the foundation of the system of recording ministers that ensued for many years.

In 1773, the minute passed recommended that the "unapproved ministers and elders in the several Monthly Meetings would tenderly advise those who come forth in public testimony to wait patiently under a deep consideration of their
state of infancy and childhood without intruding themselves into Meetings of Ministers and Elders, and were to report them to their Monthly or Quarterly Meetings, "when their fruits should afford sufficient evidence of the qualifications," so that these meetings might recommend them as members of the select Meetings of Ministers and Elders. This shows a return towards the early practice of ministers approving their fellow ministers, only the approving body is now one of the ministers and elders combined.

In the 1802 issue of the Book of Discipline, the 1773 minute was strengthened by omitting the words "without intruding themselves into Meetings of Ministers and Elders," which took away any ground for Friends regarding themselves as recognized without approval. In 1810, the phrase "a proposal for acknowledging a minister" is first introduced. The Book of Discipline in 1861, in confirming the previous rules, first refers to a "case that may originate in the Monthly Meeting itself." This confirmed the power of the meeting to propose the acknowledgment of a minister without a previous proposal from the Meeting of Ministers and Elders.

In the early years of the Society, "public Friends" were called either minister or elder. Then the first generation passed away, the use of the term "elder" fell into disuse. The elder of later Quakerism were Friends appointed by the Monthly Meetings to sit with the ministers in the Ministers' Meeting to consider the state of the ministry, to aid young ministers and to have oversight of spiritual conditions. The functions of the elders were not clearly differentiated from those of the overseers who were charged with oversight of the moral conduct of the membership. In 1789, the Yearly Meeting decided that the offices of elder and overseer were distinct and that overseers were not entitled to sit in the Meeting of Ministers and Elders. The slow process of a threefold "official system" was established.

The eldership became the dominant influence in the history of Quakerism for a century after 1750. The elders acquired the position of influence in the affairs of the Society which the ministry had previously occupied. Their function of nourishing, advising, and safeguarding the ministry in the course of time took a secondary place. They became the guardians of tradition. Friends of later generations held the elders responsible for the decline of the Society's membership and ministry. This explanation seems too simple to be acceptable. The overall picture needs to be viewed with care as we continue with this history of Quaker ministry.

Throughout all of history, there are those who keep lists—records and statistics. Friends are no exception; they seem to have a propensity toward lists of births, deaths and educational accomplishments. In 1737, London Yearly Meeting began to keep lists of their members. Definite rules concerning membership were drawn up in order that each meeting have knowledge of those to whom it was bound to give assistance in time of need. Registers of birth had been kept for many years and now it was provided that the membership of children should follow that of their parents—"birthright membership" was established. Lists of recorded and unrecorded ministers were compiled from the memorials issued by the meetings and from The Friend (London) which gave monthly reports of newly recorded ministers.

For eleven years in the late 17th century, John Kelsall kept a record of the ministers who visited his meeting and made a brief notation of their concerns. He gives the names of 174 ministers (thirty-six of them are women) and names their home meetings. He also added a note about the content of their sermons. When he disapproved, his reactions were noted in Latin; when greater secrecy was called for, he used the Greek alphabet.
In the early 18th century, Dr. John Rutty of Ireland noted "Friends in the ministry" in his diary. Charles Hoyland compiled a list of the "Deaths of Ministering Friend" between 1700 and 1859—a total of 2,709 deaths of ministers. Of these, one-half died in the fifty years between 1700 and 1750.

In 1866, Joseph Thorp listed both recorded and unrecorded ministers in the Yearly Meeting. His list was made for the use of a committee of the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders. From his list and the research of Isaac Sharp, the following record was given at the York Conference on Ministry in 1903:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recorded Ministers</th>
<th>Unrecorded Ministers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In America, Samuel Wood, William Wood, William G. Hubbard, and Joseph H. Miller each published a Book of Meetings. The books of 1878 and 1884 contain lists of recorded ministers from London Yearly Meeting and from the American Yearly Meetings. The 1884 edition gives acknowledgment for the list of ministers in Great Britain and Ireland to a "private list in the possession of George Satterthwaite of Ackworth." A sharp decline in the quantity of ministers occurred during the first half of the 18th century. In 1700, two-thirds of the meetings had approved ministers residing in their areas; by 1750, two-thirds of the meetings were without resident ministers. However, there was a rapid rise in the number of women ministers in proportion to men during this fifty-year period. Lucia Beamish suggests three reasons for this condition:

Prosperity may have freed mothers to travel; equal liberty to minister may have stimulated the feminine gift of ready speech; and the earlier discouragement of women ministers, due partly to fear of emotional imbalance such as had marked Nayler's female supporter, may have died down after the deaths of those concerned over it.

For three decades, much of the energy of Quakers was spent on the struggle to exist. The Act of Toleration in 1699 brought welcome relief and a flood of ministry flowed through the Society. During the recuperation period, Friends became respectable and prosperous. Integrity, industry and thrift became important marks of Quakerism; but religious enthusiasm and spiritual power were less characteristic to their way of life. Friends of the succeeding generations inherited a great tradition but without a trial by fire. The ministers of the 18th century were "essentially conservative [and quietistic], their purpose was to preserve and extend the principles and organization which had been created for them by the founders of the Society."

The influence of the Quietism of Quakerism deeply affected the Society not only for the "Silent Century," from 1750 to 1850, but for years afterwards. The essential elements of Quaker worship were contained in the absence of arrangement of any appointed leader. Any man or woman had the freedom to speak or pray or to continue in periods of silent worship. Necessary to the continued success of such a meeting is a high degree of spiritual fellowship among the members, expressed in silence as well as in words. During the period
of Quietism excessive emphasis was laid on the Inward Teacher; this discouraged spiritual fellowship and sometimes reckoned it harmful.

The call to ministry was thought of as a sudden descent of the Spirit into the mind of the minister—perhaps as a stone dropped into a pool, unrelated to anything already there, the pool having no power either to prevent or induce its coming. Friends waited—perhaps enjoying the liberty to think about their own concerns—until, through some signal or stone dropped into the pool, they simply received their orders. The minister became an instrument, his or her ministry instrumental. The essential testimony to divine guidance which had revolted against the merely intellectual preparation of uninspired discourses came to include dislike of any specific preparation at all. The London Yearly Meeting of 1841 definitely pronounced a minute against any preparation by a minister of matter to be communicated to an audience met for worship.28

For several years, many meetings were held wholly in silence except on the occasion of a visit paid by a traveling Friend with a concern. The prevailing conception of worship laid so great a stress on the danger of disturbing the silence—"exceeding the measure" or "outrunning the Guide"—that most Friends, once and for all, ruled the service out of their lives. Those on whom the "awful gift" had descended came to be regarded as a separate order of men and women, forever marked off from others.

The journals reveal a paralyzing fear of the call to ministry, which seemed to be always conceived as forced upon them. William Allen, in 1820, describes his state of mind on being recorded as a minister:

I am now placed in an awful situation. May the Great Preserver of men be near to support and sustain under every trial, and prevent me from doing anything which may injure His great and good cause. I am indeed very low and in much fear.29

This excess of fear, as distinct from a holy sense of responsibility, left its deep mark on succeeding generations.

The numerous journals written by Friends show other possible reasons for the decline in ministry. The silence that fell upon the meetings certainly must have resulted as a reaction against wordiness; sermons were often extremely lengthy. One example in 1693, which was apparently taken down verbatim, covers twenty pages of print. This particular sermon of Richard Ashby was not only of great length but also showed misuse of Scripture with sixty disconnected quotes from the Bible.30 Such lengthy sermons and the misuse of Scripture may have led to fear and neglect of Bible study, thus to the impoverishment of the ministry.

Samuel Bownas, who more than any other Friend of the 18th century gave attention to the ministry, cautioned against superfluous words. His book of 1750, Description of the Qualifications Necessary to a Gospel Minister, admonishes ministers against seeking to do or say something extraordinary that may bring the admiration of others; "...at first it was a cross to speak, let it not be so to be silent."31 His book is concerned with conformity to a general behavior characteristic of Quietism in contrast to the enthusiastic preaching of earlier periods, and emphasizes the "blank paper" concept of ministry.

John Griffith published a book in 1764 in which he bitterly denounced the verbosity of the minister, declaring that this sprang from self-importance and a complete failure to understand the nature of true ministry.32

In 1776, Dr. John Rutty, in his "Spiritual Diary," lamented "the dearth of Ministers," feeling that it was his duty to "admonish a silent brother."33
He could not decide whether pure silence was a higher form of worship than that which led to vocal ministry or whether it was a symptom of spiritual sickness in the Society.

During this period it is obvious that "the most serious effect of the Quietistic spirit was its influence on Quaker Ministry. The creature must be nothing, the Creator everything." The Society of Friends had kept its soul but lost its outreach.

Two schools of thought began to make their appearance: approval of undisturbed silent worship and regret for the growing lack of vocal ministry. There were many who saw that Quakerism had an important contribution to make to the world's spiritual life—if only Friends could get outside themselves and feel afresh the fire in which the Society arose.

In the 18th century, the American and French Revolutions brought new ideas to all groups of people; fresh concepts of liberty and personal freedom provoked a re-examination of all kinds of bondage. Thoughts and concerns were in a state of transition during the next 50–75 years. In the 19th century, in America, separations in the Society occurred, the slavery issue was of urgent concern and the pastoral system was being established.

On both sides of the Atlantic, the two very different types of religious thought (evangelical and quietistic) became more pronounced during the 19th century. The evangelical tone gradually grew stronger. The more quietistic ministry failed to capture the loyalty of the rising generation. British Friends were united in their opposition to the pastoral system of American Quakerism being duplicated in their branch of the Society. But they were divided in their approach to the solution of the problems that were partly responsible for the American mutation. One section of the Society feared a pastoral development; they wanted to make a clear break in the matter. They did not want to recognize ministers as the Society had been doing throughout its life. Another section, on the other hand, felt the need of a richer and deeper ministry and desired it to be encouraged. This group felt that certain organizational changes could make it more effective and yet avoid the development of a pastorate. Much of the debate was focused on the matter of the practice and method of recording ministers. Included in this issue was the concern about the seating arrangements of the meetings. Many Friends felt that the raised minister's galleries were not appropriate creating the feeling that the ministers and elders, who sat in these galleries, were a separate body and had very special status.

In 1843, The Friend (London) and The British Friends began their careers as the expression of the modern and the traditional, respectively. By noting which periodical was taken, you knew the kind of Friends in whose home you were.

Meantime, disownments for "marrying out" continually weakened the Society. Four thousand Friends had been disowned in London Yearly Meeting in the fifty-five years from 1800 to 1855, for marrying out of meeting. It was enough in and of itself to account for the continuous fall in membership, which was not really checked until 1865, when the membership of London Yearly Meeting reached its lowest as 13,773.

In 1850, an anonymous offer of a prize was made for the best essay on the cause of the decline in the Society of Friends in Great Britain and Ireland—hundred guineas for first prize and fifty guineas for second. John Stephenson Rowntree received first prize for his essay entitled, "Quakerism Past and Present." Thomas Hancock, and Anglican, was awarded second prize for
his essay entitled, "The Peculium." This essay was apparently very hostile to Friends, but it was considered worthy of also receiving one hundred guineas. 38

Rowntree's essay was published in 1859 and became the center of keen controversy. Rowntree felt that there were seeds of weakness in the original views of the founders and that the structure of the human mind does not adapt to long, continued silence. He also felt that the defects of ministry in the Society came from two mistaken ideas: that intellectual attainments were of little or no value to true ministry and that sermons should altogether be unpremeditated. He also saw other lacks: the neglect of the gift of teaching and the absence of regular time of prayer. There were, of course, other points, but the whole essay was a challenge to the past from the evangelical position and caused strong feeling on both sides. 39

Pamphlets, articles and "letters to the editor" reflected the concerns of the time, during the latter part of the 19th century. Although they were not numerous, they appeared continually. In 1897, the Friends' Quarterly Examiner published four articles concerning the advantages and disadvantages of recording Ministers. In one of these articles, Rachel J. Fox suggested that "we might well walk around the tree [of recorded ministers] many times before deciding to cut it down," looking at all aspects of its growth, development and condition. 40 Friends walked around that tree for the next twenty-seven years before recording was discontinued in London Yearly Meeting.

In 1903, London Yearly Meeting requested the Meeting for Suffering to investigate ministry in the Society. A detailed questionnaire was sent to the clerks of Monthly Meetings, and a conference was planned. 41 The Friends' Quarterly Examiner published a ministry symposium prior to the conference which gives an excellent overview of the issues.

The conference was held at York in November, 1903. It was concerned with the quality and character of the ministry in the Society of Friends, specifically the "preaching of the Word" in meeting for worship. This included the question of recording—the organization detail and the effects of recording upon the Ministers and other members.

Underlying the reports of the questionnaire and the concerns of the Conference, I agree with Elsie H. Cadbury who gave three points which she considered to be the "real points" of concern.

1. Have we an effective ministry?
2. Is there likely to be a succession of those willing to exercise this gift?
3. Do Friends desire in their meetings what is called 'preaching'? 42

Questions of expediency and of principle were intermingled. The motives and reasons for and against any change were so varied that it must have seemed difficult to understand the real reason for controversy. The fundamental motive behind the conference was not simply that there had been errors of judgment in recording, or a practical shortcoming in the system. The main objections seemed to be a disinclination to recognize the role of ministry, in any form whatever. Some would not even mention the name of "minister" and held that recognition of ministerial functions discouraged freedom of spirit, and was inconsistent with any true view of Quaker worship. There was a strong desire to maintain the freedom of the ministry and to set a barrier against all development towards any elaborated or formal structure. All this seemed to represent a spirit of positive determination to realize individually the responsibility and privilege of worship, to accept the meeting not as an end
but as a means to a richer and truer type of Christian fellowship, and a life quickened in a living sense of the Divine Presence.

In 1904, the Yearly Meeting considered the report of the York Conference. A minute had been adopted by the conference which stated "that the information laid before it indicated that in some districts much difference of opinion exists respecting the recognition of ministers, and that it was attended with difficulties..." Quite an understatement!

The conference reported against proposals that ministers and elders should not be ex-officio members of the Meeting for Suffering, and that a recorded minister should only remain a recorded minister so long as he or she was a member of the Monthly Meeting which recorded them, or of which they were a present member. In the course of discussion, it was pointed out that Monthly Meetings already possessed the power of withdrawing recognition when, in their judgment, a sufficient cause existed for such a step. The conference also decided against making it a binding regulation that the Monthly Meeting ministers, elders, and overseers should consult with those of the Quarterly Meeting before recommending recording.

Even though there was a great difference of opinion among the representatives, the conference approved maintaining the system of recording ministers. The Yearly Meeting approved all of the conclusions.

In the same year, the Yearly Meeting on Ministry and Oversight appointed a Committee on the Ministry, and when the Meeting on Ministry and Oversight was laid down in 1906 the Yearly Meeting continued this committee as a committee of the Yearly Meeting itself. For some years, the members of this committee visited meetings throughout the country. These visits were understood as hints in the way of encouragement to ministry. To many Friends, the message of the committee was comparatively new; to some, it must have been bewildering. It was not easy to change the traditional outlook inherited from six generations. The hesitation and obscurity of the reports of these visits are evidence of the outlook of that time.

In 1910, the Yearly Meeting asked this committee, in addition to continuing to give help and counsel with regard to the ministry, "also to summarize the valuable results of its experience in the form of a pamphlet dealing with questions relating to the ministry and the right holding of our meeting for worship, which may be adopted by our meeting next year." In response to this request, the pamphlet Ministry and our Meetings for Worship was published. In this pamphlet, ministry is described as service, particularly vocal service that receives spiritual guidance to inspire the intellect. It gives encouragement to "the wise minister [who] will always be storing up material on which the Holy Spirit may be able to draw as it is needed... But it is important that self should be kept in the background, and that care should be taken against too frequent allusion to...ourselves..."

Suggestions were made for special conferences to be held in the near future; but no further action seems to have been taken. In 1913, the Yearly Meeting abruptly terminated the service of the Committee on the Ministry with a brief statement: "The committee is discharged." After this committee was laid down, there was some review of activity within the Quarterly Meetings through the triennial reports which continued until 1914. After that time, no such reports were called for by the Yearly Meeting. The discussion of a living ministry seems to have gone "underground" with a few exceptions.

Friends were asked, in The Friend 1913, to bring forth their conclusions, since the York Conference, on their experience of the question of recording. Only one Friend responded, suggesting that the "laissez faire kind of attitude
towards the whole subject into which the Society has drifted" gives indication that recording should cease. "If, however, the recording of ministers is to be relegated to the tradition of the past, are we prepared to suggest any other method of recognition?"48

Six years later, a "Letter from the Elders of London Yearly Meeting" dealt with the responsibility for ministry. It called attention to the necessity for silent worship and warned against assertiveness, debate and airing of opinions.

In 1921, William C. Braithwaite's article, "The Recording of Ministers," pleaded for fostering inspired leadership. He asks Friends to broaden their view of the recognition of all forms of ministry and proposes questions to encourage spiritual dialogue with one another and to give support to all ministry.50

In the same year, T. Edmund Harvey encouraged education of ministers as well as all Friends.

We are not a society of laymen but a society of priests and we ought to have a standard of education worthy of that claim... by proper education provisions we can secure a background of instructed thought which will enrich and render more serviceable the ministry of all who share it.51

In 1922 at Brighouse Monthly Meeting, T. Edmund Harvey introduced a concern for the practice of the recording of ministers. A minute was sent to Yorkshire Quarterly Meeting about this concern. In turn, a minute was sent to the Yearly Meeting asking them to give consideration to the whole question of recording with a view to uniformity of action. The Yearly Meeting requested Meeting for Sufferings to send a memorandum and questionnaire on the subject of the ministry, including the question of the recording of ministers, to the subordinate meetings. A discussion of the current practices and the feelings toward the subject was planned for the following Yearly Meeting.52

The next year the Meeting for Sufferings reported a summary of replies received from the Quarterly Meetings.

It has been very difficult to draw up a really helpful summary of the replies from the Quarterly Meetings, owing to the fact that the Meetings, probably on account of the inherent difficulty attached to the whole subject, have, in most cases, forwarded indefinite minutes... The Committee has had to do a certain amount of reading between the lines in order to arrive at the judgment of individual Quarterly Meetings, and it may well be that the reading of the Committee would not entirely synchronise with the opinion of some member of a particular Quarterly Meeting who had been present at the Meeting's discussion.53

3 Quarterly Meetings -- favored abolition of recording
1 Quarterly Meeting -- did not favor abolition of recording
5 Quarterly Meetings -- no definite answer but minutes indicate abolition
6 Quarterly Meetings -- no definite answer but minutes indicate no abolition
3 Quarterly Meetings -- divided opinions, no definite response

The majority of meetings draw attention to the fact that recording is of minor importance, and that the ministry itself is the essential matter for attention.54
The following arguments were used in the various minutes:

For abolition:
- Recording is sometimes a burden to the individual.
- There is a difficulty in connection with continuous recording.
- Recording is not in accord with our ideals.
- It creates a status and a separate class.
- Where it has been in disuse for many years, the ministry has not suffered as a result; in fact the number taking part in the vocal ministry has increased.
- Recording creates a danger to the whole congregation.
- It had better be dropped if there is unanimity.

Against abolition:
- Recording is often a help to the individual.
- It is an encouragement to Friends to take part in vocal ministry.
- It is a help to the meeting to create a definite status for those who minister.
- It is a help at public functions such as weddings and funerals.

An "enlarged committee" was appointed to consider the consequential changes that would be necessary if the practice of recording ministers was to be discontinued. This committee was to report to the Yearly Meeting the following year.

In 1924, the Yearly Meeting reviewed the Meeting for Sufferings' report and decided to adopt the ten recommendations proposed. Among the recommendations two may be noted:

4. It is not necessary that Monthly Meetings should adopt uniform methods of procedure in this respect, but in all cases they should be asked to find time for the consideration of questions affecting the Ministry and to endeavour in practical ways to express their fellowship with those who are called to undertake this service.

7. If any Monthly Meeting continues the practice of recording by minute that a gift of Ministry has been intrusted to some individual Friend, it should be understood that no status is conferred by such a minute, and in future no list of such Friends, nor of those already recorded as Ministers should be printed or issued on behalf of the Meeting...

Minute 32, May 22, 1924, of the London Yearly Meeting includes the following statement: "We decided after full consideration... that the status of Recorded Ministers should not in the future be granted to any Friend."

A follow-up minute is recorded at the 1925 Yearly Meeting:

In accordance with the instructions of Yearly Meeting paragraphs 1 to 10 of the Meeting for Sufferings report on the Recording of Ministers, which was adopted by last Yearly Meeting were printed in a form suitable for insertion in Christian Discipline, Part III, and were sent to all Monthly Meeting Clerks. Attention was also drawn to the fact that the decision of Yearly Meeting makes no difference in the status of those who already hold the position of Recorded Minister, including the right of attending the Meeting for Sufferings and for signing documents requiring the signature of a Minister of Religion.
As might be expected, the decision of 1924 was discussed in various Friends' periodicals.

Some recorded ministers felt in doubt as to their position, in view of the Yearly Meeting's judgment. They did not want to possess any status which gave them a position not possible to their brethren. Resignations were contemplated but I found no confirming evidence that they occurred.

The Meeting for Sufferings considered sending a letter of appreciation to all the recording ministers, but it was decided that such a responsibility should be left to local elders. A letter was sent down to Monthly Meetings, however, stating that "there was no interference whatever with the status of ministers at present recorded." 59

A letter to the editor reminds Friends that it is impossible to 'resign' from an 'appointment' of 'office' which does not exist. The mere act of recording the fact that certain Friends had been recognized as having a gift in the ministry was not in appointment to any office. We have ceased to record, but cannot undo past acts of recognition. [It would] seem to me to be unwise, as tending to endow past records with a 'status' which we are agreed is undesirable. 60

No further letters or discussions appear.

In the American periodicals the action of London Yearly Meeting was reported with a few comments. Such as,

London Yearly Meeting is not a unit in its present decision and its peculiar problems are not of necessity ours. In meeting the issue in our own case we shall need to have special regard to those features of the question that appertain especially to ourselves. 61

What influence this step may have on the mind of American Friends we cannot foretell, but let us suggest that conditions in England and here are far from identical, and that while we have followed the discussions with interest and feel no inclination to pass judgment upon the conclusions reached, the insight this discussion has given us into our own condition, strengthens the conviction with not a few American Friends that the times do not call for so radical a change with us. 62

English Friends have taken one great step in advance....Now perhaps, those who have not been recorded as ministers will feel more strongly the necessity of individual ministry. 63

The Swarthmore Lecture in 1925 was given by John W. Graham; his subject was "The Quaker Ministry." His opinion concerning the recording decision was clear:

There has ceased to be any real distinction to record between the minister and the non-minister. The distinction was marked, too strongly marked...but now ministry has become too mixed in character, and too superficial in many cases of quite frequent speaking, to make the list of recorded ministers stand for a reality. So it is better abandoned...a new epoch of ministry needs to be ignited. 64

In an address given to the elders at London Yearly Meeting in 1946 by T. Edmund Harvey, "Our Quaker Ministry since the Cessation of Recording" was given attention. Harvey encouraged the elders to renew their help and sympathy...
toward one another in spiritual fellowship and to take a new look at the recommendations contained in the Discipline which lay special duty for ministry on each Monthly Meeting.

Some may ask: 'Why should we worry about the ministry? After all it is a comparatively minor matter: the great thing is to way of life.' It is true that the way of life is of immense importance, and if that be not faithful no ministry by itself can do what is wanted; but the ministry of the word remains as a unique instrument for the service of the Kingdom of God. It needs backing up and translating day by day by the ministry of every day. We need in our meetings not only the ministry of watering, good though that is, but the ministry of planting.

He concludes his article with a statement that we may well take to heart today as we consider the questions raised by this conference.

On a tombstone of the 18th century there is written in praise of a noble lady: 'She was religious without enthusiasm.' I am afraid there is a danger that some of us Friends may make that the epitaph of our lives. We need to have a deep enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God behind our work and our worship; and the true ministry which we long for in our Meetings will be the ministry which knows what that enthusiasm means.
FOOTNOTES


4Ibid., p. 124.

5Ibid.


Hookes' years of service (1657-1681) began with the setting up of the Men's Two Weeks Meeting in London, and covered the whole transition period of developing organization. At the time of his death, he was clerk to the Morning Meeting, the Meeting for Sufferings, the Six Weeks' Meeting and its Cash Committee of Twelve Friends, as well as Executive Officer of the Yearly Meeting. He had a "Chamber" to work in and one man to assist. He found time to edit in folio the works of Edward Burrough, Francis Howgill, Samuel Fisher and William Smith. He wrote an elaborate history of martyrs, The Spirit of the Martyrs Revived. In joint authorship with George Fox Arraignment of Popery and, surprisingly, An Instruction for Right Spelling were published.

7Minutes of London Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1904, p. 167.

8Ibid.


10Lloyd, Quaker Social History, p. 110.

During the 1660's Fox advocated separate Women's Meetings. He maintained his position for ten years against strong opposition from within the Society. A regular Women's Meeting was established in 1671 after Fox circulated an epistle recommending women to meet once a month. Although no minute or account books survive from these Meetings the records of the Men's Meetings indicate their existence. In 1753, women petitioned the Yearly Meeting for a Women's Yearly Meeting, the request was not granted. It was reviewed again in 1766 and again in 1784 when the Yearly Meeting of Women Friends was set up.


12Ibid.

13Ibid.

14Ibid.


17. The Annual Monitor, both the British and American books, published these memorials.

18. The Friends' Quarterly Examiner listed two recordings from a particular Meeting in 1898—the first time in twenty years that such an occurrence took place in that Meeting.

19. Lloyd, Quaker Social History, p. 126.

20. Russell, History of Quakerism, p. 239.


23. Lilly Library at Earlham College has five of these publications—1849, 1858, 1869, 1878, 1884. I have not found reference to others or any other publication of this kind.


29. Ibid., p. 226.


33. Ibid., p. 388.

34. Ibid., p. 391.

35. In America—The Friend, 1827; Friends Intelligence, 1838; The Friends' Review, 1847.


Joseph Rountree prepared these figures. He had labored for several years to remove this ban of disownment for marrying out of meeting, and lived just long enough to see this accomplished in 1839.

37. Ibid., p. 66.


40 Rachael J. Fox, "The Recording of Ministers," Friends' Quarterly Examiner 31 (First Month 1897), pp. 3-5.

41 Conference on the Ministry held at York, 1903, p. 7.


43 Minutes of London Yearly Meeting, 1904, p. 50.

44 Ibid., p. 185.

45 J. B. Braithwaite, "Can We Revive the Ministry Amongst Us?" Friends' Quarterly Examiner 59 (Seventh Month 1925), p. 190.

46 "Ministry and our Meetings for Worship," Prepared by the Committee on Ministry of London Yearly Meeting (1911), p. 36.

47 Braithwaite, "Can We Revive the Ministry," p. 190.


49 Brayshaw, The Quakers, p. 264.

50 ibid., p. 264.


52 Minutes of London Yearly Meeting, 1923, p. 93.

53 Ibid., pp. 95-6.

54 Ibid., p. 96.

55 Ibid., p. 97.

56 Minutes of London Yearly Meeting, 1924, p. 50.

57 Ibid., p. 256.

58 Minutes of London Yearly Meeting, 1925, p. 128.


60 J. Burt Davy, "Resignation' of Ministers," The Friend (London) 64 (June 1924), p. 557.

61 "London Yearly Meeting," The Friend (America) 98 (Seventh Month 1924), p. 3.


63 Sarah B. Leeds, "What Can We Learn from London Yearly Meeting," The Friend (America) 98 (Seventh Month 1924), p. 40.
64 Graham, Quaker Ministry, p. 74.


66 Ibid., p. 192.
THE HISTORY AND CURRENT PRACTICE
OF RELEASING OF MINISTRY AMONG FRIENDS

Stephen W. Angell

Introduction

Nine out of 29 Yearly Meetings responding to the "Questionaire on Releasing/Recording of Friends for Ministry" indicated that the term "released Friend" was used in their Yearly Meeting, at least on an informal basis. Of those nine yearly meetings, three, New England, Canada, and Pacific, had one released Friend each. In Indiana Yearly Meeting, there were estimated to be five released Friends since 1981. In Baltimore, Lake Erie, and Southeastern, there were no released Friends at all, although each of the three yearly meetings was open to the possibility of releasing someone with a concern that the whole yearly meeting could unite around as divinely led.

Nearly all yearly meetings indicated that considerable numbers of Friends were involved in mission and service work. One yearly meeting, the Evangelical Friends Church—Eastern Region, stated in response to the questionnaire that the term "released Friend" is not used in their yearly meeting, but such other terms as "missionary" and "tentmaker" described roles undertaken by church members that are fairly similar to that of the released Friend. The glossary below contains words which are rough equivalents to "released Friend."

As used in this paper, there are three elements of releasing a Friend for ministry:

(1) The Friend perceives a concern to which he or she is led by inspiration from God. As Roger Wilson defines "concern," it is a leading from God that cannot be denied, not just the intelligent thing to do. It is perceived through inward experience. 1 Hope May defines the process whereby a concern arises as the subjection of conscience to "reflection, scrutiny, discernment and decision that transforms [conscience] into something outgoing, outgiving, and constructive—a concern."2 It does not matter where the concern arises—whether from the group seeking to release a Friend, or from the individual seeking to be released.

(2) If the concern comes from an individual Friend, he or she raises the concern during a meeting for business conducted in a spirit of worship. Together the meeting seeks God's guidance on the concern that has been raised for their consideration in worship. If the meeting feels led to unite on behalf of the concern, then it is obligated to determine what assistance the Friend needs. Thus the second element is corporate support. Such support can include prayers on behalf of the Friend and the meeting's concern, oversight (often by an ad-hoc or special committee), and financial assistance as the need arises for the released Friend and his or her family.

(3) The Pendle Hill Workshop Report on Friends as Leaders states that the foremost quality called for in a Quaker leader is a continual posture of openness to God. The Quaker leader is one who proceeds in the power of the Lord....Genuine authority is derived from the divine leading and empowerment of the leader and from the confirmation and acceptance of that leading by the community of faith.
The community of Friends cannot be more favored by God than to have a genuine divinely-led concern arise among us and then to have that leading confirmed by the concensus of our meetings for business. Our released Friends, as bearers of those divinely-led concerns, can provide leadership for Friends, if we value highly enough the concern to which we also have been led and if we look to released Friends for that leadership.

I will first explore two examples of Quaker ministry in the past where these three elements were present: that is, the travelling ministers of the Society of Friends after the first generation of Friends had died out; and Quaker relief work, beginning with the Revolutionary War in the American colonies. Then I will elaborate on each of the three elements of the releasing of Friends for ministry in the light of their present significance for us.

Glossary of Related Terms

If any of these terms are more comfortable for you than "released Friend," please use those words which come most naturally to you.

"Liberated Friend," "Liberation for Ministry." This term is widely used in Friends' Books of Discipline form the mid-19th century onward. It first appears in the third edition of London Yearly Meeting's Book of Discipline (1834); it is used for the first time in the discipline for Ohio Yearly Meeting (Gurneyite) in 1876; New York (Orthodox) and New England (Orthodox), in 1901.4 It denotes the practice of Friends to obtain a certificate for travel in the ministry, especially when a distant destination, or a ministry to non-Friends, is contemplated. Such ministry could be "special or extended pastoral or evangelical service," as mentioned in the 1945 Book of Discipline of Oregon Yearly Meeting.3 The service of a liberated Friend could include the promotion of unity among those visited and the enheartening of isolated groups and individuals, as is specified in the 1931 Faith and Practice of London Yearly Meeting.6 The term is still somewhat in use; it is employed in Elton Trueblood's The People Called Quakers and the report of the Pendle Hill 1979 workshop on Quaker leadership in a similar fashion.

"Missionary." A missionary is one who, because of a special call from God, is released to spread the gospel, either under the care of one's own yearly meeting or under the care of a broader Friend's organization. Friends' missions have traditionally combined evangelizing and other kinds of religious service with differing emphases.8 The combination of divine calling and support by some Friends' group renders most mission work quite close to that of a released Friend, as I have defined the term.

"Religious Service." The practice of releasing in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in its 1972 discipline; and in London Yearly Meeting, since the publication of its 1968 book on Church Government, has been known under this name. In the case of London Yearly Meeting, there has been a widening in the variety of concerns: not only are some Friends called to the travelling ministry, but they are also called on occasion to support for the cause of peace and reconciliation, work on behalf of the oppressed, or engagement in some other aspect of service of the Kingdom.

"Tentmaker." A tentmaker is a Friend who asked to be released from his or her home church or meeting in order to relocate near a beginning church or meeting, get a job, earn his or her monthly support, and assist the new church in a variety of ways. The apostle Paul supported himself by tentmaking during one of his missionary journeys (Acts 18:3), hence the origin of the term.
"Pastor." Many consider the pastor to be a released Friend. The pastoral system developed out of many of the same kinds of needs which lead Friends meetings today to consider releasing or liberating a Friend. The pastor has a particular call to a ministry, as well as a need for financial support from the meeting to carry out that ministry; many meetings see such ministers as the answer to important needs within their meetings. I address the question of the relationship between the pastorate and the releasing of Friends for ministry below.

Travelling Ministers

The travelling ministers of the first one and a half centuries of Friends' history were the first "released Friends." George Fox and his fellow evangelists were responsible for the great growth by convincing of the Society within the first decade of its existence. They were also responsible for establishing corporate structures of support in the second and third decades (men's and women's monthly meetings, second-day morning meeting, and yearly meeting), the framework of church organization which Fox called "the gospel order." Wealthy Friends, such as Robert Barclay and William Penn, generally were able to support themselves on their family incomes and rents from colonists. But resources such as the Kendal Fund, administered by Margaret Fell at Swarthmoor Hall, aided less well-to-do Friends in meeting their basic needs.

After the death of Fox and other early Friends, the role of the travelling minister was equally important. Travelling ministers were a key influence in maintaining the unity of the Society from 1690 to the end of the eighteenth century. Whenever positive changes occurred in one part of the Society, travelling Friends would bring the good ideas to the other parts of the Society. The travelling ministers were especially concerned for the uniformity of organization and discipline among Friends and the vitality of a personal religion. Woolman, Churchman, Benezet and others were models of dedication to Quaker service, strength of character, and Christian mysticism, models which many Friends thereafter sought to emulate.

Travelling ministers evidenced the same kind of call as released Friends. Elbert Russell states that "each had a definite and decisive call to the ministry, against which they struggled, fearful of themselves, or lest they be presumptuous in undertaking so august a mission without warrant." Their call usually did not spring upon them full-blown. A minister underwent "the process of seasoning, involving at first short journeys in the company of recognized ministers. The senior chose the junior by insight." Once a Friend embarked upon public ministry, it was usually a lifetime commitment. The minister might never travel, but must always be available to set off on a journey if the word of God came to him or her. The minister would eventually have his or her gifts of ministry recognized by the group to which he or she belonged, through the recording process. Particularly during the Quietist period in Quaker history, the struggle for discernment of one's call and each separate concern—when to depart on a concern of ministry, whom to choose for a travelling partner, when to appoint each meeting, when to speak, when to return home—resulted from the belief that each action had to issue from a clear divine leading. The minister could wait for a long time when God's guidance was not available. This was also quite a strain on Friends arranging hospitality. The visiting minister would wait until the end of meeting for worship on First Day morning before deciding if he or she would ask for a public meeting that evening. Fortunately, many meetings had a reserve of posters on hand which could be quickly made ready to advertise the evening's meeting. If the minister was a well-known person, such as a Joseph John,
Gurney, a crowd of thousands would attend the meeting, often with less than a day's notice.  

The travelling minister did not alway speak—he or she would not do so without a clear leading. The minister sometimes received a leading to be silent throughout the meeting. They were "shut up" in order to deny their words to the meetings which had become too dependent on words.

After the first forty years of Quakerism, travelling ministers took the place of the founders of Quakerism in providing leadership for the Society throughout the eighteenth century. Although Friends of that century did not worry about the number of converts (after all, eternity would tell the success of their efforts), they were responsible for growth in Friends' meetings, at least in part. The Religious Society of Friends did grow throughout the first part of the eighteenth century. Following in the footsteps of their forebears, they were evangelists, too.

As mentioned above, Friends began calling their ministers "liberated" during the period of schism in the first half of the nineteenth century, when true liberation in the Society was at its lowest ebb. There is little evidence that travelling ministers did anything to alleviate dissension. In 1851, a woman from London Yearly Meeting visited Ohio Yearly Meeting (orthodox), presenting a "certificate of unity from the yearly meeting, setting her at liberty, as a minister for religious service in the land." Four years later, the Yearly Meeting in Ohio split between the followers of Gurney and those of Wilbur, because they could not agree on a new clerk. The stalemate on choosing a clerk, which had lasted since 1846, must have been a frustrating experience. In Ohio Yearly Meeting from 1836 to 1853, travelling ministers' presence is recorded each year coming from London, Philadelphia, New York, or Indiana Yearly Meetings, ranging from a high of 22 ministers, elders, and other Friends in 1836 to 3 each in 1851 and 1853.

In the latter part of the eighteenth century, the Quaker renewal was due in large part to evangelistic revivals and the formation of large, regularly scheduled conferences involving many yearly meetings (Five Years Meeting and Friends General Conference in 1902, Friends World Committee for Consultation in 1937, and Evangelical Friends Alliance in 1965). In 1910, London Yearly Meeting instituted new procedures calling for closer consultation with ministers who are led to travel in the ministry before releasing them. In the Society as a whole, travelling ministers tended to play a less crucial role, as their responsibilities for cross-fertilization and (to some extent) leadership were assumed by various Quaker institutions.

In the case of Pacific and North Pacific Yearly Meetings, something of the significance of the travelling minister is retained. Pacific Yearly Meeting has a program through which a Friend is asked to visit as many monthly meetings as possible within the yearly meeting. This Friend is called a Brinton visitor, and he or she is shared with North Pacific Yearly Meeting. Madge and Ben Seaver were Brinton visitors in 1980. Pacific Yearly Meeting also sends a "Friend-in-the-Orient," a Friend from their Yearly Meeting to live for an extended period of time in some Asiatic country in order to improve communication among Friends and increase common experiences.

The Families of Travelling Friends' Ministers

When Friends' meetings liberate or release one of their members into the ministry, the meetings also bear some responsibility for the care of the minister's family. That meetings have often fallen short of this principle in the past is evident in laconic journal references by some of the early Friends' ministers in regard to their families. Moreover, travelling ministers should
include as one test of their leading, consideration of the effect their absence will have on their families.

One example with both positive and negative aspects was that of Elizabeth Gurney Fry, mother of nine. Her marriage with Joseph Fry resulted in a reversal of roles, as Joseph, a banker, was willing to stay home with the children while Elizabeth travelled in the ministry. Fry struggled to fulfill societal expectations of herself as a mother, a role in which she never felt completely comfortable. She loathed household chores, and relinquished many of them to her oldest daughters as soon as possible. Uncles and aunts, many of whom were not Friends, also helped with child care. Friends of that era did not readily accept role reversals, and even on one occasion eldered Elizabeth Fry about her shortcomings as a mother. In the midst of these difficulties, Fry filled the roles of lobbyist, prison reformer, and prison visitor with consummate skill. Her children grew up into happy, thriving Anglicans. Only her two unmarried daughters remained Friends.

The story of Thomas Chalkley is an unhappy one. Chalkley, a travelling Friends' minister and sea trader in the early eighteenth century, was away from home for very long periods of time. Chalkley lost ten straight children in infancy, a high rate of loss even in an age afflicted by high infant mortality rates. After the death of his tenth child, Chalkley thanks God that his children died in a state of innocence, rather than being exposed to the world's vices. This protestation rings hollow. He must have felt remorse about the effect of his extended absences from home upon his family.

Ministers to Victims of War: A Model for Releasing Friends?

Friends have had a long history of being exercised by concerns that have had little direct connection to vocal ministry. This is particularly true of Friends' provision of relief to victims of war. In the 20th century, the efforts of such "concerned Friends" have co-existed with those of large standing organizations. Proponents of these two models sometimes engage in controversy as to which one is superior. Both the "concerned Friend" model and the large service organization will remain as vital parts of Quakerism. Both can facilitate the releasing of Friends. Friends need to ask how each model can best serve the world and facilitate the witness of the Religious Society of Friends.

The first known occasion that Friends supplied relief to war victims happened during the American Revolution. Friends in Philadelphia, Great Britain, and Ireland provided aid to innocent sufferers throughout the thirteen colonies. During the siege of Boston in 1775, four Philadelphia Friends went door-to-door in the Boston area, distributing 4,000 English pounds to more than 5,000 recipients, mostly non-Quakers. As the brunt of war shifted in a southerly direction, so did Friends' relief efforts; Great Britain and Ireland aided Friends in the Philadelphia and Middle Atlantic region in 1777 and 1778. During the last two years of war, Friends aided people in the Southern colonies.

In 1846, Friends established a Relief Committee to provide assistance to the Irish who were starving because of the potato famine. They not only provided food, thereby treating the symptoms, but also addressed the cause of the famine as well. To help the Irish provide for their own livelihood, the Quaker relief committee supplied fishing equipment for Irish fishermen, and seeds for crops. The Quaker committee was not the largest of the three committees—all of which together provided relief worth 10,000 pounds—but their contribution was especially important because they were able to act quickly. In the Irish famine, Friends confronted anew an old question: Was this natural disaster divine punishment visited upon the Irish people for their sins?
committee came up with the following answer, "Before we can safely arrive at such a conclusion, we must be satisfied that human agency and legislation and individual oppression and social relationships have had no hand in it." The Irish relief effort was laid down six years after it began, in 1852, and it may have been laid down too soon. Sybil Jones, visiting Ireland that same year, was quite shocked and stricken by the suffering which the Irish were still undergoing. The Irish committee commented, "It is painfully evident that the relief effort afforded was neither so extensive nor so complete as the exigency required," and called for legal and institutional reforms.27

Friends provided short-term relief on several other occasions during the 19th century. English Friends provided relief in the Balkans in 1822, and again in 1876.28 After the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, English Friends distributed seeds and cattle to the French.29 After the British navy bombarded Finland in 1854, English Friends led by Joseph Sturge raised a substantial relief fund for the Finns whose houses and boats had been destroyed.30 An individual Friend, James Hack Tuke, worked on his own to alleviate distress in Ireland, beginning in 1879.

Tuke proposed political answers to Irish problems, such as planned emigration of entire Irish families to the United States. The Society of Friends sought to avoid involvement in politics.31

Friends were involved in another large relief effort before 1914. The Dukhobors, a pacifist sect in Russia, were persecuted for their pacifist beliefs, and finally obtained permission to emigrate but were without means to do so. In 1897, London Yearly Meeting agreed to set up a one year committee to raise funds for aiding the Dukhobors. Friends worked in concert with Tolstoyans, and despite their shared pacifism, it was not an easy relationship. Friends returned a contribution from Tolstoy himself, because it derived from royalties from his novel Resurrection, which included as characters prostitutes and other immoral persons, albeit with a fiery, powerfully prophetic message which sharply condemned tsarist oppression in Russia. The relief task was accomplished, and 7,700 Dukhobors settled in British Columbia on 600 square miles of land. The relief committee was laid down in 1906, not one, but nine years after it had begun.32

World War I, eight years later, was to bring a fundamental change in the complexion of Quaker relief efforts. Until the twentieth century, all Friends' relief efforts were organized on the "liberated Friend" model. That is, a few Friends felt a concern laid upon themselves to provide relief to a starving or war-ravaged people. They laid their concerns before the Yearly Meeting, which, if it approved, set up a temporary relief committee. Then, when the relief was accomplished, the committee was laid down. At least one modern Friend wishes that this long-utilized method would be more widely employed today. In his article on "Structural Incongruities in Quaker Service," R. W. Tucker writes:

The Friendly way of organizing things [i.e., the released or liberated Friend model] is in a weakened or subverted condition today.... At best it survives side by side with structures whose nature is bureaucratic and hierarchical.33

He then cites some of the 19th century Quaker relief efforts as examples of Quaker service on a massive scale successfully mounted on the released Friend model.34

Greenwood makes an opposing comment, specifically directed to the Quaker relief effort after the Franco-Prussian war, but susceptible of broader application to other 19th century relief work.

The real force of the Quaker effort was short lived. There was no professional organization. What was done was
accomplished by busy people to the neglect of their own work; after eight months, most of them gave up, not because the need was over, but because their energy and resources were exhausted.\textsuperscript{35}

This comment reflects two realities of nineteenth century Friends relief work: (1) as we have already seen in regard to the Irish potato famine and the Dukhobor resettlement, it became more and more difficult to lay down service projects addressing needs which persisted over long time periods; (2) without standing organizations to continue the work, such relief sometimes did not have a long-lasting effect. The Religious Society of Friends needs able leaders at the head of vigorous Quaker service organizations which will pay attention to the root causes of suffering, which will not shy away from political controversy, which will advocate a firm, reasoned position, mindful always of the need for a divine leading in making a stand, and which will have staying power because the administrators and workers will have time to concentrate on meeting unmet human need. It is a vision that we have come close to achieving in a few instances in the 20th century.

From the mid-19th century onward, the task of ministry through mission and service began to be concentrated increasingly in large standing organizations.\textsuperscript{36} At their best, these organizations serve the Religious Society of Friends by facilitating the releasing of Friends to the service to which they feel called. As one example only, let us look at the American Friends Service Committee under the leadership of Clarence Pickett, executive secretary of the AFSC from 1929 to 1950; he began work five years after the resounding decision in 1924 not to lay down the organization.\textsuperscript{37} As early as 1930, he wrote about his dreams for a "socially minded and informed generation of Young Friends such as we have not seen since the early days of Quakerism" through encouragement of one year commitments to voluntary service, in inner cities and rural areas.\textsuperscript{38} Through AFSC summer work camps and Civilian Public Service camps, these dreams bore fruit over the next decade and a half, although spurred by world war, an event over which no Friend could rejoice.

FCNL has been a very eager user of released Friends. There are three FCNL programs which closely approximate the model of released Friends elaborated in this paper: (1) the Friend-in-Washington program, (2) the FCNL program interpreters, retired couples who receive a small stipend to travel for FCNL and to publicize its work; and (3) the FCNL intern program, which hires three young adults, recent college graduates, each year. Sam and Miriam Levering's efforts to facilitate agreement on a U.N. Law of the Seas treaty began as an FCNL Friend in Washington program.

Friends United Meeting's Wider Ministries Commission programs release some Friends to a particular ministry to which they are called. In particular, the newly-begun Quaker Volunteer Witness, instigated by Howard Alexander and Frank Massey, which hopes to place volunteers singly or in groups in religious service opportunities throughout the United States and the world, is a suitable way to carry on the dreams of forebears such as Clarence Pickett.

\textbf{Current Practices of Releasing Among Friends}

Our practices are governed by our presuppositions, whether intentionally or unintentionally, and thus it is best to state clearly one's presuppositions. Some of the definitions of "released Friend" supplied by Yearly Meetings had clauses which made the concept applicable to a very specific kind of person. New England Yearly Meeting defined the term as follows:

\begin{quote}
A Friend who volunteers himself or herself to spend a substantial amount of time working on behalf of a Monthly or Yearly Meeting or for matters of peace or
\end{quote}
social concerns, and who receives official approval by the
meeting, which offers financial assistance to cover costs
and possibly subsistence pay.39

Canadian Yearly Meeting defined the term this way:
A Friend is paid minimal salary to allow that Friend to do
a specific job for a specific period of time.40

These yearly meetings seem to envisage releasing a single person or a couple
without family responsibilities and with only a small financial need.
Subsistence pay can be adjusted to take account of the needs of families—the
Friends United Meeting pay scale for those employed in its missions is adjusted
in that manner.41 But the term "subsistence pay" is usually utilized to
describe the releasing of such persons as FCNL interns who have limited
financial need. In his consideration of releasing ministry, on the other hand,
Howard Macy seeks to make the term as broadly applicable as possible. We
should seek to release all kinds of ministries. Each Friend should consider
how he or she can best serve God. Releasing ministry "is quite different from
giving people a job. It is liberating people to follow the concerns and use
the gifts which are really a part of them." Special consideration needs to be
given to releasing those with gifts in public ministry and those Friends who
are professionally engaged in ministry.42

The broader definition encompasses those Friends who give of themselves
through ministry without any pay whatsoever, and those who are paid only on a
subsistence basis. Both the broad and the specific definitions can encompass
the three elements of call or concern, corporate support, and leadership which
I have suggested are essential to the concept of released ministry. In the
light of current needs of our world and the Friends' tradition of releasing
through travelling ministry, I suggest the broader conceptualization of
releasing for ministry is a more fruitful one for us to consider, if for no
other reason than to underline the responsibility of every Friend in the
process, both as a bringer of a concern and as a part of the corporate process
of discernment by which we are enabled to discover God's will.

Call and Concern

One finds opposing trends among Friends in their outlook toward
"concerns". Some complain about the multiplicity and lack of depth of concerns
among Friends today. Any monthly meeting clerk who has attempted to sort
through the piles of mail sent to him or her knows of this problem. In the
same issue of Quaker Religious Thought which featured Tucker's article, William
Rushby wrote that "Friends are often promiscuous in their interpretation of
what a concern is."43 Roger C. Wilson writes that the meaning of concern
has been debased, and emphasizes the need for a rootedness in the divine for
both the individual and the group.44

At the same time, where are the Friends seeking to be released by our
meetings today? In the July-August, 1981 issue of the Evangelical Friend,
Quentin Nordyke pleads that young persons think of the possibility of a call to
mission work in broader terms.45 One does not have to experience a
theophany in order to become engaged in mission work, the author writes. Sue
Greenleaf of Southeastern Yearly Meeting has stated, "We know the term
[released Friend] and keep hoping to find Friends suitable for this and
available." Paul Williams states, "It is difficult to find Friends who will be
released Friends. "46

Our meetings are flooded with "concerns," in the loose manner of speaking
that has become the bane of our monthly meetings for business, our clerks, and
our committees. Yet we would welcome Friends from our midst who have genuinely
experienced a divine leading and who would seek release on this leading under
which they have experienced intense personal conviction. Our concerns are too many, and yet too few. What can be done to bring more congruence to our corporate personality?

We can study the example of the many servants of God in the Scriptures: Moses and Samuel, Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah. How did Jesus Christ express his call, and how did Paul and other early Christians experience their calling? Quaker ministers who have spoken with power have always been sensitive to the Spirit of God as it spoke to them through Scripture. We can study the calls experienced by such Friends as George Fox, John Woolman, and Elizabeth Fry. Woolman's Journal, which continually brings out the tie between the inward experience and conviction of God's will and the outward motions of one guided by God's Spirit, is especially illuminating for Friends.

We can readily identify concerns that unify us as a Society. The New Call to Peacemaking seems to have found a deep and genuine place among all branches of Friends. Whether we as Friends have been involved in work for peace in our home communities, or, as Elaine Crauderreuff was, in a Peace Caravan spawned by the New Call to Peacemaking, a great many of us feel and share this concern. The released Friend at work in New England Yearly Meeting is acting upon peacemaking concerns.

The search for God's call is very evident in William P. Taber's releasing from Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative). Taber did not feel a call at the moment he was first contacted by Ohio Yearly Meeting about his interest in working with them, but in the long process which led up to his releasing in 1965, a divine concern for the spiritual state of the yearly meeting did come to him. At the end of his ministry as a released Friend in 1972, he reported that it seemed right for him to give up his concern, almost against his will. And there was a real sense of the guiding of the Holy Spirit throughout his released ministry.

Corporate Support of Released Friends: Oversight and Spiritual Nurturing

During the present century, Friends such as Rufus Jones, William Taber and Elizabeth Watson have written about the need to revive the kind of oversight of ministry (or "eldering", as we often call it) that nurtures and encourages others in their sharing of their gifts of ministry in the best and most appropriate way. Committees for the oversight of released Friends have this responsibility of nurture and encouragement. Taber was provided with careful committee oversight at each point of his releasing by Ohio Yearly Meeting. Howard Alexander has related his experience of serving on one such committee of oversight; the main message which the committee could bring to the released Friend was that she was trying to do too much, and should try to conserve her energies more. From Howard's perspective, this message was gratefully received. The most important message that a committee of oversight may bring is often the reminder that this concern has not been laid upon the released Friend alone, but that it is laid upon the committee and the meeting as well.

Corporate Support of Released Friends: Financial Means of Releasing

There have been two main philosophies in regard to obtaining the financial means for releasing. One philosophy among Friends has been that devotion to work in ministry must be combined with the practice of a secular calling. Lucia Beamish attributes the origin of this philosophy to Thomas Chalkley, who was cited above. One can see the fruitful tension that this combination caused in John Woolman's life. From age 21 to 30, he was constantly struggling with the demands of a thriving business. If he had given himself fully to his business, his travels in the ministry would have been precluded. His mind
became easy only when he closed his shop and took up tailoring. \(^{52}\) Howard Brinton's Quaker Journals contains an excellent chapter on "Restriction of Business," in which he quotes Daniel Wheeler, Thomas Shillitoe, John G. Sargent, Martha Routh, and William Evans to the same effect. \(^{53}\)

The second philosophy states that the meeting has some financial responsibility to the released Friend to meet his or her needs, as well as those of his or her family. This philosophy brings tensions as well. The greatest tension is the conflicting pressures that the Yearly Meeting, assuming extra costs that are unbudgeted, often seeks to limit the time period for which the released Friend will work while living with the reality that a concern prompted by God often must be carried beyond arbitrary time limits.

Such a tension could be alleviated in several ways. The meeting could actually budget the costs of the released Friends in its budget, or within the meeting there might be found people who would be willing to raise funds independently for the meeting's concerns. This latter approach was recently undertaken by New York Yearly Meeting on behalf of a longstanding concern for the training of prisoners in nonviolence. A private, nonprofit organization was set up, called Alternatives to Violence Project, Inc. Funds have been obtained from private foundations to pay for two staff persons at more-than-subsistence wages and to meet the expenses of many volunteers.

Another way is simply to have a very explicit agreement at the beginning of the releasing as to the length of time that the meeting will support the released Friend financially. In this way, releasing would be equivalent to voluntary service agreements that one would undertake with the Quaker Volunteer Witness or as part of the FCNL Intern program for a one or two year period of service. If the meeting provides a subsistence wage, it should ensure that all of the released Friend's basic needs are met, including health insurance and care for dependents.

**Are Friends' Pastors to be Considered as "Released Friends"?**

How far should Friends' pastors, teachers, yearly meeting administrators, meeting secretaries, and other employees be considered as "released Friends"? Some additional history may be helpful in making a response to this question.

The pastoral system developed under a very complex set of circumstances in the last half of the 19th century, primarily in the Midwest. \(^{54}\) The extraordinary evangelism of the 1860's and 1870's created a need for ways to nourish new Friends more adequately in their new faith. Evangelistic extension committees of the yearly meeting were tried as one alternative, and the hiring of paid pastors by meetings was another alternative that was tried. Although historians disagree, paid ministry might well have been the most appropriate model of ministry for Friends in the Midwest during the late 19th century. \(^{55}\) Many Friends in the Midwest at that time, and some from England and the East Coast, agreed that it provided more vitality in worship of Midwest meetings.

The minutes of the Richmond Conferences of 1887, 1892, and 1897 generally approved the concept of paid ministry for those meetings which wanted it. These minutes set paid ministry somewhat within the tradition I have identified with that of "released Friend." Payment of ministers was to be for maintenance, not for the establishment of a separate order of clergy. Gifts of ministry among all members of the meeting were to be encouraged. The ideal of an "equipping ministry" was put forward. As Elton Trueblood has said: Payment simply represents liberation in the sense that a person is set free from the marketplace to do all he or she to arouse, to incite, to teach, and to equip. \(^{56}\)
This is a positive vision of paid Friends' ministry, one that has been achieved in large part in some of our meetings, on deserving of affirmation and nurture. This is the kind of pastoral ministry that the Earlham School of Religion has encouraged and produced over the twenty-one years of its existence.

For at least 100 years, we have paid some of our ministers more than just travel expenses, whether their jobs are titled as pastors, schoolteachers, yearly meeting administrators or something else. Their ministry must be performed day after day and year after year, despite the immediate presence or absence of divine leading. Despite the progress that has been made in upgrading the Quaker pastorate, we still have far to go in releasing our Quaker pastors. A 1960 publication on the "Image of a Quaker Pastor" defines the Quaker pastor as "a young man who devotes a great deal of effort and time beyond the part-time he was asked to give at a low salary, and receives no support or aid from the Yearly Meeting he represents." Quaker pastors were portrayed as having little awareness of some vital areas of spiritual concern ("racial equality, pacifism, the social gospel") and as showing blandness toward the responsibilities of leadership [which] is not authentic Quakerism." There is in the 1980's, (just as in the 1880's and every year in between); a need for growth in spirituality, awareness of peace and social concerns, and leadership abilities that the practice of releasing can represent. The Quaker pastor needs to resemble more closely a released Friend.

Leadership

I have maintained that Quaker leaders are distinguished by the same characteristics as released Friends: depth of concern in a continual openness to God, and confirmation and acceptance of that concern or leading by the community of faith. It is important not to be simplistic here. Quakers have other kinds of leaders, different than those who have the hallmarks of released Friends. Quakers provided an inordinate share of the scientists and industrialists who achieved the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain and the United States. Quakers have produced compassionate and principled political leaders such as John Bright and Herbert Hoover. Although these men and women often possessed deep piety, they generally did not experience a call that would have made them leave their occupations and become released Friends acting upon a concern.

Roger Wilson points out that Quaker administrators must draw upon both Friendly and worldly styles of decision-making and leadership. If an administrator faces a moral issue, Wilson maintains, he or she must seek for a divine leading.

The released Friend usually undertakes a form of enabling ministry. Wilmer Cooper lists five forms of enabling ministry: reconciliation, theological or educational, nurturing, pastoral, and mission or service oriented. In New England Yearly Meeting this summer, a Friend experienced a call to become a Released Friend working as a peace coordinator throughout the yearly meeting for the current year, fulfilling nurturing and service-oriented functions. Taber combined functions of pastoral, nurturing, and service-oriented ministry into his work. Enabling ministry embodies a "basic philosophy of leadership [which] places a very high value on individual persons and their potentiality to become instruments through whom God's love and Christ's Gospel can be shared in the life and work of the church." In enabling ministry, one responds to God's call through a style of ministry which helps to release others to the ministry to which they are called.

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Fox, Woolman, and Fry exemplified the combination of truly released ministry and leadership to the Society of Friends. If such an individual arose from our Society today, would we have the insight to liberate that person for the ministry to which they are called? Let us not rest easy until we are confident that we would.

Conclusion

"Released Friend" is but one name for a type of witness and ministry that is the core and fiber of our faith. It is a term we would want to use to describe the ministry of those Friends whom we most admire—Fox, Woolman, Fry. It is a kind of witness which each of us seeks in our lives of prayer and worship.

Most or all Friends are involved in a variety of special concerns: among them, outreach to visitors and people in the community, family concerns, adult and child religious education, caring for the elderly, or help youth in their recreation and search for a sense of calling and life purpose. The concern of the released Friend may be unusual in some sense; God's call may be wrenching, discomfiting, and challenging the meeting to grow in new areas. It may forcefully confront us with the need to make new commitments and alter old relationships. For the "released Friend," the weight of God's call may be felt especially intensely, but the entire meeting is under the weight of the concern. In another sense, releasing is but another form of the calling we each submit to as part of a Friends' Meeting, as a part of the body of Christ in the world. In our excitement to begin work on the new charge which God has given us, let us remember that, in another sense, the new charge is an extension of an old call "to be patterns and examples to everyone in the world and to walk cheerfully over the earth answering to that of God in everyone." That for the one individual and corporate experience of releasing a Friend for service on an important concern, we have many names by which we call that experience, is only a sign of the predictable reality that God's call comes to us in only one way, through the Light of Christ, and yet also a sign of the unpredictable, wonderful variety of ways that the single call is manifested to us. The single and yet varied experience is a cause for joy.
FOOTNOTES


4Rules of Discipline of the Religious Society of Friends with AdVICES. (London: Darton and Harvey, 1834), pp. 110, 133; The Discipline of Ohio Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, (New Vienna, Ohio: Friends' Publishing House Press, 1876), pp. 44-45. The London Discipline is an extract of yearly meeting minutes dated by year; the sections on the liberating of Friends was dated 1827 and 1833. The third five year's conference of American orthodox yearly meetings in 1897 set up a committee to prepare a uniform discipline for the meetings included within it; this resulted in the Constitution and Discipline for the American Yearly Meetings, adopted and published both by New York (O) Yearly Meeting, (New York: Friends' Book and Tract Committee, 1901) and New England (O).

5Constitution and Discipline, (Oregon Yearly Meeting of the Friends Church, 1945), pp. 63-64.


8Harold Smuck and James Morris, "The Missionary Challenge for Friends," Quaker Life, April, 1980 (published as part of a joint issue on Friends' missions with the Evangelical Friend.) The definitions for "missionary" and "tentmaker" are based on those provided by Lucy Anderson in the reply by EFC-ER to the October, 1981 questionnaire.


12Ibid., p. 225.

13Ibid., p. 226.

14Ibid., p. 197.
In fact some travelling ministers contributed to disunity among Friends. Thomas Jeavons attributed the split in Baltimore Yearly Meeting in 1828 to the influence of travelling ministers.

The Minutes of Ohio Yearly Meeting (Orthodox) Held at Mount Pleasant, 1836, p. 4; 1851, pp. 4-6; 1853, p. 5.

Although quinquennial conferences were held in Richmond, Indiana, beginning in 1887, the "Five Years Meeting" was not formed as an organization until fifteen years later.


Questionnaire completed by Eleanor Foster, clerk of Pacific Yearly Meeting.


Ibid., pp. 335-36.


Ibid., pp. 35-40.

Ibid., pp. 129-148.


Ibid., pp. 11-12.


In addition to the AFSC, there are such programs as the Friends Service Council in London and the American Friends' Board of Foreign Missions (now FUM's Wider Ministries Commission) and programs under individual yearly meetings including California, EFC-ER, and Northwest. See, for example, Op. cit., Russell, 435-448.
Frederick Libby wrote in 1925, "The Service Committee, having served an apprenticeship of eight years, is now needed for some heavy contracts [such as the abolition of war]." The decision to continue the AFSC's work was bolstered by high hopes and optimism about the prospects of world change.


Questionnaire completed by Sylvia Perry, clerk, New England Yearly Meeting.

Questionnaire completed by Dorothy Muma.

This information was provided to me in a conversation with Harold Smuck.


Taber's concern is fully reported in the Minutes of Ohio Yearly Meeting from 1965-1972; his discussion of it at the colloquium, however, added many helpful points.


This information was provided to me in a conversation with Howard Alexander.


Larry Barker, The Development of the Pastorate in Indiana Yearly Meeting, (Richmond, IN: Earlham School of Religion); Richard Wood, "The Emergence of Revivalistic, Pastoral Quakerism in Midwestern America, 1850-1950: Creative Response or Tragic Accommodation?" (unpublished).
Richard Wood and Elton Trueblood maintain that the pastorate was appropriate for late 19th century Midwest Quakerism; Larry Barker holds that the negative aspects of the pastorate outweighed its positive aspects.


57 This paper was prepared and printed for the use of the Five Years Meeting Christian Vocations Board. I obtained a copy from Wilmer Cooper.


60 Wilmer Cooper, Friends Interpretation of Ministry, (High Point, NC, 1971), pp. 7-8.

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The Image of a Pastor. 1960. (No author or publisher listed.)

Disciplines and Minutes


It was with a feeling of anticipation that forty-two (42) Friends from sixteen (16) Yearly Meetings (representing all five branches of the Quaker tree as well as London Yearly Meeting) gathered in the "long room" of the Quaker Hill Conference Center in Richmond, Indiana the evening of 11th month 19, for the opening session of the Consultation on Ministry. Interest was high, as indicated by the number of persons coming at considerable sacrifice and by the number who could not be accommodated. One also sensed a curiosity about what might transpire or be accomplished among such a diverse group on a subject whose interpretation and practice has long divided us. That curiosity led to an openness in discovering truth and sharing concerns throughout the conference that build bridges and answer needs.

The Consultation on Ministry followed from the Leadership Conference at Pendle Hill in 1979 and the Consultation for Service sponsored by Earlham School of Religion and Quaker Hill in 1980. Wilmer Cooper and Eldon Harzman, together with an ad hoc committee, designed this conference to deal with questions of how to discern and nurture ministry, and more specifically focusing on the recording and releasing for ministry. Tom Brown, as our able Clerk, brought a sensitive spirit to the procedures through his gifts of depth, humor, and promptness.

Howard Macy presented the first paper which was on "Discerning Gifts for Ministry." Discussion fell into two broad categories: The call to the person, and the responsibility of the meeting. He emphasized repeatedly, as did later speakers, that ministry is a call from God rather than fitting someone to do an assigned task. Spiritual gifts can only be spiritually discerned. But the Meeting has a vital role also in providing a climate for the development of gifts and in helping members discover, evaluate, and develop ministry. Problems develop when Meetings are ill equipped to respond or have too narrow an understanding of public ministry. As gifts are discerned they need to be able to observe whether this ministry is consistent, persistent, and characterized by Truth and Love, and help the person test out their call in experience. He reminded us that it is in the monthly meeting where this can best be done through intimate dialogue and support. All of this is to remind us that we are not building churches, but wanting from an honest desire, to lead persons and meetings into Life, wholly abandoning ourselves to holy leadings.

As if to underscore the spiritual nature of our task, a moving Presence was felt as Ann Carter led us in "Spirit of God Descend Upon Our Hearts" a cappella.

David Castle, in his paper on "Nurturing Gifts for Ministry" believes that our practice of nurturing ministry needs an up-date. We live in an age in which we worship our work, play at our worship and work at our play. The reordering of our priorities requires us to build on our faith rather than wallow in it.

If we don't love because we want to, we will learn to love because we have to. If we learn out of necessity our learning comes at a price. So we need to
make Grace available in a useful way. Our ministry has to have a practical outlet. Quakerism is best as a frontier religion.

Because there is often no place where a serious discussion of the state of one's soul is possible, we need to develop, in a non-professional setting, a way of doctoring the spirit. We find that our physical health is helped by a doctor in whom we believe. We have a chart that tells us of our progress. We also have ways of measuring our mental health. We need to develop ways of measuring and maintaining our spiritual health.

We need to define ministry!

Some questions which will help us:
What are your gifts?
How effective do you use your gifts?
What are your fears?
Do you mind being spiritual?

Keeping a journal will help people in the future with gifts which need nurturing, as the journals of our forebears have helped us. We often wish we knew more of the ministers of our youth. We would have benefited from their journals if they had kept them.

We need to be organized for ministry, our experiments should pull more than push and should be evangelically grounded. Ask not what needs doing, but what are you concerned to do? What is your growing edge?

In response to Howard Macy's paper on Discerning Gifts, and to David Castle's on Nurturing Gifts members of the panel emphasized some of these points:

Spiritual gifts need to be discerned spiritually. We will recognize the leading of the Spirit if we seek God's guidance. We need to listen. We do not have a nice efficient clear-cut method. It is another example of calculated Quaker inefficiency.

In this apocalyptic time, when we live in fear of military excess, ecological disaster, and personal economic insufficiency, we need a frontier ministry. It must be a ministry of proclamation, social ministry, and administration. In these ministries we need to support each other, to elder each other, to be, in effect, a matrix of apprenticeship, one with another.

To people who are angry and afraid we bring a ministry of faith. For this, love is the first motion. Like John Woolman we need to tell where we come from, not to be directly critical of those whose manner of living gives cause for concern.

We who would discern and nurture gifts of others need to practice living with inward peace and an outward sense of being in a community of faith. We may be too busy, then to be overly critical of one another's ministry, but still find time to support each other. The need to share, to feel a part of a community, even with our diverse gifts, is very important. We need to be in touch with one another.

At our best we have an equipping, enabling, and recycling ministry.

Patricia Brown brought us a well researched paper on "Friends History of Recording Gifts for Ministry," with special reference to the rise and fall of the practice of recording ministers in London Yearly Meeting.
At first ministers recognized each other without formal certification. Those who attended Second Day meeting in London, held for the dual purpose of making sure that there were ministers to cover the outlying meetings and to check the content of writings to be published by Friends, were the ministers.

When objection to one name on the list led to controversy, the resolution of the problem was to have monthly meetings issue certificates testifying to the gifts of the person named. These required approval by the quarterly meeting and then reported to the yearly meeting.

Many interesting details of the growth and diminution of the traveling ministry, of women ministers, and the eventual discontinuance in this century, of the practice of recording are included in the paper. The equality of all members as children of God may have been confused by some to imply that all are equally gifted in the ministry. At any rate, for somewhat different reasons than those which have led to the decline of recording in non-pastoral meetings in North America, the practice is now laid down.

In beginning the panel’s response to Pat Brown’s paper, Charles Thomas called on us again to define what we mean by ministry. He pointed out that ministry had shifted from publishing the Truth to furnishing ministry to local meetings. The shift is to qualified ministry with controls. By granting Elders the right to issue certificates of recognition the center of gravity in the meeting shifted to them from the ministers. Now, in some cases, the preacher-pastor certification and setting of standards for recording are moved out of the monthly meeting to the yearly meeting. And instead of recognition, we have petition to be recorded.

Donna Bales spoke to the fundamental dilemma of recording some as ministers when we believe in the priesthood of all believers. If we have a universal ministry, should not all members be recorded, with their particular gifts? Does this give us a new understanding of membership? We do need to broaden our understanding of what ministry means.

Earl Redding continued the discussion of what seems to be two equally undesirable choices. If we proclaim universal ministry, we threaten the pastor who has a clear call to ministry. On the other hand, a professional pastoral ministry threatens the universal ministry. We believe that it is possible to develop the concept that all are ministers, but to have a specially gifted and trained group existing within the larger population of the meeting.

John Punshon helped considerably in clarifying the history and practice of ministry in England. He also told of the disappearance of the advices on ministry and counsel into the general advices, and of the gradual re-design of meetinghouses to do away with the facing benches and ministers galleries.

It is a worry that we are not nourishing our roots. At times we sense a trend to rigidity, at times a trend to looseness.

Ministry, in the Quaker sense, is a way of being in intentional relationship with God. A gift is given, we recognize it, a certificate is given, the minister is recorded. One has the feeling that though the meetinghouses are filled, London Yearly Meeting Friends miss the authority of an informed ministry.

Five small groups met Friday evening, each choosing their own agendas. Their reports will appear in the final collection of materials, so just a few observations will be made here. Following the presentation of the three papers, Friends seemed to need to clarify terms and procedures. In similar manner, each group began with trying to define or describe ministry, the call to
ministry, and its variations. One group moved into the specific process of recording as a confirmation and liberation, in pastoral meetings, while another one compared the process in various yearly meetings. What ministry "looks like" was described in a group and another compared meeting needs with Biblical description of ministries. The fifth group moved into the problems meetings encounter when they try to apply the principles of universal ministry in carrying out the program.

A very stimulating paper was presented by Stephen Angell on "Friends' History of Releasing Friends for Ministry." He traced the historical development of "releasing" Friends for service from the days of George Fox and the "traveling ministers" who depended entirely on divine leadings for the call, the support, and the planned itinerary. The discussion included temporary times of service to meet a particular need as well as today's variety of acting on concerns. One model used today is to release an individual for traveling among Friends for various lengths of time and purposes. Another model is that of a service organization offering opportunities for ministry through its projects, such as AFSC, FCNL and FUM Mission Board and Quaker Volunteer Witness. The meeting or group which recognizes the call and its expression must continue to test and guide the leading and enable the ministry to bear fruit. Steve stated that the Released Friends concept is at the core of our faith and outreach. It is a new charge to an old call by George Fox to "walk cheerfully over the earth answering to that of God in every one."

In response to the above, William Taber related his own experiences as a released Friend in Ohio Yearly Meeting which led him to realize that he was able to do more traveling than he could have done if he was not released, and he had much more of an outreach in the community as a representative of Friends. He preferred the arrangement he had rather than being the "Yearly Meeting Secretary" with a job description, he was a "Released Friend" who was paid by voluntary contributions and had flexibility to respond to needs. To nurture this response to ministry he suggests that we need gifted elders to act as spiritual guides and support groups that pray as well as plan strategy. We need to have conferences and traveling ministries where spiritual growth can take place in groups. It is all right to start with the recognition of a need and ask a person if they can respond, and to include non-institutional ministries is also valuable.

Thom Jeavons underlined the fact that leadership needs to be checked or it can provide dissent as well as growth and that authority must be earned rather than invested. This led to a stimulating discussion of Friends' confusion about the nature of leadership and authority. He urged us to be creative in developing combinations of work, ministry, and releasing that allow flexibility. He suggested that full time ministers who are hired should be called "assigned Friends" rather than released Friends.

Robert Beck noted that historically a traveling minister had a traveling companion in an apprentice role which is an effective way to nurture. In the pastoral tradition, it seems to him that as ministers gained power and elders became restricted, the eldering function is needed to make pastors accountable in both work and personal life. They can also act to protect the pastor from unreasonable expectations.

In the small groups assessing present practices of Friends, some consider the various ways of recording ministers. Practice in yearly meetings where both pastoral and non-pastoral meetings exist usually conforms to the old practice still in use among Conservative Friends. A gift for the ministry is recognized by the local meetings, referred to the quarterly meeting on ministry and counsel, and, if approved, recommended to the quarterly meeting itself. If approved there, both the local meeting and the yearly meeting are informed.
In pastoral meetings, variations on this process have occurred with the dwindling role of quarterly meetings. In many cases, when a Friend wishes to be recorded, or when a meeting wants its new pastor to be recorded, the case is referred to a yearly meeting ministry and counsel committee which applies a uniform educational standard as well as other criteria in approving or disapproving the application.

Practices of shared pastoring, religious education, appointment of committees annually (zero-based) etc. were explained by those familiar with them. Prayerful consideration of each other's difficulties led to suggestions for help with them. The growth of ministry is equipped if, when we see a gift, we bless it. We encourage, commend, and hold accountable those who appear in the ministry.

We were urged, on Saturday evening, to dream.

Wilmer Cooper charged us to achieve a supportive, enabling ministry. He hopes that meetings which have ceased recording gifts in the ministry will revive some form of corporate recognition of these gifts. And he hopes that pastoral meetings will look at other gifts to recognize, with a particular emphasis on the realization that women should appear in positions of leadership of ministry and of worship.

It may be that ministry should be recognized for a definite term, with review at five or seven year intervals. It is also important that we nurture the ministry. Woodbrooke, Pendle Hill, Earlham School of Religion, and colleges like Guilford, Wilmington, Friends University and George Fox, Quaker Studies programs in yearly meetings all help. We are challenged to heed calls and to have the faith that the necessary gifts will be given. A prophetic proclamation of our Christian message is still our great challenge.

We are urged to take risks. To try something! To release and not hold on to the string! Orville Winters expressed concern that we lack leadership which is dynamic enough for this age. We need to support such leaders, not to control them.

Jack Kirk predicted that a "living ministry" will be as important to Friends as silence. Gifts of ministry will be recognized more fully, and supported in a caring way, in support of a gospel fellowship. Pastoral gifts are now as important or more than, the spoken word. Although pastoral work without preaching is petty, preaching without pastoral works is empty. He hopes that we will not be afraid of size. We need to speak to the whole world. We can break it down into small groups later. He stressed the need for people to learn by association with vital ministers and by their ministry.

Judith Harvey, released Friend in North Carolina, is working to assess the need for continuing Quaker education in the southeastern region of the United States. She is discovering that Friends want to study Quaker history, the family, and contemporary issues. She told us that many of the responses to the questionnaire she is working on dealt with things similar to those that we have considered important to the nurture and support of the ministry.

Most conferences have their high and moving moments and one of these occurred Saturday evening following the presentation on the future. A heavy burden was laid upon us through various messengers, that we live in very troubled times and that Friends have a vital living Word that can speak to these conditions. What dreams does God have for us? Will we move from a ministry of consolation to a ministry of disturbance that brings a new sense of what God is saying in judgment? There was a sense of urgency about our need
to take the risks of living ministry, and the daring suggestion that this might be the beginning of a redemptive movement.

We are willing to give up Quakerism, but we must be willing to carry the fire! The urgency of our time calls for the same Spirit which George Fox found that sustained him. It leads us, too! We are joyful, loving, trusting, and forgiving one another. We pray that God, if it be His will, will lead us.

Writers of Quaker history often leave out the controversies and disputes, so that one has to read between the lines to get the true "sense of the meeting." At this consultation the lack of mention of these tensions is an accurate reporting. Of course, there were disagreements, and frustrations, and wasted time. But from the beginning there seemed to be more of a desire to seek solutions than to lay claim to any one truth. Perhaps it was because as Charles Thomas expressed it, "we all came with agreement that ministry is essential." The overriding concern became how we can recognize, encourage, and enlarge those gifts for the growth of persons in the belief that "a quantum leap" can be taken to bring healing to our broken world. There was a creative tension between the historical and present practices, and the larger concern for our belief in the universal ministry. The persons who gathered to wrestle with the concern for ministry brought patience, experience, humor, and commitment; resulting in a rich blend of gifts and inspiration. Fellowship at meals, in worship, in sharing, and in spare moments brought us a new appreciation and affirmation of one another. And through it all the Presence of the Living Christ became more and more real, convicting us and empowering each of us in our own way to a renewed faithfulness to the essential task of ministry and a fullness of joy in that calling.

Every conference has its pet phrases, which when recalled bring a smile of a reminder. "Wallowing" in the spirit described the condition of too much of the inward life and too little attention to the outward practice. "Lumpy Friends" seemed an apt description of unevenly distributed "weighty Friends." Buzz words that were fuzzy or brought mixed reactions were "ordination," "status," "authority," "professionalism," "concern," and "credentials." Unforgettable will be meanings of "the push-and-the-pull" and "egalitarian versus Quaker equality."

It would be inappropriate to leave without a word of appreciation to Eldon Harzman, Ann Davidson and the staff, and to Wilmer Cooper for their helpful preparation for and participation in this conference. We are also grateful to those who were responsible for the excellent food and its prompt service.

Prepared by Charles Brown III and
Eleanor Castle, Participant Observers at
the Consultation of Friends on Ministry.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final twenty-four hours of the Consultation allowed for small group interaction and brainstorming sessions, including recommendations for continuing the Quaker dialogue about ministry. Some of the small groups prepared summary reports of their discussions, a digest of which follows.

Small Group Discussions

We have found in this conference that there are many diversities of ministry but we realize that we do have a common ground, which is ministry itself. However, we have found it difficult to describe what we mean by ministry in a few words. One way of putting it was stated this way: Ministry is making God's presence perceptible to others through our intention to be obedient. Ministry is a corporate as well as an individual experience, and there are recognizable modes of ministry. We believe that public ministry strengthens, nurtures and enlightens the Community of Believers.

We also hold that ministry involves an intentional relationship with God; and in obedience to him one is compelled to serve, to preach, to minister in a variety of ways. Because of these many ministries those who are called must realize through the Spirit's leading what one's particular ministry will be, and whether it is rooted in Christ's calling.

Friends are looking for new ways and new models for affirming gifts of leadership. This is especially needed in smaller meetings where natural gifts of leadership may be in short supply. Some Yearly Meetings formalize this recognition of gifts by standard recording procedures. In some places the recording is primarily the prerogative of local or Quarterly Meetings, while in others the primary initiative and responsibility rests with the Yearly Meeting. Standards of recording differ widely. Some emphasize skills for ministry; others have doctrinal expectations; and still others are primarily concerned to nurture a prophetic ministry of the spoken word.

If an effective and living ministry is to be forthcoming among Friends, it is incumbent upon us to discern and nurture gifts among all members. Elders have a special responsibility to help discover these gifts and to provide ways in which persons can be instructed, exhorted, equipped and enabled to nurture gifts for ministry. Another approach may be to implement a process of spiritual check-ups as a way of monitoring gifts for ministry. We need to find ways of evoking a "pull" to ministry as an alternative to "push" to ministry. This might be facilitated by queries and questions which help to bring to birth the ministries of persons.

We affirm ministries appropriate to meeting needs, and we set out to discover gifts which persons have to fill these needs. These may include gifts of art, music and athletics; or gifts of healing, teaching, preaching, service and evangelism. We would be eager to affirm people in a wider variety of gifts for ministry, providing there is a means for eldership and oversight so that they can be made accountable to the meeting in the exercise of their gifts.
Concluding Sessions

In addition to the Summary Report of the Consultation (which appears on pages 59-64), we record here some items gleaned from the final sessions in which there was a deep sense of group sharing, together with specific recommendations for Friends to take home with them.

The mood of these sessions was one of spiritual concern for a living ministry among Friends, a sense of urgency about the condition of the world in which we live and the needs of people around us, and all this coupled with a joyous spirit—evidenced by the ability of the group to laugh together as well as engage each other in meaningful discussion. The seriousness of the occasion was reflected in a concern expressed by Charles Thomas in the discussion Saturday evening. A paraphrase of his remarks follows: "We have to move from a ministry of consolation to a ministry of disturbance. We are in an age that is dying. People do not have or know a word from God. We should not be so much concerned about the growth of the Church as about the Church being a redemptive force in an evil world. We are not here so much to console one another but to be revealers of God's judgment on evil. We need inspired people with a vision and with dreams, but just to be visionary would scarcely be redemptive. A society that is as sick as ours must have a message of salvation. We have lost our sense of a way of salvation. We need to raise again the level of conscience because conscience is the discerning spirit that knows right from wrong. What is called for is a ministry of the word of God in the freshness of his judgment upon evil." This was followed by a time of discussion and deep sharing which left many lasting impressions.

Recommendations

On Sunday morning Bill Taber shared three dreams for the future:
1. The possibility of a Midwinter Conference on Ministry, perhaps a New Year's gathering.
2. A traveling team of Friends to visit among ministers throughout the country. This might take the form of small group meetings, or one-on-one meetings.
3. Quaker cross cultural visitation, e.g., bring an Evangelical Friend to visit in Philadelphia for a week or two.

Other suggestions:
--A week-long unprogrammed conference of Friends with no stated agenda.
--Ask our meetings to release Friends to travel in ministry, not just visitation.
--Coordinate these concerns with FWCC and National Pastors Conference; others cautioned that these concerns not get lost in Quaker organization, however.
--Could families be involved in ministry and visitation?
--Encourage meetings to ask themselves about ministry questions in preparation for ministry team visits.

The question was raised about similar Consultations as this in the future. For two years Quaker Hill Conference Center and Earlham School of Religion have sponsored a Consultation on Quaker Service (1980), and the current Consultation of Friends on Ministry (1981). Among suggestions for future Consultations might be these: (a) The meaning of membership and what do we affirm as members of a Friends meeting? (b) The lost art of eldering and the question of
freedom, order and discipline among Friends. (c) The decision making process among Friends: how do we overcome our individualism and move ahead as a corporate body? Quaker Hill Conference Center and ESR will take these under advisement, but there is plenty of opportunity for other Friends groups to take hold of these questions on a regional or national basis. Persons who have ideas or concerns pertaining to future Consultations should address them to Wilmer Cooper, Earlham School of Religion, Richmond, IN 47374.

Compiled by Wilmer Cooper
REPORT OF QUESTIONNAIRE ON RECORDING/RELEASING OF FRIENDS FOR MINISTRY

Information for Consultation of Friends on Ministry
Quaker Hill Conference Center
Richmond, Indiana

November 19 - 22, 1981

A two-page Questionnaire was sent to thirty-one Yearly Meetings in North America seeking information about present practices with respect to "recording" and "releasing" Friends for ministry. Thirty replies were received and are tallied in this report. Our impression is that some reports were hastily prepared, but the overall results generally reflect the practice in any given Yearly Meeting.

RECORDING

In American Yearly Meetings the practice of recording ministers is quite varied. The procedure of recording is also quite varied, ranging from Monthly Meeting prerogatives to Yearly Meeting decisions. The following gives a brief overview of the various practices.

15 do practice recording ministers
10 do not practice recording ministers
1 has temporarily discontinued practice
2 have not recorded recently
1 rarely records
1 possibly, but did not know

All Meetings that do practice recording, record gifts either of "pastoral" or "gospel" ministry. Two Yearly Meetings record gifts of music ministry, and another is considering this. One Yearly Meeting records persons in prison ministry.

One Yearly Meeting records gifts of pastoral, evangelistic, missionary and Christian education ministries. There is one Minister of Visitation who was recorded while in this position. The same Yearly Meeting has a special classification for missionaries who are not recorded but who are Missionary Ministers while in the field.

One Yearly Meeting reports a concern for the recording of ministers and has the matter under review. Another Yearly Meeting reports that they do not record ministers, yet our research shows that they have six, and perhaps seven, recorded ministers -- the last of which was recorded in 1963.

The following is a complete tally of recorded ministers reported in our survey. The listing is by Yearly Meetings and groupings of Yearly Meetings according to the various branches of Friends in North America. There is a discrepancy in the North Carolina (FUM) report as shown in parenthesis.

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Report on Questionnaire
Consultation of Friends on Ministry

Recorded Ministers by Yearly Meeting

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**RELEASING**

Nine Yearly Meetings used the term "Released Friend," while twenty-one report no use of the term. Yearly Meetings reported widely different definitions of this term. We have categorized the definitions as follows:

1. A Friend following a specific concern with Yearly Meeting (or Monthly or Quarterly Meeting) support, spiritually and financially.

   Four Yearly Meetings report using this definition. There was one released Friend reported in New England and Pacific. Three were reported in the three years and five in the past 15 years.

2. A Friend whose practical needs are provided for so that he/she is free to give full-time to a particular ministry.

   One Yearly Meeting reported using this definition.

3. A Friend who is paid a minimal salary to allow that person to do a specific job for a specified period of time. Canadian Yearly Meeting currently has such a person. Two others were reported in the past five years and five in the past 15 years.
Report on Questionnaire
Consultation of Friends on Ministry

4. Friends who carry out special visitation and ministries. Indiana Yearly Meeting reports five in this category during the past five years.

5. A Friend who is supported or partially supported by the meeting or church served. Northwest Yearly Meeting reports using this definition and reports 82 persons (which corresponds to its total number of pastors, Christian education workers and administrators within the Yearly Meeting).

6. A Friend who is a volunteer. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting reports use of this definition.

Other comments from the questionnaires returned:

--Evangelical Friends Church (Eastern Region) report lay persons, evangelists, Friends with a "travelling minute," and missionary tentmakers. They estimate a total of 60 persons who fit these categories.

--Mid-America Yearly Meeting reports some churches release Friends for special ministries as needed. Similar comments come from North Pacific Yearly Meeting.

--South Central Yearly Meeting reports that most members are involved in some kind of service work: AFSC, FCNL, UNICEF, local meeting activities, etc. Similar comments come from Northern Yearly Meeting.
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