

# *Travelling on Outward and Inward Journeys*

***Nancy Fee  
Richard Gush Lecture  
Southern Africa Yearly Meeting  
Religious Society of Friends***

***January 2018***



# Appreciation

- My deep appreciation for the honour in being asked to give the Richard Gush Lecture for our Yearly Meeting.
- I have very much enjoyed being part of the Pretoria Meeting and the Southern Africa Yearly Meeting for the past five years. It's been a wonderful experience – sometimes challenging, always rewarding. Thank you.
- All protocol observed.

# ***Major Themes***

# Themes

- To have an integrated and full life, we need to connect our inward and outward journeys. Each side of our life needs to support the other.
- Quakerism provides collective practices and a framework for our journey in life, and a way to integrate our inward and outward journeys
- George Fox urged us to “Let our lives Speak”. Another phrasing of this is by Henry David Thoreau: “Be not simply good – be good for something”

# Themes

- We live in a complex (and often broken) world. We need to recognize complexity, while maintaining our dreams and hope. Together, we can do great things
- At home in the world

***Beginnings***





# Child of Immigrants

- English and Irish parents, who immigrated to Canada and America. A four country mix, although with strong historical and cultural linkages.
- I grew up in Canada, very aware of the history of the English in Ireland – historical injustices were often discussed. My father held strong Republican views
- My mother (English, from Manchester) was Catholic, and my father (Irish, from Dublin) was Quaker. We were exposed to both faiths growing up.

# Aware of a larger world

*(As the child of immigrants) ... my roots are not directly below me, beneath this ground that I stand on, but instead reach to many parts of the world. ...many immigrants are travellers whose wandering feet and thoughts are never still.*

Quetzal Maucci, “Children of Immigrants”, New York Times

# *Canada at 150*



# True North, Strong and Free

- Growing up in Canada in the 1960's and 70's
- aware of issues of social justice, women's rights, language and minority rights (French speakers, Native Canadians)
- Civil Rights and anti Viet Nam war movements

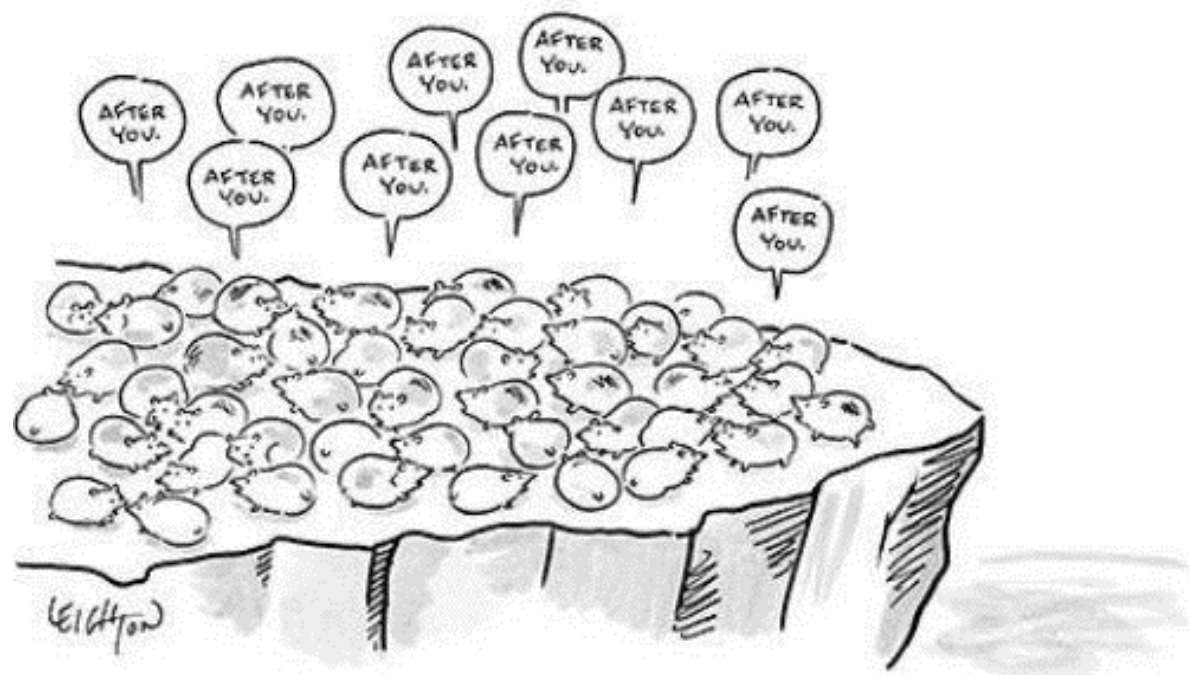


# Canada Nice

- Strong social and cultural pressure to be modest, polite and helpful – “Canada nice”
- Multicultural
- International commitments to human rights, gender equality and development
- Subjects of the Queen
- Low levels of violence - except at (ice) hockey games



# CANADIAN LEMMINGS



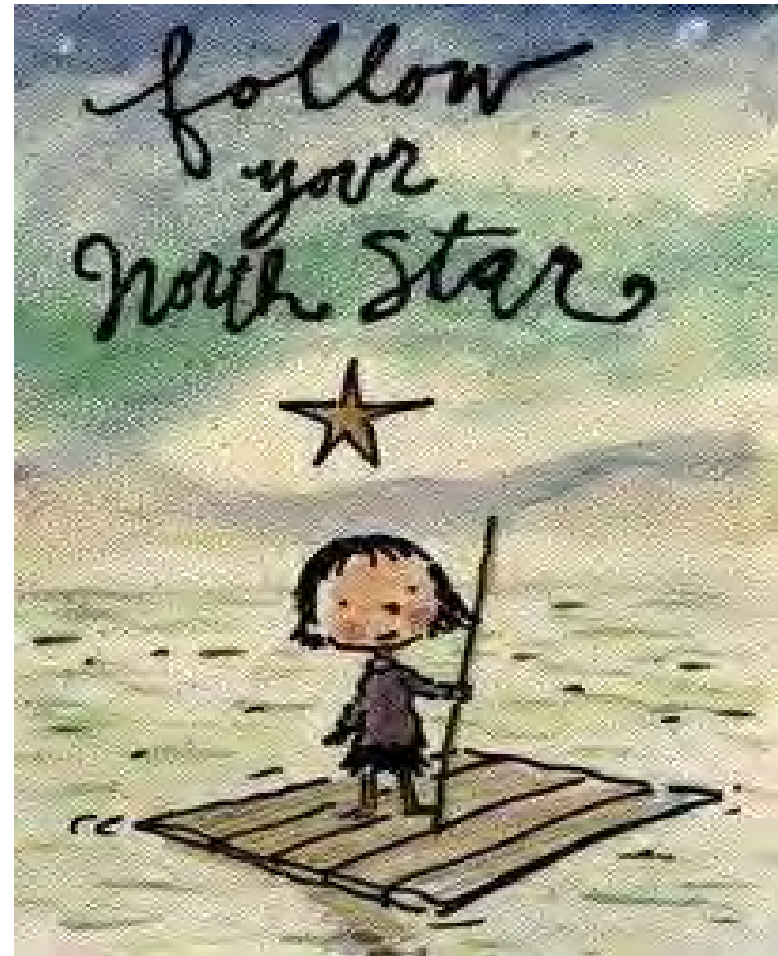
# Canadian Quakers



- Quakers started early in Canada, with English Friends first visiting in 1656
- There are now about 1,600 Members and Attenders in 26 Monthly Meetings. We have one Yearly Meeting.
- Historical connections with American Quaker efforts at the end of the Underground Railway, and providing humanitarian support during the Viet Nam war.
- Strong leadings in indigenous rights, restorative justice and refugee work

# Growing up Canadian and Quaker

- Strong commitment to service, activism, and social justice as an expression of faith
- development issues
- Interest in seeing and being part of a wider world
- I started university early. After two years, at 18 I was in Kenya getting work experience in development, and reproductive health, linked with Quakers





***Journeys***

# Being Good for Something – Skills and Experience

- Clear to me that to be able to contribute to developing countries, I needed professional skills and experience to make a real contribution
- My university work was in the UK, and focused on advanced studies in demography and public health
- I first started working in reproductive and community health, and women's rights programmes, and working with refugees. Three years work experience in Kenya and Uganda.

# **Being Good for Something – Developing Skills and Experience**

- Eventually worked for 10 years for International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), at HQ in London. 2<sup>nd</sup> largest NGO in the world.
- Directed the gender and youth programmes. Developed broad based skills, extensive cross cultural experience
- During the cold war, special experience in working with the Eastern Bloc, and politically sensitive countries.
- Extensive collaboration with WHO and other UN agencies.

# AIDS Emerges in late 1980's



**Very little solid information about AIDS**

**WHO coordinating the international response. They staffed up by asking collaborating agencies to second specific, experienced staff.**

**WHO requested IPPF to loan me to them for 2 years. Never quite made it back.**

# UNAIDS from 1996, eventual treatment options (PMTCT, ARVs)



UNAIDS coordinating a multi sectoral response from 1996. Aiming to support a more effective national response.

A more political response, getting HIV on the political agenda. Speaking truth to power.

Data driven. Linking the science and politics

Human rights based approaches; tackling stigma and discrimination

Advocacy to increase financing – national governments, donor governments, World Bank, the Global Fund. About US \$ 20 billion per year from 2012.

**UNAIDS a bit of anarchy in the UN system – our work is evidence based, but we do what is necessary to stop the epidemic.**

**I worked as UNAIDS Representative in some countries, policy advice and advocacy at the highest levels**

# 3 Decades into the HIV Epidemic

- HIV remains a serious epidemic, especially in Africa
- In 2016, there were 36.7 million people living with HIV, worldwide
- About 58% of PLHIV in East and Southern Africa are on treatment. And a 48% decline in death rates.
- HIV infection among babies has dropped dramatically, to below 5% at 18 months in most of Southern Africa
- Still too many new infections a year, especially among girls and young women. About 250,000 new infections in South Africa per year, most among 15-24 year olds

# Lessons from the Epidemic

- Successful prevention programmes are based in the community itself, with strong empowerment approaches
- Programmes need to be human rights based, emphasizing respect and dignity, to be successful
- People have a disease – they are not the disease. And they are not victims. They are their own best advocates.
- The science and politics of the epidemic need to come together.
- Inequality, poverty, unemployment, gender inequality and a lack of power all increase people's vulnerability to infection



# And the UN



# Peace is at the heart of the UN

**UN Founded in 1945 after WW2:**

“We the peoples of the United Nations,  
determined...to save succeeding generations from  
the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has  
brought untold sorrow to mankind...”

*Preamble to the UN Charter*

“The UN wasn’t created to take us to heaven, but to  
save us from hell.”

*Dag Hammarskjöld, 2<sup>nd</sup> UN Secretary General*

# *Goals of the UN*



# 10 Key Actions of the UN in 2017

- Provides food and assistance to 90 million people in 80 countries
- Provides vaccines to 43% of the world's children, helping to save 3 million lives a year
- Assists and protects 65.3 million people fleeing war, famine and persecution
- Works with 195 nations to hold the rise in global temperature below 2 degrees C
- Keeps peace with 117,000 peacekeepers in 16 operations in 4 continents

# 10 Key Actions of the UN in 2017

- Protects and promotes human rights globally and through 80 treaties/declarations
- Coordinates US\$22.5 billion appeal for the humanitarian needs of 93.5 million people
- Uses diplomacy to prevent conflict: assists some 67 countries a year with their elections
- Supports maternal health, helping over 1 million women a month overcome pregnancy risks

# **An imperfect organization in an imperfect world**



***When things are really desperate and hopeless and you can't do anything about this, and there's a sense that something needs to be done...that usually leads to the U.N.***

**Kofi Annan  
former UN Secretary  
General**

# **UN led Global Response against Apartheid, over nearly 50 years**

**Beginning in June 1946:** India requested that the treatment of South Africans of Indian descent be included in the first session of the UN General Assembly

**Ending on 27 June 1994:** The Security Council noted with great satisfaction the establishment of a united, non-racial and democratic Government of South Africa and removed the question of South Africa from its agenda.

# Speaking Truth to Power







# Achievements and Disappointments

***The U.N. has in its history achieved many successes, and suffered many setbacks. ... the Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes in its centenary year to proclaim that the only negotiable route to global peace and cooperation goes by way of the United Nations.***

***Nobel Committee, Oslo, 12 October, 2001***

# Silent Prayer Room, UN NY

“We all have within us a center of stillness surrounded by silence. This house, dedicated to work and debate in the service of peace, should have one room dedicated to silence in the outward sense and stillness in the inner sense.

It has been the aim to create in this small room a place where the doors may be open to the infinite lands of thought and prayer.”

Dag Hammarskjöld (1905-61)  
UN Secretary-General



# Quakers and the UN

- A Woodbrooke story: while there for a course, I sat for lunch at a table with others, and we chatted. My accent led to questions. On hearing I worked for the United Nations, one of the Friends in Residence asked, “Is that a Quaker organisation?”
- Of course, the UN is not a Quaker organization, but we have many goals in common, and Quakers have been strongly involved in the League of Nations from 1920, and in the UN since 1945.



**QUNO**

Quaker United Nations Office

- There are Quaker Houses, and Quaker UN Offices (QUNO) in New York and Geneva.
- Quakers at the UN listen, contribute and facilitate quiet dialogue and solution building, especially with regard to peace, justice and human rights.
- FWCC has official consultative status with the UN, on behalf of Quakers around the world.



- QUNO has made a difference to several UN policies and protocols, and has influenced the work of a number of UN Commissions and their reports.
- QUNO has been especially active in advocating for SDG Goal 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

# Questions for the Future

In thinking about our UN and other international work:

- How can QUNO reach out to Friends working for the UN, and other international organizations, who can be a great resource to us?
- How can Quakers and Yearly Meetings in the global north stay engaged in the issues of the global south?
- How can Yearly Meetings learn to use UN conventions, agencies and systems to promote our testimonies?
- For example, all countries go through the UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review every five years. Quakers have the right to make statements to the HRC on human rights issues in their countries.
- Yearly Meetings are not engaged in this process, to my knowledge. But they could be.

***Maintaining Hope in an Imperfect World:  
Bringing our Inward and Outward Lives  
Together***

# ***In an Imperfect World – Is the Glass***

**HALF  
FULL**



**HALF  
EMPTY**



# Living in a Disordered World

Easy to feel disheartened and negative in today's world:

- **Globally**, we have the challenges of Trump, human rights in Myanmar, nuclear war threats from North Korea, and the continuing lack of justice for the Palestinians
- **Within Southern Africa**, we have political, economic, and environmental challenges, including high rates of poverty and unemployment, violence and gender inequality

# What does the data say about our disordered world?

Nicholas Kristof, a senior NY Times opinion columnist, wrote yesterday, "**Why 2017 Was the Best Year in Human History**":

"A smaller share of the world's people were hungry, impoverished or illiterate than at any time before. A smaller proportion of children died than ever before. The proportion disfigured by leprosy, blinded by diseases like trachoma or suffering from other ailments also fell...the backdrop of global progress may be the most important development in our lifetime."

# What's an Angry Quaker to do?



**American Quaker Parker J. Palmer asked this recently in a blog column, citing the rise of President Trump, and the reality of a divided and unequal America.**

**“Does anger have a role to play in the life of someone who aspires to non-violence? For better or for worse, it’s a reality in mine.”**

**Anger is a frequent friend of many of us, I think. When confronted with our broken world, and political systems, our overriding feeling is anger.**

# What's an Angry Quaker to do?

In seeking to move forward, he quotes poet May Sarton:

*Return to the most human, nothing less  
Will teach the angry spirit, the bewildered heart,  
The torn mind, to accept the whole of its duress,  
And pierced with anguish, at last act for love.*

Parker notes the practical ways of moving forward to action, in response to our anger. But that this must be done based on love and discerning the right way forward.

# What does Quakerism tell us about living in a disordered world?

- Quakerism itself grew up in turbulent times, in the English Civil War
- George Fox urged us to “Let our Lives Speak”.
- In Advice and Queries, we are asked: “Are you working to bring about a just and compassionate society....? (BYM A&Q 35)
- Quaker history gives us evidence of Quakers contributing to major societal change, often working together with others, and over a number of decades.

"THE ARC OF THE MORAL UNIVERSE  
IS LONG, BUT IT BENDS  
TOWARD **JUSTICE**."

—DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.—



OWN

#SELMA50



**Action is the antidote to  
despair.**

Joan Baez

# **A Framework for Living**

“The Quaker way offers an alternative path of collective practices for encountering an inward source of guidance and meaning. This way of Quaker practice does not provide ‘answers’ to life’s problems and dilemmas in the form of statements of belief or reliance on authority.”

Craig Barnett, quoted by Paul Parker, BYM



"IT ALWAYS SEEMS  
IMPOSSIBLE UNTIL  
ITS DONE."

—NELSON MANDELA



***At Home in the World***

# Our work this YM on Quaker History





# Walk Cheerfully over the World



- *Be patterns, be examples, in all countries, places . . . Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.*

# At home in the world

