

Itinerary

December 30, 1948: born in Indianapolis, Indiana; second of two sons of Robert and June Gwyn – wonderful, loving parents. Michael was a great older brother. Grew up in the First Friends Meeting of Indianapolis.

1967 – 1971: undergraduate student at Indiana University, Bloomington. Graduated with BA in zoology. Spent summers 1971 to 1973 as staff naturalist at Shades State Park, near Crawfordsville, Indiana.

1971 – 1975: student at Union Theological Seminary in New York with growing interest in biblical studies. Long-term friendship and theological conversation with Richard Sturm began. Graduated with Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology degrees. Worked for the American Friends Service Committee in New York on hunger and development issues 1974-75.

1975 – 1977: pastoral minister with the Noblesville, Indiana Friends Meeting. Satisfying ministry but much inner unrest. Read George Fox's *Journal* for the first time. Became involved with the Quaker Theological Discussion Group starting in 1975 and met a number of Quaker scholars who would influence future work, most notably Lewis Benson, Wilmer Cooper, T. Canby Jones, Sandra Cronk, and Hugh Barbour. Felt drawn toward further study of Quaker history and theology. Began song-writing.

1977 – 1982: doctoral work in biblical studies and homiletics at Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. Independent study with Lewis Benson, Dean Freiday, and Canby Jones alongside the academic work led eventually to a dissertation on the apocalyptic theology of George Fox and its implications for early Quaker worship and ministry. Lived in Brooklyn and became a regular attendee at the Brooklyn Friends Meeting. Participated in and spoke at New Foundation Fellowship events in America and Britain. Worked part-time again for AFSC New York. Met Dorian Petri who also worked for AFSC: married in October 1982 under the care of Brooklyn Meeting, three days after defending dissertation at Drew, and three days before setting out together for Berkeley, California.

1982 – 1986: pastoral minister with the Berkeley Friends Church. Experiments with more participatory forms of Bible study and shared vocal ministry. Reworked the doctoral thesis into a first book, *Apocalypse of the Word: The Life and Message of George Fox* (1986). Prepared messages in worship have rise to chapters of a second book, *Unmasking the Idols: A Journey among Friends* (1989). Work with Barbara Mays, editor of Friends United Press, on both books. Began war-tax resistance in 1983. Participation in Berkeley's activist subculture, including the Sanctuary movement. A night in the San Francisco jail following a civil disobedience action in protest of US interferences in Central America.

1986 – 1987: travels in ministry around the West, Midwest, and East to promote and make connections with *Apocalypse of the Word*. A lecture given at Pendle Hill in May 1987 led to spending the fall term there as a Friend in Residence. Meanwhile, reading Latin American liberation theologies and Marxist social theory and literary analysis. Early work in conceptualizing a sequel to *Apocalypse*, exploring the social-revolutionary dimensions of early Quaker apocalyptic preaching in relation to proto-capitalist developments in Britain.

1988 – 1991: scholar in residence then teacher at Pendle Hill, aided in the first year by a research fellowship at Haverford College. Research and writing for what became *The Covenant Crucified: Quakers and the Rise of Capitalism*. Taught a satisfying course on the Gospel of John but generally found teaching difficult. *Unmasking the Idols* published 1989. Plenary address at 1990 Friends General Conference began a long-term effort to interpret the diverging branches of Friends to each other, in light of the early Quaker movement. Separated peacefully from Dorian Petri and returned to Berkeley.

1991 – 1994: resumed pastoral ministry with Berkeley Friends Church. Continued experimenting with more participatory worship and ministry, toward a more shared sense of ministry and pastoral care. Weathering through the emotional turmoil of the separation, had a short-lived, non-secretive relationship with a leader in the meeting, leading to congregational conflict and resignation. Learned from Rene Girard's books about scapegoat theory. Began to conceptualize a third book on the early Quaker movement as a convergence of Seekers and other radicals of that period, with reference to present-day religious seeking trends.

1994 – 1996: resident student, then scholar in residence again at Pendle Hill. Began research for *Seekers Found: Atonement in Early Quaker Experience*. Met Caroline Jones, a fellow resident student, from Britain Yearly Meeting of Friends. Song-writing and performance continued to develop. *The Covenant Crucified* published 1995, the first of two books published with Pendle Hill Publications, Peter Bien and Rebecca Mays as editors.

1996 – 1997: friend in residence at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham, England. Continued research and writing on *Seekers Found*. Taught a three-week intensive course with Woodbrooke tutors Ben Pink Dandelion and Timothy Peat on the apostle Paul, early Friends, and subsequent, post-apocalyptic Quakerisms. The course became a book, *Heaven on Earth: Quakers and the Second Coming* (1998, republished 2018). Long-term friendship and collaboration with Pink Dandelion began.

1997 – 2000: part-time librarian at Pendle Hill in exchange for room and board, in order to complete work on *Seekers Found* (published 2000 by Pendle Hill, completing a trilogy on early Friends). Part-time work programming lectures and other events for Pendle Hill on issues of science and religion, 1999 – 2000. Married Caroline Jones December 1999 under the care of the Pendle Hill community.

2000 – 2003: Quaker Studies Tutor at Woodbrooke. More satisfying experiences in teaching, though often struggled to speak to the idiomatically different liberal Quakerism of British Friends. Taught a one-week intensive course with Ben Pink Dandelion, Richard Sturm, and others on tragic consciousness in the New Testament gospels, early Quakerism, and later periods of Quakerism. The course became a book, *Towards Tragedy: Reclaiming Hope* (2004). Began to transition out of early Quaker studies, after 25 years. Travels around Britain teaching for Woodbrooke. Loved the people, countryside, and the culture, but not the climate.

2003 – 2010: Pastoral minister with First Friends Meeting, Richmond, Indiana. Motivated in part by declining health of parents back in Indianapolis. Most satisfying and successful experience of pastoral ministry overall. Many memorial services for a generation of beloved Friends, but new individuals and families arriving with fresh energies and perspectives. A series of prepared messages on conversations in the Gospel of John led to another book, *Conversation with Christ: Quaker Meditations on the Gospel of John* (2011) with Friends General Conference's Quaker Press, Barbara Mays then Chel Avery as editors. Yearly returns to Woodbrooke to teach short-courses, sometimes with Ben Pink Dandelion. Caroline spending periods in Richmond, but also training in England to become a dharma teacher. A sense of leading to research and write a history of Pendle Hill. A grant from the Louisville Institute made project possible, beginning with two summers of research at Pendle Hill, 2008 and 2009.

2010 – 2014: Pendle Hill. First year as Cadbury Scholar to finish research and write a history of Pendle Hill. Second year as scholar in residence and part-time teacher while finishing history. Third and fourth years as full-time teacher: courses in Quakerism and Bible. The most satisfying and successful experiences of teaching. Continuing returns to Woodbrooke to teach short-courses. Teaching a Quaker faith and practice course led to *A Sustainable Life: Quaker Faith and Practice in the Renewal of Creation* (2014), a second book with Chel Avery as editor. Also consulted weekly with friend Chuck Fager during his year as Cadbury Scholar researching and writing about Progressive Friends. Pendle Hill's resident program and resident teacher position ended. *Personality and Place: The Life and Times of Pendle Hill*, self-published at end of 2014, with editing help from Pendle Hill friends and writers Patrick Roesle and Emily Savin.

2014 – 2016: pastoral minister with Durham Friends Meeting, Maine. Motivated in part by Caroline's work as a dharma teacher with a Buddhist retreat center in central Massachusetts. Father died in March 2015. Growing concern for mother continuing in dementia-care in Richmond. Continuing teaching trips to Woodbrooke. Research and writing *The Anti-War: Militant Peacemaking in the Manner of Friends* (2016) with Inner Light Books, working with Charles Martin. Gave Bible Half-Hours for New England Yearly Meeting 2016 sessions. These were later self-published as *The Call to Radical Faithfulness: Covenant in Quaker Experience* (2017). Earlier conversations with Chuck Fager on Progressive Friends, plus experiences attending Friends General Conference Gatherings, contributed to a leading to research a book on the history of FGC Gatherings. Growing sense that paid pastoral leadership was less needed or affordable by the meeting. Shared this with the meeting leadership upon resigning.

2017: Friend in Residence at Pendle Hill, researching and writing the FGC project, *A Gathering of Friends: The Friends General Conferences 1900 – 1950* (2018), published by FGC Quaker Press, working with Brent Bill as editor. Participated in a gathering of scholars working in 20th-century Quaker history in Richmond, Indiana organized by Chuck Fager. In September, a sudden sense that ministry among Friends was coming to an end.

2018 – present: retired to Richmond in seventieth year to help support mother through last months of life. Having made no plans for retirement, living on Social Security and Medicare, found an affordable situation with subsidized housing in the Interfaith Apartments of Richmond. Finished writing a memoir that was begun in 2005, while living in Richmond before. Mother died in November. Research and writing on the common in the New Testament gospels and contemporary experience. That work and the memoir converged into the present book. Active with both First Friends Meeting and Clear Creek Meeting (unprogrammed). Continuing a "commuting marriage" with Caroline in Massachusetts.