

A Brief History of the Quaker practice of “Recording”

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This document addresses the topic of “recording,” “ministers,” and, especially, what those two terms may have meant to Friends through history. This document cannot explore these concepts fully, but can hopefully give some description of common phases in the practice and usage of those terms. Of course, this is not an exhaustive history of ministers among Friends. Instead, this description attempts to focus on the meaning of ministers as it changed and evolved into the pastoral system with particular importance for the recording of ministers in Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting. At its best, this document provides a historical context, pointing out tensions within Quaker views of ministry, and does not attempt to make prescriptions for solutions. That will be the work we accomplish in discernment together.

I. The Early Quakers (1650s through the Toleration Act of 1689)

While Friends of these decades were theologically diverse – ranging from revolutionary apocalypticists like Francis Howgil in the 1650s to reasoned apologists like Robert Barclay in the 1680s – they can be lumped together for this examination because of the fact that the Quaker religion was illegal. Having no legal protections and no government sanctioned channels for recognition meant that Quakers were often persecuted and they had no authorization to perform religious functions. Without the recognition of civil authorities there could be no legally recognized path for ordination, a priesthood, or a pastoral system. Without a doubt, early Friends viewed ordained clergy as a major source of spiritual disillusionment in their day and would not have ordained ministers even if they could. However, their status as outsiders to accepted British religious structures impacted their views of ministry.

The absence of legally recognized ministers who carried official standing to perform religious functions was just fine for Quaker of the first decades of the Quaker movement. They believed that the institution of “hireling ministers” and priests and their vestments (ordinations, religious education, “steeple houses,” tithes, ordinances, etc) were anachronistic in the new age

of Christ's Inward revelation. Moreover, the earliest Quakers viewed the church offices and titles of the day as human contrivances that were often merely outward forms unmatched by the inward transformation of heart. Thus, Fox famously reflected as a young man that "the Lord opened unto me that being bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men to be ministers of Christ; and I wondered at it, because it was the common belief of people."¹ Throughout his journal, Fox uses the term "ministers" in the negative when associated with the official state-sponsored religion, but he uses the term positively in reference to Quaker leaders who he feels were anointed by God, even though unrecognized by British officials. In other words, when the inward spiritual transformation was reflected in the outward obedience to God's work, Fox was supportive of the use of the term "minister." Moreover, while early Quakers expected all people to be active in their faith, they had no qualms about identifying certain individuals as bearing a special calling for vocal and public ministry.

One example of an early identification of specific people for a specific apostolic role of proclamation would be the work of the band of ministers now known as the "Valiant Sixty" from 1652-1654. Fox recorded in his journal,

About this time did the Lord move upon the spirits of many whom He had raised up and sent forth to labour in His vineyard, to travel southwards, and spread themselves in the service of the gospel to the eastern, southern, and western parts of the nation... for above sixty ministers had the Lord raised up, and did now send abroad out of the north country. The sense of their service was very weighty upon me.²

Unlike the Puritan and Church of England priests, whom Fox believed were acting of their own accord, God is seen as the primary agent identifying, equipping, and sending the Valiant Sixty. The contrast between "ministers of their own making" and those that God "raised up" is a primary theme through Quaker history. Fox believed there were "ministers and bishops" among the Quaker movement, but their ordination was spiritual, and, importantly, they "had freely received [of Christ] and would freely give."³ That is, it was important for the early Quaker movement to be led by ministers who were not tied to a particular building and salary, and so

¹ http://www.ccel.org/ccel/fox_g/autobio.xiii.html

² http://www.ccel.org/ccel/fox_g/autobio.xiii.html

³ *Ibid.*

able to share authentically in the freedom of the Spirit. Without those ties, they could travel wherever they felt led to travel. These first Quaker ministers must be understood as apostles and missionaries, sent-out ones, whose goal was to conquer the world with the Quaker message.

In order to facilitate this apostolic mission, to support suffering meetings up and down England, and to conduct a prolific pamphlet-war, a natural and organic organization developed. Members of the early Friends movement had particular administrative and leadership roles and reported to particular places through informal but well-maintained channels of authority. Under the leadership of Margaret Fell at Swarthmore Hall, George Fox, and others, a loose band grew into a movement of roughly 60,000 by the end of the 1650s. This organic structure was codified in Fox's and Fell's work on "Gospel Order." At the time, "Gospel Order" was understood as a reflection of what had already become common practice, but it did lead to increased centralization.⁴ The early Quaker leaders realized that if they were to survive as a group, they needed a clear organizational structure and lines of authority. According to Stephen Angell and Michael Birkel, early Quaker leaders like Richard Farnworth believed that "structure was not a response to threat of survival, but rather a means to support interior freedom."⁵

Ministers felt themselves to be called by God to a public ministry of proclamation. The calling itself seems to have been justified by the visible and public demonstration of that call through proclamation. If the Quaker leadership and/or monthly meetings confirmed the calling, these ministers would either feel led to a particular region or be sent there by Fox and Fell. Regional gatherings, sometimes called quarterly meetings, would be held to bring ministers together. Beginning in the late 1650s, there were also general meetings, what would become yearly meetings, covering the entire country. Those meetings that had a primarily religious and theological purpose were attended by only ministers. Others meetings were business-focused and attended by elders only.⁶ In early Quaker records, the terms elders and ministers are sometimes used in conjunction with each other but these titles connoted very different responsibilities.

⁴ Rosemary Moore, *The Light in Their Consciences: Early Quakers in Britain, 1646-1666* (University Park Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 141.

⁵ Stephen Angell and Michael L. Birkel, "The Witness of Richard Farnworth: Prophet of Light, Apostle of Church Order," in *Early Quakers and Their Theological Thought, 1647-1723*, ed. Stephen Angell and Pink Dandelion (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 90.

⁶ Elbert Russell, *The History of Quakerism* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1979), 131.

Ministers were apostolic preachers, while elders had spiritual oversight and administrative authority. Fox was a minister and elder, but it was possible to be one or the other.

Another reason early Quakers began to formalize their structure was the need to mitigate the devastating effects of persecution by British authorities. In the 1660s, Quakers were ravaged by persecution and their core leadership decimated through death and imprisonment. There was a strong internal pull toward respectability along with an external plea for toleration. The [James Nayler incident](#) of 1656 caused Quakers considerable trouble. At the time, Nayler was, perhaps, a co-leader of the Quaker movement with Fox. One outcome of this event was Fox's strong assertion of his unrivaled leadership, rebuking Nayler and those who questioned Fox's authority. After the Nayler incident, Quaker leaders loyal to Fox authored the [Balby Epistle of 1656](#) a list of principles intended to assure that those who were considered Quaker leaders were morally pure and in line with the vision of Quakerism advanced by Fox and others. The Balby Epistle and other documents from this time also emphasize the need for unity. A common message, and a united public persona, were necessary lest internal schisms and external pressures fracture the group.

And, in fact, in the 1660s, new internal divisions threatened the unity of Friends. Severe persecution meant that moderating voices were preferred and elevated, while the voices of women were generally downgraded.⁷ In part, this was a survival mechanism, and, in part, it was a reflection of Quaker successes. By the 1690s, Quakers came to an uneasy peace with governmental authorities. The lessening of external pressures and the construct of internal methods of moderation probably went hand in hand. Nonetheless, voices that were outside of the mainstream arose throughout the end of the seventeenth and into the early eighteenth century (e.g. John Perrot, George Keith), but there were means for dealing with them.

The persistent threat of internal division and external persecution sets the stage for more consolidated and prescriptive methods of approving who was an accepted Quaker minister, and who was only a troublemaker. When Quakers started building Meeting Houses in the 1670s, at least one included a "facing bench" for the elders and a "ministers gallery."⁸ In 1671, a

⁷ Phyllis Mack, *Visionary Women: Ecstatic Prophecy in Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, CA: Univ. of California Press, 1992).

⁸ Pink Dandelion, *An Introduction to Quakerism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 47.

committee was formed to decide what publications could be put forth in the name of Friends. The goal was to control how Quakers appeared to outsiders, and, in the process, defined what would become accepted Quaker views.⁹ As in publications, ministers were the public face of Friends and their visible place of prominence in the “ministers gallery” asserted a normative interpretation of Quakerism.

In this period we see that within the early Quaker movement were individuals who “God had raised up” to preach and/or provide administrative and spiritual oversight for the movement. Over this period the internal workings of Quakers became more regulated and systematic, which helped spread the movement and control divisive voices. While the identification of ministers among early Quakers (albeit informal) was probably necessary for the Quaker movement to survive and facilitate the work of the Spirit, by the 1670s, it did assert and enforce a more moderate version of Quakerism than that of the early 1650s.

II. The Middle Period (1690-1870ish)

After the Act of Toleration Quakers were no longer persecuted for worshiping together. They were now a trans-Atlantic religion. Quaker theology evolved considerably during this time. Formal books of discipline began to appear. Previously, membership was simply a matter of identifying those individuals who associated among Quakers, attended meetings for worship, and conformed to Quaker life-style principles. Out of this informal membership, a selected number were invited to participate in business meetings. With the increasing thoroughness of meeting minutes, lists of members and ministers were minuted by monthly and/or quarterly meetings in their official notes.

At first, London Yearly Meeting gatherings were composed primarily of “public Friends” (i.e. those identified as ministers). In America, the regular yearly meeting business sessions were not limited to “ministers,” and, so, a separate meeting for ministers was established so that the concerns of public ministry could be addressed and ministers could be encouraged in their work.¹⁰ Near the turn of the eighteenth century, the ministers invited to attend this special

⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹⁰ Russell, *The History of Quakerism*, 215–17.

meeting were “certified as acceptable by their monthly meetings.”¹¹ In 1714, monthly meetings were authorized to name “prudent solid Friends” to join the ministers and by mid-century it was common for meetings of Ministers and Elders to meet on both sides of the Atlantic.¹² The Quakers had no paid ministry in this period, but roles multiplied.

The American “Quaker Reformation” of the mid-eighteenth century can be understood as the Quaker response to a broader intercolonial renewal of faith and devotion known as the “Great Awakening.” At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Quakers were on a clear path toward more accommodating interactions with “the world.” Quakers were involved in slave-trading, trans-Atlantic shipping, and other ventures that contributed greatly to Quaker prosperity in Philadelphia, Connecticut, England, and beyond. However, some Quakers bemoaned what they saw as a clear path of accommodation to the world and the lessening of the inward, total transformation of the soul that they read about in the lives of the earliest Quakers. Hence, the “Reformation of American Quakerism” was born as a group of talented and energetic Quaker ministers began a vigorous campaign to assume leadership positions at all levels of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and to circulate their message to the various, far-flung meetings throughout colonial America.¹³

For Quakers of the mid-eighteenth century the increased devotion was primarily seen in a desire to completely surrender to God’s influence. “The world” and “worldliness” were often understood to be a barrier to hearing and obeying God. So, for example, Pennsylvania Quakers of the middle part of the eighteenth century invigorated a strict code of discipline that was seen as protecting Quakers from the diluting influence of the world. Quaker ministers of the Reformation were important to its success. These ministers were willing and energetic. As a result, the Reform-minded minority of Quakers within Philadelphia Yearly Meeting became the majority over the course of a generation.

Travelling ministers connected the various reform-minded Quakers spread broadly across the colonies, encouraged them to greater faithfulness and chastised the larger Quaker body for its sins wherever they encountered them. Public meetings with evangelistic intent were still

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 218.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Jack D. Marietta, *The Reformation of American Quakerism, 1748-1783* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984).

appointed, but the emphasis of Quaker ministry became the health of the Quaker body. Instead of transforming “the world,” as was the Quaker goal in the seventeenth century, the Quaker emphasis became avoiding the contamination of “the world.” This description is a gross simplification of the diversity and trajectories within eighteenth century Quakerism, but it highlights the role of ministers as purveyors and protectors of a particular Quaker vision.

William Taber’s excellent article, “[The Theology of the Inward Imperative](#),” provides many interesting anecdotes of the day-to-day activities of ministers in this era. For example, Taber explains,

one of the main functions of aspects of their ministry was that of *maintenance* of the spiritual body of which they were a part. They were divinely-inspired trouble-shooters or prophetic diagnosticians who could sniff out error or deadness or injustice or spiritual pride on the highest facing bench or on the bench behind the door. They were generally, though not always, on the side of those who favored a stronger disciplinary structure during the eighteenth century. Again and again we read of the ministers' inward struggles as they realized they had to speak the stark truth about people who 'to the outward eye' seemed good and even holy. They knew that they had to speak what was given them, or they would undergo 'uneasiness' or 'darkness' or 'suffering.'¹⁴

Taber notes that ministers of the middle period had gifts of sensing the nature of people and Meetings:

Gifts of spiritual discernment and a sensing of 'states,' occasional telepathy, and foreknowledge might develop... a certain quality of spiritual sensory extension which has as its first 'motion' - to paraphrase [John] Woolman - love, the kind of love which flows through those who have known the transforming experience and who stay in the Light.¹⁵

The progression of surrender through which a spiritual insight or discernment into the states of others would develop took on a typical form or process: The minister-to-be would make a surrender to the Spirit's call to speak. Usually this first message was a brief one, corresponded

¹⁴ William Taber, “The Theology of the Inward Imperative: Traveling Quaker Ministry of the Middle Period,” *Quaker Religious Thought* 18, no. 4 (Autumn 1980): 14.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

with a sense of peace as an affirmation. The minister-to-be would continue to speak, gradually gaining skill and confidence in knowing what is of the Spirit, and what is not. When the “ministers and elders” of the minister-to-be’s monthly meeting and quarterly meeting had stated their approval she would become a “recommended minister.”

However, Tabor suggests, even at this point the act of surrendering had only just begun. The Light must increase and grow so that the new minister might become more sensitive and responsive to the guiding of the Light, which would be a long term project of discernment and surrender. Through this process of surrender ministers would discern the Spirit’s movements guiding them to go on journey, to make an obedient plan for each day, and to learn to depend on the Spirit’s teaching moment by moment for the vocal ministry uttered during meeting for worship.¹⁶ Before undertaking a particular ministry journey, the minister would seek a certificate from the committee of “ministers and elders.”¹⁷ This process of recommendation and certification was important in helping ministers discern their calling. It was also important because ministers would rely upon the hospitality of other Friends while travelling. The documentation carried by ministers protected Quakers from imposters and ensured that the messenger was approved by Quaker bodies.

Just as with the early Quakers, and all subsequent generations, the ideal of God-anointed, Spirit-led Quaker ministry was not always an across the board reality in the eighteenth century. The additional layers of recommending and certification may have moderated and consolidated the Quaker message into an approved format and content, but some Quaker ministers unleashed harsh criticism on other Quaker ministers who were perceived as ministering under their own power and pride, even if the theology behind the message was within accepted Quaker teaching. In 1772, John Woolman described this straying from the leadership of the Spirit by ministers as kindling “a fire... and walk[ing] in the light – not of Christ who is under a suffering, - but of that fire which they... have kindled.”¹⁸

In the early nineteenth century, multiple visions of Quakerism developed as a series of schisms resulted in particular theological emphases, each being consolidated in one Friends

¹⁶ Ibid., 11.

¹⁸ John Woolman, “Concerning the Ministry,” in *The Journal and Essays of John Woolman*, ed. Amelia M. Gummere (New York: Macmillan company, 1922), 315.

group or the other. For example, the inward revelation of Christ was emphasized by the Hicksite branch of Quakers, while the part of the Orthodox branch led by Joseph John Gurney emphasized the evangelical aspects. While Hicksite ministers wished to maintain separation from “the world” and more quietistic worship expressions, the Gurneyites collaborated with non-Quaker voluntary associations that were prolific during the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century. Again, ministers of both branches were influential in proclaiming the message that coincided with their vision of Quakerism, and enforcing that vision through their respective disciplinary structures.

The structure of Quaker committees, officers, ministers and elders developed gradually over time. Eventually, the elders designation fell away, but “weighty” Friends continued to be appointed to sit with ministers, mentor younger ministers, and provide spiritual leadership for the community. Ministers continued to be regarded as men and women who were definitely called by God to preach the gospel, and who were equipped spiritually to fulfill that calling. Quaker committees and bodies, in theory, only acknowledged and recorded the calling already being exhibited within monthly meetings.

Meeting minutes and recordings became a means to verify a minister’s status. When it became important to appoint special meetings of ministers, the question arose as to who was and wasn’t a member, and, who was and wasn’t a minister. Since the 1670s, Friends had developed a consistent practice of keeping minutes. Now these minutes were also places to record the names of approved Quaker ministers. When a visiting minister wished to attend and speak at London Yearly Meeting, they wrote their name in a book. If the name was not challenged, the minister became an accepted member of the proper meeting of ministers. In America, ministers who carried a certificate from their Monthly Meetings were allowed to minister in other Meetings and sit in on committees for ministers and elders.¹⁹

Self-described ministers were not always approved by the larger body of Friends. In 1722, a minister named William Gibson was denied access to a meeting of ministers in London. He appealed the decision to London Yearly Meeting. The Yearly Meeting decided that ministers must produce a certificate from their own monthly or quarterly meeting before they could be

¹⁹ Russell, *The History of Quakerism*, 219–20.

enrolled in meetings of ministers. These meetings of ministers, then, requested monthly meetings to furnish lists of recognized ministers. “Thus the custom of ‘recording’ ministers arose in London Yearly Meeting.”²⁰ The initiative for recording ministers was to be undertaken by the meeting of ministers and elders at the monthly and quarterly meeting levels. There could have been many persons in each meeting recorded as ministers in the meeting’s minutes. These would be those individuals who were seen as having gifts of vocal ministry. They often ministered at monthly, quarterly, and yearly meeting levels and who were occasionally, or frequently, called by God to travel in the ministry.

III. The Pastoral System (1870ish – present day)

The pastoral system arose to meet the spiritual needs of a rapidly expanding Quaker membership. In Indiana Yearly Meeting during the 1880s, a Friends membership of 18,000 received 9,000 applications for membership. In many meetings, there were no experienced Friends and newcomers could receive little explanation of Quaker faith and little spiritual care. Since Quakers generally believed that all Friends were equally responsible for the care of the meeting, in some cases, no Friends in particular rose to the occasion. The care and oversight of these meetings was often sporadic and inconsistent. Some of these Friends developed pastoral committees to care for the membership. Other Friends, influenced by the experiences of revivalist evangelicals sought to establish a pastoral system that looked similar to the Wesleyan-Holiness denominations they encountered.²¹ Those appointed as pastors could articulate a conversion and a calling. Their primary goal was consistent preaching and teaching, both during meeting for worship and more broadly in the community. Soon, the responsibilities of these pastors grew to administrative oversight and regular teaching. With the growing responsibility came the financial releasing of some Quaker pastors to serve their meetings in a full-time capacity. At the time, these pastors were justified by Quaker leaders as the natural progression of apostolic ministry deriving from the Valiant Sixty.

²⁰ Ibid., 220.

²¹ Dandelion, *Introduction to Quakerism*, 110.

This quote by Elwood Siler, in 1887, from “Ben” Pink Dandelion’s *An Introduction to Quakerism*, describes the purpose and hopes of the pastoral system:

Every church must be provided with a living gospel ministry, someone whose business it is to care for the flock; to visit the sick – to look after the newly awakened, and lead them to the feet of the Saviour; to encourage the new convert, pray with, and for them, and to teach them the way of salvation more perfectly; to visit the membership of the church at their homes, socially and religiously; share with them their joys and sorrows; enter into sympathy with them in their trials and difficulties; see that none stray from the fold and become prodigals; reprove those who sin, and win them back if possible to the path of duty; if differences arise between brethren, see that the gospel order is followed speedily, that the matter be adjusted and settled in privacy before it be known abroad and the cause suffer loss.²²

Dandelion notes that the pastoral system did not always work as hoped. The Quaker infrastructure was underdeveloped to support, develop and train pastors. Because of the rapid growth of Quakers in this era, and the shortage of Quakers prepared to carry on this ministry, pastors were sometimes imported from other denominations and had little introduction to Quaker practices. Smaller meetings could not support a full-time pastor and so circuits of pastors developed with spotty coverage.²³

Around the turn of the twentieth century through the middle of the century, American churches engaged in a series of theological and social conflicts known as the Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy. The primary issues of division among Christians at this time regarded 1) the nature of biblical authority and the new biblical criticism that questioned inerrancy and supernatural inspiration; 2) evolution and miracles; and, 3) whether the focus of the church’s mission should be on social causes or conversions. While many today may dismiss these divisions as artificial binaries, they were very real and polarizing at the time. These issues were just as divisive among Quakers of the Pacific Northwest as they were among Christian churches

²² *Ibid.*, 110–11.

²³ *Ibid.*, 111.

in general.²⁴ Like other denominations, pastoral Quakers developed new systems for approving/disapproving of ministers as a means to support one interpretation of the Quaker message and avoid contamination with heresy. These methods included the development of Bible Schools that supported fundamentalist doctrines, and, often, separation from Quaker groups that were deemed too liberal, both Pastoral and Unprogrammed. Oregon Yearly Meeting's (now Northwest Yearly Meeting) decision to separate from Five Years Meeting (now Friends United Meeting) was part of these larger divisions. Among pastoral Friends, committees for recommending new ministers were careful to guard the yearly meeting from modernizing influences. Quaker groups like the American Friends Service Committee were seen as proxies for liberalizing trends among Friends generally. Thus, willingness to affiliate with AFSC, or refusal to do so, was something of a litmus test for Quaker positions along the Fundamentalist-Modernist spectrum.²⁵

Currently, there are many pathways to ministry among pastoral Friends. Ministers still articulate a "calling," but the vocabulary of that calling varies dramatically. Within meetings and yearly meetings there are processes of discernment meant to clarify a would-be pastor's calling. Some meetings hold the recording of their pastors, while for other Friends these recordings are held and approved by yearly meeting authorities and held at yearly meeting headquarters. Meetings can employ pastors who have not been recorded. This becomes more prevalent where recording processes are seen as political, cumbersome, a "rubber stamp," or obscure. Nonetheless, official recording facilitates the ministry of those who feel called to a life-long ministry of some sort. The US government regards recorded Quaker ministers as having the same tax and civic privileges and protections as ordained ministers of other denominations.

Quaker public ministry is diverse, ranging from chaplaincy, to pastoral ministry, to missionaries, to conference speaking, writing, and other forms. There are commonalities among the activities of these ministers, though. Ministers are concerned with the spiritual education and nurture of their meetings, groups or audiences. Some pastors seek conversions, others seek to be agents of social and spiritual healing. Divisions within yearly meetings are often responses to

²⁴ Timothy Burdick, "Neo-Evangelical Identity within American Religious Society of Friends (Quakers): Oregon Yearly Meeting, 1919 - 1947" (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 2013), 7, <http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/4152/1/Burdick13PhD.pdf>.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 201–10.

disagreements about what message pastors should proclaim and which methods pastors should employ.

While the Recording process is intended to identify those with gifts for ministry in a way that enhances their public witness, even here there is disagreement. Some social and theological views are seen as automatic disqualifiers from ministry. Would-be ministers and their supporters within yearly meetings can become disillusioned, viewing the process as a litmus test and political rather than Spirit led. In other words, the same tensions present in George Fox's discipline of Nayler, Perrot, and Keith are present in contemporary Quaker struggles to testify to the Truth while being open to the Spirit, whatever that may mean.

The present day practice of issuing licenses to ministers who are not recorded may be analogous to earlier Quaker understandings of certificates to sanction a particular ministry for short duration, though travel certificates/minutes are still issued as well. A continued reliance on licensed ministers may imply, also, a breakdown in the recording process and confusion as to the personal and spiritual value of recording.

In the Majority World, where Quakers are most numerous, pastors and evangelists travel widely in ways similar to the apostolic ministry of the first Quakers.²⁶

Contemporary views of yearly meeting authority have changed from those of early Quakerism, and along with it has changed the processes of recording ministers. For the first 150 years, yearly meeting authority was almost absolute, and, so too, was the yearly meeting's capacity to decide who the ministers were and what vision of Quakerism would be preached. Group discernment and an emphasis on unity sometimes works to assure the status quo, while at other times it facilitates powerful witness. Modern changes in views of yearly meeting authority, and understandings of the foundation for Quaker unity, means that dissenting voices can now reorganize and follow leading in new directions while still purporting an essential unity, though this claim is contested depending on one's perspective of the issues at hand. A reconsideration of recording processes and purposes could be beneficial alongside new views of the roles of yearly meetings in facilitating ministry.

²⁶ Margery Post Abbott and Peggy Senger Parsons, eds., *Walk Worthy of Your Calling: Quakers and the Travelling Ministry* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2004).

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