

## PREFACE

Friends believe in the universal priesthood of believers who have a diversity of gifts and callings with a ministry for each one to render accordingly.

The Apostle Paul devoted much time to instruction regarding spiritual gifts and the gifts of the Spirit. He wrote, “now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be uninformed...there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of workings, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one...To one is given through the spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit” (I Corinthians 12, RSV).

Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit endows all Christian believers with specific gifts of service, so that the church will be a ministering body. When all members give the proper exercise of these gifts, the promotion of God’s business will prosper.

Although the scriptures teach that every Christian believer is a minister when the believer functions out of Spirit endowed abilities, they also state that God has given some persons special gifts for the express purpose of nurturing and training the body of believers for the ministry to which they are called. Paul expresses this clearly in Ephesians 4:11-13. “It was he (Christ) who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (NIV).

## WHAT IS RECORDING?

The Friends’ practice of Recording for ministry raises many questions for those who are new to Quaker faith and practice. Even those who have lived as Friends all or most of their lives may not understand fully the concept of Recording or the reasons behind it. This confusion is understandable, due partially to the fact that ministry for early Friends involved a fundamental paradox. They recognized and conducted an effective ministry of their own that was extremely powerful and well developed, a ministry in which full sermons by leading ministers such as George Fox were preserved and printed. Yet they also criticized heavily and rejected the state-supported clerical system of their day. They referred to its ministers and priests as “hirelings,” not chiefly because they were supported financially, but because they responded to ministry as if it were more like a job than a calling from God.

The practice of Recording reflects the paradox. Friends stressed universal ministry, that all men and women in Christ are ministers enabled by His grace and power no matter what their occupation or station in life. Yet they also stressed ministry in a specialized sense. They recognized that some were gifted by God with unusual abilities for public ministry and were, therefore, given unusual responsibilities. They established a kind of pastoral system so that the flocks of newly converted seekers could be nurtured. No salaries were paid, but there were family allowances even in the earliest days.

It became the practice of Friends to Record the names of those who exhibited unusual gifts for public ministry. They believed these persons were ordained of God to use their gifts to train, nurture, and build up the Meeting in the ways of the Lord. Recording was an endorsement of their ministry, recognition not that they could become ministers, but that they had been called by God and already were ministers. Recording does not confer the gifts and authority for ministry; that is the special prerogative of God. But, when an individual is Recorded, those who receive that person's ministry know that he or she and the ministry have the endorsement of a wider body of Friends as possessing integrity.

The Recording of a person should not be done lightly or without careful and prayerful consideration. This person's specialized gifts are for the training and nurturing of those in the universal ministry. It is important that there be mutual recognition that the candidate for Recording does indeed possess these gifts and is using them. Mere possession of spiritual gifts, knowledge, and abilities is not enough. These need to be nurtured and channeled in appropriate directions to be used most effectively. This is done in reliance upon God's leading and guidance, using the resources He has made available for growth and understanding. This should be done in community to further insure the integrity of the ministry that is shared.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES OF MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES

It is a high privilege to be called of God as a minister of the Gospel. It is also a privilege to be accepted as a candidate for Recording by Iowa Yearly Meeting and to have claim upon the time, knowledge, and experience of those persons who are asked to serve on the Training and Recording Committee. All candidates should, therefore, understand that training requirements placed upon them by the Yearly Meeting are to be met with a spirit of gratitude for such privileges. If the candidates cannot discipline themselves to cooperate fully with the Training and Recording Committee, and do so with good spirit, how can they qualify to minister to others?

The candidate shall:

1. Complete the steps in Recording.
2. Arrange their personal schedule so as to be available for regular meetings with their sponsor and the Training and Recording Committee, and attend scheduled meetings of the Committee when requested.
3. Complete assignments as scheduled by the Training and Recording Committee and/or sponsor and have reports in the hands of the sponsor at the times agreed upon.
4. Cooperate in every way possible with the sponsor and the Training and Recording Committee.
5. Remain open to counsel in every area of preparation, including suggestions by the Training and Recording Committee relative to formal education.

#### EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS FOR CANDIDATES

The Committee for Training and Recording of Ministers has set a basic educational requirement for candidates. It is the intent of the Committee that the outlined program will adequately equip

the candidates in all areas of ministry so that they might be qualified to function as leaders in today's church and community. From this beginning it is assumed that the candidates will go forward into a lifetime of learning and growth.

The program is designed so that many candidates will be able to complete it in four years.

The Committee has sought to strike a good balance between academic preparation and the practical application of facts, skills and ideas presented. Emphasis is also placed on providing opportunities for the candidate to interact with other pastors and lay people of Iowa Yearly Meeting.

Each candidate will be assigned a sponsor by the Training and Recording Committee. Candidate, sponsor, and Committee will labor together to determine what requirements the candidate has satisfied. Recognition will be given for appropriate college and Bible college courses, for seminary courses or degrees, and for ministry and life experiences. Recognition may also be given for the reading of approved books, provided the candidate submits a book report or proof of ministry application.