

The Clearness Committee Process

Adapted by David Williams, from an article by Scott Pierce Coleman of Guilford College

Why Would I Want to Call a Clearness Committee (“Meeting for Clearness”)?

Many people resist thinking seriously about decisions they feel unprepared to make. Perhaps unknowns prevent the decision from being framed clearly. Perhaps poor past decisions make a person reluctant to commit one way or another now. Sometimes people feel they don't know themselves well enough to make a good decision. Some people simply don't like giving up their options until the last possible minute.

When used with care, a clearness committee results in a state of inner rest that Friends call "clarity." To be "clear" means to have reached a profoundly satisfying resolution to some difficult question. Three important qualities of well being typically accompany clarity: 1) a deep sense of assurance that the decision will not lead to regret; 2) a feeling of release from emotional burdens associated with the decision; 3) an increased sense of strength to persevere through challenges in carrying out a decision.

Obviously, people make major decisions all the time without relying on a clearness process, and good, clear decisions can certainly be reached without one. But difficult decisions can be seen from surprising and refreshing new angles when one gathers one's community together to face them. Corporate wisdom and insight often reveal dimensions of a decision not visible when contemplated in isolation.

How Do I Set Up a Clearness Committee, Once I've Decided to do One?

A sound clearness process involves three major steps.

Step One: Self-Reflection (Done by the Focus Person): Frame the question on which you seek clearness as fully as you can. For some people, it can be useful to write a few paragraphs, tracing the threads of your life leading to your clearness question. For others, it may be sufficient to make some notes about relevant facts and background information so other members of the clearness committee have a context in which to help you consider your question. Once you have selected a clerk, it is helpful to discuss the question with him or her to further sharpen its focus.

Step Two: Selecting Committee Members (Done by the Focus Person): A clearness committee is usually composed of three to five discerners and the focus person. You may find it useful to call together a slightly larger group, but beyond a certain size, the group loses its sense of intimacy and focus. As you think about whom to invite, keep in mind several key characteristics to look for:

1. Personal knowledge of you
2. Wisdom and groundedness about life
3. A sense of trust between you
4. Openness to all possible outcomes of your discernment process
5. A capacity to listen deeply

It is important to invite people of diverse ages, backgrounds and relationships to you. This leads to deeper listening in almost all cases. Sometimes people who don't know you well, but who are able to listen deeply may be more effective than close friends who know what you "should" do or whose fears keep them from being fully present to you. Sometimes the most "obvious" people—the names coming to mind first—aren't necessarily the ones who will be the most helpful. Some people make a list of all who come to mind as possibilities (allowing for some who *don't* seem so obvious). They then make time to sit quietly with the list to see which names "rise to the top." Be open to names that keep coming to mind, but seem like a stretch.

Step Three: Calling the Committee Together (Done by the Clerk): Once you have settled on several discerners, you'll need to ask one to be clerk. That person then takes responsibility for finding a mutually comfortable time and place for the committee members to meet with the focus person. If you've done some writing to provide your discerners with context for your question, the clerk should distribute your notes to the other members of the group in advance of the meeting. It might also be a good idea to give a copy of these guidelines to any of your discerners who have never participated in a clearness committee before.

The following sequence provides a suggested pattern for a typical meeting for clearness:

1. An opening period of silence, providing space to clear away distractions and become attentive to the voice of God, followed by centering prayer.
2. The offering of the clearness question and its context.
3. An opportunity for discerners to ask clarifying questions about the clearness question and its context.
4. A period of silent reflection in which the members of the committee consider what the focus person has said, including what they hear *behind* the focus person's words.
5. Asking any additional, clarifying questions, following the guidelines provided below.

Commonly, a fair amount of time will pass between questions, allowing the focus person to consider each one with care. Allowing space between questions also gives discerners a chance to make potential connections between their own reflections and a particular question that's just been asked. It's amazing how often a single question in a clearness process can focus the entire group's discernment and open up an important area of consideration.

It is important for discerners to ask questions rather than make statements. The group is gathered to help the focus person make his or her own clear decision, not to persuade him or her to make a decision that feels clear to a particular discerner. When a discerner has a clear statement emerge within him or herself, silent waiting will almost always reveal a way in which the statement can be phrased as a question.

The focus person is free to respond to any question asked, or not, as he or she feels comfortable. When the focus person does decide to respond, keeping those responses brief but informative is helpful. If the focus person begins to ramble, the clerk should gently call him or her back to the question just asked. Likewise, if a discerner goes off on a tangent, the clerk is responsible to call the group gently back to center.

How Do I Know When Clearness Has Been Reached?

While it is hard to describe exactly, a group generally feels a shift in energy as resolution settles within them. Questions fall away and a group will often become silent and more deeply quiet. There will be a sense of relief or release or peace, even if the "answer" is "it isn't time to know yet." It is the clerk's job to say something like, "I have a sense we've come to some clarity about this issue. Does it seem that way to you?" Sometimes a group has a sense of being done for the time being, whether or not clarity can be articulated. Sometimes a group has the sense the focus person has everything needed to make the decision and merely needs to sit with the options a little while longer, or will know when the time comes to make the decision. Whatever the "results," the focus person generally has a sense of being able to let go of the worry of indecision and live more freely in whatever answer arises.

How Might I Think of a Clearness Process as Explicitly Spiritual?

For Quakers, a clearness process is simply an attempt to discern the call of God in the context of community. An underlying assumption of the process is that we often hear God better as a group than in isolation, as each of us listen attentively for the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 15:28). An intentional decision to make Christ the center of such gatherings anchors the process in the One who is the very source and substance of Truth itself (cf. John 14:6). As George Fox, the founder of the Friends movement has testified, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to thy condition."

Following Jesus (Discerning God's Voice/Will)

By Brad and Chelsea Carpenter

Jesus, our Shepherd, calls us to follow Him. We're going to look at some specific ways that we can learn His voice, hear His call, and go where He leads.

1 Samuel 3:1-10

¹Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the Lord by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the Lord were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon. ²One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. ³The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. ⁴Suddenly the Lord called out, "Samuel!" "Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?" ⁵He got up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So he did. ⁶Then the Lord called out again, "Samuel!" Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you, my son," Eli said. "Go back to bed." ⁷Samuel did not yet know the Lord because he had never had a message from the Lord before. ⁸So the Lord called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" Then Eli realized it was the Lord who was calling the boy. ⁹So he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed. ¹⁰And the Lord came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening."

John 10:2-5, 14-16

²The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. ³The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."... ¹⁴"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.¹

1. Learn (Know) His voice (from Everett Cattell)

Story of young Christian...

- a. Being obedient now!
- b. 2 Greatest Commands
 - i. Love the Lord
 - ii. Love others
 - iii. Lord how can I love you more and better? Others?

2. God's Word (from Chuck Mylander)

The Holy Spirit never contradicts the written Word of God. The heart of the Lamb is for every tribe, language, people, and nation (Rev. 5:7).

*Conviction of my own sin as I read Scripture.
Chelsea (Genesis 12:1-5)*

¹The Holy Bible : New International Version. 1996, c1984 . Zondervan: Grand Rapids

3. God's Spirit (from Chuck Mylander)

As you surrender fully to God's will, the Holy Spirit will guide and direct your ways (Proverbs 3:5-6, Romans 12:1-2, Galatians 5:25). God's Spirit will never contradict God's written Word.

In Children's church, in Haiti...

Psalm 25:4-5, 8-10, 15

⁴ Show me the path where I should walk, O LORD;
point out the right road for me to follow.

⁵ Lead me by your truth and teach me,
for you are the God who saves me.

All day long I put my hope in you...

⁸ The LORD is good and does what is right;
he shows the proper path to those who go astray.

⁹ He leads the humble in what is right,
teaching them his way.

¹⁰ The LORD leads with unfailing love and faithfulness
all those who keep his covenant and obey his decrees...

¹⁵ My eyes are always looking to the LORD for help,
for he alone can rescue me from the traps of my enemies.

4. God's Works (from Chuck Mylander)

Look for answers to prayer, divine appointments, unique circumstances. Open doors? Closed doors?

Chris Laughlin...I asked the Lord to use me to minister to people at school and those near me in my classes...

5. God's People (from Chuck Mylander)

Listen to the wise. God has put you in a community of believers for a reason. Seek clarity, wisdom from pastor, youth pastor, parents, others who know the Lord. "Is it corroborated by Spirit-led friends?" Consider a meeting for clearness.

Meeting for clearness to go to Rwanda and Burundi...

6. An ever more weighty conviction (from Everett Cattell)

Desire to go to Rwanda and Burundi increased...I couldn't get it out of my head and out of my heart.

7. Increase / Decrease Prayer

8. Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart...

Colossians 3:15-17

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish

one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Chelsea and I prayed and prayed for the Lord to give us His peace and direction in our lives and in our relationship.

God is full of grace and mercy...if you are really seeking Him, He will not let you choose the wrong path and continue down that for a really long time...He will let you know to stop or change.

Psalm 37: 4-7, 23-24

⁴ Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you your heart's desires.

⁵ Commit everything you do to the LORD.

Trust him, and he will help you.

⁶ He will make your innocence as clear as the dawn,
and the justice of your cause will shine like the noonday sun.

⁷ Be still in the presence of the LORD,
and wait patiently for him to act.

²³ The steps of the godly are directed by the LORD.
He delights in every detail of their lives.

²⁴ Though they stumble, they will not fall,
for the LORD holds them by the hand.

Some Key Values of the Evangelical Friends Church
By Brad and Chelsea Carpenter

- 1) The Holy Spirit – Our Teacher and Guide
- 2) The Bible – Our companion (Inshuti yacu)
- 3) We are all ministers
- 4) Faith, Courage (ishyaka) and Surrender
- 5) Fellowship
- 6) Peace Testimony
- 7) Sanitation (Physically and in Thoughts)
- 8) Humility
- 9) Integrity (transparency, accountability)

The Holy Spirit – Our Teacher and Guide

1) Who is the Holy Spirit? What is He like? What does He do?

2) Scripture

John 14:16-17

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you...²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

John 16:5-15

⁵ “Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. ⁷ But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; ¹⁰ in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; ¹¹ and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

¹² “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

3) A story or explanation from Friends history

As Friends we believe that these Scriptures are true for us today! One of the main messages of the Early Friends was that the Christ is alive and that He is present to speak to us and lead us! He is present in the Holy Spirit! Early Friends believed this so much that in their times for worship, there was not a schedule. They went to a place of worship and sat in silence, waiting for the Holy Spirit to lead them. He would lead some to give a message, He would lead others to lead in songs, He would lead others to simply sit and listen in silence.

The message was that we don't have to simply try to work hard on our own, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to us!” Each of us can hear God's voice if we will simply seek Him and listen! And by His Holy Spirit He can and is ready to teach us, empower us and use us for His glory.

In order to hear the Holy Spirit, we must learn His voice. In John, Jesus said that He knows His sheep and that they know Him. He said that they (the sheep) know His voice and follow Him. Everett Cattell tells the story that a young Christian came and asked the pastor about this idea of the sheep knowing the Shepherd's voice and that he heard people talking about hearing Jesus' voice, but that he (the young man) did not know how to hear His voice. The pastor told the young man; “it is true that sheep know the shepherd's voice, but the lambs have to learn his voice.

The Holy Spirit will never contradict the written Word of God. If we hear a voice that is saying something contrary to God's Word we can know for sure that the voice is not the Holy Spirit's! We can also learn God's voice through spending time with other believers in the process of discerning (**gushishoza**) if the voice we hear is God's voice or not!

Stephen Grellet – preaching in an empty building because the Holy Spirit led him to do it.

4) What are ways that you see the Holy Spirit leading and teaching in our churches or in your life today? Ni gute ubona Umwuka Wera uyobora ndetse wigisha mw'itorero ryacu no buzima bwawe?

I see the Holy Spirit leading us in the way we elect people into positions. When the decision is unclear, we wait to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us.

- 5) What is one way that the Lord is calling you to grow in, in this area or topic? Hitamo ikintu kimwe wumva Imana ishaka ukuramo.**

The Bible – Our companion (Inshuti yacu)

- 1) What is the Bible? How do we use it?
- 2) Scripture

2 Timothy 3:15-17

¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Psalm 119:11

¹¹ I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Psalm 119:105

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Matthew 4:1-11

¹ Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

3) A story or explanation from Friends history

Friends believe that the Bible is God's Word that was written by humans who were inspired (**guhishurirwa**) by the Holy Scriptures. We believe that the Bible is a gift that God has given us help us know about Him and that it is full of God's plan for us as His children.

"He [Fox] was a constant and careful student of the Bible. He gained such familiarity with its contents that it has been said, were the Bible destroyed, Fox could have re-written most of it from memory." (Williams, p.3)

The Bible was his constant companion. And was the companion for all of the Early Friends leaders. They were in the most part able to hear God's Spirit leading them because they knew the Bible so well. Listening to God and knowing the Bible go together. It is almost impossible to have one without the other.

The message of Friends was and is straight from Scripture...That God loves us so much that He sent His only Son to earth to redeem us from our sins and reconciled us to God through His death on the cross and His resurrection! And that Jesus is still alive and is present, that He is ready to live in us and empower us to live obedient lives through the power of the Holy Spirit!

4) What are ways that you see the Bible as a constant friend in our churches or in your life today? Ni gute ubona Bibiliya nk'inshuti ihoraho mw'itorero ryacu no buzima bwawe?

5) What is one way that the Lord is calling you to grow in, in this area or topic?

We are all ministers

1) What does the phrase, 'we are all ministers' mean?

2) Scripture

Ephesians 4:11-16

¹¹It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until 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. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

1 Corinthians 12:4-31

⁴There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. ⁶There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ⁷Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. ⁸To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, ¹⁰to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,⁹ and to still another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

¹²The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized by³ one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ⁴Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body. ²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. ²⁷Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. ²⁸And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. ²⁹Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? ³⁰Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues^b? Do all interpret? ³¹But eagerly desire the greater gifts. (Also Romans 12:4-8)

3) A story or explanation from Friends history

Friends believe that each believer is filled with the Holy Spirit and can hear and be used by the Holy Spirit! Therefore we are all ministers. In the beginning of the Friends Church there were no specified roles in the church, people just led at different times based on how the Holy Spirit led them. Later in our history it became obvious that God wants to set apart some as leaders among the believers as pastors, teachers, etc.

Even though we now have pastors, we still believe that all believers are called to be ministers. We believe that the pastors and leaders are called to prepare and equip the believers to use their gifts in ministry where they live and work, and in their families. People who desire to be highly honored and put on a pedestal for all to see, should not be in the Friends Church. In the Friends Church a pastor is a simply someone who has the gifts for leading the church, just like someone else has gifts to serve, or to sing, or to welcome people in their home. We are all part of the same body and Jesus is the head, not a pastor or

a missionary. Jesus is the leader! And we all, every one of us that believe in Him are called to serve Him with the gifts and talents **(ingabire)** that God gave us!

- 4) **What are ways that you see this principle in our churches or in your life today? Do you see all people acting as ministers in churches? Ni gute ubona aya mahame mw'itorero ryacu no mu buzima bwawe? Ese ubona ko abanyetorero bese bakora nk'abakozi b'Imana?**

- 5) **What is one way that the Lord is calling you to grow in, in this area or topic?**

Faith, Courage (ishyaka) and Surrender (kumaramaza)

1) Describe faith, courage and surrendering (intwarane). What does it look like to be surrender your life and be full of faith and courage?

2) Scripture

Romans 1:16-17

¹⁶I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹⁷For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,^a just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."^b

2 Corinthians 4:5-18

⁵For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"^a made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ¹²So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken."^b With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his presence. ¹⁵All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Matthew 26:39

³⁹Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

3) A story or explanation from Friends history

Early Friends were bold (**gushira amanga**) and unafraid. They had surrendered (**bitanze / bamaramarije**) their lives to God and were ready and willing to speak His message even if it meant they would go to jail! They spoke to the King about injustice and about sin in the government. They fought against slavery. They preached against lies that were being preached in the churches of that day. They refused to take oaths. For all of these and many other reasons, they were beaten, kicked out of their families, and arrested, many for years at a time.

A lady named Mary Fisher felt called by God to go and share the Gospel message to the Sultan of Turkey. Others around her that she was crazy and tried to stop her. She was riding on a boat and they made her go back by boat, but she still went, but because they refused her on the boat, she went by foot! She traveled by herself for 600 miles (about 1,000 km) to talk to a Muslim king. She could have been killed on the way or even by the king when she arrived but she went and he accepted her into his home and listened to the gospel. He was amazed at her commitment to God and obedience to Him!

Eight years after the Friends Church began in England, people from the Friends Church had gone to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in over 20 other countries! After 50 years, there were over 50,000 Friends in England and Ireland alone and many others in several other countries! They had found life and joy and peace through Jesus Christ and their passion and vision was to help others find it too! They were totally surrendered to God; they went in obedience, even if it meant that they would be beaten (**gukubitwa**) or even killed!

- 4) **What are ways that you see this modeled in our churches or in your life today? Ese ni gute tubona abantu b'intwarane mw'itorero?**
- 5) **What is one way that the Lord is calling you to grow in, in this area or topic? Hitamo ikintu kimwe cyangwa ahantu hamwe utaramamazamo ukeneye ko Imana igufashamo.**

Fellowship

1) What is fellowship?

2) Scripture

Hebrews 10:24-25

²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. ²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Ephesians 4:2-3

² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

John 13:34-35

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Acts 2:42-47

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Colossians 3:16-17

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

3) A story or explanation from Friends history

The word fellowship comes from Greek, the word is “koinonia” which means “the close association between persons, emphasizing what is common between them; by extension; participation; sharing; contribution; gift, the outcome of such close relationships – fellowship.”

Friends love to share life together, to help each other. The monthly meetings were times for people to gather from different local churches to discuss ministry, but it was also a time to visit together. There were many travelling ministers that would go from Friends Church to Friends Church to encourage the believers in each place and to share stories with them from other places in the Friends Church.

A lady named Margeret Fell who later married George Fox received and wrote letters from and to Friends all around the world. She became to person who passed on news. Through hearing the stories of other Friends’ faith and courage, Friends were spurred (**gutera umwete**) on to continue to love and follow Jesus!

Because so many were going to preach the Gospel around the world they began giving money into the Kendal Fund, which helped to support the missionaries and their families. They worked together to serve the Lord!

4) What are ways that you see this modeled in our churches or in your life today? Ese ni gute tubona ubusabane mw’itorero ryacu?

5) What is one way that the Lord is calling you to grow in, in this area or topic?

Peace Testimony

1) What does being a peacemaker (abaharanira amahoro) mean?

2) Scripture

Matthew 5:9

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.

Matthew 5:38-48

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'^a ³⁹ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. ⁴⁰ And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. ⁴¹ If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor⁹ and hate your enemy.'⁴⁴ But I tell you: Love your enemies⁹ and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 22:37-39

³⁷ Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'^a ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Luke 6:27-36

²⁷ "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. ³¹ Do to others as you would have them do to you.

³² "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' do that. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. ³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Luke 10:27-37

²⁷ He answered: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'^a; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^b"

²⁸ "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins^c and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

³⁶ "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Luke 23:34

³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."^b And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

James 3:17-18

¹⁷ But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸ Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

3) A story or explanation from Friends history

Friends follow Jesus' teaching on loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us very seriously. We believe that we are supposed to follow Jesus' words and His example to love as He has loved, even our enemies! But we are also called to build peace amongst us and our neighbors and enemies. Making peace and building fellowship with people that were our enemies is the next step beyond loving them or not retaliating (**kubagirira inzika**) against them!

Jesus washed His disciples feet, including Judas who He knew was going to betray (**kumugambanira**) Him. Jesus also prayed for the people who put Him on the cross and asked the Father to forgive them.

Ours is a ministry of reconciliation (**ubwiyunge**) or rebuilding relationship that were broken and establishing relationships where there have never been. Jesus told us to love our neighbors, which included Samaritans who were the arch-enemy of the Israelites.

- 4) What are ways that you see this modeled in our churches or in your life today? Ese ni gute ubona ko turimo guharanira amahoro mw'itorero ryacu cyangwa mu buzima bwawe?**
- 5) What is one way that the Lord is calling you to grow in being a peacemaker? Ni gute Imana ishaka ko ukura mu guharanira amahoro mu buzima bwawe?**
-

Sanitation (Physically and in Thoughts)

1) What is sanitation physically? What is sanitation in thoughts?

2) Scripture

Leviticus 4:11-12, 21

¹¹ But the hide of the bull and all its flesh, as well as the head and legs, the inner parts and offal— ¹² that is, all the rest of the bull—he must take outside the camp to a place ceremonially clean, where the ashes are thrown, and burn it in a wood fire on the ash heap. ²¹ Then he shall take the bull outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull. This is the sin offering for the community.

Leviticus 5:2-4

² “Or if a person touches anything ceremonially unclean—whether the carcasses of unclean wild animals or of unclean livestock or of unclean creatures that move along the ground—even though he is unaware of it, he has become unclean and is guilty.

³ “Or if he touches human uncleanness—anything that would make him unclean—even though he is unaware of it, when he learns of it he will be guilty.

⁴ “Or if a person thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil—in any matter one might carelessly swear about—even though he is unaware of it, in any case when he learns of it he will be guilty.

Leviticus 11:8, 24-25, 39-40

11 ⁸ You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.’

²⁴ “You will make yourselves unclean by these; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. ²⁵ Whoever picks up one of their carcasses must wash his clothes, and he will be unclean till evening.

³⁹ “If an animal that you are allowed to eat dies, anyone who touches the carcass will be unclean till evening. ⁴⁰ Anyone who eats some of the carcass must wash his clothes, and he will be unclean till evening. Anyone who picks up the carcass must wash his clothes, and he will be unclean till evening.

Leviticus 13:3-4, 14-15, 45-52

¹³ ³ The priest is to examine the sore on his skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be more than skin deep,^c it is an infectious skin disease. When the priest examines him, he shall pronounce him ceremonially unclean. ⁴ If the spot on his skin is white but does not appear to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest is to put the infected person in isolation for seven days.

¹⁴ But whenever raw flesh appears on him, he will be unclean. ¹⁵ When the priest sees the raw flesh, he shall pronounce him unclean. The raw flesh is unclean; he has an infectious disease.

⁴⁵ “The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt,^d cover the lower part of his face and cry out, ‘Unclean! Unclean!’ ⁴⁶ As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp.

Regulations About Mildew

⁴⁷ “If any clothing is contaminated with mildew—any woolen or linen clothing, ⁴⁸ any woven or knitted material of linen or wool, any leather or anything made of leather— ⁴⁹ and if the contamination in the clothing, or leather, or woven or knitted material, or any leather article, is greenish or reddish, it is a spreading mildew and must be shown to the priest. ⁵⁰ The priest is to examine the mildew and isolate the affected article for seven days. ⁵¹ On the seventh day he is to examine it, and if the mildew has spread in the clothing, or the woven or knitted material, or the leather, whatever its use, it is a destructive mildew; the article is unclean. ⁵² He must burn up the clothing, or the woven or knitted material of wool or linen, or any leather article that has the contamination in it, because the mildew is destructive; the article must be burned up.

Leviticus 14:37-42, 46-47

14 ³⁷ He is to examine the mildew on the walls, and if it has greenish or reddish depressions that appear to be deeper than the surface of the wall, ³⁸ the priest shall go out the doorway of the house and close it up for seven days. ³⁹ On the seventh day the priest shall return to inspect the house. If the mildew has spread on the walls, ⁴⁰ he is to order that the contaminated stones be torn out and thrown into an unclean place outside the town. ⁴¹ He must have all the inside walls of the house scraped and the material that is scraped off dumped into an unclean place outside the town. ⁴² Then they are to take other stones to replace these and take new clay and plaster the house.

⁴⁶“Anyone who goes into the house while it is closed up will be unclean till evening. ⁴⁷ Anyone who sleeps or eats in the house must wash his clothes.

Leviticus 16:26-28,

16 ²⁶“The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. ²⁷ The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and offal are to be burned up. ²⁸ The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp.

Numbers 19:11-15

¹¹“Whoever touches the dead body of anyone will be unclean for seven days. ¹² He must purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third and seventh days, he will not be clean. ¹³ Whoever touches the dead body of anyone and fails to purify himself defiles the LORD’s tabernacle. That person must be cut off from Israel. Because the water of cleansing has not been sprinkled on him, he is unclean; his uncleanness remains on him.

¹⁴“This is the law that applies when a person dies in a tent: Anyone who enters the tent and anyone who is in it will be unclean for seven days, ¹⁵ and every open container without a lid fastened on it will be unclean.

Philippians 4:8-9

⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Mark 7:20-23

²⁰ He went on: “What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ ²¹ For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’”

Romans 8:6

⁶The mind of sinful man^e is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace;

3) A story or explanation from Friends history

Friends believe that as followers of Jesus all of our lives including our bodies and our minds are to be given over to God! We believe that all of life is important, not just the spiritual part! Sanitation or cleanliness is an issue of stewardship. Many diseases come from dirt and dust, so therefore in order to take care of the body that the Lord has given us, so we seek cleanliness.

Elizabeth Fry was a lady who God called to work with the poor and women prisoners. She helped them to have clean clothes, she taught them how to read and sew. At that time prisons were very dirty, cold and many diseases went around in prisons. Many people died in prison, but Elizabeth went and began to love them, she helped them get new clothes and taught them. The people were amazed at the transformation in the lives of the prisoners through the ministry of Elizabeth and others who helped her. Later in life she started a training center to help train nurses (those who assist doctors).

As Friends we are also very aware that we are called to be pure in our thought-life (abantu batunganye mu mitekerereze yacu). Jesus said that it is out of the heart that evil comes from. He also said that if we think lustfully (kwifuza umuntu cyangwa irari) about someone, then we have committed adultery (**ubusambanyi**) with that person in our hearts. I have found that if I focus my thoughts on trying to not sin, I sin more! For me the key is to focus my thoughts on Jesus and how much He loves me. I try to do things that will help me to grow closer to Him. In doing this, I am also asking the Holy Spirit to help me and empower me! I believe that this is the key to pure thoughts, rather than trying to stop thinking bad thoughts. We cannot make our hearts clean but we can decide what we choose to think about or not.

What goes in our eyes and mind goes into the heart and then comes out. We need to guard against what we are putting into our minds, what we are seeing and hearing. All of this is part of keeping our mind pure.

- 4) What are ways that you see this modeled in our churches or in your life today? Ni gute turimo gushakisha isuku ku mubiri no mu bitekerezo byacu mw'itorero ryacu?**

- 5) What is one way that the Lord is calling you to grow in, in this area or topic?**

Humility

1) What is humility? What does it mean to be a person who is humble? How do Rwandans view humble people / humble leaders?

2) Scripture

Philippians 2:3-8

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature^a God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature^b of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!

John 14:10

¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

John 7:16-18

¹⁶ Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. ¹⁷ If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. ¹⁸ He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.

James 4:6-10

⁶ But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." ⁷ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! ¹³ No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

1 Corinthians 4:6-7

⁶ Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another. ⁷ For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

3) A story or explanation from Friends history

As Friends we try to follow Jesus' example of humility, even when it is not normal or generally respected in the culture. Friends follow Jesus in saying that the leader is a servant of all. We do not lead in order to have power and get what we want! We lead to serve God and serve others. Our desire is that God is glorified and that others are blessed by what we do. Like we talked about earlier, we do not see leaders as more important than others in Christ's body, there are simply some parts of the body that are more visible than others, but every part is just as important as every other part!

Humility is recognizing my place and trying to fulfill my role or my tasks in the Body of Christ. I am not God (**si ndi Imana kandi sinduta abandi**) and I am not more important than anyone else. I am nothing apart from Christ and His worth (**Ntacyo ndicyo keretse muri Yesu no mu mubiri we**)! Humility is an honest assessment of myself (**kwicisha bugufi ni gusobanukirwa neza uwo ndi we**). Humility is not saying trying to talk down about your self and say that you are not good at certain things. Humility is, knowing that everything I have, all of my gifts and abilities came from God and that it is by His power I am able to serve and succeed! Not by my own strength! Humility is knowing that my strength comes from being united with Christ and His body. Together we can accomplish a lot, not for my gain, but for God's Kingdom and for the good of those we are leading/serving. Again, the Friends Church is not a place for pride-filled, glory and power seeking leaders; such people must seek repentance and then restoration.

4) What are ways that you see this modeled in our churches or in your life today? Ni gute tubona aya mahame yo kwicisha bugufi mw'itorero ryacu?

5) What is one way that the Lord is calling you to grow in, in this area or topic?

Integrity (transparency, accountability) Ubunyangamugayo, gukorera mu mucyo)

1) What is integrity? What does it mean to be integrous?

the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness or the state of being whole and undivided. the condition of being unified, unimpaired, or sound in construction internal consistency or lack of corruption in electronic data

2) Scripture

Matthew 5:33-37

³³ "Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.' ³⁴ But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷ Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Luke 6:43-45

⁴³ "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴ Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. ⁴⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

Mark 7:20-23

²⁰ He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' ²¹ For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

Colossians 3:9

⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

3) A story or explanation from Friends history

Friends are people of integrity. Our integrity is not based on the culture norms or based on tradition but based on a living and growing relationship with Jesus Christ. The call of Christ is to allow Him to be the Lord of each and every part of our lives!

Friends speak always speak the truth even if it will make them look bad! Friends refuse to take oaths (**kurahira**) in court because Jesus said that we must always tell the truth. Our yes means yes, and our no means no! God has blessed Friends in business very much because of their integrity. Friends business people have become very wealthy because customers trust them completely. Friends set prices that didn't change so that customers could send their small children and not get ripped off (charged too much or get less than the right amount).

We as Friends are trustworthy; we tell the truth; we do not lie; we are people of integrity. People should be able to tell clearly that we are different than others because we tell the truth in everything, because Jesus and His integrity fills our lives in every area!

4) What are ways that you see this modeled in our churches or in your life today? Ni gute ubona ubunyangamugayo mw'itorero ryaco cyangwa mu buzima bwawe?

5) What is one way that the Lord is calling you to grow in, in this area or topic? Hitamo ahantu hamwe Imana ishaka kugufasha kugira ubunyangamugayo mu buzima bwawe.

Discerning God's Will - (Duane and Lois Davis)

Availability – Isaiah 6:8 “Here am I; send me”

Prayer / Listening – Acts 1:4 “Not leave Jerusalem, but wait...”

God's Word speaking to you & examples of others – II Timothy 3:15-17 “training, adequate, equipped for every good work”

Time / Timing – Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 “...a time for everything...”

Step by Step / Process – Acts 20:18-24 “...from the first day...serving the Lord with all humility with tears and trials”

Looking at how God has worked in you and through you – Paul above; giving thanks

Other people who have spoken into your life – Moses-Joshua; Paul to Timothy; Alan, Gordon, Mission Staff

Gifts and talents – I Cor. 12:4-7 “...to each one...manifestation... for the common good

Think outside the box – I Samuel 17:45-49 David's audacious faith and courage

God-sized dreams – I Kings 18:30-39 Elijah public, confident, daring, faith in God

Guidance Questions:

As you hear something or read something, what quickens your heart? Catches your attention? How? Why?

What has led you to this point, where you are today? What feels good about that? What feels scary?

When have you felt totally outside your comfort zone? How did you respond or work through that?

Are you and your spouse like-minded in the direction you are moving?

In what ways do you envision possibly joining forces with God to build His Kingdom

Some resources:

<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/effective-prayers-for-discerning-gods-will.html>

<https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/leadership-training/sending-your-team/discerning-gods-will.html>

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/8-keys-to-knowing-god-s-will-for-your-life.html>

<https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-56-discerning-will-god-acts-211-14>

Some other resources not directly related to discerning God's will but which influenced our calls:

<http://www.thetravelingteam.org/stats> 95% of Christian workers working in Christian world & 60% of unreached people groups are closed to missionaries from North America

Book: *Eternity in their Hearts*, by Don Richardson

Rich Church Poor World <https://fb.watch/5vJ61pR0v/>

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATING CLEARNESS COMMITTEES FOR FULLER SEMINARY IS500 STUDENTS:

Based on “The Clearness Committee:
A Communal Approach To Discernment in Retreats”

by Parker J. Palmer

Modified by John C. Bangs

1. Each student should recruit a group of trusted, mature individuals to assist her or him in a process of discernment around Parker Palmer’s model of the Clearness Committee. For a seminary environment, most of these people should be Christians and should show marks of both personal and spiritual maturity. They should be people of insight and should possess better than average listening skills. The group should be no fewer than three and no more than five, plus the student. Discernment should be exercised regarding the question of whether a spouse or other family member should play a part in this group. Avoid having more than one family member in the group. Close personal familiarity is not a requirement for participation in the group, and may be either a benefit or a detriment to effective participation. One group member will be asked to serve the role of facilitator. This person must be willing to review the process outlined in this sheet in advance of the meeting, and should be prepared to gently lead the rest of the group through the process. The student will be referred to in this document henceforth as the “focus person.” The student/focus person should make sure that all members have this document in advance of the Clearness Committee session and that they have read it and understood it prior to the session.
2. In advance of the Clearness Committee Meeting the focus person asked to provide a one-page synopsis reflecting on the following three areas:
 - a concise statement of his or her problem, even if it is not clear—this process can work as well with murky issues as with clear ones;
 - a recounting of relevant background factors that may bear on the problem;
 - an exploration of any hunches the focus person may have about what’s on the horizon regarding the problem.
3. This is done so that the focus person can present their problem orally to the committee at the start of the session in a concise but helpful way, ten or fifteen minutes maximum.

4. Clearness Committees last two hours. A detailed schedule is provided to all committee members before the process begins. When fifteen, and then five minutes remain, the facilitator needs to notify the others, for reasons explained in note 9 below. Committee members for whom note-taking enhances attentiveness may take notes, turning them over to the focus person before leaving the room. This helps guarantee confidentiality and is a great gift to the focus person, helping him or her remember the questions and answers in the hours, days and months to come.

5. The meeting begins when the focus person breaks the silence, and gives a brief summary of the issue at hand. Then the committee members may speak—but everything they say is governed by one rule, a simple rule and yet one that most people find difficult and demanding: members are forbidden to speak to the focus person in any way except to ask honest, open questions. This means absolutely no advice and no amateur psychoanalysis. It means no, “Why don’t you...?” It means no, “That happened to me one time, and here’s what I did...” It means no, “There’s a book/therapist/exercise/diet that would help you a lot.” Nothing is allowed except real questions, honest and open questions, questions that will help the focus person remove the blocks to his or her inner truth without becoming burdened by the personal agendas of committee members. I may think I know the answer to your problem, and on rare occasions I may be right. But my answer is absolutely no value to you. The only answer that counts is one that arises from your own inner truth. The discipline of the Clearness Committee is to give you greater access to that truth and allow you to have a personal dialogue with it—while the rest of us refrain from trying to define that truth for you or guide that dialogue.

6. What is an honest, open question? It is important to reflect on this, since we are so skilled at asking questions that are advice or analysis in disguise; e.g., “Have you ever thought that it might be your mother’s fault?” The best single mark of an honest, open question is that the questioner could not possibly anticipate the answer to it; e.g., “Did you ever feel like this before?” There are other guidelines for good questioning. Try not to get ahead of the focus person’s language; e.g., “What did you mean when you said ‘frustrated’?” is a good question, but “Didn’t you feel angry?” is not. Ask questions aimed at helping the focus person rather than at satisfying your curiosity. Ask questions that are brief and to the point rather than larding them with background considerations and rationale—which make the

question into a speech. Ask questions that go to the person as well as the problem—for example, questions about feelings as well as about facts. Trust your intuition in asking questions, even if your instinct seems off the wall; e.g., “What color is your present job, and what color is the one you have been offered?”

7. Normally, the focus person responds to the questions as they are asked, in the presence of the group, and those responses generate more, and deeper, questions. Though the responses should be full, they should not be terribly long—resist the temptation to tell your life story in response to every question! It is important that there be time for more and more questions and responses, thus deepening the process for everyone. The more often a focus person is willing to answer aloud, the more material the person—and the committee—will have to work with. But this should never happen at the expense of the focus person’s need to protect vulnerable feelings or to maintain privacy. It is vital that the focus person assume total power to set the limits of the process. So everyone must understand that the focus person at all times has the right not to answer a question. The unanswered question is not necessarily lost—indeed, it may be the question that is so important that it keeps working on the focus person long after the Clearness Committee has ended.
8. The Clearness Committee must not become a grilling or cross-examination. The pace of the questioning is crucial—it should be relaxed, gentle, humane. A machine-gun volley of questions makes reflection impossible and leaves the focus person feeling attacked rather than evoked. Do not be afraid of silence in the group—trust it and treasure it. If silence falls, it does not mean that nothing is happening or that the process has broken down. It may well mean that the most important thing of all is happening: new insights are emerging from within people, from their deepest sources of guidance.
9. From beginning to end of the Clearness Committee, it is important that everyone work hard to remain totally attentive to the focus person and his or her needs. This means suspending the normal rules of social gathering—no chitchat, no responding to other people’s questions or to the focus person’s answers, no joking to break the tension, no noisy and nervous laughter. We are simply to surround the focus person with quiet, loving space, resisting even the temptation to comfort or reassure or encourage this person, but

simply being present with our attention and our questions and our care. If a committee member damages this ambiance with advice, leading questions, or rapid-fire inquisition, other members, including the focus person, have the right to remind the offender of the rules—and the offender is not at liberty to mount a defense or argue the point. The Clearness Committee is for the sake of the focus person, and the rest of us need to get our egos to recede.

10. The Clearness Committee should run for the full time allotted. Don't end early for fear that the group has "run out of questions"—patient waiting will be rewarded with deeper questions than have yet been asked. About fifteen minutes before the end of the meeting, someone should ask the focus person if he or she wants to suspend the "questions only" rule and invite committee members to mirror back what they have heard the focus person saying. If the focus person says no, the questions continue, but if he or she says yes, mirroring can begin, along with more questions if they should arise. Mirroring does not provide an excuse to give advice or fix the person—that sort of invasiveness is still prohibited. Mirroring simply means exactly what the word suggests: reflecting the focus person's language—and body language—giving him or her a chance to say, "Yes, that's me" or "No, that's not," though no response is required. In the final five minutes of the meeting, the clerk should invite members to celebrate and affirm the focus person and his or her strengths. This is an important time, since the focus person has just spent a couple of hours being very vulnerable. And there is always much to celebrate, for in the course of a Clearness Committee, people reveal the gifts and graces that characterize human beings at their deepest and best.

11. Remember, the Clearness Committee is not intended to fix the focus person, so there should be no sense of letdown if the focus person does not have his or her problems "solved" when the process ends. A good clearness process does not end—it keeps working within the focus person long after the meeting is over. The rest of us need simply to keep holding that person in the light, trusting the wisdom of his or her inner teacher.

The Clearness Committee is not a cure-all. It is not for extremely fragile people or for extremely delicate problems. But for the right person, with the right issue, it is a powerful way to rally the strength of community around a struggling soul, to draw deeply from the

wisdom within all of us. It teaches us to abandon the pretense that we know what is best for another person and instead to ask those honest and open questions that can help that person find his or her own answers. It teaches us to give up the arrogant assumption that we are obliged to “save” each other and learn, through simple listening, to create the conditions that allow a person to find his or her wholeness within. If the spiritual discipline behind the Clearness Committee is understood and practiced, the process can become a way to renew community in our individualistic times; a way to free people from their isolation without threatening their integrity; a way to counteract the unhelpful excesses to which we sometimes take “caring;” and a way to create space for the spirit to move among us with healing and with power.

Suggestions from Molly De La Cerda

Topic for Guide 3: Resources on good discernment practices as we listen and follow the Lord of the harvest.

1. A list of Reliable Resources to Consider in Discernment

*Based on Duane and Lois Davis Research

- Availability - Isaiah 6:8 "Here am I; send me"
- Prayer /Listening - Acts 1:4 "Not leave Jerusalem, but wait..."
- God's Word speaking to you & examples of others - II Timothy 3:15-17 "training, adequate, equipped for every good work"
- Time/Timing - Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 "...a time for everything..."
- Step by Step /Process - Acts 20:18-24 "...from the first day...serving the Lord with all humility with tears and trials"
- Looking at how God has worked in you and through you - Paul above; giving thanks
- Other people who have spoken into your life - Moses-Joshua; Paul to Timothy; Alan, Gordon, Mission Staff
- Gifts and talents - 1 Cor. 12:4-7 "...to each one...manifestation... for the common good
- Think outside the box - 1 Samuel 17:45-49 David's audacious faith and courage
- God-sized dreams - 1 Kings 18:30-39 Elijah public, confident, daring, faith in God

2. Following Jesus (Discerning God's Voice/Will)

* Adapted from a paper written by Brad & Chelsea Carpenter

- Learn His Voice:
 - Case studies in scripture where God's Voice was heard
 - 1 Samuel 3:1-10
 - John 10:2-5, 14-16
 - Takeaways to learning his voice-
 - Be Obedient to follow God Now!
 - Must get to know God to Know his Voice
- Know His Word
 - Knowing God's word Convicts our own hearts of Sin

- Knowing God's word shows us the heart of God
 - Love God and Love people
- Surrender to His Spirit
 - The Holy Spirit will Guide us and direct our ways (Proverbs 3:5-6, Romans 12: 1-2, Galatians 5:25, Psalam 25: 4-5, 8-10, 15
 - Holy Spirit Never Contradicts the written Word of God (Rev. 5:7)-
 - Ex: We would never be hearing God's voice to murder because that contradicts God's word.
- See His Work
 - Look at your own life circumstances and see God at work
 - Pay attention for answered prayers, divine appointments, and unique circumstances. Open and closed doors?
 - Look back on a timeline of how God has lead you
- Listen to God's People
 - Listen to the wise. God has put you in community of believers for a reason.
 - Seek clarity, wisdom from pastors, mentors, parents, and others who know you well
 - Is your calling corroborated by other spirit-led friends?
 - Consider a meeting for clearness
- Pay Attention for "An ever more weighty conviction"
 - The feeling that you must do something
 - "I couldn't get it out of my head and out of my heart."
 - Like you are being compelled
- Pray for God's will
 - The prayer that God's will would increase and your will would decrease
 - The prayer that you would know your way forward
- His Peace in your Heart
 - Look fo the peace that comes with following Jesus

- “Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart...”
Colossians 3:15-17
 - God is full of grace and mercy..if you are really seeking him, He will not let you choose the wrong path...He will let you know to stop or change. (Psalm 37: 4-7, 23-24)
 - We are not always given one choice...there are often multiple choices that are all good choices. Sometimes our peace comes in knowing that we have the freedom to choose and that he won't allow us to choose incorrectly if we are in his spirit. (add on by M. DLC)

3. Some Key Values of Friends that Guide Discernment

*Adapted from a paper written by Brad Carpenter

- The Holy Spirit our Teacher and Guide
- The Bible- Our companion
- We are all ministers
- Faith, Courage, and Surrender
- Fellowship
- Peace Testimony
- Sanitation
- Humility
- Integrity

4. Clearness Committee

- A group of weighty friends that know you and are willing to submit to the spirit
- “The Clearness Committee Process” - A paper Adapted by Dave Williams from an Article by Scott Pierce
- “Guidelines for Facilitating Clearness Committees For Fuller Seminary IS500 Students” - A Paper modified by John C Bangs based on a book by Parker J. Palmer

5. Other Resources

- Parker Palmer- *Let Your Life Speak.*
- Dallas Willard- *Hearing God.*
-

*Compiled by Sarah Amador

- <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/effective-prayers-for-discerning-gods-will.html>
- <https://www.cru.org/us/en/train-and-grow/leadership-training/sending-your-team/discerning-gods-will.html>
- <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/8-keys-to-knowing-god-s-will-for-your-life.html>
- <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-56-discerning-will-god-acts-211-14>

Some other resources not directly related to discerning God's will but which influenced our calls :

- <http://www.thetravelingteam.org/stats>
 - 95% of Christian workers working in Christian world & 60% of unreached people groups are closed to missionaries from North America
- **Book:** *Eternity in their Hearts*, by Don Richardson
- Rich Church Poor World Podcast
<https://podcasts.apple.com/podcast/id1550380546>

Draft: EFM Missiology and Team Giftedness in Pioneer Work
By Ron Stansell
February 2022

EFM is committed to the concept of ministry teams sometimes as close collegial relationships or sometimes as limited partnerships and often as both. A pioneer missionary does far better with a strong spiritual sending support base, but has eyes and ears to networking with others on his/her field, discovering local “persons of peace,” and partnering with early converts. From the beginning one seeks to work himself/herself out of a job and pass the baton to local Spirit-filled followers of Jesus. *[Questions with (*) indicate discernment of open doors. Questions with (+) relate to team building and giftedness for pioneers.]*

Questions for discernment:

1. Where and in what settings do we already see God at work in this location? *
2. What are the possible opportunities for friendly networking with other evangelicals, Christian or non-believing “persons of peace” or sympathizers in this location? *
3. What access doors are open or will need to be opened for expatriate workers to minister in this location? *
4. How important will it be for a two or three-unit expatriate team to commit for ministry together at the pioneering stage? (highly important? preferred but not essential? a one-unit team would be preferred?) +
5. What concrete elements of “team” do you see developing already? +

The best team will include wisdom gifts of the Spirit of broad vision and passion on the one hand, and practical Spirit-directed action and management on the other. By temperament, pioneers will do best when their identity in Christ is secure. Pioneers need to be self-starters, good observers and quick learners, and humbly accept flexibility as a virtue in life rather than a mere necessity!

6. What language learning will be short-range essential? What language learning will be highly beneficial over the long haul? +
7. What, if any, are the unique physical or technological demands for pioneering in this field? *[Keep in mind that different gifts and a willingness to mesh those gifts together will be beneficial.]* +
8. How are relationships built in this pioneer culture and what are the personality traits essential for relationships in this field? +
9. What administrative (business and bureaucratic) skills are a part of ministry in this field? +
10. What gifts and passion will be important to plant an indigenous and self-propagating ministry in this setting? *[i.e., evangelism, leadership development, cultural sensitivity, economic development skills, etc.]* +
11. What concerns for social injustice and peace, if any, will need to be addressed for the gospel message to best represent the love of Christ in this field? +
12. What pioneering approaches have been tried on this field and what can be learned from successes and failures? +

Resources:

Allen, Roland. *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., originally published in 1912 but reprinted frequently. Available used and in electronic form from Amazon.com.

This book was one of the early sparks for the indigenous church and church planting movements during the twentieth century. A classic for pioneers. Other writers of this kind of literature are Donald McGavran, Ralph Winter and Allen Tippett who stressed cultural sensitivity, homogenous people movements and the balance between conversion evangelism and Christian nurture.

Bush, Luis and Lutz, Lorry. *Partnering in Ministry*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1990. Possibly found as used copies at Amazon.com.

This small book gives a survey of various kinds of “partnerships” where diverse people work together with a special awareness of people of various cultures collaborating in pioneer work.

- Ch. 2 traces biblical roots for the concept.
- Ch. 3 sharpens the distinction between paternalism and partnership.
- Other chapters may be found helpful while still others may seem dated.

Sinclair, Daniel. *Mission: Possible. Defining and Empowering Your Ministry Among the Unreached*. MOF Publishing, 2021. Available at Amazon.com in print and Kindle format.

While especially written for the context of ministry with Muslims, some truths are clearly universal. I recommend the following:

- Ch. 1. “Apostleship Revisited” shows the historic validity of pioneering as thoroughly biblical.
- Ch. 4. “Discipleship Making Movements for Dummies” gives strategic missiological principles of value for many fields. Discipleship needs to be clearly understood.
- Ch. 5. “Stewardship on the Field” focuses on self-care for a variety of personality types who find themselves in pioneer work. The worker needs self-care. Boundaries are essential for survival.
- Appendix 7. The Story of Alma. A view of an “insider” church planting process.

Stansell, Ron. *Missions by the Spirit*. Newberg, Oregon: Barclay Press, 2009.

These four “Quaker examples” present four different pictures of pioneers and their policies and practices. The narrative shows a variety of gifts and how these pioneers worked with others. The reader would do well to start with the final Chapter 18 and its conclusions, including the traits of pioneers and other lessons learned from the history of four successful Friends missionaries. Available through Amazon.com or Barclay Press.