



**Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting 2009  
held at the University of York  
24<sup>th</sup> July – 1<sup>st</sup> August**

To all Friends everywhere,

This year Junior Yearly Meeting met in a new and exciting form, that of being part of the much larger Yearly Meeting Gathering. 110 young Friends supported by a team of 16 Over 20s came together at York University to explore the theme:

Ubuntu: All because of you I am.

This was a difficult concept to grasp, having Zulu origins and being far removed from the attitudes within communities that we are used to. We were helped by an extract from Quaker Faith and Practice: 'We are all the poorer for the crushing of one man, since the dimming of the light anywhere darkens us all.' (23.09) This provided a challenging platform for theoretical discussion but also moved us to action. The theme was put into practice through our creation of a distinct community. Integration with the larger community of approximately 1600 Quakers of other generations helped our own community become closer and stronger.

For many the most inspiring sessions were the YMG sessions focusing on the controversial issue of Committed Relationships, especially when personal stories were shared. The introduction by Colin Billet prepared and enthused us for the business meetings which were to follow. We were excited and proud to be present at what felt to us to be a return to the radical and proactive roots of Quakerism and the call to live adventurously. We appreciated the support of those Friends who held us in the light as we found the courage to minister, and to be at the forefront of such a groundbreaking move.

The theme of YMG was 'Creating Community, Creating Connections.' The connections in the community we created were enhanced through inclusive social activities, both creative, such as kite making, and in the case of the disco energetic. For some of these activities we were joined by a number of Friends from YMG, both older and younger, helping us to bridge gaps between generations.

The speakers we invited to help explore the theme offered diverse approaches. Steve Whiting spoke about change, emphasising its organic nature and the many variables there are to consider. We looked at the theme in a different light, using Appreciative Inquiry, with our second speaker Judith Moran. 'Chat Rooms' provided the space in smaller groups to discuss other aspects of the theme and how it relates to topics such as Religious Diversity and the Generation Gap. The debate was more formally structured, and focused on whether physical force is necessary to keep the peace. We were all shocked, angered and inspired by the film, 'Hotel Rwanda'. It reminded us of the importance of the individual. We are all able to make a difference.

We felt spiritually refreshed by inspiring experimental worship and epilogue sessions involving glow sticks and singing. There were times when these were testing, times when these were moving but we all recognise these as an integral part of our experience at Junior Yearly Meeting.

We leave with a greater appreciation of the communities we belong to in the outside world, and also a deeper understanding of Quakerism, its business method and its power to inspire change.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting 2009.



Katherine Quoroll  
Clerks



Roisin Brennan