

Handbook for Formal Care of Friends Called to Ministry or Witness

to accompany

“Nurturing Faithfulness to Leadings of the Spirit
in Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting”

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I. Determining when to submit one's leading to the discernment and care of the meeting

Friends may consult informally with the Committee on Gifts and Leadings at any time. A member of the committee may help the Friend discover appropriate support within the existing activities of the meeting—perhaps by joining a small group on spiritual disciplines or prayer, or forming a spiritual friendship, or calling together an informal clearness committee.

In general, it is appropriate to explore a relationship of greater accountability to the meeting when one or more of the following conditions are present:

- When a concern has begun to settle into a clear leading to action that may involve spiritual, physical, and/or financial burdens or risks;
- When others in the informal structures offer encouragement to test the leading or call to ministry in a more formal way;
- When a leading seems to have ripened under informal care to the point where faithfulness will best continue to grow by being submitted to the fuller support of and accountability to the meeting;
- When a Friend already engaged in public ministry feels a need for grounding in the discernment of the community lest s/he run ahead of, or lag behind, the Guide;
- When a Friend carrying a message faces challenges to remaining grounded in what s/he knows when others are raising questions about it, and/or may endure attacks from those who are challenged by the message;
- When it is recognized within the meeting that a member has become a “public Friend” who is teaching or organizing in or on behalf of the Religious Society of Friends and that his/her work might benefit from the meeting’s support, care, and testing;
- When the meeting’s endorsement or financial support is a useful next step in the full expression of a member’s ministry;
- When a person is nudged to submit his/her leading to the discipline of the meeting.

When an individual feels ready to explore submitting the leading in a more formal way to the meeting’s discernment, s/he should write a letter to the meeting for business asking the meeting to enter into a relationship of care and accountability with regard to the leading.

The Committee on Gifts and Leadings’ relationship to requests for formal support in faithfulness is similar to Membership Care Committee’s relationship to requests for membership or marriage. That is, requests will go to the meeting for business and be referred to the Committee on Gifts and Leadings which at a later time will bring recommendations to the meeting for business.

II. Clearness

Note: The details below spell out the process for leadings to public ministry of teaching or organizing. Support for social witness or a stand of conscience is similar to but somewhat different and is discussed in a special section “*Support for a Social Witness or Stand of Conscience*” on page 16.

A. Clearness of the Individual

Testing for clearness is a spiritual exercise which requires that the person seeking clearness and the members of the committee all enter in a spirit of trust, teachability, and openness to the guidance of the Spirit. Occasionally members of a clearness committee may meet separately from the focus person in order to clarify process or address obstacles to unity; however, the report to the Committee on Gifts and Leadings will be produced jointly with the focus person. While there are suggestions below on issues to reflect on in seeking clearness, clearness is not found in the correct answers to a set of questions. It is found in the collective sense of having discerned the leadings of the Spirit. A clearness process that has been favored by the movement of the Spirit may produce an unexpected and surprising outcome.

1. Appointing a Clearness Committee

When there is a need for testing of the leading or exploration of how the meeting might most appropriately support the Friend in her/his faithfulness, the Committee on Gifts and Leadings will appoint a clearness committee to join the Friend in a process of discernment.

In some instances, the Committee on Gifts and Leadings may feel clear to bring a recommendation supporting a Friend’s request directly to the meeting for business without a further clearness process. This is most likely to be appropriate when the work has been known to the meeting or where it has been tested through other meeting channels (such as a small group in the meeting).

2. Responsibilities of the clearness committee

The clearness committee should be attentive to two responsibilities:

- assisting the individual in seeking clearness as to the nature of the leading and its timeliness and rightness;
- assisting the meeting in discerning its appropriate role.

The clearness committee will usually meet one to three times, or as needed, to come to clarity and unity. Should concerns arise at any stage in the clearness process the clearness committee or the person seeking clearness may consult with the Committee on Gifts and Leadings for support and guidance.

3. Testing Clearness

The first step in the clearness process is to assist the individual to come to a deeper clarity about the leading, what is being asked and whether way is open for responding. Through a clearness process a person who feels a leading of the Spirit can come to a deeper clarity about the nature of the call and a fuller understanding of how submitting to the meeting’s care and discernment may empower it.

Below are suggestions of issues to reflect on in seeking clearness.

- a. *The nature of the call:* What is its nature? How has the person come to feel that she or he is being called to this service? How does this call fit into his or her personal and spiritual life?
- b. *Ways in which the person already feels clear:* In what ways does the person feel already clear? What questions and concerns is s/he seeking to clarify?

- c. *Potential benefits of the proposed ministry:* What are the potential benefits to the person's spiritual development? What are the potential benefits to the wider community? What are the potential benefits to the life of the meeting as it seeks to learn the ways of faithfulness?
- d. *Readiness to undertake the ministry:* Is the person prepared to undertake this ministry at this time? How does it fit into other obligations such as family, work, or community? Does the person have the skills and resources to carry out this call? What steps might be taken to become better prepared for undertaking the ministry? What are the risks and how will they be borne?
- e. *Financial readiness:* How will the person support him- or herself while carrying out this ministry? Is she or he prepared to go forward even if the level of funds available may require living on significantly reduced means?
- f. *Rightness of seeking support:* Is it appropriate to ask others to join in this ministry by providing spiritual, practical, or financial support? Sometimes there may be clearness that this is something the individual is called to bear alone. In exploring whether there is a role for the meeting, is the person prepared to engage prayerfully with others without resentment and disruption of his or her relationship to the meeting community?
- g. *Adequacy of support:* Does the work require more financial or practical resources than the individual can reasonably carry alone? Is the needed financial or practical support available? If not, can the ministry be carried forward faithfully in a less demanding form and/or is it rightly ordered to wait until way more fully opens?

Discerning the clearness of the individual may produce a variety of outcomes:

- If the individual concludes that there is not a call to religious service or that this is not the right time to act on the call, the Committee on Gifts and Leadings would report this outcome to the meeting for business. The Friend seeking clearness may continue to season the leading, perhaps by joining a discernment group.
- If there is clearness for the individual to go forward, the clearness committee will proceed to discern what support from the meeting would be most rightly ordered. (see below “Discerning the nature of the meeting’s support”).
- On relatively rare occasions the committee and the individual may not find unity on the rightness of proceeding with the leading at this time. This is not a “failure” or a “bad outcome.” Rather, it signifies the need for further searching and growth in the Spirit by the individual, the meeting, or both. Our Quaker forebears such as John Woolman and Lucretia Mott found themselves in this position with their meetings at times. It is an occasion for prayerfulness and humility for all concerned. The time of waiting may bring forward a ministry that is deepened and honed in ways that might not have been possible if the ministry moved forward when originally proposed.

If a lack of unity should occur, the Friend should reconsider carefully. The individual and the committee may agree on a process for further seasoning the leading or further educating the meeting on the concern. If the person feels called to act on the concern despite the reservations, *Faith and Practice* advises that care should be taken to avoid bitterness and division.

B. Discerning the nature of the meeting’s support

When a sense of unity and clarity is reached as to the rightness of the leading, the clearness committee moves on to discern how the meeting might best support the Friend in faithfulness.

An individual’s clarity to act on a leading does not necessarily imply that it is rightly ordered for the meeting to undertake any specific form of involvement. It may be found that the Friend is clear to move forward but that no further involvement of the meeting is needed or desired beyond informing the meeting of the progress of the ministry and holding the Friend in love and prayer.

More formal support of the meeting may take one or more of the following forms:

- Minuting the meeting's readiness to hold in its care the Friend's faithfulness to the leading;
- Providing a Spiritual Accountability Group to care for the minister's faithfulness;
- Providing a letter or minute affirming the clarity of our member's call to religious service;
- Providing financial or practical support;
- Providing companions for travel;
- Providing affirmation to another Friends organization;
- Affirming that the meeting is in unity with the ministry and under the weight of the concern;
- Other recommendations as the clearness committee or Committee on Gifts and Leadings is led.

Each of these forms of meeting support is described in its own section of the Handbook. As the Clearness Committee proceeds with its work it should review the various forms of support that might be rightly ordered for this individual. Each sections include queries to help the clearness committee discern whether that form of support would be useful and appropriate for the Friend seeking support.

C. Report of the Clearness Committee

The clearness committee reports to the Committee on Gifts and Leadings. On reviewing the report the Committee on Gifts and Leadings may refer to the clearness committee any additional questions that should be clarified before reporting to the meeting for business. As needed, the committee will work with the clearness committee in identifying members for a Dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group or with identifying a Mutual Spiritual Accountability Group which the minister might join. The Committee on Gifts and Leadings may also assist in drafting a minute of religious service if there is to be one.

The report of the clearness committee to the Committee on Gifts and Leadings should include:

1. Description of the leading and of the request to the meeting;
2. Clarity as to the nature and clarity of the leading;
3. Clarity as to the timeliness of the leading;
4. Recommendations to the meeting for business regarding the meeting's relationship to the ministry;
5. Details regarding recommended actions of the meeting (any that apply):
 - a. Spiritual Accountability Group of which the minister will be a part or names for a Dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group;
 - b. the meeting's relationship with Quaker work outside the meeting with which the work will be affiliated (e.g., PYM or FGC);
 - c. draft of a minute or letter (see sample letter, *page 10*);
 - d. recommendation regarding financial support from the meeting. If no financial support is needed at this time but a request in the future is anticipated it is good to let the meeting know that a further recommendation may be coming forward;
 - e. if funds are to be solicited outside the meeting, recommendations should include request for approval of solicitation of funds and include information about and the meeting's relationship to that support. (for more detailed information about financial support, see *Financial Support, page 11*)

At the conclusion of the clearness process, the Committee on Gifts and Leadings will report to the meeting for business. In discerning its right response to the report, the meeting should discern its readiness to enter into a commitment to engage tenderly with the Friend as s/he seeks to be responsive to the Spirit's guidance.

Approval for taking a Friend's faithfulness to a leading under the meeting's care is for a specified period of time of up to one year. If the leading continues beyond one year, the meeting will once again discern the form(s) of support that are most appropriate in each new season of the ministry.

III. The Meeting's Care

From C, page 6 of "Nurturing Faithfulness in CPMM"

When the meeting has taken a Friend's faithfulness to a leading under its care, all members of the meeting are asked to hold the individual in prayer and to hold a tender interest in the work. In addition, a specific group will be appointed to act on behalf of the meeting in holding the Friend's faithfulness in prayer, offering care, asking hard questions, and holding the person accountable to the Spirit and responsible to the meeting. Most ongoing ministries will be held in Mutual Spiritual Accountability Groups with others in the care of the meeting. A Dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group for response to a specific leading may be formed when it is discerned that the work is newly beginning or in a period of transition which requires more focused care.

A. Spiritual Accountability

1. A person whose faithfulness to a leading is under the care of the meeting will become part of a Spiritual Accountability Group at the recommendation of the Committee on Gifts and Leadings and with approval of the meeting. A Spiritual Accountability Group is to be attentive to the following issues in supporting the faithfulness of a minister:

- a. *Ongoing spiritual care of the minister and the ministry:* Is the minister faithfully exercising his or her gifts and responding to the call? Is the ministry filled with a rich sense of the presence of God? Is the minister nurturing his or her spiritual life while carrying out this work? Is the minister able to care for her/his health and well being and fulfill other responsibilities while carrying out the work?
- b. *Responsible conduct of the ministry:* Are the means of fulfilling the ministry appropriate to the call? Are the methods used focused and responsive to the minute if there is one? Is this minister in right relationship with others doing similar work and open to learning from and collaborating with them?
- c. *Financial accountability:* If funding is being provided by the meeting or other Friends groups, is there a clearly expressed and adequate budget? Are funds being raised in appropriate ways, representing the work and its goals accurately, and representing the role of the meeting accurately? Is the committee satisfied that funds are being properly accounted for, being spent for the purpose for which they were granted, and that appropriate and timely reports are made to the funders?
- d. *Adequacy of support:* Though the Spiritual Accountability Group is not responsible for obtaining financial or other support for the ministry, it should take care to review with the minister the adequacy of support for the work. Is adequate funding available for the ministry to go forward without harm to the minister or to his or her responsibilities to family and dependents? Are adequate structures and networks of support available for the ministry to proceed effectively? Should time be taken out from the ministry to develop support structures and obtain funding? Does inadequate support suggest that clearness to proceed be reviewed?
- e. *Companions for travel:* If the minister travels outside the meeting, would it be useful for him/her to travel with a spiritual companion? The committee should welcome reports from others who travel with the minister about ways the ministry can best be supported. (*See "Companions for Travel in the Ministry, page 14"*)
- f. *Changes in the leading:* As the leading evolves over time it is the responsibility of the Spiritual Accountability Group to discern whether the form of the meeting's care should also change. Is it rightly ordered for the new shape of the ministry to be under the meeting's care? If there is a minute of religious service, should it be modified to conform to the changes? Is the call continuing or has the time come to lay down the ministry? What are next steps for laying down the ministry or transforming it to a new stage?

- g. *Ongoing care of the minister*: Is the minister ready to move to some other form of care? If it has been under the care of a Dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group is the minister ready to move to the care of a Mutual Spiritual Accountability Group (see below)? Should the work continue under the care of the meeting or move to the care of some other body? Has the ministry moved into a form that no longer requires a commitment of care and accountability with the meeting or other Friends body?

2. Specific tasks of Spiritual Accountability Groups

- a. The Spiritual Accountability Group should meet with the minister on a regular basis to review the concerns listed above. *Most committees meet monthly.*
- b. The group should remain in touch with the work. Spiritual Accountability Group members might travel as companions from time to time in order to keep informed about the spirit of the ministry.
- c. The committee holds the minister in prayer, especially in periods when the minister is traveling and teaching.
- d. If the ministry has been receiving financial support of the meeting, it is a responsibility of the Spiritual Accountability Group to assure that the minister is working to discover how the ministry might become independent of the meeting's financial support, which is understood to be time limited (*see Financial Support, page 11*).
- e. The group should maintain communication between the ministry and the meeting. This can take several forms such as encouraging the minister to share experiences of the ministry through the meeting newsletter; or, if the ministry includes teaching or witnessing, arranging opportunities for the minister to teach or witness within the meeting.
- f. The Spiritual Accountability Group reports to the Committee on Gifts and Leadings at least once yearly and more frequently if guidance is needed.

Annual or final reports should include:

- (1) The activities carried out and any results of those activities
- (2) How the ministry has contributed to the spiritual growth of the minister and of those whom she or he has served
- (3) If applicable, a financial report listing sources and amount of income, nature and amount of expenses, and the distribution of any surplus.
- (4) Recommendations for continuing, laying down, changing the form of the ministry or changing the form of meeting's support. A recommendation that the minute be changed or that the ministry be laid down may come at any time in the life of the ministry. *In evaluating clearness to continue, the Spiritual Accountability Group should be guided by the Clearness section of this document.*

3. Membership of Spiritual Accountability Groups

“Mutual” and “Dedicated” Spiritual Accountability Groups refers to the membership of the group which holds a minister's faithfulness in its care. Both types of group carry the responsibilities listed above.

- a. *Mutual Spiritual Accountability Groups* are made up of two or more members whose ministries are under the care of the meeting, and two or three other individuals who have gifts in the area of discernment. The Committee on Gifts and Leadings works to establish Mutual Spiritual Accountability Groups in which the ministries are similar in nature and/or in which the ministers feel a readiness to hold one another's work in their care.

The expectation is that most ministries will be held in mutual Spiritual Accountability Groups. By providing mutual care, ministers can come to experience their calling the context

of the varied work of the Spirit among Friends and can learn from seeking together with experienced ministers.

A minister's faithfulness remains in the care of a mutual Spiritual Accountability Group until either (1) the work is ready to be laid down or (2) it is discerned that being part of the group is no longer useful to the minister or the ministry or (3) the ministry is moving into a new phase that would be helped by having a dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group for a period of time while that new phase settles into place.

At large members of a Spiritual Accountability Group are appointed by the Committee on Gifts and Leadings and their term of service is reviewed annually.

- b. *Dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group:* A clearness committee may recommend that a dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group be formed to work specifically with one minister around a particular leading. Experience has shown that often it takes a year for a minister to refine her/his leading, learn the rhythms of corporate testing and discernment, and discern the appropriate means for carrying out the ministry. It is a time of settling into the care of the meeting. The Committee on Gifts and Leadings will appoint three to five Friends who have gifts in prayer and discernment to serve on a dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group. It is generally the intention of the meeting that a minister be in the care of a dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group for not more than one year, and if the ministry continues in the care of the meeting after that time the Friend would become part of a mutual Spiritual Accountability Group. One or more members of the dedicated group may move with the minister to the mutual group. In consultation with the dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group, the Committee on Gifts and Leadings may recommend that the focused care of the dedicated group be extended for an additional period.

Queries to assist in discerning whether a Spiritual Accountability Group is appropriate:

- a. What supports are already available? Can this leading be appropriately supported through entering into ongoing structures of the meeting in an intentional way? Is the Friend aware of resources, such as a spiritual friendship or a discernment group (see page 6 of *Nurturing Faithfulness*), that might provide the care that is needed?
- b. Is the work of such short duration or under the care of another Friends' body (FGC, PYM) so that no formal committee for discernment and care from CPMM is needed?
- c. Will the leading thrive most fully in the rigor of a Spiritual Accountability Group or in the more gentle holding of a discernment group (page 6 of *Nurturing Faithfulness*)?
- d. Is the Friend prepared to share discernment with others and to be accountable to the meeting for the faithful exercise of the leading? If not, how will the Friend achieve ongoing discernment and spiritual accountability?
- e. Does the conduct of the work place the Friend at risk of outrunning the Guide, or spiritual pride, or difficulty in discerning limits? Would it be beneficial to the individual, or to the ministry, to have others help to ground the work in faithfulness to the Spirit's guidance?
- f. Might the individual be at risk of lagging behind the Guide and benefit from being held accountable to a committee?
- g. Is the meeting affirming the calling with a minute of religious service, and, thus, should it feel more responsible for the faithful discharge of the calling?
- h. Is the ministry at a beginning stage or tender transition for which it would be rightly ordered to have a Dedicated Committee? Or is the ministry more established or more stable, and best cared for in the context of a Mutual Spiritual Accountability Group with others active in ministry? Is the Friend prepared to provide care and discernment to others in a Mutual Spiritual Accountability Group?

B. Minutes of Religious Service

1. Overview

If the meeting approves taking the minister's faithfulness under its care, that approval will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting for business in which the action is taken. Formal minutes of religious service are generally given when a member is traveling to other meetings or Friends organizations and when the nature of the leading is one of teaching or of organizing around a concern. The meeting's minute says to the receiving group that we have tested the Friend's leading and found not only that the person is clear in a leading to this work, but also that the meeting is easy with the message the Friend is carrying and with the right ordering of the Friend's work. It calls upon other Friends to give consideration to the message the minister is carrying. When the travel takes the Friend outside the bounds of the yearly meeting, *Faith and Practice* calls for the minute to be endorsed by Interim Meeting or the Yearly Meeting Committee on Worship and Ministry.

The practice of carrying a minute has largely fallen into disuse among Friends. It is unusual that a meeting which has invited a visiting Friend to speak or lead a workshop will ask to see a letter from the meeting. On the other hand, some Friends who travel have found it useful to remind those whom they are visiting that their work is grounded in the care of their home meeting by presenting their minute for endorsement.

The meeting will consider issuing a minute of religious service on the recommendation of the Committee on Gifts and Leadings. In general, a minute of religious service is not a broad statement of all the qualities and concerns of the person, but specific to a certain work and perhaps to a certain period of travel.

2. Composing a minute:

The clearness committee or Spiritual Accountability Group, where one exists, will work with the Committee on Gifts and Leadings to prepare a draft of a minute of religious service for approval by the meeting. The purpose of a minute is to affirm that the minister is not traveling on his/her own authority, but with the support of a meeting and carrying out a work the meeting recognizes as a call to ministry.

In general it includes the following elements:

- That the meeting supports the work, naming the work as explicitly as possible (in general we do not want to create a wide open minute that says we support anything and everything that the minister might feel led to do);
- Name the meeting's clarity about the work, why we think this is an important work for Friends and/or for the world;
- Affirm that we believe the person really is led to do the work. (Sometimes this includes saying how the person's life and spiritual path have led him/her to this work at this time);
- Affirm that we believe the person is able to do the work with reasonable skill and grace, (sometimes this includes describing the person's gifts for the work);
- Say that the work is under the care of the meeting;
- Ask the readers for their support.

Sample Minute

Dear Friends:

The following minute was adopted by Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting in our meeting for business on DATE.

NAME, a member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, laid before the meeting a concern to BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MINISTRY (e.g., to remind Friends of the unity of all humanity OR to provide training in non-violent direct action.) The meeting has tested this leading and found NAME clear and faithful in seeking to follow the guidance of the Spirit in this matter.

Central Philadelphia recognizes DESCRIBE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK (e.g., that training in nonviolent direct action is an important part of extending the peace testimony in our time). NAME has carried this concern for many years, has worked in THIS WAY AND THAT. We in CPMM have witnessed the growth of her/his gifts and her/his faithfulness.

NAME comes to you with the blessing and support of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting. We hope that her/his time among you will be an occasion of growth in the Spirit for her/him and for you.

Sincerely,

Clerk of Meeting

3. Requests from Other Friends Groups for Discernment and Affirmation

When FGC or the Pemberton Fund or other organization inquires of the meeting whether a Friend has a true leading and the requisite gifts to undertake some work on behalf of our Religious Society, the Committee on Gifts and Leadings will give attention to what is being asked by the organization seeking our testimony, consider what we already know of the Friend's work, and tailor the process accordingly. The committee will then bring a recommendation to the meeting for business for approval.

Queries to assist in discerning whether a formal letter or minute is indicated.

- a. Is it a work, for example among Friends, where a letter from the meeting will strengthen the work?
if, yes to query "a":
- b. Would the Friend feel strengthened in the work by carrying a minute?
- c. Is the meeting prepared to recommend this ministry to others:
 - (1) Is the meeting easy with the message that is being carried?
 - (2) Is the proposed action well focused on the concern? Is the method of responding to the call one in which the meeting has confidence? Does the person have the necessary gifts and skills?
 - (3) Is this ministry in right relationship with others addressing this concern?

C. Financial Support of Ministries

1. Background on Friends Practice

There is a tradition among Friends of avoiding a “hireling ministry.” George Fox likened hireling priests and the compulsory tithes by which they were paid to the false prophets mentioned in the Bible. Robert Barclay wrote, “ ‘Those who have received this holy and unspotted gift have received it without cost and should give it without charge.’ (Matt 10:8) They should certainly not use it as a trade to earn money.”

On the other hand, Barclay goes on in the same paragraph to say, “But, if God has called any of them from their regular employment or the trade by which they earn their living, they should receive such worldly necessities as food and clothing. It is lawful for them to accept these as far as they feel allowed by the Lord, and as far as they are freely and cordially given by those with whom they have shared spiritual matters.” And Fox writes, “If any minister of Jesus Christ...who said, freely ye have received, freely give, comes to our house and ministers unto us spiritual things, we will set before him our carnal things: and he that soweth unto us spiritual things, it is the least that we minister unto him of our carnal things.”

Our *Faith and Practice* provides that “The monthly meeting issuing [a minute of religious service] should see that insofar as possible the proposed service is not hampered by a lack of funds or other support.” (p. 57) and “In cases where Meeting approval is given ...which may result in allowing Friends to be released to follow such leadings, the meeting often takes responsibility for providing financial assistance and family support...” (p.66)

While some among us may be called to travel in the ministry, others may be called to provide for financial support. In appealing to Friends for support of those traveling in the ministry, Margaret Fell asked Friends to give so “the burden not lie more heavily on [the ministers] than on others.”

2. The Practice of Central Philadelphia Meeting

In most instances faithful exercise of one’s gifts has little or no impact on that Friend’s financial life. As a Friend grows in ministry s/he discovers ways to adjust his/her lifestyle to accommodate the demands of ministry.

Subsidizing out-of-pocket costs of the ministry: Sometimes, although one is able to provide for one’s own livelihood, one may be unable to sustain the out-of-pocket costs of the ministry. In recent years, CPMM has set aside money in the budget to help defray those costs. These funds have been made available in the form both of outright grants and of grants to match contributions to the ministry made by meeting members.

Providing support for the minister’s living expenses: Relatively rarely, a Friend is found to have a burning leading that impedes her or his ability to hold regular work to provide for her/his support and that of her/his family. It is appropriate for the meeting to test such a leading closely, through a clearness committee or Spiritual Accountability Group, to discern if it is rightly ordered for the minister to seek support for living expenses.

If the meeting is clear that the leading is true and urgent and incompatible with earning a living, the meeting can support and encourage the Friend in finding ways to raise financial support. This might include: discovering an organization that might take the work under its care and provide a stipend, finding sources of grants to support the work, and raising funds among others who share the concern. To the extent that the meeting is able to do so, funds may also be granted from the meeting’s budget, and members of the meeting may share in the support of the Friend who is carrying out this work.

Generally, this extent of financial support would be given to a Friend whose work and leading have been growing over a period of years and whose faithfulness is known and trusted by the meeting. The work should be under the care of a Spiritual Accountability Group that, in the process of ongoing

discernment regarding the work, gives attention to whether this level of financial support is still rightly ordered, and to right stewardship of the funds.

3. Discerning the rightness of financial support

It is the responsibility of the clearness committee, or, if the need emerges later, the Spiritual Accountability Group, to establish the nature of the need, to explore whether it is rightly ordered that the meeting provide financial support, and after consulting with the Finance Advisory Committee regarding the availability of funds, to bring a recommendation to the meeting for business. See queries on discerning the rightness of financial support below (*Financial Support, page 13*).

In cases when there is no clearness committee or Spiritual Accountability Group and the need for funds is modest, the Committee on Gifts and Leadings, in consultation with the Finance Advisory Committee, may bring a recommendation directly to the meeting for business.

4. Discerning the level and form of financial support from CPMM

On discerning that it is rightly ordered for a ministry to receive financial support, the clearness committee or Spiritual Accountability Group would help the minister in estimating the expenses related to carrying out the work and the potential sources of funds, including the minister's own resources. Before making a financial request to the meeting for business, the Committee on Gifts and Leadings should consult with the Finance Advisory Committee as to what funds are available and how the support of this particular ministry affects the meeting's response to the needs of other ministries being supported by the meeting. In consultation with Finance Advisory, the committee would recommend to the meeting for business the amount of financial support.

[The meeting has discontinued its former practice of matching member contributions. The meeting will make outright grants. Members may still be solicited as noted in #6 below.]

5. Money from only one meeting source

Friends seeking funding for travel or projects may request funds from only one meeting source. For example, a member receiving funds from the member ministries line may not also seek conference funds from Worship and Ministry for a conference related to the ministry or receive a grant from a committee budget. Similarly, Necessitous Cases Committee should not be regarded as an additional source for planned expenses. Necessitous Cases funding is reserved for emergency needs such as extraordinary medical expenses, expenses in periods of financial stress, and inadequate pension to meet rising costs of retirement housing.

6. Raising funds inside and outside the meeting

A member for whom solicitation of funds within the meeting has been approved, may send out up to two letters to meeting members per year. The meeting will pay for the expense of duplication and postage. The timing of these letters should be coordinated with the Finance Advisory Committee in order not to be at the same time as appeals for support of the meeting (most years that would mean ministries would be asked not to solicit from mid-November through the end of December and from the beginning of May to the end of June.)

When possible, solicitations to outside sources should be in the name of the individual with the meeting's support rather than in the name of the meeting. If a funding source requires that a solicitation be made in the meeting's name, the application may be signed by the clerk of the meeting at the recommendation of the clearness committee or Spiritual Accountability Group and with approval of the meeting for business. Solicitations in the name of the meeting should be signed by the clerk of the meeting. Grant proposals in the meeting's name should be reviewed by the Spiritual Accountability Group to assure that what is proposed is in keeping with the meeting's understanding of the ministry.

7. Duration of financial support

It is difficult to know in advance what faithfulness will demand of the minister and of the meeting. However, in general, the meeting's funding for ministry is intended to assist in the start of a new project, perhaps declining over time, thus freeing up meeting funds to support other emerging ministries. At the time of requesting meeting funding it is helpful if the minister have a general sense of the duration and/or of a timeline for making the work independent of the meeting's financial support. A part of the meeting's care can be in assisting the minister in discovering stable sources of support for an ongoing work.

8. Tax consequences for the donor and the recipient

For the donor: Donors may receive a tax deduction for a contribution to the meeting *for a work of the meeting*. Thus, before channeling funds through the meeting, the ministry must be one that is under the meeting's care. Donations should be made to the project, not to the individual. For example, to the "nonviolence ministry" rather than "to George Lakey."

For the minister: When funds are provided to the minister as a reimbursement for expenses for which there are receipts, the payment is not taxable. However, funds for the minister's ordinary living expenses are taxable. The meeting will provide a form 1099 to the IRS and the minister will have to include this income on a schedule C.

Shifting the tax burden: If a donor makes a gift directly to the minister of less than an amount set by the IRS (in 2004 \$11,000), the minister will not have to pay income taxes on that gift, but the donor will not get a tax deduction.

Queries to assist in discerning whether financial support is appropriate

- a. Are the costs in terms of time, energy, money, and other resources reasonable and appropriate? Is there a well developed budget for the ministry? Has care been taken to be thorough in predicting expenses and identifying sources of funds?
- b. Is the person prepared to bear part or all of the out-of-pocket costs of the ministry? Is she or he prepared to live on reduced means while carrying out the ministry?
- c. Is carrying forward the ministry compatible with earning a living and maintaining other financial obligations? Is it perhaps untimely to undertake this work if it is in conflict with financial obligations? Are there other ways that the Friend can earn an income that would not interfere with responding to the leading?
- d. Are the recipients of the service able to cover all or part of the cost of the ministry? Are there other sources available for funding this ministry, e.g., Pemberton Fund, supporters of the activity outside Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, etc.? What relationship would the meeting have with these other sources? Considering the above sources, what level of funding from the meeting does the clearness committee find appropriate? Are the resources asked of the meeting available, and/or does the committee find concern sufficiently compelling to recommend that the meeting to dig deep to find the resources?
- e. Is the level of available funding adequate to meet at least the minimal needs of the ministry and the minister? If all of these sources total less than the anticipated need, what implication does this have for clearness to proceed?
- f. If no funding is needed at the present time, is there an anticipated need in the future for which the meeting should be prepared?

D. Companions for Travel in The Ministry

It has been the practice of Friends in the past to provide a companion for a minister traveling beyond the home meeting. *Faith and Practice* (PYM '97) describes it this way: "A Friend who proposes to travel under religious concern may find, as have Friends in the past, that it is a source of strength and comfort to be joined by another Friend who is sympathetic to the concern and able to give counsel and encouragement."

Though this practice has largely fallen into disuse, Friends in recent years who have traveled with a companion have testified to its benefits. Friends in CPMM who are traveling in the ministry are invited to experiment to discover whether they find that it empowers their ministry.

The companion's principal role is to help the traveling minister stay focused on the message s/he is carrying. The help might take the form of holding the minister in prayer or sitting together in worship, thus helping the minister to be centered and open to the movement of the Spirit. The work of the companion might be one of taking care of distractions and worries about travel arrangements, whether there are enough chairs, or the need for a glass of water nearby. Or the companion might reflect with the minister after a presentation on her/his sense of faithfulness, where s/he shied away from a difficult message, or where s/he seemed ahead of the Guide. When the work is difficult, the companion helps the minister keep from feeling discouraged.

When is a companion called for? All those who travel outside the bounds of the meeting to organize or teach can be encouraged to experiment with traveling with a companion. Friends who have traveled independently may be pleasantly surprised to discover a deeper sense of grounding and centering when they and the group are being held in prayer by a companion.

A companion is particularly useful in instances where the minister is carrying a message that is difficult to carry or may be difficult to receive. On the other hand, when no suitable companion is available or when it would cause considerable extra expense, the minister may be clear to travel alone.

How are companions identified? When there is a Spiritual Accountability Group, the group can help the traveling Friend identify a suitable companion for an upcoming journey. From time to time it is helpful for a member of that committee to accompany the minister so that the committee has a deeper understanding of the work.

The companion may be a member of the meeting or a person from another meeting, someone who wishes to travel with an experienced minister as s/he is growing into ministry him/herself, or the minister's spouse or partner. Ideally the companion is a person with gifts of centering and discernment and with whom the traveling Friend feels comfort and trust.

If the work is not under the care of a Spiritual Accountability Group the Committee on Gifts and Leadings can help to identify a traveling companion.

E. The Meeting in Unity With a Ministry and Under the Weight of the Concern

From D, page 6 of “Nurturing Faithfulness in CPMM”

Supporting a Friend in response to a leading means that the meeting recognizes the Spirit at work in the minister and is prepared to provide spiritual and practical support as the minister grows in faithfulness. It does not necessarily imply that the meeting as a whole is under the weight of the concern.

Sometimes, however, there is a feeling of unity between that person’s ministry and the aspirations of the meeting when the meeting finds itself under the weight of the concern. This is not something to be “requested and approved.” Rather it is something to emerge and be recognized in its time. It will likely represent a period of growing together between the ministry of the individual and the life of the meeting. And it will likely require growth and change on the part of both the meeting and the minister. It will certainly require a commitment of both the meeting and the minister to work together over time to deepen our understanding of one another and of the concern. It will require patience and care on both sides.

We have discovered that there is a distinction between supporting a member in ministry and feeling led corporately to join in carrying the concern with that member. As a meeting we have been clear about our support of a member in his/her ministry, but we are still growing toward an understanding of what it would require of us as a meeting to be corporately in such unity with the concern that we join with the minister in carrying it. Similarly, we are still growing into an understanding of when this is the appropriate response of the meeting. It is our sense in drafting these guidelines that while it may be a step beyond what we have experienced in the past, there will be times when this will be the right response of the meeting. When these times arise, we will live into what it means for the meeting community.

Perhaps the best way to answer this question of when is it appropriate for the meeting corporately join with the minister in the carrying of the concern is to say “when we are there, we will recognize it.” There may be instances when there is an immediate recognition of a concern being one for the meeting as a whole. However, it is more likely that the meeting will gradually, perhaps over a period of years, come to a common understanding, clarity, and commitment.

Queries to assist in discerning whether this is a ministry that the meeting might not only support but grow to unity with:

- a. Is this concern already broadly shared in the life of the meeting?
- b. Does the minister feel a calling to work within the meeting to increase other members’ understanding and involvement with the work?

F. Support for a Social Witness or Stand of Conscience

Friends may be called by the Spirit to witness to Friends testimonies by taking a public stand on a political or social matter. The most common examples are war tax resistance and draft resistance, or other acts of civil disobedience. Faithfully carrying out a witness can require courage and stamina and can involve financial risks or risk of imprisonment. Friends have a long history of supporting one another when suffering for the sake of conscience. The forms of support the meeting might provide are similar to, but slightly different from, support of a ministry of teaching or organizing; therefore, below are recommendations tailored to stands of conscience and social witness that can supplement the recommendations in earlier sections of this document.

1. Clearness:

A clearness process can help a Friend discern whether s/he is truly led to the stand which s/he is considering. Does s/he have a right understanding of the issues involved and the relationship of Friends testimonies to that issue? Is s/he aware of various options for taking the stand? Is s/he aware of the risks and willing and able to face them?

Often a member can find the support for his/her discernment through an informal clearness process with persons whom s/he invites. However, if it is anticipated that a minute or other support from the meeting will be needed or desired, the Friend may consult with the Committee on Gifts and Leadings as to whether it would be rightly ordered to ask the meeting to be formally a part of the discernment.

2. Recording in the minutes:

In some legal matters, particularly regarding draft resistance, it is helpful to be able to document that one's position is, indeed, based on conscience and deeply-held religious beliefs. Following the recommendation of the Committee on Gifts and Leadings, the meeting may choose to record in its minutes its support for a stand of conscience. Recording such a minute can be quite encouraging to a Friend undertaking a witness, and it benefits the meeting community by lifting up the concern for the consideration of others in the meeting.

3. Financial and other practical support:

In general, taking a stand of conscience implies a readiness to accept the consequences of the stand. Other members of the meeting may be led to support the stand by providing practical support such as accompanying a Friend to court; providing spiritual, emotional and practical support to the Friend's family; and sharing the financial burdens.

This support should not be taken for granted, however. It is important at the time of the clearness committee's report that the meeting have an understanding of the support that is needed or desired and to have an opportunity to indicate whether it feels ready to provide that support. (*See queries on financial support of ministries, page 13*). Also, the Friend should take care to remain in communication with the meeting if there is an escalation in the witness and a possibility of need for support beyond what the meeting has committed.

4. Ongoing support for discernment and deepening the witness:

A Friend undertaking a stand of conscience is encouraged to find sources of ongoing support. Support might come from a discernment group in the meeting, a yearly meeting working group, or a group of others undertaking a similar witness. At the beginning of a witness or during times of intense activity a Dedicated Spiritual Accountability Group may be appropriate. Where the witness presents a particular spiritual challenge of neither lagging behind nor running ahead of the Guide, and where the Friend wishes to submit her/his work to the testing of the meeting, it may be rightly ordered for the Friend to be part of a Mutual Spiritual Accountability Group. See *Spiritual Accountability, page 6*. for queries on discerning whether a Spiritual Accountability Group or some other support is appropriate.