



Yearly Meeting of
the Religious Society
of Friends in Britain

Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting, held at Friends House, London, 4-7 May 2007

To all Friends everywhere,

Loving greetings from Britain Yearly Meeting 2007.

After two years of looking at our structures, we have accepted the changes proposed in 2005 and inserted them into the text of *Quaker faith and practice*. We have had time to reflect on Quaker ways of working. We have been encouraged to be grounded and rooted in the springs of God's love.

"Don't talk while other people are talking – listen!" These words from the 7s to 11s group are important to us all. Let us listen faithfully to each other and to God.

There may seem to be a paradox between taking action and reflecting deeply on that action. The answer may lie in the words of Frances Dagnell shortly before her death, "We always think we know best and we don't... Sit down, shut up and listen to God".

Before we act it is important to look within and examine our motivation. Initially, we may be prompted by anger, guilt or fear – we need help to transform these into love. The road of transformation is not easy; worship and discipleship will show us the way. Only then will we become truly open to the guidance of the Spirit and our work will become love in action.

But worshipping together is not enough. We also have to work together and with others to make a better world. In working together we find a greater unity, strength of purpose and the courage to make sacrifices when necessary.

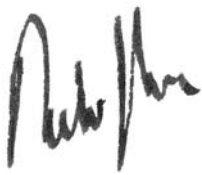
We sense a great longing for a clear call to united action by our Yearly Meeting.

A number of profound themes were explored in the sessions, including: 21st century forms of slavery; the legacies of the Transatlantic slave trade in our own communities; the increasing erosion of civil liberties; the unjust treatment of those on the edge of society. The current exercise of Britain Yearly Meeting on these subjects is only just beginning.

Let us not be overwhelmed. Through quiet, listening prayer we can discover what is required of us.

The Spirit may be both comforting and terrifying – we may find ourselves in what was described as an “unnerving, compelling and unsought place”. Can we take a risk and make ourselves vulnerable so that we truly engage with other people, both young and old, on the deepest level? When we get things wrong and make a mess, time and love will be able to heal and recreate.

For each of us our part in transforming the world will be different, but as long as we hold true to the Spirit in our everyday lives then we are Quakers in action. We cannot all be a Woolman or a Wilberforce but we can create ripples which spread from our small circles to the wider world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Ward', written in a cursive style.

Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting
MARTIN WARD, Clerk