

Re-envisioning the Quaker Testimonies in turbulent times: seeking from the silence

*A seeker of silences am I, and what
treasure I have found in silences that
I may dispense with confidence?*

From *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran (1923)

Dedication

I dedicate this lecture to the several faithful Friends from this Yearly Meeting who have died in the past three years and whom we miss so much – namely Rosemary Elliot (Eastern Cape), Jim McCloy (Lesotho), Gudrun Weeks (Botswana and USA), David Jobson (Zimbabwe and Pretoria), Shelagh Willet (Botswana) and John Schmid (Zimbabwe). Each one of them illustrated the Quaker Advice ‘Let your life speak’ and four of them have given this same lecture (Rosemary Elliot in 1998, John Schmid in 2011, Gudrun Weeks in 2012, Shelagh Willet in 2013). So I follow in illustrious footsteps!

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation to the Quaker Tapestry in UK for permission to use ten of their panels to illustrate this talk (see more details in bibliography at end of lecture) and to Friends House in London for permission to use two of their posters which I found in the 2018 Quaker Peace Calendar. On a more personal note I have to warmly thank Enid Ellis, my friend and Friend from Namibia Quaker Community, for her on-going practical support over the past 7 months while I was compiling the lecture and for letting me bounce ideas off her.

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1. Introduction

Good Morning. Sanibonani. More. Dumelang. Mangwanani.

Many thanks to all of you for being here today. I feel honoured to have been asked to give the 2019 Richard Gush lecture but also rather inadequate at the same time since I follow in the steps of so many weighty Friends. I think this is the 21st Richard Gush lecture. In fact I give a list of the titles of these lectures with the name of the speaker and the year in an Appendix at the end.

I will start with an introduction to Richard Gush to remind you of why this lecture takes his name. Then I will give a brief introduction to myself and how Quakerism has been a constant thread throughout my life from age 4 to now (a period of 67 years) and how enriching that has been.

I have many interests, such as AVP, education and literature, so I have tried to incorporate elements of these in what I say. I will look at our Quaker testimonies (SPICES or STEP depending on your preference) and since the theme of this year's YM is Equality I have particularly focused there.

I go on to suggest two more potential testimonies, namely gratitude and creativity, as well as considering whether Quakerism is **more** than its testimonies and how the four concepts of faith in action, the inner light, silence and stillness are crucial.

Finally I look briefly at the idea of 'turbulent times' and how Quakerism is vitally significant in how we live our lives and deal with its many challenges. I end on a positive note with an image from Namibia and a song.

Most sections are headed by an illustration, usually from the Quaker tapestry AND also a quotation from a Friend, often taken from a previous Richard Gush lecture, or from one of the Advices or Queries. In fact I have woven key quotations from 12 previous Richard Gush lectures into this presentation and hopefully this provides a synthesis and appreciation of other Friends' insights.

I endeavour to be reflective, informative and thought-provoking and I hope there is at least one thing in this lecture that will 'speak' to each of you.

2. Who was Richard Gush?

Many of you will remember when we had YM in Grahamstown in 2008 we went out and had meeting at Salem, home of Richard Gush where we heard of his life (1789-1858) in a talk by Colin Steyn, admitted him to posthumous membership in the presence of several of his descendants and listened to the Richard Gush Memorial Lecture, entitled *Turning the World Upside Down*, given by Vernon Gibberd in the chapel that Gush had built. Richard Gush was a carpenter and builder, one of the 1820 British settlers who in 1834 courageously mediated a peaceful resolution between the Amakhosa and the settlers (YM Epistle 2008).

For more on Richard Gush I would refer you to the *Life of Richard Gush – an African Emigrant*, printed and sold in 1860, only two years after his death, by one Thomas Brady for the York Friends' Tract Association. It gives some fascinating details and is being put on the YM website.

3. My Quaker background

It is only in preparing for this lecture over the past few months that I have come to realise how interwoven my life has been with individual Quakers and Quakerism and the opportunities I have had to see Quaker work at first hand, particularly in my time at Quaker Peace and Service, Friends House, London over 6 years.

I am reminded of the words from the song *Tapestry* by Carol King:

*My life has been a tapestry of rich and royal hue
An everlasting vision of the ever-changing view
A wondrous woven magic in bits of blue and gold
A tapestry to feel and see, impossible to hold...*

To start at the beginning. My family was not Quaker. I was taken to Quaker meeting in Church Road, Watford, Hertfordshire in England with my two sisters when I was about 4 by a sweet old Friend called Arthur Weeyms who seemed ancient to me then, but could have been 65. We went there and back on the no 142 red bus and we left around 10am to get there for 11. On reflection with my younger sister recently we think now that my parents just wanted some peace on a Sunday morning! I can remember reading picture books for the first 10 minutes before going out to children's meeting and my feet barely reaching the hassock. As I grew up I came to enjoy the quiet time and as a teenager I went on work camps in the monthly meeting at weekends hitchhiking to the various places and camping on the floor in the meeting houses. I also really enjoyed going to Luton and Leighton MM Quaker camp over about 15 years from age 11 and not washing properly for 10 days! The camaraderie, the dew on the grass, meetings for workshop in the open air, being in nature, the friendships, table tennis, late night walks I really enjoyed but not the tent inspection or the duty of 'cooks wash up.'

As I became an older teenager I found that the Friends at meeting really impressed me in that they were sincere and committed to social concerns, practical in their social witness, were without hypocrisy or sophistication and did not preach. They were open and loving to me, particularly two Friends who came to treat me like their daughter and became my mentors and second parents. There are people who come into your life at different stages and move you forward in some way. These people for me were Bill and Muriel Frank and to this day my best friend in UK is their daughter Ros. There is a coincidental link with our YM since Bill and Muriel were wardens at Johannesburg Meeting House in 1970-71. It was Muriel who was on the Africa Committee at Friends House, the administrative headquarters of Friends in Britain, who suggested to me that I might apply to be a Quaker volunteer and that she would give me a reference. I did so and the rest, as they say, is history.



So started my long relationship with Swaziland where from October 1972 to September 1975, I worked as a volunteer at Sebenta in Mbabane as bursar with the National Adult Literacy Programme and fell in love with southern Africa and made several good Swazi friends along the way. In fact I have just been in Swaziland for 10 days visiting some of those friends and it is now 47 years later! Altogether I have lived there about 12 years at different times.

In 1979 when I was back in UK I was offered a job at Friends House in London, the HQ for Quakers in Britain, and worked there for 6 years as administrative assistant to two dynamic and committed Quaker Peace and Service General Secretaries, Alun Davies first and then Cecil Evans. I worked on Quaker issues relating to east-west (including the British Soviet social scientist series of seminars on human rights with British friend William Barton instrumental in this initiative), the middle-east, Europe and northern Ireland as well as the London Diplomats Group, the Geneva Summer School, the European volunteer programme and the 1% Fund. This was both a privilege and an eye-opener and vastly expanded my understanding of Friends and of issues of peace, development and human rights as well as how to give support to various Quaker committees. I had the opportunity to travel amongst Friends in Europe and UK and experience first-hand Quaker work in Brussels (Quaker Council for European Affairs – with Brian and Pat Stapleton, the first representatives, Belfast (Quaker House with Billy and Joan Sinton as reps), Geneva (Quaker United Nations Office with Kevin and Valerie Clements and Peter Herby and the Geneva Summer School) and Austria (Ewald and Hamsa Eichler, at Quaker House Vienna, and the volunteer programme in Austria).



It was during this time that I did my Masters in African Studies part time at the School of Oriental and African Studies, over two years. Fortunately SOAS was only a 7 minute walk from Friends House.

I then returned to Southern Africa in 1985 taking up the post of Field Officer for International Voluntary Service in Swaziland, overseeing a programme of 28 volunteers. From there I moved to teaching literature at the University of Swaziland for 4 years and then to the University of Namibia in 1991 where I taught for 16 years. I continue to live in Namibia. In both Swaziland and Namibia I have been active with the small group of Friends.



4. What are the Testimonies?

You are probably familiar with the two useful acronyms, namely SPICES and STEP, which are simple way to remember them. The former stands for Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Stewardship while the latter is shorter and refers to Simplicity, Truth, Equality and Peace. Of course, you do not have to choose or use either of them.

“Quakers declare to themselves and to the world those things that they choose to say yes to: the values to which their lives bear witness. These are the Quaker testimonies.”

Geoffrey Durham (2011:88)

‘The testimonies arise out of a deep, inner conviction and challenge our normal ways of living. They do not exist in any rigid, written form; nor are they imposed in any way. All Quakers have to search for the ways in which the testimonies can become true for themselves’ from The Quaker Testimonies - Newcastle Quaker Meeting (2014)

The word ‘testimony’ itself can have several meanings according to different dictionaries. One is that it is a solemn declaration usually made orally by a witness under oath. For Quakers the word has a rather different connotation. ‘Testimonies’ are what Quakers call *ways we have found to live and act based on our beliefs* and as a group we find that *listening to and following leadings of the Spirit* leads to them (www.quakercloud.org).

As our own *Living Adventurously* explains it in the glossary of terms (2009:132) testimony is ‘a solemn witness or confession in public, a protest, either by word or action’.

These beliefs spring from a sense of equality, compassion and seeing the sacred in all life. The testimonies are about Quakers' commitment to those beliefs. Naturally, our day to day practice of them faces us with many dilemmas and compromises. Indeed the testimonies are often out of step with the way that many other people think and act and so may seem idealistic. As the testimonies come from "leadings of the Spirit", this may mean taking a stand against common social practices(Newcastle Quakers, 2014)

On our own SAYM website the section on Quaker Teaching explains that testimonies are not rules or laws with punishments for not following them. Each individual must decide for themselves how far they can follow a particular testimony and respect the position taken by others.

A former colleague of mine at Friends House, Harvey Gillman, then communications officer for Quaker Peace and Service, has written:

'Testimony is not a strategy; nor is it a political manifesto. Rather it is a vital response to a call from the depths of our being to examine our lives and to heed the cry of the world itself' (2016: 30)

It is fascinating to note that 'faith, hope and charity' in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, (1 Corinthians 13.13) are not specifically taken up as testimonies nor is justice but perhaps that is because these four concepts are already implicit in the existing testimonies. For example, if we redefine 'charity' as love or compassion (in the sense of 'agape') then it is there as love of others (in peace and integrity and community) and love of the planet (in sustainability and simplicity).

It is important to be clear at the outset is that Quakers don't claim any kind of monopoly or exclusivity in these testimonies since they are shared by many other organisations and individuals, religious or not. What makes them work in the lives of Quakers is the blend of them, the acknowledgement of the way in which they overlap, their affirmation that religion is indistinguishable from everyday life (Durham, 2011:91).

4.1 How and why testimonies have changed over time

Isn't it natural that they should have altered over 350 years?

The testimonies reflect the society we live in, and so have changed over time. Early Quakers had testimonies against outward symbols, taking oaths and the payment of tithes, and about peace, temperance, moderation and forms of address. Later, testimonies evolved with regard to slavery, integrity in business dealings, capital punishment and prison reform, nonviolence and conscientious objection to military service (www.quakers-in-newcastle.org.uk/pdf_2014/AllQuakerTestimonies.pdf). Then more recently in the 20th century the concepts of sustainable development and sustainability have emerged which links to stewardship with its idea of responsibility for our planet and environment.

4.2 Can they be added to depending on geography/regional factors?

The answer is Yes. We can see from our own Southern and Central African region that three additional testimonies have been formulated to deal with our particular challenges. We all need to re-read the sections of 'Our Experience of Faith in Africa', 'African Values that shape us as African Quakers' and 'Quakers and Social Justice in Africa' in our own Quaker Faith and Practice entitled **Living Adventurously** (2009), which is a hugely rich resource.

The first new testimony on **Democracy in Africa** (2009: 95-97) was developed at YM in Grahamstown in 2008 and set out our vision for democracy in the continent. As a basic premise government must reflect the will, and act as the servant, of all the people of the country and there must be universal suffrage (based on the principle of equality) and elections that are free and fair.

Further basic human rights must be respected in order for the political environment to be democratic. These rights include freedoms of speech, of association, of movement, and of thought and conscience.

Moreover, there can be no real democracy unless the basic needs of people, such as food, shelter, water, health and education, are met. Twenty guidelines were given for Quakers to nurture democratic practices, three of which speak to me, namely 'Have the courage to speak truth to power', 'Draw strength through the practice of our own testimonies to peace-making, simplicity, truth-seeking and social equality' and 'Offer AVP Programmes'.

The second testimony that we as a YM added was in 2000 in Modderpoort and it relates to **HIV/Aids**. It states that the Religious Society of Friends in Central and Southern Africa supports all people infected and affected by HIV/Aids and sees the infection as a worldwide tragedy and not a curse or sin. Everyone has the right to a full, joyful sexual experience, within the context of a caring, responsible relationship founded on love and respect (2009:99)

A third testimony that was expanded by demonstrating its importance for Southern Africa is equality, which makes it especially relevant for this YM because of our theme. In 2007 in Hlekweni, Zimbabwe, I think in response to Martin Wilkinson's powerful Richard Gush lecture entitled '**Prophets of Equality**', we updated our testimony and called it '**Equality for the 21st century: Making a start in Southern Africa**'. A key extract reads:

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...

We need to try to ensure that none of us is left to feel the desperation that comes with a life that is characterised by unequal access to status; power; 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 health and happiness of each of us, individually is depleted.

So Friends, we have some wonderful testimonies, especially relevant for us in southern Africa, as I hope I have demonstrated, but the crucial question is Do we live them? Do we implement them in our relationship with others in our communities and societies? If not, why not and what more can we do?

Surely, as Jonathan Dale in his essay in **Searching the Depths** (1996: 62) indicates:

The importance of testimony is that it encourages us to work on putting our faith into practice in such a way that it is tested and strengthened. It may lead us into new situations where our social concern is tested almost to breaking point, and, in the process, our faith may be deepened.

4.3 Is Quaker belief more than the testimonies?

The Meeting for Worship is central to Quaker belief as Advice 10 (little red book) shows:

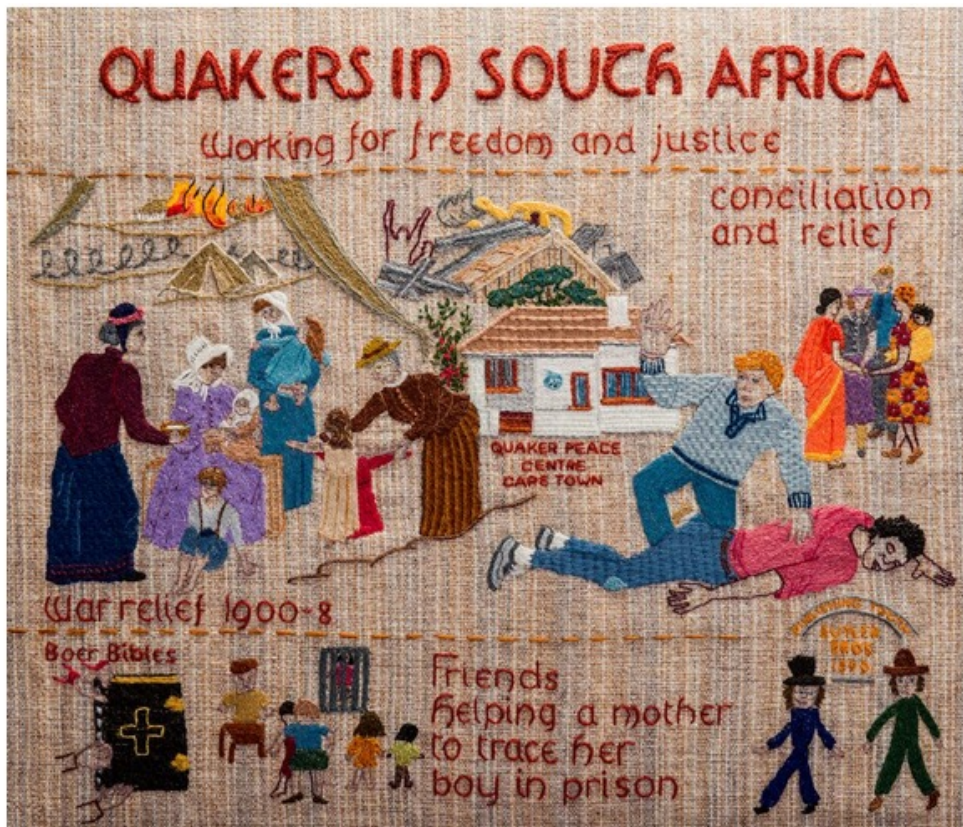
‘Prayer springing from a deep place in the heart may bring health and unity as nothing else can. Let Meeting for worship nourish your whole life.’

It is vital to remember that Quakerism has its roots in Christianity as Advice 4 reminds us:

The Religious Society of Friends is rooted in Christianity and has always found inspiration in the life and teachings of Jesus.

However, this should not detract from respect for and inclusion in the Society of those Friends who do not see Jesus as their personal Saviour but see spirit as being found in all world regions and wish to be seen as universalists rather than Christians.

I think Quaker belief encompasses the centrality of faith in action, ‘the inner light’ or ‘that of God in everyone’, as well as silence and stillness. I discuss these pivotal concepts now.



5. Faith in action

Is your relationship with God real and personal? Is that relationship the driving force behind your social concerns and witness? Put simply, do you have a faith worth living?

Simon Lamb, 'A faith worth living', Richard Gush Lecture. 2002. (quoted in *Living Adventurously*, 2008:37)

The interaction between faith and action, as expressed in the testimonies, is at the heart of Quaker spiritual experience and living. As Friends we talk about faith in action and Quakers have been known over the years for their social witness. This reminds me of the bible verse about faith and action going together :

¹⁴ What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. (James 2:14-26 New King James Version)

As Kholekile Tshanga of Cape Eastern Monthly Meeting explained it in Southern Africa Quaker News in September 1999 (*Living Adventurously*, 2008:70):

To put our faith into action is one of the central pillars of Quaker ministry and it has its roots from the first generations of Quakers who were struggling for social freedom in their time. This

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.

On the point of taking responsibility for ‘how to be in the world’ which to me is faith in action, Jennifer Kavanagh in her Richard Gust Lecture ‘No other; a journey into oneness’ in 2016 puts it brilliantly:

Because we have no separate priesthood but are ‘the priesthood of all believers’ we have to take responsibility for our faith, our organisation and by extension for what goes on in the world. We do not rely on politicians or ‘experts’. For us, the only approach is ‘If not me, when who?’ In our worship we are silently waiting on God. We are waiting for guidance. For how to be in the world.

Interestingly, Sheldon Weeks in his 2004 Richard Gush Lecture ‘My life as a Friend and Fellow Traveller’ (Living Adventurously, 2008:70) also talked of living in the world, developing a social consciousness and finding purpose in our lives:

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. 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 see 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.

On a personal note, when I was diagnosed with breast cancer in January 2014 it certainly jolted me out of my complacency and made me consider the purpose in my life and I decided that ‘to serve with love and light, which includes fun’ would be my aim. Fortunately, I had AVP Namibia in particular through which I endeavour to achieve that.



6. The concepts of ‘the inner light’ and ‘that of God in everyone’

Central to Quaker belief are these two concepts which are intrinsic to the testimonies in that if you believe each individual has ‘the inner light’ or ‘that of God’ then you would wish to treat them equally, not to be in conflict with them, to share the planet’s resources with them and so on.

The following are key quotations taken from Advices and Queries or from previous Richard Gush lecturers:

Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.

(Advice 1)

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

Rosemary Elliot, ‘The Inner Light’, RGL 1998 (*Living Adventurously*, 2008:40)

Take time to learn about other people’s experience of the Light .. Appreciate that doubt and questioning can also lead to spiritual growth and to greater awareness of the Light that is in us all.(Advice 5)

And I particularly like this one:

Are you open to new light, from whatever source, it may come?

(Advice 7)

7. Silence and stillness

I start this section with a brief extract adapted from **The Power of Stillness** written by John Edward Southall (1855-1928), a lifelong Quaker. He was a printer who used his press from time to time for the spread of Quaker Principles. He describes his experience of silence as the vital element in his approach to religion and life as follows:

..as the dew never falls on a stormy night, so the dew of His grace never comes to the restless soul. We cannot go through life strong and fresh on constant express trains; but we must have quiet hours, secret places of the Most High, 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.

Though we may find some of this passage archaic in its language we can relate to Southall's reference to going through life on 'constant express trains' and the need to have 'quiet hours.' The world has become increasingly noisy – particularly in public spaces, whether a shopping mall or a gym. Noise of one sort or the other batters us constantly, especially in urban centres. Many young people are even going deaf through the use of headphones to play music. So silence in the 21st century needs to be nurtured and protected.

Absolute silence doesn't exist but quiet spaces are essential because they *"can inject us with a fertile unknown: a space in which to focus and absorb experience."* (Prochnik, 2010)

There are many different kinds of silence – including boring, scary, sorrowful, embarrassed, dramatic – but the silence in Meeting for Worship is none of these.

The silence around us may contain a lot, but the most interesting kind of silence is the one that lies within; a silence which each of us must create. I no longer try to create absolute silence around me. The silence that I am after is the silence within.

Erling Kagge, Norwegian explorer, Silence (2017:25)

Silence can be 'a key to unlocking new ways of thinking' and also 'a practical resource for living a richer life' as Kagge puts it (2017:35).

For me silence and stillness are at the heart of Quakerism and at the centre of our Meetings for Worship. But the two are not the same. Silence does not necessarily imply stillness. But stillness, which is a deep calm and centring, can be found in the silence if we are able to examine and then let go of our scattered thoughts. Advice 3 expresses it well:

All of us need to find a way into silence which allows us to deepen our awareness of the divine and to find the inward source of our strength... seek to know an inward stillness, even amidst the activities of daily life.

All the major religious traditions recognise that silence is a very effective tool for spiritual development but Friends are unusual in that for them silence is central:

Quakers gather together and sit in collective silence seeking to become 'gathered' - it is a gathered meeting, where hearts and minds are united beyond words, that can discern the fullness of truth.

Sarah Maitland, **A Book of Silence – a journey in search of the pleasure and powers of silence** (2009:142)

It is fascinating to recall that Pascal, the French philosopher, reflected over 350 years ago that 'All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone' (Pensées, 1670). I think that most Friends can sit in a room **alone** quietly but we prefer to sit with others in Meeting for Worship where we are all seekers.

As Advice 8 explains:

*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.* (Advice 8, little red book) (my emphasis)

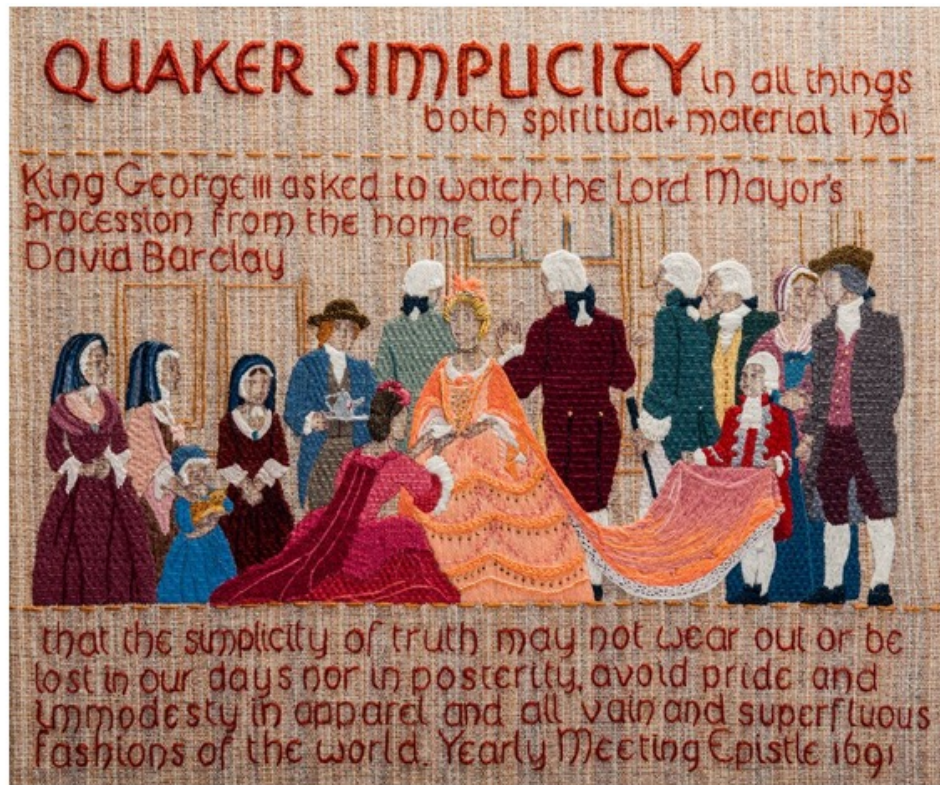
But that experience of silence does not cause us to withdraw from the world but rather enriches us to go out into the world more empowered. As Richard Knottenbelt in his Richard Gush lecture 'Recognition, Identity and Belonging' in 2000 explained it : *The silence in which we meet and the ministry which comes out of it are not separate from 'the rest of life'. There is a continuum which embraces the whole of life.*

A fascinating question for me which is perhaps outside the scope of this lecture is whether George Fox would recognise Quakers of today? I think first he would be amazed how Quakerism has spread round the world and also its diversity with programmed, evangelical and unprogrammed meetings. He may be shocked that its Christian roots are not so important for some Friends who may not call themselves Christians and some Friends may even have problems with the concept of God.

I now turn to reflect on our individual Quaker testimonies. We should remember that Quakers do not impose their testimonies on anyone and that whilst a particular testimony may be very critical to many Friends, it may not necessarily be so for all Friends.

8. Testimonies

I will look at them in the order of Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality and Sustainability/Stewardship. I will focus more on Equality since that is the theme for our YM.



8.1 Simplicity

*Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,
 'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
 And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
 'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.
 When true simplicity is gain'd
 To bow and to bend we shan't be asham'd,
 To turn, turn will be our delight
 'Till by turning, turning we come round right.
 (Original Shaker Lyrics - Simple Gifts)
 Live simply so that others may simply live (Mahatma Gandhi)*

*Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength.
 (Advice 41)*

For me simplicity links to simplification – particularly in these times of distractions brought about by social media, overwhelmingly negative news and multiple commitments. Anne Morrow Lindbergh explained in 1955 in her wonderful reflective book, **Gift from the Sea**, saw simplification as a technique for living and even as a technique in the search for grace - by which she meant an inner harmony, especially spiritual, which can be translated into outward harmony. And surely we all want that balance between inner and outer harmony and maybe we find it sometimes in Meeting for Worship:

But how difficult this is for most of us to do, to achieve a balance in the midst of multiplicity and contradictory tensions, especially when one is a parent and a spouse, yet how necessary it is. (Lindbergh, 1955:24)

This writer goes on to talk about the art of shedding (which we could now think of as decluttering and as a form of sustainability) as we realise how little one can get along with, not how much. For her there is both physical shedding and emotional shedding – of anxiety, pride, hypocrisy and insincerity (1955: 32). So simplicity and its corollary simplification cover both the outward and the inward life.



8.2 Peace (inner and outer)

*Drop thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our striving cease;
Take from our souls
The strain and stress
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.*

From my favourite hymn, 'Dear Lord and Father of Mankind',
Words by John Greenleaf Whittier, 1872)

A useful definition of peace is 'a way of life committed to the non-violent resolution of conflict and to personal and social justice' Geoff Harris in 'Is Peace Possible?' Richard Gush Lecture 2003

The Peace Testimony is probably the best known of the Quaker testimonies. In 1947 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded “to the Quakers, represented by their two great relief organizations, the Friends Service Council in London and the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia.” The nomination was influenced by Quaker relief work with the victims of war and famine. Quakers were at work in a world traumatised by World War II. They provided assistance wherever they found need, in Germany, elsewhere in Europe and in Asia. They offered relief without discrimination, just as they had in previous wars.

Many of us know of the Declaration of Friends to King Charles II in 1660

"We utterly deny all outward wars and strife and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretence whatsoever; and this is our testimony to the whole world. The spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil and again to move unto it; and we do certainly know, and so testify to the world, that the spirit of Christ, which leads us into all Truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world."

As Advice 31 declares ‘we are called to live in the virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars’ and that Friends should search out whatever in their own way of life may contain the seeds of war.



Some of you may remember that in 2000 at Modderpoort near Lesotho we deliberated and produced a Quaker Statement on Peace in Africa. A key passage reads:

'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 scourges of HIV/Aids, eliminating inequality and poverty and providing education including Early Childhood Education, adult literacy and peace education.'

(Living Adventurously, 2008:75)

We committed ourselves and called 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. This commitment is needed now more than ever.



Moreover, Harvey van der Merwe in his 1998 Richard Gush lecture 'Quakers and my Pursuit of Justice in South Africa' focused on the link between justice and peace and when speaking of the failure of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission 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, he concluded that "We cannot have peace without justice."

Inner Peace

I have endeavoured to look at this concept already when I spoke of silence and stillness and their centrality for Friends, specifically in the Meeting for Worship. And isn't our attempt to find that inner silence the reason we come to Meeting?

8.3 Integrity

Richard Gush was noted for his strict honesty and truthfulness. Though often placed in circumstances in which these qualities were closely tested he would not yield in any degree to the temptation to falsehood; and he often urged on those around him, the necessity of not only keeping from direct falsehood, but from indirect untruth, saying 'to convey an untruth in any way is equal to telling a lie' (Life of Richard Gush, 1860, p.6)

Early Quakers called themselves 'Publishers of Truth'. According to the Quaker author Geoffrey Durham (2011:95) the word truth in the 1650s had associations with what we might

call 'reality' today and for him it has connotations of authenticity and a power outside ourselves.

For some Friends, including me, this testimony to integrity includes truth.

Listen patiently and seek the truth which other people's opinions may contain for you... Do not allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue.

And here is the brilliant final sting in the tail from this Advice 17.

Think it possible that you may be mistaken.

Two other relevant Quaker queries that link to this testimony are no 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?*

And no 38 *If pressure is brought upon you to lower your standard of integrity, are you prepared to resist it?*

I now move on to look at the testimony to community.



8.4 Community

Rather than talk a lot about this testimony I am just going to give three insightful quotations which I think captures its essence:

Umuntu ugumuntu ngabantu’- a person is human through the humanity of others Dudu Mtshazo, Johannesburg Monthly Meeting, 2007 (Living Adventurously 2008:60)

How can we make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured, and strangers are welcome? Seek to know one another in the things that are eternal, bear the burden of each other’s failings and pray for one another. Advice 18 (little red book)

Unlike solitary meditation, our spiritual practice is communal. I like thinking of Meeting for Worship as a triangle – of self, the Divine and the others in the room. Guidance can come directly or through others. And as in worship, so in the world. We take that dynamic out in the world, with a profound consciousness of our fellow human beings and God in them. Jennifer Kavanagh, 2016 Richard Gush Lecture



8.5 Equality

Greater equality is at the heart of creating a better society because it is fundamental to the quality of social relations at large. Wilkinson and Pickett (2018:261)

We must work together to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth, opportunity and power in our society Mandela (1996)

The concept of equality is wide ranging – it covers economic, social, cultural and spiritual aspects. It links to the fulfilment of basic needs and granting of human rights. Such basic needs would include access to shelter (housing), to water and to sanitation. It includes equality of opportunities of access to and provision of education, health care and employment. Equality also links to ideas of equity – meaning fairness and justice.



I want to look first at Quakerism and equality and make four points. Firstly the nature of Quakerism is fundamentally egalitarian in that access to the spirit is open to all regardless of any differences in gender, race, class or religion. Secondly the lack of hierarchy and paid pastors (in unprogrammed meetings like ours in Southern Africa Yearly Meeting) promote equality. Thirdly all ministry is of equal importance and lastly women have been and are valued equally to men from the beginnings of the Society.

Moving on, you will recall that Martin Wilkinson in his 2007 Richard Gush lecture 'Prophets of Equality' spoke on the topic of equality and particularly the main thesis of the book *The Spirit Level* by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, published in 2009. The book showed that people in societies with bigger income gaps between rich and poor are much more likely to suffer from a wide range of health and social problems than those living in more equal societies. Such problems include lower life expectancy, higher rates of infant mortality, mental illness, illicit drug use and obesity. More unequal societies also experience more violence (as measured by homicide rates), higher rate of imprisonment and lower levels of child well-being and educational attainment, more teenage births and less social mobility.

If we apply this to our countries in Southern Africa we can see, particularly in the case of Namibia, where the gap in income between rich and poor is huge and one of the highest in the world (as measured by the ginico-efficient) that levels of gender based and other violence, of murder, of suicide, of death on the roads, of teenage pregnancy, of baby dumping, of school drop outs, of alcoholism, of unemployment, of indebtedness, are all very high in relation to

the size of the small population of 2.5 million. Why is this so and what can be done? It does appear to be directly related to the vast disparity of wealth in the country?

If we turn in particular to the situation in South Africa, we can see that whilst many South Africans have improved their education and job prospects, overall income inequality remains entrenched. South Africa has the highest level of income inequality in the world and it is not unusual in Africa. Of the most unequal countries in the world, 10 are in Africa, according to the recent UNDP Report released in September 2018 (*Income Inequality Trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences*).

As Ibrahim Makaki, the CEO of NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa Development Agency) when responding to a question on how employment impacts inequality in Africa responded:

The inequality equation is very simple. If you have 75% of the population under 25 years, and you have an unemployment rate that is more than 25%, de facto you have inequality because a massive proportion of the population doesn't have a means to survive... The young people are not waiting for inequality to be solved in the medium or long term; they want inequality solved now. This puts pressure on public policy makers. And if we are not careful it can be a source of conflict and governance instability (Africa Renewal, Dec 2017 - March 2018)

Oxfam in their recent report '**Reward Work, Not Wealth**' (January 2019) highlight the increase in inequality throughout the world where 82% of the wealth generated last year went to the richest 1% of the global population while the 3.7 billion who make up the poorest half of the world saw no increase in their wealth. The richest 42 people in the world own as much as the poorest 50%. This report outlines the factors driving up rewards for shareholders and corporate bosses at the expense of workers' pay and conditions. It reveals how the global economy enables a wealthy elite to accumulate vast fortunes whilst millions of people struggle to survive on poverty pay (<https://www.oxfam.org/en/tags/inequality>).

In their new book, *The Inner Level* (2018), Wilkinson and Pickett concentrate on the individual rather than the society and explore the psychological effects and social stresses of inequality. They investigate levels of mental illness and emotional disorder and how living in a more unequal society changes how we think and feel and relate to each other. They set out overwhelming evidence that material inequalities have powerful psychological effects. They show from a vast amount of data and analysis by themselves and others from around the world that when the gap between rich and poor increases so does the tendency to define and value ourselves and others in terms of superiority and inferiority and that low social status is associated with elevated levels of stress and increased rates of anxiety and depression. They conclude that societies based on fundamental equalities, sharing and reciprocity generate much higher levels of well-being (xvii).

However, all is not lost and the authors argue that though inequality may be entrenched in many of the societies examined, its current levels are neither inevitable nor irreversible and despite the many challenges of the past decade, a better world is possible (xxii). I discuss this way to a better world in the final section of this lecture headed 'Turbulent Times'. I also give more information on inequality in Africa in Appendix 2.

I now move on to consider briefly the final testimony.



8.6 Sustainability or stewardship (to the earth and to the environment)

In the past 50 years or so there has been a growing awareness and interest in 'green' issues, including the move away from fossil fuels to renewable energy; conservation and protection of our natural environment and wildlife, both flora and fauna; concern about global warming and climate change; and our responsibility to care for our planet and with this came the concept of sustainability and hence 'sustainable development' with the idea that there are limits to economic growth. The concept of stewardship which links to sustainability has a long history with 'a sense of the unity of creation' being part of the testimonies.

'We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God's continuing creation. (Advice 42, little red book)

I think this advice says it all and cannot be bettered. You will recall that our Friend Shelagh Willet entitled her 2013 Richard Gush lecture 'Reverence for Life', asserting the following:

How infinitely precious is the living world in its myriad forms and how greatly it is to be revered'

9. New suggestions

I am sure that each of us could have a suggestion for a new testimony. I realised only when I came to the end of drafting this lecture that the two new testimonies that I am suggesting now are not so much social, like all the others, namely to do with society, but personal to do with ourselves. But for me if we have gratitude and creativity our lives are enriched and we can relate to family, friends and our wider community feeling more empowered and enriched and, therefore, be more effective, so these personal testimonies do have a ripple effect on the wider society.

9.1 Gratitude

When we do a mental and spiritual inventory of all that we have, we realise that we are very rich indeed (Daybook, January 3)

In her book **Simple Abundance, A Daybook of Comfort and Joy** Sarah Ban Breathnach gave women six principles to create and sustain an authentic life and encouraged them to incorporate these gradually into their daily lives. These six were gratitude, simplicity, order, harmony, beauty and joy. She argued that weaving these six together in one's life will lead to feeling of serenity and inner peace and I agree with her. I would like to commend all six but as a suggested new testimony for Friends I will focus briefly on the first, Gratitude.

Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It turns a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend, gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow. Melody Beattie (1992)



One tool that can help you bring this feeling of gratitude into your life is to make yourself a daily gratitude journal and before you go to bed write down in it five things that you can be grateful for about that day. This practice is also recommended by others. I think of Julia Cameron in her book **The Artist's Way** (1992).

Important here is to realise that appreciation and gratitude, if you do not already have it, will give a life-affirming shift to your mind set. As Karen Powell, a lifestyle mentor based in

Windhoek, recommends ‘*to truly transform your life, try to use gratitude not only as a reaction to an event, but more as constant state of being.*’

I now move on to my second suggestion.



9.2 The arts – creativity

All too often, we think of art as a luxury, or something that should be left to ‘artists’, but the distinction between artists and the rest of us is false. Everyone belongs somewhere on a spectrum of creativity. (Flintoff, 2012:76)

Life would be poorer without the arts and the potential of each person to express him or herself through them would be lost. Arts and creativity enrich our lives and our societies. The communication of our ideas and feelings through the arts, in whatever genre, is healing and of huge value. So I propose that our commitment to the arts, particularly through our own personal expression as much as support for arts in our community, be seen as a key principle, if not sometimes as a form of ministry.

As Gudrun eloquently expressed it in her 2012 Richard Gush lecture ‘Art as testimony: in praise of music’:

*Music we need in times of stress, to take us out of ourselves into the common human spirit where we feel profoundly free, blissful. There is a huge hunger for rhythm and melody and the people around us in Tlokweng, who have so little, still thrive on music and dance. **Through art we witness to our concern for a better world.** Quakers need to fully embrace art as one of their living testimonies.’ (my emphasis in bold)*

As I draw to a close, I want to turn now to look at how the Testimonies and AVP might be related.

10. Testimonies and the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP)

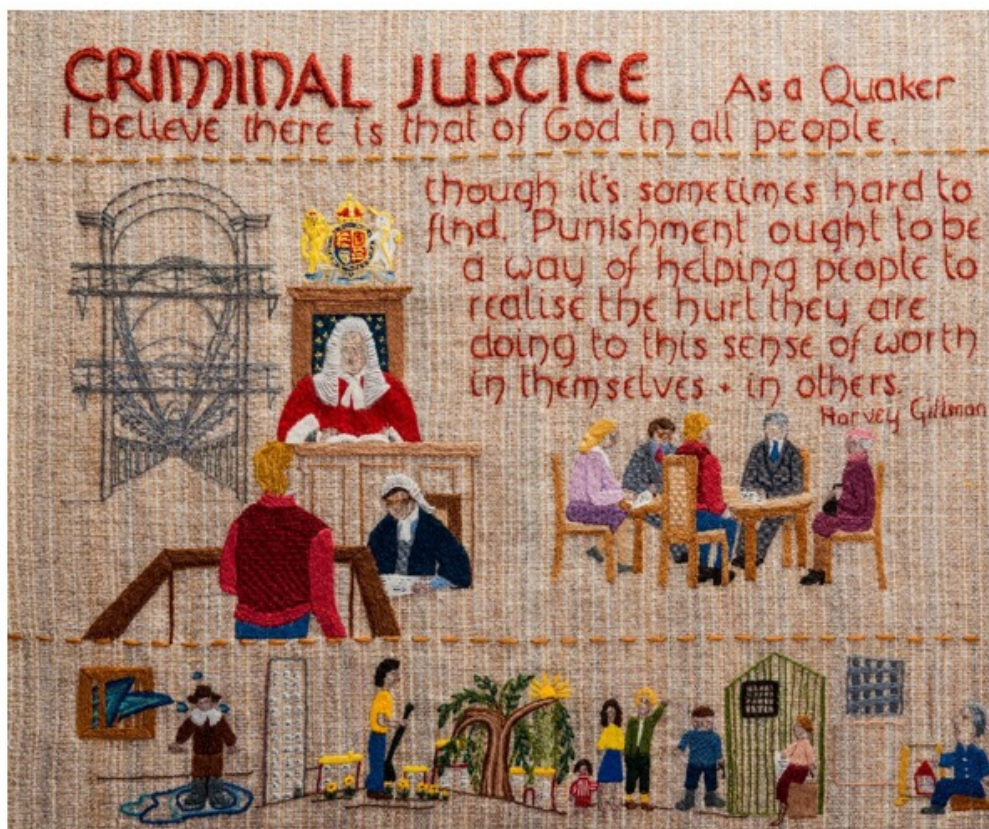
There are two advices that are particularly applicable to AVP for me and these are Advices 32 and 33:

Bring into God's light those emotions, attitudes and prejudices in yourself which lie at the root of destructive conflict, acknowledging your need for forgiveness and grace. In what ways are you involved in the work of reconciliation between individuals, groups and nations?

Are you alert to practices here and through the world which discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are? ... Bear witness to the humanity of all people, including those who break society's conventions or its laws.

There are many links between AVP and Quakers and Quakerism and by implication between AVP and the testimonies. Several of you here today are already AVP facilitators working in your own countries and will know first-hand much of what I am now going to say.

The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) started in 1975 as a collaboration between prisoners and Quaker prison visitors in the United States; its impetus was prison violence and the desire of some prisoners to examine the roots of violence in their own lives and to try and find alternative, more constructive ways of approaching problems and conflicts.



Today, the programme is widely used in correctional facilities and many other social contexts in about 50 countries around the world, including Southern Africa, to good effect to empower individuals to deal with conflict in creative ways and without violence.

In brief, the Alternatives to Violence Project offers basic, advanced and training for trainer workshops. It is...

- an experiential programme, helping people change their lives.
- a community programme, offering a new approach for community groups, social service agencies, schools, youth organisations, 'people of concern' (refugees) and all who would like to participate.
- a prison programme, helping inmates learn new skills and attitudes that lead to fulfilling and crime-free lives.

In 2006, it was introduced in Namibia, by two of the Quakers in Namibia (Gudrun Kober, a clinical psychologist and former psychology lecturer) and myself in collaboration with the PEACE Centre in Windhoek where Gudrun was Director. Our Friend Colin Glen came from Phapama in Johannesburg to talk to a group of about 30 interested NGOs, individuals, and civil servants. Since then it was administered by the first group of trained Namibian facilitators with strong support initially from the PEACE Centre. Over the years the executive committee or circle as we call it, which meets every month or so to administer the project, has changed its composition somewhat but all members are AVP trained facilitators. Ben Schernick, who is now co-Clerk of the Namibian Quaker community, has been secretary for many years and I have served on the circle from the beginning.

In 2011, AVP Namibia was registered as an independent non-profit and social welfare organisation with the Ministry of Health and Social Services. After initial support from the FNB Foundation in 2013 (over N\$ 197,000) AVP managed to conduct a series of AVP workshops, develop a larger pool of facilitators from diverse backgrounds and establish itself as an organisation.

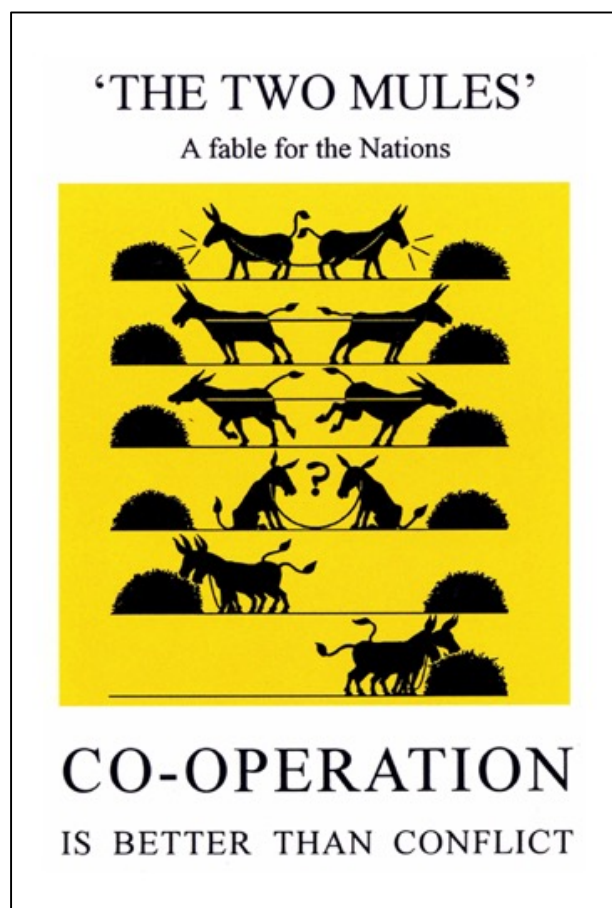
We have given workshops to refugees (mainly from the DRC) in Osire, to other interested individuals, and to inmates in the Correctional Facility at Rundu (which is in the far north on the Angolan border) and in Windhoek. We are currently giving workshops to correctional officers in Windhoek CF. Two basic workshops were given last year and we plan one advanced and one Training for Facilitators in the next few months.

We have finalised a cooperation agreement with the Namibian Correctional Services (NCS) with the aim of helping officers apply nonviolent conflict resolution methods in their work, and giving them the tools to start training inmates so that inmates themselves can become AVP facilitators who can then continue training more inmates.

The long-term strategy is to expand this approach to other correctional facilities countrywide as a sustainable and cost-effective model for rehabilitation, transformation and reintegration of offenders, targeting social skill development and change in behaviours and attitudes, usually not covered by existing approaches.

Now the particular links to Quakerism which I have noticed are:

1. The underlying principle that each individual is special – as reflected in the words
‘Remember that each one of us is unique, previous, a child of God.’
(Advice 22)
2. The experiential experience in both AVP workshops and in Quakerism, specifically the Meeting for Worship. The emphasis in both is on the ‘lived experience’.
3. The aim to resolve conflict through non-violent means is also at the heart of both AVP and Quakerism.
4. The five key principles of AVP are that ‘AVP is experiential and experimental’, ‘we are all teachers and all learners’, ‘AVP is not religious but it can be spiritual’, ‘AVP is not therapy but it can be healing’, ‘we are all volunteers’ and the first two in particular resonate strongly with Quakerism.
5. The importance of ‘trusting the process’ is implicit in the conducting of AVP workshops, but also it is there in both our Meetings for Worship and particularly in our Meetings for Worship for Business where when making difficult decisions Friends don’t rely on a majority vote, or even consensus, but on a new way forward that may emerge through the process of trusting the spirit.
6. The concept of Transforming Power is key to AVP and it is itself made up of five elements – respect for self, caring for others, asking for a non-violent solution, thinking before reacting, and expecting the best. The first three of these elements are also fundamental to Friends.



This concept of ‘Transforming Power’ can be explained in several ways – but one is that it is the inner power that each of us has to transform a situation from negative to positive. Each of us has an inner potential to transform our attitudes and behaviour. This is where a conflict,

whether physical or emotional, can be changed, healed, 'transformed'. For me Transforming Power can be equated to 'the inner light' and 'that of God or the divine in every person' in Quaker belief.

Something that Jennifer Kinghorn shared at Johannesburg Monthly Meeting in 2007 on Ubuntu links to Transforming Power:

'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 though, energy flows from respect for self to respect for others, which in turn regenerates respect for self.' (Living Adventurously: 60)



I feel that this 'invisible circuit of connections' is there in AVP workshops as it is in Meetings for Worship.

AVP is both an individual and a group process as is the Meeting for Worship. Creative Listening is very important for both AVP and Meeting for Worship and we always incorporate an activity called concentric circles which focuses on this aspect of deep listening.

In addition, I should stress that facilitating an AVP workshop may not only be transformative for the participants, it can also be so for the facilitators since you are also constantly learning about human nature, the participants and yourself. I feel blessed to be able to facilitate workshops, particularly with inmates, and to be working with some younger committed Namibians to further AVP in Namibia.

11. Turbulent times

We all know the many challenges that the world faces in this first quarter of the 21st century. This personal statement from Nicky Marais next to her art installation at a recent Namibian Arts Association exhibition *HOW INDEPENDENCE CAME TO YOU* powerfully sets out the different elements that have impacted Namibia since its independence in March 1990 in her view, and it reads:

*Independence, precious but precarious, **buffeted** by environmental crisis, economic disaster, poverty, corruption, greed, alcoholism, cynicism, defeatism, violence, crime. **Bolstered** by art, advocacy, youth action, feminism, compassion, concern, critical engagement, justice, reform, analysis, research, activism, information, a free press, independent observers, diligence, efficiency, democracy. (my emphasis)*

I feel certain that this list of negative and positive forces could apply equally to all our countries in southern Africa.

As Wilkinson and Pickett argue in the final chapter ‘A Better World’ in their book **The Inner Level**:

The choice which confronts us is whether we expand the vertical and hierarchical or the horizontal and egalitarian dimension of our society, whether we increase inequality and the status divisions between us, or decrease them... (2018:231)

They go on to expand the list of negative forces given by Nicky Marais by adding ‘climate change, the increasing flows of desperate refugees and migrants, the undemocratic and unbridled power of multinationals (whose turnover can be larger than the GDP of many countries), the need for enforceable international law’ and illicit financial flows (2018:242).

These problems are indicative of the ‘turbulent times’ we live in and the urgent challenges facing all societies today. Wilkinson and Pickett argue that a major reduction in inequality is possible through political pressure and structural changes such as greater economic democracy (2018:244). The latter would encompass the development of cooperatives and of employee-owned businesses. This would change working relationships and power structures and improve the experience of work. It would spread the ownership and earnings of wealth more widely.

But whilst this is all very commendable, change on the scale needed can only be achieved if large numbers of people commit themselves to achieving it. The world is in need of a radical alternative, a clear vision of a future society, which is not only environmentally sustainable, but in which the real quality of life is better for the vast majority (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2018:265)

So what can I do to make a difference? As Flintoff puts it in his book, **How to change the world**:

How can I one individual in a world of billions, hope to change anything?(2012:7)... To make a difference only the person who actually seeks to make change truly understands that there is a choice to be made about how we lead our lives, and can observe clearly the effect they are having.(2012:26).

We all have free will and the potential to change the world. In fact each of us can make a difference, even through small acts. To change the world is to have a sense of purpose and this relates to the human search for meaning. And meaning relates to what values we have and for Friends surely those values are intertwined with our testimonies.

As the Quaker writer Geoffrey Durham puts it:

The impulse of Quakers to ‘mend the world’ is a religious one since religion and politics, religion and peace, religion and simplicity, religion and sustainability are all mutually inclusive (2011:91)

Viktor Frankl, a Jewish doctor, who survived several years of suffering in Nazi concentration camps, developed his ideas from interacting with his fellow prisoners and the guards. He put down his experience and views in his profound book *Man's Search for Meaning*. He saw that a prisoner who had lost faith in his future was doomed and for me that applies equally to humankind now faced with its many seemingly overwhelming challenges. Frankl quoted Nietzsche: 'He who has a "why" to live can bear almost any "how"' (1963:121). He also argued that it is impossible to define the meaning of life in a general way and instead we should think of ourselves as being questioned by life.

Our answer must consist in right action and in right conduct. Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfil the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual. (1963: 122).

Surely for Friends our testimonies provide that guide to right action and right conduct, however much we might fall short of attaining them.

'Changing the world is a job that never ends. In that sense, it's not so much a job as a state of mind: attentive to the way things are, willing to share responsibility for it, and determined not to make despair convincing, but hope possible.' (Flintoff. 2012:126)

I end this section on turbulent times on a positive note with a phrase from the late John Muafangejo, Namibian artist, internationally known for his black and white lino and woodcuts. It is a phrase that he wrote on one print created in 1984 during Namibia's liberation struggle. It shows figures in discussion and I believe this is the mind-set which can help us:

Hope and optimism in spite of the present difficulties

12. Conclusion

In conclusion, I hope that this lecture has helped stimulate you as Friends in southern Africa to be part of a process of assessing, re-testing and re-envisioning our testimonies. We need to be reminded of the importance of continuous reflection on them. In fact many of the Richard Gush lectures over the years have done so. We also need to be reminded that we have a treasure trove of Quaker insights in our *Quaker Faith and Practice, Advice and Queries*, and our own *Living Adventurously* and *Southern African Quaker Newsletters* and we should use them.

Finally, I would like to share an extract, a picture and a song. The extract which speaks to me comes from the autobiography of Carl Jung, the 20th century psychologist, and was quoted by John Schmid in his 2011, Richard Gush lecture 'Life'.

'In spite of all uncertainties, I feel a solidity underlying all existence, and the more uncertain I have felt about myself, the more there has grown up in me a feeling of kinship with all things.'

The picture I end with is an image of grace and hope for the future, of a dancer, outside the NAMDIA office in Avis Windhoek near where I live which I photographed on Christmas Day last year. Let's celebrate life and all that it and we can be.

And I end with the music and words of 'Lord of the Dance' (words by Sydney Carter) which complement this photo.

I danced in the morning
When the world was begun,
And I danced in the moon
And the stars and the sun,
And I came down from heaven
And I danced on the earth,
At Bethlehem
I had my birth.

Chorus

Dance, then, wherever you may be,
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
And I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he.

I danced on the Sabbath
And I cured the lame;
The holy people
Said it was a shame.
They whipped and they stripped
And they hung me on high,
And they left me there
On a Cross to die.

Chorus

They cut me down
And I leapt up high;
I am the life
That'll never, never die;
I'll live in you
If you'll live in me -
I am the Lord
Of the Dance, said he.

Chorus



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14. Appendices

14.1 Richard Gush lectures 1994-2018: title, name of lecturer, year, and place if known.

Note that there are some gaps. Sometimes I give an extract if the lecturer has not already been quoted in this 2019 lecture.

1. **Guy Butler.** 1994. *African Values that shapes us as African Quakers* (Port Elizabeth)
2. **George Ellis.** 1996. *Developing Human Rights Values. Is Quakerism viable in the light of modern science?*
3. **Christo Lombard.** 1996. (December) *Reconciliation, Truth and Justice - Breaking the Wall of Silence: Namibian Experiences.* (Penn Tech, Cape Town),
4. **H.W. van der Merwe.** 1999. *Quakers and my Pursuit of Justice and Peace in South Africa.*
5. **Richard Knottenbelt.** 2000. *Recognition, Identity and Belonging.*
6. **Simon Lamb.** 2002. *A faith worth living.*
7. **Geoff Harris.** 2003. *Is Peace Possible?*
8. **Sheldon Weeks.** 2004. *My life as a Friend and Fellow Traveller.*
9. **Jennifer Kinghorn.** 2005. *Mystery, Mysticism and Daily Living: A Quaker Adventure in difficult times.*
We are not creatures learning to be spiritual; we are spirits learning to live (quoted in Living Adventurously, 2008:33)
10. **Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge.** April 2006. *Speaking Truth to Power – Peace is a Struggle.* (Heronbridge, Johannesburg)

It may be important for us as a small marginalised religious group to say 'I am a Quaker and I am proud' (quoted in Living Adventurously 2008:66).
11. **Martin Wilkinson,** 2007. *Prophets of Equality.* (Hlekweni, Zimbabwe)
12. **Vernon Gibberd.** 2008. *On turning the world the right way up.* (Grahamstown)
13. **Dudu Mtshazo.** 2009.
14. **John McCormick** January 2010. *Sustaining Light in Times of Change.* Good Shepherd Retreat Centre, Hartbeespoort Dam.
15. **John Schmid.** 2011. *Life (KZN outside Durban?)*
16. **Gudrun Weeks.** 2012. *Art as Testimony: in praise of music.* (Simonstown, Cape Town)
17. **Shelagh Willet.** 2013. *Reverence for Life (Cape Town)*

18. **Rob Thompson**. 2015. *Human Economic Activity: Holding Organisations Accountable for an Environmentally, Socially and Economically Sustainable future*". The YM 2015 lecture was based on a then unpublished doctoral thesis.

19. **Jennifer Kavanagh**. 2016. *No Other: a journey into oneness*. London: John Hunt Publishing.

20. **Nancy Fee**. 2018. *Travelling on outward and inward journeys*. (Good Shepherd Retreat Centre, Hartbeespoort)

Appendix 14.2 Additional Material on Equality

1. Read *Reducing Inequalities: Closing Africa's Wealth Gap* by Kingsley Ighobor, in **Africa Renewal** UN quarterly magazine. Dec 2017-March 2018 including interview with Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of NEPAD, former prime minister of Niger, on latest socio-economic developments on the continent.
2. In their first book **The Spirit Level** (2009), the ideas for which discussed by Martin Wilkinson is his 2007 Richard Gush lecture 'Prophets of Equality', Wilkinson and Pickett looked at data from a range of countries round the world and found that the USA had the largest income differences and the lowest level of quality of life indicators, with Britain and Portugal coming second. In contrast more equal societies such as countries in Scandinavia and Japan did well. The evidence from numerous research papers show that there is not just evidence of correlation between income inequality in a country and its health and social problems but evidence of causality (xvii-xviii)
3. In **The Inner Level** (2018), the latest book by Wilkinson and Pickett, show from a vast amount of data and analysis by themselves and others from around the world that when the gap between rich and poor increases so does the tendency to define and value ourselves and others in terms of superiority and inferiority and that low social status is associated with elevated levels of stress and increased rates of anxiety and depression. They conclude that in societies based on fundamental equalities, sharing and reciprocity generate much higher levels of well-being (xvii).

They argue that greater equality, particularly in UK, would bring four key improvements in quality of life.

- i. Status would matter less and divisions of class would heal and there would be stronger communities.(p.262)
- ii. There would be more leisure, reduction of working hours. and more time for family and friends. (p.263)
- iii. There would be an improvement in the quality of working life
- iv. Health and social benefits would increase and there would be a reduction in all the problems that become more common lower down the social ladder, namely few prisoners, less drug abuse, higher rate of child well-being, less violence, better physical and mental health.

4. **UNDP Report** released in September 2018. *Income Inequality Trends in sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences.*

Several factors drive inequality in Africa according to the group of economists who wrote this UN report. One is that there can be a ‘natural resources curse, an urban bias of public policy, and ethnic and gender inequalities.’ Countries with abundant natural resources, such as Botswana and Zambia (and Namibia) are also some of the most unequal.

5. **The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index.** October 2018. Authors are Max Lawson and Matthew Martin. This is a global ranking of governments based on what they are doing to tackle the gap between rich and poor. www.inequalityindex.org.

Development Finance International (DFI) and Oxfam which produced this Report believe inequality is far from inevitable. It is a policy choice and governments have considerable powers to reduce the gap between the rich and poor in their countries. We developed this index to measure and monitor government policy commitments to reducing inequality, but also to offer a robust, evidence-based alternative to other existing income and wealth measuring systems which are sorely lacking in data coverage and quality.

In 2015 the leaders of 193 governments promised to reduce inequality under Goal 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Without reducing inequality, meeting SDG 1 to eliminate poverty will be impossible. In 2017 DFI and Oxfam produced the first index to measure the commitment of government to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor. The current index is based on a new database of indicators, now covering 157 countries, which measures government action on social spending, tax and labour rights – three areas found to be critical to reducing the gap.

6. Oxfam Report, **Reward Work, Not Wealth.** January 2019. <https://www.oxfam.org/en/tags/inequality> accessed 1 March 2019. This report calls for actions by governments around the world to ensure that our economies work for everyone and not just the fortunate few. Their recommendations are 1. That returns to shareholders and top executives should be limited and all workers should receive a minimum living wage to enable them to have a decent quality of life 2. that gender pay

gaps should be eliminated and the rights of women workers protected and 3. that the wealthy should pay their fair share of tax through higher taxes and a crackdown on tax avoidance and spending on public services such as health and education be increased.

7. **Further reading.** *Poverty and Inequality – Diagnosis, Prognosis and Response* by Craig Soudien, Vasu Reddy and Ingrid Woolard. March 2019. HSRC Pretoria.

Appendix 14.3 List of graphics and music

Graphics All graphics are mainly panels selected from the Quaker Tapestry exhibition housed in Kendal Meeting House, Cumbria, UK, unless otherwise stated. Permission was kindly granted to Helen Vale to use the panels for this lecture. See acknowledgements and bibliography. Other graphics are two posters used with permission from Friends House London., and five photos which are accredited in brackets.

1. Service Overseas
2. True Peace
3. SPICES poster (made and photographed by Helen Vale)
4. Quakers in South Africa
5. Divine Light prism
6. Simplicity – in all things...
7. Quaker Vigil for Peace
8. It's time to build a culture of Peace. Poster from Friend House London
9. World Family of Friends
10. Namibian Quakers (photo by Justin Ellis, May 2018)
11. Slave Trade
12. Reverence for Life
13. Helen and desert pixie (photo by Vera Kortshal, 2017)
14. Mandala made by children with Enid Ellis (photo by Helen Vale from Krumhuk retreat, 2017)
15. Two donkeys, Poster from Friends House London
16. Criminal justice
17. Transforming Power Mandala. AVP materials
18. Dancing girl. Life size wire sculpture/statue outside NAMDIA office, Klein Windhoek, Namibia(photo by Helen Vale, Christmas Day 2018)

Music

Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D Major – Larghetto – first 3 minutes
'Lord of the Dance' is a hymn with words written by English songwriter Sydney Carter in 1963. He adapted the tune from the American Shaker song "Simple Gifts". It is kindly played by our Friend, Rob Thomson, on his accordion.