

**FUNDING THE CENTRALLY MANAGED WORK  
OF BRITAIN YEARLY MEETING  
OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS**

**by**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines the proposition that the centrally managed work carried out by Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends has suffered from a decline in the income contributed by Members and Attenders. It argues that declining income is strongly linked to dwindling membership. It considers whether the declining levels of income and membership are expressions of secularisation.

It researches the historical growth in the Society's centrally managed work and the development of an organisational structure to support this. It considers recent past experience when the perceived importance of the work led Quakers to lose the balance between caution and 'living adventurously'. Soaring expenditure, unmatched by similar increase in contribution income, forced a move to budgetary planning, based on a balanced budget and maintenance of a prudent level of reserves.

Finally, this dissertation examines the importance that Quakers attach to the centrally managed work and the direction it takes. It argues that increasing engagement with the work by members would lead to greater financial commitment. It demonstrates that decisions taken in this area affect levels of contribution income and membership and suggests that clarity of purpose and a much higher profile in the world are needed.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>	
1	Introduction	1
1.1	Funding for the Central Work	2
1.1.1	Knowledge and Understanding	2
1.1.2	Financial Commitment	3
1.2	Membership	4
1.3	Structure of the Society	5
1.4	Purpose of the Society	6
1.5	Summary	6
2	Methodology	8
2.1	Modes of Research	8
2.2	Insider Research	9
2.3	Survey	11
2.3.1	Survey Design	11
2.3.2	Survey Distribution	13
2.3.3	Survey Sample	13
2.4	Interviews	16
2.5	Direction of Subsequent Research	17
2.6	Summary	17
3	Church Money	18
3.1	Secularisation	18
3.1.1	Understanding Secularisation	18

3.1.2	Links between secularisation and other phenomena	19
3.1.3	Effects of secularisation on church attendance	20
3.1.4	Effects of secularisation on corporate purpose	22
3.1.5	Links between secularisation and church income	22
3.2	Wealth of Main Religions	24
3.2.1	Broad Scenario	245
3.2.2	Church of England voluntary income, membership and costs	26
3.2.3	Quaker voluntary income, membership and costs	28
3.2.4	Comparison of Church of England and Quaker Giving	30
3.3	Summary	32
4	Membership	33
4.1	The Meaning of Membership	33
4.2	Introduction of Membership	35
4.3	First Period of Declining Membership	35
4.4	Second Period of Declining Membership	38
4.5	Ageing Membership	43
4.6	Single Quaker in Family (SQIF)	45
4.7	Link between Membership and Central Funding	46
4.8	Summary	50
5	Quaker Organisation and Central Funding	51
5.1	The first three Centuries	51
5.1.1	Organisation and Funding in the 17 <sup>th</sup> Century	52
5.1.2	Organisation and Funding in the 18 <sup>th</sup> Century	55

5.1.3	Organisation and Funding in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century	58
5.2	The twentieth and twenty-first centuries	60
5.2.1	Organisation	60
5.2.2	Funding	62
5.3	Summary	65
6	Balancing Income and Expenditure	67
6.1	Income	67
6.1.1	Contribution Income	67
6.1.2	Total Income	69
6.1.3	Cost of raising Funds	70
6.2	Expenditure	72
6.2.1	Increasing Spend	72
6.2.2	Staffing Costs	73
6.3	Achieving a Balanced Budget	78
6.3.1	Comparison of Income and Expenditure	78
6.3.2	Use of Reserves	80
6.3.3	Development of Budgetary Planning	82
6.3.4	Long Term Budgetary Planning	84
6.4	Summary	86
7	Core Purpose of the Quaker Church	87
7.1	The Debate	88
7.2	Spiritual Nurture	90
7.3	Engagement with the World	91

	7.3.1	Quakers in Politics	91
	7.3.2	Quakers in Business	94
	7.4	Sharing of Funds between Spiritual Nurture and Witness in the World	97
	7.5	Summary	100
8		Conclusions	102
	8.1	Income	103
	8.1.1	Contribution Income	103
	8.1.2	Generated Income	104
	8.1.3	Balanced Budget	104
	8.2	Membership	106
	8.3	Secularisation	107
	8.4	Future Opportunities	108
9		List of Appendices:	111
		Appendix 1 – Survey Questionnaire	112
		Appendix 2 – Questionnaire Analysis	115
		Appendix 3 – Membership Data from Tabular Statements, 1935-2007	116
		Appendix 4 – Breakdown of Income of the Religious Society of Friends, 2000–2007	117
		Appendix 5 – Contribution Income and Average Contribution, 1979-2005, actual and inflation adjusted	118
		Appendix 6 – Income/Expenditure, 1979-2007	119
		Appendix 7 - Main Areas of Expenditure, Income/Cost of Raising Income and Summary of Expenditure by Area of Work, 2000-2007	120
		Appendix 8 – Staff Numbers, Staff Costs compared to Total Expenditure, 1997-2006	121
		Appendix 9 – Income/Expenditure, 1979-2005, adjusted for inflation	122
		Appendix 10 - SWOT Analysis	123
10		Bibliography	124

## LIST OF FIGURES

		<i>Page</i>
Figure 1	Breakdown of Quaker Income, 2000–2007	29
Figure 2	Total Membership including children, 1935-1960	38
Figure 3	Total Membership including children, 1965-2007	40
Figure 4	Adult Members and Attenders, 1965-2007	41
Figure 5	Members lost and gained, 2001-2007	44
Figure 6	Total Adult Membership, 1979-2007	48
Figure 7	Contribution Income, 1979-2005 (£000s), actual and inflation adjusted	48
Figure 8	Average contribution per adult, 1979-2005, actual and inflation adjusted	68
Figure 9	Income, 1979-2007 (£000s)	70
Figure 10	Cost of raising different forms of income, and Income/Expenditure relating to Charitable Activities, 2000-2007 (£000s)	71
Figure 11	Expenditure, 1979-2007 (£000s)	73
Figure 12	Expenditure, 1984-1988 (£000s)	74
Figure 13	Expenditure, 1990-1996 (£000s)	75
Figure 14	Staffing Costs compared to Total Expenditure, 1997-2006 (£000s)	76
Figure 15	Staffing Numbers, 1997-2006	77
Figure 16	Total and Contribution Income compared to Expenditure, 1979-2006 (£000s), Actual Values	79
Figure 17	Total and Contribution Income compared to Expenditure, 1979-2006 (£000s), Values adjusted for inflation	80
Figure 18	Expenditure, 2000-2007 (£000s)	98
Figure 19	Expenditure by area of work, 2000-2007 (£000s)	99



## LIST OF TABLES

		<i>Page</i>
Table 1	Adult membership of Britain Yearly Meeting and Colchester & Coggeshall Monthly Meeting, 2006, showing gender mix	14
Table 2	Adult membership of Britain Yearly Meeting and Colchester & Coggeshall Monthly Meeting, 2006, showing percentage of Attenders	15
Table 3	Relative wealth of the world's main monotheistic religions, 2008	25
Table 4	Voluntary Income in the Church of England, 2000-2004	26
Table 5	Membership/Average Giving in the Church of England, 2000-2004	27
Table 6	Clergy Costs in the Church of England, 2000-2004	27
Table 7	Fundraising from individuals within BYM, 2001-2007	28
Table 8	Calculation of Average Contribution per adult, 2000-2007	29
Table 9	CofE Membership / Clergy Cost / Annual Giving, 2000-2004	30
Table 10	Quaker Membership / Annual Giving, 2000-2004	31
Table 11	Movements in membership, 2001-2007	43

## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

AQM	Area Quaker Meeting
BYM	Britain Yearly Meeting
CAF	Charities Aid Foundation
CofE	Church of England
LQM	Local Quaker Meeting
MM	Monthly Meeting
PLO	Parliamentary Liaison Officer
PM	Preparative Meeting
QCCC	Quaker Communications Central Committee
QCD	Quaker Communications Department
QF&PCC	Quaker Finance and Property Central Committee
<i>Qfp</i>	<i>Quaker Faith and Practice</i>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the proposition that the centrally managed work carried out by Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends has suffered from a decline in the income contributed by Members and Attenders in recent years.<sup>1</sup> This is an area which is largely unresearched.

Dandelion confirms the need for financial commitment to the Society and emphasises the need for research into this area:

Financial commitment is only one aspect of the commitment required for the continuation of a group, but it is an essential one... Future research needs to investigate dimensions of Quaker commitment which both predicate subscription to the group and its behavioural creed, and which are consequential of it.<sup>2</sup>

My research shows that the centrally managed work has suffered from the recent decline in contribution income, and I argue that central funding will continue to decline as membership continues to decline. Although this decline in both church income and church membership is symptomatic of the spread of secularisation, I suggest that the decline can nevertheless be halted, if not reversed. For this to happen, however, Quakers need to become more visible as they resolve the dilemma around their core purpose –

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<sup>1</sup> Centrally Managed Work is the term now used to define the work managed and funded centrally from Friends House, the London base of Britain Yearly Meeting. The previous term in use was 'Central Work' but the new name is thought to make it clearer that it is Quaker Work, owned by all Friends in Britain, but managed centrally. Both terms are used interchangeably in this dissertation for this same work.

<sup>2</sup> Pink Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers: The Silent Revolution* (New York, Ontario & Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), 305.

spiritual insights, leading into political campaigning – with additional funding possible based on a return to traditional Quaker integrity in business.

## 1.1 FUNDING FOR THE CENTRAL WORK

My research started with a survey in one Area Meeting<sup>3</sup> to establish the degree of knowledge, understanding and commitment of Friends in relation to the centrally managed work, in the expectation that this would hold the key to why contribution income was declining.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.1.1. Knowledge and Understanding

Appendix 2 shows that 75% of survey respondents felt that they understood *where money comes from* at local levels but only 62% at the central level. There was less certainty about *how the money was spent*, with only 53-63% knowing at local levels and 42% at central level.

A similar picture emerges on the question of financial responsibilities at the three levels, where misunderstanding and lack of knowledge are evident in many of the responses.

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<sup>3</sup> Area Meeting is a group of Local Meetings, geographically reasonably close, which is responsible for membership, finance, trusteeship, etc, and which meets for business, educational and social purposes on approximately a monthly basis. The Local Meeting is the Quaker group which holds the regular Meeting for Worship. It is normally the Area Meeting, rather than the smaller Local Meeting unit, which is required to register with the Charity Commission. Local Meetings were called Preparative Meetings until a decision taken at Yearly Meeting 2007. Area Meetings were known as Monthly Meetings until changed, also by a decision taken at Yearly Meeting 2007. In this dissertation the two terms, Area Meeting and Monthly Meeting, are used interchangeably to mean the same thing.

<sup>4</sup> Appendix 1 is the survey questionnaire, Appendix 2 is an analysis of the results.

85% of respondents claimed to know who is responsible for finances at the local level, as opposed to only 43% at yearly meeting level. In a number of cases, however, respondents' understanding was incorrect – for example, 14% wrongly believed that outside accountants are involved at local level.

It is apparent from the survey that both knowledge and understanding of the financial structures and requirements of the Society are lacking or confused. This is true most particularly at BYM level but also at Local and Area Meeting levels.

#### **1.1.2 Financial Commitment**

A high level of financial commitment generally is shown in the survey responses, with 82% of respondents making a contribution. Specific financial commitment to the central work seems less enthusiastic, with only 50% choosing to give to the Yearly Meeting, although a few respondents did understand that the Area Meeting contributed substantial amounts to BYM each year.

The question of commitment is nevertheless still very confused – 87% of respondents thought that the money sent to BYM for the centrally managed work was important to the survival of the Society, 90% of respondents claimed that the survival of the Society was important to their faith, yet only 50% of respondents make a financial contribution. This, I suggest, indicates that the commitment to the Society felt by respondents is not generally matched by any clear understanding of the financial needs.

A plausible reason for the general lack of understanding may be that 74% of Members surveyed had joined the Society before the 1990s, i.e. before the present-day unified system of financing the central work was introduced in 1988 (5.2). If interested in finance at all, they were probably more familiar with the pre-1988 arrangements.

My survey indicates that the majority of Quakers are not interested in the detail of the centrally managed work or of the financial structure, but that they nevertheless feel a high level of commitment to the Society. This is confirmed by the comparison with voluntary giving levels in the Church of England (3.2.4). I then determined to examine other aspects of membership of the Society which might explain the decline in contribution income.

## **1.2 MEMBERSHIP**

I consider the composition of the Society's membership and how this impacts on income for the centrally managed work. Only 48% of survey respondents claimed they were able to increase their contribution each year in line with inflation, thus reflecting the high proportion of elderly, retired Members of the Area Meeting which is also valid for the Society as a whole (4.5). This is borne out by the static level of contribution income over the past few years (3.2.3). In addition, membership of the Society is increasingly being replaced by attenders, with a consequent reduced level of participation and understanding (4.6).

I argue that Quakers, under constant pressure to increase the level of contribution income, are in danger of failing to address the underlying problem of dwindling, ageing membership. I suggest that declining income is an effect of dwindling membership and these factors combined could seriously impact on the future of the Society (4.7). I consider whether the declining levels of income and membership are expressions of the trend towards secularisation (Chapters 3, 4).

### 1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE SOCIETY

To broaden the scope of my research, I then examined the development of the organisational framework of the Society and its funding, from its origins through to the present day system of unified funding (Chapter 5). The proceedings of Yearly Meeting<sup>5</sup> sessions reveal, particularly in the second half of the twentieth century, that the importance of the work has at times led Quakers to lose the balance between caution and ‘living adventurously’ in financial matters.<sup>6</sup> This led to the introduction of the balanced budget principle, ensuring that prudence now prevails in the light of radically reducing financial resources (Chapter 6).

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<sup>5</sup> As explained above, Britain Yearly Meeting is used in this study to mean Quakers in Britain. Britain Yearly Meeting is also the name of the body responsible for all Area and Local Meetings, which meets on an annual basis for business, educational, inspirational and social purposes. It carries out the centrally managed work of the Society in respect of which it is also required to register with the Charity Commission. However, the term Yearly Meeting is also used – as in this context – to denote the event itself, the annual meeting of Quakers in Britain, rather than the organisation. The proceedings of Yearly Meeting comprise preliminary documents and minutes of the annual meeting.

<sup>6</sup> A favourite Quaker phrase, taken from Advices and queries 27 in *Quaker Faith & Practice: The Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*. (London: Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 1995; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1999), 1.02.

## 1.4 PURPOSE OF THE SOCIETY

Finally, this dissertation examines the importance that Quakers attach to the centrally managed work itself, the direction it takes, and whether decisions taken on those issues affect the levels of contribution income or membership.<sup>7</sup> Although the specific question of funding the centrally managed work of the Society has not featured largely in the literature as a topic in its own right, I show that Quakers in recent times have urged different priorities in the use of Quaker funds (Chapter 7). The way funds are used is an essential element in the forward prophetic thinking of many Quakers, such as Wolf Mendl,<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Dale,<sup>9</sup> Tony Stoller,<sup>10</sup> and Christine Davis.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.5 SUMMARY

This chapter outlines the path taken during my research into the proposition, starting first with a survey to establish how well members understand the centrally managed work and how committed they are to providing the financial support it requires. The next stage of

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<sup>7</sup> In the survey, through a literature review and in Chapter 7.

<sup>8</sup> Wolf Mendl, *Prophets and Reconcilers: Reflections on the Quaker Peace Testimony* (London: Friends Home Service Committee, 1974).

<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age: Quaker Social Responsibility at the End of the Twentieth Century* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1996), 21.

<sup>10</sup> Tony Stoller, *Wrestling with the Angel – Quaker Engagement in commercial and public affairs* (London: Quaker Books, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Christine A M Davis, *Minding the Future* (London: Quaker Books, 2008).



research examines the clear links between dwindling membership and declining contribution income, before broadening to encompass the development of the Quaker structure responsible for administering the finances. The final stage recognises that membership and financial support of a religious society are totally dependent on how it follows its core purpose, which is expressed at its most fundamental level in the way it uses the resources available.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the different modes of research used and describes the benefits of insider research. I outline my initial plan to research financial aspects of the Society by means of a survey, followed by in-depth interviews with individual Quakers and Attenders. I explain why my research changes direction away from the individual approach, to a broader examination of the links between Quaker income, membership and core purpose. My research is supplemented by data and records extracted from the annual accounts and proceedings of Yearly Meeting over a number of years, and by reference to existing literature on the subject.<sup>12</sup>

### 2.1 MODES OF RESEARCH

On the premise that the degree of knowledge and understanding would dictate the level of Members' financial commitment to the centrally managed work, my survey examined these three fundamental areas:

- Knowledge of Quaker centrally managed work
- Understanding of the purpose or extent of this work
- Financial commitment to supporting the work

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<sup>12</sup> Annual Accounts were included in the YM Proceedings until 1990, and were published as a separate document from 1991 by Communication & Fundraising Dept, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, and from 1993 by the same department renamed Quaker Communications Dept (QCD).

Although this objective might suggest that a qualitative study would be most appropriate, there was a clear need also to quantify some aspects such as membership data – numbers, ages, gender, etc – and financial data. I therefore chose to combine both quantitative and qualitative research.

Qualitative research helped with the design of survey questions and response items. The results of the quantitative elements of the questionnaire focussed participant observation, interview questions, and textual analysis. Some research questions were too problematic to ask of the Quaker group in a quantitative form, and a qualitative approach was a crucial element in the collection of data, and subsequent construction of theory.<sup>13</sup>

Dandelion's description of the relevant links between the two types of research and his use of both throughout his exploration are consistent with the approach that I adopted in the survey and interview phase of my research:

## 2.2 INSIDER RESEARCH

Being a Member of the Monthly/Area Meeting selected for my research made it easier to obtain permission to send a questionnaire to its Members and Attenders.<sup>14</sup> In this age of indiscriminate mail shots and telephone cold calls, Monthly Meetings would not normally permit such contact from an outsider and it would in any case be much less likely to produce results. Dandelion found the same benefits:

The basic advantage of formal Membership was the access this offered. Only Members have an automatic right to attend Quaker business

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<sup>13</sup> Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*, 31.

<sup>14</sup> I was accepted into membership of Colchester & Coggeshall Monthly Meeting in the 1970s.

meetings, and Members are more likely to be involved in the committee work of the group.<sup>15</sup>

This ease of access to Members was an undoubted benefit in this stage of my research. Another advantage of insider research is the feeling of sharing something very important with the people one is studying. This is highlighted by Stringer when he discusses Peter Collins's study of the Quaker Meeting in Dibdenshaw:<sup>16</sup>

... we can see that Peter presents himself very clearly as an 'insider'. He claims to share a large number of assumptions with the people he is studying, including, we must assume, their 'faith' .... As well as a common religious background, there is a clear sharing of social background, culture, certain class-based assumptions, and even, in this case, a certain intellectual approach to the whole question of religion ... It is clear, therefore, that far more than 'faith' is shared between Peter and the people studied.<sup>17</sup>

My previous involvement in the committee work of the group, as member and then Clerk of Quaker Communications Central Committee, produced the added benefit of increasing my own understanding of the topic before research began.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*, 39.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Collins, 'Connecting Anthropology and Quakerism: Transcending the Insider/Outsider Dichotomy' in Elisabeth Arweck and Martin D Stringer, ed., *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual* (Birmingham: The University of Birmingham Press, 2002), 77.

<sup>17</sup> Elisabeth Arweck and Martin D Stringer, ed., *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual* (Birmingham: The University of Birmingham Press, 2002), 4-5.

<sup>18</sup> I was for six years a member of QCCC, Quaker Communications Central Committee. For the last year, from April 2006 to March 2007, I was Clerk of the committee. QCCC comprises about 12 Friends, unpaid, and is responsible for setting policy on raising the revenue required to finance the centrally managed work of the Society. The Clerk is a servant of the Committee, responsible for setting the agenda, chairing and minuting the meetings, and maintains regular contact between meetings with the Quaker Communications Department (QCD) which implements the policy set by the Committee. QCD, based at Friends House in London, has a paid staff responsible for implementing the policy decisions of the Committee.

Confidentiality and anonymity are important when engaged on insider research. I therefore gave an assurance on the questionnaire that my research was not being done in any official capacity, that I had no access to any records of their giving and that my purpose was simply to find out how Friends and Attenders make choices about their financial giving. They were also assured of anonymity and an ethical assurance was given as to who would see the data and how it would be used. These assurances have been respected throughout. The response level of 56% to the 188 questionnaires circulated (2.3.2) is a good indication that these assurances were acceptable, and also demonstrates the effectiveness of insider research when attempting to gain access to a group.

Confidentiality issues became apparent again when I started the interview process. The assurances of confidentiality and anonymity which I gave could have been rejected because of my recent membership of QCCC, despite my additional assurance that I was not acting in an official capacity. However, in fact, my assurances were accepted and my QCCC membership did not lead to any problems.

## **2.3 SURVEY**

### **2.3.1 Survey Design**

The questionnaire was designed to give specific quantitative data on Friends and Attenders, and qualitative data on their knowledge of the financial organisation within the

Society at Local, Area and Yearly Meeting levels. Questions 1 and 2 gave me specific quantitative data such as the relative proportion of Members and Attenders responding to the survey, their age and gender, and, in the case of Members, their length of membership. The Question 'Retired: Yes/No' gave an indication of the respondent's potential earning capacity. Questions 6–10 and 12–13 gave a general picture of how committed the respondents were to the Society, in matters of financial contribution, service and faith.

For the purpose of ascertaining their knowledge of the financial organisation, I included questions 3a and 3b on where the Society's income came from and how it was spent at the different levels within the Society, questions 4 and 5 about those responsible for financial management at these levels, and question 11 to determine how knowledgeable they were about their own Local Meeting's contribution to centrally managed work.

I made the error at this stage of not carrying out a pilot survey to test the usefulness of the questionnaire, and as a result inherent design faults which could easily have been eliminated were not. With hindsight, I realise that had I numbered the 'Retired' and 'Gender' questions and moved them to separate lines below question 2 on 'Age' instead of alongside it, they would not have been overlooked by 16-17% of respondents.

Question 6 relates to *regular* financial giving but Question 8, which was also intended for those who give regularly, does not include the word 'regular' and was therefore in some cases answered by respondents who give occasionally.

### 2.3.2 Survey Distribution

I was authorised by Colchester & Coggeshall Monthly Meeting on 9 September 2007 to circulate the questionnaire to all 188 Members and Attenders listed in its current Book of Members.<sup>19</sup> 188 questionnaires were sent out that month, requesting that they be returned by end October 2007. Although seven questionnaires were received after this deadline, they have been included in the Questionnaire Analysis sheets (Appendix 2). 105 questionnaires (56%) were returned, including five with no questions completed because respondents felt they could not make a valid contribution to the study. These five have not been included in any of the figures.

### 2.3.3 Survey Sample

My research assumed that the sample chosen for the survey was broadly representative of the Yearly Meeting as a whole, and this was certainly true of gender.<sup>20</sup> Table 1, using data from the 2006 Tabular Statement, compares the total number of adult members of BYM at the end of 2006 with the figures for the Monthly Meeting surveyed and the figures resulting from the survey. Adult Attenders are not included as the available data

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<sup>19</sup> The formal name of an Area Meeting continued to be Monthly Meeting until changed by formal minute. This did not happen in the case of Colchester & Coggeshall Monthly Meeting until 2008, when the name was changed to Southern East Anglia Area Meeting. Its Book of Members includes only those Friends and Attenders who have given express authorisation for their names and details to be included. As shown on page 8 of 'Tabular Statement, Supplement to *Quaker Work in 2006*', Colchester & Coggeshall Monthly Meeting has a total number of Friends in membership of 187 plus 62 adult Attenders, so clearly not all are listed in the Book of Members. I was therefore able to circulate the questionnaire to only 188 of the 249 Members/Attenders.

<sup>20</sup> Of the 84 participants in the survey who responded to the question on gender, 31 were men and 53 women, or 37% and 63% respectively of total adults. My survey analysis does not show whether these are Members or Attenders. Of the MM membership of 187 including Attenders, 117 are female, 70 male – an identical 63% / 37% ratio. From the gender point of view this is clearly a representative sample of this Monthly Meeting. The ratio also compares very well with the 39% / 61% men/women split of Members in BYM shown in Table 1.

does not show the split between men and women. The results show the split to be 39/61% BYM and 37/63% MM, so my survey sample was clearly representative of BYM on this point.

	Total Adult Members	Men Members	Women Members	% Men/Women Members
Britain Yearly Meeting	15,068	5,815	9,253	39/61%
Colchester & Coggeshall MM	187	70	117	37/63%
Respondents to Survey Question on Gender	84	31	53	37/63%

Table 1: Adult membership of Britain Yearly Meeting and Colchester & Coggeshall Monthly Meeting, 2006, showing gender mix<sup>21</sup>

Table 2 shows that this was not true when comparing Membership with ‘Attendership’. Had all Members and Attenders within the monthly meeting responded to my survey, the percentage of Attenders would have been 25% of total adults, compared to 18% of the 100 who actually responded and compared to 34% over the entire Yearly Meeting.

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<sup>21</sup> Data extracted from Tabular Statement – Supplement to *Quaker Work in 2006* – The membership of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain for the year ending 31 December 2006. [http://www.quaker.org.uk/Shared\\_ASP\\_Files/UploadedFiles/B6E1E828-E3C8-463B-864F-8CB75D518F55\\_Tabular\\_Statements\\_2006\\_for\\_YM\\_2007.pdf](http://www.quaker.org.uk/Shared_ASP_Files/UploadedFiles/B6E1E828-E3C8-463B-864F-8CB75D518F55_Tabular_Statements_2006_for_YM_2007.pdf); Internet, accessed 23/1/09, and from Appendix 2 Questionnaire Analysis.



	Total Adult Members	Recognised Attenders	Total Adults	% Attenders
Britain Yearly Meeting	15,068	7,952	23,020	34%
Colchester & Coggeshall MM	187	62	249	25%
Respondents to Survey Question 1a	82	18	100	18%

Table 2: Adult membership of Britain Yearly Meeting and Colchester & Coggeshall Monthly Meeting, 2006, showing percentage of Attenders<sup>22</sup>

Again, the Yearly and Monthly Meeting membership figures are taken from the Tabular Statement 2006, the percentages and the Survey results are mine.

The proportion of Attenders included in the adult membership of BYM at 34% is almost double the percentage represented in my survey of 18%. It is possible that Attenders simply felt they had nothing to contribute because of a total lack of knowledge of the workings of the Society.

However, as a result, some survey results may have been distorted in favour of a Member viewpoint rather than that of an Attender. In particular, answers to the questions of knowledge of and commitment to the centrally managed work in the survey are most likely to be distorted in this way. Where a positive answer indicates some degree of knowledge or commitment, a higher percentage of Members than Attenders gave positive

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<sup>22</sup> Data extracted from Tabular Statement – Supplement to *Quaker Work in 2006* – The membership of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain for the year ending 31 December 2006. [http://www.quaker.org.uk/Shared\\_ASP\\_Files/UploadedFiles/B6E1E828-E3C8-463B-864F-8CB75D518F55\\_Tabular\\_Statements\\_2006\\_for\\_YM\\_2007.pdf](http://www.quaker.org.uk/Shared_ASP_Files/UploadedFiles/B6E1E828-E3C8-463B-864F-8CB75D518F55_Tabular_Statements_2006_for_YM_2007.pdf); Internet, accessed 23/1/09, and from Appendix 2 Questionnaire Analysis.

replies. For example, in answer to question 3a ‘Do you know where money comes from to finance Area Meeting?’, of the 74% positive answers only 6% came from Attenders. Of the 26% negative answers indicating no knowledge, nearly half came from Attenders.

## 2.4 INTERVIEWS

The second, more qualitative, phase of my research took the form of in-depth interviews with interviewees selected from the forty questionnaire respondents who agreed to take part in this further research. These volunteers consisted of 38 Members and 2 Attenders, equally divided between male and female, from whom I selected a possible thirteen candidates for interview.

The first interview yielded a great deal of thought-provoking information and, by comparison, the information gained from the other two interviews seemed almost irrelevant.

I show in 3.2.3 below that contribution income is raised at a consistent level despite the level of ignorance about funding at national level found in respondents to my questionnaire (1.1.1). It seemed to me, therefore, that the crucial question was not *how* Quaker centrally managed work is funded. Rather, and more importantly, I needed to examine *why* the work is funded. This led me to move to a new direction for my research, and for this reason this phase of my research was in the end limited to just three interviews.

## 2.5 DIRECTION OF SUBSEQUENT RESEARCH

In order to discover *why* Quakers need to raise money and how they arrive at the decisions on the right use of this money, the focus of my research changed from the assessment of individual knowledge, understanding and commitment, towards an examination of the following questions:

1. Falling church income reflecting the trend toward secularisation (chapter 3)
2. Declining membership numbers (chapter 4)
3. Disappearance of the rich Quaker philanthropists (chapter 5)
4. The way Quakers plan and budget for centrally managed work (chapter 6)
5. The options for the right use of the money raised (chapter 7)
6. Quaker engagement with the world (chapter 7)

This research is largely literature based, and makes use of statistics and data extracted from Quaker Annual Accounts and Tabular Statements.

## 2.6 SUMMARY

In summary, my initial plan of research focusing on the perspective of the individual Quaker was changed following the survey and three interviews, to concentrate on a much broader perspective of the Society as a whole, the historical background leading to the present financial pressures and the underlying causes.

### 3. CHURCH MONEY

In this chapter I examine the spread of secularisation to various aspects of church life, including membership and income, and I research the wealth of churches with a particular comparison between voluntary giving in the Church of England and in the Society.

#### 3.1 SECULARISATION

##### 3.1.1 Understanding Secularisation

The disagreement between the *orthodox* (Bruce, 2000)<sup>23</sup> model of secularisation used to account for European developments, compared to the American model (Warner, 1993),<sup>24</sup> is in large part attributed by Casanova to their different uses of the term:

Europeans tend to use the term ‘secularization’ in the double sense, constantly switching back and forth between two related meanings. There is, firstly, secularization in the broader sense of the secularization of societal structures or the diminution of the social significance of religion. There is, secondly, secularization in the narrower sense of decline of religious beliefs and practices among individuals. The second, narrower meaning of the term ... is secondary, posterior and mainly derivative from the primary meaning. Europeans, however, see the two meanings of the term as intrinsically related ...  
... Americans tend to view things differently and practically restrict the use of the term ‘secularization’ to its secondary and narrower meaning, to

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<sup>23</sup> Steve Bruce, ‘The Supply-Side Model of Religion: The Nordic and Baltic States’ in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39 (1), 32-46, quoted in Casanova, ‘Beyond European and American Exceptionalisms: towards a Global Perspective’ in Grace Davie, Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, ed., *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 17.

<sup>24</sup> R Stephen Warner, ‘Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States’, *American Journal of Sociology*, 98 (5), 1044-93, quoted in Casanova, ‘Beyond European and American Exceptionalisms’ in Davie, Heelas and Woodhead, *Predicting Religion*, 2003, 17.

the progressive decline of religious beliefs and practices among individuals.<sup>25</sup>

For the purposes of this study, I am using the term in its European senses.

### 3.1.2 Links between secularisation and other phenomena

Literature on the subject of secularisation shows the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, and, more recently, the feminist revolution as possible contributing factors.<sup>26</sup>

For example, Holloway reports that:

Callum G Brown in his book, *The Death of Christian Britain*,<sup>27</sup> claims that the single most important element in the free-fall in church attendance in Britain is the resistance in the churches to the feminist revolution. The classic sociological account of the decline of religious observance in Britain ... [is] that the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution gave birth to a new kind of consciousness that was inimical to religion and began the process of its dissolution ... Brown dismisses that claim and shows that working class Britain was heavily involved in various forms of evangelical religion until fairly recently. ... What Brown calls the background discourse of this period was the evangelical economy of salvation and it was a highly gendered discourse.<sup>28</sup>

Brown's narrative 'exactly mirrors [Holloway's] own theological experience'.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, Holloway clearly believes that it is not inevitable that the secularisation

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<sup>25</sup> José Casanova. 'Beyond European and American Exceptionalisms: towards a Global Perspective' in *Predicting Religion: Christian, Secular and Alternative Futures* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 17-18.

<sup>26</sup> Richard Holloway. *Doubts and Loves: What is Left of Christianity?* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd, 2002), 7.

<sup>27</sup> Callum G Brown. *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> Holloway, *Doubts and Loves*, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Holloway, *Doubts and Loves*, 8.

process will continue in the future as he points to humanity's struggle with God as 'a history of constant surprise and discovery'.<sup>30</sup> Although young people 'don't seem very interested in the Church, [that may be because] while God always has the potential to be new, the Church seems to be very old.'<sup>31</sup> This suggests he sees a way back from secularisation through spiritual values.

However, he also seems to accept Jantzen's assessment of a danger that secularisation might lead to a loss of kinship, the individual's disconnectedness to the web of life.<sup>32</sup>

Even when Christianity was gradually displaced by the secularism of modernity, the rejection of connectedness with the world ... in which kinship is rejected and people see themselves as disconnected individuals, is precisely the seed-bed in which totalitarian regimes can take root.<sup>33</sup>

In the next section I examine the more specific link between secularisation and the dwindling church attendance in Britain.

### 3.1.3 Effects of secularisation on church attendance

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<sup>30</sup> Holloway, *Doubts and Loves*, 236.

<sup>31</sup> Holloway, *Doubts and Loves*, 236.

<sup>32</sup> Holloway, *Doubts and Loves*, 235-237.

<sup>33</sup> Grace M Jantzen, *Becoming Divine* (Manchester University Press, 1998), 151, quoted in Holloway, *Doubts and Loves*, 237.

Scholarship highlights the effects of secularisation on church attendance.<sup>34</sup> According to Heelas and Woodhead, Steve Bruce claims that ‘the sphere of the sacred is largely if not entirely undergoing relentless decline.’<sup>35</sup> To explain this, Heelas and Woodhead suggest ‘that the main reason for overall secularisation is probably that the holistic milieu has – to date – attracted a relatively small constituency’,<sup>36</sup> and ‘The simple fact that the holistic milieu has not exercised a wider appeal can thus greatly help explain why its growth has not been able to compensate for congregational domain decline.’<sup>37</sup>

However, this trend for congregations to decline is scarcely followed by the Baptists:

As for the fortunes of congregations of difference, in Britain .... some of the smaller denominations of hard difference have declined very fast since the 1960s, even to the point of near extinction... Yet attendance in the single largest conservative evangelical denomination in England, the Baptists, has almost managed to keep pace with population growth since the late 1970s, which in the rapidly secularizing British context represents remarkable success.<sup>38</sup>

Burton<sup>39</sup> suggests that the Quaker trend is also different. Whereas Brown agrees with Brierley ‘that the decline in church membership and the secularisation of British society

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<sup>34</sup> Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, with Benjamin Seel, Bronislaw Szerszynski, Karin Tusting. *The Spiritual Revolution: why religion is giving way to spirituality*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005); Peter Brierley, *The Tide is Running Out: What the English Church Attendance Survey Reveals* (London: Christian Research, 2000); Chadkirk, B. ‘Will the Last (Woman) Friend to Leave Please Ensure that the Light Remains Shining?’ in *Quaker Studies 9* (Sunderland: Centre for Quaker Studies, 2004), 114-119.

<sup>35</sup> Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2002), quoted in Heelas and Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution*, 9.

<sup>36</sup> Heelas and Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution*, 127.

<sup>37</sup> Heelas and Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution*, 127.

<sup>38</sup> Brierley, *The Tide is Running Out*, 37.

<sup>39</sup> Paul F Burton, ‘Keeping the Light Shining? The End of British Quakerism Revisited’, *Quaker Studies 9/2* (2005), 249-256.

was an abrupt event beginning in the 1960s’,<sup>40</sup> Chadkirk describes how ‘adult membership of Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) began to increase from around 1960, remained on a plateau from 1975 to 1991 or 1992 and has been declining sharply ever since’.<sup>41</sup>

#### 3.1.4 Effects of secularisation on Corporate Purpose

Again from a Quaker point of view, Jonathan Dale expresses concern about the effects of secularisation on the Society, and in particular on the Society’s corporate purpose and its ability to take corporate action:

... The process of secularisation, has driven religion out of large parts of life: out of science, out of morality, out of politics and out of business ... the effect of this is to separate religion from life ... Understood in this way the spiritual is allied to the personal, the private, the experiential and separated from the public world of economic and social life, which is abandoned to the secular world.<sup>42</sup>

Dale hints in this last sentence at a link to money in the secularisation process. I return to the issues of corporate purpose and corporate action in 7.4 when I examine how spiritual insights with differing emphases lead to conflicting views on the corporate purpose and how the Society’s income should be spent.

#### 3.1.5 Links between secularisation and church income

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<sup>40</sup> Callum G Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, 2001, quoted in Burton, *Quaker Studies* 9/2 (2005).

<sup>41</sup> Bill Chadkirk, ‘Will the Last (Woman) Friend to Leave Please Ensure that the Light Remains Shining?’, *Quaker Studies* 9/1 (2004), 114-119.

<sup>42</sup> Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age*, 21.



A clear pointer to the importance of the link between money and secularisation is to be found in Steve Bruce's chapter on Religion in the United States:

One good mark of the importance of some social institution is how much money people give to it. As part of a critique of the secularization paradigm, Roger Finke (1992)<sup>43</sup> made much of the fact that Americans gave as generously to the church in the late 1980s as they did fifty years previously. What he failed to point out was that over that period the amount they spent on everything had more than doubled. In 1963 Catholics gave 2.2 per cent of their income to the Church. By 1983 it was only 1.6 per cent.<sup>44</sup> While financial contributions to the churches have in net terms remained fairly high, they have declined markedly as a proportion of disposable income. In brief, while we can be sure that US churches remain more popular than their European counterparts, there is good reason to suppose that church adherence in the USA is declining.<sup>45</sup>

Bruce, in refuting Finke's 1992 critique, proposes that secularisation is increasing in America.

Although I concentrate on the European understanding of secularisation, and the European model with declining attendance and dwindling church income, the importance of the church can, as pointed out by Bruce above, to some extent be defined in terms of the amount of money given to it. This area of secularisation is therefore one of vital importance to the future of the church because both membership and income are clear indicators of the value placed on religion by the community.

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<sup>43</sup> R Finke, 'An unsecular America' in S Bruce, ed., *Religion and Modernization: Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 145-69.

<sup>44</sup> A M Greeley, *Religious Change in America* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1989), 24.

<sup>45</sup> Steve Bruce, *God is Dead*, 207.

For this reason, in 3.2 after examining briefly the current values of the world's main religions, I then make a more detailed comparative study of Church of England and Quaker income and membership.

## 3.2 WEALTH OF MAIN RELIGIONS

### 3.2.1 Broad Scenario

In a recent television documentary, *Who's Got God's Millions?*, Robert Llewellyn attempted to find out which of the world's main monotheistic religions had the most money.<sup>46</sup> His journey took him from Canterbury Cathedral to Vatican City and Israel, as he calculated the income and assets of the Anglican Communion, the Catholic Church, Judaism and Islam.

Llewellyn admits that figures are not audited and the majority are rough estimates, but he puts them forward as the best available in the time allowed for making the programme. I have added Quaker figures based on Britain Yearly Meeting Accounts 2007 into the final column for the sake of comparison.

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<sup>46</sup> <http://demand.five.tv/Episode.aspx?episodeBaseName=C5142550001>; Internet, accessed 17/1/09.

	<b>Anglican Communion</b>	<b>Roman Catholicism</b>	<b>Judaism</b>	<b>Islam</b>	<b>Quakers</b>
<b>Total followers worldwide</b>	<b>70 million</b>	<b>1.2 billion</b>	<b>13.3 million</b>	<b>1.8 billion</b>	<b>338,000<sup>47</sup></b>
<b>Annual Income w'wide</b>	<b>£5 billion</b>	<b>£51.8 billion</b>	<b>£21.6 billion</b>	<b>Not known</b>	
<b>Annual Income UK</b>	<b>£1 billion</b>	<b>£279 million</b>	<b>£62.7 million</b>	<b>£322 million</b>	<b>£8 million</b>
Made up of:					
Fundraising	£250m				£2m
Weddings, Funerals, Investments	£150-250m				£1.8m
Contributions from members, inc Legacies	£500-600m				£4.2m
<b>Regular worshippers in UK</b>	<b>871,000</b>	<b>879,000</b>	<b>Not known</b>	<b>1 million</b>	<b>23,000</b>
Avg Contribution per worshipper	£574-£689				£183
<b>Assets<sup>48</sup></b>	<b>£8.3 billion</b>	<b>£1 billion</b>	<b>£150 million</b>	<b>£1.4 billion</b>	
Made up of:					
Equities	£3.6 billion				
Property	£1.6 billion				
Clergy housing	£2.7 billion				

Table 3 : Relative wealth of the world's main monotheistic religions, 2008<sup>49</sup>

Despite the many gaps in information to which Llewellyn gained access, Table 3 provides a current snapshot of the relative wealth of these religions. Of particular interest to this

<sup>47</sup> Figure for 2000. Pink Dandelion, *The Quakers: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc, 2008), 112.

<sup>48</sup> Excludes value of churches, cathedrals, etc as consecrated ground has no accounting value.

<sup>49</sup> Quaker figures based on BYM Accounts 2007, except where stated. Data for other religions taken from <http://demand.five.tv/Episode.aspx?episodeBaseName=C5142550001>; Internet, accessed 17/1/09.

study is the average contribution per worshipper in the Anglican Communion of around £600 compared to the average Quaker contribution of £183. This apparent disparity is examined in greater detail in the following sub-sections.

### 3.2.2 Church of England Voluntary Income, Membership and Costs

A financial overview of Church of England (CofE) Finances, 2000-04 gives figures for contribution income (Table 4), membership (Table 5) and clergy costs (Table 6).

	2000 £m	2001 £m	2002 £m	2003 £m	2004 £m	Av. Ann. Increase
Regular giving	159.6	181.3	191.6	203.0	216.1	7.9%
Other giving	208.5	206.2	217.4	219.8	230.9	2.6%
Tax recovered ("Gift Aid")	47.2	52.3	57.2	60.8	64.4	8.1%
<b>Total Giving</b>	<b>415.3</b>	<b>439.8</b>	<b>466.1</b>	<b>483.6</b>	<b>511.4</b>	<b>5.3%</b>
Grants	83.9	75.5	77.4	94.0	93.3	2.7%
<b>Total Voluntary Income</b>	<b>499.2</b>	<b>515.3</b>	<b>543.5</b>	<b>577.6</b>	<b>604.8</b>	<b>4.9%</b>

Table 4: Voluntary Income in the Church of England, 2000-2004<sup>50</sup>

The Overview comments 'In 2004 giving before tax recovery was £447.0m, of which £41.8m related to legacies, on which tax cannot be recovered, as they are made free of inheritance tax.' This makes it quite clear that legacy income is included in the 'Total Giving' figures, and I therefore combine contribution and legacy income when presenting the Quaker figures for comparison (Table 9).

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/finance/finoverview.pdf>, accessed 13/3/09.

Table 5 shows how the Overview uses the Total Giving and Membership figures to calculate each member's weekly giving. The figures for annual giving have been calculated by me for ease of comparison with annual Quaker figures (Tables 8, 9 and 10).

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Av. Ann. Increase
Total Giving (£m)	415.3	439.8	466.1	483.6	505.2	5.0%
"Membership" (m) <sup>1</sup>	1.04	1.03	0.96	0.98	0.98	-1.6%
<b>Giving per member/week (£)</b>	<b>7.66</b>	<b>8.18</b>	<b>9.33</b>	<b>9.50</b>	<b>9.92</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
<b>Annual Giving/member (£)</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>494</b>	<b>516</b>	

Table 5: Membership/Average Giving in the Church of England, 2000-2004<sup>51</sup>

The same Financial Overview gives the costs of maintaining the clergy in these years:

	2000 £m	2001 £m	2002 £m	2003 £m	2004 £m
Stipends, NIC and related payments	170.8	174.4	180.1	179.8	182.0
Pension contributions <sup>1</sup>	30.9	31.7	40.1	44.4	44.8
Housing	48.6	50.8	53.0	54.3	61.0
<b>Total Clergy "remuneration"</b>	<b>250.4</b>	<b>256.9</b>	<b>273.2</b>	<b>278.5</b>	<b>287.8</b>
Office and working costs	53.4	53.7	55.6	57.1	58.5
<b>Total Clergy Costs</b>	<b>303.8</b>	<b>310.6</b>	<b>328.8</b>	<b>335.6</b>	<b>346.2</b>
Clergy (Number)	9,538	9,352	9,182	9,067	8,942
<b>"Remuneration" per minister £</b>	<b>£26,200</b>	<b>£27,500</b>	<b>£29,800</b>	<b>£30,700</b>	<b>£32,200</b>
Total cost per minister £	£31,800	£33,200	£35,800	£37,000	£38,700

Table 6: Clergy Costs in the Church of England, 2000-2004<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/finance/finoverview.pdf>, accessed 13/3/09.

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/finance/finoverview.pdf>, accessed 13/3/09.

The overview is clear that these clergy costs are paid from members' contributions. As Quakers have no paid clergy, there are no clergy costs for comparison with CofE figures.<sup>53</sup>

### 3.2.3 Quaker Voluntary Income, Membership and Costs

Table 7 shows contribution income virtually static at around £2m during the period 2000-2007, which raised concern amongst Quakers involved in the centrally managed work that in real terms contribution income was dwindling. Friends were asked to nearly double the level of giving.<sup>54</sup>

2000 £000	2001 £000	2002 £000	2003 £000	2004 £000	2005 £000	2006 £000	2007 £000	Average £000
£2157	£1946	£2079	£1998	£2027	£2044	£1834	£1960	£2006

Table 7: Fundraising from individuals within BYM, 2000-2007<sup>55</sup>

Despite the static contribution income, it is clear from Figure 1 that total Quaker income as a whole was rising at times during that period. This is accounted for by the increasing amounts raised from sources other than contribution income. In 2005 the income from legacies and gifts was considerably higher than in other years.

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<sup>53</sup> C Trevett, *Previous Convictions and end-of-the-millennium Quakerism* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1997), 127: 'ours is a "do-it-yourself" religion, devolving responsibility onto each individual Friend, to whom the ultimate Teacher is accessible directly.'

<sup>54</sup> *The Friend*, 9 April 2004 - Report on Meeting for Sufferings: 'Member donations, she [Beth Allen] said, are a contribution to the "housekeeping" of the Yearly Meeting, for which all Friends have a responsibility, within their means. This means an average of £140 to £150 per member.'

<sup>55</sup> Kate Cargin, 'Fundraising Strategy', unpublished paper presented to Quaker Finance & Property Central Committee, December 2006. I have added 2000, 2001, 2006 and 2007 figures, taken from BYM Annual Accounts for those years.

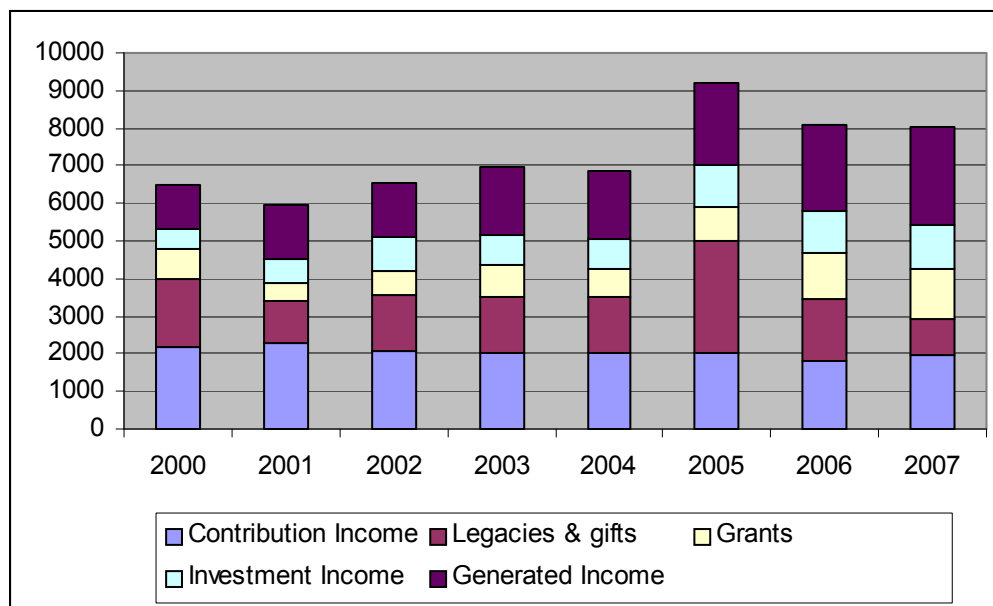


Figure 1 : Breakdown of Quaker Income, 2000–2007 (£000s)<sup>56</sup>

Quaker membership figures in Table 8 include both Members and Attenders, but not children.

	Contribution Income	Adult Members and Attenders	Average Contribution per adult
2000	£2,157,000	25352	£85.08
2001	£1,946,000	24793	£78.49
2002	£2,079,000	24216	£85.85
2003	£1,998,000	24198	£82.57
2004	£2,027,000	23911	£84.77
2005	£2,044,000	23400	£87.35
2006	£1,834,000	23020	£79.67
2007	£1,960,000	22977	£85.30

Table 8: Calculation of Average Contribution per adult, 2000-2007<sup>57</sup>

As we have seen above, in April 2004 Friends were advised that an average contribution of £140 to £150 was needed from each member. This contrasted markedly with the

<sup>56</sup> Data derived from the Annual Accounts of BYM 2000-2007, summarised in Appendix 4.

<sup>57</sup> Membership figures are extracted from Appendix 3, Contribution Income figures from Appendix 4.

£84.77 average contribution actually achieved in 2004, and there is scarcely any improvement by 2007.

### 3.2.4 Comparison of Church of England and Quaker Giving

Using data from Tables 4, 5 and 6, we can see in Table 9 that the average annual giving per member of the Church of England, excluding the clergy cost but including legacy income, was £163 in 2004.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
“Membership” (m)	1.04	1.03	0.96	0.98	0.98
Average Total Clergy Cost per member/annum	£292	£302	£343	£342	£353
Annual Giving/member (£)	£398	£425	£485	£494	£516
Net Annual Giving/member exc Clergy Cost	£106	£123	£102	£152	£163

Table 9: CofE Membership / Clergy Cost / Annual Giving, 2000-2004<sup>58</sup>

As already explained, Quaker figures for Contribution Income and Legacy Income have been combined in Table 10 for the purposes of true comparison, and result in annual giving per Quaker worshipper of £147 in 2004, using the same criteria:

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/info/finance/finoverview.pdf>, accessed 13/3/09.



	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
Total Adult Members and Attenders	25,352	24,793	24,216	24,198	23,911
Contribution Income £m	2.157	1.946	2.079	1.998	2.027
Legacy Income £m	1.830	1.469	1.492	1.531	1.487
Total Annual Giving £m	3.987	3.415	3.571	3.529	3.514
Net Annual Giving/worshipper	£157	£138	£147	£146	£147

Table 10: Quaker Membership / Annual Giving, 2000-2004<sup>59</sup>

The CofE / Quaker comparison showing respective net annual giving figures in 2004 of £163 and £147 per worshipper is, however, only a very rough gauge of the commitment of the members of the two churches. In this study there is not enough time to delve more deeply, but it is important to recognise that this is not an accurate ‘like-for-like’ comparison. For example, the Financial Overview provided by the CofE shows the total giving to cover expenditure in the parishes as well as at the centre. The Quaker figures are for contributions to centrally managed work only and there is considerable additional Quaker giving to cover the costs incurred locally. Although difficult to quantify, I suggest that Quaker contributions to cover expenditure locally as well as at the centre would be much higher than the £163 average for CofE worshippers.

A further disparity between the Quaker and CofE figures is due to the fact that Quaker central income funds Quaker work in the world as well as work done for the Quaker structure from the central point. A brief survey of the CofE work detailed in the

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<sup>59</sup> Data taken from Tabular Statement and Annual Accounts, as set out in Appendices 3 and 4.

Overview indicates that it is all Church related; CofE work in the world is not detailed.

This suggests that voluntary giving in the Society is much higher than in the CofE.

### 3.3 SUMMARY

In the previous section, I have suggested that Friends are contributing amounts at least comparable to those given by members of the Church of England, if not more. However, there is an average decrease in Quaker giving of about 2.2% per annum, which explains the concern reported in 3.2.3.

This contrasts with a more optimistic view for the future of the Church in the CofE

Financial Overview, based on the figures in Table 4:

Voluntary income is the cornerstone of the Church's income; it makes up around 55% of gross income ... It is also a vital benchmark for the Church in reflecting the level of commitment of the public to the Church and its faith. Over the period total giving increased at 5.3% p.a., compared with an increase in average earnings of just 3.8%.

Tables 9 and 10 show that membership of both CofE and Quakers declined by 6%

between 2000 and 2004. Both declining income and declining attendance suggest that

Quakers are following the current European trend towards secularisation. I therefore take a closer look at the decline in membership in Chapter 4.

## 4. QUAKER MEMBERSHIP

This chapter considers the history of membership of the Society, the steady decline in numbers over recent years and suggests future trends.

### 4.1 THE MEANING OF MEMBERSHIP

In a Sidcot PM report on ‘The Meaning of Membership’ dated 1st April 2001, Friends questioned whether the Society needed Members and reached the conclusion:

First of all it is a legal necessity; it is essential to be able to identify those who control and are responsible for the Society. But much more important is the commitment to a way of life which is implicit in membership.

A recent consultation document, which used the Sidcot report as one of its sources, found that:

Friends understand membership in a multitude of ways. The principles that have stood out for us in Friends’ feedback so far are ...: commitment; community, reciprocity and mutual accountability in the relationship between the individual and the meeting; a sense of belonging; a public statement; spiritual discipline; shared beliefs and testimonies; being part of a larger body; corporate worship; the value of experience. All of these values and principles are expressed elegantly in section 11.01 of *Qfp* [*Quaker Faith & Practice*].<sup>60</sup>

It is not clear whether the word *commitment* is used here to indicate financial or spiritual commitment, or both.

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<sup>60</sup> *Consultation Document for Monthly Meetings, October 2004* (London: Britain Yearly Meeting, Quaker Life Membership Procedures Group: 2004), 3.

Simon Best questions whether membership is even a spiritual commitment.<sup>61</sup> He argues ‘that formal membership does not denote a spiritual stage but is a reflection of where someone is at, in terms of their proximity to the group’ and ‘Membership of the Society of Friends unites the applicant with the Society of Friends in a temporal rather than a spiritual connection.’<sup>62</sup>

However, the Society’s book of discipline is quite clear that membership is both spiritual and temporal, and expressly involves a financial commitment:

This [membership] means ... contributing to the meeting by giving time and energy to events and necessary tasks, and also being willing to serve on various regional or yearly meeting committees and other groups. There is a special responsibility to attend meetings for church affairs, for it is here that the meeting enacts its faith. Membership also entails a financial commitment appropriate to a member’s means, for without money neither the Local Meeting nor the wider structure can function.<sup>63</sup>

This definition of membership, with its financial commitment, specifically includes the responsibility to support local, regional<sup>64</sup> and – most importantly for this study – yearly meetings. It therefore provides a clear link between membership and my topic and is particularly important when membership is in decline (4.4), ageing (4.5) or constrained by family commitments (4.6).

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<sup>61</sup> Simon Best, unpublished essay ‘Issues in Contemporary Quakerism’, 2003, 2.

<sup>62</sup> Best, ‘Issues in Contemporary Quakerism’, 5-8.

<sup>63</sup> *Quaker Faith and Practice: The Book of Christian Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain*. (London: Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, 1995; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1999), 11.01.

<sup>64</sup> Regional Meetings comprised a geographical grouping of Monthly Meetings and were part of the formal structure of the Society until Yearly Meeting decision in 2007, when they disappeared or were replaced in some regions by Regional Gatherings, which are no longer part of the formal structure.

## 4.2 INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERSHIP

There was no formal membership of the Society until 1737 when recording of membership was introduced by Yearly Meeting to deal with financial matters, ‘and the spiritual community of Friends developed into a corporate body’.<sup>65</sup> Membership was intended to establish *where* Members were rather than *who* they were so that property matters could be administered correctly and Friends in financial straits could be given help by their local Meeting.<sup>66</sup> For this reason, in order that they might also be included in the membership lists, children of Friends were given ‘birthright membership’.<sup>67</sup>

## 4.3 FIRST PERIOD OF DECLINING MEMBERSHIP

The first decline started during the seventeenth century. When the monarchy was restored with the accession of Charles II to the throne in 1660, suspicion of insurgency was directed against sectarians of various types. Ingle tells us that, by 1661, ‘Quakers, already suffering a bad reputation, raised more suspicions than other sects’.<sup>68</sup>

Accordingly they suffered considerable persecution.

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<sup>65</sup> John Punshon, *Portrait in Grey* (London: Quaker Home Service, 1984; reprint, London: Quaker Books, 2001), 134.

<sup>66</sup> Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 135.

<sup>67</sup> Friends whose parents had enrolled them into membership at birth. This system of membership was started in 1737 (see Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 134) and terminated in 1959. Thereafter membership has been by conviction.

<sup>68</sup> H Larry Ingle, *First Among Friends: George Fox and the Creation of Quakerism* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc, 1994), 189.

[Quakers] evolved into a sect markedly different from the creative, exuberant and confrontational company of the turbulent and exciting 1650s ... they gradually withdrew from confrontations with society at large and became concerned with their internal problems. To a large degree, they separated themselves from the outside world.<sup>69</sup>

For the remainder of the seventeenth century, the emphasis was on survival and consolidation rather than on attracting new Members, which inevitably led to a decline in numbers.

This continued into the eighteenth century when Quakers entered a prolonged ‘quietist’ period in the history of the Society. Walvin says of John Stephenson Rowntree and his book *Quakerism, Past and Present*: ‘As we have seen, he [Rowntree] estimated a sharp decrease between 1680 and 1800.’<sup>70</sup>

With the introduction of formal membership in 1737, Punshon claims:

Friends ... closed ranks behind their birthright membership and began to reassess their position as no longer an apostolic missionary church, but a peculiar people, kept apart from the world as a sort of spiritual aristocracy ... The Yearly Meeting emerged as a curious legislative body which became more concerned with the internal management of the Society than its relations with the wider world.<sup>71</sup>

As a result, the decline continued. As Punshon explains, ‘The regulation of Quaker life by Yearly Meeting became stricter as time passed by, and owing to the obtuse operation

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<sup>69</sup> Ingle, *First Among Friends*, 190.

<sup>70</sup> James Walvin, *The Quakers, Money and Morals* (London: John Murray, 1997), 137-8.

<sup>71</sup> Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 135-136.

of the rule against marrying out, and the unwillingness to seek converts, numbers began to decline sharply.<sup>72</sup>

Dandelion gives a similar explanation for this loss of members during the quietist period:

In the eighteenth century, the period of quietist Quakerism, visits by Quaker Elders to Quaker families became more important to the group than any attempt to recruit newcomers into the 'gathered remnant' (Vann 1969: 205<sup>73</sup>). A strict discipline was enforced and Friends were disowned for various offences.<sup>74</sup>

The loss of members continued through the first half of the nineteenth century too:

Numbers continued to fall from 16,227 in 1840 to 13,859 in 1861. ... the policy of disownment ensured that a regular flow of Quakers left their ranks, taking their new spouses into the arms of other, more sympathetic churches. Between one-quarter and one-third of Quakers had been expelled in this fashion during the years 1800 to 1855. ... Once the rule was relaxed in 1858, membership began to increase for the rest of the century.<sup>75</sup>

Finally, with the relaxation of this strict discipline which had led to the reduction in numbers to less than 14,000 in 1861, membership rose not just for the 'rest of the century' as described by Walvin above, but well into the following century too.

By 1935 adults and children in membership had risen to 19,301.

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<sup>72</sup> Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 151. Friends were disowned if they 'married out' (married a non-Friend). Many Members left the Society in this way.

<sup>73</sup> R T Vann, *The Social Development of English Quakerism 1655-1755* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

<sup>74</sup> Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*, xxiv.

<sup>75</sup> Walvin, *The Quakers, Money and Morals*, 137-8.

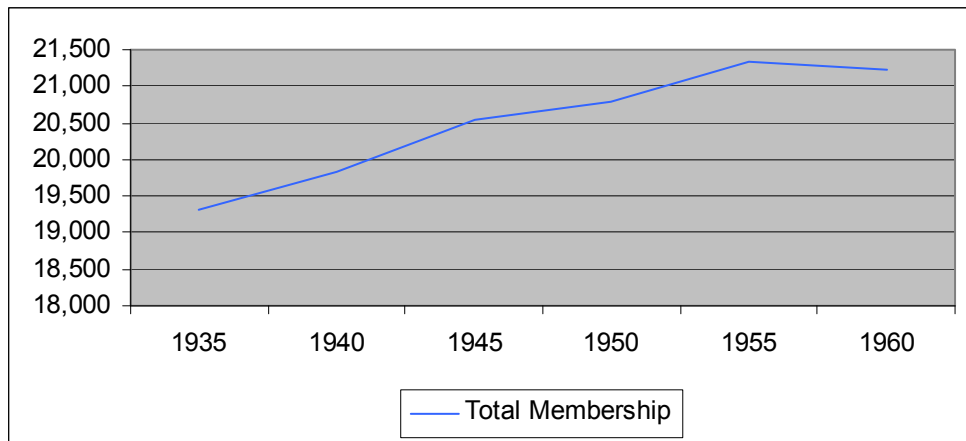


Figure 2: Membership inc children, 1935-1960<sup>76</sup>

In the next section I show that Stroud and Dandelion report a high point of over 23,000 in 1958, which would require a dramatic rise between 1955 and 1958 followed by an equally dramatic fall in the following two years. This is unlikely and I suggest below a reason for the apparent discrepancy.

#### 4.4 SECOND PERIOD OF DECLINING MEMBERSHIP

Although membership levels are recorded in the 2007 Tabular Statement (Appendix 3) at 5-yearly intervals from 1935 to 1960, as shown in Figure 2, it is clear that a peak occurred between 1955 and 1960 when membership fell from 21,343 in 1955 to 21,222 in 1960. However, I suggest that the maximum level reached was no higher than 21,500.

Stroud and Dandelion analyse the membership figures for 1900 to 1998 and conclude:

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<sup>76</sup> Membership Data taken from Tabular Statements, 1935-2007, Appendix 3.



... Quaker membership in Britain rose to a high point of 23,107 in 1958, before declining. Factors other than secularisation which affect this numerical decline are that: a) in 1959 automatic membership of new children<sup>77</sup> was abolished, b) in 1963 figures for Australia and Canada were no longer included in the British totals. However, even allowing for the ‘hiccups’ these changes have produced, the last 40 years have been years of decline. From 1962, decline of combined adult and child membership has been largely constant but for a period of stability in the 1980s.<sup>78</sup>

A possible explanation for the discrepancy between Stroud and Dandelion’s figure of 23,107 and my maximum level of 21,500 is that 2007 Tabular Statement figures may have been adjusted to remove the Australia and Canada element throughout the entire period.

Adult Membership increased steadily from 17,655 in 1960 to 18,912 in 1973. Attenders increased in this same period from around 5,000 to 5,696 (Appendix 3), a period when Quakers were active in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). A number of members of that campaign joined the Society to find a safe haven for their idealism.

Swarthmore lecturer in 1974, Wolf Mendl views the campaign with a degree of realism, pointing out that it was well intentioned but failed first to seek the political changes that were needed.<sup>79</sup> Despite the failure by this campaign to achieve its purpose of nuclear disarmament, it brought the authentic Quaker voice to greater prominence and this, in

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<sup>77</sup> Quaker birthright membership.

<sup>78</sup> Charles Stroud and Pink Dandelion, ‘British Quakers and a new kind of end-time prophecy’ in *Quaker Studies* 9/1 (2004), 120-125.

<sup>79</sup> Mendl, *Prophets & Reconcilers*, 88-89.

turn, led to new interest in membership of the Society. From field notes taken at Quaker Conferences over the years, the importance of getting the Quaker voice heard is clear to me - I have often heard the comment ‘If I’d only known about Friends before, I’d have joined the Society much sooner!’

Figure 3, extending the work of Stroud and Dandelion and using data from the 2007 Tabular Statement, shows this period of stability in the 1980s and the largely constant overall slow decline in adult and child membership from the early 1990s continuing until 2007.

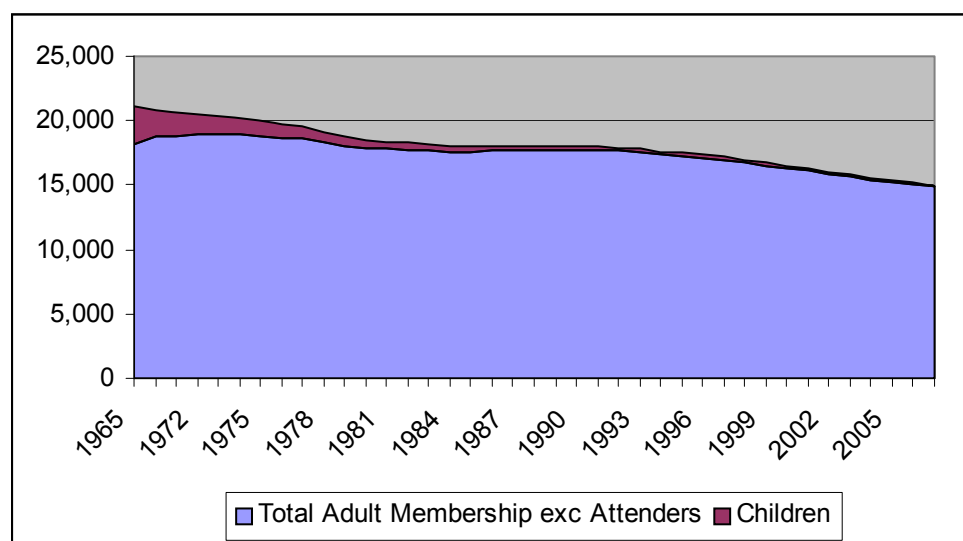


Figure 3: Total Membership inc Children, 1965-2007<sup>80</sup>

Figure 3 also shows the clear effect of removal of automatic membership of new children in 1959. Since that time, child members move into the adult statistics as they grow older and they are not replaced by new children applying for membership.

<sup>80</sup> Membership Data taken from Tabular Statements, 1935-2007, Appendix 3.

Figure 4 reflects the adult membership, including Attenders, between 1965 and 2007. I have excluded children as they would not be likely to contribute to BYM funds and are therefore not relevant to my study.

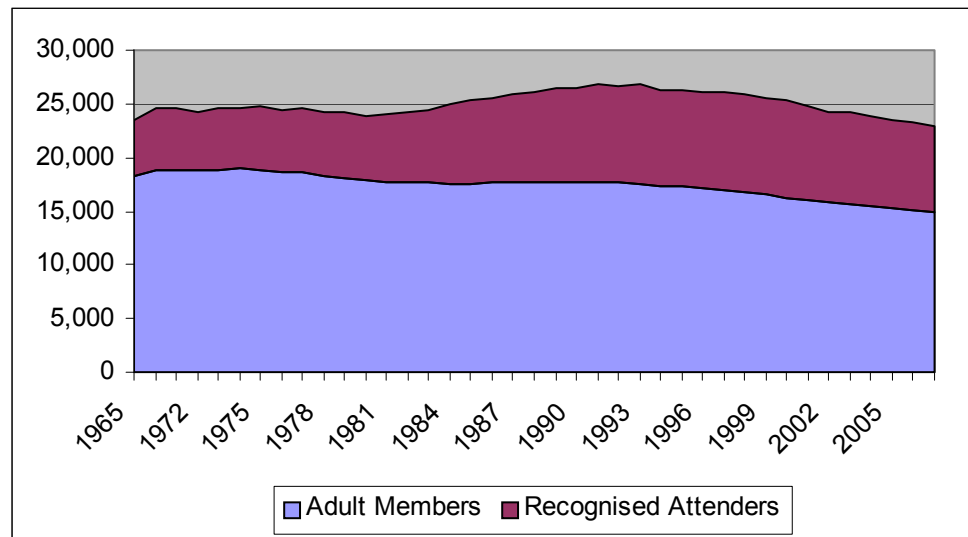


Figure 4: Adult Members and Attenders, 1965-2007<sup>81</sup>

Whilst adult Quaker membership was largely stabilised at around 17,600 between 1984 and 1993, during this same period Figure 4 shows the number of Attenders increasing, thereby allowing the overall number of worshippers to rise slightly. Trevett sees a possible danger when the proportion of Attenders compared to Members increases. She suggests the Society might lose its identity if Members fail to pass on to Attenders, or if Attenders fail to absorb, the Quaker ‘tradition based knowledge and values’.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Membership Data taken from Tabular Statements, 1935-2007, Appendix 3.

<sup>82</sup> Jacqui Stewart, ‘Friends and Theology’, *The Friends’ Quarterly*, July 1994 : 112-118, quoted in Trevett, *Previous Convictions*, 141.

But the problem so far as Quakers were concerned was that some had no idea what the *standards* of Friends had been. Consequently decision-making by communal discernment was not distinguished from *majority vote* and the decline in financial and practical support of the Society (while Meetings retained their numbers) suggested a tendency to the quietist and inactive.<sup>83</sup>

I suggest that the *standards* referred to by Trevett can be equated to the *behavioural creed* described by Dandelion:

The behavioural creed fulfils most of the requirements of group continuance that Bruce sees threatened by liberalism, even if components of attitudes towards commitment and recruitment are less clearly defined. The behavioural creed also acts as a controlling feature of the group.<sup>84</sup>

Although, as a result of the influx of Attenders, the total number of worshippers increased through the 1980s and into the early 1990s, there is no doubting the decline in numbers in the Society in the latter 1990s into the twenty-first century, both when Attenders are included and when they are not. The net result is a slight fall in numbers over the period of four decades.

Looking just at the first few years of the twenty-first century, when contribution income was static or showing signs of reducing, Table 11 shows a steady overall decline in membership numbers.

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<sup>83</sup> Trevett, *Previous Convictions*, 141.

<sup>84</sup> Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*, 306.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Membership figures (inc children, exc Attenders)	16,243	15,953	15,775	15,576	15,374	15,147	14,907
Recorded increase/decrease in membership	-225	-290	-178	-199	-206	-235	-240
Gain/loss as a percentage of membership	-1.39%	-1.82%	-1.13%	-1.28%	-1.34%	-1.48%	-1.58%

Table 11: Movements in BYM membership, 2001-2007<sup>85</sup>

The dwindling membership during this period indicates a possible causal link to the static or reducing contribution during this same period. Not only is the membership of the Society reducing, however, but I suggest in 4.5 that the age of its Members is increasing and their earnings potential is therefore also reducing.

#### 4.5 AGEING MEMBERSHIP

The decline in contributions from 1998, particularly in real terms, may be due both to the falling numbers and the increasing age of the membership. There are no published statistics recording the average age of members of the Society, but my own survey (Appendix 2) shows that 77% of those who responded were over the age of 60 and 53% of those who responded were over the age of 75. A large majority of the respondents were retired (80%), and it can therefore be assumed that they were on fixed incomes, and/or dependent on investment income which leaves them vulnerable to reducing interest rates.

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<sup>85</sup> Data extracted from Tabular Statement – Supplement to *Quaker Work in 2006* – The membership of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain for the year ending 31 December 2006. [http://www.quaker.org.uk/Shared\\_ASP\\_Files/UploadedFiles/B6E1E828-E3C8-463B-864F-8CB75D518F55\\_Tabular\\_Statements\\_2006\\_for\\_YM\\_2007.pdf](http://www.quaker.org.uk/Shared_ASP_Files/UploadedFiles/B6E1E828-E3C8-463B-864F-8CB75D518F55_Tabular_Statements_2006_for_YM_2007.pdf); Internet, accessed 23/1/09.

Figure 5 shows that death is by far the largest contributing factor to the decline in numbers. It also shows that new members are out-numbered by members lost by death in five of the seven years covered. When deaths are added to terminations for other reasons, members gained are always out-numbered by members lost.

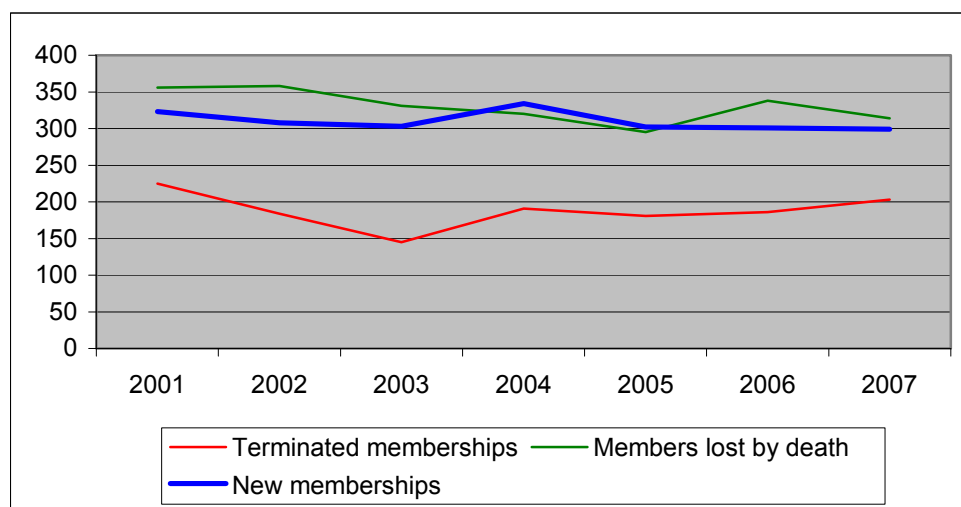


Figure 5: Members Lost and Gained 2001-7<sup>86</sup>

This is symptomatic of a Society with a predominance of older members, which might one day lead to the death of the Society itself:

From 1990 on the decline is accelerating. The calculated equation can be used to predict the course of membership, assuming the trend remains constant. In which case the membership of the Society will be zero in 2032, just 28 years from now.

<sup>86</sup> Data extracted from Tabular Statement – Supplement to *Quaker Work in 2006* – The membership of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain for the year ending 31 December 2006. [http://www.quaker.org.uk/Shared\\_ASP\\_Files/UploadedFiles/B6E1E828-E3C8-463B-864F-8CB75D518F55\\_Tabular\\_Statements\\_2006\\_for\\_YM\\_2007.pdf](http://www.quaker.org.uk/Shared_ASP_Files/UploadedFiles/B6E1E828-E3C8-463B-864F-8CB75D518F55_Tabular_Statements_2006_for_YM_2007.pdf); Internet, accessed 23/1/09.

The diminution in membership will make the problems of finding officers of Meetings worse ... The figure shows that the average number of Members per Meeting has declined from about 43.6 in 1973 to about 33.6 in 2001. Already many Meetings struggle to support themselves and, as the number of Members falls, more will be faced with the possibility of closure ... Meetings also are the main form of outreach of the Society and the fewer there are, the less opportunity there will be for enquirers to find out about the Society. Over time, the closure of Meetings cannot but hasten the decline in membership.<sup>87</sup>

As suggested by Chadkirk above, ageing membership also brings problems of a kind other than financial, especially for a ‘do-it-yourself’ religion such as Quakers (3.2.3) in which Members are called upon to undertake all the duties inherent in organising a church, both at local and at national level. If a Member retires at the age of 60, he or she is likely still to have enthusiasm and energy for these tasks, but both will wane with age. It is then that they will look to younger Members to take on the work to be done. This not only moves the burden immediately on to the next Friends facing retirement, but may also be a factor in an Attender deciding not to apply for membership.

#### **4.6 SINGLE QUAKER IN FAMILY (‘SQIF’)**

*SQIF* is the acronym used to describe the phenomenon of a Quaker with a partner who is a non-Quaker, when that partner does not regularly attend Meeting for Worship and rarely, if ever, participates in Quaker activities. For the purposes of this survey, this could equally be an Attender who attends Meeting for Worship, and possibly participates in other Quaker activities, with a partner who does not.

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<sup>87</sup> Bill Chadkirk, *Quaker Studies 9/1 (2004)*, 114-119.

Dandelion uses the term ‘Split Household’ to describe this type of membership, which he sees as predominant in the Society.<sup>88</sup> As part of a mixed Quaker/non-Quaker household, the Member, Dandelion suggests, may find ‘her/his ability to serve on the innumerable Quaker committees ... compromised by the need to consider the non-Quaker needs and wishes of partner and family’.

There is a trend for this predominance to increase and, I suggest, it affects not only the Member’s ability to serve on committees, but also the Member/Attender’s ability to give full financial commitment to the Society.<sup>89</sup> In fact, I would go so far as to suggest that in some cases it may deter an Attender in a split household from taking up membership at all because of the importance of these conflicting interests.

#### **4.7 LINK BETWEEN MEMBERSHIP AND CENTRAL FUNDING**

As shown earlier in this chapter, the book of discipline is clear that membership brings with it a financial commitment, and that the level of this financial commitment has implications for the way in which the Society functions both locally and centrally (4.1). The strength of this membership is therefore crucial, and of particular concern for the future.

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<sup>88</sup> Dandelion, *A Sociological Analysis of the Theology of Quakers*, 225.

<sup>89</sup> My own view based on field notes taken in 2005 whilst researching membership of the Society.



Membership was built up in the 1650s and first half of the 1660s as a result of early Friends' fervour and crusade to convince new converts, but this momentum was essentially lost by the mid-to-late 1660s (4.3). Subsequently, the Society's withdrawal into quietism led inevitably to the decline in numbers in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reaching a low of 13,859 in 1861 (4.3). However, this had little or no impact on centrally funded work which did not begin in earnest until the twentieth century (Chapter 5).

From the low membership level in 1861, there was considerable growth in the next one hundred years, reaching a high point in the late 1950s. By this time, however, many Quaker families had left the Society (4.3) and the Society had come to rely on a larger proportion of Attenders (4.4).

By the second half of the twentieth century, Friends were engaging with the wider world. Individual Friends continued to raise concerns through their local Meetings but, with the disappearance of the wealthy benevolent Friends of the nineteenth century (5.1.3), these concerns were brought to Meeting for Sufferings for action and funding at a central level.<sup>90</sup> As I show in Chapter 5, this had significant budgeting implications. With pressure to achieve increasing income to fund new central work, membership levels assumed greater significance than in previous centuries.

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<sup>90</sup> Meeting for Sufferings is 'the national representative group charged with day-to-day business between the annual Yearly Meetings' (Jennie Levin. *Is Your Money Working for the World?* (York: Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, 2000), 63.)

As worshipper numbers were again in decline at the end of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century (Figure 6), I compared contribution income levels over the same 1979-2006 period (Figure 7).

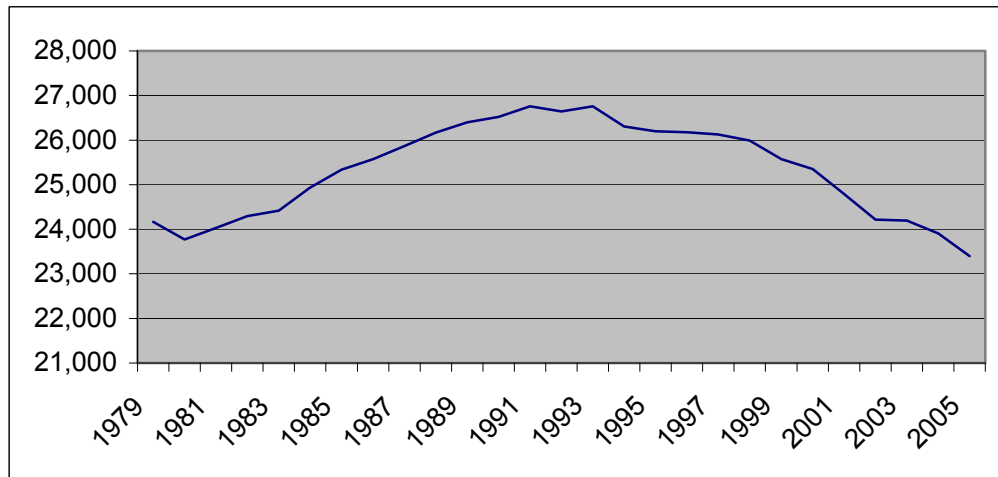


Figure 6: Total Adult Membership, 1979-2006<sup>91</sup>

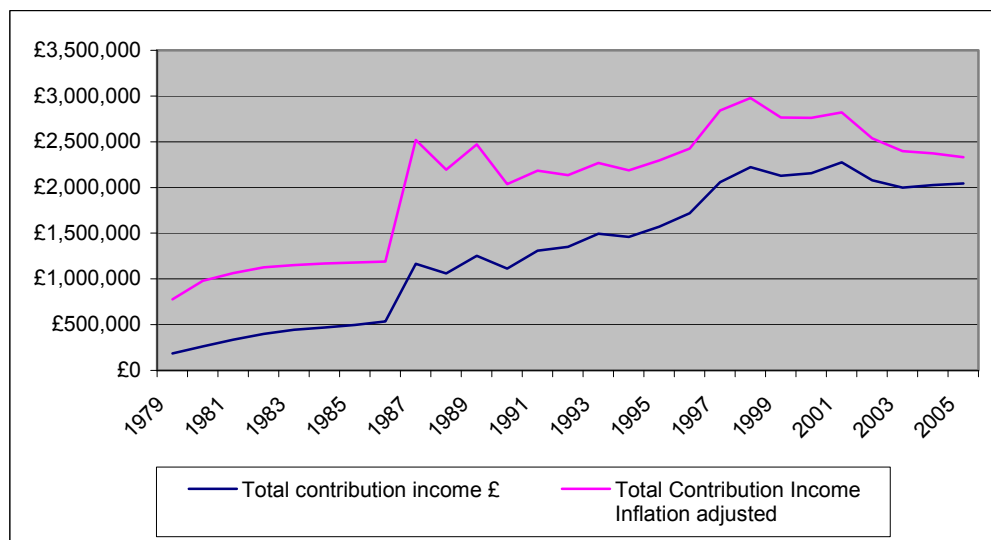


Figure 7: Contribution Income, 1979-2005 (£000s), actual and inflation adjusted<sup>92</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Membership Data taken from Tabular Statements, 1935-2007, Appendix 3.

<sup>92</sup> Figures for actual income extracted from the Society's Annual Accounts. For inflation adjusted figures I used on-line inflation calculator at <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/historic-inflation-calculator> throughout this dissertation. Internet, accessed 10/7/09. See Appendix 5.

Based on the number of worshippers, one would expect contribution income to rise steadily between 1979 and about 1991, followed by a short plateau, then falling steadily from about 1995 to 2006. This is not the case (Figure 7).

Contribution income rose very sharply around 1986-7 but there is no indication of a sudden increase in membership at that time. In both actual and real terms, the contribution income shows an overall increase between about 1979 and 1998 whilst the membership level shows an overall reduction. The decline in contribution income does not start until about 1999 whereas membership had started to fall four years earlier.

A comparison of Figures 6 and 7 show that income levels are more volatile and subject to influences other than membership. I suggest that there is a tenuous link between membership *numbers* and contribution income, but there is a much stronger link between the *age* of the membership and available income.

My analysis results in Appendix 2 show that the Society is ageing. As Friends die, they are not replaced in the same numbers by new, possibly younger, Members (Figure 5). This could explain why it was possible for a sharp increase in contribution income in 1986-7, when Members were younger, probably still in paid employment, and therefore able to respond positively to appeals for higher contributions. Twenty years later, it is no longer possible for those Members to respond in the same way. This suggests that Chadkirk's prediction that 'the membership of the Society will be zero in 2032' (4.5) is not impossible.

#### 4.8 SUMMARY

I conclude that membership is the most important factor in the decline in contribution income. It is in fact the underlying cause, not solely on the basis of dwindling numbers but more importantly because the membership is ageing. Because population in Britain is ageing, it is widely accepted that financial provision for possibly long periods of old age is a primary concern. It is therefore, I suggest, very reasonable that elderly Members of the Society feel unable to increase their contributions. Unless new, younger Members are drawn into the Society, not only will contribution income dwindle but the Society itself will disappear. The ability to attract new, younger Members may be affected by the spread of secularisation, though I point out in 8.3 that this trend can be reversed. It is far more likely to be in the hands of Quakers themselves (8.2).

## **5. QUAKER ORGANISATION AND CENTRAL FUNDING**

In this chapter, I examine the development of the Quaker structure, from its origins through to the present day, and the reasons why it has developed in that way. Until the late eighteenth century, the Society undertook little centrally managed work but thereafter, as the structure developed to accommodate new methods of working to achieve the Quaker core purpose, so the need for constantly increasing resources developed. My purpose in examining this development is to clarify how it affects Friends' understanding of the Society's finances, their attitude to the centrally managed work, and to assess whether this has any effect on the resulting levels of income.

### **5.1 THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES**

This section examines how Quaker work in the seventeenth century was largely restricted to helping individual Friends and setting up the corporate body of Quakerism; how in the eighteenth century this work extended – though still confined very largely to applying Quaker values to the life of the family, meeting and business – as Quakers became more affluent and respected businessmen; and then how in the nineteenth century it began to move out into the wider world, funded by wealthy individual Friends.

### 5.1.1 Organisation and Funding in the Seventeenth Century

In the very early days of Quakerism in the seventeenth century, much of the detailed organisation of the Society's practical affairs was carried out at Swarthmoor Hall:<sup>93</sup>

All Fox chose to write about the next few weeks was that he stayed in the Fell household while, as he recalled, 'the meeting there was well settled.' Subsequent circumstances, particularly the very important role that Margaret Fell quickly assumed in the life of the young Society of Friends, point to important decisions made at Swarthmoor during this early period.<sup>94</sup>

At that time, 'central' funding initially took the form of assistance to individual Friends as they moved about the country spreading the word and setting up new Meetings. Money was also needed to relieve hardship arising from the persecution and imprisonment suffered by early Friends. Margaret Fell played an important part in this initiative too:

Margaret Fell ... began to maintain contact with the itinerant Quaker preachers by letter and by personal contact, keeping open house for them at Swarthmoor Hall ... At the same time she took a leading part in building up the 'Kendal Fund' which was intended to meet the costs of the ministry and to support Friends in prison.<sup>95</sup>

However, the Society was not dependent on Margaret Fell's efforts alone. 'For the first eighty years of its existence ... the whole society by its pastoral care and financial contributions supported those who were suffering on its behalf.'<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Home of Judge Fell and his wife Margaret. Judge Fell was not a member of the Society but was happy for his wife to become a member and to offer Swarthmoor Hall as a central point for the emerging Quaker organisation. Margaret Fell was to marry George Fox in 1669 after the death of Judge Fell. (Ingle, *First Among Friends*, 93 and 225).

<sup>94</sup> Ingle, *First Among Friends*, 93.

<sup>95</sup> Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 63.

<sup>96</sup> Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 133.

Much of Friends' witness in the seventeenth century resulted in fines, abuse and often imprisonment. However, after the first decade or so, Friends progressively withdrew from such confrontation until after the passing of the Toleration Act in 1689 which 'remitted all penalties on dissent'.<sup>97</sup> During this period of withdrawal Fox set about establishing the structure which would enable the Society to survive into the future. He wrote early in 1667:

And then I was moved of the Lord God to set up and establish five Monthly Meetings of men and women in the city of London, besides the Women's Meeting and the Quarterly Meeting,<sup>98</sup> to admonish and exhort such as walked disorderly or carelessly, and not according to Truth; and to take care of God's glory. And the Lord opened to me and let me see what I must do, and how I must order and establish the Men's and Women's Monthly and Quarterly Meetings in all the nation, and write to other nations, where I came not, to do the same.<sup>99</sup>

Yearly Meetings 'grew out of a series of conferences of ministering Friends, some regional, some national'.<sup>100</sup> Of a meeting in May 1658, Fox wrote:

After some time we came to John Crook's house [probably Beckerings Park, near Ridgmont, Beds], where a General Yearly Meeting for the whole nation was appointed to be held. This meeting lasted three days, and many Friends from most parts of the nation came to it, so that the inns and towns around were filled, for a matter of three or four thousand people were at it.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 94.

<sup>98</sup> The Quarterly Meeting was renamed General Meeting, comprising all the members of Monthly Meetings within a geographical area. In 2006 this tier was removed from the formal structure of the Society.

<sup>99</sup> John L Nickalls, ed., *The Journal of George Fox* (Philadelphia: Religious Society of Friends, 1997), 511.

<sup>100</sup> *Church Government* (London: London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1968), 781.

<sup>101</sup> Nickalls, ed., *The Journal of George Fox*, 339.

*Church Government*, however, reports the first regular Yearly Meeting as being held ten years later in 1668.<sup>102</sup>

This [the meeting in May 1658] in some ways might be considered the first Yearly Meeting were it not for the fact that the 1660s, through persecution and pestilence, saw breaks in annual continuity. The meeting in May 1668 was followed by one at Christmastime, which lasted into 1669, since when the series has been unbroken.<sup>103</sup>

*Church Government* sets out very briefly in chapter 811 the further development of the central organisation with the setting up of ‘the Six Weeks Meeting (1671), Morning Meeting (1673) and Meeting for Sufferings (1675). All were basically meetings of London Friends; all, to a greater or less extent, undertook national responsibilities.’ The responsibility of Meeting for Sufferings was particularly aimed at obtaining redress and relief from suffering, the oath, and the burden suffered under tithes.

The full Meeting for Sufferings was to meet at the beginning of each law term and one-quarter of the membership was to meet weekly ... until the next full meeting. ... At the outset some eight to ten Friends attended the weekly meetings and the speed with which ... the meeting was able to put Friends’ case to good effect before members of both Houses of Parliament is indeed impressive ... Meeting for Sufferings, meeting weekly (as it continued to do until 1798), was able with great effect to carry out Yearly Meeting’s instructions. ... Although it was primarily a London body its effective correspondent system enabled it to speak with an authoritative national voice.<sup>104</sup>

A specifically financial role is not mentioned in relation to Meeting for Sufferings or Yearly Meeting in the seventeenth century but, as explained in 5.1.3 and 5.2, with the

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<sup>102</sup> *Church Government* 1968 was approved by Yearly Meeting in November 1967. Together with *Christian Faith and Practice* it forms the ‘Book of Christian Discipline of London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends’.

<sup>103</sup> *Church Government*, 781.

<sup>104</sup> *Church Government*, 811.



growth of the permanent and administrative committees of Meeting for Sufferings in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this was to come.

### 5.1.2 Organisation and Funding in the Eighteenth Century

As outlined in 4.2, it became possible with the introduction in 1737 of recorded membership to deal with financial matters, such as the administration of wills and alleviation of poverty, mainly related to the personal finances of Friends. After 1737 Friends in need could apply for assistance to the quarterly meeting in which their membership was formally recorded.<sup>105</sup>

There were no major developments to the central structure during the eighteenth century and there was no attempt at this time to provide central funding for Quaker work or concerns. As Punshon explains, the evangelical movement started in the eighteenth century, particularly by the Methodists, did not in fact begin to have its effects on Quakers until the nineteenth century.<sup>106</sup> This is virtually confirmed by the minutes of Yearly Meeting, although they do ‘point to certain outstanding sessions – the 1783 one on the slave trade, for instance; or that in 1818 on capital punishment ... it sought to awaken the public conscience’.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 134.

<sup>106</sup> Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 148-151.

<sup>107</sup> *Church Government*, 781.

The main preoccupation in the eighteenth century appeared to be the state of the Society, but with the education of Friends' children becoming a recurring theme.<sup>108</sup> However, despite the fact that exclusive Quaker education was felt to be essential to guard the Society's children against the world, there were no central funds available to finance dedicated Quaker schools. This example of centrally directed Quaker policy, without central funding, caused severe financial hardship to local Meetings. Monthly Meetings found themselves in the position of having to apply to their Quarterly Meeting for help to meet education costs.

Whittaker describes the dire effects that this central policy had on one Monthly Meeting and its Quarterly Meeting.

The 1689 Toleration Act gave them ... the right to establish their own schools but they faced enormous difficulties in finding adequate schoolmasters. Friends' children should be taught by Friends. ... edicts went forth from London Yearly Meeting to that effect. In many areas, however, Monthly Meetings found it difficult to implement central policy, especially in the years around the turn of the century when finances were at a low ebb. Strickland Monthly Meeting minute book reveals the difficulties of keeping a school there open. In August, 1701, there is mention of a collection 'for to defray the charge of the Schoolemaster'<sup>109</sup> and by December it has become necessary to apply to the Quarterly Meeting for financial assistance.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> *Church Government*, 781.

<sup>109</sup> Cumbria Records Office Kendal MSS WDFC/F2/1 Strickland Monthly Meeting Minute book No.1, 1675-1714.

<sup>110</sup> E Jean Whittaker, BA, PhD, *Thomas Lawson, 1630-1691, North Country Botanist, Quaker and Schoolmaster* (York, England: Sessions Book Trust, 1986), 189-190.

Whittaker also refers here to the quandary of whether schools should be profit making businesses or benevolent institutions run by caring professionals, which illustrates the Quaker attitude to making money which I examine in more detail in 7.2.

Later in the eighteenth century Dr John Fothergill, a successful research scientist and central figure in Quaker affairs, saw the importance of Quaker education, in particular in the way it could strengthen the future of the Society as a whole:

He and others appreciated that the traditional schooling ... was inadequate, both for the changing needs of society at large and, perhaps more importantly, to sustain a steady flow of educated young Quakers drilled in the ethics of the Society, and able to replenish the intellectual and theological vigour of Friends everywhere.<sup>111</sup>

With no central source to approach, Fothergill raised the £7,000 needed with the help of prosperous Friends such as David Barclay and William Tuke. This was possible, as Gwyn, explains, because by the end of the eighteenth century some Friends had begun to amass considerable wealth:

Friends continued to prosper, sometimes spectacularly, as the eighteenth century unfolded. Through mining and refining ventures, some were drawn irresistibly into large-scale industry. Quakers thus became leaders in lead mining and iron works, which greatly enriched Quaker families such as the Darbys and Lloyds. Quaker simplicity and asceticism rapidly amassed small fortunes, leading families such as the Lloyds and Barclays into banking.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Walvin, *The Quakers, Money and Morals*, 94.

<sup>112</sup> Douglas Gwyn, *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the Rise of Capitalism* (Pennsylvania: Pendle Hill Publications, 1995. Reprint London: Quaker Books, 2006), 335.

With the money raised by Fothergill, a Quaker boarding school (Ackworth) opened in 1779. Walvin tells us that ‘Friends sent donations, annuities and bequests, and within twelve years of its foundation, the school had attracted some £17,000.’<sup>113</sup>

The opening of a financially well supported Quaker boarding school towards the end of the century – after the emergence of wealthy Quaker banks and industrialists – is in stark contrast to the dire effects of central education policy on local finances in the early years of the century. It is also a clear example of the way in which Quaker work in the late eighteenth century could be funded without any system of central funding.

### 5.1.3 Organisation and Funding in the Nineteenth Century

Although Quakers at the turn of the century were still more interested in internal and domestic affairs than in engaging with the world, there were a few exceptions and Punshon points to some growth in social action during this time:

At the beginning of the nineteenth century though, we can discern the emergence of two groups of Friends – the rich, like Richard Reynolds, Joseph Storrs Fry, John Horniman, and later, the Cadburys, whose generosity became a by-word, and concerned and prosperous people like William Allen and Joseph Sturge, who not only gave their own money to their own causes, but enlisted other people’s money as well.<sup>114</sup>

The wealth available to Quakers in the nineteenth century was concentrated in the hands of a few benevolent and respected Friends. Walvin describes the activities of the Cadbury family as one example:

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<sup>113</sup> Walvin, *The Quakers, Money and Morals*, 95.

<sup>114</sup> Punshon *Portrait in Grey*, 167.

Richard Tapper Cadbury ... had served an apprenticeship as a draper in Gloucestershire before working first in London, then in 1794 in Birmingham. ... He became a prominent Birmingham Quaker, known to his contemporaries as 'King Richard', and involved himself in a host of social reforms and good works. ... John Cadbury had returned to Birmingham and in 1824 began as a tea dealer and coffee roaster ... in 1831, John Cadbury took over a warehouse and embarked on a career as a chocolate manufacturer. A lively, energetic man, though one restrained by rigid Quaker principles (he refused to sit in a comfortable chair until he was 70), Cadbury was as active in philanthropy as in business.<sup>115</sup>

Another example quoted by Walvin is Elizabeth Gurney who in 1800 married Joseph Fry, the London tea merchant. From 1816 Elizabeth Fry devoted her time to prison reform in general, and to transforming the female wing of Newgate Prison in particular:

A school was established for the children; the women were given simple instruction in sewing and knitting. Quaker merchants provided the materials and the proceeds from the sale of finished items went to the inmates.<sup>116</sup>

The Cadburys, Frys and others used their business opportunities to become philanthropists and paternalistic employees, and there are many other examples of the social work funded by individual, prosperous, concerned Quakers.

There was at this stage no perception of a need to organise, manage and fund Quaker work as a corporate effort but, as Walvin puts it, 'There was a new and increasingly powerful process of modernisation at work within the Society of Friends, and it flowed from the drive and resources of this new breed of self-made industrialist.'<sup>117</sup> In 5.2 I

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<sup>115</sup> Walvin. *The Quakers, Money and Morals*, 165-166.

<sup>116</sup> Walvin, *The Quakers, Money and Morals*, 130.

<sup>117</sup> Walvin, *The Quakers, Money and Morals*, 135.

examine the effect of this process of modernisation on Quakers in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

## 5.2 THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

### 5.2.1 Organisation

As we have seen in 5.1, through the first three centuries of Quakerism at a national level there was little need for paid staff, budgets, accounts because there was little centrally managed Quaker work. From the early twentieth century, all this was to change. From the turn of the century, the Society's involvement with the world began to gather momentum. *Church Government* records that 'The twentieth century witnessed a considerable growth in the standing committees of the Society and increasingly the agenda of Yearly Meeting was built up round their concerns.'<sup>118</sup> This Yearly Meeting agenda was at that time crucial in developing Quaker concerns and determining Quaker policy because 'London Yearly Meeting is the final constitutional authority of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain. Its membership consists of all those who belong to the several monthly meetings in Great Britain and of those on the foreign membership list of the Friends Service Council.'<sup>119</sup>

Punshon sees this momentum as beginning in earnest after the First World War:

In the interwar years the Society of Friends finally emerged from its traditional seclusion into full participation in the life of the world .....

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<sup>118</sup> *Church Government*, 784.

<sup>119</sup> *Church Government*, 789.

but the Society as a whole was now far more democratic and its membership comprised large numbers of people who wanted to support all kinds of Quaker witness that their circumstances prevented them from undertaking personally. What had happened to the joint-stock company now happened to the Quakers – influence shifted from the owners to the managers.<sup>120</sup>

The Society had moved away from its dependence on a few wealthy, benevolent Friends and both the organisation and finance for Quaker work were to become issues for central consideration. As Punshon points out, with the growing establishment came new practical challenges, including the need for suitable premises to accommodate this growing activity. After over two hundred years based in Devonshire House in Bishopsgate, in 1925 Friends moved to their current headquarters in Euston Road:

Such was the business the Society needed to transact ... the central offices were moved ... to a new building opposite Euston Station ... The Society now had a large secretariat serving its standing committees, but the centre was clearly accountable to the constituents.<sup>121</sup>

The workload of Meeting for Sufferings expanded:

The twentieth century ... witnessed a steady trend of delegation of routine matters to sub-committees, but it also saw a gradual growth in the Meeting's function in drawing together and relating to one another the different strands in the Society's life and service. ... Yearly Meeting 1965 agreed that all standing committees should be appointed by Meeting for Sufferings which ... would be enabled 'to become more sensitive to the insights of the committees and thus ... more effectively to enter into and to discharge their responsibilities'.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 243.

<sup>121</sup> Punshon, *Portrait in Grey*, 244.

<sup>122</sup> *Church Government*, 811.

Also in 1965, Yearly Meeting recognised that Meeting for Sufferings would ‘act on behalf of the Society between Yearly Meetings [and put in place a system of] representation from monthly meetings rather than quarterly meetings’ to ensure that geographically it would represent the entire Yearly Meeting.<sup>123</sup> Other decisions of Yearly Meeting 1965 were to have a difficult effect on the funding of the central work, as we see in 5.2.2.

### 5.2.2 Funding

In 1965, Yearly Meeting agreed to unification of the employment aspect of central work, but the dual method of financing the work was not similarly unified. Central costs continued to be covered in two ways: by direct appeals from the separate Departments and the Yearly Meeting Quota system.<sup>124</sup>

In furtherance of the essential unity of the work undertaken in the name of the Yearly Meeting, staff employed by the Yearly Meeting and by seven separate employing committees were unified and became employees of Meeting for Sufferings. The anomaly remained that while the yearly meeting’s essential central services were funded by means of a *quota* contributed by monthly meetings, standing committees were issuing separate financial appeals which had the effect of competing one with another.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> *Quaker Faith & Practice*, 1999, 7.01.

<sup>124</sup> The YM Quota was ‘Friends’ main official means of fundraising for central work ... - a set sum that all MMs were intended to pay in for each member on their books ... In theory the amount of the Quota was set to cover such part of the planned central outlays not met by proceeds of the separate appeals from each of the spending committees. In practice it was inadequate for this purpose, as not all MMs were able to meet their Quota figures.’ (Private correspondence, letter 27.5.05 from Brian Rodmell to Beth Allen, General Secretary of Quaker Communications Central Committee.)

<sup>125</sup> *Quaker Faith & Practice*, 1999, 7.01.



The Yearly Meeting Quota system placed on Monthly Meetings the responsibility for raising the money to meet the cost of central services. However, not all Monthly Meetings were able to raise the quota set and the deficit needed to be transferred from a Yearly Meeting Fund. At the same time, the different Departments were in effect competing for funds as they each launched appeals to attract the resources they required.

At present the money needed for Yearly Meeting Fund is raised from Monthly Meetings in proportion to adult membership (“the quota”). Some Monthly Meetings parcel out the amount which they have to raise among their constituent Meetings also in proportion to adult membership. At one stage or the other, the money has to be raised from Friends by persuasion!

...

Under our present arrangements, the three existing departments [Quaker Peace & Service, Quaker Home Service and Quaker Social Responsibility and Education] raise the amounts which they need by direct persuasion of individual contributors, as do Preparative and Monthly Meetings the amounts which they need, including the Yearly Meeting quota. The effect of the quota is to give each local collecting unit a target for the amount which it is asked to raise for Yearly Meeting purposes.<sup>126</sup>

Quakers struggled for many years from 1965 to find a less divisive system of funding. A Committee spent two years examining the possibilities for a new system based on one single fund before reporting to Yearly Meeting in 1975.<sup>127</sup> It offered ‘some cogent arguments in favour of a single fund, but in the end concluded that the time had not yet come for a change to a wholly unified financial structure.’<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> *Proposals of the Working Party on Financing the Society's Work*, London Yearly Meeting, February 1981, paragraphs 42 and 44.

<sup>127</sup> Constitution Review Committee set up by Yearly Meeting 1973.

<sup>128</sup> *Proposals of the Working Party on Financing the Society's Work*, London Yearly Meeting, February 1981, paragraph 33.

Six years later the time was still not yet ripe and the 1981 proposals resulted, not in one single fund, but in the setting up by Meeting for Sufferings in 1982 of a further Working Party on Financing the Society's Work. It was this new Working Party which finally produced the proposals for abolishing the quota system, setting up a YM common fund to finance all the central work, setting up a Needs & Means Committee to assist Meeting for Sufferings in reconciling the cost of central work with the contributions, and setting up a support service for fundraising (QCCC). These proposals were accepted by London Yearly Meeting in 1986:

We welcome the [Working Party's] proposals in the expectation that they will move us towards greater simplicity in our financial affairs and towards a fairer distribution of financial burdens between monthly meetings and between individual Friends.<sup>129</sup>

The Needs and Means Advisory Committee was set up following Yearly Meeting 1986. In 1988 it was given responsibility for budgeting.

Thus, by the late twentieth century, unified financing for the centrally managed work had finally evolved – with no more competing for funds, one budget for all. The quota system was dispensed with; Meetings and individual Friends sent in contributions to central work according to their ability and willingness to pay. Decisions on how to spend the money raised from Friends were made at Meeting for Sufferings between Yearly Meetings, and approved at Yearly Meeting. This is the system which still applies today.

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<sup>129</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1986. Minute 31: Financing the Society's central work.

### 5.3 SUMMARY

It is clear from the above examination of the development of the Quaker structures and methods of funding that centrally managed work is a relatively new concept to Friends. I suggest that this is one explanation for Friends' lack of knowledge and understanding since many joined the Society before the introduction of unified funding. Many are more familiar with the earlier system when contributions were given directly for use by a specific Department.

I suggest that, because giving could be directly related to the work supported by an individual Friend, there was a much greater feeling of engagement with that work and thus a much greater incentive to give. The *centrally managed work* is a much more remote concept which, I suggest, does not inspire the same level of commitment.

Not only is the centrally managed work a more remote concept, it is also very much broader in scope than the earlier direct funding of one particular Department. Difficult decisions have to be made on how to spend the money, which are not always understood by Friends.

In recent years, difficult decisions have also had to be made on where economies should be made. In Chapter 6, I examine the problems arising from the need to find the right balance between the spending and the available income.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> The 'balanced budget' policy was adopted in December 2000, as shown in the proceedings of Britain Yearly Meeting 2001, Trustees' Report and Accounts.

## 6. BALANCING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

This chapter examines why Friends had such difficulty in achieving a balance between income and expenditure.

Some Friends are very concerned about where their money comes from, others much more interested in what it is used for. There are big challenges here for meetings, for individuals, and for Britain Yearly Meeting as a whole.<sup>131</sup>

### 6.1 INCOME, 1979-2006

In this section I examine Quaker income from all sources over a period of twenty-seven years at the turn of the current century. All statistics are extracted from the Annual Accounts for the Society, 1979-2007, summarised in Appendix 6.

#### 6.1.1 Contribution Income

Each Member gave an average of £8 in 1979 increasing to about £21 in 1986 which, as shown in Figure 8, meant that the annual increase in this period was roughly in line with inflation.

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<sup>131</sup> Levin, *Is Your Money Working for the World?*, 14.

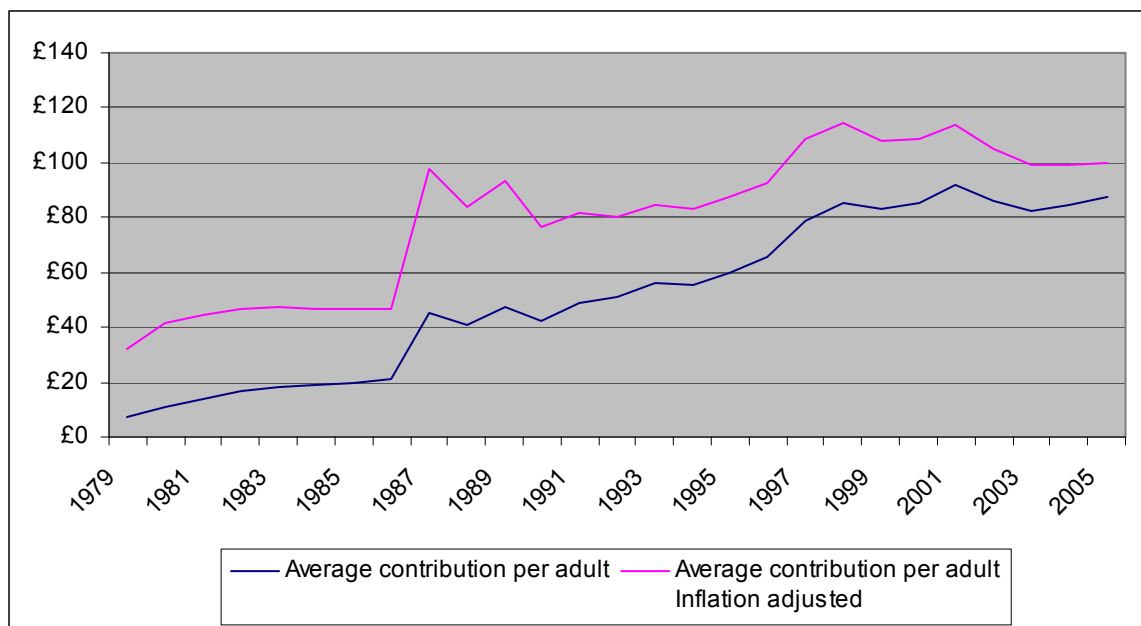


Figure 8: Average contribution per adult, 1979-2005, actual and inflation adjusted<sup>132</sup>

The level of centrally managed work increased steeply in the late 1980s and 1990s (5.2) and Friends responded in 1987 by more than doubling individual giving to around £45. This coincided with London YM’s approval of the move to unified finance in 1986 and the change from Quota to Common Fund. In 1988 Friends were reminded that: ‘... It would only be possible to maintain our present work with lower reserves if current giving increased. In the end it came back to our own individual response.’<sup>133</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Figures for actual contribution income extracted from the Society’s Annual Accounts, Appendix 6. For inflation adjusted figures I used on-line inflation calculator at <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/historic-inflation-calculator> throughout this dissertation. Internet, accessed 10/7/09. I used membership figures from Tabular Statements, 1979-2006 (Appendix 3). See Appendix 5 for detail.

<sup>133</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1988. Meeting for Sufferings Report Item 5: The wealth of London Yearly Meeting.

The response from Friends was slow in coming as the average contribution continued at around £40-45 until the early 1990s before starting a gradual but steady increase. In 1998 the average individual contribution peaked at about £86. This steady increase, however, levelled out in the years 2001-2007 (3.2.3, Table 8).

It was during this latter period that Meeting for Sufferings heard the plea for the average contribution to be increased to £140 - £150, as discussed in 3.2.4.<sup>134</sup> The justification for this is clear in Figure 8 which shows that, after adjustment for inflation, the static picture becomes a marked fall in contribution income in real terms since 1998. In fact it has fallen back to the level achieved in 1988 when the crucial importance of the individual response was originally highlighted.

### **6.1.2 Total Income**

Figure 9 shows a steady rise in total income during the period, essentially due to various new income streams coming into the equation. In the early years, Friends made use of amounts from the appreciation of investments; interest earnings were good; grants began to be a more important source of funds, and generated income made a substantial contribution in the last ten years of this period. Legacy income, as is to be expected, fluctuated and was unreliable for budgeting purposes.

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<sup>134</sup> *The Friend*, 9 April 2004 - Report on Meeting for Sufferings

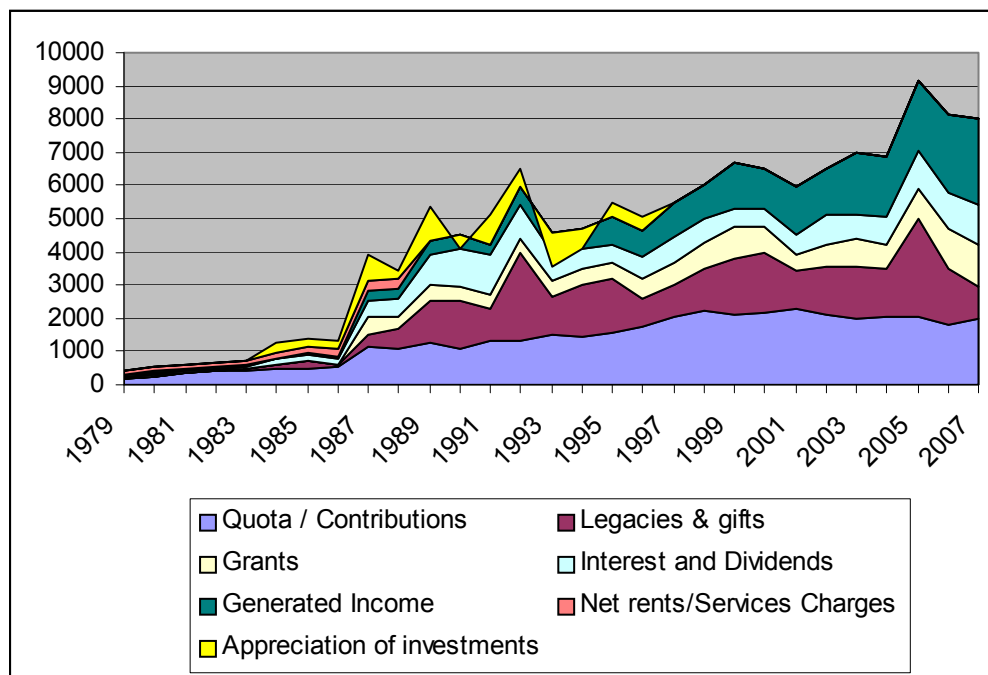


Figure 9: Income, 1979-2007 (£000s)<sup>135</sup>

Appreciation of investments ceases to be an item in the accounts after 1997, but is then replaced by generated income and, occasionally, by legacies as the main contributing factors to help fund the increasing expenditure.

### 6.1.3 Cost of Raising Funds

On examining the cost of raising these funds, I question whether the net income achieved justifies the effort and suggest that, in the case of ‘Activities for Generating Funds’, it does not. Figure 10, concentrating only on the years from 2000 to 2007, shows the costs attached to raising money from different sources using data extracted from BYM Annual Accounts, recorded in Appendix 7.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Figures taken from BYM Annual Accounts, 1979-2007, summarised in Appendix 6.

<sup>136</sup> BYM Annual Accounts have been differently stated almost every year so that items that appear in one year do not necessarily appear in other years. A careful examination of the Notes to the Accounts can often



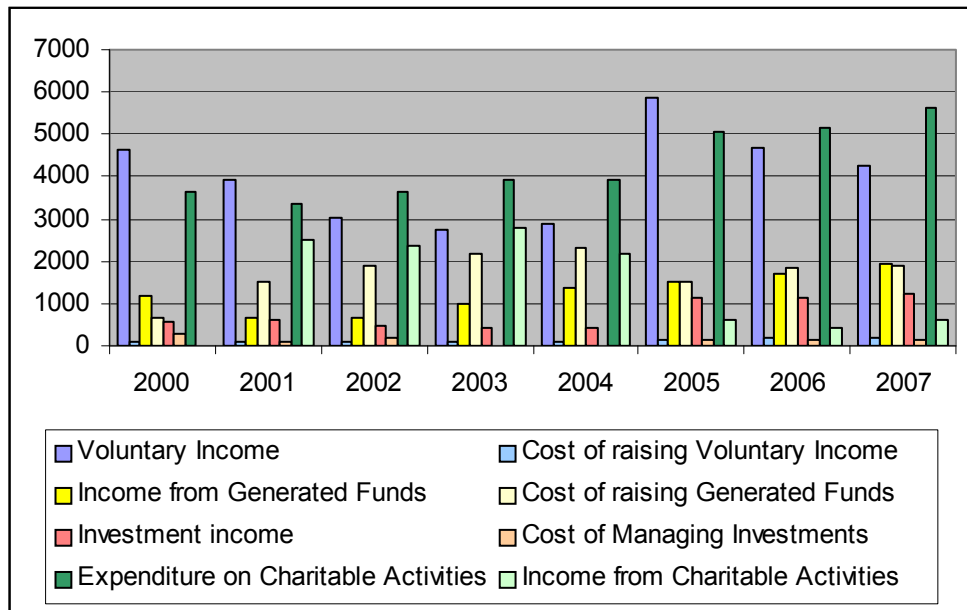


Figure 10: Cost of raising different forms of income, and Income/Expenditure relating to Charitable Activities, 2000-2007 (£000s)<sup>137</sup>

As shown, in only three of the eight years is voluntary income sufficient to meet the gross expenditure on charitable activities. However, although allocation of some items of income and expenditure may be inconsistent in these years, the net cost of charitable activities appears to have been met by voluntary income except in 2007.

The cost of raising voluntary income is very low indeed and is the most cost effective method used by Friends. In contrast, in five of the eight years, the cost of activities for generating funds ('Hospitality' – Room lettings, equipment hire and Friends House restaurant) is higher than the amount generated. This net loss turns to small profit in

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explain how income and expenditure items are allocated, but comparison of like for like is not totally certain in these years. Time has not allowed a more detailed scrutiny of this aspect.

<sup>137</sup> Appendix 7. Figures extracted from BYM Annual Accounts as summarised in Appendix 6.

2007, but the cost is still out of all proportion to the funds raised. When reporting on 2007 fundraising activities, BYM Trustees state:

Hospitality at Friends House continued to generate substantial income to support Quaker work ... The new Hospitality Company starts operation in April 2008 with a new business plan ...<sup>138</sup>

Clearly, this generated income is achieved at a very high cost and, I suggest, does little to support Quaker work. It appears from this statement by BYM Trustees that efforts are now being made to remove it from the mainstream of Quaker centrally managed work.

In the next section I examine the trends in Quaker expenditure which motivated the calls for ever more contribution income.

## **6.2 EXPENDITURE**

### **6.2.1 Increasing Spend**

As highlighted in Figure 11, expenditure trebled from a level of £1091K in 1986, to £3.5m in 1987. From 1987 there was a steady rise in spending until 1993 when it reached a peak due to heavy premises costs. After falling again between 1994 and 1996, increasing levels of spend on premises and other items again led to a further steady rise from 1997 to the end of the period.

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<sup>138</sup> *Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees' Report & Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2007* (London: Quaker Communications, 2008), 16.

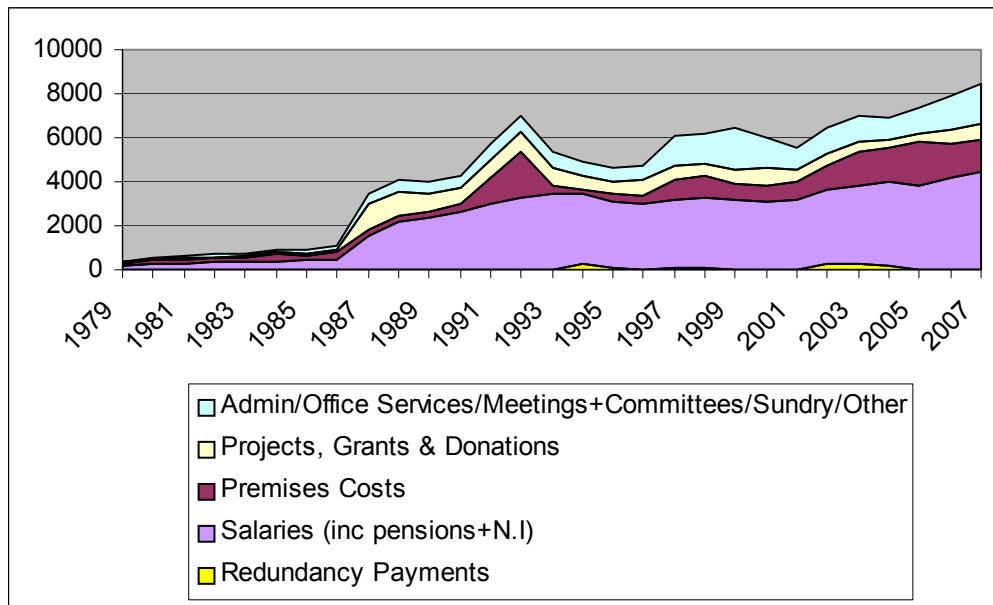


Figure 11: Expenditure, 1979-2007 (£000s)<sup>139</sup>

### 6.2.2 Staffing Costs

One major component of the rocketing expenditure was the cost of servicing the developing programme of project work. Staffing costs nearly quadrupled between 1986 (£449K) and 1987 (£1581K), and in 1988 at £2169K these costs represented 56% of the total expenditure (Figure 12 and Appendix 6).

<sup>139</sup> Figures extracted from BYM Annual Accounts as summarised in Appendix 6.

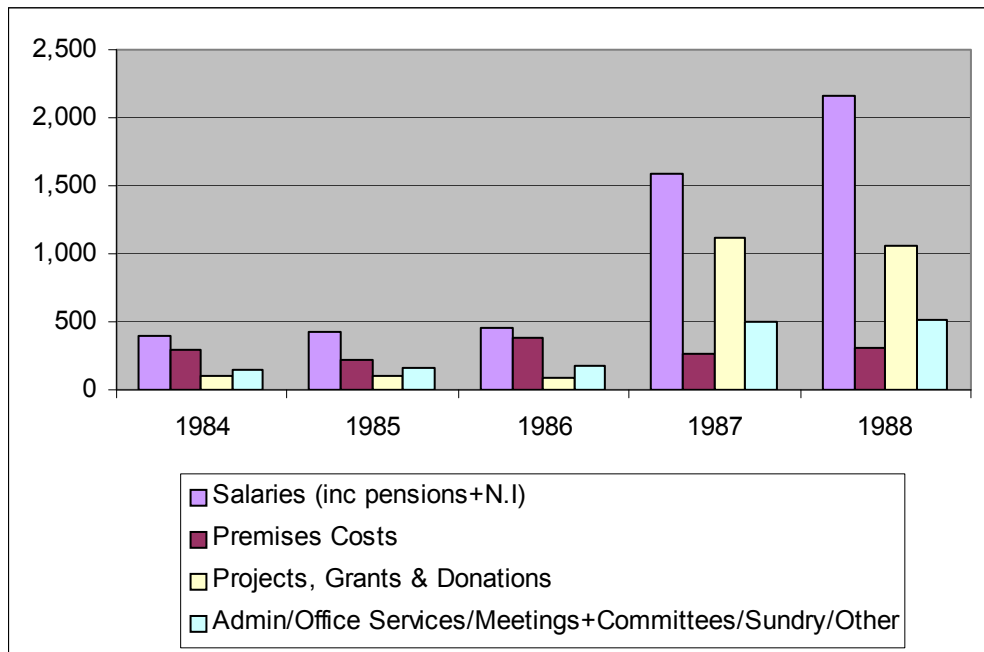


Figure 12: Expenditure, 1984-1988 (£000s)<sup>140</sup>

With income levelling out (Figure 9), by 1990 it was clear that expenditure would have to be rationalised. Although Friends' contributions were not increasing in line with spending on new projects, they were reluctant to call a halt to any of the work. However, it seemed inevitable that this would have to be done, and staff cuts were an obvious area for economies. In 1990 Meeting for Sufferings reported that it 'was very conscious of the agony and anxiety experienced by staff and committee members'.<sup>141</sup>

Despite the fact that the Yearly Meeting was clearly living beyond its means, Figure 13 shows staffing costs continuing to rise until 1993 when they reached £3449K. Staff cuts

<sup>140</sup> Figures extracted from BYM Annual Accounts as summarised in Appendix 6.

<sup>141</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1990. Meeting for Sufferings Report, C: Financial and Related Matters.

were finally made, reducing salaries by £300K in 1994 and a further £150K in 1995.

However, redundancy payments totalling £413K were made during this period so the net savings were minimal.

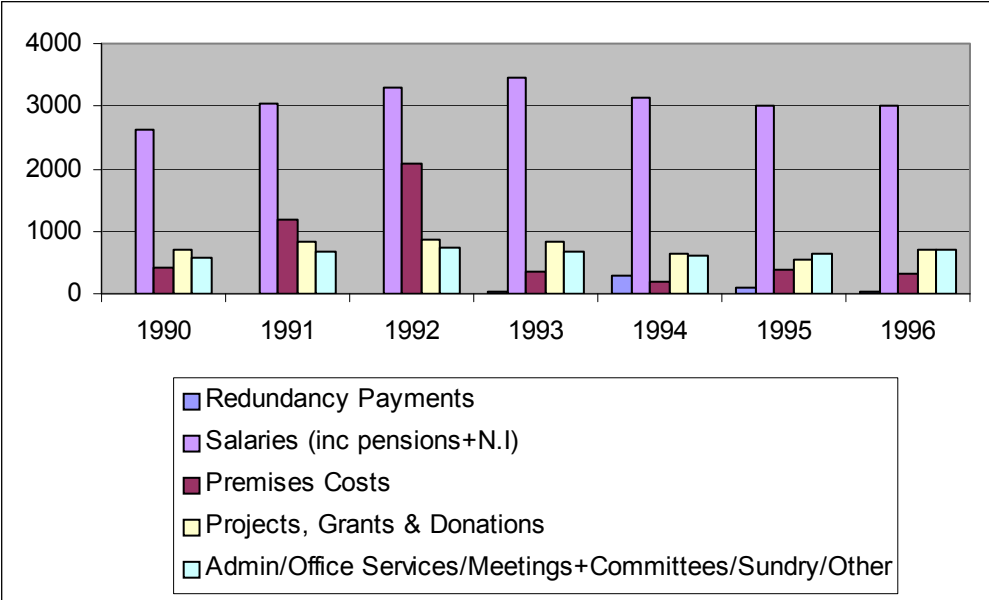


Figure 13: Expenditure, 1990-1996 (£000s)<sup>142</sup>

From 1997 through to 2006 staff costs increased again steadily each year, with the single exception of the year 2000 (Figure 14). Throughout this period, staff costs are at or above 50% of the total expenditure each year.

<sup>142</sup> Figures extracted from BYM Annual Accounts as summarised in Appendix 6.

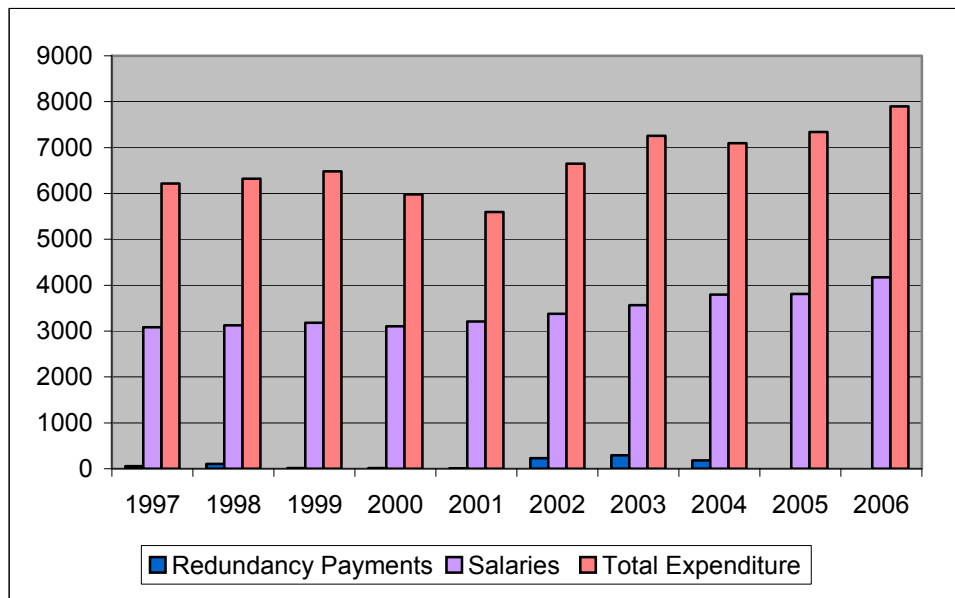


Figure 14: Staffing Costs compared to Total Expenditure, 1997-2006 (£000s)<sup>143</sup>

A Five-Year Plan introduced in 2000 (6.3.3) aimed to get the situation under control :

... As a result of declining levels in real terms of contribution income and the volatility of legacy income and rising costs, management action will be required to ensure a balance of income and expenditure over the life of this Plan. One consequence of this will be a further fall in staff numbers by 2004...<sup>144</sup>

As indicated in Figure 15, staff numbers were reduced in 2002 and 2003, and again in 2005, but with the effects of inflation there was no equivalent reduction in staffing costs.

These rose consistently after 2000.

<sup>143</sup> See Appendix 8. All data extracted from BYM Annual Accounts as summarised in Appendix 6.

<sup>144</sup> Britain Yearly Meeting 2001, Trustees' Report and Accounts.

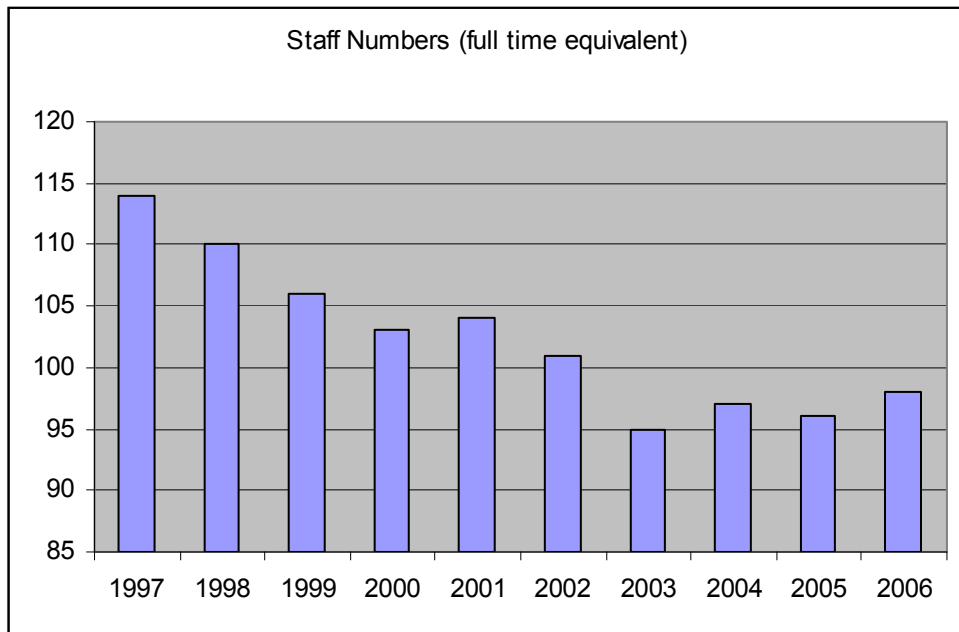


Figure 15: Staffing Numbers, 1997-2006<sup>145</sup>

I suggest that the curve in Figure 15 indicates that staff numbers, rather than costs, give a true picture of what Friends are attempting to achieve at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The rationalisation of work at the end of the twentieth century, with consequent reduction in staff numbers continuing through to 2003, now seems to be leading into a period of stability as more flexibility is introduced together with more creative ways of managing new work. Reduction in staffing levels is clearly a response by Friends to the need to balance the budget. However, as I have shown in Figure 14, it does not result in cost savings. Therefore the pressure continues to increase contribution income.

<sup>145</sup> See Appendix 8. All data extracted from BYM Annual Accounts as summarised in Appendix 6.

## **6.3 ACHIEVING A BALANCED BUDGET**

### **6.3.1 Comparison of Income and Expenditure**

The end of the Quota System in 1987 coincided with a new impetus to expand the centrally managed work. Income to fund this steep increase in expenditure is clearly outlined in Figures 16 and 17 illustrating the increasingly heavy reliance that Quakers placed on income other than contributions in order to make this work possible.

Figure 16 shows both income and expenditure trends, in actual terms, during the years 1979-2006. Over this period the gentle rise in contribution income between 1979 and 1999 had levelled out in the new century, with values roughly static. Figure 16 also shows that total Quaker income in the 1990s was often below the level of expenditure but in more recent years, after the introduction of the ‘balanced budget’ policy, this has generally been avoided.



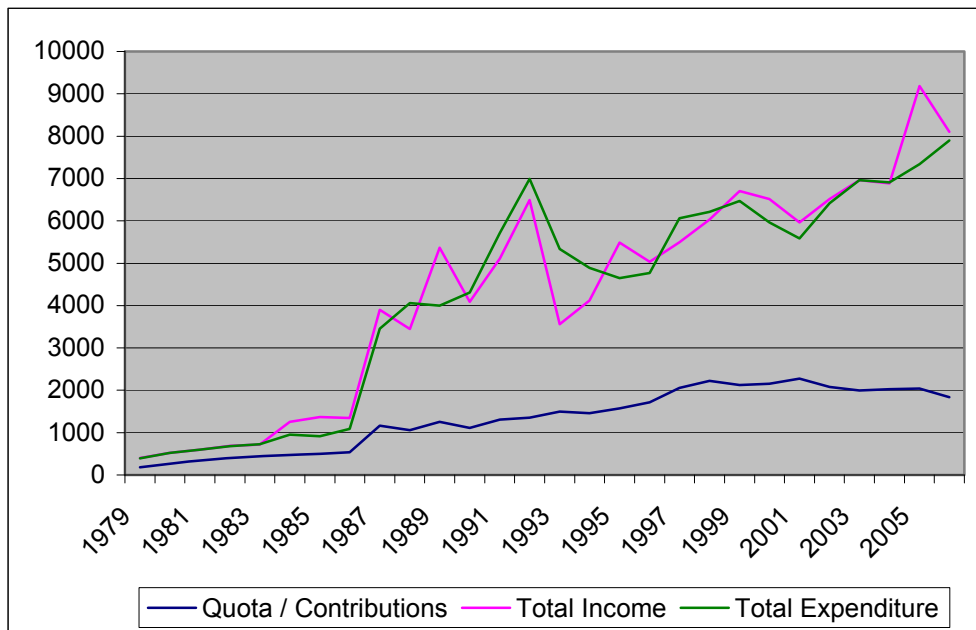


Figure 16: Total and Contribution Income compared to Expenditure, 1979-2005 (£000s), Actual Values<sup>146</sup>

Figure 17 illustrates income and expenditure in real terms. Apart from the sharp rise in 1987, contributions for the centrally managed Quaker work have been virtually static throughout the period, so just keeping pace with inflation. However, both income from other sources and expenditure levels have been more volatile since 1987.

<sup>146</sup> All data extracted from BYM Annual Accounts as summarised in Appendix 6.

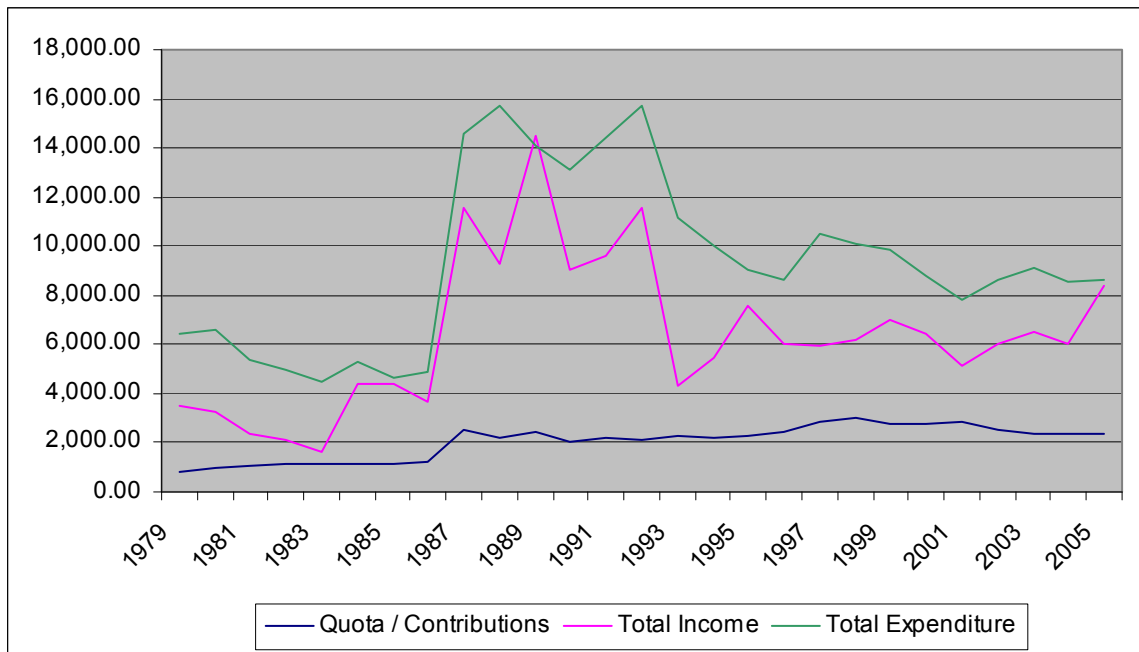


Figure 17: Total and Contribution Income compared to Expenditure, 1979-2005 (£000s), Values adjusted for inflation<sup>147</sup>

As we have seen, the impetus to take on new work which began in 1987 presented a challenge to achieve substantially higher funding levels – a challenge that was not met by equivalent increases in contribution income. I examine in 6.3.2 the action taken in order to make up the resulting deficit.

### 6.3.2 Use of Reserves

Friends identified the need for increasing levels of income resulting from the decision in the late 1980s to increase the centrally managed work. With no sustained increase in Friends' giving, new sources of income had to be identified.

<sup>147</sup> Appendix 9. All data extracted from BYM Annual Accounts as summarised in Appendix 6, adjusted for inflation using on-line inflation calculator at <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/historic-inflation-calculator>.

As illustrated in Figures 9 and 11, the increase of almost £3m in expenditure in 1987 was made possible only by the use of substantial reserves. Appreciation of investments became a prominent item in the accounts at £800K in 1987 (Appendix 6), and continued to be an item in the accounts for another ten years:

The general picture was encouraging. Investments are now shown at current market value, which makes the reserves figure more realistic. ... The Meeting noted that while substantial use of reserves was budgeted for in 1987, a similar planned use of reserves in 1986 had not in fact materialised and reserves had actually increased. Not all the work budgeted for had been achieved in 1986 and income had been higher than anticipated. The Meeting approved this combination of prudence and living adventurously.<sup>148</sup>

However, the following year's results reported at Yearly Meeting in 1989 suggested that the urge to live adventurously had outweighed considerations of prudence:

... the excess of current expenditure over current income was £1,343,000, somewhat less than budget but still more than double the excess of expenditure incurred in 1987. This worsened deficit was due to a number of factors. On the one hand there was a substantial and unbudgeted adjustment in the level of staff salaries, which meant that expenditure on this major item increased by some £588,000 to £2,169,000 ...<sup>149</sup>

On the other hand, of course, Friends' individual response had proved disappointing and reserves were again needed: '... income, from Friends and meetings, was down by about 15%. It was anticipated that during 1988 our reserves could diminish by nearly £1,000,000.'<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1987. Administrative Committee Report, Item 5: Finance.

<sup>149</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1989. Finance and Accounts Report.

<sup>150</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1989. Meeting for Sufferings Report item 4: Financial Reserves of London Yearly Meeting.

This Meeting for Sufferings Report to Yearly Meeting 1989 also ‘identified reserves to be retained of £1,990,000 and expendable funds of £3,123,000’ as a means of ensuring ‘that Friends met their obligations both as ethical employers and as responsible project managers’

By 1990, Meeting for Sufferings was able to report that some caution would be exercised over both spending and maintaining reserves at a prudent level:

It was accepted that the 1990 budget would have a final deficit of not more than £550,000 ... It was further agreed that the principle of not spending more than half of available reserves be continued for 1991 and 1992...<sup>151</sup>

This acceptance is an indication that more realistic budgetary planning had begun.

### **6.3.3 Development of Budgetary Planning**

As reported in 5.2.2, the new Needs and Means Advisory Committee was given responsibility for budgeting in 1988. Their first priority was to develop a format for a three-year rolling plan which they saw as ‘crucial to the whole budgetary process’.<sup>152</sup> They in fact found it impossible to complete this task before work on the 1989 budget became the more urgent priority.<sup>153</sup> Despite the worsened deficit in 1988, the first draft of the budget for 1989 was rejected in February 1989, revised and eventually approved in

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<sup>151</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1990. Meeting for Sufferings Report, C: Financial and Related Matters.

<sup>152</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1989. Needs and Means Advisory Committee Report.

<sup>153</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1989. Needs and Means Advisory Committee Report.

April – but only after reinstating expenditure of £209,100 which had originally been deleted in the first draft.<sup>154</sup>

A report to YM 1989 made it clear that, long term, the choice was between reducing the level of central work or doubling the amount of Friends' contributions:

As the exceptional income from legacies and investment appreciation cannot be expected to continue at the level experienced in 1988 there is a need for both the withdrawal from reserves and the loss of investment income to be replaced by contributions. In broad terms this means that, if the central work is to continue at the present level, Friends' giving must double in the two to three years that it will take to use up the expendable reserves; if this can be achieved we shall establish a more consistent and reliable base from which to finance the Society's future work.<sup>155</sup>

By 1990, Friends had begun to accept the need for some caution in their budgeting (6.3.2). However, as they were reluctant still to make substantial cuts in the level of central work, or in the number of staff required to carry out the work, the need remained for a large increase in contribution income:

Again there were difficulties ... selecting what work had to be reduced or discontinued ... The 1990 budget ... was for a smaller expenditure of funds than in the 1989 budget. Even this reduced budget anticipated a substantial increase in Friends' giving.<sup>156</sup>

This anticipation was disappointed and in the next section I show how longer term planning is forced to adopt a more realistic assumption regarding contribution income levels.

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<sup>154</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1989. Needs and Means Advisory Committee Report.

<sup>155</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1989. Finance and Accounts Report.

<sup>156</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1990. Meeting for Sufferings Report, C: Financial and Related Matters.

#### 6.3.4 Long Term Budgetary Planning

The new emphasis on caution in spending based on the policy to maintain minimum reserve levels which began in 1990 was crystallised by the introduction of longer term budgetary planning. The three-year rolling plan first attempted by Needs & Means in 1988 was finally introduced for the period 1990-1992.<sup>157</sup>

The three-year plan became five-year plans. The principle of achieving a balanced budget, the assumption of static contribution income and declining levels of income from other sources were all clearly expressed at YM 2001, leading to the inevitable conclusion that ‘work may need to be laid down during the period of this Plan if the yearly meeting is to continue to live within its means.’<sup>158</sup>

The mismatch between Quaker aspirations and Quaker resources continued to feature in Long Term Plans. In 2005, *Quaker News*, a quarterly publication of BYM, reported that:

Britain Yearly Meeting continues to face the problems identified in the Long Term Plan: spiritual hunger, changing needs amongst the membership and in the wider world, over complex structures and processes, overload in information and gaps in communication. We also face problems of declining and overstretched human and financial resources.<sup>159</sup>

Human resources in terms of staff to service the centrally managed work are certainly declining (Figure 15) and this clearly impacts on the level of work that can be undertaken

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<sup>157</sup> Proceedings of London Yearly Meeting, 1990. Meeting for Sufferings Report, C: Financial and Related Matters.

<sup>158</sup> Britain Yearly Meeting 2001, Trustees’ Report and Accounts.

<sup>159</sup> *Quaker News*, Spring 2005 No 54, 14.

at central level. Human resources in terms of membership numbers are also declining (Chapter 4) and this clearly impacts on the level of financial resources available to the Society.

A new six-year Framework for Action 2009-2014 ‘provides a clear guide as to the priorities for the use of resources, taking account of our size and capacity, but also allowing flexibility to respond to change.’<sup>160</sup> With small membership and limited funds at their disposal, it makes eminent sense to leave really big projects to larger organisations with more substantial resources and to work with other like-minded groups when opportunities arise. These principles are stated clearly in the new Framework:

Friends at all levels need to respect the work of other bodies, throughout Britain and internationally, whether or not Quaker, work with them, learn from them and avoid ineffective duplication of their work.<sup>161</sup>

The Framework also sets out very clearly the need for ‘a new mindset and some new competences to make us fit for purpose’ and puts forward ideas on how this can be achieved, how funding might come from a variety of sources, rather than from exclusively central funds.<sup>162</sup> It sees the need ‘to make our faith known more widely’.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> *Framework for Action 2009-2014* (London: Recording Clerk’s Office, 2008), 4.

<sup>161</sup> *Framework for Action 2009-2014*, 4.

<sup>162</sup> *Framework for Action 2009-2014*, 4.

<sup>163</sup> *Framework for Action 2009-2014*, 11.

## **6.4 SUMMARY**

I detect a clear dichotomy between tailoring the work to the resources available, and Members' spiritual hunger and desire to be proactive in their efforts to alleviate world problems. I examine this in more detail in Chapter 7.



## 7. CORE PURPOSE OF THE QUAKER CHURCH

Having examined in Chapter 6 how much contribution income is raised for the centrally managed work and how much in total is spent, in this section I examine the way in which the income is spent, and whether that spending reflects the direction in which Friends are led by their spiritual insights.

As will be seen in this chapter, there is debate about what exactly is the Quaker core purpose, but I suggest that this is an argument about emphasis rather than substance. Some see the core purpose as spiritual nurture. Others see it as spiritual nurture which may, or may not, lead to engagement with the world. Yet others see it as engagement with the world which comes from the spiritual nurture.

For example, during the financial crisis of the 1990s when budgetary planning was becoming a crucial necessity for the centrally managed work,<sup>164</sup> a view commonly held amongst Friends at that time is described by Dale:

The financial crisis created a discussion about what is essential and what is not. Maintaining the structure and nurturing local Meetings was essential. Enacted faith was less essential, even inessential.<sup>165</sup>

This is in direct contrast to Dale's personal vision:

Individual change which loses its connection to loving and just relationships is a travesty of the truly spiritual life. And a Quaker central

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<sup>164</sup> See 6.3.3 and 6.3.4.

<sup>165</sup> Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age*, 30.

structure which expressed Quaker faith by turning its back on the world would destroy Quaker spirituality.<sup>166</sup>

## 7.1 THE DEBATE

This debate is exemplified by correspondence in *The Friend*.<sup>167</sup> For the sake of brevity, I take just one exchange - relating to Quaker Meeting Houses - as an example. The emphasis on engagement with the world is illustrated in Alan Sealy's letter proposing that the Society sell all its meeting houses, which he describes as 'a three-hundred-year-old ritual on borrowed time'.<sup>168</sup> Sealy suggests that resources made available in this way should be switched into 'applying our values to a society where the gap between rich and poor continues to widen and communities wither and die'. He quotes the detailed example of Jordans Monthly Meeting where rental income of only £17,000 was generated to cover property maintenance costs of £47,000.<sup>169</sup>

However, Sealy does not believe that dwindling resources are the real problem; the problem is the way those resources are used. Releasing asset value and human resources

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<sup>166</sup> Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age*, 30.

<sup>167</sup> Weekly Quaker publication.

<sup>168</sup> Letter to *The Friend*, 31 March 2006.

<sup>169</sup> Letter to *The Friend*, 31 March 2006: 'The Jordans Monthly Meeting Accounts for 2005 ... show that the cost of repairs and maintenance, which includes utilities, together with salaries and pensions came to £47,000. Funds generated from the premises (rentals) were just over £17,000 – thirty-six percent of the costs. It took sixty-three per cent of the total contributions and collections made in the year to cover the balance. The accounts tell the story of the costs of property maintenance – for a one hour Meeting for Worship held in six Meeting Houses on Sunday. They tell nothing of the hours spent by committees on debating the best use of resources. Is this what the Society is for?'

which would otherwise be tied up in meeting houses would, he maintains, make it possible to concentrate more energies and resources on Friends' core purpose in the world.

As an example of spiritual nurture as the core business, Anne Bancroft responds to Sealy's radical view by suggesting that such a judgment places 'doing' before 'being', which as a rule does not work well.<sup>170</sup> Fides Matzdorf from Sheffield Central Meeting, putting the case for the dual purpose of spiritual nurture leading to engagement, writes:

... whilst property maintenance is not a mainstream activity for Friends, there are opportunities to live, share and display Quaker values through the use of property – isn't this about stewardship and the right use of resources?<sup>171</sup>

David Rolfe from Watford Meeting supports Matzdorf's reasoning when he describes how the recent enlargement of his meeting house gave Members a base for both spiritual nurture and the expression of Quaker values to the world.

I think most [Members] are of the opinion that without a Meeting house and its place as a centre of worship our 'borrowed' time would be even shorter and Quakerism in Watford would have rapidly disappeared. ... I believe that we can both have our Meeting houses and put effort into pursuing the Quaker values to which he [Sealy] refers. Indeed our experience is that the one supports the other.<sup>172</sup>

Here, interestingly, Rolfe suggests that the use of meeting houses can help to maintain numbers in the Society.

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<sup>170</sup> Letter to *The Friend*, 7 April 2006.

<sup>171</sup> Letter to *The Friend*, 7 April 2006.

<sup>172</sup> Letter to *The Friend*, 7 April 2006.

## 7.2 SPIRITUAL NURTURE

Levin sets out the spiritual insight of Quakers in relation to their personal spending as well as their work in the world:

Our purchases of vegetables, clothing, investments, mortgages or pensions are as much part of our ministry as our prayer, our meditation, our friendships, our ministry to the poor or sick, our work, our charitable giving or fund raising or our contribution to meeting for worship.<sup>173</sup>

For Levin, clearly, the whole of life is a spiritual response. It includes spending, caring and giving in the Local Meeting and in the world, as well as the relationship with God.

O'Shea expresses the same total oneness of Quaker spirituality and Quaker practicality, and their direct relevance to Quaker work in the world:

In the Quaker Way the transcendent and immanent aspects of our lives are indivisible; the spiritual vitality of our meetings depends on each of us being faithful to the inward guide; and action for justice to transform the world arises from our inward awareness of God's way in the world.<sup>174</sup>

However, Dale is concerned that the focus of the Society's central work has become too much centred on developing the spiritual life of its Members as an end in itself – 'the revaluation of *being* over *doing* ...; the felt need to concentrate on our *core purpose* – identified as spiritual nurture and outreach; and the mistrust of politics.'<sup>175</sup> He feels that

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<sup>173</sup> Jennie Levin, 'An Unexpected Ministry', *Quaker Monthly*, February 1998, 7.

<sup>174</sup> Ursula Jane O'Shea, *Living the Way*, (Australia: Australia Yearly Meeting, 1993; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition London: Quaker Books, 2003), 68.

<sup>175</sup> Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age*, 24.

the work is failing to allow the spiritual insights to lead into political commitment and engagement with the world in which they live:

... the renewed emphasis on our spiritual nurture in the last twenty years or so has been important for the life of the Yearly Meeting and has been the source of much good. It is my conviction, however, that it has had unintended negative side-effects: in particular, it has encouraged Friends to place 'spiritual nurture' in opposition to 'social witness', which is then increasingly envisaged as a purely human activity.<sup>176</sup>

### 7.3 ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WORLD

Over the last decade the need for more effective Quaker action in the world has been expressed, often by Friends presenting the Swarthmore lecture, whose vision is therefore highly respected by other Quakers.<sup>177</sup>

#### 7.3.1 Quakers in Politics

Dale, in his Swarthmore lecture at the end of the last century, accepts the importance of spiritual nurture (7.2), but is adamant that this must lead to inspiration to witness in the world. Dale speaks of the prime importance of the spiritual aspect of the political dimension: 'I cannot emphasise too strongly that for me this would be a deeply spiritual path.'<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age*, 28.

<sup>177</sup> The Swarthmore Lectureship was established by the Woodbrooke Extension Committee on 9 December 1907, with a twofold purpose: first, to interpret to the members of the Religious Society of Friends their message and mission; secondly, to bring before the public the spirit, the aims and fundamental principles of Friends. The Lecture is given annually and is accompanied by the publication of the book of the lecture.

<sup>178</sup> Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age*, 119.

At the start of the twenty-first century, Simon Fisher, the 2004 Swarthmore lecturer, clearly feeling a sense of isolation, appeals to other Quakers for support – spiritually, actively and politically:

I am looking for companionship with radical people who are willing to bring worship into the heart of social and political struggle ... the Society ... will need to dig deeper wells for its members to drink from. It will place spiritual renewal as close to its heart as social and political witness. It will tend to both needs, yet unite them as one in reality .... It will resist a tide ... which sees spiritual renewal as quite separate from action, politics and living witness, as though one could become a finer, more spiritual person in splendid isolation from the messy world which surrounds us.<sup>179</sup>

Christine Davis suggests a reason for this feeling of isolation and of being unsupported by the majority of Friends:

There is a finite pot of money and time; should they be spent on researching green energy sources or on promoting energy reduction? On persuading people to alter their own ways of life or on struggling to influence national or supranational policy-making? ... It is easy to think so long on what is right and what is most wrong, that we are paralysed.<sup>180</sup>

Fisher, faced with this paralysis too, begs Quakers to get involved, do something: ‘Doing a small thing is not doing nothing. It is doing something.’<sup>181</sup> Dale attempts to understand why Friends suffer from this paralysis. In his chapter on Faith and Action, he suggests three reasons why Friends have been unable to take the political action needed:<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Simon Fisher, *Spirited Living - Waging Conflict, Building Peace* (London: Quaker Books, 2004), 107.

<sup>180</sup> Davis, *Minding the Future*, 48.

<sup>181</sup> Fisher, *Spirited Living*, 73.

<sup>182</sup> Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age*, 40-41.

1. Conventional political campaigning can lack much sense of engagement and requires unfashionable amounts of dogged determination.
2. Political action is a special gift which not all Friends possess.
3. Friends are uncomfortable with the political.

Nevertheless, Dale believes that Friends at that time did accept this need for political involvement:

The exceptional support Friends have shown for the relatively new Parliamentary Liaison work ... probably no other area of Friends' central work has been more strongly defended against cuts during the last years.<sup>183</sup>

However, cuts there were, and they were to be introduced only one year later. Until 1997, Friends employed a Parliamentary Liaison Officer (PLO) with a full time administrative assistant. When Michael Bartlet was appointed to the post in 1997, the administrative assistant was downgraded to part time. Now, even the part time assistant has gone, the PLO works alone within the Quaker Peace and Social Witness Department, with support from an unpaid Advisory Group.<sup>184</sup> I suggest that the political area of Friends' central work no longer receives the exceptional support reported by Dale.

In a recent talk on Human Rights, Michael Bartlet claims that Friends have removed themselves from politics over the last 50 years, that they have lost faith in political

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<sup>183</sup> Dale, *Beyond the Spirit of the Age*, 40.

<sup>184</sup> Email exchange between Hazel Jones and Michael Bartlet, September 2008, and conversations on 27.9.08.

engagement, withdrawing into a form of quietism.<sup>185</sup> He is confident that Quakers in the twenty-first century have a role to play if they are willing to become political and to raise an authentic Quaker voice. He urges Friends to rediscover politics.

For human rights to flourish, essential elements are for the lawmakers to put in place the correct framework, and for the legislature to enforce it. ... We have to work with the lawmakers and the legislature. He went on to put the case for Quakers to re-engage in the political processes to help bring this about. ... we can't do it alone - collaboration with others and compromise are both important parts of the process.<sup>186</sup>

Fisher uses this same word *authentic* but this time in relation to how Quakers live their lives. Faced with political leaders rarely able to address critical issues, he says that 'conventional politics, at the moment when we need it most, has almost everywhere become sterile'.<sup>187</sup> On the same page he urges Quakers to face these issues, to 'be honest with ourselves, and to live our lives authentically.'

Dale, Bartlet, Fisher and others appeal for more Quakers to become more involved in political action. They link it to a deep spiritual life which leads into that action. The Quaker voice that comes out of this action is authentic, and it is becoming more urgent.

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<sup>185</sup> Talk by Michael Bartlet on 'Meeting the challenges of human rights, is there a distinctive Quaker voice?' given at Essex & Suffolk Regional Gathering, Sudbury, on 27.9.08.

<sup>186</sup> Extract from report on talk given by Michael Bartlet, Quaker Parliamentary Liaison Officer, to Essex & Suffolk Regional Gathering on 27 September 2008, on the subject of 'Meeting the challenges of human rights, is there a distinctive Quaker voice?' Report appeared in Monthly Newsletter of Southern East Anglia Area Meeting.

<sup>187</sup> Fisher, *Spirited Living*, 74-75.



### 7.3.2 Quakers in Business

The world of business, like politics, is another area of engagement where Quakers are no longer involved to any great extent. Stoller's Swarthmore Lecture in 2001 is passionate in its constant exhortations to Quakers to reverse this trend.<sup>188</sup> He reminds Friends that, 'through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, running successful businesses (and as a consequence acquiring wealth and providing employment) were admired activities for Quakers'.<sup>189</sup>

A Friend writing in *Quaker Faith & Practice* at the end of the twentieth century applauds such activity:

.... Every object we use has to be designed, manufactured and sold by someone. It is an honourable occupation to apply one's talents to the marketplace .... Perhaps a function of industry is to reflect that of God that is creation and glory.<sup>190</sup>

However, Stoller does not believe this is the general view of Quakers when he tells us that 'By the late twentieth century any conventional wealth had come to be regarded with at best circumspection, at worst with downright hostility.'<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Stoller, *Wrestling with the Angel*.

<sup>189</sup> Stoller, *Wrestling with the Angel*, 28-29.

<sup>190</sup> *Quaker Faith & Practice*, 23:55 Rachel Jackson 1990.

<sup>191</sup> Stoller, *Wrestling with the Angel*, 29.

Confirming Stoller's sentiments, it was suggested by my first interviewee that many Quakers now see making money as an unworthy activity, even incompatible with Quaker values:

I think that Friends suffer through this lack of exposure to business and it's a syndrome which feeds itself. ... I suspect there are people who wouldn't survive in Friends because of the way they've earned their living – because of hostility, not open hostility, but unspoken disapproval. I think people find it very difficult to believe that profit can be earned legitimately by consent, by everybody.<sup>192</sup>

Here we see echoes of Fisher's 'messy world that surrounds us' (7.3.1), and again when Stoller tells us that many more Friends now head for the caring professions than enter business.

For much of the second half of the past century, Quakers in Britain have sought to escape from the implications of the material world in favour of the 'ethical', the caring and the simply nice. This has led our Religious Society away from institutional involvement with the 'commercial state' at the very time that this entity has come to have the greatest influence over our societies as a whole.<sup>193</sup>

These professions are not normally well-paid, which suggests one possible explanation for Friends' inability to respond to the continuing appeals for more contributions. I further suggest that, until Quakers return to making money as a spiritual activity and use the money to promote their values in engagement with the world, they run the risk of remaining 'a peculiar people'. Youth and energy are deserting them, many are disdainful of money, business and politics. This attitude will not attract the new Members they need. However, none of this can be achieved effectively until Friends reach a conclusion

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<sup>192</sup> First Interview, 1/1/08.

<sup>193</sup> Stoller, *Wrestling with the Angel*, 98.

on the debate determining the order of priorities for spiritual nurture and witness in the world.

## 7.4 SHARING OF FUNDS BETWEEN SPIRITUAL NURTURE AND WITNESS IN THE WORLD

Arguing the case for spending on witness in the world to be increased, in 1996 Dale pointed to the fact that emphasis on spiritual nurture in the previous twenty years or so had been the source of much good, but it was time to put this into practical expression. Mendl, Dale, Fisher, Bartlet and Stoller have all pleaded for Quakers to become more engaged socially and politically (7.3). As Mendl pointed out, the very first requirement in order to bring about a better world 'is a more radical change in the outlook of men and in the structure of political institutions'.<sup>194</sup> If Quakers are to engage fully with the world, it can be argued that a larger proportion of centrally managed Quaker funds will need to be allocated to witness than to other activities. This has not happened.

In 6.2.2 (figure 14) staff costs were shown as roughly 50% of total expenditure throughout the period 1965-2006. This substantial spend is seen in more rational context for the years 2000-2007 in Figures 18 and 19 in which staff costs are allocated to greater or lesser extent across the different areas where they were incurred.<sup>195</sup> In 2005-2007, this rationalisation process is taken further by eliminating support costs as an item, and allocating all expenditure to the specific areas of work.

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<sup>194</sup> Mendl, *Prophets and Reconcilers*, 89.

<sup>195</sup> See Appendix 7.

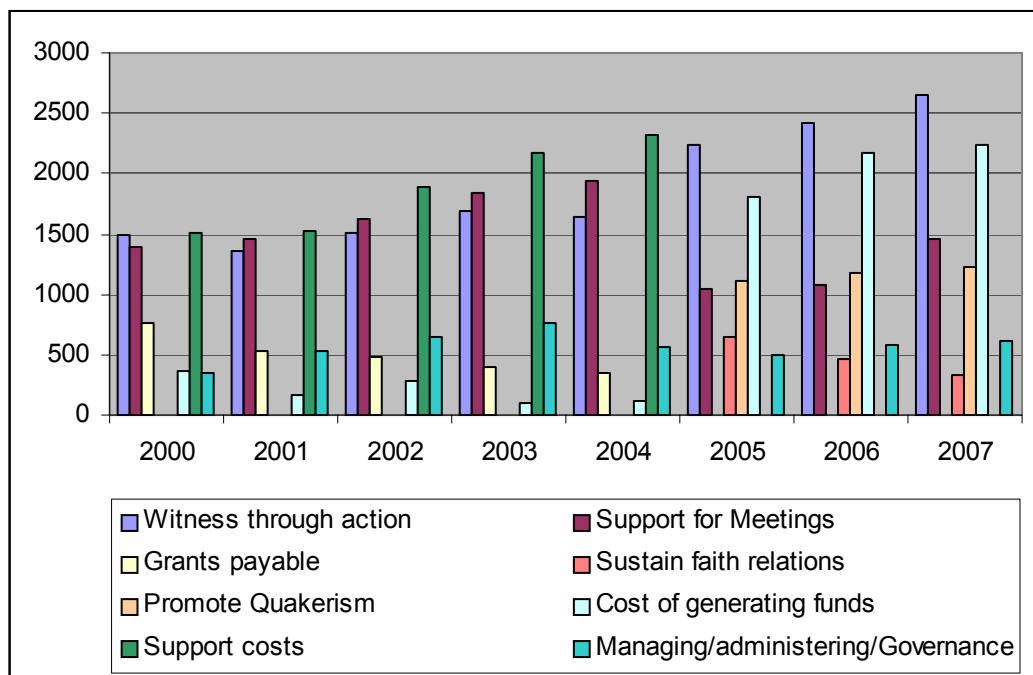


Figure 18: Main Areas of Expenditure, 2000-2007 (£000s)<sup>196</sup>

Throughout the first five years of Figure 18, the cost of generating income appears relatively low but, from 2005-2007, that cost is substantially higher and increasing year on year. This is explained by the fact that staffing costs were included in the figures for generating income in 2005-7, but not in 2001-2004 when they were allocated to support costs.

Figure 18 shows expenditure slightly higher for supporting meetings than it is for witness in the world in 2001-2004, whereas this trend is reversed in 2005-2007. However, in Figure 19 I have simplified the picture by combining expenditure on support for meetings, promoting Quakerism and sustaining faith relations. It is now clear that in the

<sup>196</sup> Data extracted from BYM Annual Accounts as summarised in Appendix 7.

















































































