

THE ROLE OF TRUSTEES



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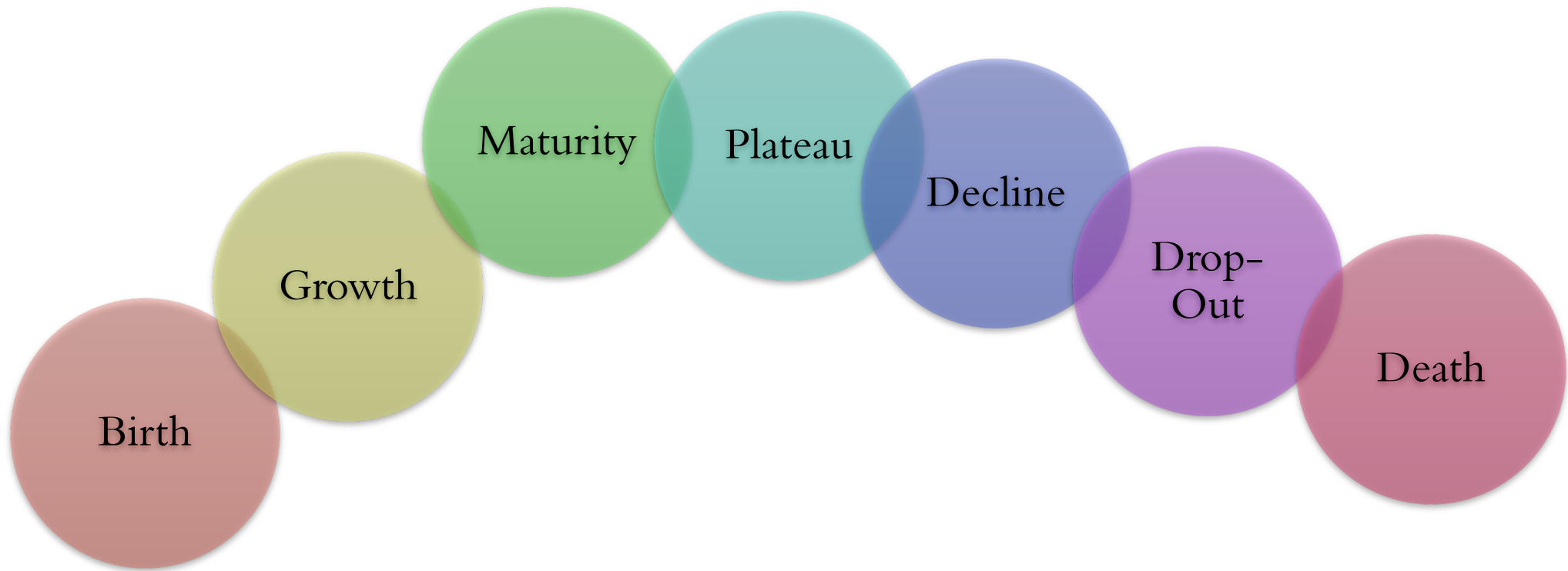
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Trustee – a Friend who has legal responsibility for the rightful use of the assets of a Quaker organization, according to the laws of their nation and/or area. The legal responsibility is usually communal: that is, the trustee does not have sole personal responsibility, but the trustees collectively have responsibility. The legal responsibility is that the organization's property be used in the best interests of the organization, or—if the organization is legally dissolved—that the assets are disposed of in keeping with the law.





What is a healthy meeting?



Vitality

Can discern God's call

Viability

Can act on God's call

Some Adaptations to Waning Energy



Reducing ministries

Simplifying committee structures

Adjusting staff

Combining/merging meetings

Sharing the building
















Selling the building

Becoming a worship group or preparative meeting

Becoming a house church or online meeting

Laying down the meeting



	<i>The Local Meeting Has Trustees</i>	<i>The Regional Meeting Has Trustees (Local Meetings Own Property)</i>	<i>The Regional Meeting Has Trustees (Regional Meeting Owns Local Meeting Property)</i>	<i>The Yearly Meeting Has Trustees (Local or Regional Meetings Own Local Meeting Property)</i>	<i>The Yearly Meeting Has Trustees (Yearly Meeting Owns Local Meeting Property)</i>
<p>Corporate discernment makes all decisions. Trustees serve as action body only.</p>					
<p>Corporate discernment makes some types of decisions. Trustees are asked to make other specific types of decisions on behalf of Friends.</p>					
<p>Trustees make most or all decisions related to the assets of the community.</p>					

How might trustees initiate an adaptation in the meeting?



Notice changes that are happening in the meeting, especially related to viability



Articulate the changes truthfully but without pressure



Be prepared to tell the story several times before Friends respond



Be specific and honest about the consequences of inaction



Remember that the meeting discerns its own future

How might trustees support the discernment about an adaptation in the meeting?



Suggest helpful outside resources in a timely way



Research a little bit ahead of the meeting's progress



Tell the historical stories of the assets



Honor Friends' grief



Maintain trust (with open communication, including to distant Friends)

How might trustees act on the discernment of Friends about an adaptation in the meeting?



Hire professionals



Connect with other Friends to get a sense of how they have handled similar situations



Ask if help is available through a council of churches or interfaith group



Report on your work from multiple perspectives: (1) data, (2) logical progression, (3) emotional/historical story, (4) spiritual journey.



Honor your own experience and the experiences of other trustees

Questions for Discussion



How do you think about your spiritual, relational, and legal responsibilities as a trustee?

Do you have a story of a time in the past when you supported a meeting through some kind of transition? How did it go?



Additional Resources

- [*Transitioning Older and Historic Sacred Places: Community-Minded Approaches for Congregations and Judicatories*](#) – highly recommended resource with practical tips toward approaching a variety of property-related matters
- [“Being a Quaker Trustee”](#) – an online course from Woodbrooke that repeats on occasion; designed for British Friends, but some concepts will translate