

Episode 10: Guests Reflect



Questions for Individual or Group Reflection

Q1. Do you have family, friends, or colleagues who are active in other Christian denominations - with whom you talk about your experience as a Quaker? What do you share? What are they surprised by or interested in?

Q2. Do you ever visit other churches to worship? What similarities do you feel? What differences do you sense?

Q3. Tamisha noted that, in her experience, “passion” as a motivation for calling sometimes leads people to lay down a path where when the going gets tough – people lay down that calling. In your experience – is there a difference between being “passionate” and being led? What is it? What are the effects of each?

Q4. Tim shared how he found powerful El Dearborn’s story that being deeply engaged in clearness means you might be led away from your own tradition. Do you know any who have been called beyond the Religious Society (Quakers)? What was their experience? How do *you* feel about it?

Q5. There was a noticing about the ways in which Quaker culture might reflect White Supremacy culture. The same is true for other denominations. Has your Meeting done work to look at the ways in which it embodies the dominant culture of whiteness? If so, what has that been like?

Additional Resources and References Mentioned in the Episode

Eden Grace (Beacon Hill Friends Meeting, NEYM) has written much on Quakers and ecumenism. A collection of her essays can be found here: <http://www.edengrace.org/>

An essay on Quaker Business Practice by Eden is here: <https://bit.ly/2v07dXn>

Eden's essay on Friends Relating to Other Christian Churches might be useful, in this context: <http://www.edengrace.org/pendlehill.html>

More resources for Christian Ecumenism can be found at the National Council of Churches. <http://nationalcouncilofchurches.us/>

A good overview essay on the toxic culture that black seminarians face at Fuller and other seminaries can be found here: <https://thewitnessbcc.com/seminary-while-toxic-culture-black-exodus/>

There are lots of great resources about white supremacy culture and its characteristics. It is useful to look at these and see how they map onto Quaker culture. One such list is here: <http://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/whitesupcul13.pdf>

Episode Transcript

Callid: Hi. I'm Callid Keefe-Perry.

Kristina: I'm Kristina Keefe-Perry.

Callid: This show is on carrying a concern.

Kristina: Sharing stories of friends in service.

Callid: So as we promised exciting thing today, we have gathered with us some friends who are from different pieces of the Protestant world, and we've asked them to take a listen to a few of the episodes and peruse the transcripts, and listen to snippets and snappits of the first half of the season to see if they heard things different than what they were used to. If there were questions they had about what the heck it is that ministry in the Religious Society of Friends is and or things that they noticed. Sometimes as you folks may know, we're not always the most connected to the rest of the faith world and are siblings in the rest of the Christian church. So, this is an opportunity for us and for you by extension to hear what some folks hear in our stories. So without further ado, what I'm going to do is invite our guests to tell you a little bit about themselves so that we can hear the context of their coming from a little bit before we launch into some of their reflections, thoughts, questions, and or sharp criticisms. So we'll start on my screen, we'll go clockwise. So first up is Tuhina, however it is you want to kind of identify your context for a group of random Quakers who might not have any idea who you are.

Tuhina: I guess, I can call myself a Ludu. I am a Lutheran Hindu. So, I grew up as a devout Hindu in Denver Colorado. I started attending the Lutheran Church when I was in college, not actually attending the church, just hanging out in their student lounge a lot. Then, I ended up meeting a person who just happened to be Lutheran. Then we got married. The pastor that married is like, "I don't just marry and bury people, if you're going to make a commitment in the church, you need to know us and the community that's going to support you when you get married." So, here I am attending church as this Hindu. I'm writing all of my observations on a legal pad in the back of the church. I'm like, "You all stand up and sit down a lot. What's with the round cracker? Why do you dip it in this cup?" I had no idea what's going on. I'm like, "Okay. You all are about Bibles. I don't see Bibles in the pews. Where are your Bibles because you hit people with them, don't you?" So I was baptized actually in my late 20s. I went to seminary a year after I was baptized. I was ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American in 2013. I served my first

call in Oakland California for two and a half years. I then moved to a church in Palo Alto. I was there for 10 months. I'm currently on loan from the Lutherans to the AME Zion Church, and I serve on the teaching team at University AME Zion in Palo Alto currently. That entails doing Bible study with the preachers and being on their preaching rotation.

Callid: Terrific. Thank you so much Tuhina, and I've got next, Tamisha.

Tamisha: Hey everyone. I'm Tamisha. I am currently in a slightly busy cafeteria at a theological seminary writing away. They're watching the World Cup, so if you hear unexpected cheering, you know why. I grew up in a fairly Christian ... It was Christian home. We lived in Christianity, but nobody went to church except me even as a child. I would go sporadically with friends, but I didn't actually get involved in church until college. So, I started to really engage in college and into my faith and found that there is something that you can do where you can connect school and God. I was like, "Oh, that's perfect," which is how I ended up long story short, here. I'm really interested in just learning about other cultures and other people specifically through the arts, and trying to figure out how to create spaces where we can all hang out together and learn from each other. So, a little about me.

Callid: Terrific, and last but not least, Tim.

Tim:Hey. My name's Tim. I grew up in a pretty evangelical household actually. Throughout my faith journey and my various positions of ministry, I've sort of migrated in the different expressions of Protestantism, but now I worked in the Christian Church Disciples of Christ. I'm interested in theopoetics, as a lens for performing theology and leading communities that have an emphasis on aesthetics and embodiment. So, I'm actually working in Santa Barbara with the Disciples of Christ to help an existing congregation transform into creating a new form of community for today. So, we're doing some innovative work and trying new models to help people have faith in the 21st century be together for peace and for compassion. So, that's why I'm here.

Callid: Terrific. Folks as per usual, we'll connect you all to some of the resources that are these incredibly humans in the show notes. So, if you want to learn more about the various folks whose voices you'll be hearing, you can check that out as usual, ocacshow.org. So, without wasting any more time, I guess the first round would be, was there anything in that what you heard that was surprising, compelling, or confusing? If you can let us know, if there was a specific episode you were listening to, if there's a general question or comment you had that would be useful. Then if need be, Kristina or I will jump in if we need to answer anything.

Tamisha: I'll jump since I have a question at the very beginning. So I listened to the episode, Angela Harris?

Callid: Hopkins.

Tamisha: Hopkins, I knew it started with an H. Just listening to her story about going to Kenya and then coming back, and then getting involved with the Friends. There are a couple of things that I thought were really compelling, and then I had a question. I guess it's surrounded, the part of the conversation that you guys are talking about with discernment and with being in community, and they were two things that really intrigued me. One was, leading into quiet space and there are some differential between leading into the quiet space and then silence.

Then also, the new word that I have discovered, "Leading" and the sense of ... I was really just intrigued by the way in which you guys do discernment and community and the part where it's not about, "Well, what do you want to do?" That question was brought up as like that's not the question you ask that everybody has this equal stake in walking through this process with you. It's not necessarily about what makes you comfortable or what you have a distinct passion for, and I love the carrying the concern aspect to that. So, that was the first thing that I thought of. So if you want to riff off that, then great.

Kristina: It's interesting that one of the things that Angela brings up, Tamisha you mentioned the distinction between quiet space and silence. In that, if I'm remembering correctly, one of the things that she was talking about was that a lot of people refer to Quaker worship as quiet or as silence, but that actually it's expectant waiting worship so that there's this hope that a lot is, or this expectation that the Holy Spirit will show up and things are going to happen. When we're doing discernment, and there was some talk about clearness committees and using clearness committees, that everyone is entering into that expected waiting place, not just silence or not just quiet, and really listening for where someone's being called together. That's the first thing that comes to me.

Callid: I think Angela would have known this, but part of this is a historical fact that in the early years of the tradition, being Quaker was illegal. So when you met, you usually met like in market places, or on the down low and places you weren't supposed to be. As point of fact, it wasn't quiet. You were finding stillness. What happened over the centuries is it was like, we like quiet, which is I think resonant but it's not the same thing as listening for that still small voice which may or may not correspond to the decibel levels kind of outside.

Then, the other piece of that which is related is that - discernment is in the Christian version of Quakerism and the early version of Quakerism, which is the same thing - is about listening for the will of God and doing that, which may or may not be what you want to do. There's a lot of Friend stuff related to the identity connected to the prophets which is like, "Why me? Me? Am I supposed to do this business?" You hear a lot of that language echoed in Quaker language because it's your cross to bear or your daily watch. There are things like that, or it's like that is all of our jobs to do is to seek out that task that's been put in front of us.

Tamisha: Yeah. I think that that was really refreshing just because I think so often a lot of the rhetoric around calling, or what have you, is about what are you passionate? What do you love? I don't think that there's necessarily anything wrong with that, but there is something that's unique in thinking about like what you guys are called carrying a concern. It centers the spaces in which you would go and the things that you would do in a different light, and it is almost accepting that sense of quiet, that sense of uncomfotability that I think that we a lot of times with a passion rhetoric are training people out of.

That when things get difficult or hard, because it's something we're supposed to be passionate about, this can't be the space that I want to go in because I don't feel the passion or I don't feel the ... but if it's seats in carrying the concern, if the language is changed, then it's a way in which we can enter into spaces that maybe perceived as difficult, but knowing that and part of the discernment these are spaces which we are also called to be in. I think that the language is, these are really helpful in that way.

Callid: Any riffing there from Tuhina or Tim?

Tuhina: I thought it was really interesting that there was laughter with Angela and you about the quiet and the silence. I actually was laughing along with you because I thought it was actually really interesting because ... Callid, I'm going to bring up a part of our history. When we first met, that we were in our discernment group for what was then the Fund for Theological Education in a very not talking space. I think like we had just come out of a workshop that had essentially like pretty much bruised us and bloodied us pretty badly. It wasn't necessarily us being quiet. I think like the conversation that we're having around silence and quiet, and it's not about us, it's about what God is telling us to have it refrained as such, because I think particularly in American Christianity, there's a lot of like, I, I, I, like the if done equation. If I do this, then I receive this. If I am quiet, God will talk to me, but it's actually really interesting to then flip the script and then reframe it of, "God's speaking, I just need to shut the hell up." Because I think one of the holiest mo-

ments I ever had was God was speaking in that time at that FTE workshop. I think we just need to shut up.

Callid: Yeah, bounce back to that. So, if any of you have ever been to kind of waiting Quaker worship the way it works is everyone kind of gathers in silence and someone may rise and speak and offer something. In the old days, the advice given to people was just stay seated as long as possible. You shouldn't want to stand up. It's a horrible, terrible thing to speak as a prophet. Don't ask for it, keep your butt on the bench. The quaking came from people fighting against God asking them to give a word. So, we're called the Quakers because people were fighting against it, being pushed off the bench. I mean, very few people talk about it this way anymore. Tim?

Tim: Can I add just along the same theme that as I was listening to the episode with Elizabeth Dearborn. There was a turn in the episode where she started to speak of the guidance that took her out of the Society of Friends, and I found that to be really compelling and resonant with what you just mentioned about not desiring that prophetic call that might even call you outside of your own tradition. So, I mean as I heard that story and her own affinity for Thich Nhat Hanh and that modality of thinking too, I just found it compelling that there's sometimes this sort of guidance or clearness that can come and lead you even ... away.

Kristina: Yeah, right. I think that one of the conundrums that Quakers can get in is to be really centered on being Quaker and not realizing that ... Well, there's been a lot of talk about whether Quakers are Christian and part of that larger Christian stream, but is the discernment, are we faithful to the Quaker way or are we faithful to God? What's at the center that we're listening to? If we're faithful to God, we could get called - who knows where. What's interesting is I don't know if we mentioned it on the episode or not, but El is no longer worshiping with the Quaker meeting at all. Now, she was baptized in UCC Church because that's where she was sent.

Callid: Yeah. This is an apocryphal story, which might be true. I don't care enough about the history that like test it, but it is a story that's told often. At least some part of it is the case that Mother Ann was the founder of the Shakers was a Quaker, and that we know. It is said in many places, and I can't historically verify it, but the story gets passed on that she essentially sought out discernment with her community to say, "Hey, I have this vision. I have this leading of a thing I'm supposed to do," and the thing was the Shaker movement. Her meeting was like, "Yeah, I know. It seems like you're supposed to do that but that's not this."

Callid: So, they essentially blessed the leading. We would say affirmed of the leading and said, "Yes, you're being called to it, and you're being called out of our meeting to do it." That, I've always thought was a really powerful vision of the sermon, where you're so clear as a community on what your boundaries are that you can affirm God's motion with no prejudice, but also say, "Yeah, but that's not us. We can say yes to you, yes to the way God is working your life, and also that takes you beyond the boundaries of what we are." To be able to do both of those, seems to me really powerful. We're not really always great at it by any means, but I mean there's just something in that story that I think is very resonant with what Elizabeth was saying in that episode. Cool, other things, comments, questions, themes you noticed where is it similar to what you know, different?

Tuhina: There's a lot of different types of committees. So, just kind of going through the transcripts. There's a support community, a clearness community, an anchor committee, and so I'm very curious about this organizational structure.

Kristina: Let me just review the support committee, clearness committee, anchor committee. So clearness committee is that group who comes together for a single meeting or a series of maybe a set of meetings to help an individual test whether something is true. The most common use of a clearness committee is actually for membership and for marriage. People when they're applying for membership have a clearness committee to help them test whether it's right to become a member of meeting, and then a couple will ask for clearness committee as they get married to test whether they are really being brought together by God - and whether the meeting is clear to take the marriage under its care. Similarly, they'll work with an individual who's maybe testing or leading for a new direction in their life or ministry.

Kristina: Then, all of those other committees, support committee, anchor committee, committee to care and accountability, oversight committee are mostly names for the same thing, though support committee can be a pastoral care. Iteration of that committee, but support, anchor, oversight, are all committees that are then formed after a clearness committee happens, and their job is to care for the ministry which looks a little bit like caring for the minister, but is really making sure that minister needs to be faithful to the ministry and to the work that they're doing. So, that it's a committee of the meeting because the ministry emerges out of the life of the meeting and then gets cared for in the life of the meeting. You want to add something Callid?

Callid: Yeah. So, I think a piece of the clearness thing that's useful here is that this is all invented junk in the last 80 years. Largely, we know that in the early generations of the Religious Society of Friends, our communities were mostly homogenous. If you knew, everyone shared a communal practice of prayer and discernment, it

could happen anywhere. You might be down by the well or at the baker's shop and be like, "Hey, I've been really thinking about whatever." There are stories about people praying together to figure out what field to bring the cows to. I mean, it just was like life and that got harder and harder to pull off in the 20th century.

Callid: So while people used to gather, or groups of people together to reach clearness. Clearness of what? Clearness on the will of God. Then, they're like, "Oh no, we need a structure to do this because we don't live together, and what if?" So, we began to call these things clearness committees say, "Hey, will you come together for a clearness committee?" which is like on a day, on a time to kind of help me figure out what I'm supposed to do, and the clearness word began to replace clearness on the will of God. It just has its own thing. Are you clear? What the clearness was, is what the way forward is.

Callid: So, in the ye olde school way, so for Kristina and I, we said ... Again, we're testing for truth. We believe we've been married sacramentally. Will you help us tell, see if that's true? Not can we get married, but we think God has married us. Will you test that spiritual sense of that truth? That was the question, which is a very different thing than like, "Will you let us?" Similarly, that's how ministry works. If you feel led into something say, "I really feel like this thing's on me. Is it?" If the community says, "No, you're supposed to put it down." Including the marriage, if they're not clear that this has happened, that's the end of it, and that's intensely communal and very rarely lived into, but it's there and it has happened. I mean, not with us, but around.

Tuhina: I mean, I'm always fascinated with how words are used and how words are defined and used within faith communities. I think part of it is that it's like going from a Hindu world to a Lutheran world, and not my family is still in the Hindu world. I have to actually like ... I realized that I use coded language, and I use exclusive language when it comes to my life of faith. So, I have to break things down now for my family to a point where it's like, I can't just assume that they know like, "Hey, the season of Advent is the season before the coming of Christ and represents the Second Coming of Christ."

Tuhina: I have to lay that all out, and that I can't just assume that will use the word church, because not everybody is in a church. So, it's really having to recalibrate what vocabulary is. Noticing that these committees are appearing a lot in the conversations that you're having and like, "Okay, so that's a committee. That's a committee, and that's a committee." So, I was trying to grasp but like, "What is that in trying to figure out if I can get the context from the conversations without having to Google it to see if I could be able to glean something from that."

Callid: Another important part of this Tuhina is also that, and we talked about this in lots of the episodes because it's part of the thing that comes up is because Friends have historically been averse to hiring anyone to do anything, all the work that normally gets done in the congregation is done by teams of volunteers, and those teams of volunteers are known as committees. They even talk about that sometimes gets known as guilds or kind of small group staff, and that we've kind of been operating that way roughly 100 years.

Callid: Previously, we had named elders, ministers, and overseers, and we got rid of the overseers because of the slave association. Then, we got rid of the function entirely. Then, we got rid of elders, and then we got rid of ministers. It wasn't until the '70s and '80s that people started saying, "Hey, maybe we should have not done that," so much. We started a conversation again around what it might mean to talk about ministry and talk about eldership. Are there things, questions, comments, concerns?

Tim: Well, one of the reflections I had. I heard a phrase that was used earlier that, that this form of committee forming was intensely communal. Coming from a sort of relational perspective, but also working in the mainline Protestant church, I think a lot of our Protestant traditions give lip service to communality. I already mentioned earlier also, this high emphasis on individualism that's a part of the Protestant salvation narrative. So I just wonder, we do have boards, and elders, and different ways that people can serve in guild type scenarios, but I just wonder what letting some of that intense communality infuse inter-Protestantism would look like, and not that, that's what we're trying to do right here. I just wonder what we would have to learn from the Quaker tradition in that regard.

Callid: I'd be glad to hear from Tuhina or Tamisha if there's any thoughts on that before we run our mouths.

Tamisha: I don't know. I think it's really interesting question. I think it's a good question. I guess what I think about Tim, some of the ways in which Protestantism is very individualistic. I think about some of the churches that I've connected with, black churches, other churches of communities of color where the sense of community is so embedded culturally that there isn't a necessarily a separation when it comes to how we gather and worship. So, I'm wondering in addition to how the Quaker tradition seems to be really intentional about this intense communality. What way is in which this conversation, there are things that we can learn from the Quaker tradition, but there are things that already exists within Protestantism that we've marginalized.

- Tamisha: I think my only caveat with the question is, "Yes, let's think about that question, but let's also think about the ways in which those spaces of intense communality exists." They just look different. So if the disposition is, the posture is learning, I would say where are we learning it and to which people are we giving more authority to teach us? I'm curious to know how this sense of intense communality unfolds in other aspects of friends, communities, particularly as it relates to other communities, communities of color, other marginalized communities. Are there different expressions of the Quaker tradition in those communities that the Quaker tradition generally is learning on this sense of intense communality, and how have they navigated those relationships with those other communities as well?
- Tuhina: I think that for Christian theology, like it is a communal theology, but I think like as time has progressed in the sense of embodying it has become really ... I don't want to say distorted but like it's become ... The means of how we do it in which we do it has become really diverse and different. I think it's also been commodified and commercialized particularly in the American church and it's been colonized. So, I think like there is an ability to do community well, but I think like looking at it as a Lutheran pastor that like we lived ... At least Lutherans live in a small world. So, we have our siloed congregations in which we think we do community well. Then, we have our regional things in which we think we do community well. Then, we have our national body in which we don't do it well.
- Tuhina: I'm going to be like Martin Luther and then like, "Let's just call the thing, the thing," in reading the website and then listening to the conversations. There is more of an intensity of community and just wondering, it's like how far does that intensity go? Within face to face like within same building, regionally, how does this communal relationship work out because in listening to Angela's interview, the Quaker experience for her was different in Africa than it was in the United States. So, it's like even having to culturally communicate your own faith expression with another person who identifies as the same faith expression. How does that community live and foster?
- Kristina: There's a lot. It's so interesting. I am struck by Tamisha's question about: are there different expressions of Quakerism in communities of color and marginalized communities in different communities. In North America at least, Quakerism, unless it's the evangelical flavor of Quakerism, is I don't know what I would put at percentage, 96?
- Callid: Whiter than the Lutherans.

Kristina: Yeah. They're extremely white. Then you have evangelical Friends in North America, the fastest growing-

Callid: Spanish speaking.

Kristina: Spanish-speaking Friends. So, that's the fastest growing community of Quakers in North America are Spanish-speaking Quakers. Then, if you are looking globally at Quakers and you were going to pick what your median Quaker look like, it would be a Kenyan woman, an East African woman. They're the largest concentration of Friends is in Africa and Bolivia because evangelical Friends were really good at mission. So, Angela's experience of coming to Friends in Africa was coming to a very different kind of Quakerism.

Callid: I want to go back to something that Stina didn't point out, which is that one of the ways that white supremacy functions in the Religious Society of Friends is that our communality is so intense. So, Kristina and I are some of the craziest. Before we were married, and then before we decided to have a child, we asked if we should try to get pregnant... because we knew that if we had a child, we would be less available for service. If they had said no, we wouldn't have had a kid. That's the far edge of it. If we mandated that everyone be as crazy as us, who's going to come on board?

Callid: I mean, that's how we are and we encourage people to be that intense about it because that commitment, then invites other people into that commitment to say, "Oh, what if I was like that?" without a judgy way, but what happens culturally when you have these really intense communities forming and you don't really have a shared faith commitment anymore in terms of a basis in Bible, or scripture, or doctrine, and you have a vague sense of goodness, that vague sense of goodness starts to look culturally a lot like whiteness! So, then what you really committed to is a kind of sense of progressive white values.

Callid: There's a lot of conversations in New England Yearly Meeting at least, that's kind of our diocese or conference around how much of Quaker culture is essential to the Quaker faith, and how much of Quaker culture is just part of momentum and oppression? We're actively having that level at the yearly meeting, having that conversations at the early meeting level and it's rough. We're talking about culture and Quaker culture is sometimes challenging to pick apart because people were like, "Whoa, we helped free the slaves and we like women for a long time. We clearly are on the right side of history." Those facts line up, but that doesn't mean that you're immune to the realities of systems and structures of power. That's the harder conversation to have with folks who can say, "Yeah, but we did that thing."

Callid: You're hearing a lot of these folks are aware of some of these dynamics and part of the conversation is we have to talk about our failure, so we could figure out how to move. The claim isn't like, "Let's just skip it, and we'll eventually get better in some magical way," but that actually is the way that the spirit works is through this continuing acknowledgement of turning away from the things that are evil and to something else. Thoughts, comments, last pieces, we're kind of in the final turn here, themes, differences, appreciations.

Tim: As a protestant, I sort of lean toward more contemplative streams of Christianity. So, drawing off of some of the Franciscanism and just quieter, I think modalities sometimes speak to me personally. One of the things I noticed about the pacing of the way that both you and Kristina spoke on the podcast and Elizabeth as well, was that there's a slowness to the way that you talked about the journey. Even in yours and Kristina's reflections on your time with Elizabeth, there was a care. There was a concern for or attending to the language that seemed important in a way that a lot of the sort of hype of some of Western Christian expressions. You can lose that tenderness I think.

Tim: So, I thought there was a beauty to that element of ... It almost causes the listener to enter into a listening modality that is ... It takes a different posture inherently, just because of how it sounds. I just found that to be compelling. So, I just wanted to let you know that I appreciated that slowness. It was inviting.

Callid: Yeah. That's one of those things that is interesting Tim because there's a kind of Quaker culture around slowness that gets joked about, but is also a point of pride that you can't really push us around because the whole community needs to be clear like God's will or something before we move on it. The trick of it is, if you're clear that something is the will of God, you do it immediately. So, that's a trick because you have this culture of slow contemplative discernment, and then sometimes if you're under the weight of it, just pause.

Callid: The space of it is how you get formed, and sometimes from that space you need to be launched forth in different energies. We're not always great at that second part, which is another way in which homogeneity happens. Everyone just quiet down, quiet down. If someone's really angry in his righteous anger, what do you do? That can be not healthy sometimes. Does that track with you Kristina?

Kristina: It does. I was going to talk about something completely different which is the earliest Quakers in the Interregnum period. So, this is the Civil War in England where they deposed and killed the king, but not like chaos and the world was falling apart. That was the origin of Quakers. They were reacting both politically

against that and also against the Anglican Church and just start stripping away from their church experience forms that didn't have power.

Kristina: So, there was a really an apathetic approach, which has a lot of complementary nest to a contemplative approach. The kind of stripping away of all of the external ... We talk about getting rid of the smells and bells of Christian worship. Another manifestation of that was waiting to speak until you really had something to say that was right. So, an integrity of speech, to the point where early Friends were so intense in their discipline to this integrity of speech that they didn't want to say things like bless you or greet someone like good morning because they weren't sure if that person was saved, and they might be speaking to someone who is line with the adversary.

Kristina: So, they didn't greet people or didn't greet them back. They were seen as incredibly rude and that was the part of forming this community that was so tight-knit and close, and kind of separated out from the rest of society that Callid was talking about before because there was this intense discipline around speech that I think that we've inherited a little bit of it culturally. Would you say so Callid?

Callid: Yeah. I think that's the case. I guess maybe a good place to close in the next few minutes here. I know people have to go. You all have participated in congregations where there's a regularity to some of the work. So there's singing, or preaching, or the elements of communion. Wondering kind from the outside in, what do you think about ministry being largely unpaid, sometimes that kind of stipend did, but largely unpaid on goal assigned task where people in communities figure out what they're supposed to do and do it, as opposed to the structures of having staffs and what weekly things look like. What's your sense of that from the outside? Any thoughts on that as we close out?

Tuhina: Serving as a pastor in one of the most expensive places to live in United States is not sustainable. I think part of it is like tying the world of the church and the world of faith to commodity, tying it to capitalism has just ... I think has been atrocious. So, there are people who are in miserable positions in their ministry, but they can't lead because of the damn paycheck. They have to stay because they need a place to live. They have to support their family. They need health insurance, and I think one of the realities at least within my denomination in this part of the country is that this is no longer feasible. This is no longer sustainable to interpret the ministry as a job as opposed to call. I think that's really part of what happened within at least my denomination I think with some pastors is that, "Well, I got to get up and go to work," as opposed to, "This is call and this is what resonates in my bones and in my heart."

Tuhina: I really wonder what it would look like to reframe what it means to be church without a paycheck, without a building to have to take care of, without a staff that you pay. So, those are questions that I've really been wrestling with and just kind of like looking out like, "Hey committees, hey communal group to take on these things," which I know churches are supposed to be those things. Also, I live in the land of spiritual but not religious. So, it's also living into that aspect of it where you can shop for a church now, and then you can find the best product available. Then, you can just drop every other thing. Then, if they don't meet your needs, you can just leave.

Tamisha: Yeah. I think it changes everything especially in the spaces that I've been in and I served in where ... I mean in especially being in a place like seminary where it takes theology, it takes a sense of ministry and then makes it vocation. To be able to engage with the sense of leading or calling separate from, "This is the thing that I'm going to do that's going to provide me with enough resources to take care of my family that's going to ..." There's this sense of necessary exchange or necessary currency that occurs with a person providing ministerial services, but then having to receive something in order to sustain their livelihood.

Tamisha: So, the commitments and all the different things that you have to do and give up in order to maintain that exchange in a lot of ways can take away from, "This is really something that I am called to do." It's hard even being in a place like seminary where you're dealing with people who don't think that they need to be by vocation or also don't know, "I got to find a job to feed my family." So like now, they're not able to really 100% lean in to that conversation of leadings or callings because of everything that is attached to it.

Tamisha: So, to say that there is a space where you could just serve, and it's not attached to the sense of you're not getting anything for it in terms of monetary compensation or anything like that, it really changes the conversation in a way that I think channel our people to really think about how they're carrying out the concerns that they are called to do, and how they are called to live in to that. Also, I think it strips it of this expectation that your reward will be quick and hopefully, every two weeks, spend something that you can deposit.

Tamisha: So, I think that it's a necessary conversation that we need to have. I honestly don't know if there is enough space in the products of imagination to begin that conversation because of the commitments that we have made.

Tim: I just echo that, and I'll just add that probably the most common conversation I have with other pastors who are mainliners is the conversation around sustainability of these communities going forward. Not only is there that vocational

question of calling, and sustainability, and finances from my family, but I think in terms of the way the mainline is declining and new models that are going to have to be adopted that's a huge question mark, but it's something that everybody's talking about. So, I look forward to continuing to press into that question this week as we walk together.

Callid: I'll just say to close off. I mean, it's interesting that the money issue became the conversation here because it's the thing that we get asked the most about, because Friends have historically never received money and in fact money was often a marker of false ministry, but now people are saying, "I can't even do ... You want me to do all this work for free, but it cuts into my ability to earn. So, now what?" We used to solve those with community. While I was out on the road doing, I tendered ministry, took care of my farm. When I came back, the farm was still cool. That doesn't work now. What's the model now? What does community look like now to support this?

Callid: We hear a lot from a lot of folks who feel one way or the other about this funding issue because it's so central to all of our lives, regardless of what denominational hole we live in. So, it seems as if maybe that's a place for us all to be kind of joining arms and joining thoughts in the years ahead. It's like, "So, what comes next?"

Kristina: Yeah.

Callid: Probably hybridity of model is key and recognizing that there's already answers out there in places of marginality, almost certainly there's answers out there. We just need to make sure that we look there and don't try to reinvent the wheel, right?

Kristina: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Callid: Well, incredible gratitude to you all. Thanks Tamisha, and Tim, and Tuhina, really great to hear your perspectives. Hey listeners, if you want to give a shoutout to these folks, they all live on the internet as well as in places that are homes. So, if you want to say hey on Facebook or Twitter, all that info is on the show notes. Really glad that you all could join us, and I hope you folks enjoyed listening into the wisdom of some incredibly gifted ministers from other traditions.

Kristina: I'm incredibly grateful that you took the time to not only be with us today, but also to listen to the episodes with enough care and attention to be able to have conversations and ask questions, so thanks. It means a lot.

Tim: Thanks for having us.

Tuhina: Yes. Thank you for the invitation and looking forward to continuing the conversation. I think it doesn't end here.

Callid: Well folks, thanks for being in a different kind of family.