

**Living the Transformation: Creation waits with eager longing  
for the revealing of the children of God (Romans 8:19)**



**Study booklet for the FWCC World  
Plenary Meeting in Peru January 2016**



## **Introduction**

In January 2016 Friends from around the world will gather in Pisac, Peru for the World Plenary Meeting of Friends World Committee for Consultation. This meeting (previously known as the international representatives meeting or FWCC triennial meeting when it was held every three years) is a meeting for representatives from all four FWCC Sections to tend to FWCC business, and is surrounded by worship and fellowship with Friends from around the world. All Yearly Meetings and other bodies that are affiliated with FWCC are invited to send representatives.

The theme of the meeting is “Living the Transformation: Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” This is taken from Romans chapter 8 verse 19. We hope that this theme will come alive for us in worship sessions, home groups and in the four consultations that will be taking place during the World Plenary Meeting as we explore what it means to be a member of the worldwide Religious Society of Friends and to discover how we are called to transformation in our lives and for the world.

## **How to use this booklet**

This booklet explores four elements of the theme of the World Plenary Meeting “Living the Transformation: Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God” These are: -

- Living the transformation
- Eager longing
- Revealing
- Children of God

Each of the four areas of the theme is explored through passages from the Bible, particularly from Romans chapter 8, from which the theme of the meeting is taken and from other Quaker writings. We have sought inspiration from Quakers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century who share how their lives had been transformed by their direct encounters with God. We offer Advices and Queries and other extracts from the books of discipline of different Yearly Meetings and Friends’ churches to help us focus on the living out of our Quaker faith in the world. The plenary meeting will have a strong focus on youth with many young Adult Friends attending, so we have included experiences and insights of young Quakers from around the world with extracts from the book *Spirit Rising*. We also offer a few queries at the end of each section that we hope may serve to help you reflect and consider, individually or with other Friends. Many of the passages we have chosen are easily available on Quaker websites and most are also available in Spanish as well as English. You may also like to consider what other sources help inspire your exploration of the theme and bring them to Pisac to share in your home groups.

## Living the Transformation



© Erik Dries, 2015

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' **John 3: 1-8**

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**Romans 12:2**

### Isaac Penington's Opening

At last, after all my distresses, wanderings and sore travails, I met with some writings of this people called Quakers, which I cast a slight eye upon and disdained, as falling very short of that wisdom, light, life and power, which I had been longing for and searching after... After a long time, I was invited to hear one of them (as I had been often, they in tender love pitying me and feeling my want of that which they possessed)... When I came, I felt the presence and power of the Most High among them, and words of truth from the Spirit of truth reaching to my heart and conscience, opening my state as in the presence of

the Lord. Yea, I did not only feel words and demonstrations from without, but I felt the dead quickened, the seed raised; insomuch as my heart, in the certainty of light and clearness of true sense, said: 'This is he; this is he; there is no other; this is he whom I have waited for and sought after from my childhood, who was always near me, and had often begotten life in my heart, but I knew him not distinctly, nor how to receive him or dwell with him'.

But some may desire to know what I have at last met with. I answer, 'I have met with the Seed'. Understand that word, and thou wilt be satisfied and inquire no further. I have met with my God, I have met with my Saviour, and he hath not been present with me without his Salvation, but I have felt the healings drop upon my soul from under his wings. I have met with the Seed's Father, and in the Seed I have felt him my Father; there I have read his nature, his love, his compassions, his tenderness, which have melted, overcome and changed my heart before him.

What shall I say? I have met with the true peace, the true righteousness, the true holiness, the true rest of the soul, the everlasting habitation which the redeemed dwell in.

Isaac Penington 19.14 *Quaker Faith and Practice of Britain Yearly Meeting, 2013*

## **The Power of God**

They were changed men themselves before they went about to change others. Their hearts were rent as well as their garments, and they knew the power and work of God upon them... And as they freely received what they had to say from the Lord, so they freely administered it to others. The bent and stress of their ministry was conversion to God, regeneration and holiness, not schemes of doctrines and verbal creeds or new forms of worship, but a leaving off in religion the superfluous and reducing the ceremonious and formal part, and pressing earnestly the substantial, the necessary and profitable part, as all upon a serious reflection must and do acknowledge.

A Testimony of William Penn concerning early Friends, 1694

## **Grace**

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. The 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 when 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 MM, South Africa, *Living Adventurously: Quaker Faith and Practice of Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting*, 2009, page 80.

## **Recognising the Spirit**

From our deepest being, using all the forces of creation, the Spirit pushes itself into our awareness and demands our complete attention via a racing pulse, immobility, darkness in our eyes, loss of hearing and waves of emotion. These are whole-of-body recognitions of the Spirit as it breaks into our humanness and takes us wholly in its grip. How else is 'that which is beyond words' to communicate with us? And how else can we reply except through our bodies with laughter, tears, sweat, shivers, knots in the belly, tight throat dry mouth? When we dismiss these as passing emotions, we deny the Spirit and turn away from God. Indeed they will pass if they are not recognised and so will the light therein. This is the way the Spirit leads, and we must be open to it. We must embrace the Spirit's work within ourselves and others, not try to moderate or control it, and, above all, we must take notice of the messages we receive.

Helen Bayes 2003, *This We Can Say, Australian Quaker Life, Faith & Thought*, 2004, page 45

## **The Kingdom of Life**

Here is what I know about the kingdom life:

- It is to recognize the Spirit of Christ infusing every moment and, in that awareness, to love and laugh and mourn and feel everything, held in the arms of God.
- It is to be aware of your own transformation, to see yourself reoriented toward greater faithfulness and courage and integrity.
- It is learning to love selflessly, which fulfills the self.

Kody Gabriel Hersh, Miami Monthly Meeting, Southeastern Yearly Meeting (FGC-FUM) United States, *Spirit Rising*, QUIP 2012, page 126

## **God Guides my Life**

I come from a family that is not Christian, but God put in me the need to attend a church, because he showed me a different life from the one I had, and since then I have felt in me the desire to seek the Lord.

I began the Christian life at age twelve, today I am twenty-three years old; and in all these years there have been times when I withdrew from the Lord, but even so I have realized that my Lord has not abandoned me.

Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never fail you nor forsake you." (Heb 13:5, RSV)

Therefore, we can confidently said: "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid; what can anyone do to me?" (Heb. 13:6-7, RSV)

After so many lapses in my worldly, non-Christian life, the Lord called me again to his path; and I excited and happy to know and see God's love for me, returned running and thirsty for His word. Even today I feel touched to know what God does for me. Because now more than ever, I can see God's care in guiding my life and the opportunities He gives me to grow in my faith and to work for love of Him in my meeting. When I have problems, even when I know that I am wrong and cannot change my ways, it is He who changes me with his words, in this case and in these times, mainly via my teacher of discipleship, and by means of a book that I bought in the street to read that has been of great help in my life.

Now I serve in my meeting, I am a teacher of children, a member of the ministry of praise and secretary of the council. I enjoy working for the Lord because I know that what I do in the meeting is pleasing to my Lord and I like to do all that I can.

I thank the Lord for the love and patience He has for me and this makes me happy. You cannot imagine how I would like to know how to do everything, so that with everything I knew I could serve the Lord. "God is great in love!!!" And I am happy.

Erika Paula Miranda Gutierrez, Christian Friends Congregation, National Evangelical Friends Church of Bolivia (EFCI), Bolivia, *Spirit Rising*, QUIP 2010, page 233

## **Dot-to-Dot**

I used to ride to "quiet meeting" on the back of my Dad's bike. I would sit in the corner with felt-tips and Dot-to-Dot books trying to colour between the lines and not make too much noise. Later, I remember wriggling and fidgeting on the laps of friendly strangers, studying the facial expressions in the practically silent circle.

I wonder how much time I spent in that circle over the following years, in the ten minutes before creeping out to read, shout, sing, and draw in Children's Programme. I spent that time making faces at the other kids, watching the ducks out the window, counting different types of shoes, reading books from the library trolley, asking forgiveness for having snuck a spoonful of Nutella, listening really hard to see if God would talk to me...

I still remember the pride I felt the first time that I sat through a whole meeting, how nervous I was the first time that I gave a reading.

Now, after ten years of meetings, I realise how much I've changed. I still know how many beams there are across the meeting house ceiling and how many bars on the window, but I could no longer tell you the ratio of shoes to sandals or how many people had their eyes shut last Sunday.

I've been to quite a few discussions about how different people spend their time in meeting for worship, been given suggestions and things to try, but those ten minutes I have twice a month are different every time. I listen to and reflect on the readings and ministry. I breathe deeply. I admire the beautiful world out the window. I give thanks for the people who are present and think of those who are not. I try to clear my mind of daily worries. I try to focus on my feelings. Sometimes I just stare at the ticking clock waiting for it to be over. I've felt enlightened, relaxed, happy. I've made resolutions. I've come to feel a sense of peace. But I wouldn't claim to ever have cleared my mind completely or to have heard the Inner Voice.

Watching the younger children in the meeting as they wriggle and whisper, I'm reminded of how far I've come...and how far I have to go.

Keava McKeogh, Waikato-Hauraki Meeting, Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/New Zealand, *Spirit Rising*, QUIP 2012, page 18

### **Why I Became a Quaker**

What attracted me to the Quakers was the open-minded attitude toward spirituality. To build a faith out of experience rather than belief in creeds. My previous spiritual seeking had led me into exploring different eastern traditions and new-age spirituality. But I couldn't find a spiritual home in any of these traditions. My doubts prevented me from settling into a belief system.

I first heard about Friends when I was in a doubtful and agnostic period. I was surprised by the open-minded attitude and inspired by the idea of the Inner Light. It really spoke to me in my situation because I realized that even if I couldn't believe in anything else, I could still believe in my Inner Light. I had felt it inside me for many years and felt its bliss when playing or listening to beautiful music or falling into spontaneous meditative peacefulness when being alone.

I soon went to an unprogrammed worship and experienced it as soothing and meaningful. I could probe into that sacred feeling for the first time without distorting it with confusing words. I also liked the people I met and soon became friends with some of them. At the same time as me, a couple of other young people found their way to our meeting. Earlier on very few young persons attended the meeting, but now this is beginning to change. I soon found out that most of us had found the Quakers through the Internet, in several cases through the [www.beliefnet.com](http://www.beliefnet.com) site. In a number of cases their Belief-O-Matic test gave the result that the person completing it had a spiritual profile most closely matching that of the Quakers.

My experience with secularization in Sweden is that often young people reject religion and spirituality because they identify these matters with blind faith in dogmas. The only real facts are the ones that can be investigated scientifically. There is a tendency to look upon religious people as naïve. But I also see much spiritual longing and seeking among young people. There is a growing interest for meditation, yoga, and personal development.

In this situation I believe that the Friends have great potential. As a rich tradition on the Judeo-Christian ground, enhanced by the lives actions and testimonies of at least a dozen generations of Friends, there is an abundant well of inspiration for the seeker here. There is room for finding words but also silence, introverted mysticism but also extroverted activism, belief in Jesus but also universalism. There is room for spiritual seeking, sharing and communion, without the pressure to agree upon a certain confession of faith.

I became a member of the Swedish Yearly Meeting in November 2007. Since then I have gone through different phases in my spiritual life. I have expanded my understanding of Christianity. I have been driven through pantheism and agnosticism. But all the time, despite the turmoil, I kept the faith in the Inner Light. It has always been a quiet spot inside of me, like the eye of the storm, where I can find peace of mind, and soul.

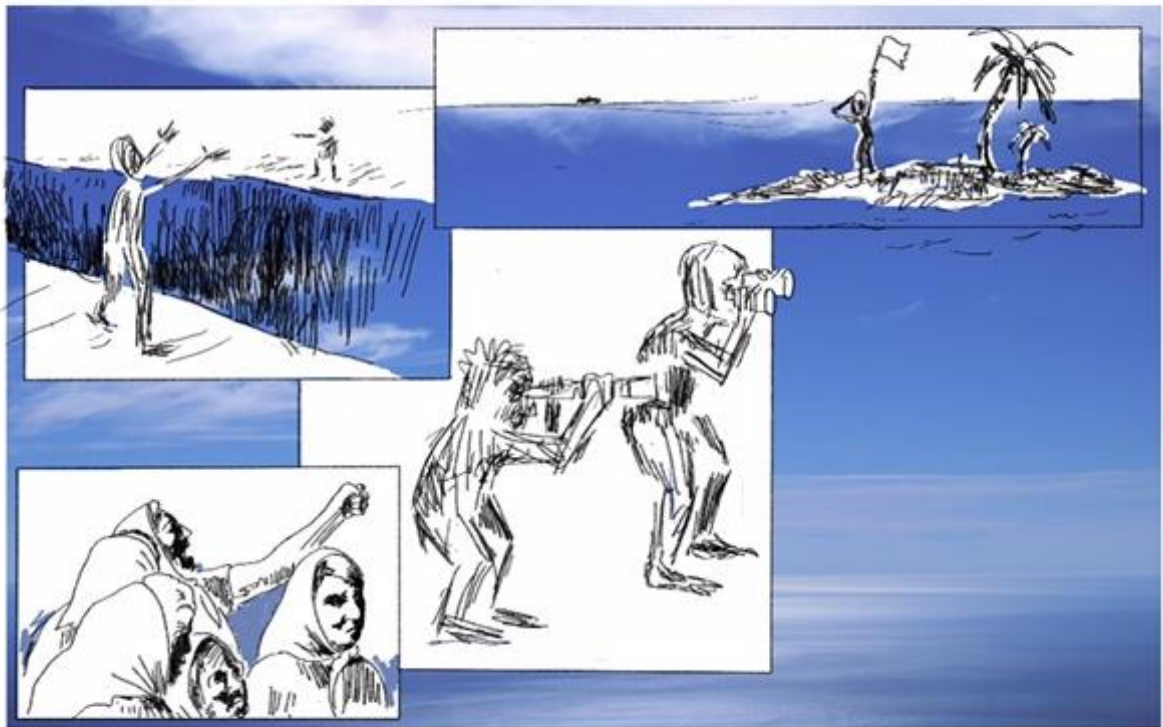
Kenneth Platter, Sweden Yearly Meeting, Sweden, *Spirit Rising*, QUIP 2012 pg 217

## **Queries**

- In what way have you been personally changed by your experience of God?
- In what way has your meeting/church been changed by your corporate experience of God?
- How have themes of death and rebirth expressed themselves in your faith, your ministry, your witness, in your way of life etc?
- How do you and your church/meeting contribute to the transformation of society and creation?



Creation waits with ***eager longing*** for the revealing of the children of God



© Erik Dries, 2015

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. **Romans 8:26**

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. **Romans 8:22-23**

### **Psalm 42**

As a deer longs for flowing streams,  
so my soul longs for you, O God.  
My soul thirsts for God,  
for the living God.  
When shall I come and behold  
the face of God?

My tears have been my food  
day and night,  
while people say to me continually,  
'Where is your God?'

These things I remember,  
as I pour out my soul:  
how I went with the throng,

and led them in procession to the house of God,  
with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving,  
a multitude keeping festival.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you disquieted within me?  
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
my help and my God.  
My soul is cast down within me;  
therefore I remember you  
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,  
from Mount Mizar.

Deep calls to deep  
at the thunder of your cataracts;  
all your waves and your billows  
have gone over me.

By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,  
and at night his song is with me,  
a prayer to the God of my life.

I say to God, my rock,  
'Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I walk about mournfully  
because the enemy oppresses me?'

As with a deadly wound in my body,  
my adversaries taunt me,  
while they say to me continually,  
'Where is your God?'

Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you disquieted within me?  
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
my help and my God.

### **The infinite Love of God**

I was under great temptations sometimes, and my inward sufferings were heavy; but I could find none to open my condition to but the Lord alone, unto whom I cried night and day. And I went back into Nottinghamshire, and there the Lord showed me that the natures of those things which were hurtful without, were within in the hearts and minds of wicked men. And I cried unto the Lord, saying, 'Why should I be thus, seeing I was never addicted to commit those evils?' And the Lord answered that it was needful I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all conditions, and in this I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. And in that also I saw the infinite love of God; and I had great openings.

George Fox 1647 quoted in 19.03 of *Quaker Faith and Practice*, Britain Yearly Meeting  
2013

## **An Awareness of God**

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.

Advices & Queries 1.02.8 of *Quaker Faith and Practice*, Britain Yearly Meeting, 2013

## **Eternal Truth**

My motive for taking the inward journey was not curiosity, nor was it a wish for intellectual enlightenment, nor in order to gain power. Neither was it remedial. It was simply that the world had failed me and, being earth-empty, I longed with my whole strength for the eternal love, the eternal truth that I felt was hidden in God himself.

To long for and listen for the divine spirit may be called prayer, or meditation, or communing with nature. This I did every day for short or long periods until, one evening out of the listening silence a vibrant voice sang: 'Come unto me.... O come until me...' and my soul trembled, and my heart melted at the love and truth in the tones.

Ruth Sansom 1971 *This We Can Say: Australian Quaker Life, Faith and Thought*, 2004  
page 6

## **Still Learners**

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 1948, Natal Monthly Meeting, South Africa, *Living Adventurously*, 2009 pg 31

## **Worship**

Have you ever asked yourself, *What is worship? And why do you worship?* These and many other questions have arisen for me. Before I used to just do it---sing, and that was all, but now worship plays a really important role in my daily life. For me it is a very important experience. It is a way of communicating with God through song.

To pray in song is something that wells up from the depths of your heart, like looking for the pearl of great price in the bottom of the sea. You are the sea and the pearl is your heart directed to God. When you worship, what do you do? Do you really feel what comes out of your mouth when you praise? Often we worship when our hearts are not really in it, and we don't see the true way of worshipping, which is unforgettable and edifying. I share with you a little experience when I participated in a gathering of UJESA (Santidad Friends Youth Gathering) that took place in the town of Patamanta. All the young brothers and sisters worshipped and praised God, and when we did it we felt it in our hearts! How beautiful it was! Lots of young people came who were seeking the same thing I was looking for with such devotion.

It is in this way that we all have experiences and we learn and return with more strength to

carry on and not grow weary. It is like when a lion pursues its prey, the prey falls but gets up with more strength than before. This is how a Friend should get up when she/he falls. Also, worship gives consolation in moments of anguish, and happiness when one is cheerful. It functions as a complement to our faith, something like the sand is to the sea. As the word of God says, "Is someone happy? Sing praises. Is someone afflicted? Pray."

So, the only thing we can do when we are giving praise or adoration, let's not do it half-heartedly, but rather with our whole heart. Let's not fall away, but press on, persevere, and continue to follow the footsteps of the Master until the end of our lives.

Fanny Mamani, Bolivian Holiness Mission of EFCI, Bolivia *Spirit Rising*, QUIP 2010 page 4

### **Yearn for the Word of God**

The Quaker culture early had opposed the use of musical instruments and hands clapping in praising the name of God. This resulted in a reluctance to participate fully in activities. Currently, Quakers – through the reformation of churches and reviewing of the Quaker constitution – have improved greatly, thus making me yearn for the word of God, and I can now praise him through claps and dance to him for good deeds done to me.

Through the innovations of Internet services, I can easily receive God's message by downloading information. This has also been made easier through hearing of fellowship programmes conducted by other Quakers across the world.

Mobile phones and radios have contributed greatly to growth of my faith because I can hear and see the experiences faced by other youth and how I can overcome them. I have learned a lot how to persevere and how to forgive those who have done wrong to me. Through this I am in a position to explore my spiritual gifts that I had never understood.

Mathew Amoyi Lanogwa, Kitale Village Meeting, East Africa Yearly Meeting (North) (FUM), Kenya from *Spirit Rising*, QUIP 2010 page 32

### **Today I Choose You**

Today I choose you –  
Like the soldier lays down arms  
And goes home to his own country  
To live in peace.

Today I choose you –  
Like a child turns to her mother,  
Relying in all ways upon her father,  
With no thought of departing.

Today I choose you –  
Like the field hand goes home  
After long labor on another's land  
To his own house and kin.

Today I choose you –  
Like the slave breaks his shackles  
And goes in search of his family,  
Never resting till they're found.

Today I choose you –  
As the traveler from the desert  
Drinks down the cool river water  
And stills a long thirst.

Today I choose you –  
As the sheep follow shepherds,  
And as the foals follow mares,  
And as summer follows spring.

Today I choose you –  
You, who have more names  
Than all the stars in all the heavens  
And as many faces.

Today I choose you –  
Though I have chosen otherwise,  
And rent my body, and soul,  
Today I come back.

Today I choose you –  
Humbly I come, begging crusts,  
And asking no forgiveness,  
But you lead me to the feast.  
Today I choose you –  
I shelter behind the Immutable Sone,  
And beg the blessing of the Immanent Wind,  
That I may make you my home forever.

Today I choose you –  
Though I did not yesterday,  
and may not on the morrow,  
In this hour I am yours.

Today I choose you –  
As the Moon chooses Earth,  
As the Earth chooses Sun,  
As you have chosen us.

Paul Christiansen, Eastside Friends Meeting, North Pacific Yearly Meeting  
(Independent), United States, *Spirit Rising*, QUIP 2010 page 244

## Peace Poem

Peace, peace, peace, peace  
Where are you peace?  
I have searched for you in many places  
But you are nowhere to be found  
Where did you hide yourself peace?  
Tell me to reach you peace,  
Without you my life is a lie.

Many people are looking for you,  
At home in schools at work, in organizations  
And also in churches  
Tell us where you are peace, we are confused  
Of where to find you, where did we go  
Wrong? Tell us to change, without you peace,  
We are heading nowhere,  
Even though you do well,  
Without peace your life is a lie.

We who know what friendship is,  
Let us make as many friends as mites,  
We will never have peace where we  
Are enemies?  
Let us spread peace as seeds  
To grow all over the World.  
Our Christianity will not be complete,  
Without you peace, even preaching  
Will not be easy,  
Truly without you peace our lives are big lies.

Peace I all we need  
In everything we do  
Jesus left us in peace  
But also in pieces  
We have to maintain peace  
In order to stay/live happily  
Without peace and holiness,  
Not one still sees the Lord.

Charity begins at home,  
Peace has to start from home,  
To Church, to community and then  
Spread all over the world,  
Peace is all we need in our daily lives,  
Without peace and holiness,  
No one shall see the Lord.

Our Country had been destroyed  
Because there was no peace  
Without peace in the world  
There will be no truth at all  
We thank our almighty Lord,  
for granting us peace,  
Despite of what happened  
After election  
Without peace and holiness  
No one shall see the Lord  
Watch out.

Wycliffe M. Musera, East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends (North) (FUM), Kenya, *Spirit Rising*, QUIP 2010 page 128

## **Quaker Haiku**

Silence envelops  
Hearts gathering together  
Waiting to be led

Kathleen Burckhardt, Saanich Peninsula Monthly Meeting, Canadian Yearly Meeting  
(FGC-FUM) Canada, from *Spirit Rising*, QUIP 2010 page 5

## **Queries**

- What is your deepest yearning, as an individual and as part of a faith community?
- What kind of a world do you believe God is yearning for?
- How do we discern if our yearning is God's yearning?

Creation waits with eager longing for the **revealing** of the children of God



© Erik Dries, 2015

God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit. **Romans 8:27**

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly,[b] but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. **1 Corinthians 13: 8-13**

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. **1 Corinthians 2: 12-13**

### **The Quaker Experience of Waiting for the Revealing of God**

Not by strength of arguments or by a particular disquisition of each doctrine, and convincement of my understanding thereby, came [I] to receive and bear witness of the Truth, but by being secretly reached by [the] Life. For, when I came into the silent assemblies of God's people, I felt a secret power among them, which touched my heart; and as I gave way unto it I found the evil weakening in me and the good raised up; and so I became thus knit and united unto them, hungering more and more after the increase of



this power and life whereby I might feel myself perfectly redeemed; and indeed this is the surest way to become a Christian; to whom afterwards the knowledge and understanding of principles will not be wanting, but will grow up so much as is needful as the natural fruit of this good root, and such a knowledge will not be barren nor unfruitful.

Robert Barclay (1648-1690) 19.21 *Quaker Faith and Practice*, Britain Yearly Meeting 2013

## **Power and Glory**

Now all people, cease from your strange guides and outside lights, and return to the light of Christ in you, that which shows you sin and evil and the deeds of darkness: for whatever makes manifest is light; and this is that light which shines into the conscience, which tells you that lying, swearing, pride, envy, covetousness, backbiting and dissembling leads to condemnation. And this light checks you for sin and would have you to do to all men as you would be done to. And this light is not a chapter without you, in a book, but it is that light that revealed that to the saints in their several measures, which they spoke forth, and which thou readest in the chapter. And this light being minded will lead to the perfect day which declares all things as they are.

James Nayler *The Power and Glory of the LORD Shining out of the NORTH* from <http://www.qhpress.org/texts/nayler/north.html>

## **Shortcomings**

Be honest with yourself. What unpalatable truths might you be evading? When you recognize your shortcomings, do not let that discourage you. In worship together we can find the assurance of God's love and the strength to go on with renewed courage.

No 11, Advices & Queries, chapter 6 of *Faith and Practice* of Canadian Yearly Meeting

## **Brokenness and Touching God's Divine Presence**

After much prayer I have come to see brokenness as being broken open to God, as having one's walls torn from the roots to find freedom in the Lord. What does it mean that the Religious Society of Friends is broken and that it is we who have broken it? I now believe that we have broken ourselves open to the power and grace of the Lord. That we have struggled and suffered and cried out for guidance and have been torn open to Her divine will. We have lit ourselves afire with the power of the Spirit and we are made free. I believe that when the smoke clears we will find ourselves standing among the rubble of that burning, made new in the simplicity of what we truly are: a group of people bound together by the expectant waiting and witness of the Lord. And we will know our strength. And we will know God's.

Anna Obermayer, Binghampton Community Friends, New York Yearly Meeting (FUM-FGC), USA, *Spirit Rising* QUIP page 23

## **I am**

I am the light and the dark  
I am life and death  
I am hope where there is no hope  
I am solitude and a great crowd  
I am joy and sorrow  
I am a friendly word and a touch  
I am first love and love after many years  
I am the wind that touches your face  
I am the thunder and then lightening  
I am the bird in the sky and the fish in the sea  
I am spring summer autumn winter  
I am the sun on a cloudy day  
I am the seas and the rivers  
I am the land and the creatures  
I am the beginning and the end

I am

Gayle Yeomans, Stafford Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting, United Kingdom, *Spirit Rising* QUIP page 39

## **You Say You Love Me (God's Lament)**

You say you love Me  
But you walk on by  
When I'm cold and hungry,  
And I cry out for your help.

You say you love Me  
But your neighbour starves  
Needlessly  
Because you do not share.

You say you love Me  
And yet you destroy  
The world I gave you  
To tend.

You say you love Me  
But you kill one another  
And worse  
You do it in my name.

You say I am the Way  
But my Way you do not follow.  
You say I am the Truth  
But Truth you do not hear.

You say I am loving  
And still you imagine  
I would send you to hell  
For believing “wrong” thing.

One day  
You will realise  
What it truly means  
To love.

Peter Parr, Sussex Area Meeting and Young Friends General Meeting, Britain  
Yearly Meeting, *Spirit Rising* QUIP page 334

## Queries

- God reveals Godself in many ways in the Bible – how has God revealed Godself to you?
- God helps us uncover the truth about ourselves – the light shows us our strengths and our shortcomings. What do you need to bring into the light in your own life and in the life of your meeting/church?
- How do you cope spiritually with darkness, both close to you and in the wider world?

Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the **children of God**



Stock photo

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. **Matthew 5:9**

‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another. **John 15:12-17**

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. **Romans 8:14-15**

The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **Romans 8:21**

### **True Godliness**

True godliness doesn’t turn men out of the world but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavours to mend it...

William Penn, 1682 23.02 *Quaker Faith and Practice of Britain Yearly Meeting 2013*

## **Our Life is Love, and Peace, and Tenderness**

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand, if there has been any slip or fall; and waiting till the Lord gives sense and repentance, if sense and repentance in any be wanting. Oh! wait to feel this spirit, and to be guided to walk in this spirit, that ye may enjoy the Lord in sweetness, and walk sweetly, meekly, tenderly, peaceably, and lovingly one with another.

Isaac Penington writing to Friends in Amersham 1667 10.01 *Quaker Faith and Practice of Britain Yearly Meeting 2013*

## **Children of God**

Jesus teaches us how to live. Instead of following self-centred ways of sin, as we did before, we walk in a new direction, following Jesus. We can no longer accept values set by society. All spiritual, moral and ethical values must be set by Scriptural standards. It is for this reason that the Friends church teaches testimonies to peace and nonviolence.

When the standards of society tell us to hate our enemies, we follow Jesus' command to love them. When the standards of society seeks violence, we seek non-violent resolution to conflict. We remain the harmless and innocent children of God, denying anyone the right to put weapons into our hands once we have dedicated those hands to the service of God. Our fight is not against other people, but against the forces of evil (Ephesians 6: 12).

*Christian Faith and Practice in the Friends Church*, Friends United Meeting in East Africa 2002, part 1 Faith

## **The Right Spirit**

Have we honoured and protected those neglected by society – the unborn, poor, prisoners, orphans, widows, abandoned, disabled, disadvantaged, addicted, institutionalized, homeless, and/or hungry? Since we cannot do everything, have we done something?

Have we encouraged and built each other up, speaking only what is helpful? Have we resolved conflict effectively by avoiding gossip and encouraging critics to talk with the right person in the right spirit?

Questions 6 & 10 from *Congregation Accountability Questions, Faith and Practice Evangelical Friends Church Southwest*

## **I Try to Live my Daily Life in the Presence of God**

I try to live my daily life in the presence of God. When I leave the house from my first step out the door I begin to talk with Jesus as my companion in travel, study, work, and play. Of course, as I am human, in more than one moment of my day my obligations try to separate me from my life companion who is God, and I forget that he is at my side. It is then that I experience stress and I live difficult moments that are only relieved when I remember I am not alone, that there is one who knows me, and that even though I forget it for a moment, He continues at my side to love me and support me.

... Our Faith influences everything from “What will I do when I get up?” to the biggest decisions in our lives as young people. “Whom will I serve? To what will I dedicate myself? Whom will I marry” The inner voice of the Holy Spirit of Christ can guide us. Up until today as a young Christian I can share that the Holy Spirit has never failed me, and I want to make clear that not everything in my life has been wonderful; I don’t think there is a young person in all the world who cannot say this. As human beings we make mistakes and bad decisions bring pain and consequences. For that reason I brg you all to seek for God as soon as possible so it is He who directs your life and with whom everything will go better. I say this from experience. Personally I have never heard the voice of God audibly, but I am sure that He talks to me through my mind and my heart. I yearn never to be apart from Him and to grow in obedience until He calls me into His presence.

Damaris Mercedes Guardado Lemus, the Yearly Meeting of the Evangelical Friends Church of El Salvador, *Spirit Rising* QUIP 2010 pages 48-49

## **Queries**

- Quakers say that there is that of God in everyone and the bible reminds us that we are children of God. How do you understand these words?
- Is there anybody who would not be welcome in your meeting/church?
- How can strengthening our bonds as fellow Quakers equip us to be better sisters and brothers in the wider world?

## Materials used:

Illustrations are by Erik Dries of Netherlands Yearly Meeting

All Bible passages are taken from the New Revised Standard Version:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/> New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

*Living Adventurously: Quaker Faith and Practice of Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting 2009*

<http://www.quakers.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Living-Adventurously.pdf>

*This We Can Say: Australian Quaker Life, Faith and Thought*

(The Australian Faith and Practice) Australia Yearly Meeting 2010

Details of how to get an electronic edition of this book are available on the Australia YM website <http://www.quakers.org.au/?page=22>

*Quaker Faith and Practice*

The book of Christian discipline of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain (Fifth edition) 2013. Full text including Advices and Queries: -

<http://qfp.quaker.org.uk>

*Spirit Rising: Young Quakers Voices* edited by Angelina Conti, Cara Curtis, C. Wess Daniels, Harriet Hart, Sarah Katreen Hoggatt, Evelyn Jadin, John Epur Lomuria, Emma Condori Mamani, Katrina McQuail, and Rachel Anne Miller, QUIP 2010 ISBN 978-1-888305-86-9

Isaac Penington writing to Friends in Amersham 1667

<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/54395733e4b0dcb6b7141216/t/54d13fc7e4b0553df77820cd/1422999495640/cfp404Penington1667AmorPazTernura15-02-03+copy.pdf>

James Naylor *The Power and Glory of the LORD Shining out of the NORTH* from

<http://www.qhpress.org/texts/nayler/north.html>

Advices and Queries/Conseils et Questions from chapter 6 *Quaker Faith and Practice* of Canada Yearly Meeting <http://quaker.ca/resources/faith-and-practice/>

*Christian Faith and Practice in the Friends Church*, Friends United Meeting in East Africa 2002, part 1; <http://www.quakerinfo.com/eastafricafandp.pdf>

*Faith and Practice Evangelical Friends Church Southwest*

<http://www.friendschurchsw.org/uploads/2011faithandpractice.pdf>



Stock image