

An aerial photograph of a rugged coastline. In the foreground, large, dark, rounded rocks are scattered across the lower half of the frame. The ocean is a vibrant blue-green, with white, frothy waves crashing against the shore and swirling in eddies. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. The overall scene conveys a sense of adventure and natural beauty.

Living Adventurously

Quaker Faith
and Practice

CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN
AFRICA YEARLY MEETING

Living Adventurously



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MEETING

Living Adventurously was approved by Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting in April 2009.

The full text is also available on the Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting website. <http://quakerscsaym.ning.com>

The advice 'Live adventurously' has guided Quakers for centuries. The full text of the advice is, 'Live adventurously. When choices arise, do you take the way that offers the fullest opportunity for the use of your gifts in the service of God and the community? Let your life speak. When decisions have to be made, are you ready to join with others in seeking clearness, asking for God's guidance and offering counsel to one another?'

(Set out as advice 27 in *Quaker Faith and Practice* (third edition), published by the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain (2005))

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Foreword

At the Religious Society of Friends' (Quakers) Central and Southern African Yearly Meeting (C&SAYM) in 2006, it was agreed to develop a Quaker Faith and Practice for our own Yearly Meeting.

The purpose is to capture our experience, concerns, witness and insight from living our faith in Central and Southern Africa.

Quakers have had an established presence in Southern Africa since the 19th century and initially came under London Yearly Meeting (now Britain Yearly Meeting).

C&SAYM is a small unprogrammed yearly meeting of about 270 members and attenders living in Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In Africa we have strong oral traditions in our cultures, in our Quaker traditions and in our individual spiritual journeys. Our Quaker traditions have emerged through our daily interactions, our shared concerns, our witness to the world, and our individual and collective spiritual quests. We build the 'sense' of our Yearly Meeting through prayer, discussions and dialogue, returning to issues over time, and seeking the right path for us in our concerns.

This wisdom and collective consciousness forms our 'faith and practice' and is embedded in our particular Quaker way.

This edition of the Central and Southern African Quaker Faith and Practice is a first attempt at collecting our stories, customs, histories and testimonies – a record of our faith in action. It has not been easy given our particularly oral traditions: phone calls, calling one another across the hill tops, singing, ministry, celebrations and retreats. We do however write some things down – in letters, emails, minutes, testimonials, epistles and our journal, Southern Africa Quaker News. These have been a rich resource for this work.

Through the process of developing this first edition, we have encouraged Friends to share their truth in writing – particularly requesting Friends to write in their mother tongue and in their own way, be it poetry, songs, stories, reports, prose or music.

Let us not forget our Quaker ancestors, our time on this planet, and our small and large acts of doing God's work in Africa. Let us embrace our living faith and find our words to strengthen our Quaker traditions to be passed on to new Friends and our children, our children's children, and their children's children.

This is, of course, a work in progress, and we look forward to the second and subsequent editions!

An electronic copy of this publication is available on:
<http://quakerscsaym.ning.com/>

QUAKERS IN AFRICA

Expressing our Quaker identity in Central and Southern Africa

We regularly gather for silent worship as a community. This meeting for worship may take place in homes or meeting houses. We settle into silence as we arrive. A sign, initiated by one Friend after an hour has passed, signals the end of the meeting, usually by the holding or shaking of hands. Our arrangements are simple, a circle of chairs, perhaps with a table, a vase of flowers, a lighted candle, books such as the bible, Quaker Faith and Practice, or scriptures from other religious traditions. Our meetings are open. Anyone may come. In this shared space, we are free, individually or together, to grow spiritually.

Sometimes it takes a while to settle into a deep silence. It is out of this gathered silence that ministry arises. Everyone ministers through being present. Sometimes a meeting for worship may pass in silence. In this silence we wait on God, and if called by the Spirit deliver vocal ministry. This may be spoken or sung. Those moved towards vocal ministry give thought and prayer to what needs to be said, and speak clearly and simply – from the heart. When ministry is given, we listen attentively. We receive it, hold it and reflect on it. We search for truth, open to ‘that of God’ in each of us. Ministry addresses all aspects of life – our spiritual journeys, our personal and communal growth, and our concerns for social and environmental justice.

Some meetings have a practice of ‘afterwords’ immediately after meeting for worship. This is a short time, of continued silence, where thoughts that did not culminate in ministry may be shared. Then introductions are made, notices given, and personal news shared. Conversations can then continue over tea, and sometimes food is shared.

Friends may ask for additional meetings for worship to mark significant moments in their lives. These include marriage, birthday celebrations, welcoming of children, celebrating the life of Friends that have passed on,

meetings for separation and divorce, or meetings for clearness. We also often have smaller meetings for prayer, discussion and discernment, all contributing to the spiritual life of the meeting.

We hold few essentials in our faith. We hold that there is 'that of God in everyone'. This guides us to respect and affirm each person as being of God, which in turn develops trust and closeness among Friends. We often speak of this direct experience of God as the 'inner Light'. When we respond to that of God in ourselves, we seek to bring the whole of our lives into this Light. To help us we have queries, advices, testimonies and the lives of Friends to guide us. Our individual and collective challenge is to find ways to let our lives speak of integrity, truth, simplicity, equality, and peace. We are open to living adventurously and to questioning and seeking truth and continuing revelations in our lives.

We have no hierarchies in our Society; no priest is needed to assist us to access the inner Light. We do make use of and appoint, on a rotating basis, Clerks, Elders and Overseers to guide the spiritual and material life of our meetings. All members are responsible for the spiritual and social well-being of the Society and we meet in monthly meetings for business, which are extensions of meetings for worship, to conduct the practical affairs of each monthly meeting. In a prayerful manner we try to ascertain the 'sense of the meeting' on each issue that arises.

Quakers are an 'inside out' community of people who are often involved in an array of social justice concerns which reflect our guiding principles and our commitment to letting our lives speak.

Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Hlekweni, Zimbabwe

2007

Our experience of Quaker Meeting for Worship

An immediate sense of being still in the presence of God
The real experience of the power of intention
And then, a sense of being suspended in the common consciousness of
divinity and eternity
This is an experience or actualisation of Ubuntu – I am because you are
A deep realisation that all is well and all will be well
A meeting for worship affords me the opportunity to experience who I am
created to be.

Ros Posemann

KwaZulu-Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

In stillness, in meditation the Inward Guide can speak. Much speaking is
a snare. It is not a question of what someone else has said or written but
'What can you say?' 'What have you learned experimentally, for yourself?'

It is the breathing of the Spirit in the human heart that counts and is
precious.

WS Lean

'Religion for Today'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 27 November 1976

I think it is NOT a PURPOSE of our meetings for worship that we may
grow numerically. Propaganda is not a purpose of our meetings for worship.
Yet if we have really been a group, even of two or three gathered together
to find that HE has indeed been in the midst of us, we MUST carry that
living, achieving, conquering experience with us. That it won't mean the
growth in numbers of the Society of Friends is unimportant, so long as it
does mean the unseen growth of an unrecorded membership...in the far
wider human-divine fellowship in the world.

Roger Carter

Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa circa 1950

If science could prove that prayer never effects utilitarian results, true prayer would still be untouched, persons will go on praying as before. If we could say nothing more we could affirm that prayer, like faith, is itself the victory; seeking is the finding; wrestling is the blessing, it is an end in itself, like love; it is its own excuse for being; it is the first fruit of the mystical life.

Rufus M Jones

A lecture on Prayer

American Visiting Friend 1935

I am transported back to my first remembered Quaker meeting... to the escarpment overlooking the Letaba valley where I am sitting on a little dug-out chair next to my grandmother, Amy Garthorne. We are sitting in silence – I don't ever remember her speaking during our family meeting for worship – but hearing the stillness. I must have been three or four years old and know I felt the soft air, heard a cricket or a bird singing, and I knew God. I knew I was loved and I knew I was blessed.

Elizabeth Roper

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

I was struck by the silence and the equality of it all. No one appeared to have presidential position in the gathered silence. This silence was broken with speech – from the heart. Ministering words, fresh insights, sometimes muddled, sometimes powerful, always surprisingly illuminating. Then the words tumbled to a heap on the carpet and dried up and we were still again. I remember looking at the people around me. Taking in the little sounds, the coughs, sighs, lightly snoring breaths – the sounds on the outside. All the things I no longer hear. I thought this might be a place I would like to stay in for a while... I remember feeling that Quaker practice and style felt in no way alien.

Jane Argall

KwaZulu-Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

It was not the 'meeting' as such that I experienced, but the force of individual autobiographies which took precedence over theological assertion.

Richard Aitken

KwaZulu-Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

A Ministry which is the revelation of God communicates to the members of the meeting. When there is oneness in the spirit of the worship, when the Spirit reveals itself, each and every one of the worshippers experiences its presence as it communicates with each and every one of us.

Kholekile Tshanga

Capetown Eastern Monthly Meeting, South Africa

Southern Africa Quaker News, September 1999

Over the years, some of the Ministry has spoken to me, spoken for me, made me consider my truth, my spiritual path and made me question my actions. Some of the Ministry has not spoken to me or I have realised what it meant only years later.

Margaret Roper

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

I had a conviction that I had found in Quaker meeting something that was absolutely right for me. I did not try to capture the experience in more words than that. In a sense, the experience did not need words to describe it. The sense of having entered an incredibly safe and rewarding space was enough. I resolved that I would attend Quaker meeting every Sunday from thenceforth unless I was sick or there was no accessible meeting. This was, in a sense, a finding of a path, a definite direction spiritually. Up until then, I had no particular direction in my spiritual life.

Rory Short

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

When I was ten, I went to my first Quaker meeting, and I found the idea of sitting in silence for a whole hour very exciting. I was keen to show the grown-ups how still I could be. I sat rigidly, found focus on an old carpet with an interesting pattern. I imagined being a small creature walking along the lines and colours. The carpet was like a maze with unexpected barriers and openings. I fixed my mind on each colour in turn and after some time felt a change. My mind became quiet and I lost my busy thoughts. I was only aware of colour and trying to find the best colour for my mind, settling on autumn reds, rusts and gold. People spoke and their words combined with the colours. My space didn't feel invaded by their voices. I knew a freedom and a connection to something warm and loving. The redness blended with the warmth and I experienced peace and joy for the first time.

Julie Povall

KwaZulu-Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

What is our experience of a 'gathered meeting for worship'? Unity, harmony, the presence of God, coming home, an experience, friendship, emptying of other things, family, the whole being greater than the individual, no distractions, peace, silence, truth, heightened energy levels, everyone being present – together with our concerns.

Mid-Year Representatives Meeting

Good Shepherd Retreat Centre, South Africa 2008

As others entered the meeting I experienced an expansion of quality not numbers

I was among others who found simplicity as the road to perfection

I was among others who respected the inner sanctum of every individual

He told me of the meeting

Having been all my life in preparation

I had arrived

Charles Ashby

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

The room was freshly-painted, lemon yellow. I was relieved to see black people in the meeting. The attenders looked like 'good people'... ordinary, kindly. I closed my eyes and sank into the silence. It was feather-light yet strong. I felt held – really held. I don't remember the ministry but I do remember being moved by something Duncan Brown said. Towards the end of my first meeting I felt a swelling joy rise up on my heart. I found myself on my feet and heard myself tell Friends that I had come home. Years later, I feel astonishingly fortunate to have found Friends, one of the real turning points of my life; one that has brought me great warmth, love and joy and helps keep me in touch with what is of real value.

Justine White

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

I was really surprised that Quakers would just sit in silence. That is one of the things I love about Quakers. I also liked the fact that you had no one heading the meeting and that you could connect with God in your own way. The first thing that got my attention is that you didn't have to wear a skirt to every meeting!

Zimbili Mabazo

KwaZulu-Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

I walked in to my Quaker meeting and thought, 'Hmmm... Uphi umfundisi?' (where is the pastor?). All the people at the meeting were very friendly and they welcomed me with warm arms. But still I asked myself, 'Uphi umfundisi?' The meeting began and everyone kept quiet and still and I thought, 'Very interesting.' No one spoke. Aunt Ntisiki sang a Zulu hymn 'Siyabonga Baba'. I thought, 'Aah!' That was beautiful. After a while I started to get a feeling of what silence is meant to be and how peaceful it is to just keep quiet and be still.

Sthembile Dlamini

KwaZulu-Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

All forms of worship that give glory to God are good;
Whether in silent meditation, spoken prayers, hymn singing or psalms
Where the worship of God
Is true and heartfelt,
His spirit is dwelling, too.

Joanna Sankey

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

Let us remember that when we come to Quaker Meeting for Worship, do not let's sit there with our spiritual picnic baskets on our knee and never open them. When Friends have a 'bring and share' there's more than enough food. But when you have a spiritual 'bring and share' it's a bit picky. People often don't take the lid off their baskets. And so I would encourage all the silent Friends amongst us to remember that you've got something special that you need to share and we need to receive.

Rosemary Eliot, South Africa

The Inner Light

Richard Gush Lecture 1998

One Sunday after meeting for worship, someone invited me to come into business meeting. I did and was profoundly impressed with how the business was conducted. It was not something I had experienced before. Right from early on, I could see the undoubted practical need to deal with the sheer worldly needs of our meetings. In recent years I have also come to see that we in our meetings live on the boundary between the material and the spiritual and it is our privilege to make the spiritual manifest in the material. Our business meetings provide excellent opportunities for us to practise this as a collective.

Rory Short,

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa

Southern Africa Quaker News, March 1998

This way of worship through silent communion, in which there is freedom for spoken prayer or ministry, springs from the fundamental experience of the Society of Friends and is a constant expression of working out of its central principle – the firm belief that all who seek God in their hearts can find God, and the knowledge that, both as individuals and as groups, those who ask and accept God's guidance are led of God.

Quaker Meetings are open to any who wish to attend, and visitors are welcomed to share fully in them. As each person present responds to the living experience of a Quaker Meeting he is able to accept himself as he is. He finds release from frustrations and fear and is able to identify himself more fully with others. His total experience of life is enriched as he enters a new dimension of living.

A Quaker meeting does not end when the period of worship closes, for those who have shared in it will continue to live in its strength.

Shelagh Towert

'The Gathered Meeting'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 9 October 1971

Our experience of our Quaker community

At their gathering in ... 1946, London Yearly Meeting granted the application that we should assume the status of a Yearly Meeting.

In taking this step it is encouraging to know that we have the good wishes of the parent body, the warm and loving support of so many English Friends, as well as the large majority of our own members.

We are acutely aware of our insufficiency and pray that we may become more worthy of the duty we are voluntarily assuming – namely ‘to maintain the witness of the Society’ in Southern Africa. It is true that our members are few; that we are a scattered community and that our meetings are all too often sadly weak, whilst the need for such a witness is abundantly evident.

Nevertheless, this General Meeting of Friends has now been in existence for 30 years; it is time that we learnt to stand on our own feet. Even the weakest child must eventually assume the responsibilities which come with adulthood.

The world, of which we are very much a part, has need of courageous men and women who are endeavouring to witness to ‘that which is eternal’ in an age so very different from that of our Quaker forefathers. But to be of any avail we must remember the old counsel: ‘that which Friends speak, they must live in.’

We appeal to every one of our members to ponder the challenge implied by this change of status, so that we may go forward, both individually and collectively remembering that God helps those who are of a stout heart.

First Southern Africa Yearly Meeting (12th General Meeting)

Stellenbosch, South Africa 1948

We have come together to share our experience of how we witness to our Quaker faith today, that God’s Spirit dwells in every man.

Christine Agar

Clerk’s Report, Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Johannesburg, South Africa 1959

Since it is sometimes claimed that 'you can prove anything with figures' it may be best to leave to each member to draw his own conclusions from the ... Tabular Statement which covers the two years 1957 and 1958. Yet a loss of three on the total membership even though accompanied by a gain of five adults hardly suggests that Quakerism is sweeping Southern Africa.

Seventh Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Johannesburg, South Africa 1959

In recent months we have been aware of an urgent seeking going on in the townships, for a religious anchor of worth and integrity ... they are asking, now, what type of religion we have: whether we are the same or different from others: what we believe about this or that: where, how and when we worship. It seems that much ought to happen, but what does happen depends largely on our state of readiness and the quality of our response.

Olive Gibson

Social Worker to Quaker Service in the Transvaal

Report to Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1962 – 1963

I appreciate the Quaker process, which at times may seem slow and cumbersome but [which] comes to good decisions by drawing on the wisdom of all at the meeting.

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, South Africa

Speaking Truth to Power – Peace is a Struggle

Richard Gush Lecture 2006

The greatest thing we as Friends have to offer our fellow men is our revelation of a living Christ. We express this in many ways in our lives, but perhaps the most vital way of all has been and is, in our relationships with our fellow men. We have found release through some. We have found that personal service has cut through difficulties, hatred and fear, and brought solutions to apparently intractable problems and has brought love and peace. But it is not sufficient that we ourselves have found the Way, and it

is NOT sufficient to do the 'good works' and hope our achievements will inspire others likewise. Our inspiration is from Christ ... If He is not with us, then the actions we do are without life and bring neither the peace nor the love in the doing.

... from my own experience how in doubt or failure there is so often a sense of 'going it alone' and a determination to do better, to lift oneself out of a sense of guilt. But the need is so often not one of trying, but one of trusting Him – the opening and letting in of Divine love, the trust that leads to revealing truth and can accept God's forgiveness just because we cannot forgive or trust ourselves.

Let our lives speak, but do they speak above a whisper?

Robert T Pearl

Care of the Meeting

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1962 – 1963

One of the telling characteristics of Quakers is not only our belief in faith in action but also our belief in the importance of fellowship of the Society, our need to come together and get acquainted, to discover each other, to travel together, to love and support each other, to teach and learn together, to lead and follow together, to wish and pray for goodness in and for each other, to cry and laugh together, to heal and comfort each other, to embrace and feed each other, to love and forgive each other, to respect each other and to approach the world as one body of Christ.

Kholekile Tshanga

Cape Eastern Monthly Meeting, South Africa

Southern Africa Quaker News, September 1999

One of my favourite Advices is 'Seek to know one another in the things that are eternal.' I try to do this chiefly by listening to what people say (although this has become harder because of increasing deafness), trying not to judge their appearance, their words and their actions. Trying, in so doing, to give them space to be themselves. (In a school situation this can be in quite sharp conflict with the tensions of confrontation in matters of discipline!) This space is where we meet each other and where we share at

a deeper level than the social pleasantries. Listening like this means being ready to be surprised at the new things that people reveal, either because they have grown into them or because they now feel able to express them. It is wonderful that we can change. It is this that makes us wonderfully various. Interestingly different from each other.

Richard Knottenbelt, Zimbabwe

Recognition, Identity and Belonging

Richard Gush Lecture 2000

So what makes us Quakers, members of the Religious Society of Friends, is that we recognise each other as seekers, as pilgrims, trying to live right, here and now; opening ourselves to the Spirit which lives in us if only we will open ourselves. We do not fill our lives with words or deeds but try to do and be together what our movement is called –The Religious Society of Friends. This is our belonging. Holding us together and giving us insight and strength is the power of Love.

Richard Knottenbelt, Zimbabwe

Recognition, Identity and Belonging

Richard Gush Lecture 2000

We shall not suddenly bloom into perfection, but if we can at least face up to our imperfections and genuinely try to improve our ways, this Yearly Meeting will not have been in vain. And let us not forget charity towards those who may have to face great difficulties in achieving what we may consider to be relatively simple.

Hubert Malherbe

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1962 – 1963

There was a time when I cut myself off from others in Meeting, but I found that it doesn't work! Worship is always in the presence of others. Those of us who are isolated can and do remember Friends around the world gathered for this. It brings to my mind the witness and work of Richard Gush who for so much of his life was physically separated from other Friends. What is

special about Quaker worship is that the others are there, they matter. We do not speak to them, they do not speak to us. We are all channels of that Life which is the fulfilment of creation.

Richard Knottenbelt, Zimbabwe

Recognition, Identity and Belonging

Richard Gush Lecture 2000

We started our Johannesburg Monthly Meeting Morning Group some time in the 1980's when five of us started the 'Gifts and Discoveries' Course sent out from Woodbrooke. We did all three sections of the course and when completed decided that we would miss our meeting as we had become so close to each other. Since then four of the original members have died. Their spirits are still with us! Fortunately others have joined us and, though we used to meet in each other's homes, we now meet at Phyllis and Robert Young's home, usually once a month.

This is an informal group of Friends who welcome visitors. We enjoy tea while all gather and then have an hour of discussion. Usually each one takes a turn in leading the subject. We find that by sharing our feelings, insights and experiences in a 'safe' group we are able to be free to express ourselves in a very open way. We confide thoughts and weaknesses that we may not feel confident to share with others, but in the gentle embrace of this community.

Here, we are offered love, fellowship, strength and support. We learn to be sensitive and to be open to learning God's will and purpose. We are grateful to share not only the challenges of day-to-day life, but also the joys of inner peace, simplicity and the beauty around us.

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, Thursday Morning Group 2007

Sena ke sediba se maphodi se monate. Mona moya wa ka o wa phuthuloha mme ke kgona ho bua ka bolokolohi se seng le seng se amang botebo ba maikutlo a ka. Ekaba ka bophelo ba ka - ngwahola, kajeno kapa isao.

E, ke moo ke kopaneng le metswalle eo Modimo o ntliseditseng yona. E meng metswalle e se e hlokahetse; empa dikeletso le melemo ya tsona e tla ba karolo ya bophelo ba ka ka ho sa feleng.

Ke moo ke fumanang teng matla a ho tobana le tsa lefatshe – mosebetsing wa ka wa borupelli, bodumedi kapa wa bohwebi. Ke fumane bofihla; thabo ya kamehla; kgotso e sa feleng. Leha ke le menyakeng le batho ba mefutafuta – ba baholo le ba banyane; esitana leha ke le diphuthehong, moo ho nang le batho ba tswang kgutlong tse nne tsa lefatshe.

E, sebaka sena ke mohlodi wa bophelo ba ka.

Mmereko Ntilane-Mnisi

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, Thursday Morning Group 2007

We continue to cherish our Quaker process in Meeting for Worship with a concern for business, as we seek to come to decisions in the light. This year, however, we were forced to face our human limitations as we stumbled into a painful conflict. Almost as though by divine plan, this was followed by a workshop on conflict resolution led by the Cape Town Quaker Peace Centre. The facilitators gently and sensitively led us through healing processes which let us examine our own conflict, our emotional responses and tools for handling and resolving conflict.

Epistle of the Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

South Africa 1996

A member – one very close to me – once wrote that he had never heard in all the testimonies of our local Friends, a single thing he counted as offensive; not a word of contradiction of what had gone before.

And this, he said, so recommends our ministry, that even if a second subject fails to catch the sense, in worship of the first, the twin themes we hear are balanced in our minds.

Stephen Whiteley

The Value of Ministry

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 1997

Yearly Meeting is always faced with a heavy agenda of business to be got through—this time in five days and eight sessions. The Co-Clerks, Angus and Scotty Morton, had put months of careful planning into the smooth running of this and clerked the sessions with considerable skill to get through the agenda in good time. At one point Angus referred to the ‘rigours’ of Meeting for Business, but there are those among us who actually enjoy it, and treasure the process and the conviction that it is a continuation of Meeting for Worship. Visitors from other Yearly Meetings remarked favourably upon the number of Friends who attended and on the careful attention which was given by all participants to getting each minute correct. They also mentioned the humour which has been such a feature of these sessions, lightening the atmosphere briefly and enabling us to settle again with due seriousness. The visitors have not mentioned how they view our habit of standing up, rolling our ears, doing a cross-crawl, slapping our chests and thighs, bellowing and jumping in the air every hour (the ‘Quaker toyi-toyi’). This has brought us back to sitting and concentrating refreshed in mind and body...

Meetings for Worship have been the cement holding all other aspects of Yearly Meeting together...

The fellowship of Yearly Meeting has once more been a source of joy to both old hands and first-time attenders. Our Meetings are small and widely scattered and we badly need to meet with one another to be nurtured and renewed. At this time we may hold the world record for hugs per day.

Epistle of the Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Richmond, South Africa 1999

In most of our Meetings in C&SAYM we sing as part of our worship and many of us use the ‘Songs of the Spirit’ and Taize song sheets and ones we know by heart. We sing when we are happy or sad, angry or at peace. We also sing in our own languages. This is a way of speaking to God, giving expression to the Spirit among us. We have drum circles and marimbas and other instruments (piano, violin, horn, recorders, guitar, accordion etc.). Making music is satisfying and it helps to bring us to our best selves; it takes away all need for conflict or revenge; it allows us to communicate through our different cultures. It stirs the imagination, gives energy, and comforts

the suffering. We treasure it more and more. We are planning to put together a booklet of our favourite songs including many in different African languages, which will be published separately.

*Caroline Mahapi, Lesotho Allowed Meeting and Gudrun Weeks,
Botswana Monthly Meeting*

Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Hartbeespoort, South Africa 2009

Overcoming ignorance is also being informed.

I think this is where we are fortunate in being in a community where we, as individuals, can feel safe to express our thoughts and feelings. Quakers generally are caring and compassionate. They do not expect everyone to be or think the same, we enjoy our differences.

When a new thought or idea is talked of we are challenged to consider it and often our immediate response changes completely. We also, through our silence, are taught to give ourselves time to consider before rushing in to make judgements.

In the wider community I have found sharing a quiet word or by one's own behaviour, one is able to change a situation and hopefully overcome ignorance in a peaceful and acceptable way.

Elizabeth Roper

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

Lonely witness can be a powerful witness – remember Richard Gush – but no Friend in our Yearly Meeting need feel lonely for we are here to lend strength to one another.

Carole and Jack Urner

Lesotho Allowed Meeting

Southern Africa Quaker News, March 1999

The complexity of modern life should not lead us into inactive frustration.

Hubert Malherbe

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1962 – 63

Letting our lives speak

The particular Friends I have in mind were Bill and Muriel Frank, a couple who were known and loved by several South African Friends from their years of loving service as wardens in the early 1970s at Quaker House, Johannesburg. Bill and Muriel were in their mid 80s and died in the last few months within a few days of each other. Their deaths have left a huge gap for their many Friends and friends, who, however, can celebrate the gift of their lives which were filled with concern for others, humour and vitality...

I think the most important thing they taught me was how to put the Quaker testimonies into practice in one's daily life with a natural simplicity and integrity, the joy of a sense of humour and the wonder at nature and the changing seasons.

Helen Vale

Namibia Allowed Meeting 1998

This spiritual venture calls for great vision and for creative road making. We cannot walk by texts alone, we must walk by faith.

Shelagh Towert

'The Light Within'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 25 July 1970

Assaulted as we are on all sides by noise, we need to be quiet, alone or together in order to see the Light, to become illuminated in the depth of our being. Continual noise distracts us, prevents our thinking. We need to retire to the ground of our being.

W Scarnell Lean

'The Light of Truth'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 11 August 1976

Our experience of the divine Light within

Events happen to us, and we have to interpret them. The world doesn't leave us alone, nor do our own emotions. These events awaken us or decide us, expand or shrivel our self-respect. We are forced to design a framework which tells us how we will respond to these encounters: whether we will escape, fight, submit or compromise. Thus, events take on meaning. The meaning becomes powerful when the experience is connected with other vivid experiences, or when we recall the best that some contemporary has made of such an experience, or how someone we have read about made sense out of life.

The Quakers believe that God, or spirituality, is in every human being. The divinity is called 'the Light'. The Light is in everyone, although it burns more brightly in some than in others. It must be looked after and nourished. This strengthening of the Light in oneself, and the recognition of this Light in others, is spiritual experience. If we are faithful to our measure of Light, we shall be guided up toward God.

Mary A Holmes

'The Spirit and The Devil'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 16 March 1974

It's always God that opens the door.

Phyllis Lean

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1953

We must have quiet times, times of waiting upon the Lord, when we renew our strength and learn to 'mount up on wings as eagles', and then come back to 'run and not be weary', and to 'walk and not faint'.

Dorothy Garley

Quakerism: A Cult or a Gospel?

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1950

Will Fox asked us not to get too serious about our responsibilities. We needed gaiety and joy of service under love's compulsion. We must not always be pulling up the plants to see how the roots were getting on.

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1953

Quakerism is the simplest and grandest of faiths.

We have to live in the material and master it, by the guidance of Christ, to make it something clear and fine.

We should examine all ideas through to the limits, finding the answers for ourselves, so that we know what we believe and why.

W Scarnell Lean

The State of the Society – Domestic Aspects

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1953

If we are poorly reached by our own faith we shall fail to reach those around us who need our help. George Fox's mission, John Martley said, had been to bring people to Jesus and leave them there. We must have been there first ourselves.

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1953

In the lives of faithful men and women we see the wondrous power of the indwelling Spirit – that Inner Light ... In the fact of this indwelling of the Divine we find all the driving force we need. In this we find the spirit of wisdom, love and power. By it we know that ... all evils are utterly opposed to the mind which is in Jesus Christ. Through it we learn to love our fellow man and to become anxious for his best welfare, whatever his race or colour.

Epistle of the General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Cradock, South Africa 1923

We looked for blessings, and it was poured upon us. We looked for guidance and were given strength. We came for Spiritual refreshment, and in finding

it, we found responsibility and tenderness for one another and for all men.

In love there is unity and it is this which became a reality to us.

The gift of Christ is this: we are his when we love one another. If we are not one in Christ then we cannot hope to speak to the disunity of mankind. Dear Friends, we need to turn to one another a listening ear, a seeing eye, and an understanding heart. Our Young Friends have shown us that it is not always distance which makes communication difficult, but a closing of ourselves which makes it hard for others to come near to us.

Let us reach out to one another so that we can render to others what God has given to us so abundantly, for God himself dwells in us if we love one another and his love is brought to perfection within us.

Epistle of the Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1962 – 1963

As a final message we would leave with Friends the thought that the faith we have inherited emphasises the necessity for the inward stillness in order that the voice of God may be heard, and has proved the value of personal good will to those around us, as well as a basis for our daily lives and our service for Mankind. Peace must be our prompter, our stimulus, our companion by the way, and our end.

*Epistle of the General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Cape Town, South Africa 1921*

Ours is a task that demands of us all that we have to offer in courage, adventurousness of spirit, knowledge, moral certainty and personal worth. Our Quaker witness against war is no negative refusal, no anti-social protest. It is rooted in our knowledge that war but adds to the rising tide of evil and hastens on the dark. Our task is no less than the discovery of war's counterpart.

We must find the way to give to democracy and Christianity the validity they lack, to relate them to the basic needs of mankind: freedom, security, peace and deep spiritual roots. We must enshrine these needs in a vision of the Kingdom that will set men's minds aglow and their hearts afire. Then the false Gods that a desperate world now worships will be deserted and fall neglected in the dust. ...

In our hearts, in our worship, in our fellowship we cherish the light that is the light of the world. If we are worthy of the Kingdom of God we shall find in the simple living quiet of our meeting for Worship the same reality that came to George Fox by his seeking: the clear personal realisation of God. Then his Kingdom is in us and about us. We enter into it as an immediate spiritual reality and there breaks through the darkness the dawning of a new day.

Maurice Webb,

Quakerism and the Kingdom of God

General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends 1940

Our faith is two-fold. It is characteristic of Friends that we look up to God and at the same time try to express our vision in terms of service. Faith and works can only grow together.

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Johannesburg, South Africa 1949

We must pray for the perpetrators of evil deeds as well as for the victims. Sometimes when we are deeply affected by something, we may need to forgive the perpetrator even when he/she did not physically harm us. Like the unseen flu virus, the evil they did enters into our minds and generates disease which can be spiritually fatal. Then we pray again, 'Deliver us from evil.'

The result is amazing! We are freed from fear. Joy returns, Christ's life is restored within us and we become ourselves again.

... I have a picture in my mind of what Christ is doing through those who are obedient to him. They become a source of radiance and love. When the world disintegrates around them, they stand as beacons. Evil may crash against them, but they stand fast, rooted on the Eternal Rock.

Their own faith and integrity mediates and heals relationships. It reaches out to those overwhelmed by their situation and brings new hope. We can't do this in our own strength, but only with the light of Christ within.

Rosemary Elliot

Cape Eastern Regional Meeting, South Africa 1997

The silence in which we meet and the ministry which comes out of it are not separate from the 'rest of life'. There is a continuum which embraces the whole of life. So the pain, the meaninglessness, the depression, the anger and bitterness are there too. And because they are there we try to find ways of dealing with them in practical terms.

Richard Knottenbelt, Zimbabwe

Recognition, Identity and Belonging

Richard Gush Lecture 2000

In Quakerism we have an abundance of positive and powerful images such as Seed, Light, That of God, etc. These come from deep experience in the past and we share them and add to them from our own experience.

Richard Knottenbelt, Zimbabwe

Recognition, Identity and Belonging

Richard Gush Lecture 2000

I feel my faith, my feeling that God 'carries us in the hollow of his hand' through all manner of adversity and affliction, has been enhanced and bolstered, that I can testify to a safe passage through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. And I can attest to the love of friends, Friends, relations, and even strangers, when one most needs love. But I also feel that we must not demand miracles of God, that we must be willing to accept his solutions to our problems and to use all his gifts that may be appropriate.

Petronella Clark

Cape Western Monthly Meeting, South Africa 1997

Quakerism began three hundred years ago by people seeking; people desperately wanting to LEARN the way of sincerity, of reality, of truth. We are still learners, or disciples. I find that Quakers and Quakerism are friendly to learners, and in this too I find myself at home in the Society.

Roger Carter

Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa 1948

Quaker worship is spiritual not sacramental. It is mystical worship – direct connection with the Source. We do not deny the material world, but we look to the spiritual dimension and constant heart to heart contact with the Source, in order to bear Fruit.

Jennifer Kinghorn, South Africa

Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure

Richard Gush Lecture 2005

Jesus came to proclaim, not a way of escape from the world, but the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven within it. Quakers are concerned with an earthly world that needs redemptions, not with a heavenly world beyond, which is eternally perfect.

If we endeavour to carry inspiration of God's love in the consciousness and in all the activities of life, we raise the tasks of daily work, and our relationships therein, to a spiritual level and turn them into avenues of ministry and service.

Shelagh Towert

'Peace on Earth'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 18 December 1971

The Spirit, what is it? Where is it? How do I know I've got it? When I feel filled with love for life and humanity and music and all creation, is that the Spirit? When wonderful coincidences happen that defy logic, is that the Spirit moving? When I see a beautiful vast landscape that no human could ever imagine, I know that is the miracle of love. Is love the same thing as the Spirit? I'm asking all these questions as if you have an answer. You don't, I know. Maybe I can overcome this confusion of words, of language. It's so fruitless to get caught up with these words. I feel this huge, immense and beautiful thing, and I call it the Spirit, or Love, or God or whatever. It doesn't matter. It's here and that is all that matters.

Sarah Argawal

Quaker Peace and Social Witness Volunteer, South Africa 2007

We are not creatures learning to be spiritual; we are spirits learning to live.

Jennifer Kinghorn, South Africa

Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure

Richard Gush Lecture 2005

My family were staunch Christians. The Church of Christ set up a mission near our home in about 1959 and that provided my early Christian education. I remember being terrified of hell, as the evangelists drummed into our young minds the image of a place where there was crying and gnashing of teeth. It was as an adult that I discovered an understanding of religion among Quakers, that I was comfortable with, where we were all children of a loving God.

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, South Africa

Speaking Truth to Power – Peace is a Struggle

Richard Gush Lecture 2006

We do not tie ourselves to work in a particular direction in any Meeting. We come with hearts and minds prepared. We are alert, ready, we hope, to be comforted in our pain, made clearer in what is right for us, challenged to do some new thing whether it is to right a wrong, share another's pain, change a job. We are also ready to accept the simple presence of the Spirit without being able to say what has happened, what has changed. This seems to me to be what we call spiritual growth. My image of this is yesterday's fresh green leaf which today is a slightly darker colour because it is now more able to unite the carbon dioxide and water in the sunlight, to make the sugar on which other life depends, and the oxygen which will enable the sugar to be used. So we are made more serviceable as we allow that life of the Spirit to work through us.

Richard Knottenbelt, Zimbabwe

Recognition, Identity and Belonging

Richard Gush Lecture 2000

The concept of God is so mysterious that we have, over the ages, used metaphors and images to make the spirit appear more accessible, so God is often referred to in human terms. But is God not more powerful and more mysterious than any anthropomorphised mental image we can conjure up? And does personifying God in this way not alienate some people who might, otherwise, find a spiritual home in Quakers? In the same way that most humans no longer believe the sun is a fiery chariot drawn across the sky, perhaps it is time we moved on from thinking of God as a person. Jesus is quoted as saying, 'God is spirit, and those who worship God, must worship in spirit and in truth' (John 4.24).

Jennifer Stern

Cape Western Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2008

I want to start this whole talk with Jesus. ... Jesus, Himself, had to grapple with the nature of this Kingdom that He was to establish. ... What was the nature of the Kingdom of God? One of the things that Jesus was looking for was the fruits of a righteous life. It wasn't just enough to go and make sacrifices in the temple to get forgiven of all sins. His key teachings we see in the Sermon on the Mount. The first is 'Happy are you poor, the Kingdom of God is yours.' If you look at the rest of those, except for the 'persecuted for righteousness,' everybody else will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, but for the poor, the Kingdom of God is yours. So the material world wasn't a key ingredient to the Kingdom of God. And if we put that alongside what Jesus said to His disciples, 'I assure you it will be very hard for rich people to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' And they said, 'Well then who can be saved, because if they can't who can?' There was a time when I sensed that I had stacked my possessions in the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven and they were more important to me than people. So I came to see that people are more important to God than status, who we are, what we earn, or anything else except our relationship with Him.

Rosemary Elliot, South Africa

The Inner Light

Richard Gush Lecture 1998

I was brought up as a Quaker which meant no dogma or theology. I inherited a simple belief: that God loves every one of us deeply, and guides and helps us all, personally, so we must be kind to one another and look after everything in creation.

Jennifer Kinghorn, South Africa

Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure

Richard Gush Lecture 2005

It seems to me that we must recognise the Inner Light, the Holy Spirit at work in the most unlikely places. That was one of the things that struck me about Quakers. They have their deep beliefs but they do not send their opponents to a perpetual Coventry. They will seek interviews and put their case, face to face. They believe in reason and love.

Guy Butler, South Africa

Richard Gush Lecture 1994

I just want to remind you that God had a website a long time before – and God's e-mail works in remarkable ways. I'd just like to share one instance that happened many years ago. A friend of mine phoned me one morning and said, 'In my quiet time this morning I felt God was telling me to give you a cheque. It surprised me because I know you told me Valley Welfare didn't need money.' So I said, 'Oh well actually that's wonderful, because I know a couple of women who didn't get their pensions yesterday.' So she came down and she brought me the cheque and I ran to the bank and changed it and then I went out to look for one of the women and I met her on the road and I said to her, 'Julia, God has sent this money,' and she said, 'Oh praise the Lord! Last night I was so worried. I didn't get my pension and I owe the builder for building my house and this is exactly what I had to pay him.'

Rosemary Elliot, South Africa

The Inner Light

Richard Gush Lecture 1998

Sitting in a circle with five other women with totally alien traditions to mine, I first felt movings of the Spirit. It was a prayer group – imagine ME in a prayer group! I am an atheistic, pan-theistic, Quaker mixture, or what am I? One thing is certain, when this particular woman prays for me, I feel enfolded in the Spirit. She can pray deeply and warmly, unlike anything I have felt before. I begin to do some praying aloud myself... hesitantly... there is no pressure. We take turns and just go round until we feel we are finished and then do some sharing. My feelings of loneliness and despair, guilt about abandoning my family although I haven't really done so, all gone, forgiven. Who is this Jesus I never learnt about? Why did I grow up without learning about his generosity and love?

Gudrun Weeks

Botswana Monthly Meeting 2007

Just before the farm dam, I pause, totally by myself. I look up the valley. The sky is an incredible blue, touched by the rock faces of the mountains. I rest on my stick, and I am filled with peace. God is near.

Neil Brathwaite

Cape Western Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

So here is the heart of the Quaker message. God has become available to each of us personally through an experiential relationship with the Inward Christ as our Teacher, Prophet, Priest and King. Our Faith must be based on this relationship and all our actions and endeavours should be directed by this Inward Teacher laying the seeds of Truth in the sanctuary of our soul. Faith becomes personal and in doing so becomes real.

Simon Lamb, Ireland

A Faith Worth Living

Richard Gush Lecture 2002

And what about God? Who wants a God hanging over us who quietly and inwardly pricks our conscience, who makes us feel guilty at our desire for

freedom, who cramps our style? So gradually in an almost unnoticed way many of us find that God slips from our agenda. Other things keep us busy, our lives full of activity and purpose. Some get to the point where it seems as if God has never been there at all. Occasionally we join in a discussion with our student friends on the existence of God but that is an intellectual debate with little reference to personal experience ... Often we simply seem to be working to pay the bills. We never appear to have the time to do all the things we are supposed to. We can feel trapped in a continuous circle of commitments. And in this busyness God is forgotten. Other things just seem more important ... For many adults faith in the Divine is a matter of intellectual interest rather than an issue of vital importance to our personal and spiritual well being.

Is your relationship with God real and personal? Do you know the living God (as early Friends would put it) in an experiential way? Is that relationship the driving force behind your social concerns and witness? Do you have a dynamic and exciting faith in the Almighty, which transforms your every action and makes you long to constantly be walking in God's presence? Put simply, do you have a faith worth living?

Simon Lamb, Ireland

A Faith Worth Living

Richard Gush Lecture 2002

NOW

Yesterday has gone; but what has it left behind?

Tomorrow we are not sure about.

We may not see its dawn;

All that we can be certain of is the minute we call 'now'.

The worth of all our yesterdays

Depends upon today.

How can we make use of it,

The miracle of 'now'?

Sue Farren

From her testimony in memoriam

South Africa 1998

If our lives are to be vessels of substance rather than conveyor belts of highs and lows, treasured moments and throwaway experiences then it is up to each of us to seek to know in our own lives the transforming power of God's divine intervention. This intervention does not come because we follow unthinkingly some set of rules and regulations, nor will we find it available by leaving ourselves open to be bombarded by every half-baked spiritual idea since the dawn of creation.

Simon Lamb, Ireland

A Faith Worth Living

Richard Gush Lecture 2002

It isn't necessary
To seek the Holy Grail in Port Elizabeth,
Or anywhere, once we find – no matter what we do –
Eden in the temple of our mind.

Stephen Whiteley

From a poem 'In memory of Leo Goodfellow', Friend from Zambia

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 1997

I have discovered, as many Quakers and other Christians have before me, that there is one thing that makes faith real. It is something that few, if any, of the other world religions have at their heart. It is the remedy to a dependence on the rulebook. It is also a blunt rejection of the idea that variety is the answer to our spiritual needs. It is something that early Friends put as the source and inspiration of their fledgling community. They saw it as the Truth. It is available to each of us. It is our living experiential relationship with the Light of Christ within.

Early Friends strongly believed and testified to the world that this Light of Christ within was available to every human being that walked this planet whether they had heard of the historical Jesus or not.

Simon Lamb, Ireland

A Faith Worth Living

Richard Gush Lecture 2002

What Fox discovered was that while we can chase after Spiritual enlightenment in many forms and follow the teachings of great preachers, saints or gurus, in the end it is simply a matter of God and us. Fox realised that his relationship with the Christ within was the doorway to Truth.

Simon Lamb, Ireland

A Faith Worth Living

Richard Gush Lecture 2002

Going to Yearly Meeting in Hlekweni, Zimbabwe, I drove from Windhoek, Namibia to Gaborone, Botswana – a long way on the Trans-Kalahari Highway. It was dark and isolated. Suddenly a huge kudu, with its brown and white stripes, filled my windscreen. I braked hard and was waiting to hear the thud of my car against the animal. But no thud came. It sounds a cliché, but it seems as if a higher power had protected me from a horrific accident.

Helen Vale

Namibia Allowed Meeting 2007

We come to accept, sometimes grudgingly, that despite what we would like to believe, we are not really in control of our lives. In truth, we come to the point where we realise we need God. Whether this realisation comes slowly, gently and with great thought or like a mad rushing wind, which hits us in an instant, is irrelevant. Both methods are valid. Whether we call this salvation or conversion or conviction or something else doesn't really matter. What matters is that God becomes central to our existence and nothing is ever quite the same again.

Simon Lamb, Ireland

A Faith Worth Living

Richard Gush Lecture 2002

The Spirit is in everything – in me, in every action I take, in how I respond to people. Every interaction matters. The Spirit is in the sun, the rain, the

clouds that constantly change, the twinkling light of stars and planets, in our laughter, smiles and quietness. It is in my work, how I journey through life and in the troubled people and situations I encounter. In times of pain, sadness, loss of love, emotional drought and muddle of insecurities and once again not knowing where my life is going, I know that the Spirit will guide me, as in the past... because I am blessed.

Margaret Roper

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

Our inheritance as Friends is to wait on God, tune in to the Light within, to our Inner Guide and seek God's will for us.

Rosemary Eliot, South Africa

The Inner Light

Richard Gush Lecture 1998

Love

While we realise, with humility, how little we understand of space and matter, of time and eternity, of life and death, of suffering and sin, of love and redemption, yet we know also that life is not all seeking or only doubt. We have found, by experience, that Christ's teaching is relevant to the problems of our modern industrial society, that it does provide guidance for daily action. Humble seekers after truth and goodness have found God in unexpected ways and places, and those who have found can never again be satisfied with a life that ignores God.

Shelagh Towert

'Science – and Our belief in God'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 3 October 1970

God meant relating to people as people, and not as objects. God meant that we should love our neighbour, love all men, not because it is a commandment of God, but because through this love we would meet God. Through this humanity we would find God.

Christian existence is not the withdrawn one of sitting on a mountain top looking down on struggling humanity and feeling 'righteous'. Nor is it just attending dignified religious services and feeling 'uplifted'. It is being involved in what is happening, and it is caring about each other and humankind.

In our encounters with other human beings, we come into the arena of forked road choices, from which other choices follow. The question presses on us: What do I believe? Where do I stand on this issue? Will I stand up and be counted? This is the quest, the 'holy insecurity'.

Mary A Holmes

'Holy Insecurity'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 12 October 1974

The problem of fear cannot be solved by any scientific technology nor by any political organisation. For it is a problem in personal relations,

and such problems are religious problems, and can only be solved by religious means.

More than ever, in today's world of turmoil and tribulation, we need courage and trust – a living manifestation of our faith in the power of love which Jesus showed in his life and teaching.

Shelagh Towert

'To Save From Fear'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 8 July 1972

The startling truth is that GOD CARES.

W Scarnell Lean

'Doing Unto Others'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 10 February 1973

Jesus lived during an evil time, but he did not try to escape from the human situations around him. He embraced the human situations around him. As God shone through in the faith-works of Jesus so God is trying to manifest in the lives of each of us.

Mary A Holmes

'He Who Weeps for the Jews'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 3 August 1974

Love must be the certain rock on which our faith in God is built. If we spend our lives striving to find Truth without understanding that love must be at the centre of such striving, then we have truly missed the point, for God is Truth and God is Love.

Simon Lamb, Ireland

A Faith Worth Living

Richard Gush Lecture 2002

Holding in the Light

In my Meeting, Quakers usually say, 'Hold me up in the Light' instead of 'Pray for me.'

I like this. The picture I get if I Pray for someone is that I am adding to a 'Wish List' that I send to God, now and then – for a kindly Parent to do something about. Anyway, I often don't know what to Wish for. I may ask for a dangerous or wrong thing.

There is nothing wrong with asking God to help others, but I know that usually I must do something more active myself.

I have to put a picture in my mind of that person, surrounded by White Light – the healing Power that radiates from the Creator of the Universe. Then I ask that the Creator Spirit cover and fill that person with Healing Love, Wisdom and Strength. I also ask that the person will accept the Light, and allow Love, Wisdom, Healing and Strength to enter every cell of the Body, Mind and Spirit.

I hold the picture and the experience for as long as possible and try and repeat it as often as possible over the time of crisis.

While I hold the picture I, myself, feel the stream of Light passing through my body, towards that person. I suppose this is because we are all connected directly, through God to each other. So I find that I too, am receiving what I have asked for the other person – Healing Love, Wisdom and Strength. This changes me. I see the other literally, in a New Light.

I see the other as a creature belonging to God, with all the potential of a Godly human. My petty thoughts, wishes, resentments melt away. My whole relationship to that person and the surrounding circumstances becomes better: More Godly. Wiser, kinder, more humble, more effective.

After this kind of experience, I know that something in the world, something in the environment has changed. I know that those people around me will receive more from God, through me, however slight. And like ripples when you throw a stone into a pond, some of that pouring out of Light will eventually reach the needy far, far away.

Jennifer Kinghorn

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2009



OUR EXPERIENCE OF FAITH IN AFRICA

I got the impression that almost for the first time we were standing four square on our own feet on our own South African soil, not looking inwards to South Africa as visitors but looking outward on the Society elsewhere and the world at large from South Africa where we now fully belong. And this, I think, is a very good thing. We shall make a greater contribution to Quakerism in the world if we first relate it fully to the life about us.

Maurice Webb

*Comment on the General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa 1940*

We become ourselves as we respond to our surroundings, ideas, culture and people we live with. That involves choosing... I believe that the choices we make in following the leadings of the Spirit, 'the promptings of Love and Truth in our hearts', are the most significant in determining who we are at the moment and who we may become.

Richard Knottenbelt, Zimbabwe

Recognition, Identity and Belonging

Richard Gush Lecture 2000

My social life began in a small Quaker family. I was born in Pretoria, brought up in Johannesburg but had strong rural roots. I was taught to be respectful to all people and all things, and to be especially respectful of the humble and poor, and the small and frail. By example, we learned to value beauty – in nature, the sky, the earth, the rocks and beauty of character. My Quaker grandmother and mother practised hospitality, so we met a stream of interesting and varied people, gleaned from Meeting on Sundays, and the neighbourhood, and townships on the outskirts of Johannesburg. We had

few rules – only to be truthful, considerate and kind. We were often told ‘to be wise’ and so grew up valuing Wisdom.

Jennifer Kinghorn, South Africa

Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure

Richard Gush Lecture 2005

Why are we here in Southern Africa?

We are humans – why are we here?

We all started off in a home or nest of sorts and we all have an instinct to explore. Later we develop our instinct to find better nourishment, warmth, interest – to look for opportunities. Sometime we stay. At times there are mass migrations.

So all of us, whatever ethnic group, whatever language are here in southern Africa hoping for opportunity, for fulfilment and also if possible for permanence, and now here is home.

As Quakers, why are we here?

Because here is part of the Cosmos, part of the Universe. The creative Spirit is here and so some of us respond to it in a Quaker way.

We have used the name Quaker to affirm and recognise our fellowship.

Here is fluid opportunity. Not only for food, warmth, friendship but also communion – with each other and with the Inner Spirit of the Universe.

Here we find challenges and opportunities to test ourselves and our ideals. To nourish our Spirit in a real world – in difficulties and in community, just as we would anywhere else.

We are here because of our human history and because we do not need to find our Spirit anywhere else.

Jennifer Kinghorn

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

Our African Quaker history

The first meetings for worship in South Africa were held by Nantucket whalers who used Cape Town as a base for their expeditions to the Southern Oceans in the eighteenth century. In typical Quaker fashion their numbers have grown to well over 100 two centuries later. But, also like Quakers elsewhere, they have had more influence than their numbers would suggest. I want to quote from the editorial of *South African Outlook*, May 1986: '...South African Quakers are engaged in a variety of work which extends to all sectors of the community. Those who know this small group (there are fewer than a hundred Quakers in South Africa) frequently express bafflement at their energy and ability to take on so much work.'

This 'work' entails a wide range of activities concerned with the fundamental goals of justice and peace, including conciliation and peace-making, development, education, training and political activism.

With the Richard Gush lecture we honour a famous Quaker pioneer who during a time of violent conflict between white settlers and Xhosa inhabitants on the Eastern frontier, demonstrated that peaceful relations were possible. The 'hero of Salem' saved a whole community from certain annihilation by a Xhosa impi when he confronted them unarmed, learned that they were hungry, and fed them, thereby averting a bloody battle.

During the Anglo-Boer War, when England invaded and conquered the Boer republics, some British Quakers and the handful of South African Quakers, played an active role first to try to prevent the war, and subsequently to bring about peace. The sympathy of the Quakers was clearly with the Boers or Afrikaners. After the war, they made great contributions towards the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Boers. While the Quakers were active mediators, they were not blind to injustices and did not hesitate to support the underdog or deprived. They acted both as impartial peacemakers and as partisan supporters of the deprived.

During the fifties and sixties, a few Quakers in South Africa again became involved politically. But by this time the situation was reversed and the Afrikaners, the former victims, were now the oppressors of the Black population. Individual Quakers, Monthly, General and Yearly Meetings became involved in various anti-apartheid organisations.

And then the 1990's introduced another phase when apartheid was dismantled, the African National Congress won the first two national democratic elections, and the power relations were reversed again. The Quakers, with other liberal groups, went through a painful process of adjusting to a new situation where they were called on to protest against abuses of power by those they used to protect against abuse.

HW van der Merwe, South Africa

Quakers and My Pursuit of Justice and Peace in South Africa

Richard Gush Lecture 1999

Richard Gush, one of the 1820 Settlers in South Africa, 'became a convinced Friend alone and solitary, worshipping in silence and endeavouring to put his beliefs into practice' (from Hope Hay Hewison's *Hedge of Wild Almonds*). For those of us who have spent much of our lives in African countries far from other Quakers, Richard Gush's witness is an inspiration. He showed us that one can live up to one's Quaker principles while living with and having fellowship with other Christians. For those Friends who live far from a Meeting, he showed that a lone Quaker can still be a practising Quaker. While obviously we need to meet with other Friends as often as possible, some are unable to do so because of distance or infirmity.

Richard Gush is known to members of C&SAYM because of the annual lecture, named after him, which is delivered during Yearly Meeting. Although Meetings were held in Cape Town during Dutch East India Company rule in the early 1700s, and Nantucket sailors attended when in port, Richard Gush is probably the earliest well-known South African Quaker. The Friends Tract Association published 'The African Emigrant,' an account of his life, in 1877.

The background to Gush's conviction and self-declared announcement that he was a Quaker is interesting. When passing through London on his way to South Africa he was given some Quaker tracts which he carried with him on his travels. He made a point of selecting those that covered Quaker practices. After settling, Richard became a travelling trader and Methodist lay preacher. After some traumatic experiences, including the loss of cattle, by flood and theft, he began to rethink his beliefs with the help of the Bible and

the Quaker tracts. According to Guy Butler he saw war as 'utterly at variance with the precepts of Christ' and 'discouraged the wanton destruction of wild animals.' After reading the Quaker tracts on slavery he concluded 'that the tree which bore such good fruit must probably have a good root'. Gush, 'if known at all, is known for a single incident. During the Sixth Frontier War (1834–5) he walked unarmed into no-man's land and persuaded a Xhosa chieftain not to attack the village of Salem'.

A problem for the lone Quaker is how one achieves clarity for a concern, to use the term in *Quaker Faith and Practice* (13.05). Bringing a concern 'before the gathered community of Friends' was not possible for Richard Gush, nor for a significant number of Friends today. He must have been helped by 'remaining in good fellowship with the Methodists' and his last seven years 'were chiefly spent in tending his garden' which 'afforded him much opportunity for contemplation and communion with his God and Saviour.' In effect his garden was his Meeting for Worship.

Ronald Watts

'Richard Gush—An Inspiration to Lone Quakers'

Southern Africa Quaker News, December 2000

Our role in our communities

Being at an African Quaker gathering was also very special for me. There was a vibrancy and urgency of concern for issues that directly impinge upon our lives ... It was simply encouraging to feel part of something bigger. To meet other Quakers living with the shocking reality of Aids or obsessed with the wonders of vetiver grass. It was very helpful to talk to Friends who had also been Quaker Peace and Service workers in the region. There is something very reassuring about feeling you are not the only one to have had certain dilemmas and experiences.

Irene Horne

Madagascar Worship Group 2000

I am more sure now than I have ever been before that we can only serve others if the love and power of God have some free cause in us. We can do little in our own strength however bold we may be ... When the disciples asked Jesus to show them the way He taught them by example that He was the way. If we realise that we can go forward with confidence and with joy...

The value of our Service depends less on the giving of our material substance than in the gift of ourselves. If we are sincere we must face the challenge of more honest loving: we must love beyond the lovable, painful to us though it may be.

Too often, I fear, too much falls upon a few members because some of us fail to realise that we owe anything – least of all time – to the Society. Let us serve Christ in the ordinary ways of life, in the service of others – never minding about apparent results – just striving to give our best in all humility – then He will look after the results.

Dorothy Garley

An address on Personal Service

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1953

Conscientious affirmation claims obedience to a higher law. By affirming what we know in good conscience to be right and just, our actions may highlight an injustice, while at the same time exemplifying a more just and positive way of acting. I firmly believe that conscientious affirmation conveys to the authorities (or the enemies?) a convincing spirit of love and conciliation which they cannot easily ignore.

HW van der Merwe, South Africa

Quakers and My Pursuit of Justice and Peace in South Africa

Richard Gush Lecture 1999

In researching this talk I looked up other Quakers who had entered politics. Bayard Rustin, a Quaker civil rights non-violent activist who worked with Martin Luther King, commented in explaining his shift from activism to politics, 'An activist never compromises but politics is all about compromise.' This, of course, is putting it starkly. Looking at the compromise in diplomatic work, Sidney Bailey answers the question of how we can distinguish between a concession of marginal importance, a sacrifice of vital national interest, and a violation of personal conscience. He says, 'Friends often ask for an enhancement of the moral element in international decision making, and they are quite right to do so. At the same time we should recognise that for the harassed foreign minister or ambassador, the distinction between the pragmatic and the ethical is often blurred. The most effective Quakers in international affairs are not those who think of ministers and diplomats as knaves or fools, but those who enter with sympathy into the painful dilemmas and difficult choices which national decision-makers confront. Sometimes this becomes almost a pastoral one.' And elsewhere he says, '...Our commitment to peace and justice should be infectious, so that we inspire others to share in the process.'

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, South Africa

Speaking Truth to Power – Peace is a Struggle

Richard Gush Lecture 2006

God has not called us to be right. God has called us to be neighbours... True discipleship is not a matter of having the right theology. The evangelism is not getting others to believe as we do. Rather, true discipleship and evangelism consist in welcoming our neighbours into the beloved community.

Ryan Baum

A Call to be Born Again

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

We view with very grave concern the persecution, directed mainly against the Jewish people, now taking place in Germany. We cannot regard ourselves as apart from this deplorable outburst of cruelty for we see in it a continuance of that violence and denial of human rights which are inseparable from war. ... [W]e must protest against the deliberate persecution of the Jewish people and a number of Christians of partial and sometimes forgotten Jewish origin, and pray that in those immediately responsible and in ourselves, the war spirit and its resultant evils may be overcome.

Natal Monthly Meeting

A Statement on Jewish Refugees 1938

Perfection is not being faultless, it's fitting in to the world. But that does not mean allowing the world to mould you – it means finding a harmony, so that you can live in the world as an integral part of it but also still be your own person, retaining your individuality and integrity. It means making the world a slightly better place because you are in it, and making yourself a better – or happier – person by your interaction with the world.

Jennifer Stern

Cape Western Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2008

Individually ...

To be a Quaker conscience

To live a faithful life

To interact with all showing respect, dignity, integrity

To touch each life in a spiritual way
To live my faith in all I do.

In our Quaker Meeting ...

To be an active member of our meeting through worship, prayer, spiritual guidance

Through a phone call, letter, email, thoughtful word

To participate in meeting business, premises, finance, clerking, elders and oversight

To share one's thoughts, truth, food and love

To take care of each other in a multitude of ways.

As a Quaker in a community ...

To live our concerns for the environment, social justice, peace and take steps to put this into practice

To be part of Quaker service through bringing up children, taking care of friends and relatives, being part of Quaker concerns, teaching, working ...

To make decisions based on truth and principles

To break down social barriers, economic divides

To speak truth to power

To connect with others by recognising each person as a human being

To live adventurously in one's own way

To find that of God in everything

To live simply so others may simply live

To live a community life, one which strives to build heaven on earth

Ultimately, let there be no greater purpose in our community interactions than a deepening of the Spirit.

Margaret Roper

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

The purpose of our human existence is to flower abundantly, with increasingly better blooms. The gardener prunes, waters, digs around the roots in order to grow the perfect rose-tree, bearing only flowers and with

its thorny root-stock reduced to its functional minimum. We differ from the rose in that the Divine Gardener works within us, through the Spirit as well as outside us, to achieve God's end.

What's more we have a choice in the matter, with the potential of both the truly human and its negation in us: we have a say in which of the two prevails. Our spirit can yield to the divine loving will, or we can resist its striving within us, and let ourselves be overwhelmed by the wild forces of our root-stock.

The dice are loaded in favour of the Spirit though. We are not being asked to follow blindly and in ignorance of what the end of the whole process is: we know its meaning and purpose as well as the results. We know what God means to achieve, and that it can be done, because it was accomplished in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the living expression of what God wants to achieve with us, the instance of perfection for us to set our sights by. In Him we can see the way, the truth and the life of totally yielding our spirit to God's will, and not giving in an inch to the temptations of our non-spiritual root-stock.

Ellen Pye

'Human Nature'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 18 March 1978

Apartheid in South Africa and its influence on the region as a whole

All races in a multi-racial state have contributions to make to the common good.

Dudley Robinson

The Hopes of Friends in the Federation

Talk at the Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1956

In general, intensification of the problems of race relations in the life of all people is echoed in the lives of our small group of Friends spread thinly over the Federation and the Republic, and affects our thoughts, our hopes, our fears and our resultant doings. Whether we wish to be or not, we are a part of the political scene. What part we should play in it as Christians and Quakers is one of the questions we are here to consider in the light of God's guidance.

Audrey Hoole

Clerk's address to Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 1959 – 1962

What were Quakers doing [about Apartheid]? What we always seem to do. Some were involved in spectacular action. Most of us seemed to work all day, every day, to change our patterns of behaviour so that everything we did would undermine the Apartheid system. Quietly and with dedication SA friends all over the country and in many organisations helped in hundreds of chiefly mundane ways to heal and maintain society, by supporting truth and good ordering.

Jennifer Kinghorn, South Africa

Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure

Richard Gush Lecture 2005

The great need in South Africa today is for men and women who would consecrate the whole energy of brain and heart to the solving of the race problems on the Christian basis of human solidarity.

General Meeting of the Society of Friends in South Africa

Cape Town, South Africa 1921

[W]e cannot admit that difference of race can set limits upon our friendships.

General Meeting of the Society of Friends in South Africa

Memorandum on Inter-Racial Problems in South Africa

Cape Town, South Africa 1931

At the Yearly Meeting of our Religious Society, which was held this year in Cape Town in January, we gave much consideration to the problem of race relationships in this country and to the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign. While we were in clear agreement that, as a religious society, we could not support the Defiance Campaign, we were united in a keen desire to express our deep sympathy with the non-European people in the frustration of their legitimate aspirations by unjust racial discrimination by the white population, which is in a minority in this country.

Through a very small body in South Africa, we belong to a worldwide Christian Society which welcomes people of all races in full and equal membership, and has always tried to stand firm in its testimony against violence, oppression and racial discrimination.

The building of a Christian social order in this country demands that we pray and work more vigorously for the overcoming of mutual fears, misunderstandings and prejudices, as well as the progressive removal of discrimination and development of fuller participation by the non-Europeans in the life of the Community.

We wish to share in the protest made by other Christian and liberal groups against the Public Safety Act and the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and strongly urge instead the opening up of channels of consultation and understanding to remove the causes of tension. In the absence of any

effective constitutional means for the non-Europeans to make their protest, we feel strongly that means must be found, and found quickly, within the law, whereby the voice of the non-European shall be heard and heeded. We shall give our utmost support to any and every effort to fund such a means of expression for the non-European Community, and we appeal to all people who desire a just outcome of present difficulties to do the same, and to lose no opportunity of stimulating a closer approach of one racial group to another.

We believe that God's love is the unassailable possession of all Mankind and that God would draw all men equally to Himself. All laws and regulations which prevent or hinder this free development of human personality towards the Father are, in our view, immoral, and detrimental to the good of the country.

Determination to maintain the supremacy of one ethnic group over another by the imposition of unjust restrictions and the deliberate limitation of economic opportunity seems to us to be wrong and bound to fail. We believe rather, as humble disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the well-being of the Community can only be built, in this or any other country, on the full recognition of the truth that in God, all are one.

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

A Statement on the Racial Situation 1953

Our guide told us... that many whites such as he, working with friends in Soweto, simply refuse to get the required government passes to travel in a black township. 'Why should we be required to have government permission to visit with our friends just because their skin is a different colour?'

Marjorie Nelson

Friends World Committee for Consultation Visit to Southern Africa 1979

The members of the Religious Society of Friends in Natal, though very few in number, feel impelled to declare their conviction that the form of society for which they must consistently work and pray is one that must grow out of the co-operation of all its people in freedom.

We remember with special gratitude that it was in the healing quiet of a Quaker Meeting for Worship that the recently defeated Boer general, Jan Christiaan Smuts, found it in his heart to be reconciled with his former enemies and with them to build a new nation. We long to see this spirit of reconciliation that came in a moment of vision grow in the life of South Africa, embracing all its citizens, white and non-white.

We believe that South Africa is not for one people alone, or for any one more particularly, but that every section of the population has come to this land under the hand of God who 'made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell on the face of the Earth' and who would have us all live together in peace. ...

And we believe passionately in freedom: that it is only in freedom that man can attain his fullest stature and can hear clearly the voice of God in the deepest places of his heart, and hearing, freely do his will.

Natal Monthly Meeting

Statement on the Present Situation in South Africa 1957

Quaker vision – why are we here?

What do I believe now? I believe very little. Instead *I know*. I know from Experience. I know that life is a process; that creation is an ongoing process, and I am an integral part of that process. I know that I want to be in step with that process, and with the Essence, the Spirit of the Universe. I know that I need not be afraid, because the process is Good even though I don't know why or how. I already experience the bliss of that process, and so am not afraid of dying except in a purely animal instinctive way. I already live in Heaven. I know I am a Quaker. I know that the Ethical Mysticism of Quakerism is effective in renewing and healing the world. I know that I cannot live fully in body, mind and spirit on my own. The maturing process is a communal one; we are part of a communal discovery and evolution. Our process is good; it will lead us to a good place in the Mystery, if we stay close to the Historical Jesus and to the Evolving Christ myth. I know I am proud to be able to say I am a Quaker and to speak of Quakers, because we actually live according to the Alternative Life of Jesus, and have avoided many of the faults of orthodoxy. I trust the Process. The Mystery of Creation. I don't know about good and evil, I don't understand God, or the world. My puny mind produces puny theories; how can I even imagine the Whole? But I do trust and enjoy and love the Process. I love The Way. Like George Fox on his deathbed I can say, 'I am glad I was here.'

Jennifer Kinghorn, South Africa

Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure

Richard Gush Lecture 2005

Africa is a place that tests my humanity, my individualism and my connectedness to all people. Quakers, holding me in my search, give a glimpse of what God's world, God's Africa, could be.

Bronwen Wilson-Thompson

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

I am here because my Spirit is here and was here even before me, and will continue long after I am gone. I am here to fulfil and complete what was left needing completion and that is what completes me. I get my identity through being here and I go and return here to find who I am, and my purpose in this place and at this time.

My identity is here. My humanness is here with and among the people, their values, beliefs, their love and fears. I embrace and hold my own and others' wounds as works of my own humanness and Africanness.

Duduzile Mtshazo

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

Why am I here?

Because I was lucky enough to have been born here in Africa

Because I feel part of Africa

I breathe the African air

I hear the sounds of Africa

I feel the African sun and the warmth of my African community

This is my home – my place in God's world.

Elizabeth Roper

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

My ancestors travelled from Europe to find a rhythm and beat on African soil. I have explored Southern Africa and have experienced the common values, traditions, cultures and soul of this part of Africa. Wherever I may live, my home will always be here. Why I am here is also about an inner process of discovering my spirituality; living as a Quaker in a diverse, conflicting and changing world, being active in a community that lives heaven on earth and finding the mysticism of living a spiritual experience in human form.

Margaret Roper

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007



AFRICAN VALUES THAT SHAPE US AS AFRICAN QUAKERS

Ubuntu

I walked from spiritual drought and a busy, hurried and harried life into a sea of silence and stillness. The Light shone through the door on those gathered people and silence was like a balm to my ruffled nerves and soul. The warm embrace of acceptance, just as I was, was moving and magnetic. I made a decision to stay and search deeper. Who were these people? They shared their space, their tea, their lives and their God – that calls us to be one in the same body. They broke bread with me as never before. I stayed! I was accepted, affirmed, and that enabled me to accept that there was that of God in me, despite what I had been led to believe. ‘Umuntu ugumuntu ngabantu’ – a person is human through the humanity of others. I found my humanity and humanness through those Friends who saw that of God in me and affirmed that.

Duduzile Mtshazo

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

The paradox of being human is that each of us is at once an individual, a separate being in our own right, and at the same time intrinsically and inextricably bound up and interconnected with other individuals – other aba-ntu. There is an invisible circuit of connection between us all: activating the flow of humanity, of love, of creative or spiritual power between human beings. This connection is Ubuntu. It is not a static state though, energy flows from respect for self to respect for others, which in turn regenerates

respect for self. But the greatest challenge for Ubuntu is when I do not find it in the other when the other is trapped in a vicious downward spiral of self-destruction and self-hatred, feeding hatred and destruction of others. Do I see anything of myself in that other? If not, what am I blind to in myself? How do I energise my sense of Ubuntu – the flow of love and energy from myself to that other person? Can I continue to respect myself if I do not strive to do that? Can I respect myself if I affirm another person who is doing evil to others, perhaps also to me?

Jennifer Kinghorn

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

Africans have a greeting that means ‘I see you.’ It is profoundly important to grasp what is meant. In South Africa we have noticed or watched each other for centuries; we have not seen each other. Seeing a person, in that salutation, means what is called eyeball to eyeball contact; recognising the presence of a *person*, not a white man or a black man or a plumber or a doctor, but someone as alive and as self-aware and as vulnerable as you are. I see you. The time for overlooking each other has gone; also of some having the monopoly of overseeing others. We must see each other.

Guy Butler, South Africa

Richard Gush Lecture 1994

Friendship

There is only one way to get the difference between service and friendship clear, and that is by discovering it in our own experience. Suppose a friend came to see you when you were ill, would you be satisfied to know that he came because he thought it was his duty to come? Would you not feel that the one thing needful was lacking? In friendship the personal things – warmth and intimacy and feeling – must be the springs of action.

The more deep and real our friendships become the more what looks like sacrifice from the outside is found to be the free and spontaneous expression of our own soul's necessity. In a perfect friendship, however, the word sacrifice is meaningless. In such a relationship, what looks like giving whatever I value most is really getting what I most desire: the losing is the saving.

'These are my commandments – that ye love one another.' In other words, the friendship of Christ is realised in our friendships with one another. Christianity is the religion of friendship. What people need from us is love, not sympathy; friendship, not friendly service.

It is to this dedication of themselves to friendship that the followers of Christ are called. Those who have the courage to lose themselves discover, with an ever recurring surprise, that in losing themselves, they find themselves, and freedom.

All of us know something of the freedom that comes – the tranquillity and self-realisation that comes when we slip from the company of strangers into the companionship of our intimate friends. The ray which illuminates and warms us in these moments, however faint it may be, comes to us from the Light of the World. The purpose of God in the life of the world is simply the spreading and the deepening of that experience until it covers the whole world.

Shelagh Towert

'Ye Are My Friends'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper

Ancestry

I was born and grew up at Magog, Umzumbe on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal near Port Shepstone. My mother traces our ancestry back to Mkhaliphi who fought at the battle of Blood River. My grandfather was the first teacher in the area and I was brought up by my grandmother to a large extent, as my mother's teaching posts were far from home. My grandmother valued education and sent her daughter to a Catholic Mission school at Marianhill to train as a teacher. I probably saw her once a month only during school term. She became a principal of a primary school where she served for thirty-six years. My mother rejoiced when she was able to vote for the first time at 63 and went on to become a councillor. She has since retired as a councillor but the youth continue to see her as a mentor and they hold political meetings on her veranda.

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, South Africa

Speaking Truth to Power – Peace is a Struggle

Richard Gush Lecture 2006

I feel I have been here before – that's why I feel so at home.

Charles Ashby

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

Multilingualism and multiculturalism

I relish the challenge of living in a country of differences. Some of these are negative and are to be overcome, such as inequality and poverty. But some differences are to be exalted and cherished as an opportunity to live in another's skin, and in so doing to expand our own imaginations. To dance to one another's music is to overcome the paranoia of difference – to feel the rhythms and vibrations of our humanity. People have invited me to share in truths of their culture and experiences. People have fed me, danced with me, taught me how to 'click' in Xhosa and patiently corrected my many mistakes. Multi-culturalism is an expression of love: for ourselves, our culture, for others and their culture. As an African Quaker I feel so blessed to live in a place and among people who are so different yet so open.

Justine White

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

I speak from limited experience of personal contact with black people, and while I would deny any active rejection of blacks – indeed the very opposite – I have not cultivated such friendships as I should have. This is partly a language problem. I think Friends should aim at being tri-lingual. Another problem is cultural difference and custom. Pleasant social intercourse depends very much on people knowing what behaviour is expected of them; white good manners and black good manners do not tally at all points. Acceptance of each must not be conditional upon conforming to Western or to African mores; but it does require mutual understanding of what the mores are. We live in a confused cultural climate – a culture whirlpool, which I think is a very good condition to be in after a century of social engineering to keep whites, blacks, Indians and Coloureds [separate].

Guy Butler, South Africa

Richard Gush Lecture 1994

My South Africa lives in the poetry
Of my weekly walk to Quaker House
Through the parts of town that make people say
'Oh my God! You walk there?!'
But where the only intrusion on my journey
Is the beautiful two-year old who stares up at me and laughs
The only person on those Hillbrow streets
Honest enough to admit she notices my melanin deficiency.

Love is alive as I walk your streets
As I look into your children's laughing faces
As I fall deeper and deeper into your silences
Love is alive even as I
Cry, My Beloved Country
My South Africa

Ryan Baum

From 'A Love Poem to My South Africa'

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

Family, community and belonging

Through contact with the Black Consciousness Movement and its leader, Steve Bantu Biko, I learned to accept and be comfortable with my black identity. This was important in my life, as I had grown up in a world where the colour of your skin determined your socio-economic status. As part of that growth process I was encouraged to reclaim my African name and learned to shout, 'Say it loud, I'm black, and I'm proud.' Steve Biko had visited our school with Barney Pityana and I spent my school holidays at the nearby Phoenix Settlement, Gandhi's first Ashram, where Steve Biko, Rick Turner, and others used to hold political summer schools. This was an important step in my growth. Now I can say I am Quaker and I am proud. It may be important for us as a small marginalised religious group to say, 'I am Quaker and I am proud.'

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, South Africa

Speaking Truth to Power – Peace is a Struggle

Richard Gush Lecture 2006

In 1994, when Apartheid was delegislated, like many others I was tired and had to re-orientate. The urgency seemed over. Keeping in step with my Inner Guide, I have space to develop my understanding and to improve my caring, my listening and my personal relationships. At present my path is quiet, talking and playing with children, offering hospitality, being a friend to the old and dying and to young energetic people of good will, who are afraid, lonely, and often oppressed by their employers. This is satisfying, not dramatic. I find I don't need to be as conscious of the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth, when I am not under so much human and personal stress, and for a while I needed to rest quietly in God's universe. Then I talk more about God instead of Jesus. Now I wait (sometimes impatiently) for guidance to deal with the anger, pain, violence and greed which I see all around.

Jennifer Kinghorn, South Africa

Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure

Richard Gush Lecture 2005

My first meeting in Johannesburg was interesting, to say the least. A young man sitting next to me, informed me that whilst Quakers worldwide were generally a very nice group of people, this Johannesburg bunch were really not up to much! As if that wasn't enough, Elizabeth Taylor, whom I really came to love in the very short time that I knew her, asked me, during the tea-break, if I was from the security police! I hope our skills at greeting visitors have improved somewhat since then! Also at my first meeting (in Johannesburg), Dudu Mtshazo ministered out of the silence, reflecting on the pain she had experienced as a result of the apartheid laws. I found her lack of bitterness, her capacity to forgive and, through growth, to overcome her hurt, really overwhelming. I have never forgotten that meeting. ...

I have never experienced any reluctance to get to Meeting on Sunday, and have found the softness and authenticity of the Meeting for Worship wonderfully refreshing and energising. ... It seems to me that our Meeting has succeeded in creating an atmosphere in which many of our individual members grow and flourish. I have never seen any rivalry, stereotyping or disrespect shown toward those who are different. In fact, I think that we are, by and large, doing a good job of creating a truly nurturing family.

Colin Glen

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 1998



QUAKERS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN AFRICA



My concern is for the inward being, from which the concern for outward action grows and is sustained.

Rosemary Elliott

Visit by South African Friends to North America 1978

The two goals of justice and peace are universally accepted, but are of special importance to Friends worldwide, and to Friends in South Africa. The relationship between these two goals is, however, complex and has been a source of intense debate and conflict within the Society.

There is a complementary and contrasting relationship between justice and peace as desirable goals in South Africa, and the means by which they are pursued.

Three observations must be made about the goals of justice and peace. The first is that they are ideals for society, but are in fact unattainable. We can never have full justice or peace in any society. We can only strive towards them.

The second point about these two goals is that they are complementary – we cannot have one without the other. There can be no justice without peace, nor can there be peace without justice. Peacemaking must thus be concerned with promoting justice, and the search for justice must include striving for peace.

The third observation is that these goals stand in a relation of tension to each other. Sometimes justice appears to be unattainable by peaceful means, and at times the achievement of peace seems to run counter to the demands for justice.

HW van der Merwe, South Africa

Quakers and My Pursuit of Justice and Peace in South Africa

Richard Gush Lecture 1999

The issue we have to face is whether a government has the right to decide how a religious body conducts its affairs. To me this is an interference with religious freedom which I cannot accept... It seems that it is now our turn to accept this challenge, recognising the price of freedom is eternal vigilance.

Therefore to me our duty is clear. We must explain why it is impossible for us to comply with certain provisions of the Act. ... When matters of right or wrong have been at stake, Quakers have never been overawed by the fear of the consequences and I hope they never will be.

Will Fox

Letter on Friends and the new Welfare Act

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 1980

The Advices of our religious society on social matters exhort us to seek out root causes of social problems, unrest and injustice and strive to live in the life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars and violence.

The error of deciding and doing things for and about Blacks without their consent should be brought speedily to an end.

Keeping them [the feelings of Africans living in Soweto] 'under control' by force and fear is no answer and may indeed reinforce the underlying causes and seriously aggravate the cause of future events.

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting

Evidence to the Commission of Enquiry Regarding the Soweto Riots of June 1976

Each of us in our own lives must make decisions on how we relate to others, to tensions and conflicts in our lives, those around us, wherever we live in the world. Not to do so is to let life pass us by. A social consciousness is something that each individual must strive to develop on his or her own. It is found by being involved. Without engagement it is difficult to learn and grow. To me it is still necessary to work with others, to be a traveller on the road less travelled. To seek what Quakers have called 'the cutting edge.' To try and do what others are not doing, while seeking those who will

join you in doing it. Life does not have to be a process of trial and error, a stumbling, though that may always be there as part of the unexpected or the serendipity as we develop and change. I believe it is possible to find a purpose to each of our lives.

Sheldon Weeks, Botswana

My Life as a Friend and Fellow Traveller

Richard Gush Lecture 2004

To put our faith into action is one of the central pillars of Quaker ministry and it has its roots from the first generation of Quakers who were struggling for social freedom in their time. This social involvement needs to be guided by faith and should be reflective of the ministry of the Society, thus it should be an extension of the meeting for worship.

Kholekile Tshanga

Cape Eastern Monthly Meeting, South Africa

Southern Africa Quaker News, September 1999

While I was Clerk of South Africa General Meeting I represented the Quakers in the South African Council of Churches. At the annual national conference in 1979 there was a deadlock between conservatives and radicals about a motion proposed by Allen Boesak calling for an act of civil disobedience against an apartheid law. One reason why the conservatives felt unable to support the motion was the arrogant language of the motion. I then proposed that we formulate the proposal in the language of conscientious affirmation instead of objection. My proposal argued that we as Christians have an obligation to promote contact, fellowship and understanding among all population groups, especially among racial groups. It so happened that there were laws that prohibited certain kinds of contact between certain racial groups, for instance the law that required whites to get permits to visit black townships. Instead of making an emotional attack on this law, I proposed that we affirm our commitment to interracial

fellowship, regardless of the law. We therefore declared that we continued in our resolve to develop fellowship across racial lines and that would inevitably mean visiting black townships. We found this law requiring permits so morally objectionable that we could not apply for these permits in good conscience. We would therefore proceed to visit our fellows in townships without these permits. Should such action happen to be against the law, it would not deter us. This was a positive step, for something good, not against something bad.

HW van der Merwe, South Africa

Quakers and My Pursuit of Justice and Peace in South Africa

Richard Gush Lecture 1999

The Truth [and Reconciliation] Commission failed to meet the deep needs of a large part of the population to see justice done towards the major policy makers and implementers of apartheid. I became especially conscious of this need through my friendship with Winnie Mandela, and the contrast with her ex-husband. Like Winnie, there are thousands, no, millions of black people who are not ready to forgive the whites, especially the Afrikaners, as Madiba [Nelson Mandela] has done. That deep-seated need for retribution has not been properly acknowledged in the Truth Commission, by our churches and by our political leaders.

To put it in popular terms: [Nelson] Mandela has leaned relatively more towards peace and reconciliation, and less towards justice than I would have liked to see. While I pray that Winnie or somebody of her persuasion should never gain significant political influence in our country, I do believe their needs deserve sympathetic consideration. We cannot have peace without justice.

HW van der Merwe, South Africa

Quakers and My Pursuit of Justice and Peace in South Africa

Richard Gush Lecture 1999

We feel that it is very important that the social responsibility of every individual in the community should be encouraged.

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Letter to the Minister of Social Welfare and Pensions 1978

In order to protect rights, we have to have a steely determination to protect people from all the horrors that governments and others inflict from time to time: the murders in the name of the state, the tortures, destabilisation in the name of democracy. We need to search out the truth about such events and make them public, for most of these deeds flourish in the dark. . . . Pursuing public truth is the first line of defence.

George Ellis, South Africa

Developing Human Rights Values

Richard Gush Lecture 1996

So here is God laying the burden of responsibility for changing our sad and broken world on our shoulders. For early Friends saw it as being called to bring the kingdom of heaven here to earth now. But God could not and does not abandon us to handle this task on our own. Nor does God expect us to achieve miracles purely in our own strength. That is why our living experiential relationship with God is so essential. For in this relationship is our strength. Our daily knowledge of God walking by our side, carrying us when we do not feel up to the task, encouraging and convincing us when we need that extra push, forgiving us when we choose to ignore or reject those burdens laid upon us, is what drives us into action and supports us while we carry out the responsibilities we are called to.

Simon Lamb, Ireland

A Faith Worth Living

Richard Gush Lecture 2002

We need to be aware of the dangers of self deception, of the unwillingness to listen to others because what they say is not what we want to hear. If it turns out to be our political friends or relatives or political comrades who are oppressing others, we have to face up to the fact and do something about it.

George Ellis, South Africa

Developing Human Rights Values

Richard Gush Lecture 1996

We can feel overwhelmed by the problems of the world, but also reassured that beyond the clouds, the sun of God's love still warms and illuminates.

Epistle of the Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Modderpoort, South Africa 2000

Quakers and Peace

Quaker Peace Testimony

The Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), represents Friends in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Madagascar, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. This meeting is concerned for peace and development in these countries, in Angola and Mozambique as well as in Africa as a whole.

Quakers have a long tradition in working for peace. We believe that war and the preparation for war are inconsistent with the gospel of Christ. The governments of the world at the United Nations General Assembly have declared the years 2001–2010 a 'Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World'.

We commit ourselves, and call on all citizens and governments, to initiate programmes that will bring this culture into being.

There are more wars in Africa than in any other part of the world.

We commit ourselves and call on all citizens and governments to:

- ▶ *Work towards the abolition of war in Africa*
- ▶ *Build peace by non-military means*
- ▶ *Demilitarise and reduce expenditure on arms*
- ▶ *Convert arms industries to socially useful production and, in the interim, to ensure transparent and accurate reporting of all subsidies, direct and indirect, to the arms industry and related activities*
- ▶ *Consider voluntary or national youth non-military service as a means of building peace and development*
- ▶ *Consider state funded 'Institutes for Peace' to research non-military means to ensure the security of the state against strategic threats as well as research the experience in peacemaking that has been developed on the African continent.*

Nobel laureates have proposed a code of conduct for the transfer of small arms. Africa is awash with arms, particularly small arms, which have not contributed to stability and have diverted scarce resources away from peace and development.

We commit ourselves and call on all citizens and governments to:

- ▶ *Work towards a moratorium on the import to, and manufacture of arms in, Africa and, in the interim, legislate and implement rigorous controls on arms transfers*
- ▶ *Ensure effective gun control legislation as well as its effective implementation*
- ▶ *Recover and destroy*
 - 1) *Illegal arms*
 - 2) *Arms left over after cessation of hostilities*
 - 3) *Arms surplus to police and military requirements.*

Peace is not brought about by preparation for war. Peace is achieved by ensuring democracy, good governance, and justice, and upholding the rule of law and human rights. It is achieved by addressing the basic needs of people such as provision of adequate health care, fighting the scourge of HIV/Aids, eliminating inequality and poverty and providing education including early childhood education, adult literacy and peace education.

We commit ourselves and call on all citizens and governments to:

- ▶ *Work towards democracy, good governance, human rights, equality and meeting the basic needs of all people in the region.*

Economic inequality is a major cause of war, instability and lack of security. Our security is not ensured by arming ourselves, employing armed response and building high walls with razor wire, but by economic justice and building strong communities.

We commit ourselves and call on all people to:

- ▶ *Contribute by way of wealth, talent or effort to the promotion of peace, reconciliation and economic justice.*

We call on governments to ensure that their policies create a more equitable distribution of wealth. Leaders of government have committed their armed forces to war in foreign countries as well as inviting foreign armies to their territories without informing their citizens or getting a mandate from their citizens by a decision of parliament.

We commit ourselves and call on all citizens and governments of the region to:

- ▶ *Work for the abolition of armed forces and in the interim*
- ▶ *Ensure transparency and accountability when military decisions are made.*

Women are major victims of war and potentially major contributors to peace, but are seldom consulted when decisions are made which result in war or when peace treaties are negotiated.

We commit ourselves and call on all citizens and governments to:

- ▶ *Ensure that peace and peacemaking are enhanced by equal participation of women and men.*

Conflicts in the region are fuelled by the exploitation of natural resources from which only a few individuals benefit. The majority of citizens suffer the effects of war and are not organised so as to be able to bring an end to the conflict.

We commit ourselves and call on all people and governments to:

- ▶ *Identify and expose those who benefit from conflicts in the region*
- ▶ *Support civil society movements working for peace.*

South Africa destroyed its nuclear weapons that had been built by the apartheid regime without the knowledge of its citizens.

We commit ourselves and call on all citizens and governments to:

- ▶ *Ensure that never again are nuclear weapons manufactured in Africa*
- ▶ *Ensure that nuclear weapons are never transferred to any African country*
- ▶ *Ensure that nuclear weapons never enter the territorial waters of any African country on a foreign naval vessel nor that they ever be flown over any African air space*
- ▶ *Ensure that nuclear weapons are never targeted at any African country*
- ▶ *Ensure that Africa remains a nuclear weapon-free zone.*

We would like to draw attention to the fact that The Coalition Against Military Spending in South Africa has called on organisations and individuals in South Africa to sign their Charter:

- ▶ *Declaring their opposition to the recent and the prospective increases in military spending*
- ▶ *Demanding a substantially increased allocation of resources to poverty eradication and development*
- ▶ *Demanding transparency and honesty of the government on defence spending and its economic implications*
- ▶ *Committing them to building real security in the Southern African region.*

We commend this charter to all people and governments in the region. We call on people in South Africa and its government to support this charter. We call on citizens and governments of the other countries in the region to work towards initiating similar charters and coalitions within their own countries.

Quakers have witnessed to their opposition to war and preparations for war by conscientious objection and by refusal to support war financially.

We commit ourselves and call on all people in the region to work for legislation allowing:

- 1) *Taxpayers to indicate that their taxes are not to be used for military expenditure*
- 2) *For conscientious objection to military service.*

Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Modderpoort, South Africa 2000

This General Meeting of South African Friends has had under consideration our testimony for peace, and is firm in maintaining that all war is contrary to the spirit and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ.

First General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in South Africa

Cape Town, South Africa 1918

Structural violence, then, describes the structures which maintain the dominance of one group at the centre of power over another group at the periphery. At a practical level for those at the periphery, it can mean low wages, landlessness, illiteracy, poor health, limited or non-existent political representation or legal rights and, in general, limited control over much of their lives. If those who suffer structural violence resist or try to change it, they may be met with direct violence. Exploitation, neglect and exclusion, which are features of structural violence, kill slowly by comparison with direct violence, but kill vastly more people.

Geoff Harris, South Africa

Is Peace Possible?

Richard Gush Lecture 2003

The Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Southern Africa believes in the sanctity of the individual. It has re-affirmed in the strongest possible terms its conviction that all war and preparation for war are contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ. We would ask, not for ourselves alone, but for all persons who have conscientious objections based on religious humanitarian and ethical grounds, that they shall be granted exemption from military service at any stage, including cadets, whether in war or peace.

Letter by the Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

3 July 1956

When I was a child, I heard grown-ups talk about something called WAR (World War II). I sensed it was something terrible, shocking and sorrowful. This was quite different from my experience of meeting. In meeting I had a sense of kindness, warmth, family and peacefulness. Perhaps this contrast alerted me to different ways of living and to the nature of Quaker community.

Jennifer Kinghorn

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

There are three common ways of trying to deal with a dispute. The use of power – physical, military, economic – usually results in victory for the most powerful. The use of rights, in a legal sense, also most often results in victory for the most economically powerful who can afford the best legal resources. Attempting to reconcile the interests of the parties is based on the hope that, by uncovering their underlying needs and interests, parties to a conflict can achieve a mutually satisfying outcome.

The problem with the first two is that they result in a winner and normally leave the underlying causes of the conflict unchanged.

Geoff Harris, South Africa

Is Peace Possible?

Richard Gush Lecture 2003

[E]very person in this country with any claim at all to an ethical or religious life does indeed have a critical decision to make. He is going to have to choose if he will allow himself to be placed by the Government in a situation where it is very likely he will have to kill on their behalf, and will then be willing to do so; or if he will refuse to act in this manner.

Cape Western Monthly Meeting

Statement on the Conscientious Objectors Issue 1982

We are deeply conscious of injustices and inequalities and the many wrongs of the world. . . . We feel, however, that we must reaffirm our conviction that wrong cannot be righted by war, which is itself wrong. Our pacifism does not mean indifference. Though denying to ourselves any participation in war and material conflict, we are able to take up those tasks of healing that the world needs. Thus at this time the Friends are feeding orphaned and destitute children of both combatant parties in Spain, are endeavouring to help distressed Jews in Vienna and to render assistance to those in need in China. While refusing to take any part in 'outward wars and strife' we would ask to share the burden of the world's suffering and would strive always to be the instruments of God's love and peace.

Natal Monthly Meeting

Statement Reaffirming Our Opposition to War 1938

Pacifism is not PASSIVISM but positively seeks to create those conditions which will remove the causes of war and strife. Since wars begin in the minds of man, it is in the minds of man that the defences of peace must be constructed.

Shelagh Towert

'Children of God'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 21 January 1978

A letter was sent to the Minister of Mines reaffirming our peace testimony and asking that materials, especially uranium, used for atomic energy and mined on our soil, be used for peaceful purposes only.

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Johannesburg, South Africa 1959

The meeting had ended and they walked towards their cars. On an impulse Rommel Roberts said, 'Take my bakkie, you know your life has been threatened, and they know your car.' Smuts Ngonyama looked at his friend, smiled his thanks and nodded. They swapped keys to their respective vehicles, and Smuts drove off first. Rommel soon followed him out of Mdantsane township near East London, South Africa. He was driving along the road when suddenly a minibus overtook him and slowed down. In his rear-view mirror he saw a second minibus close in behind him. Then he noticed a sedan car alongside him, it was filled with armed men. Panic flooded. 'This is it. I'm going to be killed.' Then he thought, 'I don't want to die fearful and unaccepting.' He looked through his window straight into the eyes of the man with the gun and smiled. The man suddenly said something to his driver and the car shot ahead, signalled to the minibus in front and then did a U-turn across the grass verge in the middle of the road, the two minibuses followed it and they disappeared. Rommel pulled his car over and sat shaking and shocked for a while before returning home.

In speaking of this incident, Rommel said, 'As I panicked, I suddenly remembered a drug addict I was counselling many years ago. I had sent him out to walk round observing things and then come back to tell me what he

saw. He told me of the graceful flowers which grow with beauty, asking nothing but to be themselves. People step on them or they get broken, but they are still beautiful.' Rommel elaborated, 'Graceful, implying grace and graciousness, and suddenly I wanted to die being myself, not filled with fear or anger. I wanted to let the gunman know that I accepted what he was about to do.'

Story collected by Rosemary Elliott

Cape Eastern Monthly Meeting, South Africa

We appeal to those who are concerned for peace and to those who have a conception of education that is above the supposed exigencies of the moment, to liberate our school system from a practice that means bondage to obsolete standards and puts education under obligations to which it should never submit.

Natal Monthly Meeting

Evidence to the Natal Provincial Education Commission on Military Training in Schools 1936

Thinking about security broadened from an exclusive concern with the security of the state to a concern with the security of people. Along with the shift came the notion that states ought not to be the sole or main referent of security. People's interests or the interests of humanity, as a collective, become the focus. In this way, security becomes an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety and participate fully in the process of governance. They enjoy the protection of fundamental rights, have access to resources and the basic necessities of life, including health and education, and inhabit an environment that is not injurious to their health and well being. Eradication of poverty is thus central to ensuring the security of all people, as well as the security of the state.

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, South Africa

Speaking Truth to Power – Peace is a Struggle

Richard Gush Lecture 2006

We need to persist in our efforts of peace building i.e. in working towards positive peace. This is long-term work and is the foundation on which a peaceful society must be founded. A useful definition of peace, incidentally, is 'a way of life committed to the non-violent resolution of conflict and to personal and social justice'. How would it have been if ... the US had offered weapons of mass salvation – in the form of generous aid – to Iraq rather than focusing on alleged weapons of mass destruction?

We could press for the establishment of national Ministries of Peacebuilding. ... There is currently no ministry with prime responsibility for peace and non-violence so it is not surprising that so little progress has occurred at government level. We could envisage a senior ministry, which controls and coordinates efforts at building a non-violent society. Its responsibilities would include: the oversight of education in non-violent ways of dealing with conflict; building good relationships with neighbouring countries at all levels of society by all manner of means; demilitarising, including the reallocation of non-core functions currently undertaken by the military e.g. coastal patrol, rescue work and disaster relief to other government departments or civilian bodies; and efforts to confront cultural violence in all its forms.

What would it need to establish a Ministry of Peacebuilding in a southern African country? Could faith communities set up national Centres for Peacebuilding to begin some of these tasks and encourage governments in this direction?

Geoff Harris, South Africa

Is Peace Possible?

Richard Gush Lecture 2003

Recognising God as a tool of peace-making could help us to solve some of the problems of Africa ... to uplift and upgrade our countries, to settle disputes peacefully and improve our standards of living. Freedom of speech is a way of bringing Africans together. The concept of the African Renaissance gives us an opportunity to work together as Africans. Let us rebirth, renew and innovate Africa.

Zamo Mbatha

KwaZulu-Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

As a Christian, I strive to live a life which is pleasing to Jesus Christ. I have come to the conclusion that ... military service is incompatible with my Christian convictions. I see war as being the most overt form of violence. I believe that violence is the antithesis of love and love is at the very centre of the Christian way of life.

I want to be a peacemaker here in South Africa. I want to be used by God in the process of reconciliation between the peoples of our land so that we may live together in true peace – a peace undergirded by justice and righteousness.

The principles of Christ-like love and non-violence are absolutely central to my Christianity and to myself. I feel it would be more destructive of me as a person if I were to compromise on these principles and go to the army than to be true to myself and my God and go into detention barracks.

Richard Steele

*Letter to the Commanding Officer of the Witwatersrand Command
Headquarters 1979*

Another source of tension within the Society in South Africa was between selective and universal conscientious objection. South African Quakers have a long history of support for conscientious objectors as part of their peace testimony. The Quakers are a peace church: they oppose all violence and all wars. They are universal pacifists and universal conscientious objectors. They object to participation in all wars, anywhere, at any time, while the situational or selective objector objects to participate in certain wars. The latter arguments against certain wars are basically the same as the arguments used by those who distinguish between just and unjust wars, and who support those wars that they regard as just, often qualified by the condition: as a last resort. The just war theory is the mainline of both the Catholic and Protestant churches. It is quite distinct from pacifism as practised by the Quakers.

HW van der Merwe, South Africa

Quakers and My Pursuit of Justice and Peace in South Africa

Richard Gush Lecture 1999

I was called up for military 'service', refused the call up, was in court to explain that I could not participate in any war effort, particularly one for an unjust cause, and I was then in prison for 100 days – a short time by the standard of political prisoners. The gift of those 100 days was a set of encounters with people I would almost certainly never have met otherwise. These 'criminals' were child abusers, murderers, embezzlers; the violent and the pathetic, and even two Jehovah's Witnesses, fellow conscientious objectors. The lasting impression of this time was how dehumanising it is to take away someone's freedom, (and indeed to allow one's own freedom to be taken away). Those men were becoming less able to live useful independent lives in society – quite contrary to the idea of 'rehabilitation' so often talked about.

Richard Knottenbelt, Zimbabwe

Recognition, Identity and Belonging

Richard Gush Lecture 2000

An Asian judge in Nairobi, Kenya once told litigating Friends to go away and pray about their problems. He said that in the past, Kenyans had looked up to Quakers as providing an example of peaceful resolution of disputes.

Ronald Watts

Southern Africa Quaker News, December 1998

I know HW [van der Merwe] questioned how I could be a communist and a Quaker, and many of you have questioned how I could be a Quaker and the Deputy Minister of Defence. I am no longer the Deputy Minister of Defence but I am still a member of the South African Communist Party. I still think it is important to engage in defence issues. When the Defence Review was adopted calling for the arms procurement for the revitalisation of the South African Navy and the Air Force, there was not much resistance by civil society and recently when the Navy welcomed one of the four submarines we have purchased for our National Defence Force, I noticed a silence from civil society and pacifists. The focus has been on whether there was corruption in the arms deal. Yet the core issue is whether

the arms deal itself was the best way to ensure our security and to build peace on the African continent. This is not to say Quakers were silent. In fact, Friends were vocal and challenged my appointment as Deputy Minister of Defence at our Yearly Meeting at Modderpoort in 2000. Through a creative Quaker process we produced a 'Quaker Statement on Peace in Africa.' The Quaker Statement says, 'Peace is not brought about by preparation for war. Peace is achieved by ensuring democracy, good governance and justice and upholding the rule of law and human rights. It is achieved by addressing the basic needs of people such as provision of adequate health care, fighting the scourge of HIV/Aids, eliminating inequality and poverty and providing education, including early childhood education, adult literacy and peace education.'

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, South Africa

Speaking Truth to Power – Peace is a Struggle

Richard Gush Lecture 2006

Since it is with our human hearts and hands that we try to do our Lord's will and grow in grace, we must carry this reverence for life to all men, in all circumstances, and pray for light to illuminate our human understanding towards a better way to help the murderer or delinquent than to repeat his crime by revengeful death.

To most thinking people capital punishment is morally indefensible but to the Quaker who follows George Fox's teaching that 'there is that of God in everyone,' this is no less than to re-crucify Christ, who Himself died at the hands of frightened privileged people.

Shelagh Towert

'Reverence for Life'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 25 November 1972

We need to spread the news that the military has reached its use-by date. This follows from a belief that God never uses war to accomplish his/her purposes; from the fact that non-violent methods are less costly, more effective and able to be learned; from the fact that invasions have become rare, and

that security needs embrace far more than simply territorial security; and from the recognition that there are alternative ways of achieving security and cost effective non-military alternatives for the non-core functions which the military currently performs. Should faith communities stop supporting their countries' military forces, for example by the withdrawal of chaplaincy services?

Geoff Harris, South Africa

Is Peace Possible?

Richard Gush Lecture 2003

Quaker practice of non-racialism

Sometimes our choices are NOT to do something, not to allow ourselves to be labelled in a particular way. About 30 years ago in what was then Southern Rhodesia, a new Constitution was introduced to allow for expanded representation of Black people in Parliament based on the proportion of Income Tax paid by the Black community. So a little box appeared on the Income Tax Return form with the word RACE beside it. For two or three years I left it blank, and nothing happened, but then a letter came asking me to state my 'race'. I went to the office to explain that I could not in conscience describe myself as having a 'race' for this purpose. So I was interviewed by officials at ever higher levels and eventually was told that the matter had to be referred to Head Office. A few months later I received a certificate determining that I was 'European as the passport photo shows he is not an African.' I did not know whether to laugh or cry or be angry.

Richard Knottenbelt, Zimbabwe

Recognition, Identity and Belonging

Richard Gush Lecture 2000

The Religious Society of Friends in South Africa is a Christian community whose faith allows only one undivided membership. Consequently it is not possible for us to build into the Constitution of one of our subordinate bodies any distinction or separation of its members whether on an ethnic or any other basis.

Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Letter to the South African Ethnic Auxiliary Committee 1972

I have never known so much being accomplished by so small a number of Friends, as is done in Southern Africa Yearly Meeting. The approximately 100 Friends in widely separate areas are active either professionally or as volunteers in many aspects of social welfare work for Blacks, Coloureds or Asians.

The small Southern African Yearly Meeting exerts a great impact on national religious leaders by its active role on the executive committee of the South African Council of Churches.

We should be thankful for the purposeful lives that Friends are leading in South Africa. In the tradition for which Quakers are well known, this small yearly meeting carries influence far beyond their numbers in trying to ameliorate suffering.

Samuel M Snipes

*Friends World Committee for Consultation Visit to Southern Africa
1979*

While in Pietermaritzburg working for the province, she was criticised for being too liberal, and, because Shelagh felt so strongly that the [nursing] training should be the same for all races, she lost her job. Then in 1969 she took up a post as sister tutor at Durban Medical School. Her feelings of injustice over discrimination were shown in her refusal of the honour of Life Membership of the South African Nursing Association, which at that time denied office to Black women.

Testimony to Shelagh Towert 1997

Quakers [in South Africa], like their early Quaker foremothers, played a highly visible and significant role in the struggle against racial discrimination and later against Apartheid. Indeed they were central to this endeavour for, without them, the Society's Apartheid odyssey (especially in the early years of our era) would have been voiceless on a public level.

Gerard Guiton

*Thesis on 17th Century British Quakers and 20th Century
South African Quakers 2000*

Young Friends buying ice-creams on a sweltering hot day in Southern Africa should be a moment of joy and an everyday occurrence. In Apartheid South Africa, it became an injustice, an affront to human dignity, which

intended to divide friendships on the basis of skin colour. When the proprietor refused to let black young Friends sit on the chairs in the café to eat their ice-creams, what were the choices? To leave and thereby accept the social norm and carry the lack of dignity and integrity back to Yearly Meeting and know in my heart that we were not living our Faith, or to engage in a verbal battle that might have sparked physical violence and further loss of dignity? Was there another way? I cannot recall who suggested it – Friends classified Black sitting on the laps of Friends classified White. The owner was left speechless. A simple gesture of equality cut through the nonsensical logic of a meaningless societal injustice.

Margaret Roper

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

Political activists were harassed by security police and like many others I was detained a number of times, the last time for one year in solitary confinement. Every day I would save some of my food to share with the ants in my cell; to stay in touch with my humanity and have some contact. During this time I was supported by members of my family and organisations in and outside South Africa. One of the organisations that supported detainees was Defence and Aid, through which a family in the UK kept in touch with my mother and sent her money to look after my first child, Martin, who was five years old at the time.

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, South Africa

Speaking Truth to Power – Peace is a Struggle

Richard Gush Lecture 2006

From the beginning of my association with Quaker Service Fund, and later on under other Quaker auspices, I often participated in what the Quakers call 'Speaking Truth to Power'. Since the early seventies South African Friends, either under Quaker auspices or as leading members in other organisations, have participated in many delegations to senior government officials and politicians to help better understanding and relations between the authorities and the black communities, to protest against race discrimination,

apartheid laws, police brutality and such matters. This was not neutral or impartial, but partisan intervention on behalf of the underdog, the deprived. While this kind of intervention was partisan, the spirit and atmosphere were usually understanding and not confrontational. Many interventions were made to obtain visas or permits for foreigners, especially individual Quakers and Quaker delegations from England and the USA.

Whether the Society (Monthly and Yearly Meetings) should privately and quietly Speak Truth to Power, or should make public protests, often caused intense debates. Almost invariably the priests among us favoured the private path in a somewhat more conciliatory tone, while the prophets chose public protest. On many occasions individuals or clerks who acted on behalf of the Society made public statements or joined other organisations like the Council of Churches and the Institute of Race Relations, and sometimes political parties, in statements and demonstrations.

HW van der Merwe, South Africa

Quakers and My Pursuit of Justice and Peace in South Africa

Richard Gush Lecture 1999

Later I was invited as 'a church leader' to join others from all faiths, and take flowers on June 16th to Hector Petersen's grave in the cemetery in deep Soweto. The purpose was to express sympathy and respect for the parents of Soweto, because no formal condolences had ever been expressed towards the thousands of parents who had lost children during the 10 years of student unrest. After lengthy ecumenical discussion and planning, we collected over a thousand bouquets and wreaths from various churches and a cavalcade of about 20 vehicles set out in the cold and misty dawn, a bleak winter's day. A 'state of emergency' had been declared; we expected to be arrested and imprisoned indefinitely, so we had warm socks, toothbrushes and bibles in our pockets and I got permission from my children. Outside Baragwanath Hospital we were halted by a contingent of soldiers.

We explained that we were merely taking flowers to the grave. After some courteous discussion we got reluctant permission to lay down the flowers on the roadside outside the hospital. We did this, and stood in a circle and prayed, in the cold grey air. We had invited the soldiers to join in, but they refused. Then we had to turn round and return to Johannesburg. The

people in the last vehicle saw the soldiers stamping on the radiant flowers, crushing them all. How afraid the armed force of the state was of flowers!

Jennifer Kinghorn, South Africa

Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure

Richard Gush Lecture 2005

Our constant effort was to battle the evil of apartheid, the heresy which divided humankind, tried to divide the Spirit, the soil, the water and the air, from itself. The creation of the One God and the Integrity of the Universe was being attacked in a cruel, ferocious and cynical way, which encouraged greed, torture and murder.

Jennifer Kinghorn, South Africa

Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure

Richard Gush Lecture 2005

I was seldom afraid for long. I had been greatly blessed. When I was about 20 I joined a Black Sash demonstration on the City Hall steps where we stood in silence, wearing black sashes and placards protesting against some new Apartheid law. A crowd of rowdy thugs gathered and threw tomatoes at us. As I looked at them I found myself filled with a clear, calm, happy sense that I was doing the right thing, and sorry for them, who were so clearly not in right relationship with God. I was covered by a tangible atmosphere which their mockery and hatred could not penetrate. I knew nothing could hurt my essence.

Jennifer Kinghorn, South Africa

Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure

Richard Gush Lecture 2005

I was reared in a colonial society and at school was trained to be a virtuous colonist. I found that I could not follow the Light, be a Quaker and also be a colonist. I had to overcome the sense of superiority and inferiority, oppressor and oppressed.

My Quaker training of seeing all I met as equals worthy of respect brought me up against the fact of my ignorance and my own inferiority, and slowly broke down the conditioning that I was superior and knew it all. It has been an awesome process – so much so that I have become addicted.

I have a need to meet other people of every background, to discover that of God in them, to be filled again with awe. To discover the Truth that others offer me.

How to help other people embark on the process? Workshops and worship sharing groups give a quick start. Perhaps I can only be a model in showing respect and helping us all to meet in a Spirit of Truthfulness and humbleness? Preaching does not work. Experience does change me. I am still rising from the experience of colonialism.

Jennifer Kinghorn

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2006

Morality

One aspect of morality that concerns many of us today, especially young people, is authenticity. Authenticity is more than just being open and psychologically honest, being what one seems to be, expressing what one really thinks and feels. Being authentic is actually being the real article, a real person, rather than just learning about a lot of ideas that are true. It is knowing what one is not, as well as what one is, and having ideas to back up one's own convictions.

Another aspect of morality is 'being for' something. Haven't most of us considered the question 'Am I just an agent or something significant, or am I just struggling through an impersonal world?' We can be steadfast in adversity only if we believe the former of these alternatives to be true. Healing for a person in distress begins with the discovery of commitment: some point at which the individual cares about something significantly greater than himself.

The idea of 'living with' is basic to morality. In a commercialised civilisation, we tend to treat persons as objects doing something useful for us, or as powers to whom we must sell ourselves. Yet we are terribly eager to be received as a person. 'Living with' is at once the condition most neglected and most desired by modern man. 'Living with' is more than just having pleasant human relations and being amiable to all. It is entering into the thoughts and feelings and intentions of others.

Human life is not meant to be just a quest, in which one is ceaselessly searching, but a pilgrimage, with commitment and caring. One goes forward toward a goal. One ceases trying to be everything, and risks becoming something in particular. Isn't this the essence of all great religions, to do right, to be true, and love one another?

Mary A Holmes

'Complexity and Morality'

Saturday Sermon, The Natal Mercury Newspaper, 25 May 1974

Overcoming colonialism

Our task is to find the new form for the old colonisation. How can the enduring motives – love of adventure, the questing spirit, desire for freedom and opportunity, and the will to service – play their part? How can the resources of the earth be made available for human needs, and spaces of the world be inhabited by healthy, happy and contented people? These are the problems of the new conception of colonisation.

Durban Friends Study Group

Report on Colonies (undated)

If Colonies mean no more than opportunities for personal greed, for exploitation and for the assertion of superiority or for nations' strategic position in time of war; and the human heart and mind can rise no higher than these considerations, then the colonial problem would remain unsolved and Colonies will continue to be sources of discord and war.

Tenth General Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Durban, South Africa 1940

Quaker Testimony on Democracy in Africa

We, the Religious Society of Friends, wish to set out our vision for democracy on the continent of Africa. We commit ourselves, and call on all citizens and governments in Africa, and all international organisations, to initiate political processes to re-establish and strengthen democratic practices in civil society, government, and state institutions in Africa.

The basic premise of a democracy is that a government must reflect the will, and must act as the servant, of all the people of the country.

In order to reflect the will of the people of a country, there must be universal suffrage (based on the principle of equality) and the government must be elected in an election that is free and fair.

In order for an election or a referendum to be free and fair, there must be independent monitoring of all aspects of the election i.e. the preparation of the voters roll, campaigning, the holding of a secret ballot, ballot counting, and the announcement of results. This monitoring is to ensure that each aspect takes place peacefully and in a manner that allows for unfettered political activity. The body conducting the election must be independent of the government of the day.

Further, the political environment in which an election takes place must be democratic. In order for a political environment to be democratic, the country must, at a minimum, respect basic human rights such as freedom of speech (including freedom of the media, particularly of radio, and the need for a free flow of information among people and between the government and the people), freedom of association (particularly the right to form political parties), freedom of movement and freedom of thought and conscience.

We believe that there cannot be a democratic environment if the very basic human needs of citizens are not being met. Unless basic human needs such as food, water, housing, health and education are available to all, then social and political instability will result. Of course, human rights can only be secured when various levels of responsibilities are recognised and taken up to give effect to these rights. Each of us, in our families, and with civil society, government and state structures, is responsible for securing human rights for ourselves and for others.

Once a democratic election has taken place, we believe that the real work of ensuring the continuation of democratic practices begins. A democratically elected government will continue to be democratic only if its practices as a government are designed such that the will of the people continues to be the guiding focus. To be a democratic government, government must ensure that human rights are protected in an on-going fashion, preferably by being enshrined in a Bill of Rights as part of the Constitution.

The government must be structured such that there is a separation of powers between the three branches of government i.e. an independent judiciary, a Parliament that is reflective of the will of the electorate, and an Executive that is accountable to Parliament and, through it, to the people.

The on-going political environment must be characterised by the rule of law, the non-politicisation of the military and the police and by a general climate of security, peace and stability. In our view, this will mean that the government must commit itself to development and to ridding society of structural inequality. Again, this will require a commitment to enshrining socio-economic rights in a Bill of Rights and to working to make these a reality to ensure the meeting of the basic human needs articulated above.

We believe that one of the best indicators of democracy is the development of a strong and vibrant civil society – including business, religious bodies, trade unions and NGOs, that are able to present their visions for society and to negotiate their competing interests and concerns. Civil society needs to be supported by the establishment of independent watchdog bodies such as ombudsmen, public protectors, human rights commissions, corruption commissions and the like which will assist in deepening democracy in a country.

On a day-to-day level, democratic and legitimate governments need to be able to articulate a vision for society that captures the moral imagination of the citizenry and have the ability to implement such a vision by demonstrating a commitment to good governance, including eschewing all forms of corruption, and a will to work and serve the people of a country. If governments act in this way, then the people of a country will become informed, educated and empowered, and this, ultimately, is the best guarantee of a democracy in which government serves the people.

What can Quakers do to nurture democracies and democratic practices in Africa?

- ▶ *Know our country's political framework; stay informed*
- ▶ *In all relationships, social networks, and organisational work, be both a Quaker and a citizen*
- ▶ *Look for that of God in all people, constituencies, and situations*
- ▶ *Sound deep to that of God in all confrontations or political statements*
- ▶ *Seek the spiritual truth in a political situation*
- ▶ *Have the courage to speak truth to power*
- ▶ *Draw strength through the practice of our own testimonies concerning our commitment to peace-making, simplicity, truth-seeking, and social equality*
- ▶ *Encourage political participation, particularly at election times*
- ▶ *Make thoughtful use of the media (for example, letter writing to newspapers, radio or television interviews)*
- ▶ *Have a strong spiritual base rooted in prayer and community*
- ▶ *Offer Alternatives to Violence Programmes*
- ▶ *Articulate a statement of principle on a particular situation*
- ▶ *Facilitate dialogue between opponents*
- ▶ *Be involved in or support direct non-violent action*
- ▶ *Understand and explore the distinction between corporate and individual involvement and action among Friends*
- ▶ *Use Quaker organisations such as FWCC, QPC, QUNO, and find allies and social partners e.g. church groups, unions, NGOs*
- ▶ *Learn from peaceful role models, both current and historical*
- ▶ *Participate in campaigns with other social partners that have a strong resonance with our Quaker testimonies*
- ▶ *Work for an inclusive democracy to limit conflict between 'winners' and 'losers'*
- ▶ *Encourage Quakers to be election monitors.*

*Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting,
Grahamstown, South Africa 2008*

Gender

The Botswana Monthly Meeting has always had a small membership, never more than twenty members and attenders, and currently only five members and about seven attenders.

Nevertheless, over the years the group has maintained a strong social witness. As a result of consultation with other NGOs, welfare personnel, government officials and representatives of local organisations dealing specifically with the needs and problems of women, it was realised that a crying need exists in Botswana to address the situation facing women victims of domestic violence. A survey carried out by a Francistown sociologist confirmed that large numbers of women face the problem, and cases which come to court are a very small proportion of those affected.

The Women's Shelter Project is at the very initial stages of development at the moment, but some background facts may be helpful. In the project document the following objectives have been identified:

- ▶ *To establish a shelter for women and their children who are survivors of domestic violence*
- ▶ *To raise public awareness about the unacceptability and illegality of violence against women*
- ▶ *To form a network with NGOs, Government and other members of civil society currently tackling the issue and*
- ▶ *To offer the women in residence counselling and support towards a better life.*

Shelagh Willet

Botswana Monthly Meeting 1997

HIV and Aids

Quaker Testimony on HIV/Aids

We, the Religious Society of Friends in Central and Southern Africa, support all people infected and affected by HIV/Aids.

We stand with all who have made their HIV/Aids status public.

We believe that HIV/Aids is a worldwide tragedy of epic proportion. It is not a curse or a sin, and people living with HIV/Aids should not be victimised.

We call upon each person in civil society and government to be active in the prevention of the spread of the disease and in the relief of the despair and grief of HIV/Aids sufferers.

We celebrate the right of everyone to a full, joyful sexual experience, within the context of a caring, responsible relationship founded on love and respect.

Central and Southern African Yearly Meeting

Modderpoort, South Africa 2000

[Nozizwe] Madlala-Routledge [deputy minister of Health in South Africa] has, through her outspokenness and out of the box thinking, effectively created an HIV/Aids ministry [and] has not allowed herself to be constrained by establishment. She publicly took an HIV test and urged other leaders to do the same as a way of destigmatising the disease. But if Tshabalala-Msimang [minister of Health] and other party hacks had paid attention, they would have realised that Madlala-Routledge's record shows she has never been one to follow creeds handed down by anyone, however powerful they thought themselves to be. ...

Madlala-Routledge finishes a year that not only saw a change of government's policy on HIV/Aids. Since her public spat with Tshabalala-Msimang, profilers have found it necessary to include the fact that she is a member of a lesser known Christian movement, the Quakers. The undertone, unwittingly or not, being that she is already a member of an organisation that prides itself on free-thinking and the eschewing of hierarchical structures. ...

Inevitably, the deputy-minister's outspokenness will make her unpopular with self-ordained keepers of party discipline. When that time comes she may look to a 17th-century injunction by Quaker theologian Robert Barclay, who said: 'No man, by virtue of any power or principality hath power over the consciences of men, because the conscience of man is the seat and throne of God in him, who has reserved to himself the power of punishing the errors.'

'The Deputy Who Outshone Them All'

Annual Report Card on Ministers, The Mail and Guardian Newspaper

21 December 2006 –4 January 2007

Poverty and wealth

Quaker Testimony on Equality for the 21st Century: Making a start in Southern Africa

Research has shown that economic equality is a key influence on the health and happiness of people and nations. Rich countries with high levels of inequality have lower life expectancy than rich countries with low levels of inequality – indeed some rich and unequal countries have similar life expectation rates as much poorer but more equal countries. This pattern is reflected across a range of social issues such as murder rates, literacy, imprisonment, domestic and child abuse, etc. All these ills are hugely increased by economic inequality.

It is clear that inequality combines with rampant consumerism and a culture of acquisitiveness to create a host of social problems that destroy trust and a sense of community. Ultimately we, rich and poor, are all losers as we feel increasingly alienated from each other. The poor experience a loss of dignity as well as the difficulties of struggling for survival and the well-off focus on accumulating more and more wealth in an effort to barricade themselves from the effects of social conflict.

Since 1994, Southern Africa (including Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa) has finally been able to rid itself of formal racialised inequality and we are learning to break down prejudice in our minds and celebrate our diversity. Many countries now have laws or constitutions that protect against legalised discrimination including racial, gender, ethnic and sexual orientation discrimination but, sadly, we have massive economic inequalities.

Where are our societies now? Despite the eradication of formalised racial and gender inequality, our countries are in trouble. We recognise the desperation of ordinary people who struggle for basics in economies plundered and misused by political elites. We know that South Africa is one of the most dangerous countries in the world with astronomical rates of murder, rape and child abuse and ongoing abuse of economic refugees.

Southern Africa, like the rest of the world, needs a new vision of equality. We believe that the foundational Quaker notion of 'seeing that of God in

every person' could be a guide for developing such a new vision of economic equality for our region and the world.

Reducing inequality of wealth and power is a task that requires continually pushing our governments, our municipalities, our companies, our organisations, our meetings and ourselves to commit to practices of economic equality for all of us, irrespective of race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, language, sexual orientation or age.

We need to try to ensure that none of us is left to feel the desperation that comes with a life characterised by unequal access to status, power and symbols of success; little or no education; unemployment; no access to health care; homelessness, and, in some instances even starvation. If one of us leads a life like this, the humanity of all of us is diminished and as the research shows, the happiness and health of each of us, individually, is depleted.

Being Southern Africans we are well placed to be a beacon to the world on how men and women, black and white, young and old, citizens and refugees, people speaking dozens of languages and being of varied ethnicities can recognise our common humanity by working towards economic equality for all. Our vision and goal is not a society based on the competitive pursuit of wealth and status, but harmonious communities of people sharing the world's resources more equally and flourishing in mutual respect and trust. The basic call is to live our recognition of that of God in every person.

Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Hhlekweni, Zimbabwe 2007

Yesterday I was struck by two stark contrasts. The first was an article in the newspaper – a homeless man, weighing only 42 kilograms and who had lice in his armpits, froze to death on a street in downtown Johannesburg. A few hours later ... a Ferrari, shocking red with cream leather bucket seats growled past the knot of lawyers outside the advocates' chambers: every head turned, faces openly envious, brows knotted.

Material things contribute to happiness only in meeting the basics for life ... food, clean water, shelter, clothing, health, education. Once we have these, more doesn't make us happier. We start comparing and material things contribute to the great comparison game. How does my dress, car, house, watch ... how do my things compare?

We also do this as countries, as families, as societies in small ways and large. Our complex, complicated, comparison-driven way of living is damaging the environment for birds, animals and plants, destroying habitats not just for them but also for us. What we do not see is that competing and comparisons lead to inequality and inequality makes us literally sicken and die.

The key question for us individually and corporately is: How much is enough? The world can easily afford to provide each person with adequate food, clean water, shelter, clothes, health and education. Why don't we do this?

I think it is too simplistic to blame it all on greed. I think there is an inertia or a helplessness about the nature of power: political and economic. So we don't strive for fairness in trade or sharing of resources.

What can I do?

- ▶ *Each one of us needs to consider how much is enough for us and our families*
- ▶ *Let's avoid consumerism and recognise the corrosiveness of envy*
- ▶ *Let's give away things we don't need for others to use – a form of recycling*
- ▶ *Let's invest in businesses that do no harm*
- ▶ *Let's support fair trade*
- ▶ *Let's speak up for a basic income grant and for proper wages for teachers, fire fighters, nurses and police men and women.*

When people die of want in a place of plenty we need to say ... not in my name.

Justine White

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

Our domestic worker had an extended family, a husband who sometimes beat her and multiple relatives who all moved in with her and felt entitled to live off her. They didn't help with her rent, food or water costs... I felt terrible about the disparity in our lives. She and her husband built a shelter of branches and boards for their own bed. We had a five bedroom house with only three children with us and no financial pressure to speak of. Everything I did to alleviate her struggle seemed futile. I sometimes prayed for her in my prayer group, sometimes cried about it, sometimes repressed it. Poverty was all around – in the dump was a series of shacks, people living on the trash of rich folks. This was my first such experience as in America,

poverty was hidden and officially dealt with. The injustice made my guilt feeling surface but I did nothing innovative except to visit her and let her take my daughter to her home so she could see how others live.

Gudrun Weeks

Botswana Monthly Meeting, 2007

Poverty and wealth are usually seen and defined in relation to material things: 'the have nots and the haves'. For me the greatest poverty is that of Spirit, that blinds one from seeing and experiencing God's Abundance in the world. The Quaker value of simplicity enables me to take from the world that which meets my needs and leave the rest for others. 'Live simply in order for others to simply live.'

Some of that intangible wealth that is abundant is Love, Joy, Laughter and Hope. I can give these away without ever losing them but adding to my abundance in the world. Out of LOVE I can share some of my material wealth, but not lose it. A cup of soup shared with a passing woman carrying a bowl of beans, mealies or morogo, trying to make a living for herself and her family.

Keep it moving and circulating in order to create more for all of us!
Poverty will move out!

Duduzile Mtshazo

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

My membership of the SACP [South African Communist Party] stems from the reality of South African life, where huge socio-economic inequalities remain. Despite our national efforts in the past twelve years to remove the huge backlogs in the delivery of basic services, recent human development index reports and poverty studies indicate growing economic inequalities in our country.

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, South Africa

Speaking Truth to Power – Peace is a Struggle

Richard Gush Lecture 2006

Environment

Environmental problems threaten the health and lives of people and other species. We all ultimately depend on the earth to sustain us, providing us with food, air, water and materials. Anything we do that threatens the environment, threatens all of us. Christ taught us to love one another. How can we say we follow Christ and yet we cause global warming? As Friends, we need to think about how our actions affect others. When we cut down on our use of plastic, or thoughtfully switch off appliances to save electricity, we engage in contributing to the health of all species on earth. When we do this we are loving those who might suffer the consequences of global warming.

Alice Thomson

KwaZulu-Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa 2007

So, Friends – and I say this as much to myself as to you – we must remember that we have something so valuable, bequeathed to us by George Fox, John Woolman, Richard Gush and lots more, that we must go out there and share it through daily Creative Encounter. Or do we not have the time? Really?

Now, all that I have said applies to myself first of all, but I must say, in my own defence, that I do now look for opportunities to have Creative Encounters on the very urgent issues associated with climate change and the need for us all to adopt a more sustainable way of living.

My concern has been, ever since my school days, about what is now called the unsustainability of modern life. That the process of producing our food and disposing of our waste just didn't add up and that sooner or later, something had to give even if it meant our eating seaweed. In the same way, something else which is clearly unsustainable has come to pass: the extraordinary polarisation of wealth, where the rich have just got richer and the poor – at least in sub-Saharan Africa – have got poorer.

In reading the gospels, it seems that Jesus didn't have a problem with this per se. He preached more emphatically against the religious establishment than against the rich. He seemed to condone slavery, but he attacked the

habit of passing by on the other side. In other words, we could say he was anti-establishment, not anti-rich or anti-capitalist. Indeed, he sometimes seemed to endorse the smart capitalists of the day. But he doesn't let the rich off. He reminds them of their burden of possessions, their responsibility for Lazarus at the gate and the sheer difficulty they will have entering the Kingdom of Heaven. And he reminds them of the need to care for the sick, the hungry, the thirsty, the naked and those in prison – and let me add: the immigrants and refugees.

Most of us see Lazarus at our gates every day in South Africa. We are certainly aware of the sick, the hungry, the thirsty and the prisoners – and the Zimbabweans. We know that the public health system is crumbling, especially in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape and Limpopo; that many schools are a travesty of education and that the prison system in many cases just isn't fit for purpose. So when we read the Gospels and do not attempt to re-interpret them in a 'modern context', we have a heavy responsibility as Friends, and a very heavy one as South Africans.

We all have our own strengths and weaknesses, and we are not all rich. But that we are here at Yearly Meeting suggests that we have something inside us which can occasionally glimpse the first rays of that wonderful Light breaking through the dark night we have endured, the first intimations of the Kingdom of Heaven coming to a place near us. We can all turn whatever gifts and strengths we have to spreading a little of Jim Bond's happiness every day, to turning this world upside – no, no, it is the world we are already in which is upside down. We must turn it the right way up.

Vernon Gibberd, South Africa

On Turning the World the Right Way Up

Richard Gush Lecture 2008

I can see a future where Africa uses the limitless resource of the sunlight that falls on its enormous area, both to develop its own livelihood and to sell clean energy to the world.

Nevertheless, making the change in our attitudes and behaviour is not going to be easy. Against us are laziness, and inertia and the very human love of comfort. They are powerfully reinforced by the social impulses I referred

to when I spoke about how sensitive we are to our idea of how others see us. This sensitivity has formed a most unhealthy alliance with a scale of human value that is based not on who we are and how we behave but on what we own and what we can pay for. Some of that must have been around for the whole of history, but in our mobile city societies it has come to replace other valuation based on our human qualities, and it is manipulated and exaggerated by advertising – a huge industry using every resource of money, intelligence and skill. In a society at the co-operative end of the spectrum that might matter less, we might share more, and care less about our differences in our possessions. But at the dominant-hierarchical end, towards which inequality is driving us, competition is all, and competition is largely based on how much we spend. That means, how big is our car or house, how new are our household goods, how far we fly for our holiday. Our economic system uses fear, greed and the most negative aspects of us, and tends to divert even our positive and creative attributes to personal and competitive ends.

In the face of all these forces, in each person and in society, is there any hope that we can change our ways, strongly enough and quickly enough?

The question now is not can we do what is needed, but will we. Just as in the Second World War, we need the contributions and agreement of individual people, but government has to take rapid and determined action. The great moral challenge for us all is to change our thinking and our lives to preserve the planet, as effectively as we once did to preserve our own country. But this time we have the whole world to preserve, and every person on it to include in our fellow-feeling. And there's no identifiable enemy to galvanise us into action. That's why I say this is the greatest moral challenge we have ever faced.

What values can we use to meet this challenge, to set up against this huge well-funded lie, that we are what we own? That the only way to live is to use as much as we can of the world resources? What values can help us to see the truth of the situation and act upon it? I think you can guess what I will say next: Those Quaker Testimonies ...

That means equality – so that we recognise the suffering of the people in Bangladesh, the Maldives, in every low-lying coastal city and the dry areas of Africa. Above all, the poor, who have least chance to protect themselves. It has started and will increase, and we are making it worse. A sense of our

equality should lead us to accept the justice of a personal 'carbon ration', the same for every human being world-wide, and enable us to step off the treadmill that makes us compete through our possessions and luxury.

That means truth, so that we are prepared to recognise the uncomfortable fact that our actions have consequences for people all over the world, now and for our children and grandchildren for ever. And to assert that the best nature of people is not about possessions and competition, but friendship and co-operation and living our lives together as equals.

That means simplicity, so that we can be happy to live without more than we need, and don't spend in ways that others can't afford and puts them down.

That means peace, so that we recognise the terrifying potential for conflict that is posed by the effects of climate change, inundating their homes and destroying their livelihoods. Peacemaking not like the fire fighter who waits for the fire to start before trying to put it out, but like the one who comes to your house and shows you how to stop the fire ever happening.

And like Fox and the early Friends, we will need courage, to admit these things to ourselves, and tell them to others, however unpopular or unfashionable it may be.

Where can we find these values? Here, among us for example, Friends meeting at Hlekweni, set up as a statement of equality in a time of deliberate discrimination. Are we ready to be prophets, speaking our truth about how the accepted way of life is leading us into a sick society and a devastated planet, and showing there is another way within our grasp, in which flourishing human communities care for our shared home, the earth?

Martin Wilkinson, Britain

Prophets of Equality

Richard Gush Lecture 2007

Concern for animals

Do we recognise the suffering imposed upon billions of nonhuman animals by human animals in the flesh and milk industry; in vivisection laboratories; in using them for power and entertainment and in the taking of their natural habitat? Given that nonhuman animals are utterly powerless to resist this oppression how is our Society called to act?

Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

Heronbridge, South Africa 2006



ADVICES AND QUERIES



Quakers prefer to give advice and ask questions, rather than preach doctrine. Advices and queries are a collection of notes that help Quakers to reflect on and to live their beliefs in everyday life.

Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting has adapted the 42 advices and queries that appear in Britain Yearly Meeting's *Quaker Faith and Practice* (third edition). These are set out in the first part of the Advices and Queries section in language which resonates with us as Quakers in Africa. Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting has in addition formulated 16 new advices and queries which speak directly to our particular circumstances and concerns. These are in the second section. Some advices and queries have also been translated into the languages used by Quakers in our region.

The earliest surviving collection of advices was issued by early Quaker elders from Balby in Yorkshire in 1656. It concludes:

'Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided: and so in the light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.'

Advices and Queries adapted by Central & Southern Africa Yearly Meeting

1.

Dear Friends, listen to the feelings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as they are from God, whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

Vriende, luister na die gevoelens van liefde en waarheid in julle harte. Vertrou die gevoelens want dit is van God wie se Lig ons ons donkerheid uitwys en ons tot nuwe lewe bring.

Language: *Afrikaans*

Zihlobo ezithandekayo, phulaphulani kwizimvo zothando nenyano ezintliziyweni zenu. Thembela kubo njengabasuka ku-Thixo, abakukhanya kwabo kusibonisa ubumnyama kuze kusiphathele ubomi obutsha.

Language: *isiXhosa*

Zihlobo ezithandekayo, lalelani imizwa yothando neqiniso ezinhliziyweni zenu. Niyethembe ngoba ivela kuNkulunkulu, onguku Khanya okusibonisa ubumnyama esinabo, asisondeze ekuphileni okusha.

Language: *isiZulu*

Bavandimwe, nshuti, nimwumvire urukundo n'ukuri biri mu mitima yanyu. Mubyizere kuko bituruka ku Mana, ari yo iduha urumuri rutwerekwa umwijima muri twe, rukatwerekwa ku buzima bushyashya.

Language: *Kinyarwanda*

Kini bangane, lalelanini imizwa yothando leqiniso ezihliziyweni zenu. Lizethembe ngoba zivela kuNkulunkulu, njengoba ukukhanya kwakhe kusitshengisa ubunyama njalo kusiphathela impilo entsha.

Language: *Ndebele*

Shamwari dzinodikanwa, tererai kune zvamunozwa nekuda kwerudo uye nechokwadi mumwoyo yenyu. Zvibvumei nekuti zvinobva kuna Mwari, uye chiedza chake chinotiratidza rima redu uye chinotiratidza upenyu hutsva.
Language: *Shona*

This is so even when political and economic structures are crumbling around you and you are suffering great hardship and persecution. Do not lose faith and hope or give in to the temptation to resort to violence, because violence only creates more violence.

Lowa izimiso zepolitika lomnotho zibhidlika empilweni yakho, uphakati kokuhlupheka lokuhlukulukuzwa, ungalahli ukholo lwakho lethemba, njalo ungalingeki ukuthi ungenekubudlwangudlwangungobaubudlwangudlwangu buletha ubudlwangudlwangu obuphindiweyo.
Language: *Ndebele*

Kunyangwe zvmatongerwe enyika nezveupfumi hwenyika zvingakufambirei zvakanaka uye murikushupika nekutambudzwa musarase tariro, kana kubvuma kuedzwa motanga kurwisana. Nokuti kurwisana kunounza kurwisana kwakanyanya.
Language: *Shona*

2.

Do you experience the abundance of life that comes from opening all aspects of your being to the Spirit of Christ? Do you feel the healing power and love of God within you and others as your worship tends to growth? Treasure your own image and experience of God however it comes to you, no matter how you understand it, remembering that our faith is a way rather than a creed.

3.

Do we find times of stillness on our own? When we are quiet, are we open to the presence of the Spirit? It is in the silence that we find the inward source of our strength. In the stillness we need to be open to our awareness of the Light within, and to do this on a regular basis. Let us hold ourselves and others in the Light, knowing that all are embraced.

4.

The Religious Society of Friends is based on people who experience the Living Christ and That of God in every person. For us in Africa, this means finding Oneness in Christ – creating unity and valuing the richness of cultural diversity.

Umbutho wabahlobo benkosi, uxhomekeke kubantu abanamava okuphilelela iNkosi nabaziyo ukuba uThixo ukhona nakwabanye abantu. Kuthi thina ma-Afrika, oku kuthetha ukufumana ubunye ku-Krestu – sakhe ubunye yaye samkele ukuchuma kwe- nkolelo zethu ezahlukahlukeneyo
Language: *isiXhosa*

Religious Society of Friends yeyame ebatwini abaphila loKristu njalo abananzelela okukaKhulunkulu emuntwini wonke. Khiti thina eAfrica lokhu kutsho ubunye kuKristu okugoqela ukubambana, izinto esiziqakathekisayo emphilweni yethu, ukuqakatheka emasikweni lokuba lemibono etshiyeneyo.
Language: *Ndebele*

Religious Society of Friends isangano revanhu vanorarama vachiona upenyu hwaKristu nekuzwawo upenyu hwaMwari muvanhu vose. Kunesu muAfrica izvi zvinorewa kuwana humwechete munaKristu uho hunosanganisa kubatana, kukosha nekusiyana kwetsika nemagariro.
Language: *Shona*

Uyahlonipha na, lokhu okuvela kuThixo okuhlala kukhona kwabanye abantu? Lapha e Africa sivela kwamanye amazwe lendlela esenza ngayo izinto azifani/ kazifani. Sonke sakhula sikhuluma ulimi lwethu kumbe ngendlela ezifanayo. Wonke umuntu uhlangane loThixo ngendlela yakhe futhi kumele ukuthi sidinge iqiniso yethu loThixo.
Language: *isiXhosa*

5.

Take time to learn about other people's experiences of the Light. Remember the importance of the bible, the writings of Friends and all writings which reveal the ways of God. As you learn from others, can you in turn give

freely and share what you have gained? While respecting the experiences and opinions of others, do not be afraid to say what you have found and what you value. Appreciate that doubt and questioning can also lead to spiritual growth and to a greater awareness of the Light that is in us all.

6.

Do you work gladly with other religious groups in the pursuit of common goals? While remaining faithful to Quaker insights, try to interact with people of other faiths, creating friendships together.

Niyasebenzisana yini ngenjabulo, namanye amaqembu ezenkolo ukufinyelela kuleyo migomo efanayo? Niloku nibambelele okholweni nezifundo zobuQuaker, nizame ukusebenza ngokuzwana, nobuhlobo nabanye bezinye izinkolo.

Language: *isiZulu*

7.

Remember the Spirit of God is with you all day and everywhere. We learn more about God all our lives and in surprising ways. We can be inspired by nature, science, the arts, our work, our community, by our history and our ancestors, in both sad and happy times. Are you open to new insights, wherever these may come from? Do you test new ideas with care and prayer?

Onthou dat die Gees van God met jou is, altyd en orals. Ons leer meer oor God ons hele lewe lank en op verrassende wyse. Ons kan inspirasie vind in die natuur, wetenskap, kuns, ons werk, ons gemeenskap, ons geskiedenis en by ons voorouers, in slegte en in goeie tye. Is jy bereid en gereed om nuwe lig te ontvang, waar dit ook al vandaan kom? Toets jy nuwe ideë sorgvuldig en in gebed?

Language: *Afrikaans*

Khumbula ukuthi umoya kaKhulunkulu ulawe usuku lonke njalo indawo zonke. Sifunda okunengi ngoNkulunkulu emiphilweni yethu, njalo ngedlela ezimangalisayo. Singakhuthazwa yimvelo, izifundo ze Science,

Arts, imisebenzi yethu ebantwini esihlala lobo kuzigaba esihlala kuzo, imbali yethu, okhokho bethu ezikhathini zokudana lokujabula. Uyavulela ukukhanya okutsha kumbe isibane esitsha kungakhathazekile ukuthi kuvela ngaphi? Uyayihlola na iminakano emitsha ngokunanzelela lokukhuleka?

Language: *Ndebele*

Rangarirai kuti mweya waMwari uri mauri zuva rose uye kwese kwese. Tinodzidza nezvaMwari mukati mekurarama kwedu uye nenzira dzinoshamisa. Tinogona kukurudzirwa nezvisikwa, zveumhizha, zvizweza, zviumbwa, mabasa edu matinogara, nhorondo yedu, madziteteguru edu mukusuwa nemukufara. Makasununguka here kuchiedza chitsva, kunyange kupi zvako kwachinobva? Munyedza here mazano matsva zvakanaka uye muminamoto?

Language: *Shona*

8.

Worship is our response to an awareness of God. We can worship alone, but when we join with others in expectant waiting we may discover a deeper sense of God's presence. We seek a gathered stillness in our meetings for worship so that all may feel the power of God's love drawing us together and leading us. Music, song and vocal ministry are also ways in which we can allow the Spirit to move in and among us in meeting for worship.

9.

In worship we enter with reverence into communion with God and respond to the teachings of the Holy Spirit. Come to meeting for worship with heart and mind prepared. Offer up yourself and all your cares and anxieties to God's guidance so that you may find 'the evil weakening in you and the good raised up.'

Ekukhonzeni singena ngokuvezelwa ubudlelwano loNkulunkulu silandela ukukholwa ngumoya oyingcwele. Buyani emihlanganweni lizokhonza lizilungiselele, ngehliziyo langengqondo, lizinikele lakho konke elikukhathalelayo, lokulihluphayo, ngokuqondiswa nguNkulunkulu, ukuze okubi konke kwehle khiti, okuhle kuphakame.

Language: *Ndebele*

Pakunamata tinosvika pedyo naMwari uye tinoterera kuMweya mutsvene. Uyai kumisangano kuzonamata mwoyo nepfungwa dzenyu zvakagadzirira. Zvipirei imwi, zvamunazvo uye zvamunoshuvira kunaMwari kuti zvichengetedzwe kuitira kuti zvakaipa zvishaye simba mwamuri asi zvakanaka zvichisimudzirwa.

Language: *Shona*

10.

Come regularly to meeting for worship even when you are angry, depressed, tired or spiritually cold. In the silence ask for and accept the prayerful support of others joined with you in worship. Try to find a spiritual wholeness which encompasses suffering as well as thankfulness and joy. Prayer, springing from a deep place in the heart, may bring healing and unity as nothing else can. Let meeting for worship nourish your whole life.

11.

Be honest with yourself. What unpleasant truths might you be avoiding? When you recognise your failings, do not harp on these. Encourage yourself to begin afresh with these new insights. Trust that the love and strength of God will encourage and support you.

Na o elelloa bohlokoa ba setsoalle se molemong oa hore se hole re utloane/ mamelane hape re hlomphane? Ha re ntšana se inong, re bula menyetla ea ho utloa bohloko esita le ho ba le thabo; 'me sena se thusa hore Moea o Halalelang o iponahatse.

Language: *Sesotho*

12.

If you come to meeting for worship with a busy mind or become distracted, allow yourself to become still so that you may again become aware of God's presence. Hear the ministry of others in a spirit of acceptance. Listen for its meaning, and recognise that even if it is not God's word for you, it may be for someone else. Remember that we all share responsibility for meeting for worship whether our ministry is in silence or is expressed by voice.

13.

Do not assume that vocal ministry is never to be your part. Faithfulness and sincerity in speaking, perhaps in your mother tongue, even briefly, may open the way to fuller ministry from others. When prompted to speak, wait patiently to know that the leading and the time are right, but do not let a sense of your own unworthiness hold you back. Pray that your ministry may arise from your own deep cultural and spiritual experience, and trust that words will be given to you. Try to speak audibly and distinctly, and with sensitivity to the needs of others. Beware of speaking predictably or too often, and of making additions towards the end of a meeting when it was well left before.

14.

Are your meetings for church affairs held in a spirit of worship and in dependence on the guidance of God? Listen to each other with open minds and listen in the silence for God's guidance. Remember we seek a decision which all support and not a majority decision. As we wait patiently for divine guidance our experience is that the right way will open and we shall be led into unity.

15.

Do you take part as often as you can in business meetings? Are our business meetings held in a spirit of worship? Are you familiar enough with Quaker ways to contribute to its disciplined processes? Do you consider difficult questions with an informed mind as well as a generous and loving spirit? Are you prepared to let your insights and personal wishes take their place alongside those of others or be set aside as the meeting seeks the right way forward? Listen to each other with open minds and listen in the silence for God's guidance. Remember we seek a decision which all support and not a majority decision.

16.

Do you welcome the diversity of culture, language, ethnicity, gender, race, sexual orientation and expressions of faith in our lives, meetings, yearly meeting and in the world community of Friends? Seek to increase

your understanding of and gains from our rich African heritage and wide range of spiritual insights. Uphold your own and other yearly meetings in your prayers.

17.

Do you respect that of God in everyone even though he or she may come from a foreign country, have different social and religious customs, may be dressed differently or speak a strange language? Each of us has met God in a different way and each must find his or her own way to the truth.

When words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others. Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people's opinions may contain for you. Avoid hurtful criticism and provocative language. Do not allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. Think it possible that you may be mistaken.

18.

How can we make the meeting a welcoming community where each person is cared for, and strangers feel at home? Get to know one another in Spirit, understanding that we all have failings, and at the same time pray for each other. As we enter into the ups and downs of others' lives, are we ready to give help, ask for help, and to receive help? Our meeting will be a channel for God's love and forgiveness.

19.

Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. Remember that the meeting as a whole shares a responsibility for every child in its care. Seek for them as for yourself a full development of God's gifts and the abundant life that can be ours. How do you share your deepest beliefs with them, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them? Do you invite them to share their insights with you? Are you ready both to learn from them and to accept your responsibilities towards them?

20.

Do you give sufficient time to sharing with others in the meeting – both visitors and long-time members – your understanding of worship, of service, and of commitment to the Quaker witness? Do you give a right proportion of your money to support Quaker work?

21.

Do you cherish your friendships, so that they grow in depth, understanding, spirituality and mutual respect? In close relationships we may risk pain as well as find joy. When experiencing great happiness or great hurt we may be more open to the working of the Spirit.

22.

Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgements about the life journeys of others. Do we foster the spirit of mutual understanding and forgiveness which God asks of us? Remember that each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God.

23.

Marriage has always been regarded by Friends as a religious commitment rather than merely a civil contract. Both partners should offer, with God's help, an intention to support and cherish one another for life. Remember that happiness depends on a love that is understanding and steadfast on both sides. In times of difficulty remind yourself of the value of prayer, of listening to each other, trust, courage, open communication and a sense of humour.

24.

Children and young people need love, shelter, food, education, safety and health. Are we doing all we can to uphold and support parents, older siblings, grandparents, extended family and other caregivers who carry these responsibilities?

In Africa we experience high numbers of orphans, child soldiers and youth offenders, abandoned and homeless children, and child-headed households.

These children are particularly vulnerable and are at risk of never having their basic needs met. What do we do personally, as communities and as nations, to uphold, nurture, support and take care of them?

25.

A long-term relationship brings tension as well as fulfilment. If your relationship with your partner is under strain, have you, together, tried to discover each other's points of view and concerns? Have you tried to understand your own feelings, which can be powerful and destructive? Have you considered the wishes and feelings of any children involved? They have an enduring need for love and security. Have you sought the help offered by God and, if needed, by others? Quaker meetings and other services can give help.

If you separate or divorce, are the arrangements between yourselves based on compassion and a concern for the best interests of children and your former partner? Avoid bitterness at all costs.

26.

Do you recognise the needs and gifts of each member of your family, household and community? Don't forget about yourself! Work to make your home and community a place where there is love, friendship, peace and enjoyment. Make it a place where all who live there or visit are refreshed by God's presence.

27.

Live adventurously and consciously. Risk moving beyond your comfort zone, reaching beyond the divisions of the past and present – embrace diversity, greeting that of God in each other. We are always faced by choices. Welcome them. Let your life speak. Reflect on your experiences.

28.

In trying to decide what direction to take, at moments of change in life, seek advice from trusted sources and your conscience. Wait for the right time to undertake or relinquish responsibilities without fear, pride or guilt. Embrace the task with loving enthusiasm.

29.

Approach your advancing years with grace, confidence, good humour, courage and hope. As far as possible make arrangements for your care in good time, showing consideration for the needs of others.

Although old age may bring increasing disability and loneliness, it can also bring serenity; less attachment to material things, people and issues; and increased insights and wisdom. Pray that in your final years you may be enabled to find new ways of receiving and reflecting God's love.

30.

It is for us to live daily in the here and now, and on dying simply return to our source, the Light. As African Quakers, our experience of Christianity and African spirituality give us the knowledge and comfort that the wisdom and guidance of those who died before us will remain part of our lives.

Be alongside those who mourn in loving fellowship, giving them time and space for the healing process. Know that both the departed and those who mourn are always together in the Light.

31.

We are called to live 'in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars.' Do you faithfully maintain our testimony that war and all preparation for war are inconsistent with the Spirit of God?

32.

Bring into God's light those emotions, attitudes and prejudices in yourself and your involvement in oppressive structures or systems, which lie at the root of destructive conflict. Acknowledge your need for forgiveness and grace and your gratitude for the forgiveness and grace you have experienced.

In what ways are you involved in the work of reconciliation and the promotion of justice? Consider your daily interactions with persons begging at your gate, the taxi driver in front of you, and the people all around you. Consider also how you might spread your influence to larger groups and speak your truth to power.

33.

Are you alert to practices here and throughout the world which discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are because of their beliefs? Bear witness to the humanity of all people, including those who break society's conventions. There are new growing points in our social and economic life; seek to recognise them. Try to develop a positive outlook. The causes of injustice, social unrest and fear are still present. Are you working to bring about a just and compassionate society which allows everyone to develop their capacities and fosters the desire to serve?

34.

Remember your responsibilities as a citizen for the conduct of local, national, and international affairs. Do not shrink from the time and effort your involvement may demand.

35.

Respect the laws of the state but let your first loyalty be to God's purposes. If you feel impelled by strong conviction to break the law, search your conscience deeply. Ask your meeting for prayerful support. This can give you guidance and strength, and help the right way to become clear to you.

36.

Do you uphold those who are acting under concern, even if their way is not yours? Can you lay aside your own wishes and prejudices while seeking with others to find God's will for them?

37.

Are you honest and truthful in all you say and do? Do you maintain strict integrity in business transactions and in your dealings with individuals and organisations? Do you use money and information entrusted to you with discretion and responsibility? Taking oaths implies a double standard of truth; in choosing to affirm instead, be aware of the claim to integrity that you are making.

38.

If pressure is brought upon you to lower your standard of integrity, are you prepared to resist it? Our responsibilities to God and our neighbour may

involve us in taking unpopular stands. Do not let the desire to be sociable, or the fear of seeming peculiar, determine your decisions.

39.

Consider which of the ways to happiness offered by society are truly fulfilling and which are potentially corrupting and destructive. Be discriminating when choosing means of entertainment and information. Resist the desire to acquire possessions or income through unethical investment, speculation or games of chance.

40.

In view of the harm done by the use of alcohol, tobacco and other habit-forming drugs, consider whether you should limit your use of them or refrain from using them altogether. Remember that any use of alcohol or drugs may impair judgment and put both the user and others in danger.

41.

Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength. Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need or cannot afford. Do you keep yourself informed about the effects your style of living is having on the global economy and environment?

Know yourself. Each of us needs to decide for ourselves what is enough. Do you avoid elaborate lifestyles and conventions? Do you regularly pause and give thanks for all that you have? Do you find ways of sharing?

42.

We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show an equal loving consideration for all people and creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that we better use the earth responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God's continuing creation.

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'Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.'

George Fox

1656

Central & Southern Africa Yearly Meeting Advices and Queries

1.

Before we love others, we need to love ourselves. How do we treasure our own Light and gifts? How do we learn to share what we have to offer?

Do you seek to find the place where your own talents and the world's needs meet?

Uyadinga ukufumana indawo lapho iziphiwo zakho lezinswelo zomhlaba okupheleliwa khona?

Language: *Ndebele*

Munotsvaka here nzvimbo dzinosangana zvipo zvenyu nezvido zvenyika?

Language: *Shona*

Be willing to grow and develop the hidden gifts within you. Do not be too fearful or shy to use these gifts in the service of fellow human beings. Others will be there to support you as you take up the challenge.

2.

When we gather, we seek a unity of the people of God. We seek the opportunity to be open to and receive from one another. We seek the communion and companionship of people from all walks of life, young and old, men and women.

How do we maintain friendships across different living conditions such as poverty, political instability, and HIV and Aids? How do we respond to the challenge of sharing, caring and loving in these situations?

Re ka tsoela pele joang hoba metsoalle maamong ao bofuma bo jeleng setsi, ho na le meferefere ea lipolotiki esita le lefu la HIV le Aids? Re tla hlola

joang phephetso ea ho ntsetsa pele ho arolelana seo re nang le sona le ba bang, ho tsotellana le ho ratana maamong ana a hlobaetsang?

Language: *Sesotho*

Be gentle with others. Be careful not to judge and criticise too quickly and acknowledge your own failings. Understand imperfection as a part of being human and be generous in your forgiveness of other people.

3.

No matter how difficult the circumstances, look for the good and positive in everyday life. Face the reality of sorrow and hardship, but make a conscious choice to live with joy, encouraging those around you.

4.

Do you work to get rid of all feelings of superiority for whatever reason? Do you listen carefully, ask questions, and realise that fresh and valuable insights may come from whom we expect it least?

Werk jy daaraan om ontslae te raak van alle gevoelens van meerwaardigheid vir watter rede ookal? Luister jy sorgvuldig, vra en besef dat nuwe en waardevolle insig kan kom van diegene van wie ons dit die minste verwag?

Language: *Afrikaans*

Uyazama ukwenqabela ukuziphakamisa kumbe ukuzikhukhumeza okungabangelwa yizinto lezizatho ezitshiyeneyo? Uyalalelisisa, uzibuze imbuzo njalo unanzelelele ukhuthi imbono eligugu emitsha iyadingakala?

Language: *Ndebele*

Munoshanda here kubvisa kuzvikukumadza kuri mamuri? Munoterera zvakanyatsokwana here, muchibvunza uye muchiona kuti pfungwa itsva uye dzakakosha dzinobva kune uyo atisingatarisiri?

Language: *Shona*

5.

Learn to live with ambiguity, recognising that it is very difficult to explain our own cultures, let alone someone else's. Are we committed to seeking to understand one another's languages, cultures and traditions? Do we set aside time and make opportunities to share in life experiences and to learn to communicate with one another?

6.

Recognising the need for personal safety, you should nevertheless seek creative opportunities for engaging with neighbours and communities.

Leka ho fumana ditsela tse ngata tsa ho aha moya wa boahisane le botshepehi ho metswalle le baahisane ba hao. Etsa hona o ntse o mamela letswalo la hao, esere mohlomong wa tlola tekano boikitlaetsong boo ba hao. Hopola hore boipaballo ke taba e hlokolosi.

Language: *Sesotho*

7.

Are our lives whole? Do we divide our worlds into spiritual activities, family life, secular pursuits and political action, into good people and bad people, us and them, old ways and new ways? Let's make them one. Let's find the goodness in the other, the infinite in the humdrum, the wisdom in the ancestor, the eternal in the here-and-now. Let's elicit these surprises to engage the powers of oppression, to set people free, to live creatively. May our lives ring with truth to the whole of our being, the whole of humankind, the whole of the earth.

8.

HIV and Aids is a concern of all people in Africa. As African Quakers, we see that of God in everyone, and open our hearts to all people, regardless of whether they are HIV positive or negative. Do you try to learn as much as possible about HIV and Aids? Do you know whether you are HIV positive or negative? Do you talk openly about HIV and your own situation with someone you trust? Do you offer practical support to those living with or affected by HIV and Aids?

9.

Do you seek the positive in political developments which you feel you need to protest against? Do you listen with care to the arguments and seek points of agreement before putting an opposing point of view? Is your opposition based on spiritual conviction and can you articulate this?

Pray for the oppressor as well as the oppressed, that a way forward can be achieved based on hope and a vision of the peaceable kingdom. In situations where there is conflict, whether religious, ethnic, political or economic, are you a peacemaker? In situations where there is bribery or corruption, are you able to uphold your morals? A bribe breaks the other person's morals and breaks your own doubly. Seek the courage to speak truth to power and uphold those working for peace and justice.

10.

In these days of global warming and its potentially disastrous results, are we as meetings and as individuals taking care to be well-informed and aware of God's presence, to base our decision-making not only on concerns for justice but also on our ecological responsibilities? We strive to create a climate of peace through the right sharing of resources. We rest in the knowledge that God always provides abundantly. Do we ensure that our neighbours' basic necessities are met? Do we provide for orphans and the under-resourced in our communities? Do we respond to requests for help and assistance keeping in mind we are asked to love our neighbours as ourselves? Do we set aside time and make opportunities to share life experiences and learn to communicate with one another?

11.

Do you walk with God in your working life? Have you considered whether your work meets real human needs? Do you seek approval from God or only from people? Do you do your work willingly and cheerfully? Whatever work you do, do it well and for its own sake, not for the sake of the rewards it may bring.

12.

When at home attend meeting for worship regularly. This will sustain you when you travel to other regions or countries. When you are away from home, try to attend a meeting wherever you are. There are Quakers in many countries across the world. You will find the same fellowship and worship that you experience in your own meeting.

13.

When you bring a ministry to meeting for worship, or an advice or query to read, do you bring one that is really just for yourself? Do you bring one that, consciously or sub-consciously, you wish to direct at someone else? Or do you choose one that you feel moved to share with the gathered meeting, one that will remind us of where we have come from or where we are going together?

14.

Are you challenging yourself and your meeting to strengthen the Religious Society of Friends in Central and Southern Africa? Prayerfully consider becoming a full member, taking up office among Friends, and helping worship groups and allowed meetings to become full monthly meetings.

15.

Do we strive to enable others also to find the peace of Friends' experiences?

16.

Open your hearts to those suffering from HIV and Aids. Pray for them, accept them and help in as many practical ways as possible.

Maak jou hart oop vir die wat aan VIGS ly. Bid vir hulle, aanvaar hulle en help op so veel praktiese maniere as moontlik.

Language: *Afrikaans*

Vula intliziyo yakho kwabo banesifo sengculaza. Bathandazele, bamkele uze ubancede kangangokoko unako.

Language: *isiXhosa*

Vulani izinhliziyo zenu kulabo abakhungethwe igciwane le HIV kanye nesifo se Ngculazi. Nibathandazele, nibemukele, nibancede noma ngaziphi izindlela enikhona ukubanceda ngazo.

Language: *isiZulu*

Mufungurire imitima yanyu abavandimwe bandujwe n'agakoko gatera SIDA n'abamaze gufatwa nayo. Mubasengere, kandi mubafashe mu buryo bushoboka ubwo ari bwo bwose.

Language: *Kinyarwanda*

Vulani inhliziyo zenu kulabo abagula umkhuhlane wengculaza (HIV/Aids). Libakhulekele, libamkele njalo libasize ngazo zonke indlela elingabasiza ngazo.

Language: *Ndebele*

Itšepehalle hao bua ka linnete tse bohloko. O seke oa li pata. O seke oa lula o nahana ka bophelo ba hao ba khale ba sebe. Ikhothatse ka hore o 'mupuo a e mocha. Ha re rapela 'moho re tšepa hore lerato le matla a Molimo li ka re khothatsa.

Language: *Sesotho*

Zarurai mwoyo yenyu kune avo varikurwara ne HIV/Aids vanamatirei, vatorei sewamwe wenyu muchiwabatsira nenzira dzose.

Language: *Shona*



GLOSSARY

We are indebted to Rex Ambler and Britain Yearly Meeting for allowing us to use selected terms from the Glossary of Truth of the Heart, Rex Ambler's book on George Fox.

Christ

Originally a title given to Jesus of Nazareth, meaning literally 'the anointed', that is 'the one empowered by God', it became a name both for the man Jesus and for the eternal son of God who became human in Jesus. In Fox it nearly always carries this strong theological meaning: Christ is 'the word of God' or 'the light of God' by which God created the world and communicates with human beings, bringing them to an awareness and experience of God. So in Fox, Christ can be said to be both the source of creation itself and also the divine light in every human being.

experimental

We would now say 'experiential', since 'experimental' in the 17th Century referred to the whole range of experience, and not just to the disciplined testing of the scientific method. Fox's meaning is captured by Harvey in 1593, 'Trusting none, but which they find certainly, and experimentally true' (Philad. 10.6), and by Bishop Hall in 1644, speaking of 'those solid divines that experimentally know what belongs to the healing of a sinful soul' (Sermons, 110). However, Fox used the word to indicate how he came to a knowledge of the truth and he suggested elsewhere that others might test this truth by undergoing a similar experience, so in effect he included our modern sense of 'experiment' in his use of the word.

Friends

The first followers and companions of Fox were known as 'Friends in the truth,' deriving the sense from John 15:14, where Jesus says to his disciples, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.'

life

The spiritual condition of being alive, in contrast to the condition of spiritual death. The word can also mean 'the divinely implanted power or principle by which this condition is produced' (OED), which is in fact the central idea in Fox. So 'the life' becomes yet another reference to 'that of God' within people, but describing a different aspect. It applies especially to the experience of meeting.

light

'The light within' would normally have been understood as a natural capacity for understanding and insight, like reason or conscience, but Fox differed from most in saying it was a special, divine capacity, a function of the Spirit of God within people, which enabled them e.g. to 'see themselves.' He was anticipated by writers like Francis Rous who wrote in the 1630s and 40s, e.g. 'The soul has two eyes – one human reason, the other far excelling that, a divine and spiritual Light... By it the soul doth see spiritual things as truly as the corporal eye doth corporal things' (Treatises and Meditations, 230). Fox followed closely the Gospel of John on this theme, especially the Prologue (1:1-18, e.g. v.9: 'That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,' but cf. 3:19, 12:35).

ministry

Service to people, usually spoken.

spirit

From the Latin spiritus, 'breath, air,' it is the animating principle when applied to humans, or the immaterial centre as opposed to the material body. The 'spirit of God' is the power in God to inspire and energize human beings. To distinguish it from the human spirit or an 'evil spirit' it is sometimes also called the 'holy spirit' or 'holy ghost'.

testimony

A solemn witness or confession in public, a protest, either by word or action.

that of God

This is an abbreviation, devised by Fox himself it seems, of a phrase like 'that of God in thee which purifies' or 'that in thee which shows thee thyself.' 'The relative clause may also be altogether omitted so that "that of God," in this or some slightly different form, becomes a short way of referring to the Light Within...' (Seppänen, 183). Sometimes, when he wishes to make a point very clear, which is not so often (!), he will use the phrase 'something of God' or 'something in thee,' e.g. 'There is something of the invisible power of God in every man and woman' (3:15), and 'There is something in them that tells them that they should not practise those evils.'

witness

To witness is not to see, as it is today, but to bear witness to what one has seen. So 'to witness to the truth' is 'to bear witness to what one has seen of the truth.' This can be applied to the light within, which is 'the witness of God' in people, and to the words and actions of people who have already embraced the truth and live by it.

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The advice 'live adventurously' has guided Quakers for centuries. Living adventurously is being open to new ways of doing things, and always seeking the best way even if it isn't the easiest. It's consciously and deliberately choosing the way that offers the fullest opportunity to use your gifts in the service of god and the community.

Through their commitment to equality, non-violence and social responsibility, the small group of Quakers in Southern Africa has had a significant influence on the political and social events of the region. Quakers prefer to be identified by what they do and how they live, rather than by what they believe, so this collection of writings and sayings is neither a catalogue of beliefs, nor a list of creeds and commandments. It is the collective wisdom and experience of Quakers from all over Southern Africa documenting the joys, tribulations and challenges of 'living in the Light' in an African context.

This book contains Quaker responses to apartheid, Aids, the arms deal, global climate change, the environment, poverty, genocide and more. But it's also a celebration of living in the Light – of walking cheerfully over the world seeking the good in everyone. It's about living as a Quaker in Africa – about Quaker processes and the Quaker approach to making decisions, and it is a testimony to the Quaker commitment to non-violence, equality and simple living. In short, it's about living meaningfully, and honouring what is sacred without being tied to religious dogma.

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