

1985

# Receiving Holy Callings, and Being Wholly Responsive

Paul N. Anderson

George Fox University, [panderso@georgefox.edu](mailto:panderso@georgefox.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ccs>



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Anderson, Paul N., "Receiving Holy Callings, and Being Wholly Responsive" (1985). *Faculty Publications - College of Christian Studies*. 281.

<http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/ccs/281>

This Conference Proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Christian Studies at Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications - College of Christian Studies by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact [arolf@georgefox.edu](mailto:arolf@georgefox.edu).

RECEIVING HOLY CALLINGS,  
AND BEING  
WHOLLY RESPONSIVE

PAUL ANDERSON

THE QUAKER LECTURE  
WESTERN YEARLY MEETING  
1985

RECEIVING HOLY CALLINGS,  
AND BEING WHOLLY RESPONSIVE

by Paul Anderson

The Quaker Lecture  
Western Yearly Meeting  
1985

The Revelation of John is actually a record of the revelation of Jesus Christ. This gripping account begins with the words, *Apokalypsis Jesou Christou*, or "The unveiling of Jesus Christ." In a double sense, it not only reveals the revelation which is FROM our Lord—to be shown to his servants; but it is also a revelation OF our Lord—a depiction of the One who is seen and heard by the apostle.

The scene opens in Revelation 1:10 with John being startled while "in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day (evidently during "unprogrammed worship".) He is addressed by a loud voice instructing him to record what he sees on a scroll and to send it to the seven churches. As he turns around, he beholds with his eyes the source of that which he has heard with his ears. With the voice which was "like the sound of rushing waters" are seven candlesticks, or lampstands, and amidst them stands One whose flaming eyes and dazzling radiance pierce the darkness and render the apostle speechless. Notice John's reaction:

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever!

—Revelation 1:17-18 (NIV)

Nearly sixteen centuries later, George Fox records a similar spiritual encounter. What John calls a revelation, or an unveiling, Fox refers to as an "opening."

As we went I spied a great high hill called Pendle Hill, and I went on top of it with much ado, it was so steep; but I was moved of the Lord to go atop of it; . . . and there atop of the hill I was moved to sound the day of the Lord; and the Lord let me see a-top of the hill in what places he had a great people to be gathered.<sup>1</sup>

Not long after receiving that vision of a people to be gathered, Fox ministered among the Westmoorland Seekers in the Preston Patrick area. That which was received on the mountain top is now shared liberally on the plain. That which was experienced in solitude is now multiplied in community. The Day of the Lord has indeed come.

Reflecting upon the contagion of Fox's ministry, Francis Howgill exclaims:



The Kingdom of Heaven did gather us and catch us all, as in a net, and his heavenly power at one time drew many hundreds to land. We came to know a place to stand in and what to wait in; the Lord appeared daily to us, to our astonishment, amazement and great admiration, insomuch that we often said to one another with great joy of heart: "What, is the Kingdom of God come to be with men? And will he take up his tabernacle among the sons of men, as he did of old?"<sup>2</sup>

The above accounts of human-divine encounters are probably familiar to most of us who are here tonight. What might not be so familiar is the relationship of these accounts to those who are called with a holy calling—namely, each of us here—as the theme of this conference suggests. We begin to see a part of that relationship as we consider what it means to receive a holy calling.

"What does it mean to receive a holy calling?" That's a good question!

Whereas "holy" is an adjective, describing the just and loving character of God, a "calling" is the activity by which we are encountered by God in a way which transforms ourselves and our reasons for being. The image associated with a calling is an invitation to come and join another person in a task and into a personal relationship. Notice how a calling is the opposite of a command or an order. An order sends someone away with a task to be completed (Keleuo). A calling, however (Kaleo), invites the called to join the caller in partnership. Out of the relationship between partners, then, emerges a sense of mission and the empowerment with which to effect it.

Every spiritual calling is founded upon a spiritual encounter between ourselves and God. And, every spiritual encounter becomes a divine calling with a mission to be carried out. Spiritual encounters and holy callings are inextricably entwined. One cannot exist without the other coming into being.

Consider, for instance, the experiences of four Old Testament prophets. Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel all experienced life-changing spiritual encounters, out of which came their callings to ministry. (See these accounts in Exodus 3:2-6, 4:10-12; Isaiah 6:1-8; Jeremiah 1:4-9; and Ezekiel 1:25-2:5, NIV). Like the above account of the unveiling of Christ to John (Revelation 1:10-20), all four of these accounts reflect a common sequence.

First, there is some kind of experience in which God is encountered by the individual. Moses saw a burning bush and heard this name called out from amidst the bush. "Moses, Moses!" called the Lord. Isaiah saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and lifted up, complete with seraphim and smoke filling the temple. Jeremiah heard the word of the Lord which said, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." (Jeremiah 1:5 NIV). Amidst a vision of wheels and winged creatures, Ezekiel beholds

the glory of the Lord, who says to him, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." (Ezekiel 2:1)

In each of these examples, God is the one who initiates the encounter. As Thomas Kelley says, "Our apparent initiative is already a response, a testimonial to His secret presence and working within us."<sup>3</sup> Regardless of the senses employed, each of the prophets experiences himself being known and addressed personally by God. As in the case of the Good Shepherd, the sheep "hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name." (John 10:3) Being called by name not only informs and reforms one's identity, it is an invitation into relationship with the One who is the Source of all knowing. All callings have their root in the sensing that we are being addressed, sought out, invited to know and be known by God.

In light of such an awesome invitation, it is not surprising to take note of people's reactions to being encountered by God as mentioned above. Over all, the reactions portray a common feeling of humility and a sense of inadequacy as the only imaginable response to having experienced the awesome presence of the Almighty.

John records, "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead." (Revelation 1:17) Moses betrays his sense of inadequacy regarding the task before him, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11) Regarding his sense of unworthiness Isaiah exclaims, "Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, . . . and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord, the Almighty." (Isaiah 6:5) Jeremiah responds humbly, "Ah, Sovereign Lord, I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." (Jeremiah 1:6) And Ezekiel reflects on his vision, "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. When I saw it, I fell face down. . . ." (Ezekiel 1:28)

In a self-oriented culture where the mythology of our times naively dictates, "Let us make God in our image," we may find ourselves surprised by such humbled responses to God. Our "Jesus and me" theologies converge with "God was my sponsor" testimonies to the extent we may regard humility as a quaint attitudinal relic of how one ought to appear during worship, but of course never really does. However, the testimonies of those mentioned above indicate that the opposite may be true. Their emotions were NOT the result of a poor self-image or a lack of self-esteem. Rather, they felt the way they did because they saw themselves in light of God's eternal Truth. One cannot help but notice the sheer spontaneity of their feelings in the presence of the Deity! Falling to the ground and expressing one's sense of inadequacy were not calculated attempts to assume the "right" pose and posture. They were the only authentic attitudes and actions for those who had come into the awesome Shekinah Presence of Almighty God. It is not surprising that Friends who sought to know Christ purely without addition or diminution were known for their shaking in the Presence of the Lord; thus the name, "Quakers."

A third component of receiving holy callings which can be observed in the above examples is the way God prepares and equips each one for



their ministries. Out of a sense of unworthiness before God and utter dependence upon God, comes the redeeming and empowering touch of God's grace and love. This is the place where God's transforming power is most observably at work. Spiritual transformation occurs when our human need and the reality of God's sufficiency come together to form a new creation which has never existed before.

In response to Moses' feelings of inadequacy God says, "I will be with you. And this will be a sign to you that it is I who have sent you." (Exodus 3:12) Isaiah's sense of unworthiness was transformed by an act of God's cleansing. "Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.'" (Isaiah 6:6-7)

Jeremiah's account was similar, "Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, 'Now, I have put my words in your mouth.'" (Jeremiah 1:9) And Ezekiel, who lay prostrate on the floor, was instructed, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." (Ezekiel 2:1)

Just as it is God who initiates the encounter, it is God alone who ultimately prepares those who are called for ministry. Formal education may help, but it can never suffice unless one be prepared by the Spirit of God for ministry as well. The 1646 opening of George Fox was more of a radical notion than we give it credit for. The idea that to be bred at Oxford or Cambridge was not enough to fit and qualify men (or women) to be ministers of Christ,<sup>4</sup> contradicted the view that vocational ministry could only happen through professional training. Fox himself could hardly believe this notion. He records in his journal, I "stranged at it,"<sup>5</sup> or thought it strange.

Fox's next reaction was to seek the Lord's power among the Dissenting people. He hoped that spiritual empowerment might be found within the religious counter-culture in his day. Eventually, Fox become disillusioned with those pursuits as well.

Faced with the bankruptcy of human effort within the establishment and within the counter-establishment, Fox points to his discovery of the true source of empowerment. "So neither them (the priests) nor any of the Dissenting people could I join with, but was a stranger to all, relying wholly upon the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>6</sup> Contemporary Friends find it easy to smugly quote, or to slightly modify Fox's conclusion about the insufficiency of "being bred" at Oxford, Cambridge, E.S.R. or any other school. But less often do we hear the positive statement that is made: the only source of sufficiency is to rely wholly upon the Lord. It was true for George Fox and the early prophets, and it is true for us today.

The fourth aspect of holy callings to be noted in the above examples is that in each of the four cases, and in John's case as well, the one who is being called into relationship with God is also called to a mission or a task to be done for God.

Moses was sent to Pharaoh, with the message to let God's people go. To Isaiah's volunteering, "Here am I, Send me!", the Lord responds:

Go and tell this people:

"You will be ever hearing, but never understanding;  
You will be ever seeing but never perceiving."

(from the Greek rendition of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, Isaiah 6:9.)

Jeremiah is instructed to proclaim to Jerusalem, the once-loving and faithful bride,

My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

(Jeremiah 2:13 NIV)

To the hard-hearted of Israel, Ezekiel is instructed, "Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. Go now to your countrymen in exile and speak to them. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says,' whether they listen or fail to listen." (Ezekiel 3:10-11)

Out of our encounter with the Sovereign Lord arise feelings of awe and humbledness. This is not the result of an inadequate sense of self-worth; rather, it is the spontaneous reaction of seeing ourselves as we truly are in contrast to beholding but a glimpse of the total worthiness of God. This leads to a holy experience of worship in which worth is attributed to God, and the cleansing power of God's love and grace equip and empower the worshiper for ministry. The very essence of worship involves our adoring response to God's worth-ship, and our receptive acceptance of God's love for us—out of which all true feelings of worth have their root. A sense of mission, then, arises out of transforming encounter with God. The same God who calls us into relationship also calls us to a particular mission with a distinctive, redemptive message. Such a message is informed by our awareness of needs in the world, but ultimately its source is beyond us. Thus it is not we who possess a message, but the message it is which possesses us.

The experience of Stephen Grellet, the "Quaker preacher to Europe" in the first half of the 19th century, further illustrates this process:

It was a memorable meeting—held in silence, however, as usual, never to be forgotten. Very soon after sitting down, great was the awfulness and the reverence that came upon me. It was succeeded by such a view and sense of my sinful life, that I was like one crushed under the mill stones. My misery was great; my cry was not unlike that of Isaiah: "Woe is me, for I am undone!" The nearer I was then favoured to approach to Him "who dwelleth in the light," the more I saw my uncleanness and my wretchedness. But how can I set forth the fullness of heavenly joy that filled me when the hope



was again raised that there was One, even He whom I had pierced, Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, that was able to save me? . . . On my earnest petition being put to Him, the language was proclaimed: "Thy sins are forgiven; they iniquities are pardoned." Floods of tears of joy and gratitude gave vent to the fullness of my heart! Then I thought I heard again a sweet language saying, "Proclaim unto others what the Lord has done for thy soul." Apprehending that this was a requisition of PRESENT duty, I began to plead excuses, from the consciousness of my inability to perform the service. "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I cannot speak English so as to be understood," was my answer, "and what am I that I should proclaim Thy name?"

There was not the least feeling then in me to flinch from doing or becoming whatever the Lord would require of me, but a sense of inability and unworthiness. I have since seen that this was more to prepare me for a future day than a command for a present offering. My spirit continued so prostrated before the Lord and encircled with His love and presence, that I was insensible to what passed around me. The meeting concluded and the people retired, without my noticing it, till my brother, speaking to me, drew my attention, and I saw that we two only were left in the house.<sup>7</sup>

What does it mean to receive a holy calling? It means first to be called into relationship with Almighty God. Out of that relationship, and its encounters, comes an awareness of who we really are and what we are called to be doing. As John Woolman says,

Wherever men (and women) are true ministers of Jesus Christ it is from the operation of the Spirit upon their hearts, first purifying them and thus giving them a feeling sense for the condition of others.<sup>8</sup>

Catching a glimpse of what it means to receive a holy calling, we must ask a second question: "What does it mean to be wholly responsive to those callings?"

Before discussing the meaning of responsiveness, let us first back up a bit. I can imagine that some of us might be feeling a bit left out. After all, the previous illustrations are quite exceptional. I mean, how many of us here have actually been addressed by a voice out of a burning bush or seen the meeting house fill up with smoke and fire-carrying seraphim? Our tendency is to think that unless a spiritual calling is spectacular, it isn't important. Not so! Remember our earlier discussion. A holy calling is first an invitation into relationship with God. Out of this relationship stems a partnership in which we find ourselves sensitized to needs in the world and empowered to meet those needs by the love of God. All spiritual callings have their roots in a spiritual encounter, and every spiritual encounter leads to a divine calling as to how we should be stewards of those human-divine experiences.

Unfortunately, some callings are not recognized because people misunderstand the connection between callings and responses. One misconception is the idea that the legitimacy of callings depends on how spectacular they are. Therefore, God's presence becomes confused with manifestations of it. Consider, however, the story of Elijah on the mountain (I Kings 19:11-12) when the presence of the Lord passed by. The account emphasizes the point that God was not in the wind, earthquake or fire—but in the gentle whisper. Each of us experiences God in unique and distinctive ways. The way in which we respond to our spiritual callings should be an expression of the ways in which we have encountered and are being transformed by God. This is what we mean by the proper stewardship of human-divine encounters. Our ministries will likely be most effective in those areas in which we have been ministered to ourselves. Thus, the character of one's ministry is often like in kind to the character of one's calling.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the "patriarch of Quakerism" should make such a distinction throughout his ministry that it was not the building of brick and stone which as the church of Jesus Christ, but the people who sought to worship him in Spirit and in Truth. After all, Fox had written in his journal at the beginning of his ministry,

At another time it was opened to me that God, who made the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands . . . but that his people were his temple, and he dwelt in them.<sup>9</sup>

Whether one's encounters with God have a dramatic character or a subtle one, we are called to be stewards of our experiences with God. If our human-divine encounters be more subtle, our stewardship may take the form of unceasing prayer, and bringing a sense of God's presence into the arena of everyday life. If, on the other hand, one has heard the Lord roaring from Zion as did Amos (Amos 1:2), one's stewardship of that encounter may possess the same urgency as did Amos who exclaimed,

The lion has roared—who will not fear?

The Sovereign Lord has spoken—who can but prophesy? (Amos 3:8)

One's ministry will often be similar to ways in which one has been ministered to; and in seeking to discern one's calling, one should start by asking, "How am I to be the best steward possible of my encounters with God?"

Another misconception is the belief that one's calling is not legitimate unless it is similar to the callings of others. This is where a Quaker view of callings to ministry is vital. A spiritual calling to ministry is not merely a function of one's ego, nor is it a calculated plan to do good in the world. A spiritual calling does not come from imitating the leadings of another. Rather, true callings come from imitating the One who is the true Leader, Christ himself. Robert Barclay poses the question,

What make a man a minister, pastor or teacher in the Church of Christ? How does he come to be one? We answer: "By the inward

power and virtue of the Spirit of God which will not only call him but will in some measure purify and sanctify him." Since the things of the spirit can only be truly known by the aid of the Spirit of God, it is by this same Spirit that a man is called and moved to minister to others. Thus he is able to speak from a living experience of the things to which he is a witness.<sup>10</sup>

The temptation is to think that because God has called another person or group to a successful ministry, this calling is identical for us. It is the same fallacy to assume that the failure of another's ministry means that we should not undertake that ministry. The question is whether or not God has or has not called us to be engaged in that ministry. We are called not to be successful, but to be faithful to the callings and leadings of God.

If there were an aspect of another's ministry which should be imitated, it would not be the program, but the prayer and seeking out of which the program emerged. Alan Kolp has said that ministry involves the identifying of a need and going about seeking to meet that need. Such a process begins and ends with prayer, and truly successful programs are the outward structures through which needs discerned through prayer can be effectively addressed in the world. It is easy to forget that George Fox's vision of a people to be gathered began not with climbing Pendle Hill, but with a spiritual prompting or leading. His key words are, "I was moved of the Lord to go atop it."<sup>11</sup> The true source of callings is not the callings of others. We may be informed and helped by such testimonials, but without experiencing a calling ourselves, the experiences of others will not suffice.

Now let us consider what it means to be wholly responsive to holy callings. As human beings, we were created in the image of God for fellowship with God. Therefore, to be called into relationship and partnership with God is an invitation to become most fully ourselves. If we refuse this love-relationship with God, we not only forfeit what it means to taste of the Divine, but we also forfeit what it means to be most fully human. Responsiveness begins and ends with letting our lives become a perpetual "yes" to God, the Source of all Life and Being.

What it means to be responsive is essentially what it means to be alive. And being wholly responsive to divine callings involves being wholly alive to the One who is the Source of these callings. Responsiveness not only involves an awareness of being addressed by another, but it also involves what we do and who we become because of that awareness. Some responses can be partial, involving only our minds or our feelings. But being wholly responsive touches every aspect of our lives, not just one or two. Such a response is a spiritual one because the spiritual encompasses all aspects of life. Therefore, being wholly responsive involves being alive to God with our intellectual selves, our emotional selves, our physical selves, and even our social selves. This is what it means to be spiritual, and this is what it means to be alive.

Let me illustrate what I am trying to say. If I were to enter a room in which you were sitting, there would be several levels on which you might

respond or relate to me. You may, for instance, choose to ignore my presence in the room, preferring to continue reading a newspaper or doing whatever it was that you were doing. A level a bit more engaging than that would be to acknowledge my presence with a simple greeting, "Hello!" or "Hi, how are you doing?"; or "Nice day, isn't it?" might be responses you might choose to make. Such greetings are not really overtures to learning the details of how another is doing; in fact, we probably don't want to know those details. These responses are designed to acknowledge the presence of another while at the same time keeping the discussion on somewhat of a surface level.

A third level on which we could relate would be to explore our commonalities. "Oh, you have children, too? Well, let me tell you about mine. And, yes, let me hear about yours." Or, "So you had your appendix out too, well, what was it like? Would you like to see my scar?" Such discussion explores common areas of interest, but the interests take precedence over the other person and the relationship.

A fourth level would involve going beyond common interests and schedules to seeking to cultivate a friendship with the other person. A friendship may involve common likes and interests, but it goes beyond the given time-allotment of fixed schedules to seeking to cultivate common experiences and interests. The cultivation of a friendship requires intentionality. It is an activity which consequently must be reserved for fewer people, because one simply does not have the energy nor the time to develop a solid friendship with every person one meets.

More exclusive yet is a fifth level on which two people might choose to relate. It is that of intimacy. Intimacy takes some time if it is to develop within a relationship. It involves not only the sharing of information or ideas, but the sharing of feelings between two people. It requires some long, unstructured times together for no other purpose than simply being together with one another. This is not a means to another end. The other person IS the end of all one's interests, energies and desires. Knowing and being known are the goals of intimacy. The realm of that knowledge is comprehensive. It wells up from the core and center of our beings and encompasses our minds, feelings, bodies and other friendships. Responding to one another on this deep level involves the entirety of who we are, and it affects the entirety of what we do.

If I were to enter a room in which you were sitting, you could choose to respond to me on one of those five levels, and so it is with our responsiveness to God. There may be people here tonight who are responding to God by ignoring His presence. Such a response does not mean that God doesn't exist; it may simply mean that we don't want our agendas disrupted, and so we choose to live our lives as though God did not exist.

Or, we may choose to relate to God on a surface level. We may feel perfectly comfortable with our shallow greetings but not wanting our conversation to go much beyond comfortable phrases which can be easily rehearsed without much personal involvement.

A third level on which we might choose to respond to God is to explore our commonalities together. In doing so, God is granted a well-defined

place in our lives, such as the time between 9:30-12:00 on Sunday mornings, or conversations with other people with whom we have a spiritual interest in common. However, we probably wouldn't want God to tag along with us during the week or in our thought lives. Limiting our responses to some common contexts and interests may seem convenient because then we can get on with our real lives.

A fourth level would involve actively pursuing a friendship or relationship with God. Beyond the scheduled times for worship we may institute some "extra-curricular" times for worship in order to help us be more regular and consistent in our devotional lives. We may seek to go beyond our commonalities, and so our prayers may include intercession for others rather than merely being limited to petition for our own needs. Our relationship with God may be intentional, and we may be committed to its cultivation. Our spiritual lives may have some bright spots in them, but our love relationship with God has not yet become for us all-consuming fire. That happens only when intimacy with God is developed.

The ultimate level on which we might choose to respond to God is on precisely that level. To respond to God on a level of intimacy means that we begin to know and be known by God. The same Hebrew word for "knowledge", as in "knowledge of the Holy One," is used in saying that Adam "knew" his wife, and she conceived and bore a son. Intimacy with God can never be reduced to an easy religious method or a quick solution to a spiritual project. Intimacy is by its very definition exclusive, and it can only be cultivated by spending healthy, uninterrupted time together with one's partner. When this happens between ourselves and God, new openings of truth and light and love occur. No longer can we speak of God as theological topic, or spirituality as a respectable aspect of life. We have known and been known by God as lover and beloved, and at the faintest nuance of our Lord's presence our hearts overflow with passion and adoring love. We find ourselves caught up in the melody of the ancient hymn, "Jesus, the very thought of thee with sweetness fills my breast." The effects of such empassioned love cannot help but transform every aspect of our lives. As George Fox wrote in his journal,

Now was I come up in spirit through the flaming sword into the paradise of God. All things were new, and all creation gave another smell unto me beyond what words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness, and innocency, and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God by Christ Jesus, so that I was come up to the state of Adam which he was in before he fell . . .<sup>12</sup>

Being wholly responsive to holy callings involves cultivating a relationship with God which is intimate, and therefore transforming. Being known by and knowing God gives us new eyes with which to see ourselves and the world. The result, then, is that we become partners with God in the work of extending God's redeeming Love to a world which yearns in anticipation for its healing invasion.

As Neave Brayshaw has said, the Society of Friends "has rediscovered, neither easily nor quickly, the truth that it exists not for itself, but for the world's healing."<sup>13</sup> Spiritual callings arise out of spiritual encounters with God. Therefore, the ways in which we experience ourselves as called men, women and children will arise out of the ways in which we have experienced ourselves as encountered by God. Being wholly responsive to those callings, then, involves living in the newness of life which results from knowing and being known by God. It involves the totality of what we do and who we are. The outcome is that our lives become channels from which new spiritual callings and encounters spring. Whatever our experiences with God have been, whether they be like unto a blazing bush in the wilderness or the gentle whisper on the mountain, our common calling is to be proper stewards of those experiences.

As a Society, we Friends have been blessed to overflowing with a rich abundance of spiritual encounters. God calls for us to be stewards of what we have learned and experienced. Otherwise, we would be unfaithful to our spiritual callings, individually and corporately. It is out of transforming intimacy that the prophets of old heard and saw the Lord with ears and eyes of their souls; and in light of the holy Presence of Almighty God early Friends could not but tremble in reverence and awe. We have a holy calling as Friends; all of us do. The same One who startled the apostle John during worship some two thousand years ago stands before us today—inviting, calling us into spiritual partnership. Might our prayer be akin to that of Lancelot Andrewes, who prayed nearly four centuries ago:

Thou who walkest in the midst of the golden candlesticks,  
remove not our candlestick out of its place;  
set in order the things that are wanting,  
strengthen the things which remain . . .<sup>14</sup>



## FOOTNOTES

1. George Fox; *Journal*, ed. J. L. Nickalls, 1975, pp. 103-4.
2. Edward Burrough: *The Memorable Works of a Son of Thunder*, 1672, prelim. leaf e3. "Testimony of Francis Howgill concerning Edward Burrough." Extracted and edited by *Christian Faith and Practice*, London Yearly Meeting, 1973, #184.
3. Thomas R. Kelley: *A Testament of Devotion*, 1941, pp. 29-30, from *The Light Within*."
4. *Ibid.*, George Fox, p. 7.
5. *Ibid.*,
6. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
7. Stephen Grellet: *Memoirs*, ed. Benjamin Sebohm, 1860, Vol. 1, pp. 24-5. (cited in *Christian Faith and Practice*, *Ibid.*, #58.)
8. John Woolman, *Journal*, Chapter 1.
9. *Ibid.*, George Fox.
10. Robert Barclay, *Apology*, ed. Dean Freiday, 1967, pp. 178-9.
11. George Fox, *Ibid.*, p. 104.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
13. A. Neave Brayshaw, *The Quakers: Their Story and Message*, 1969, p. 348.
14. Lancelot Andrewes, *Private Devotions*, ed. Alexander Whyte, #5, "Intercession."