



Australian Quaker Survey 2014

First Summary of Results

Report to Yearly Meeting

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a report of results from the first national Australian Quaker Survey, conducted from September to November 2014. It presents the combined summary results from all 368 Friends who responded to the survey. Twenty-seven Appendices give the complete text of all additional comments Friends contributed, and these form a rich resource for further exploration.

If the Friends who responded to the survey are representative of the total population of Friends in Australia, a few tentative conclusions may be drawn from the results:

Demographic description

- Most Australian Friends are aged over 50 years, highly educated and from an Anglo-Australian cultural background. This lack of diversity may be an issue to be considered in planning outreach activities

Initial experiences

- Most Friends (85%) have a Christian upbringing, 14% have a non-religious background, and 1% come from a non-Christian upbringing
- More than half of Friends join Quakers after the age of 40 years
- The lack of religious dogma, the form of worship, and testimonies are the key issues that attract new members to Quakers
- A significant proportion of Friends are Attenders. The choice to remain Attenders, rather than pursue Membership, is not primarily based on disagreements about religious beliefs; these Friends may consider application for Membership if encouraged to do so by other Friends

Quaker practice

- Belonging to a community of like-minded people and the practice of silent worship are the main factors that keep Friends coming to Meeting
- More than 60% of Friends say that in Meeting for Worship they are listening, meditating, being with others in the Spirit, thinking or waiting. Only 13% say they are worshipping God
- One fifth of Friends have never spoken in Meeting
- Only half of Friends agree that they are seeking the will of God in Meetings for Worship for Business
- Most Friends (79%) feel their primary connection is with their local Meeting, but significant proportions also feel a strong connection with Yearly Meeting (24%) and the world family of Friends (19%)
- Around one in five Friends do not contribute financially to their Regional meeting

Religious beliefs

- Almost all Friends (95%) describe themselves as spiritual people to some extent
- Most Friends call themselves Quakers but only one third call themselves Christians
- 62% of Friends believe in God, 13% do not, and 25% are uncertain or unable to answer
- Of those who believe in God, most describe this term as The Inward Light, Love, A Life Force or Spirit, and not a being
- Those who do not believe in God have developed a range of alternative words to substitute when traditional religious terms are used. It may be worth exploring the impact of this on the 15% of members who identify as non-theists
- Friends strongly accept that Quakers can be helped in their spiritual journey by hearing about the religious experience of other groups
- Almost half (48%) of Friends always or often seek God's guidance for important decisions
- 31% of Friends say they pray daily or more often
- 31% of Friends believe in life after death, but more than half (52%) have no belief in this, nor in spirits, heaven, or miracles
- More than half of all Friends see Jesus as a spiritual or ethical teacher, and 'containing that of God within as we all do'. Few view him as the Son of God (13%) or Saviour (10%)
- More than half of Friends participate in a spiritual nurture group, or other support groups
- The activities that Friends undertake to deepen their spiritual life include participating in a spiritual nurture group (59%), serving on Meeting committees (53%), attending Meeting for Learning in their own meeting (37%), or attending a course at Silver Wattle (32%)
- 14% of Friends with traditional Christian/theist beliefs, and 10% of Friends with non-traditional beliefs feel uncomfortable or out of place in their Meeting

Ideas about the world

- 48% of Friends firmly agree that breaking the law can be morally justified in certain circumstances, while 13% firmly disagree
- A significant minority of Friends (16%) believe violence can be justified in some circumstances, and concerns about pacifism were noted by several Friends as a reason for not applying for Membership
- Friends are much more concerned about environmental issues than the Australian population in general (94% vs 62%), with 57% of Friends rating themselves as very concerned
- Friends are much more likely than most Australians to have taken action on environmental issues; more than 60% have signed a petition or donated money to help protect the environment in the last 12 months, versus 13% of the Australian population in general.

BACKGROUND

Quakerism allows considerable scope for variation in belief and practice¹ and the issue of Quaker identity has been the subject of much research and discussion.²⁻⁵

In Britain there have been a number of recent surveys on the beliefs and practices of Quakers. Ben Pink Dandelion ran the first survey in 1990. He contacted 32 British Meetings to determine the breadth of Quaker belief and reported results from 27 of those meetings.⁶ In 2003 Rosie Rutherford replicated this survey using a more formally stratified sample of 600 members from 48 Meetings. A latent class analysis of the responses and a comparison of results from the two surveys have been published.^{7, 8} A third survey was conducted in 2013 and some initial findings have now been released.⁹

Other studies in Britain have also examined the private practices and beliefs of Quakers generally,¹⁰ adolescent Quakers,¹¹ or those who self-identify as Buddhist,¹² non-theist¹³ or pagan¹⁴ Quakers. There was also one survey conducted in the US, at ten Meetings of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting in 2002, that had questions similar to those asked in Britain.¹⁵

A further set of British surveys in 2006 and 2008 aimed to obtain an overview of active membership participation in the Religious Society of Friends, including the profile of people attending Meetings and the processes of business meetings and nominations.^{16, 17} There have been no comparable attempts to survey Australian Quakers in order to better understand our shared identity and views about involvement within the Religious Society of Friends.

AIMS

This first Australian National Quaker Survey aimed to survey all Members and Attenders of our Regional Meetings to answer several overarching questions:

- What leads people to consider Membership of the Society?
- What are the shared beliefs, practices and values held by Quakers in Australia?
- How do these beliefs, practices and values compare with those found in the British surveys?
- Are there generational differences amongst Quakers in Australia, in relation to patterns of belief and practice?

It was anticipated that there would be two main outcomes from conducting a survey.

1) The results could assist Australian Yearly Meeting (AYM) and Regional Meetings with:

- identifying the educational and spiritual needs of Australian Quakers and so help with planning programs/workshops/learning experiences
- planning outreach activities - e.g. how we describe Quakers to non-Quakers
- understanding barriers to Membership that are perceived by Attenders

- evaluating the range of current AYM and Regional Meeting publications and assist with the planning of new resources.
- 2) Completing the survey might assist Members and Attenders to:
- reflect on their own spiritual views and involvement with Quakers
 - listen with more empathy to the differing views of other Friends.

METHODS

Survey Design

The survey was designed to be distributed and completed via an online questionnaire. A print version of the questionnaire is available at: <https://www.scribd.com/doc/248402072/Australian-Quaker-Survey-2014>.

The questionnaire was largely based on the 2013 British Quaker Survey, kindly provided by Ben Pink Dandelion. That survey contained 55 questions, but the experience of the researchers was that some were difficult for respondents to answer, and those were omitted in the Australian version. A few additional questions (#34, 47, 48), taken from David Rush's 2002 survey of non-theist Quakers¹³, were incorporated.

Further questions were included (#4, 12, 17, 18, 19, 46 and 49) to explore issues of membership status, methods used to develop personal spiritual growth and knowledge of Quaker practice, and social concerns. Question 56 comes from a recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey on environmental concerns. The answer options to questions 60 (Educational attainment) and 62 and 63 (Cultural identity) have been changed from the British survey to reflect standard ABS categories, to allow comparison of results to other Australian data.

The survey consisted of five parts:

1. Religious background, upbringing and introduction to Quakerism
2. Involvement with Quakers and attitudes to Quaker practice
3. Religious beliefs
4. Ideas about broader social issues
5. Information about the respondent.

The wording of the questionnaire was reviewed by a group of interested Friends from the Canberra, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australian Regional Meetings, as well as by Ben Pink Dandelion, Honorary Professor of Quaker Studies at both the University of Birmingham and the Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre. Some minor editorial changes were made to clarify some questions, but as much as possible the aim was to keep the wording the same as the British survey, so that the Australian and British responses could be directly compared.

The questionnaire was created in *SurveyMonkey*, an online program that allows surveys to be completed electronically, and the results collated and reported automatically. However, recognising that not all members have Internet access, the survey was also made available in a paper-based format that could be mailed or

distributed via local Meetings. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents could omit any questions they did not wish to answer. Standing Committee approved the final version of the questionnaire in July 2014, with some budgetary support to assist in the mailing of paper versions of the survey.

Survey Management

Peter Williams volunteered to be the primary researcher and coordinator of the project. From his previous academic roles he was aware of the requirements of good practice in survey research¹⁸ and had experience of undertaking both qualitative and quantitative studies, and analysing and publishing results from national surveys.

A survey Working Group was established to provide oversight of the project, and advice and guidance to the survey coordinator. The Group comprised: Topsy Evans and Kerry O'Regan (from SANTRM) and Ronis Chapman, Christine Larkin, Erica Fisher and Geoffrey Ballard (from CRM).

Survey Promotion and Distribution

The survey was available online from the beginning of September 2014 and all Members and Attenders (including Young Friends and Junior Young Friends, but excluding Children) were invited to participate. It was promoted to Friends in a number of ways:

- An article about the survey was included in the AYM Secretary's newsletter in August.
- In the first week of September, a personal invitation to complete the questionnaire was sent by email to all Friends on the AYM membership list
- Each Regional Meeting Clerk was sent a notice about the survey for inclusion in local newsletters and notices
- In the September AYM Secretary's newsletter it was noted that the closing date for completion of the survey had been extended to the end of October
- In October, Jenny Turton – the national Children and JYF Coordinator – sent a notice about the survey through the Regional Meeting Children and Junior Young Friend Correspondents, and included it in the Australian Quaker Children and JYF Newsletter
- In October, Callista Barritt included an invitation to participate on the Young Friends email list and posted it on the Young Friends Facebook page.

The survey was closed on 16 November. Twenty-four Friends requested paper copies of the questionnaire and 15 of these were returned. Their contents were entered into the *SurveyMonkey* web-based version of the questionnaire by the survey coordinator.

Response rate

A total of 378 questionnaires were completed, giving an overall response rate of 20%, compared to the total number of AYM Members and Attenders (excluding children). With this number of responses, the percentage results should be accurate $\pm 5\%$, with a confidence level of 95%.¹⁹

RESULTS

In the following sections it should be noted that because respondents did not necessarily answer every question, the total number of responses varies for each question. The term 'Friend' is used throughout this report to include all categories of potential respondents (i.e., Adult Members and Attenders, Young Friends, and Junior Young Friends. It excludes Children, who did not participate in the survey).

1. Respondent details

Gender and membership category

66% of Friends who responded were female, 33% male and 1% intersex or gender not specified. This is quite similar to gender distribution in the national Quaker community, where 63% of members are female. The membership status of respondents is shown in Table 1, which also gives the survey response rates, compared to AYM membership, for each category (excluding children).

Table 1: Survey responses by membership category (n=378)

<i>Membership category</i>	<i>Total number responses</i>	<i>Proportion of survey responses</i>	<i>Response rate vs AYM membership</i>
Adult Members (n=930)	267	71%	29%
Adult Attenders (n=829)	99	26%	12%
Young Friends (n=52)	5	1%	10%
Junior Young Friends (n=64)	7	2%	11%
Total	378	100%	20%

Most of the responses came from adult Members, with a smaller proportion from Attenders and very few responses from Young Friends or Junior Young Friends.

Regional meeting

Table 2 shows the distribution of responses by regional meeting, compared to the distribution of AYM members.

Table 2. Regional Meeting of respondents (n=361)

<i>Regional Meeting</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>	<i>AYM membership</i>
New South Wales	24%	23%
Victoria	18%	19%
Canberra	17%	10%
Tasmania	13%	15%
South Australia and NT	11%	13%
Western Australia	10%	9%
Queensland	7%	11%

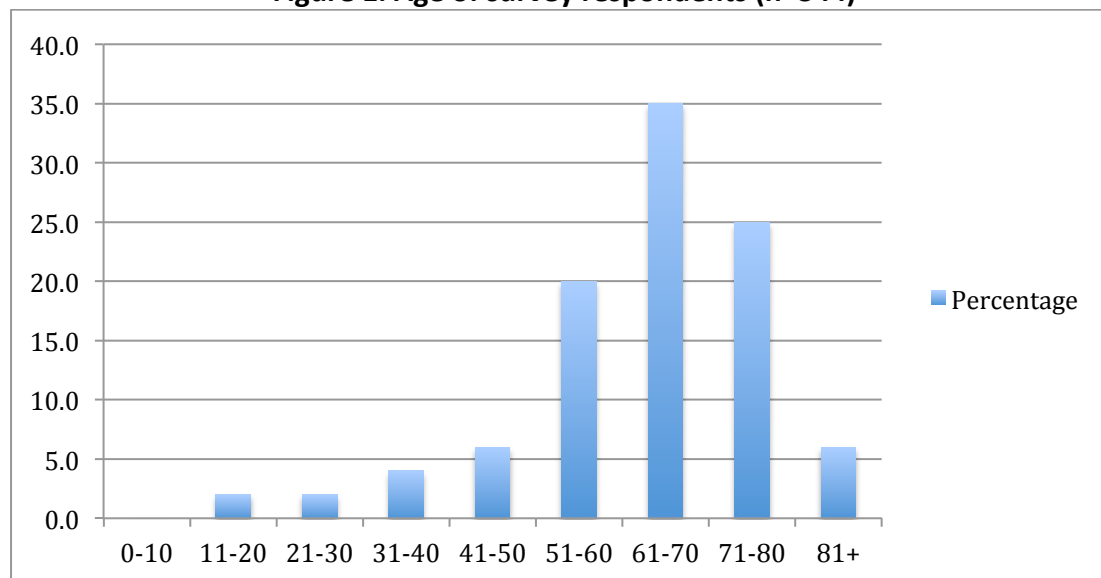
The regional distribution of respondents closely matched the overall Australian profile, with some over-representation from Canberra and under-representation from Queensland.

Age

The mean age of respondents was 62.6 years, with a range of 12-94 years.

Figure 1 illustrates the spread of ages of respondents. Unfortunately there are no records of the age distribution of the total AYM membership to use for comparison.

Figure 1. Age of survey respondents (n=344)



Educational level

Respondents were generally highly educated, with over 80% having tertiary qualifications, as shown in Table 3. Comparison data is provided from the 2011 ABS survey of national educational attainment levels.²⁰

Table 3. Highest level of education of respondents (n=361)

<i>Highest education level</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>	<i>Australia 2011</i>
Primary or secondary school	4%	46%
Certificate qualification	5%	21%
Diploma/Advance diploma	9%	9%
Bachelor degree	25%	17%
Graduate diploma/certificate	15%	2%
Postgraduate degree	42%	5%

Income level

Self-reported income level of respondents is shown in Table 4.

Comparison of 2012 household income data from the ABS is provided and suggests that the survey respondents had somewhat lower than average incomes.²¹

Table 4. Self reported income level (n=363)

<i>Income level</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>	<i>Australia 2012</i>
High	12%	27%
Middle	48%	29%
Low	37%	44%
Don't know	3%	-

Cultural background

Only 1% (4 Friends) identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. Table 5 shows the cultural or ethnic groups that respondents identified with, above the level of 0.5%. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%. Comparison data on ancestry are provided from the 2011 Australian Census.²²

Table 5. Cultural or ethnic group identity (n=351)

<i>Cultural group</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>	<i>Australia 2011</i>
Australian	87%	34%
British	39%	42%
Irish	11%	10%
North American	7%	1%
Western European	6%	13%
New Zealander	5%	2%
Northern European	3%	1%
Jewish	1.4%	0.1%
Southern and East African	0.9%	0.5%
South Asian	0.6%	3%
South East Asian	0.6%	6%
Caribbean Islander	0.6%	<0.1%

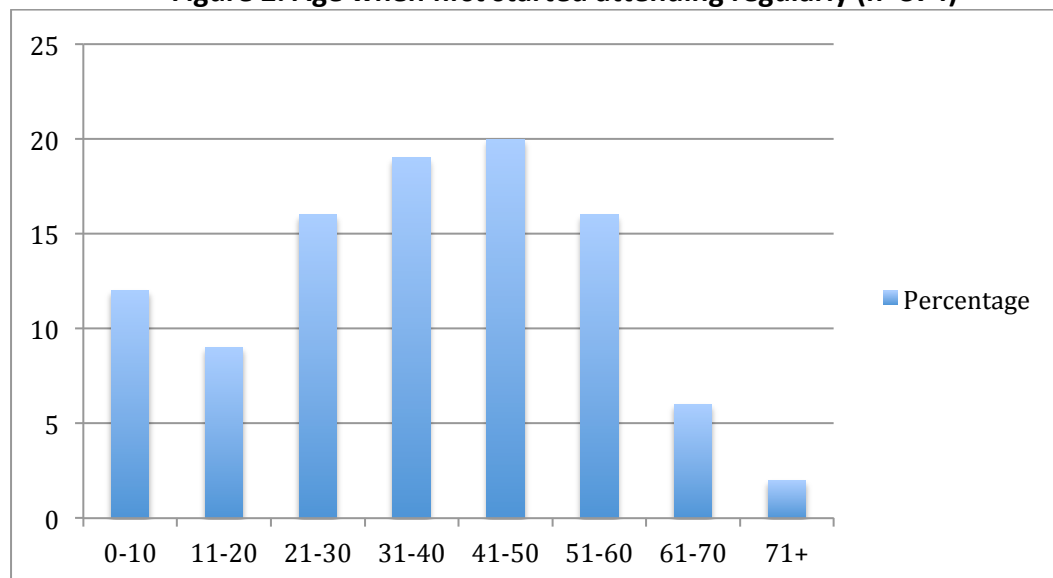
The great majority of Friends identified as Anglo-Australian. People of Asian origin are significantly under-represented.

2. Initial experiences

Age when first started regularly attending Quaker meetings

The mean age of Friends when they began attending was 36.7 years, with a range of 0-82 years. Figure 2 illustrates the spread of ages of first attendance.

Figure 2. Age when first started attending regularly (n=374)



How long have you been attending meetings on a regular basis?

The results in Table 6 show that most responding Friends had been attending regularly for more than 10 years. There was only a small proportion of new members, indicating low levels of growth.

Table 6. How long attending regularly (n=379)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
Less than 6 months	1%
6 months to less than 1 year	2%
1-3 years	11%
4-10 years	19%
11-25 years	30%
Over 25 years	37%

Religious upbringing and schooling

Only 11% of Friends were raised as Quakers and only 7% attended a Quaker school. Table 7 shows that most Friends had a Christian upbringing.

Table 7. Religious upbringing (n=380)

<i>Religion</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Anglican/Church of England	24%
Roman Catholic	16%
Quaker	11%
Presbyterian	10%
Methodist	10%
Baptist	5%
Congregational	3%
Church of Christ	1%
Other Christian	5%
Non-Christian	1%
Atheist/Agnostic/None	14%

Previous religious attendance

Most Friends (62%) did not come to Quakers directly from another church or religious/meditational group. Of those who did come directly from another group, Table 8 indicates which religious community they came from and Table 9 shows how often they attended that group.

Table 8. Previous religious group (n=152)

<i>Religious group</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Anglican/Church of England	31%
Uniting Church	28%
Roman Catholic	20%
Other Christian	15%
Non-Christian	6%

Table 9. Frequency of attendance at previous religious group (n=158)

<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Daily	3%
More than once a week	10%
Weekly	54%
2-3 times per month	13%
6-12 times per year	13%
Less than once a year	7%

Other current religious/spiritual groups

A significant proportion (19%) of Friends were actively involved with another religious/spiritual group currently. There were 72 responses, detailed in **Appendix 1**, but the most common nominated groups were other Christian churches (26%), meditation groups (15%) and Buddhism/Yoga (8%). Table 10 indicates how often these people attended the other groups.

Table 10. Frequency of attending other religious/spiritual groups (n=74)

<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Daily	4%
More than once a week	6%
Weekly	28%
2-3 times per month	19%
6-12 times per year	39%
Less than once a year	4%

Initial attraction to Quakers

The full text of 119 responses is given in **Appendix 2**. Table 11 indicates the main categories of reasons that initially attracted Friends to Quakers. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 11. What initially attracted Friends to Quakers (n=377)

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Lack of religious dogma	66%
Form of worship	65%
Peace and social testimonies/political viewpoint	62%
Quaker structure/lack of hierarchy	51%
Quaker way of life	44%
A feeling of coming home	42%
Position of women within the group	37%
The idea of inward light	32%
Company and fellowship	32%
Position of gays and lesbians within the group	28%
Own curiosity	23%
Quaker writings	23%
Born into a Quaker family/attended as a child	15%
Other (see Appendix 2)	18%

How Friends began to learn about Quakerism when they began attending

Table 12 indicates the proportion of Friends identifying the ways they first began to learn about Quakerism, chosen from a list of 14 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 12. How Friends first began to learn about Quakerism (n=372)

<i>Method</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Books	67%
Discussion with Friends	62%
Watching and listening to others	60%
Leaflets	48%
Hearing Ministry in Meetings for Worship	44%
Discussion/study groups/education programs organised by the Meeting	40%
Attendance at a Quaker business meeting	26%
Reading <i>The Australian Friend</i>	24%
Family discussion/upbringing	14%
Children's meeting	12%
Attending a course	10%
The Quaker Basics distance education course	9%
The Quaker Australia website	9%
At a social event	6%

74 Friends provided other comments on this question, and these are given in **Appendix 3**.

Speaking in Meeting for Worship

Table 13 shows how long after Friends starting attending that they first spoke in Meeting. One fifth had never spoken in Meeting.

Table 13. When Friends first spoke in Meeting (n=373)

<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Haven't spoken in Meeting	20%
Less than 2 months	3%
2-4 months	7%
5 months to less than a year	13%
1-3 years	21%
More than 3 years	23%
Not sure	13%

Time to application for Membership

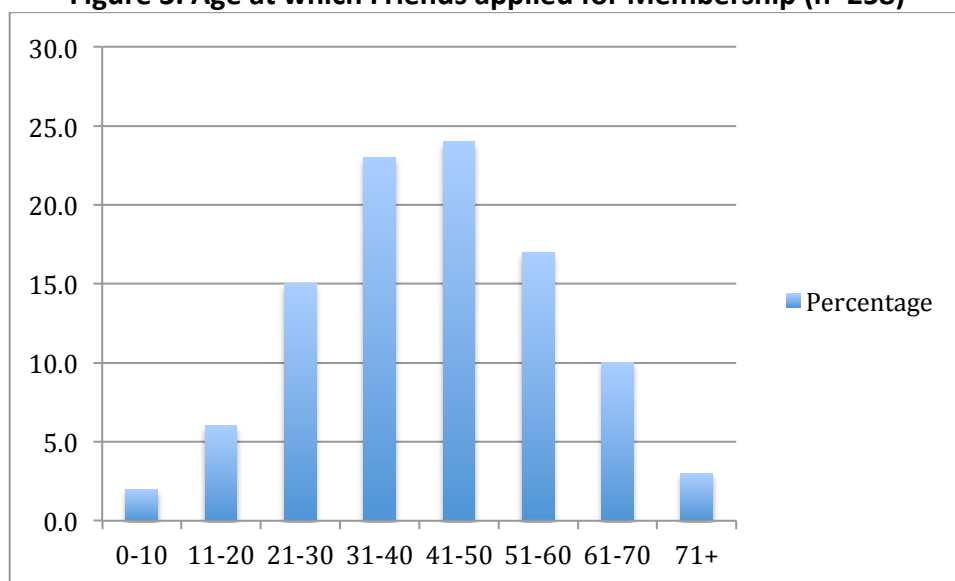
Table 14 shows how long after Friends started attending that they applied for Membership.

Table 14. When Friends applied for Membership (n=266)

<i>Time after started attending</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Enrolled at birth	8%
Less than 6 months	6%
6 months to 1 year	9%
1-3 years	34%
4-10 years	28%
Over 10 years	15%

The mean age of applicants for Membership was 42.4 years, with a range of 0-77 years. Figure 3 illustrates the spread of ages at which Friends applied for Membership. More than half were over the age of 40 years.

Figure 3. Age at which Friends applied for Membership (n=258)



Main reason for applying for Membership

250 Friends wrote about their reasons for applying for Membership. The full text of these responses is given in **Appendix 4**. Table 15 summarises the key themes in these comments.

Table 15. Main reason for applying for Membership (n=254)

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Feeling of belonging/spiritual home	31%
Formal commitment to Quakers	28%
Agreement with testimonies and practices	12%
To take on financial and committee responsibilities	8%
It was time	8%
Asked by other Friend	6%
Community	5%
Birthright	2%

Reasons for not applying for Membership

92 Friends wrote about their reasons for not applying for Membership. The full text of these responses is given in **Appendix 5**. Table 16 summarises the key themes in these comments.

Table 16. Main reasons for not applying for Membership (n=101)

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Not fully committed/not ready	26%
Irregular attender only	25%
Don't like joining any group	8%
No need	8%
Membership/Attender categories are elitist/divisive	8%
Disagreements about religious beliefs	8%
Don't want to attend business meetings	5%
Not certain agree with Peace testimony/pacifism	5%
Not certain/not sure	3%
Waiting to be ready	3%
Don't feel worthy	1%

Reasons for resigning from Membership

13 Friends wrote about their reasons for resigning from Membership. The full text of these responses is given in **Appendix 6**. Table 17 summarises the key themes in these comments. These values should be interpreted cautiously given the very small numbers.

Table 17. Main reasons for resigning from Membership (n=13)

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Conflict in Meeting/dogmatic Members	39%
Irregular attendance	23%
Unfriendly/lack of pastoral care	23%
Conflicts of beliefs about God	15%

Partners, spouses and children attending

Of those Friends with partners/spouses (67% of the total) 31% indicated that their partner attended Quaker Meetings also.

Of Friends with children living at home (23% of the total) again 31% indicated that the children attended Quaker Meetings.

3. Quaker Practice

Quaker business method

92% of Friends agreed that the way Quakers make decisions is important to them (n=365). Table 18 indicates what Friends understood as the Quaker business method, chosen from a list of 6 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 18. Understanding of the Quaker business method (n=362)

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Seeking the sense of the meeting on a particular issues	86%
Seeking the will of God	52%
A process of trust	43%
Finding consensus	33%
A useful process	18%
A good idea	14%

76 Friends provided comments on their understanding of the Meeting for Worship for Business, and these are given in **Appendix 7**.

Activities in Meeting for Worship

Table 19 indicates how Friends described their activities in Meeting for Worship, from a list of 14 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 19. Activities in Meeting for Worship (n=373)

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Listening	79%
Meditating	68%
Being with others in the Spirit	65%
Thinking	62%
Waiting	60%
Opening up to the Spirit	58%
Being grateful	45%
Seeking union with the Divine	31%
Seeking God's will	30%
Communing	30%
Worshipping God	13%
Praising	12%
Sleeping	9%

Appendix 8 summarises 78 additional comments made on this topic.

Factors that keep Friends coming to Meeting

361 Friends wrote about their reasons for coming to Meeting. The full text of these responses is given in **Appendix 9**. Table 20 summarises the key themes in these comments.

Table 20. Main factors that keep Friends coming to Meeting (n=361)

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Belonging to a community of like-minded people	33%
Peace/stillness/silence	19%
Seeking spiritual nourishment/renewal	12%
Communal Meeting for Worship	10%
Waiting on/connection with God/numinous	6%
Being with others in the Spirit	5%
Commitment to being a Quaker	4%
Shared values/social justice	4%
Belonging to a faith community	2%
Family/parents	2%
Ministry at Meeting/discussion with Friends	2%
Mental health/wellbeing	1%

Feeling part of groups of Friends

Table 21 indicates which groups Friends felt most part of, from a list of 9 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%. The low number of JYFs and Young Friends among these respondents accounts for the low proportions nominated for these two groups.

Table 21. Groups which Friends feel most part of (n=365)

<i>Group</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Local meeting	79%
Regional meeting	36%
Yearly meeting	24%
The world family of Friends	19%
A spiritual nurture group	16%
A committee or group of my local/regional/yearly meeting	12%
None	3%
Junior Young Friends	2%
Young Friends	2%

Appendix 10 summarises 79 additional comments made on this topic.

Engagement with the Quaker world

Table 22 indicates the parts of the Quaker world that Friends had ever been actively engaged with, from a list of 9 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%. The low number of JYFs and Young Friends among respondents may account for the low proportions nominated for these two groups.

Table 22. Groups that Friends have been actively engaged with (n=371)

<i>Group</i>	<i>Survey responses</i>
Local meeting	92%
Regional meeting	56%
Yearly meeting	56%
A committee or group of my local/regional/yearly meeting	43%
A spiritual nurture group	27%
The world family of Friends	19%
Junior Young Friends	11%
Young Friends	14%

Appendix 11 summarises 126 additional comments on this issue.

Roles in Quaker positions

Table 23 indicates which types of roles Friends had held at the National (e.g. AYM or QSA), Regional or Local meeting level.

Table 23. Roles held in Quakers (n=270)

<i>Roles</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>Regional</i>	<i>Local</i>
Nominated position (e.g. Clerk, Treasurer, Librarian)	11%	50%	69%
Committee convenor or member	33%	63%	56%
Other voluntary role (e.g. newsletter editor, delegate to other organisation)	24%	61%	47%

Appendix 12 summarises 59 additional comments on this issue.

Financial contributions

Table 24 indicates the Quaker organisations that Friends supported financially.

Table 24. Financial support (n=352)

	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Monthly</i>	<i>Quarterly</i>	<i>Yearly</i>	<i>Less often</i>
Regional Meeting	18%	15%	2%	55%	10%
Children & JYFs	65%	2%	1%	20%	12%
QSA	19%	17%	4%	38%	22%
FWCC	65%	1%	1%	21%	12%
Yearly Meeting funds	42%	4%	2%	31%	21%
Friends' School	76%	1%	3%	10%	10%
Other Quaker projects	41%	4%	2%	20%	33%

4. Religious Beliefs

In this section of the survey, Friends were asked about their attitudes towards God, spirituality, prayer, the Bible and Jesus. It was noted that people may have different ideas about words such as God or spirituality, but respondents were asked to answer according to their own interpretation of these words and concepts.

Spirituality

Table 25 shows how Friends considered themselves as spiritual people.

Table 25. How Friends consider themselves (n=363)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
Very spiritual	22%
Moderately spiritual	52%
Slightly spiritual	22%
Not spiritual at all	4%

Important aspects of spiritual awareness

Table 26 indicates the terms that Friends chose to express important aspects of their spiritual awareness, from a list of 7 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 26. Important aspects of spiritual awareness (n=361)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
Love	73%
The Inward Light	68%
Truth	65%
Connectedness/joining with all things	65%
Spirit	64%
God	42%
Transcendence	24%

Appendix 13 summarises additional comments from 61 Friends on this topic.

Belief in God

When asked the question '*Do you believe in God?*' (n=362)

- 62% answered Yes
- 13% answered No
- 25% answered they were not sure or not able to answer.

The reasons given for not being able to answer this question are provided in Table 27.

Table 27. Reasons unable to answer about belief in God (n=105)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
I do not use the word God	32%
My own views are still uncertain	29%
I cannot answer without a definition	24%
Other	15%

57 Friends gave further comments on this topic, which are provided in **Appendix 14**.

Those who answered that they did believe in God were asked to indicate which terms described God for them, from a list of 17 options. The results are presented in Table 28. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 28. Which terms describe God (n=252)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
The Inward Light	65%
Love	62%
A life force	55%
A spirit	45%
Spirit	64%
Creative spirit	40%
All loving	35%
Unknowable	31%
Capable of a personal relationship	27%
Best not described	23%
All knowing	22%
A human construct	18%
A being	17%
All powerful	14%
A process	12%
Mother figure	10%
Father figure	8%
Person figure	7%

In addition to agreeing with these terms, 64 Friends gave further comments, which are provided in **Appendix 15**.

Alternative non-theist terms

Those Friends who do not believe in God (or are not sure) were asked to provide metaphors or formulations they find helpful when the following words arise in the ministry of others: God, The Spirit, The Inner Light, That of God in every person, The Kingdom of God, The Divine, the Sacred, Holy, Faith, Prayer. The responses from these Friends are given in **Appendices 16a - 16j**.

Seeking God's guidance

Table 29 summarises Friends' views about whether they seek God's guidance in making important decisions in their life.

Table 29. Seek God's guidance for important decisions (n=349)

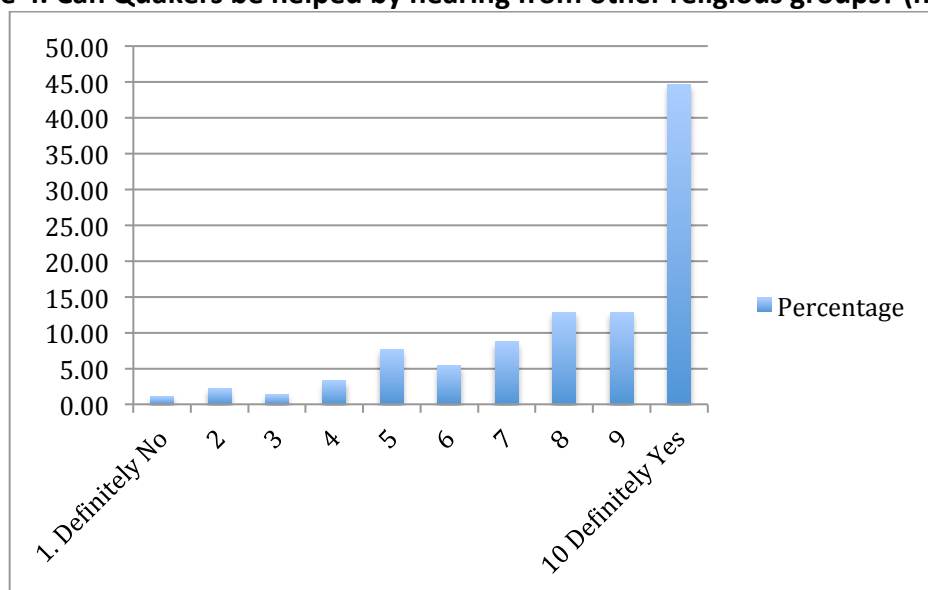
	Survey responses
Always	16%
Often	32%
Sometimes	22%
Rarely	9%
Never	21%

Views about other religious groups

When asked 'Do you agree with the idea that Quakers can be helped in their spiritual journey by hearing about the religious experience of other religious groups?' (using a 10 point rating scale, from 1=Definitely No to 10=Definitely Yes), the mean score was 8.19 (out of 10).

As shown in Figure 4, 44% agreed definitely yes, but 15% Friends did not agree with this statement, with scores from 1-5.

Figure 4. Can Quakers be helped by hearing from other religious groups? (n=367)



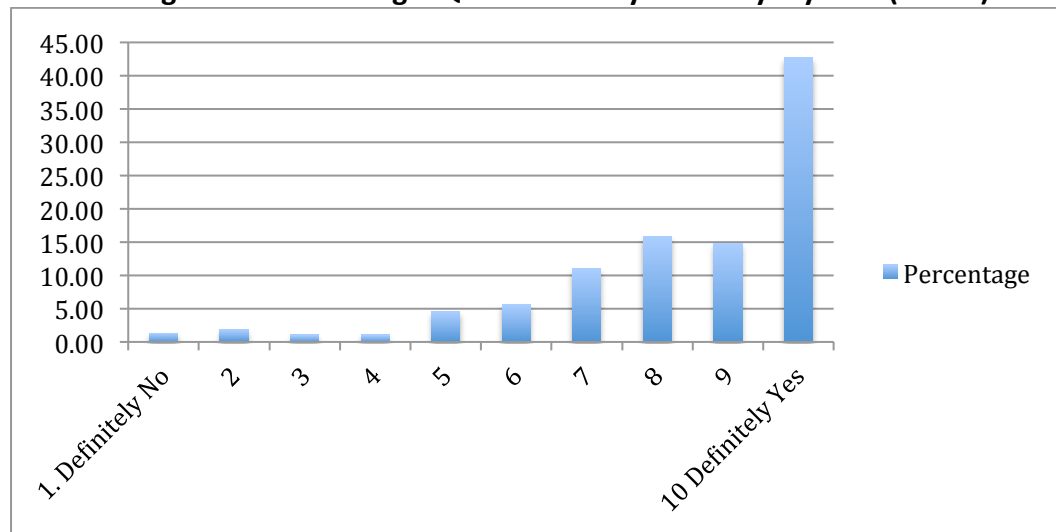
In answering this question, 108 Friends gave further comments. These are provided in **Appendix 17**.

Living the Quaker way

When asked 'Does being a Quaker affect your everyday life? (e.g. the way you vote, shop, what you buy, etc)?' (using a 10 point rating scale, from 1=Definitely No to 10=Definitely Yes), the mean score was 8.34 (out of 10).

As shown in Figure 5, 43% agreed definitely yes, but 10% of Friends did not agree with this statement, with scores from 1-5.

Figure 5. Does being a Quaker affect your everyday life? (n=372)



Appendix 18 summarises further comments from 143 Friends on this topic.

Views about Jesus

Table 30 indicates the terms that Friends chose to describe their view of Jesus, from a list of 10 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 30. Views of Jesus (n=353)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
A spiritual teacher	74%
An ethical teacher	63%
Containing that of God within as we all do	59%
Exemplary human	40%
Christ	20%
God made human	14%
The Inward Light	14%
The Son of God	13%
Saviour	11%
Just a person/not special	10%

When asked if Jesus was an important figure in their life, 28% of Friends said Yes, 35% said It varies, and 37% said No (n=365).

Appendix 19 summarises further comments from 85 Friends on this topic.

When Friends were asked if the teachings of Jesus were important in their life, 56% said Yes, 33% said It Varies, and 11% said No (n=366).

Other spiritual concepts/beings

Table 31 indicates the religious concepts that Friends said they believe in, from a list of 15 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 31. Belief in spiritual concepts/beings (n=355)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
Life after death	31%
Spirits of the natural world	18%
Religious miracles	14%
Karma	16%
Heaven	13%
Reincarnation	13%
The possibility of connecting with spirits of the dead	13%
Ghosts	10%
Hell	5%
Nirvana	4%
Horoscopes/fortune tellers	4%
The Devil	4%
Magic	4%
The supernatural power of deceased ancestors	3%
None of the above	52%

Prayer

Table 32 indicates the terms that describe what prayer is for Friends, from a list of 14 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 32. What prayer is (n=348)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
Still and silent waiting	74%
Seeking enlightenment/guidance	63%
Opening to the Spirit	61%
Meditating	51%
Thanksgiving	49%
Tuning into the consciousness around you	47%
Seeking communion with the Divine	46%
Talking to/listening to God	42%
Seeking healing	30%
Daily life	28%
Confession	18%
Recollection	12%
Asking God to change things	9%

Appendix 20 summarises further comments from 54 Friends on the topic of prayer.

When Friends were asked if they believed that prayer can affect the way things are on Earth, 48% said Yes, 36% were Not Sure, and 17% said No (n=360). **Appendix 21** provides 154 further comments on this question.

Table 33 shows Friends responses to how often they pray.

Table 33. How often Friends pray (n=366)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
Constantly	7%
Every day	24%
Several times a week	12%
Approximately once a week	8%
Approximately once a month	2%
Approximately every 2-3 months	1%
Less often than every 2-3 months	2%
It varies a lot	30%
Never	14%

Views of the Bible

Table 34 indicates the terms that describe Friends' view of the Bible, from a list of 12 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 34. View of the Bible (n=356)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
A combination of history and metaphor	67%
A book of stories	55%
The word of God experienced by its writers	44%
A useful teaching text	37%
A book of history	37%
A book of myths	29%
The word of God ever open to new interpretation	23%
A book of authority for belief in God	7%
The word of God in that all words are God given	3%
Historically and factually true	2%
The literal word of God	1%
The final word of God	1%

Additional comments from 73 Friends about the Bible are given in **Appendix 22**.

Reading to nurture spiritual life

Table 35 shows which key documents Friends read to nurture their spiritual life, from a list of 5 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 35. What Friends read to nurture their spiritual life (n=307)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
<i>Advices and Queries</i>	77%
<i>Quaker Faith and Practice</i>	67%
<i>This We Can Say</i>	68%
Backhouse Lectures	40%
The Bible	38%

196 additional responses are summarised in **Appendix 23**.

Activities to deepen spiritual life

Table 36 shows what Friends have done to deepen their spiritual life and/or knowledge of Quaker faith and practice, from a list of 7 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 36. Activities to deepen spiritual life (n=303)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
Participate in a spiritual nurture group/mutual support group	59%
Serve on Meeting committees	53%
Attend Meeting for Learning in my own meeting	37%
Attend course at Silver Wattle Quaker Centre	32%
Follow Quaker or other websites (see Appendix 9 for details)	24%
Attend courses at Quaker centres in other countries	23%
Participate in a QLA Meeting for Learning retreat	19%

Additional responses from 115 Friends are summarised in **Appendix 24**.

Terms to describe self

Table 37 shows the terms that Friends used to describe themselves, from a list of 16 options. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 37. Terms used by Friends to describe themselves (n=359)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
Quaker	90%
Spiritual person	32%
Christian	32%
Universalist	19%
Non-theist	15%
Mystic	13%
Humanist	13%
Agnostic	7%
Post-Christian	5%
Atheist	4%
Buddhist	4%
Religious secularist	3%
Pagan	2%
Non-realist (do not believe in God or do believe in a non-real God)	2%
Jew	0.6%
Muslim	0.3%

58 additional responses are summarised in **Appendix 25**.

Feeling accepted in the Meeting

Friends were asked to nominate how comfortable they felt in their Meeting, and to categorise their views as traditional (e.g. Christian or theist) or non-traditional (e.g. non-theist, atheist or other). Table 38 reports the responses.

Table 38. How comfortable Friends feel in Meeting

(Traditional n = 201; Non-traditional n = 203)

<i>Feeling</i>	<i>Yes</i>		<i>No</i>		<i>Unsure</i>	
	Traditional	Non-traditional	Traditional	Non-traditional	Traditional	Non-traditional
A minority in your Meeting	19%	27%	67%	57%	14%	16%
Uncomfortable or out of place in your Meeting	14%	10%	77%	78%	9%	12%
Your views have been greeted sympathetically by others in your Meeting	66%	65%	15%	11%	19%	24%

There do not seem to be any significant differences in the experiences of Friends with traditional or non-traditional views in how sympathetically they were greeted in their meeting, but a significant minority (> 10%) of both groups felt uncomfortable or out of place in their Meeting.

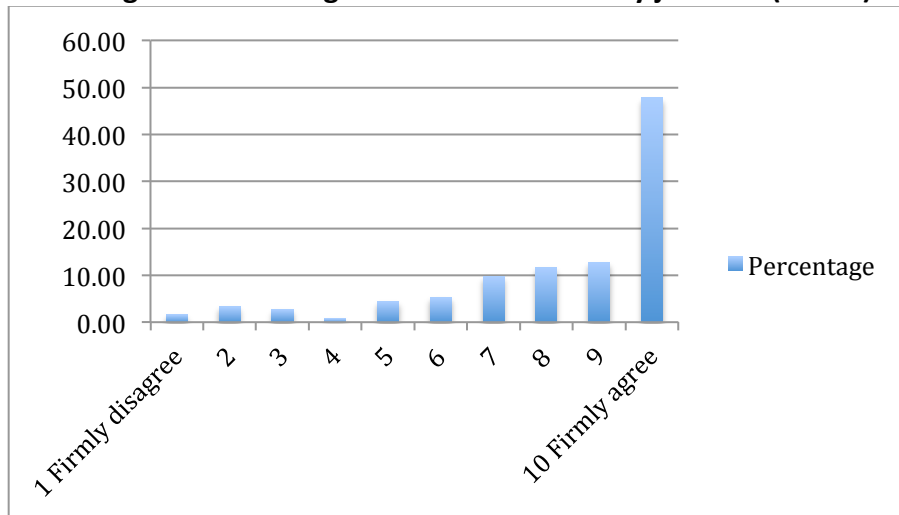
5. Ideas about the World

Breaking the law

When asked to consider the proposition '*In certain circumstances, breaking the law can be morally justified*' (using a 10 point rating scale, from 1=Firmly Disagree to 10=Firmly Agree), the mean score was 8.26 (out of 10).

As shown in Figure 6, 48% agreed firmly yes, but 13% of Friends did not agree with this statement, with scores from 1-5.

Figure 6. Breaking the law can be morally justified (n=362)

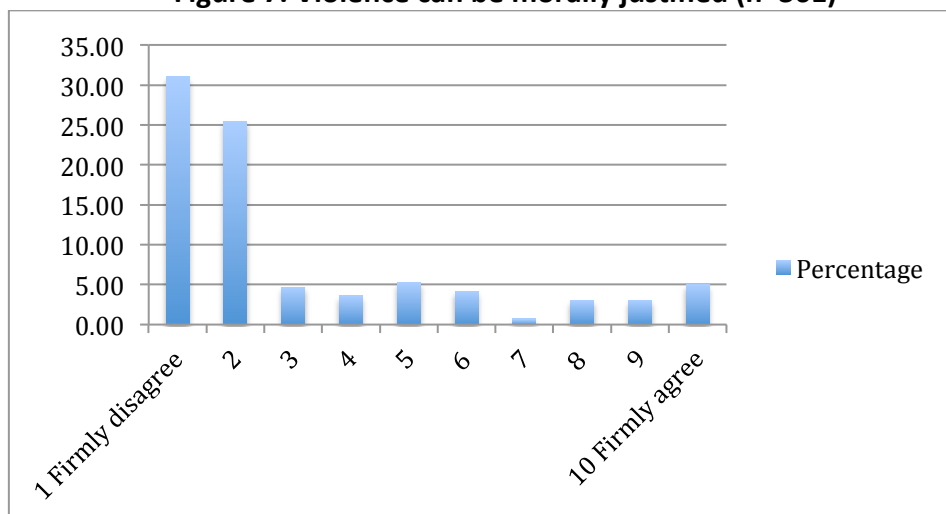


Violence

When asked to consider the proposition '*In certain circumstances, violence can be morally justified*' (using a 10 point rating scale, from 1=Firmly Disagree to 10=Firmly Agree), the mean score was 3.26 (out of 10).

As shown in Figure 7, 75% disagreed, with scores from 1-4, but 16% of Friends did agree with this statement to some extent, with scores from 7-10.

Figure 7. Violence can be morally justified (n=361)



Views of human nature

Table 39 shows what Friends believe best describes their view of human nature, from a list of 5 options.

Table 39. View of human nature (n=351)

	<i>Survey responses</i>
Essentially bad	1%
Imperfect	27%
Neither essentially bad or essentially good	19%
Essentially good	33%
Both essentially good and essentially bad	17%
Don't have a view	3%

Additional responses from 52 Friends are summarised in **Appendix 26**.

Involvement with other organisations

Table 40 shows the organisations and issues that Friends are involved with, from a list of 19 options, and of those involved in any organisation/issue, the proportion who were paid or unpaid workers, rather than simple supporters or members. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%.

Table 40. Involvement with organisations or issues (n=356)

	<i>Survey responses</i>	<i>Of respondents, % paid or unpaid worker</i>
Religious or church organisations (inc Quakers)	75%	18%
Conservation, the environment, climate change	60%	10%
Education, arts, music or cultural organisations	53%	23%
Third world development or human rights	46%	11%
Social welfare services	40%	49%
Professional associations	40%	10%
Refugee support	39%	20%
Peace movement	33%	20%
Local community action on issues like poverty, unemployment, housing, racial equality	31%	19%
Political parties or groups	30%	8%
Aboriginal rights	27%	8%
Trade unions	23%	5%
Voluntary organisations concerned with health	20%	27%
Women's groups	18%	20%
Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender rights	17%	8%
Sports or recreation	15%	11%
Animal rights	14%	6%
Youth work (e.g. scouts, guides, youth groups)	10%	26%
Prisoner support	9%	39%

67% of Friends considered this involvement to be part of their Quaker identity.

Appendix 27 summarises 26 additional comments made by Friends.

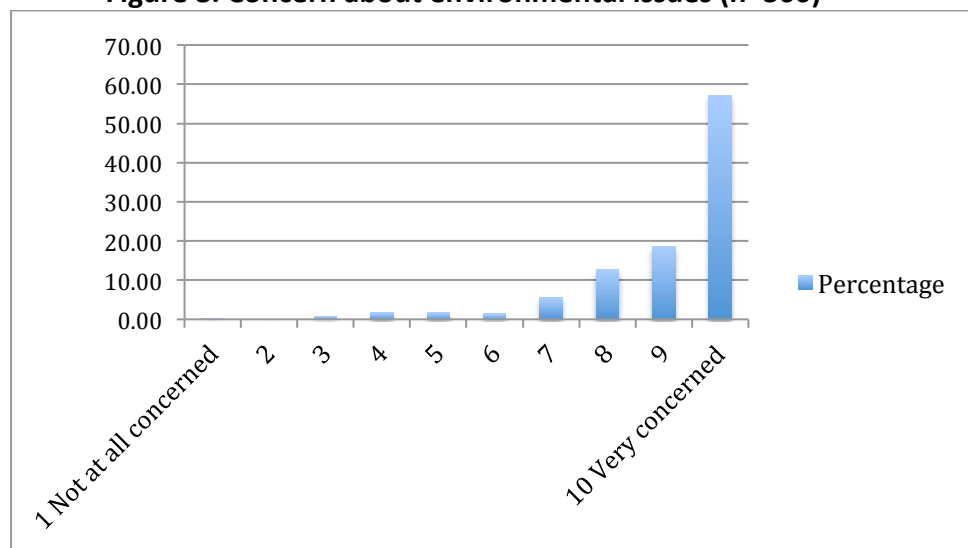
Concern about environmental issues

When asked 'Generally speaking how concerned are you about environmental issues (including climate change)' (using a 10 point rating scale, from 1=not at all concerned to 10=very concerned), the mean score was 9.07 (out of 10).

As shown in Figure 8, 57% of Friends scored their concern as 10; 94% scored their concern as 7, 8, 9 or 10.

For comparison, in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011-12 Environmental Views and Behaviour Survey, only 62% of Australians said they were concerned about environmental problems.²³

Figure 8. Concern about environmental issues (n=360)



Action taken on environmental issues

Table 41 indicates actions that Friends had taken in the last 12 months. The survey question allowed multiple responses, so percentages do not add to 100%. For comparison, results are provided from the ABS 2011-12 Environmental Views and Behaviour Survey.²³

Table 41. Environmental action in the last 12 months (n=326)

Action	Quaker survey 2014	ABS survey 2011-12
Signed a petition relating to any environmental issues	84%	13%
Donated money to help protect the environment	64%	13%
Volunteered or become involved in any environmentally related programs	33%	8%
Expressed concern about the environment through a letter or by talking to responsible authorities	61%	8%
Participated in a demonstration or rally on environment	43%	2%
Other activities	11%	4%

CONCLUSION

The results of this survey summarise the findings from the first detailed study of Quaker belief and practice conducted in Australia. There was a good rate of participation in the survey and several Friends noted that completing the survey assisted them in thinking about their own ideas and beliefs.

The findings confirm that there is a wide diversity of views and experience amongst Australian Friends that is not easily captured in simple summaries. In particular there is a rich source of commentary provided by Friends and presented in the report Appendices (over 100 pages and 51,000 words) that are worthy of much more detailed consideration.

The next stage in analysis of these findings will be to compare the results with those from the recent British survey, and prepare these for submission for publication in the journal *Quaker Studies*. There has been no attempt in this report to conduct sub-group analyses of the results by age, gender, regional meeting or beliefs; this may be undertaken at a later date.

Furthermore, 191 respondents volunteered to participate in follow-up interviews. While there are no plans or resources to extend the study further now, interviews could be valuable to provide more insight into some of the views expressed by Friends in these results.

The Survey Coordinator and the Survey Working Group thank all Friends who participated in the survey.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AYM	Australian Yearly Meeting
CRM	Canberra Regional Meeting
FWCC	Friends World Committee for Consultation
JYF	Junior Young Friend
MfW	Meeting for Worship
MfWfB	Meeting for Worship for Business
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
QLA	Quaker Learning Australia
QSA	Quaker Service Australia
SANTRM	South Australia and Northern Territory Regional Meeting

APPENDICES

(Some text has been deleted to retain confidentiality of respondents)

Appendix 1. Other current religious/spiritual groups Friends attend (n=72)

12 Step recovery

A Christian Meditation group

A L'Arche Community

A range of others

A small reading group of church "alumni"

An ecumenical meditation group

An independent group where one member channels Alpha

Anglican

Anglican

Anglican Church

Anglican church

Anglican church house group.

Benedictus

Buddhist Vipassana Meditation groups

Buddhism

Buddhism and Catholic

Buddhist

Buddhist

Buddhist meditation group/ Vipassana and minor involvement with Unitarian Universalists

But attend an Anglican church sometimes

Canberra Interfaith Forum

Catholic

Catholic Bible reflections

Catholic Church

Catholic Church

Catholic Church

Christian home church

Christian Meditation

Christian meditation group

Christian meditation group

Christian meditation groups; catholic parish

Dayspring

Episcopalian

Fortnightly bible study for a mixed group of Christians and non-Christians

Hindu sect

I am a practising Anglican

I attend a 12 Step fellowship that has at its core a spiritual concept

I privately practice Vipassana meditation though haven't attended a course for four years

I still meditate at times. I still find the philosophies and practices complimentary and they still shape how I live. A few times a year I gather with my meditation friends. Does that make me "actively involved"? Do I "attend" whenever I meditate? Or whenever I contemplate the moral philosophy when making life decisions? Or only when I gather with people?

I think of my Grow mental health group as being a spiritual experience of sorts.

In a way - Association with people who follow the work of Thomas Berry

Informally with all who believe similarly (not formally)

Jewish

MEDITATION GROUP

Meditation Group

Multi-faith meditation group

Narcotics anonymous.

New Church (Swedenborg)

Northern Beaches Buddhist Meditation Sangha

Pax Christi

Progressive Christianity

Religions for Peace

Salvation Army

Sea of Faith in Australia

Secular Buddhists

Small spiritual fellowship group

Subud - an acronym for Susila Budhi Dharma, a spiritual group

Sydney Insight Meditators (Buddhist)

The Uniting Church, Morwell

Theosophical soc., Christians for Ethical Soc

Unitarian

Unitarians

Uniting

Uniting Church

Uniting Church

Uniting Church

Uniting church

With two, one is Anglican and the other has no name...

With Unitarians in a vague way

Women's reading group with women of various denominations

Yoga/meditation

Zen, Shamanism

Appendix 2. What originally attracted people to Quakers (n=119)

A combination of interest arising from my parents joining Quakers some years earlier and disenchantment with the dogmatism of the Rector of the local Anglican Church

A faith community where I felt free to explore my spiritual longings. Formed a relationship with a Quaker who introduced me to modern Quakerism.

A friendship 15 years before with a colleague and Quaker: greatly admired who they were and wondered about Quakerism at the time. And then my children were to attend at Friends Hobart. I met with XXXXX and it reawakened my curiosity in the best way. I wanted to finally attend and see what this was. A sense of rightness and coming home kept me attending and finally lead to membership

A good combination of head, heart, and spirituality made active within the community.

A need for spiritual direction for life balance. I had been bordering on agnostic/atheist for many years - but Quakers suited all my values and I found it easy to believe that of god in everyone.

A religious community for my child to grow up in

Actually followed up immediately after a Compass ABC-TV show on Quakers, mostly in Tasmania, and the school there - I found it v interesting and historically, have always known about Quakers leaving England for USA

Admiration for older Friends who were active and participating in life when so many of the same age group outside the Meeting had already gone to sleep.

Admired Quaker families I knew as a child. Had no idea I could have joined them.

After a number of years of nominal membership during my twenties, I began attending Meeting again when our children were born. I was seeking a community with shared values in which to raise our children

An advertisement in the Courier Mail from QRM, Fred Harris

Answered an advert for a free book about Quakers. Had a call from local Quakers and we met them and decided to start attending Meeting. This was in the UK.

Attended initially out of curiosity in early twenties once. Attended to accompany my father who is a member in my early forties, I am an attender and attend about 3 times a year but keep track through emails and my father's involvement.

Attended Quaker School

Attending a course - finding it exceptional and then discovering those taking it were Quakers. "Quakers" shone out of a history book I read.

Attention of Q. included wider Social Justice issues! And it followed from the protests at the Arms Expo at the ACT Exhibition Centre in early??? 1990s? I had previously known some (F)riends, read about Q. and attended an occasional mtg. earlier in my explorations. When I first commenced regularly attending C.R.M., "ten (or so) of the first dozen att./members I met" were people I knew through active involvement in (local) social justice issues, some way-back to Uni-days!

Attracted by the search for the truth or inner light.

Connection with Easter religious practice. I practised (and still do) Vipassana meditation for many years

Connection with other Quakers before I was involved

Direct communion with God without going through a third party (minister or priest)

Dissatisfaction with church's lack of social justice

Felt lead to Quakers

Focus on silence. A place for my children

Followed my eldest son.

Friend who was a Quaker

Friends School

Had met a couple of Quakers and was curious.

Having been raised in a Quaker family I actually became a convinced Friend in mid life and it was the advices and queries that spoke to my condition. eg Take heed of the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God

Highly recommended by my spiritual idol Aldous Huxley.

Husband was interested

I actually came to Quakers looking for answers about God etc. What I found was a wonderfully open group of

fellow seekers who helped me not to require answers. To the extent that this survey might try to define what a Quaker is, I'm quite nervous about it. I hope this survey won't add to the rising debate about "theist" and "non-theist" Quakers. I hope you can ensure that our expression of ourselves and our words will build understanding rather than walls and word-wrangling. That way lies unnecessary tension, division, exclusion, and finally schism. We are so few. Let's remain a continuous work-in-progress, open to all people and their experiences, but with our sensible guidelines and boundaries.

I admired the Quakers I had met and my late husband had been a Quaker by conviction.

I also met and agreed to marry XXXXX and that encouraged me to become involved in something that had been fundamental to his life

I became a Friend in September 2012. It has taken me nigh on 2 years to realise that Quakerism is a way of life, I suspect that, during my years of being a visitor, I was blissfully unaware of the company and fellowship Quakers have to offer ... possibly my own shyness contributed to that sense. Thankfully, it is changing now.

I believed the Quaker rhetoric about the light within and the spirit moving etc for a long time.

I came into contact with Friends when my husband and I moved to Hobart in the late 1960s. We joined the Moratorium movement against the war in Vietnam where we met, and were impressed by, the Quakers involved with the group's activities. Before we came to Hobart we had become interested in Quaker ideas, for instance with hearing regular presentations by William Oats on the ABC radio program "Scope".

I can have direct access to God without going through a third party (Minister or Priest)

I do not consider myself a Quaker or a Christian. The key point to what I believe is in Thomas Hobbes, that if you want peace, you should behave accordingly. Existence or non-existence of God is not relevant, and not to be argued about. This is also Buddhist teaching which Buddhists sometimes accept, and sometimes do not accept.

I felt led to worship with Friends.

I got fed up with sexism in what was said in public worship and in attitudes to war in the Uniting Church I had been attending and I had often been to Quaker meetings/discussions over decades

I had become more introspective after my marriage ended and was seeking peace and joy in life again. Also saw the channel 2 program about Quaker faith.

I have good friends who are Quakers

I knew many Quakers through pacifist and feminist groups and their approach to peace and social justice attracted me.

I like the idea of faith in action and that every day and everything we do is holy. I also like the respect and tolerance of all to all. I suppose this is all included in the Quaker way of life, however different people like different things about the Quaker way of life.

I lived in New Zealand at the time of the Vietnam War protest marches and was very favourably impressed by the non-violent process of protest that they taught.

I married a birth-right Quaker

I married a birthright Quaker

I read Christian Faith and practice and discovered that this is by and large what I also believed

I started by going to YFs at the invitation of a good friend who was a Quaker and then from that started to go to M for W and discussions. I was absent from age 20 to about 38 and my responses above are as much about my return as my initial attendance.

I took the opportunity to drop in at a Quaker Meeting House that I was passing because my Atheist father had always said the Quakers were the only religion he respected because they lived their faith and were famous for their Social Justice action, e.g. the underground railway.

I wanted to belong to a worshipping community but needed the freedom to explore my relationship with God without dogma imposed by others.

I was called by God, I felt an inner prompting to pick up the phone and find out about it

I was familiar with Q meetinghouse (nonviolent training) and knew several Quakers who were keen supporters of Action for World Devt where I worked. I felt generally comfortable with their philosophy and style and had moved much closer geographically, and away from my familiar Uniting church congregation.

I was impressed by the people who were Quakers. I thought that the faith that sustained them might have something to offer me.

I was impressed by the way a friend led her life. I discovered The Friend magazine under a pile of magazines in her living room and asked her about it. When I moved to Sydney I found out where the Meeting House was. There was no meeting where I used to live.

I was in the Mitchell Library researching cooperatives & partnerships worldwide for my book XXXX, and this is

where I first encountered works by Quakers.

Influence of XXX [other Quakers]

Initially in 1991 it was a comment made by my father who said in passing when I had moved into a house in XXXX "I see the Quakers meet just around the corner". I was at the time without any particular worshipping community and was "seeking" something. When my father made the comment, it somehow piqued my interest and I began researching Friends (without ever mentioning to my father it was his comment that guided me to do so)

Initially my Inner Self sent me to a Quaker meeting, and then kept sending me back every Sunday. After that I became attracted to the items I ticked above.

Inspiring friends who were Friends

Interfaith

Introduced to Quakers by a Friend

Iraq war 2003

Learning that people I respected for their commitment to social justice were Quakers Appreciation, from school days, of the historical contribution of Quakers to reform of unjust social structures

Link to early pre-Christians

Looking for a meditative practicing group

Looking for community

Looking into beliefs after reading about Elizabeth Fry & others; arranging education grant to Quaker School at Whanganui, New Zealand; working with South Australian member XXXX collecting wildflowers in Western Australia and could ask questions.

Married one

My father and uncles attended a Quaker school.

My fiancé/ husband had been searching for a denomination, which supported his pacifist stance at a time when he would have been required to do National Service. He found Quakers first, and I followed.

My first wife was Jewish. We tried without success to put together a hybrid wedding. By happy chance came across Morningside Heights Meeting in NYC. Immediately felt at home there. They agreed we could be married in the Meeting. (Quakers do weddings well!)

My Housemaster at boarding school was a Friend and lived in the schoolhouse with his wife and family. Their example made an unconscious impression on me, which remained with me when I became dissatisfied with other forms of organised religion.

My wife suffered with chronic pain. My cousin suggested that we attend XXXXX Meeting to see if that helped her. It did! She said that for the hour of the Meeting she was free of pain, so we kept coming back. It didn't always work, but often enough to keep us attending.

NB I think there is a hierarchy both formal and informal.

No such thing as "No religious dogma" in a religious community

Non violent demonstration and civil disobedience

OK to be vegetarian, single mother. To be treated as equal whatever my status in society.

On reading the general Quaker beliefs, I realised I held these beliefs. I was very tired of the egos and politics in churches and valued the silence. Still a few egos around though!!

Over the course of my long life, I bumped into many Quakers. They impressed me. So, basically, it was the people I met - as well as those other things I've ticked up there - that drew me in.

Political and peace and social justice activism, no clergy to tell me what to think or believe.

Quaker believes as pacifists closely related to the community I grew up in

Quaker involvement in CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), Aldermaston marches &c.

Quaker Open day at Burnside Hall in Adelaide I was so impressed with the information I decided to start to attend worship meetings. I had read the advert about the open day in the Advertiser

Quakerism runs in the family, tried the others but if you've been brought up a Quaker, and we go back a long way, 1750's approx, then it's a way of life and a challenge constantly.

Quakers had a volunteer program in Kenya that we wanted to participate in

Quakers had drawn me for a long time, although I've never really known why.

Quakers' honesty and acceptance

Quiet contemplation, integrity of action, speaking from one's own experience, consensus decision making, open-

mindedness

Quietness

Saw the difference visiting Quakers on the most outcast people - living their faith.

Search for meaning

Seeking a place to worship with former husband- non attending Catholic

Sense of having a calm centre in my life.

Simplicity

Socially - Quakers walk their talk.

Some links to US Quakers during our stay there 40 years ago

Testimony on simplicity

The active roles played by older people.

The fit with work life where intellectual thought and accountability and social justice issues not disregarded when comes to worship

The idea of direct connection transforming into something otherly (utterly) unknown.

The practice of holding in the Light / that of God in all / peace and non violence

The purity of the idea that everyone can have direct communion with God or the Spirit without the intermediary of a priest

The Quaker Mystical Tradition

The Quaker testimonies from a non-political but spiritual perspective.

The quality of support provided by fellow members to someone experiencing a life changing and devastatingly tragic event in their family

The sense of acceptance regardless of personal belief in God and Jesus

The silent meeting was very attractive to give me space in the week to reflect and pray and settle into my spiritual. The intense honesty of interactions and respect was potent. The capacity to hold own beliefs and be accepted for those beliefs despite others different beliefs

The suggestion was made that the local Quaker's might meet at my home in the bush. As I was a single parent and somewhat isolated this worked very well for me. It just flowed.

There is that of God in every creature. Had read "The Road Less Travelled" and that the author had been saved from himself when sent to a Friends School

There was no emphasis at all on original sin

They were tolerant of my atheist views

Tired of processing wordy clichés in other religious groups

Tolerance, especially of varied beliefs in "God", who is not defined.

View that there is something of God in every person

When I first began to attend Quaker Meetings I was unaware of the position of women in the group. It is something which I am happy to see.

While not born into a Quaker family, it was the next closest thing I suppose - having had Quaker books and behaviours in the house all my life.

Witness and action around simplicity, hospitality, fellowship, inclusion, the idea that my faith could grow and change over the course of my life with Friends.

Working alongside Quakers in ecumenical settings, university chaplaincy, international development, Peace and Nuclear Disarmament

Appendix 3 – Additional comments on how Friends first began to learn more about Quakerism (n=74)

Always knew about Quakers from religious upbringing

And at Friday night gatherings with shared meals and speakers.

And weekend gatherings etc

As a child it was the first two. As a convinced Friend it was the second two. Being asked by Friends to write, facilitate, speak about topics increased my learning

At demonstrations eg Anti-apartheid etc

Attended Quaker School XXXX [in England]

Attending Summer Schools (in England, where I lived) These were set up for Quaker Teenagers who did not attend a Quaker School. Young Friends activities at Woodbrooke.

Attending Yearly Meeting and wider Quaker fellowship

Attending yearly meeting in Germany

Attending Yearly Meetings

AYM

Began as an attender in the US

By attending Meeting for Learning

By observing the happiness and energy of the few Friends that I had known for some time.

Courses at Woodbrook This question makes the assumption that all Friends came to Friends in Australia, while there are many who did not.

Didn't really learn much at all. It has taken a long time and my understanding has developed as I have developed friendships and connections with people whose knowledge I have learnt to trust.

Dinner party when I was looking for another church. After I began attending I was mentored by weighty Friends.

Doing Hearts and Minds prepared

For a few years no-one helped me to learn anything... just attended M4W regularly. Did not even know about Quaker publications or newsletters etc. Attended a YM after a couple of years, without knowing what it meant!- but had a bad experience when I approached a very senior Friend there for advice. Only persisted in tending due to friendly approaches by one or two Friends in my local Meeting.

Friends Fridays functions, getting to know friends events at a yearly meeting

From my work in the Mitchell I knew that once I walked into a Quaker meeting I would probably never walk out.

Had once in South Africa attended a non-Quaker event in a meeting house. The event was awful but I saw all the pictures round the walls and was most impressed with one where Native Americans had burst into a Meeting House in a warlike way to be met with peace and light.

Having a mentor

Heard the ABC religious radio program in 1991 (?) when 3 Quakers were interviewed. Excellent: what impressed me was (a) these people actually thought about their spiritual beliefs; (b) tolerance for other beliefs.

Hearing about Quaker beliefs and seeing peace demonstrations.

Hearts and Minds program was wonderful and consolidated my interest and commitment to Quakers

I became involved with Friends in UK

I began attending in the UK. Local Quakers paid visits and discussed issues with me.

I didn't join Friends in Australia.

I don't think the website existed when I started attending Quakers. I lived in Hay, NSW, and attended regularly, but not often, the worshipping group in Wagga. There were no other Quakers in Hay, but Friends in both Wagga and Canberra made efforts to keep in contact.

I had an elderly male Friend take me under his wing and mentored me.

I had attended Meeting for Worship/ Meeting for Business on several occasions over many years before my more recent attendance.

I had read very deeply into Quakerism before attending meetings. I became convinced well before attending any meetings or being accepted into membership. I became unconvinced in contemporary Quakerism thru the years of attending meetings.

I have participated in an online learning program from Woodbrooke

I was impressed by the strength of individual Quakers' commitment to the testimonies such as peace, and the high value placed on honesty and straightforwardness.

I was isolated for many years, attending MfW in cities I visited, and Friends Book Supplies was very important. They also put me in contact with Friends in the different areas I lived in, who I visited when I could.

Internet research.

Junior Young Friends/Young Friends

JYF's and YF's

Knowing Quakers personally and liking their work, ethics and attitude; all that I had read in other books, the news etc about Quakers and observing NON-Quaker missionaries and church workers.

Learning from marvellous role models, while working for Quaker Service Australia, like Bronwen and Richard Meredith, Bill Oats, Ron Darvell and so on.

Lived out of Perth and attended when able hopefully a Business Meeting and discussions etc. Often stopped at Perth Meeting House and talked with caretaker.

LM & Reg. Mtg. Newsletters, etc.

Meeting for Learning

Meeting for Learning

Meeting for Learning

My brother, XXXX was the clerk of XXXX Regional meeting.

Other Quaker websites

Our eldest son started school at Friends in 1971 and the school's Quaker ethos was a strong influence on the whole family.

QN

Quaker books and booklets

Quaker Quest

Quakers website UK, US, Canada

Quakers were invited as guest speakers by Eremos

Reading Advices & Queries, and Quaker Faith & Practice

Reading journals in England

Residential weekends and AYMs

Several stays at Silver Wattle - attending courses and/or as FiR and/or as cook

Summer camps at Yearland (UK) Mid Year gatherings - Lower Plenty (UK)

Talking with Quaker partner

Teaching at a Friends School

The Australian Friend, Friends Journal, The English Friend

The business meeting procedure impressed me and was important to my decision to keep attending. Being in a very small meeting, I have not had the opportunity to go to any learning groups.

The Fremantle Meeting has a small Study Group, which meets every two weeks. This has been invaluable to me.

This was in UK

Through a documentary aired on the ABC.

Through direct engagement with Quaker education and other institutions.

Through my parents and their love, beliefs, encouragement and attitudes. Through belonging to a meeting where children were recognised for their contribution.

Through YFs and YM. I attended YF camp 1965,6,7 and 8, and YM 66 and 68

Weekend Gatherings for Wholeness" which were residential

When I began attending I was involved with the Hills Group here in WA. There were a number of older Friends who were quite inspiring with their lack of dogma and clarity of thought. Sadly most of those Friends have since died. They were an intelligent and sensitive group who did not engage in power struggles or insist on doctrinal conformity.

Wider Quaker fellowship

Yearly Meeting

Appendix 4. Reasons for applying for Membership (n=250)

A current member suggested it to me.

A desire to support Quaker practice to continue and thrive

A feeling of being 'at home' among other Friends, relating to the Testimonies and aspiring to live by the leadings of the Spirit.

A feeling of being at home spiritually

A feeling of being more at home with the XXXX Group

A feeling of belonging

A feeling of belonging and a need to be more involved in the life of the meeting.

A feeling of belonging. It felt right.

A feeling of commitment.

A Friend made it clear to me that some Friends thought I had a 'stop in [my] mind', or I would have applied for m/shp by now.

A sense of belonging

A sense of belonging

A sense of belonging and appeal to the human rights and social justice issues were close to my heart as was the anti Iraq war and East Timor war etc

A sense of commitment.

A sense of having found my spiritual home

A sense of having found what we were looking for. Also, we were about to move to Australia, and wished to confirm our status as Friends.

A sense of responsibility - wanting to share fully the tasks of the meeting

A sense of wanting to be part of my new spiritual home.

A sense that I wanted to affirm in a public way that Quakers constituted my spiritual home and that I was committed to it.

A spiritually and ethically based group but not dogmatic. A sense of affinity with those in the community
The status of women and processes that worked well

Acceptance of Quaker principles

After many years as an Attender it seemed the right thing to do.

Agreed with philosophy and attitudes against war

As a quasi-Muslim, I liked the Quaker Universalists, of which there was a small but illegal) Meeting in Jakarta.

As I was already very committed and involved it seemed right to formalise membership

Asked to

At Saffron Walden school

At the time I felt I had found my home and I felt my full commitment was necessary.

Attracted to contemplative forms of worship

Because I thought Member numbers we're gutting so low that Quakers might lose status as a religion, in terms of paying tax on Meeting Houses etc. I thought I was benefitting so much from Quakers it was time for me to make a commitment.

Because I was made clerk of Young Friends and thought I ought to be in membership!

Being able to say 'we' and not 'they'.

Belief in Quaker way of life

Belief in Quakerism

Belonging to a spiritual community.

Bridget Hodgkin said, "XXXX, you ARE a Quaker and it is time you applied for membership." And I realised she was right!!

By wanting to be identified as upholding Quaker beliefs and practices, and to formally state that conviction

Coming home to a non-hierarchical accepting community

Coming home.
Commitment
Commitment to the Society
Committed to continue my connection, wanted that to be 'official'
Connection. If this is what I believed I wanted to formalise the commitment and the fellowship
Convincement
Decided it was right for me and I wanted to show commitment.
Describe myself as a Quaker to people I meet, figured after 20 years of attending figured I should make it official
Desire to belong to a denomination that rested right within my being
Encouragement by existing member
Everyone else at Meeting were Members
Feel I had been an attender for long enough and thought it time to make a statement of belief
Feeling a responsibility for the business of the meeting
Feeling at home and wanting to commit to the Meeting at a deeper level.
Feeling connected. I found myself realising that I was 'owning' the sense of being a Quaker; not just joining in, so I figured it was time.
Feeling I belonged
Feeling identified with the community in many respects.
Feeling it was high time, especially since I identified as Quaker
Feeling of being accepted
Feeling of being in the right path
Feeling of belonging
Feeling of home
Feeling ready to commit to stand up and be counted as a Quaker.
Fell in love with Quaker ways
Felt 'at home', committed and wanted to belong
Felt called
Felt I fitted under what I thought of as the Quaker umbrella of belief and I wanted to support Friends.
Felt it. I felt that it was time to have a deeper commitment to contemporary Quaker life, and a need for a supportive spiritual community.
Felt important to assert that I belonged
Felt need of a spiritual home and attraction to Helen Savage
Felt Quaker Meeting was my spiritual home.
Felt Quakerism was my spiritual home
Felt this Quakerism reflected my religious beliefs
Felt to be right & important to belong after many years as an attender (from a baby!)
Finding strength in my spiritual search, sense of connection with Quaker beliefs and way of life
Form of worship
Formalize involvement and commitment to the SoF
Found my spiritual home
Freedom to explore own belief in a supportive atmosphere
Freedom to explore ideas and entertain doubts
Gentle urging by Friends
Gratitude, a sense of belonging
Greater involvement with the Regional Meeting's operations
Had never been in an area with a 'real' Meeting long enough to apply; didn't know the process, so when I learned about it, I jumped!

Having decided other groups were not for me, wanted to belong

Having to ask permission to attend YM each year to report on QSA, made me realize I should be a member really.

I attended regularly and seemed to be accepted

I became increasingly convinced that a life lived in the Inner Light was the only one for me and that I had a duty to stand up and be responsible for the life of the Meeting

I believed in the Quaker viewpoint on most things.

I believed that a commitment would help me on my spiritual journey

I confirmed my membership at approx. 25 years old I think because I felt part of the Quaker family.

I could slowly move through my views and not be stopped what I now believe is parent & grandparents dislike of Presbyterian "thou shalt not have a good time in this world - we must wait for kingdom come etc."

I decided that to stand on the periphery was no longer something that I could do. I wished to commit to the Society, since I could not imagine ever wanting to go elsewhere.

I didn't particularly want to become a member and be in a box but I had been so long identified with things Q, it seemed an appropriate thing to do.

I felt a strong sense of belonging to the community and wanted to celebrate and affirm this through membership.

I felt as though the Quaker community was right for me. I am a 'joiner' and if I think something is right, I like to make a commitment.

I felt at home, and the knowledge of the need to contribute in whatever group I became part of.

I felt at home. I felt that Meeting was the right place for me to be, to continue my spiritual quest. Faith has been problematic for me for some time.

I felt committed and settled with Quakers. I was undertaking a difficult journey at an age that my father had died. I felt that I needed to have a spiritual home if I were to die.

I felt I belonged

I felt I had found a religious community whose ideas were as radical as my own without being dogmatic.

I felt I had found my spiritual home

I felt I wanted to belong, and to make a commitment, both to a spiritual practice and to the group.

I felt I was on the right path for me and this strengthened my commitment to that path

I felt led to do so.

I felt like a Quaker and referred to myself as a Quaker

I felt no compulsion to become a member but eventually wished to contribute at one point as Treasurer and by attending Meeting for Business.

I felt ready to belong.

I felt so attuned to Quakers that I wanted to belong

I felt sure that I was in the right religious group for me.

I felt that I had come home, but I also felt I was in control of my own destiny because Friends accepted me as a seeker in the journey of my life.

I felt that I was sure that the Religious Society of Friends was my spiritual path.

I felt that it was time for me to participate in the Meeting more fully since my children were grown up and had left home

I felt that it was where I belonged.

I felt that was where I belonged.

I finally felt led to apply. I finally had more confidence that I could say "No" to pressure that might be applied to me, to take up a role or do things that didn't feel right for me. I finally felt able to resist my own exhausting old tendency to fall in with things out of "duty."

I found out that one could! Quite a surprise. I immediately did so.

I got a job some distance from the meeting I attended and had to move away. I wanted to be looked after.

I had applied before in my 20's but withdrew, as I didn't like the process. Much later I wanted to join officially as a commitment and my increasing spiritual interest.

I had become actively involved in my local Meeting.

I had become more centrally involved in Quakers and Friends kept asking when I was joining.

I had been attending for over 12 months, which was nice and comfortable without commitment; then I was challenged by another Attender as to why I didn't make the commitment. I attended a Quaker Information session at a similar sort of time (run by Elders) - and it seemed appropriate that if I was to keep coming to Meeting then I ought to commit.

I had enough experience of Friends to feel confident that becoming a member would be helpful for me. Plus they had asked me to be Asst Clerk.

I had found what I needed as a way of worship and an example of a way to live one's life.

I had often said I took my spiritual life seriously and after 20 years it was time to act on it.

I knew I was a Quaker and I wanted to formalise membership

I knew immediately that this was my spiritual home. I loved everything about it - well, almost everything. Some Friends were opinionated and loud and seemed to need to speak on every issue, but that's not unique to Friends.

I knew these were my family. At the same time, I lost many of my family through marriage collapse- so my Meeting was a replacement family

I loved my Quaker community and the doctrines of Quakerism while not being compelled to believe in them and not discouraged from exploring other spiritual perspectives. I loved the form of worship, it was therapeutic. I also loved the Quaker literature and its history.

I realised that being a Quaker didn't mean you had to be perfect. I travelled around Australia and met so many different Quakers some were not what I thought a Quaker would represent quite dishonest and bullying so I decided I was good enough if they could say they were a Quaker!

I really don't know. I think because of the Testimonies. It seems easier to live the Testimonies in the company of other people.

I shared the Quaker position

I thought it was about time and I may as well as I seemed to have become a regular attender

I waited in George Fox fashion until it felt to me I "could not become a Quaker." I wore my 'attending only' for as long as I couldst.

I wanted to "pull my weight"

I wanted to affirm that I was choosing to be a member.

I wanted to be counted as part of an organisation that stood for peace and non-violence

I wanted to be part of the Quaker community

I wanted to belong

I wanted to belong

I wanted to belong

I wanted to claim this identity that felt so right to me, and make a commitment to it.

I wanted to contribute financially.

I wanted to formalise my membership and make a commitment to Friends

I wanted to tithe 1% of my income.

I was already very comfortable ("at home") and active in the Meeting. Discussion with some Friends had convinced me about 4 years of being an Attender before applying for Membership was "in good ordering". The absolute catalyst was a planned 2-month trip to UK & Ireland. I wanted to be a Member before visiting other Meetings overseas.

I was attracted to the logic and open-mindedness of Quakers, as I then saw it.

I was becoming actively involved in my local meeting

I was brought up a Quaker, but researched other faiths as a teenager and decided Quakerism was the only relevant faith for me.

I was calling myself a Quaker and thought I should make it official

I was going to work for FSC as a QOV so it seemed logical that I should join and my Dad thought if I was committed as a YF at university, that was a good idea too.

I was invited to apply. "You've been coming for a long time now, why don't you apply for membership?" or something like that. I thought hard for a week or so about whether this was where I thought I belonged and decided to apply.

I was leaving the US to go to work in [another country] and wanted to maintain a formal link with Quakerism. The Quaker community and way of life had become very precious to me - and important to my family.

I was looking for a religious group that did not demand I conform to a strict dogma
I was no longer moving around so felt I could make a commitment to a Local Meeting, after the irregular attendance at various Meetings that had marked the previous 15 years
I'd been thinking about it, but when I was moving interstate?
Identity and a sense of belonging.
Important to belong and show commitment
In Quakers I'd found my spiritual community
It felt like time
It felt right
It felt right ordering for me
It felt right to make a commitment to the Quaker way of living and of worship.
It felt right; I felt at home in the meeting, I was beginning to ask myself why I was not a member.
It fitted with my identity as 'Quaker'. I wanted to make a formal commitment.
It had been long enough
It seemed totally right
It was time.
Making the commitment to the Quaker way of life and supporting the organisation
Moved by The Spirit to minister in Meeting
My commitment to leading a Quaker life.
My Inner Self told me it was time.
My interest in spirituality and peace and non-violence
My parents applied for my membership, and I continued that membership into adulthood
I was told to! Seriously, I understood the meaning of "surrendering to the discipline of the Meeting" and chose not to be outside it.
Need to commit and belong
O! what a question. The sense of peace, which prevailed at Meetings. The genuine concern members (and attendees and visitors) have for all people and, of course, the earth.
Others kept using the phrase "just an attender". That annoyed me intensely. Eventually I woke up one morning realising I needed to become a member so those Friends could see me as equal- their problem not mine!
Our Correspondent was finding that the responsibility was becoming quite burdensome and there wasn't another member to take over
Outward evidence of my inward commitment
Pressure from some older Quakers together with a feeling that this was in fact my spiritual home.
Probably the Quaker basics course was the final factor in a decision, which took 28 years to make.
Quaker Testimonies, worship and way of life. Non judgment attitudes
Ready to affirm participation in the Meeting
Realising that I was already "in" - that the Quaker Way was the way I wanted to develop my spiritual life, and that I was committed to contributing to the life and wellbeing of my Meeting
Registered as a baby at birth
Religious attendance after school
Seemed like a good idea at the time
Sense of belonging
Sense of belonging
Sense of belonging and interest in taking a more active role
Sense of belonging and responsibility to the group.
Sense of having come home and wanting to participate fully
Sign of commitment
Simply wanted to be a member.

Somehow being a member validated for me my commitment

Stability

Statement of Commitment

Strong identification with Quaker testimonies, feeling of being in the right place, desire to be fully part of the Quaker community, desire to contribute fully as a member.

Synchronicity of feeling and values.

That is was my family

The commitment and sense of belonging.

The idea of commitment to a spiritual group

The meeting felt like a powerful source of spiritual strength, and I wanted to be part of it.

The openness of the meeting I attended

The Quaker business method seeking the to do the will of God.

The sense of belonging; to be able to share in the Quaker way of life.

The spirit of the members of the small worshipping group I met with twice a month

The spiritual experience of Meeting for Worship and Convocation

The time was right

The time was right.

There was some pressure for me to join by an active Friend. I was in two minds about joining and feared loss of independence and integrity belonging to a group

Think it is important to belong

This was a struggle for me and I fought against it. But I finally realised that this was the path I wanted to follow, and I wanted to make a serious commitment to it.

This was where I fitted, and still do

Thought I should give a commitment

Through ministry that spoke to my condition.

Time to make a commitment

To be a stronger part of the community

To be part of the group

To become more committed. I was invited to think about it.

To belong and to feel better

To express my commitment to a Quaker way of life, and ideals.

To feel a sense of belonging

To formalise this part of my life

To fully belong

To increase my commitment

To make a commitment.

To make it official to my family that I wasn't a Catholic

To participate more actively in the life of the meeting

To please my parents

To serve on Quaker committees

To serve on Quaker Committees

To show my willingness for full participation in the life of the Meeting

To show support and solidarity for a group to which I felt at home.

Totally in agreement with Quaker practice and values.

Truly, it was because the position-holders in our group were getting tired, and to be able to relieve them of some of their burden, I felt I should be a Member.

Wanted to be able to identify myself as a Quaker

Wanted to bear witness to my beliefs

Wanted to participate fully
Wanting to belong more fully
Wanting to belong to a community.
Wanting to commit
Wanting to commit to Quaker lifestyle and community
Wanting to feel as if I truly belonged to the Meeting
Wanting to support the community that is supporting me.
Wanting to take an active part in the Meeting, and in the children's understanding and activity in the Meeting.
Wanting to take more responsibility within the Meeting, to add my gifts and strengths to the Meeting, to show the Meeting that I had definitely chosen this path for my future.
Wanting to worship. Very needy in personal life
We had become regular Attenders in XXXX Meeting, London
When I join a group, I believe I need to contribute and membership is part of that involvement.
Wished to make the commitment formal.

Appendix 5. Reasons for not applying for Membership (n=92)

(The usual): lack of knowledge of Quakerism. Some of the knowledge I am gaining, which is Christocentric, scares me off, as does the associated language, as I am not a Christian friend. Moving away from Christianity was traumatic, & I'm not willing to repeat the process any time soon.

1. I want to wait until I feel as though it is the right time 2. I want to wait until I feel truly part of the community 3. I want to wait until I can contribute to the meeting, as I would wish to.

1) Feel linked to Quakers anyway 2) My local meeting is held at a rather inconvenient time that limits my ability to attend regularly, which means I do not feel I can participate as fully as is required of a Member. NOTE: my answer to Q2 was the best available option, but I do not attend as often as is implied.

Applied 3 weeks ago

At the moment I am not attending regularly because of distance from nearest meeting house. Also, being still rather new to Quakerism I am unsure of the whole commitment as a Member and what is required of me.

Attender has most of the benefits of members, not sure I think it necessary

Because I don't see myself as exclusively Quaker. I find meaning in other traditions as well.

Because it would mean committing more time, energy and money that I currently don't feel I can spare.

Being a member would make it feel too much like a church

Cost

Don't feel I am ready and know enough or committed enough as I am an irregular attender

Don't feel the need.

Don't tend to join any organisations

Don't think I'm holy or reliable enough. Doubts about the common sense of some members.

Don't want to be involved with business meetings and Quaker politics

For a long period of time I was living and working in the Australian Outback and the closest meeting was 2000 kms away in either direction. When I became a member, I wanted to become a member of a local meeting that I truly felt a part of and could regularly attend.

Have applied for membership but the process is as slow as mating elephants - in addition the Quakers in charge of the process cannot get their act together - eg: never turn up for planned meetings or stay in contact - the whole process shows no leadership and is cumbersome

Haven't felt I needed to before now, but I am thinking of becoming a member

Having been over-committed as an Anglican I was wary of making a commitment which might overwhelm me again.

Here in Perth? Well, it's old age, really, and inability sometimes to get to Meetings.

I am an atheist

I am comfortable remaining an attender and not at this point willing to take on the additional responsibilities of being a full member

I am currently applying for membership

I am not a very clubbable person.

I am not sure

I am reluctant to commit to membership of any organisation.

I am reluctant to join a religious organization. An aversion from my Catholic upbringing. But more importantly, I have not been moved to apply. I just don't feel the need of it. That could change.

I did not know I could apply for membership.

I did not want to be a Member. I am no longer an attender.

I didn't know there was membership as a separate thing to attendance

I do not feel comfortable stating I am a member until I have the time to commit to more regular assistance in the Quaker community I do not feel comfortable stating I am a member until I have sorted some key differences in my mind - most of the Quakers seem to be Labor party and I am liberal party, and I was told by one Quaker that there was a liberal member once, but that he did not stay that it was hard for a Liberal to be a Quaker, and yet I see the mission statement of the liberals and think it applies 100% but then actions that happen on a daily basis occasionally do not match the mission statement, and I think that the Labor party have a Pollyanna view of the finances available to do what they want to do. I am also a supporter of the Royal family and I think that they provide a role model for helping and preservation and respect for our ancestors, but I can see the point of those who don't like them or the thought of hierarchy

too, but it seems to be a fundamental point in Quakerism - even George Fox regarding equality - the thing is, I feel no less equal to the Queens family and think they have a great privilege to be doing what they are doing, but do not think I would have the capacity to do what they do so well. I am feeling recently there is a tendency in Australia for a move from the historic Quaker community to an almost pantheistic view. While this is okay for others to have these views, I am also seeing a little bit of not quite ridicule from some members regarding those who have a more George Fox view of spiritual life, and I want to see where this is going before I join - in actual fact I am not sure that being a "joiner" was what George Fox was about or even Jesus was about, I take a long time to make up my mind about things, but I do pay a annual subscription to Quakers so that I help maintain the running costs.

I do not feel especially close to Quaker orthodoxy

I do not have the dedication or conviction to commit myself

I don't feel a need for a tag. I would be embarrassed by the distinctions made with attenders were I a member. As with any other group, do what I can in every way.

I don't know enough about being a "Member", and I am very happy with my current limited involvement with Quakers

I don't feel that I attend often enough, I feel that I do not want to commit myself to the group because of limited time that I could give, not totally sure that I want to be formally in a "church" group.

I feel I should become a more regular attender first.

I have applied for membership - it was a chaotic, exclusive and distressing experience - I withdrew my application

I have only just begun attending

I have thought about it but do not feel a pressure to take membership; I am as involved as I want to be.

I haven't applied because I never knew where I stood with Quakers. I feared I'd be looked down upon for opening up about religion or politics. I needed a space where I could feel I could share and still be supported.

I live 200kms away and I feel I need to know more

I still attend the Catholic Church and I feel that I would need to be more knowledgeable and involved in order to become a member.

I want to learn more.

I'm not able to attend enough to feel myself part of the society (although I know I'm accepted). I'm still not sure how well the fit between myself and Quakerism is.

I'm still actively involved in the local Uniting Church and I attend Uniting Church Sunday services on the weeks when there is no local Quaker meeting (the Quaker meeting is held one Sunday a month in XXXX which is 30 km away by car).

I've never thought to apply

Increasing uncertainty about permanent involvement

Individuals in the meeting

It has been a slow journey to fully understand Quaker beliefs and spirituality. I am ready now to make that commitment

It seems un-Quakerly to be a member. I enjoy the absence of formal membership and have no need to be inducted into another religious club.

Joining a group to feel part of it smacks of us vs them elitism

Just haven't got round to doing it. As I was born into a Quaker family I never really felt the need to do it!

Just too big a step

Lack of clarity about the importance of a belief in GOD. Lack of clarity about the difference between members and attenders and a slight resistance about that issue. Lack of desire to join a group formally. Lack of desire to join a group formally, when it seems that there are no criteria for joining other than being liked by the Meeting. A general lack of clarity about whether Quakers do actually live by the testimonies and a reluctance to join yet another group that does not live by what it says. Complications in my relation with my partner and in my understanding of my partner's beliefs and role in Quakers. Concern about how some issues are handled by Quakers in Australia

Lack of commitment to the high ideals of the Society

Lack of enthusiasm for the implied superiority of membership. And one should not have to go through a process.

Laziness I have it on my to do list this year 2014

Never been asked, I go too infrequently

Never been ready to totally commit.

Never got around to it.

Not a Christian.

Not necessary

Not ready yet

Not sure I support the Quaker core beliefs. Don't want to attend business meetings.

Not sure I want to claim to have faith

Not wanting to get a label which might be a cause of separation from others

Not worthy to become a member

Not yet part of the inner circle!

Participation in another Religious Group

People keep reassuring me that it doesn't matter and I haven't gotten round to it. I think being in a rural area away from a bigger meeting, the formalities are less pressing.

Personal

Possibly because my understanding is that no Quaker would ever shoot anyone under any circumstances, and I couldn't say I could follow that in certain situations - although I don't own a gun!

Prefer an informal approach.

Problems with experience of ministry - seeming to be the same people ministering often and with no sense of the spiritual. Often ministry seems to be about lecturing people or their favourite issue or just having a "chat". The theist/non-theist divide. It does not seem ok to mention God in our Meeting; in fact in the time I have been attending, the number of times God or the Divine was mentioned could be counted on the fingers of one hand. I have not found the Quakers that I have read about. The children seem to be taught airy-fairy "peace" things but no history of Quakers, biographies or anything about God, Scripture or Jesus. So, it feels as if the non-theists are in the ascendancy or no one wants to offend them, so nothing happens.

Quaker worship appeals for its lack of institutional structure and boundaries, therefore I am happy simply being a friend

References to belief in Christ as son of God. I could accept the teachings of Christ.

Sense that dedicated membership requires a time commitment that would be difficult when spouse is not involved.

Some reservations about the Peace testimony. Unsure if I want to be a member.

STILL AN ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE UNITING CHURCH

Still learning, not fully committed Uneasy about the emphasis on pacifism - too idealistic

Still wanting to learn more.

Take membership seriously and not yet ready

The Quaker decision-making processes depress me and, I think, suppress action for social justice. Of course I admire their commitment to total participation and consensus but they seem to use this to the exclusion of the radical action, which characterises Quaker history. I find meetings oppressive and time wasting. Please forgive me for my frankness here but we don't have time on this planet for speaking on minor issues of procedure when there are other matters, which should obviously be prioritised.

Time Not sure it is necessary Still attend other Christian church

Too unwell

Uncertainty that it makes any difference!

Uncertainty on questions of violence ie thou shall not kill. Family background in armed service is a counter point to personal resolution of this.

Unwilling to commit to any religious group

Waiting for the right time

What I see in meeting is far too "New Age" and doesn't resemble what I have read.

Working on it! :)

Appendix 6. Reasons for resigning from Membership (n=13)

Conflict within meeting I was not able to handle successfully. I needed out to stay sane.

Disillusioned with aspects of Meeting in NZ

I am actually pretty close to resigning for two reasons. I find that the Meeting has become so small that there are those who are eager to exploit the Regional Meeting for their own power plays insisting on dogmatic and doctrinal conformity. Frequently these people who have captured positions of power in the Administration resort when challenged to having been "led by the Spirit" to some fairly false existential positions. These same people can engage in some cheap shots and verbal power play that is hurtful and quite unnecessary and frankly quite unQuakerly.

I could not abide the hypocrisy of Friends, the unfriendliest of people I was so belatedly coming to understand.

I didn't resign; I just left Jakarta on retirement. Perhaps I wasn't actually a Member there - it was all pretty informal, as the Indonesian government only allowed five religions!.

I never took part in Business Meetings but felt that as a member I should; also, I found the concept of 'God' less and less helpful and that didn't fit with the 'Religious' in Religious Society of Friends.

I resigned the first time because I found the Quaker community cold and unfriendly, at the Meeting I then attended.

Lapsed member, too lazy and ill

Mainly that I shifted a distance from the XXXX Quaker House

May resign due to lack of pastoral concern or support for members

My Quaker beliefs did not line up with those of my Regional Meeting. I would have liked to remain a Member, but could not, in the spirit of Integrity, support the direction in which my Meeting seemed to be going. I still attend Meeting when away from my home State. I still try to live the Quaker Way, I still worship individually, and I still believe in Quakerism as the best expression of spirituality and Faith.

My Quaker Meeting no longer puts God as the important 'Person'; they don't teach anything except that 'anything goes'. Not good enough

Not being taken seriously by members feeling like a refusal of the members to let me participate

Appendix 7. Additional comments on Meeting for Worship for Business (n=76)

... but I'm not sure this is how the MfWfB I've attended are conducted, really.

...for this group on this issue at this time. This includes listening and being open to the input from others present.

"Seeking the sense of the meeting" at its best - overly bureaucratic and circular at its worst.

A bit too formal, structured and assumptive in its own way for me. Some people seem to have more power and influence than they should (in my opinion).

A brilliant process when in right ordering. One of our greatest assets

A good idea seems a tad trite. The Quaker business method seems to be a truly democratic process and a true desire to seek the will of God (although I am still tenuous in my belief that God 'interferes' in the business of human kind.

A lot of time to find the correct word

A still revolutionary concept. A sophisticated method for helping groups to make decisions.

An experiment each time with the possibility of more than consensus in reaching a decision

And sometimes putting off a good idea because it is too hard/ radical

Answering to that of God in myself and others

Being open to leadings and allowing time for this to happen.

Better than other ways of deciding

Broadening my concept of a topic through an active process of encompassing the view of others into my understanding

But I have never developed the patience required to be an effective in monthly meetings.

But sometimes a vote could be a good idea

Difficult

Discernment - the will of God is sometimes very difficult to discern, and may be different from the majority view in a Meeting.

Doing business in a respectful way, seeing decisions as a part of spiritual life and service.

Encouraging even self-doubting people to speak their truth and be heard. I know it's not actually consensus, but I like the attempt to find consensus and the flexibility NOT to find it!

Expression of all the Quaker testimonies in practice

Finding solutions beyond the capacities of human individuals or groups

Frustrated that some (rare but important) circumstances call for an adjusted approach e.g. buying property. Meetings lack expertise and are low on knowledge but high on process adherence and personal bias with little regard for the cost of time in matters of finance.

Have long experience of church meetings seeking the will of God, believing they have, then within a few years finding God, or the Spirit, has changed its mind - which maybe it has done!

Holding people or situations in the Light as the Meeting seeks the way forward

I am afraid I like the ideal but do not know if it works in reality as do not have enough experience

I am still a little unclear of Quaker business method.

I could not answer the previous question. Most of the time it works beautifully, but sometimes it enables 1 or 2 people to hold up the resolution of issues. Sometimes this may be because they have areal insight into a better way, but at times it seems to be motivated by lack of insight.

I do not attend MfWfB regularly. I find the process frustrating, especially as I find it is not, despite claims, spirit driven.

I do not trust the spiritual discernment of my Meeting! It seems to me that we generally find and follow the spirit of Niceness and not that of Truth!!!

I do sense a deeper level in decision making (not all the time!) which some would describe as the 'will of God' emerging - something bigger than just a consensus.

I don't like the word 'God'. I am seeking spiritual guidance.

I don't understand the Quaker "business method"

I guess 'consensus' means unity. I didn't tick it because 'consensus' is a word I usually hear outside Friends, but if it means unity here, then I should have ticked it too.

I have experienced a few meetings where information was shared so that everyone knew what was being decided and had what they needed to make an informed decision. Then the silence was held to seek God's will. A few people spoke into the silence. They spoke for me. A decision was made that felt appropriate and satisfying. I felt to be an active decision maker without having said anything. I felt glad and able to support the decision and those who would actively follow it through. That is the ideal in Quaker Business Method. I have seen a limited amount of this occurring. My first and clearest experience was at YM 1996.

I have never attended a Quaker business meeting, so I cannot comment

I have no idea

I have not attended any business meetings. My hearing is reduced, so cannot efficiently participate if I wanted to do so.

I haven't participated in this yet.

I like that we can recognise that we are "not in unity" and lay a matter down for a later time, when way forward may become apparent. I have been present when this process has not been followed and the matter felt rushed and not in right ordering, and I feel that we will come to see that by departing from our business method we have betrayed ourselves.

I think that the Quaker Business Meetings can be manipulated to get the outcome that strong wills in the Meeting want. Too often silence by those present is taken as assent to what is being proposed. I no longer attend MfWfB for that reason.

I think that there is a difference in the theory of how we make decisions and the practice of that. I think that sometimes it is the view of an influential person or group. Sometimes it is 'how things have always been done'. Sometimes it is a process of distrust. Sometimes it is about the views of whoever shows up on the day, I am not entirely happy or settled with how we make decisions.

I think the method often gives a false result. There is insufficient waiting on the will of God.

I wish it were still so!

I wish this process could be incorporated into our State and Federal parliaments!

I would like to say seeking the will of God but I have not clearly found that to be the case

I've just read an article in which it is called 'collective intelligence'. To me that involves careful and respectful listening and a real and genuine attempt to access a wisdom which is more profound than any of us would have achieved individually - or by other processes.

It can be infuriatingly slow and I often get impatient with it

It seems to me to be a respectful and honourable way of working

Moving towards 'common ground' without 'giving ground' on matters of principle

Not sure

Not sure how to answer the previous question. It is an important reason for NOT becoming a member.

Obviously I've ticked the appropriate response, but I think it is an inefficient way to get things done.

Opening to being led. Listening carefully to everyone. Enjoying everyone there. Being practical too.

Participation of every one present.

Quite annoying and frustrating when one person who doesn't really understand a situation can affect the decision-making.

Re: question 21 the process is sometimes convoluted and members lobby behind the scenes.

Ridiculous. Imagine any other org or govt entity that would allow, "That name would not occur to me" to have an effect. And so forth. RIDICULOUS.

See above

Seeking corporate expression of Quaker values and testimonies

Seeking the leading of the spirit. Knowing the will of God is a device used by rogues

Seeking the way forward that brings a deep sense of rightness into the meeting. Finding our Spirit led path.

Seeking the will of God through the gathered business meeting. Therefore, for me, that includes listening carefully to others as they speak to make sure I am open to the sense of the meeting, as they are also seeking the way of God.

Seeking the will of the "Light" underlies (or I think should) both seeking the sense of the meeting + the process of trust involved in the decision making process.

Seeking unity in the Spirit.

Taking time- regardless of external pressures

The Clerk of the Meeting is not bound to accede to a minute of a determined individual or faction whose sole goal is to alter the long established conventions and protocols which define Quaker process

The feeling of 'can I support others when their way is not mine?'

The litmus test of all our testimonies...can we live in peace as a community, following God's guidance, or are we merely individuals negotiating for our own interests?

The phrase 'will of God' is not one I would choose to use, but I think in MfWfB we are seeking solutions that are more than 'the sense of the meeting'. At its best it is a creative process that seeks the truth of this particular situation. The solution may come to one or more of us from some meta like source - spirit? Early Quakers did not hesitate to call it the will of God. Today that description does not fit with me.

This is hilarious. Quakers have absolutely no business sense!

To look for the right decision based on ethics, knowledge, love, compassion, good sense and previous experience guided by That Which Is, (or all the other names you want to give to the Light, Spirit and God)

Well, it certainly isn't the fast method! My growing belief is that in the long run it very likely is overall the very best way to conduct business. I say 'likely' because I've not been in any such meetings where things got really challenging.

What is "seeking the will of God"? I assume it to be my attempt to discern "what I believe will be for the good of mankind (in the widest sense, incl. ecologically, etc.)"

When speaking to others about Friends, it is most often my choice to describe to them how wonderful Meetings for Worship for Business are. I also like the anecdote about a London YM in which it seems that everyone had an opinion and a hand up, Then after the clerk divined whom to ask to speak, there was a period of silence and no one else wanted to speak.

Working towards Unity

Appendix 8. Additional comments on what Friends do in Meeting for Worship (n=78)

-- Discerning whether I am being called to give vocal Ministry ... -- Wallowing in a sense of awe & wonder ... -- Recalling past Friends & events ... -- Thinking about what "non-vocal Ministry" I may be called to (e.g. looking after children, turning the heater up or down, etc.) ...

'Being' rather than 'doing'

(I will admit to nodding off occasionally when arthritis has negatively affected my sleep the night before!). I often mentally chant 'om nama shivaya' as I learnt to do with a daughter who is a Siddha Yoga devotee, this helps to keep my thoughts from straying in banal directions.

Asking for divine support

Asking questions about what I should do within my life and looking for answers.

Awareness

Being calm and accepting myself in the present moment, and in the presence of others doing similar

Being distracted and trying to center down

Being mindful - more casually than during meditation

Being open to the leadings of the Spirit To sit and immerse myself in the Spirit.

Being present with others

Being still

Being still

Being still and enjoy the peace

Centering

Centering Down. Trying to put aside all thoughts, hoping that one day I might receive a messages

Contemplate ethical practice

Contemplating the view of Mount Wellington and all that it implies about ourselves--humbling, exhilarating, and also what it tells us about the ongoing creation of the earth, both in terms of organic and inorganic transformation, and our place within that spectrum.

Daydreaming

Despairing about the world and why everyone isn't a Quaker

Different proportions of each - sometimes wish there was a bit more verbal praising

Drawing

Due to ill health have been unable to attend for nearly 2 years. Answers apply for period before that.

Emptying myself to be more open to the spirit

Enjoying the company of silence amongst others Reflecting on things that matter to me Allowing the stillness in

Enjoying the silence , have a group of mates who aren't right wing nuts, having friends who don't have requirements or demands of me, other than I have none of them.

Finding what is spirit led. What I am to do.

Holding friends (both Friends and Friends who are in ill health in the light

Holding members of the Meeting in the Light

Holding needy friends/family in the Light

Holding others present in the Light or sending Light to others not present

Hoping to experience one or more of the above.

I am not a regular attender; the categories do not apply to me. (Sleeping's a nice category!)

I confess to the odd snooze

I feel that if my mind wanders and I start thinking actively about other things it somehow distracts from everyone's experience of corporate worship even though no-one else can know.

I feel that many of the options above include each other ie meditating is a form of prayer which in turn is seeking God's will etc.,

I have not attended a MfW in over a year. The reason is that I find my worship (listening) and prayer (Lectio Divino) are too disturbed by doing so. I worship and pray in forests - where I feel Godde much more closely!

I have not found a particular mode of being, but have used meeting in a variety of ways according to what

seems the right response for me, where I am, at the time

I have to settle and get rid of thoughts and needs for day to day life before opening to the spirit and waiting for anything to come through. I usually need to close my eyes and take off my glasses.

I often quietly read parts of "this we can say"

I only slept once in a Quaker meeting - but since I was suffering from insomnia at the time it made me

I try not to think too much: I seek a communion with God which is beyond thinking and conceptualizing.

I try not to think, but find myself doing that in meetings. So one of my main tasks is attempting to manage my chattering mind.

I try to avoid the word God and similar vagueness

I try to get to a place where I am able to trust God with everything and just Be.

I try to wait upon the Lord and empty my mind in order to listen.

I used to cultivate an inner stillness that would allow me to be open to any communication from God. I now no longer attend because clearly, that's not what the others were doing. There was no guidance or common goal on this, and nothing on the subject taught. Consequently, 'ministry' as banal, to say the least.

If people come into my mind I hold an image of them in the light. I envisage the light coming from above and embracing all in the meeting

Inspecting the floor and items below waist height Trying NOT to sleep Have not ticked Praising as I do mostly Gratitude

It depends from meeting to meeting

It is very silent for most of the meeting, whereas I would like some small lecture or topic of discussion; although there is a local group that meet for such discussions, I have somehow missed out on those and was away when they commenced

Less "seeking" than being open to... union with the Divine, God's will etc

Letting go and letting God

Looking after my child!

Looking for God within

Making friendship bracelets

Mind-wandering!

Mindfulness and being grateful.

Mindfulness, letting go, grounding, opening, refreshing.

My belief in God is somewhat ambivalent - sometimes I am full of belief, sometimes not. I try to find a God in Meetings. Sometimes, in the peace and beauty of the 'forest' outside, I feel myself nodding off and have to give myself a bit of a shake.

N/a. I no longer attend meetings for worship.

Not sure if my definitions of above are the same as yours - doesn't matter really

Putting words to it feels slightly odd. These are approximations.

Quite a challenge for me not to fall asleep.

Reading Australian Friend and others in meeting house

Reading Bible

Reading when the meditation is not happening.

Relaxing, physically, and encouraging feelings of cheerfulness to emerge

Seeking a sense of the presence of God. Holding people or situations in the Light

Settling, towards the end of the time I often ask if there is anything that the spirit would like shared, I listen and respond if something comes up.

Sometimes I'm so tired I drift off, but I try to find ways not to do this.

Sorting out my present plan of action: in my life, work, family and friends. A welcome breathing space for me alone to clarify my thoughts and calm down. To mourn, to say goodbye, to rejoice and to be amused by recollections.

Submission in the presence of God

Talking with God

These I did while attending

This is a hard Question! I value the silence of being together with others

Visualizations of a spiritual nature, eg colours, beautiful objects

Wondering about the existence of god

Appendix 9. Main factor that keeps you coming to Meeting (n=361)

A belief that the worship time is important

A chance to chill out and just sit.

A community of spiritual people that is based around silent worship and ongoing revelation.

A deep need to come

A deep sense of awareness of the Mystery of spiritual energy, communal gathering, ministry

A desire to search for a spiritual home and to build a spiritual life into my daily, weekly, regular living.

A desire to seek God.

A feeling of a spiritual need

A feeling of community and people who care about me. Aligned values.

A feeling of community.

A likeminded spiritual community

A need for the structure of worship. And the fact that I have commitments in our meeting and would hate to let others down by drifting away

A need to belong and as a reminder of Quaker values and beliefs

A need, in me, for spiritual direction

A sense of community

A sense of being led by the Spirit and a sense of this practice being right for me at this time.

A sense of belonging to a group whose ideals I share.

A sense of community in worship

A sense of connection to the community. Returning to touch base. To be among like-minded people

A sense of connection with the. Light

A sense of gratitude

A sense of peaceful community and fellowship with like-minded people.

A time to reconnect directly with God - in a non directed way. This is essential to my wellbeing.

A wish to help to perpetuate the Quaker way for future seekers

Aligning with like-minded people

All those indicated in 20.

Allegiance over many years

Another Friend. However I do not so much come to Meetings as enjoy simple times with one or a very few others

At the moment, I haven't been for a while. Our meeting is very small - which, in one sense, can't be helped but in another, I find difficult. I am fortunate in that the Anglican parish in which I am situated has a strong interest in mysticism and this is opening up in a number of ways within this traditional parish. I am excited by that.

Attendance at MfW is part of my life, along with meditation, and my reading. Social connections are important.

Attending meeting helps me continue on my spiritual journey

Because I now live approx. 40km from the nearest mtg. I seldom attend in person.

Because it's no good when I don't

Being a part of something

Being at home

Being in a spiritual community

Being in company with fellow seekers; at the moment it is my best path to seeking the Light

Being in the community of like-minded people.

Being in the spirit of Quakers.

Being in the Spirit with others; sharing, and learning from them, and from my own experiences in meeting.

Being part of a community

Being part of a community of friends who are seeking a spiritual life
 Being part of a like minded worshipping group
 Being part of a progressive meeting with F/friends
 Being part of the community helps me maintain the feeling of being and belonging
 Being so ancient now, I don't manage to get to Meetings very often these days. But I do very much appreciate Quaker beliefs and practices. I also believe the Subud "opening" to the Spirit helps.
 Being with friends in a quiet, contemplative atmosphere
 Being with Friends with whom I feel totally accepted and cared for. Sitting in silence waiting with Friends for whatever is available. Being with Friends who share my sense of social justice.
 Being with like-minded people
 Being with others in spirit
 Being with others in the Meeting for Worship intensifies my experience of the Inner Light
 Being with others in the Spirit
 Being with others of like mind Getting a perspective on life
 Being with people sharing common values
 Believe in the Quaker philosophy and way of living
 Belonging to a community with good values.
 Belonging to a group of like minded people, social support
 Belonging to a group of people who sometimes have similar thoughts/ideas to me
 Commitment
 Commitment
 Commitment to the Society, they are my people, does me good to sit quietly for an hour (or whatever)
 Commitment, Fellowship
 Communal Worship
 Communal worship
 Communion
 Communion with God
 Communion with God and the holy spirit
 Communion with others in Spirit
 Communion with others, spirit of worship, social justice, human rights and fair play and Quaker light and peacefulness
 Community
 Community
 Community
 Community
 Community
 Community Sometimes we get close to a sacred community
 Community Spiritual nourishment
 Community, feeling of belonging. People with similar ideals and values
 Community, mindfulness, surrounding myself with others who have a belief in peace and environmental ethics
 Community. A sense of the silence.
 Companionship with like minds. Discipline of ethical issues
 Company of others
 Compulsion from the spirit
 Connecting with God, and with others who are seeking God
 Connecting with the family of Friends
 Connection and values
 Connection.

Contemplative, silent, still worship

Currently unable to due to distance.

Deep commitment to this path for a Christian life. Commitment to others in Meeting and history of belonging to this group.

Difficult to describe: feeling that this is where I am more complete, perhaps, feeling that this is Christianity practised more fully even though it is not a 'Christian' meeting. Definitely the silence and the listening.

Discipline and meeting friends

Discipline of regular periods of silence in community

Discipline of silent attending

Doubt as to my right action in the future. I am still questioning the righteousness of resignation.

Enjoy shared purpose/activity

Enjoy the silence and company of gentle people appreciate the lack of sermon or hymns

Ensuring I think and commit to Advices and Queries on a regular basis

Even though not attending regularly, I do feel very linked in and part of "something" worthwhile. When at Meeting although sometimes wondering what on earth I am doing there, I still feel very drawn in and that it is important to be a part of the whole.

Experiencing an increase in spirit in my life when I do

Family

Family and friends at Meeting. Also I enjoy sitting in on children's meeting

Feeling of community and peace

Fellowship and peace

Fellowship of 'like minded people'

Fellowship of other like minded people

Fellowship with others.

Fellowship. Time to dedicate to listening and waiting.

Friends

Friendship

Friendship and a place of peace.

Friendship and like minded people

Gathered expectant waiting

Habit and friendship with others

Habit, the fellowship with people I admire and occasional glimpses of something much deeper

Having an hour of quiet thinking and contemplation.

Hope

Hope

Hope (see above). Affection for other friends.

I always feel nourished

I am an isolated Quaker with no Meeting for Worship close

I am currently not attending regularly, but when I was attending I was deeply inspired by the vocal ministry of others at the meeting.

I am not currently attending a formal meeting. Some Sundays I hold a virtual meeting between 10am and 11am where I have meeting for worship wherever I am with any one who is meeting anywhere.

I can't feel centred anymore.

I cannot articulate a reason. I go, and I miss it when I do not go.

I do not keep coming to Meeting.

I do not keep coming to meetings

I don't anymore. I am keeping my belief that Quakerism, when properly done, is a most excellent thing, alive with another group of like-mindeds who also (for most part) don't attend the official Meeting anymore.

I don't attend Meeting any more due to distance, however plan to bring my children to their first Children's Meeting later this month (4 hours from home)

I don't attend Meeting except when visiting the UK

I don't attend nearly enough.

I don't come very often - I find it very difficult to balance family commitments with meeting.

I don't go because a Quaker meeting house is too far away. So I attend Catholic mass because I was born a Catholic and it helps fulfil my thirst for collective ritual worship.

I don't know

I enjoy having time to think about what is going on in my life. I enjoy hearing what others have to say. I enjoy being with people who believe in similar things to me. I enjoy talking to people after the meeting and being involved in activities

I enjoy the company.

I feel at home. I enjoy the sense of purposeful quiet. I appreciate the deep and thoughtful attitudes expressed by members and attenders, and the evident care for each other.

I feel at Peace and I can just focus on my spirituality and connect with like minded people

I feel led to do so

I find I can handle life better, even when the Meeting for Worship felt dry

I find it hard to explain but it gives me more depth and meaning to my life. The Quaker values have helped me be a better person particularly in the more challenging times of my life

I find m4w a deeply enriching experience. It is a kind of spiritual balm that provides a much-needed point of stillness - and connection with others.

I find strength in the community of the circle of friends, quietly meditating

I find the silence works for me. At times we have a real sense of being spoken to by God.

I find the unpredictability of Ministry and the fact that another's Ministry so often chimes in with my thoughts very helpful to my spiritual contemplation and development

I have a sense of loyalty to fellow Quakers. I appreciate the Testimonies

I have thought for various periods of my life - including one short period as a Quaker - that I could do my spiritual life alone. But I can't. So the answer seems to be that I benefit from the sharing of worship with Friends.

I haven't been able to come to meeting much since we adopted a severely disabled child, for whom we still carers. He can't attend meeting. I kept coming to meeting before that because I loved it and I was always led by the Spirit in my life.

I haven't been attending regularly for a few years

I help someone who wants to be there and could not be there unless I take them. (All the other 'Friends' are much too busy to assist a nonentity to come to MfW - they have much more important things to do, like ensuring World Peace.

I like being by myself and meditating whilst I am also with other people. I also like having something to do and somewhere to go at the weekend, which can otherwise be lonely.

I like the community; I like the discipline of not being able to do anything else for an hour but sit still - not even write.

I like the company and the feeling of peace

I like the silence and spiritual nourishment.

I love it

I love Meeting but at the moment I'm finding that my life is too busy for me to attend.

I love the shared silence and the power and learning from spoken ministry much so often speaks to my condition.

I love the silence. I also enjoy the connection with others, and gradually coming to feel that I am part of the group.

I mainly attend the vigil (in Melbourne) as my regular worship. I keep coming to continue the vigil, to help sustain the vigil community and as a self-discipline to continue my spiritual development.

I need it

I no longer attend a Meeting, as It is too difficult to attend.

I no longer attend. Our group was small and I no longer felt I was supported. I felt a need for more fellowship after my mother and best friend died close to each other.

I no longer come to Meetings.

I rarely attend

I still believe that Quaker values are worth aspiring to and enjoy the collected silence.

I think the Quaker way is a good way to live and worship.

I was going to say a sense of community - then realised it is far more than that - nourishes my soul.

I would like to experience more, and I find it refreshing

I'm prevented from coming to Meeting by geographic distance

In past years I often had the experience of a "gathered Meeting". I also welcomed the opportunity for fellowship before and after Meetings. However, for me it is more accurate to say "kept" me coming to Meeting and not "keeps".

Inner calm and peace

Intelligent and caring friends.

Interesting discussions (spiritual, theological, etc)/brief courses after Meeting.

It feeds me spiritually.

It feeds my soul and strengthens my sense of inner serenity and acceptance.

It feeds my soul. I feel great joy and love there. I am committed to the meeting and to Quakers in general.

It feels "healthy" to take the time out to do this. Also community is attractive.

It feels right for me

It has a positive impact on the state of my mental health

It helps my sense of well being

It is a community of seekers

It is an important part of my life.

It is essential nurture for my soul (here in the USA - I did not attend in Canberra because of the quality of MfW)

It is my primary community and I share that with my partner. A spiritual focus and ethical principles Friends in the community

It is part of the commitment one makes in becoming a member and it is the primary way of keeping in contact with the Meeting. It is an integral part of being the Meeting.

It is refreshing, uncomplicated and honest

It is still my spiritual home 21 years later

It is the centre of my Spiritual and social life.

It is the most appropriate place for me

It keeps me grounded

It makes me feel whole and centred

It seems to a quiet and often a sort of healing place to be

It's an important part of my spiritual life; I miss it if I don't come. Also I enjoy the community, but this is a secondary reason.

It's my community, my wider family & I love the people

Its my spiritual home

Joining with others in worship

Journey within

Keeps me connected to a spiritual dimension of life

Kinship with out small group

Like-minded people and being with them in the Spirit.

Like-minded people, good company, place of rest and focus, can be myself: no hidden agendas, re-energising, personal growth and development, opportunities to participate in new and different things, no hurry to try and understand what spirituality and faith means for me and my life, how I can be of service

Like-minded fellowship

Living overseas now so not attending. Sense of community and purpose.

Looking for inspiration for daily living helps me get through the week

Love.

LOYALTY TO FRIENDS

Makes me feel at peace, helps me cope with a hectic life, I believe in disciplines, helps me seek and find God's will on important decisions

Meditation with like-minded people

Meeting for worship lovely like minded people

Meeting regularly with people of similar beliefs and values

Meeting with a group of people who sincerely seek to understand and to promote what is ultimately good and what is ultimately true in ourselves, in others and in the world.

Meeting with others of likewise mind Inertia re resigning

Mf W grounds me and connects me to the Spirit.

My commitment to being a Quaker person.

My connection with the numinous

My father's interest, my desire to seek God's will for me and to remain open to the Spirit

My Inner Self.

My need of Quakerism. I had never thought of 'company and fellowship', probably because I am somewhat shy but I am passing through that stage now and I realise that Quakerism is indeed a 'way of life' and I appreciate the company of other Quakers.

My parents

My responsibility of being a member of a small worshipping group

My spiritual home. Although since having children, I find it difficult to attend.

Need for spiritual centring

Need for worshipping in community

Need that spiritual recharge

Need to worship with others of like mind

Not currently attending. I felt the discord between XXXX and other groups was a distraction. I believed money could have been borrowed and Friends' House used as security to continue Quaker Service and support other meetings.

Nurtured by being in contact with specific people Silent in community

Nurturing & rewarding place to be

On considering other places, there is nowhere else more advanced in spiritual thought & practice for me to go.

Parents

Peace

Peace

Peace and a feeling of being among like-minded people.

Peace and feeling of acceptance for all

Peace and harmony and the communion with like spirits

Peace and quiet, sharing with others in silence, and the discussion afterwards over tea. I am always amazed that the discussion may focus on what I have been meditating on.

Peace/stillness

Quakers relish values that I've had since childhood. Don't have to sing hymns I can't honestly sing - generally get on well with them. Like their varying openness to other ideas.

Quiet time to listen for God in community, which is the manifestation of God's Will.

Refreshments afterwards, also the need to govern my life by good habits.

Reminds me that Quakerism is important to me, and also of the spiritual foundation of my life that is all too easily lost in the busy-ness of the working week

Renewal

Renewal

Replenishment.

Revitalise my spiritual self

Seeing other friends

Seeking a sense of the presence of God

Seeking spirituality

Sense of belonging

Sense of belonging to a like-minded community

Sense of belonging to the community, even if attendance is seldom to rare

Sense of belonging, linking spirit with action, with similar people

Sense of community and the discipline to do all of the above at least weekly
 Sense of community with others in the Spirit
 Sense of community, belonging, ways of worship, and way of life
 Sense of community.
 Sense of oneness
 Sense of peace and connection.
 Sense of peace Belief in Quaker testimonies and culture
 Sense of peace. A community of principle based persons, open to each other's perspective on important matters. No dogma.
 Sense of shared communal values and opportunity to enlarge my sense of the sacred
 Sense of wellbeing, fellowship, mutual support, friendship
 Shared beliefs
 Shared commitment to a certain moral path
 Shared silence
 Sharing with other like minded individuals in the journey to live a life with meaning
 Silence
 Silence, and non judgemental attitude, no pressure
 Silence in community
 Silence in Meeting and warm welcome
 Silent communal "worship".
 Silent Worship
 Silent worship is important to me. There are some special Friendships too
 Simplicity in worship
 Spiritual communion
 Spiritual growth and development
 Spiritual journeying/ exploration of Spirit-led communality
 Spiritual need
 Spiritual nourishment
 Spiritual refreshment
 Spiritual, mental and physical refreshment. Being a part of a very special and unique community.
 Spiritual: MfW is often uplifting for me
 Spouse, other attendees
 Supporting the Meeting. The people.
 Still seeking experience of the Spirit
 That's a hard one to put into words. It feels right. Meeting keeps me centred during the week. I am a better person after meeting.
 The above - sense of the gathered Meeting - the silence - sense of deeply shared community
 The benefit of the meditation and connection with other Friends
 The chance to recharge my mind and to listen to ministry.
 The company, equality, the opportunity to meditate with others, the honesty, and the humanitarian values.
 The connection with the broader Quaker network. Working with those who share my commitments about social justice and peace (at least more so than some other groups around here).
 The discipline of giving me time in the week to stop, to wait, to allow the inner life some space
 The discipline of sitting and thinking and prioritising and praying and the lovely people I talk to at morning tea
 The discipline of trying to connect to God at least once a week
 The effect on life when I am not at meeting
 The experiences of the Meeting for Worship being a gathered one-no other situation has ever provided the same type of experience. Sadly it is less frequent in my local Meeting these days.

The Faith Community

The joy and blessing of waiting upon God in a community of "fellow seekers"

The Meeting - the silence.

The Meeting for Worship

The mystery of Quaker communal worship

The need to belong to a faith community

The occasional times when I feel a sense of joy and wholeness. The sharing of the Spirit with others in the Meeting

The opportunity to do all the above in a group of likeminded people

The peace and fellowship I receive from it.

The peace and my friends

The peaceful communion of spiritual time with others

The peaceful feeling I get.

The people

The people

The people and belonging to a like minded group

The Quaker community and Meeting provides the space for quiet inner searching and spiritual connection

The Quaker way of worship and action.

The quiet and company.

The quiet space and the community of like-minded people, the occasional inspirational and/or memorable ministry

The refreshment of worship and the feeling of community

The seeking quality of the meeting, the wisdom among members of meeting and the kind spirit of the meeting and the ability to share with like minds

The sense of being part of something bigger than myself

The sense of belonging

The sense of calm I can achieve during meeting and the fellowship with other people I consider examples to be inspired by.

The sense of coming together as a group to worship

The sense of community

The sense of community

The sense of peace and connection to the divine.

The Silence

The silence. Hope for change. Perhaps people will read the Swarthmore Lecture by Ben Pink Dandelion and maybe look at where Quakers are going.

The silent listening and joining in Spirit with other worshippers.

The silent worship

The silent worship - the simplicity - the lack of a 'formal' worship service. It seems to me that I get closer to God when I don't have to follow a ritual and do responsive reading... the silence is important to me.

The spiritual dimension of opening up to god or the spirit and being with others of the same belief.

The strong feeling of being home, companionship with like-minded souls (although we don't always agree!) - it is not a requirement to come - I am drawn and feel deprived if I don't come

The valuable insights into many things both spiritual and secular

The value of attender discussion and relative cohesiveness of the group

The variety of deep experiences and sharing that Meeting can facilitate, as described in Question 20

The Wahroonga Meeting. I feel very comfortable in the Meeting and with Friends.

The way of worship with the possibility of transforming power, and the community

Thinking

This is an extremely hard question to answer. Being a JYF and growing up within this community, Quakers, in specific other JYF's and YF's are more than friends, they are my family. I could write and have written in the past for Quaker newsletters, the connection between friendship and love and light and the importance. I believe the main factor along with this deep connection which are still maintained would be

the Quaker way of life and the values in which we believe, the fact that no matter what background you are from, your opinion is valid and is respected and is welcoming. Also that you can come to consensus without disregarding ones beliefs. I could talk for hours on this topic, but I wont. I cannot express how much Quakerism means to me, only in action.

Though we differ in opinions there is a sense of connection at a deep level

To be in the Spirit and with others of like mind. It gives me the moral strength to deal with the choices and conundrums of my existence. The Spirit speaks everywhere at any time, of course, not just in Meeting for Worship

To be in union with others seeking and waiting on the Light, to be open to the Spirit.

To be part of something greater than myself.

To be with that of God in those attending

To have connection with a tried and true spiritual group who are seekers

To Meet with others who are also engaged in a search for spiritual (and social) truths or testimonies.

To nurture my spirit

To re-charge my spirit - but I do not attend Meeting often - distances are too great and I don't like using the car too much.

To seek God together with others

To worship and be involved in faith community

Too unwell to attend in mornings

Travel/distance

Trust in Quakers, peaceful contemplation, fellowship

Value from MfW and growing sense of belonging

Valuing waiting in silence in a group

When it gathers and I am open to it

Worship together.

Worshiping in a group

Worshiping in company with a group whose values I share

Worshipping with others on a regular basis who have the same attitudes to Listening to and not talking at God.

Appendix 10. Additional comments on groups Friends feel most part of (n=79)

5 years ago I was very much part of regional Yearly and local meeting

A Worshipping Group of the Local Meeting

Any group where I find people who enjoy spiritual/theological etc discussion, from any viewpoint, but with the ability to be non judgemental.

As an Elder

AWPS, particularly Indian Friends

Bangor Meeting.

British Friends

By 'local meeting' do you mean 'Worship Meeting' (i.e. the meeting you worship at eg XXX Recognised Meeting, XXX Worshipping Group. Technically these are not Local Meetings

By "local meeting" I'm guessing you mean "the group with whom you usually worship"

Certain Friend who is very close to me.

Committees I belong to

Fellowship of Healing (AFFH)

Fellowship of healing group

Friend Peace Teams

Friends for gay and lesbian concerns,

Friends Peace Teams-Asia West Pacific All of my friends made during my time as XXXX of FWCC/AWPS
Silver Wattle-Australian Quaker Centre

Group of 3 friends meeting together monthly for mutual support

House Committee of my local meeting

House/Premises Committee

I am not certain of categories above.

I feel a part of Australian Friends although having been away from Friends and Yearly Meeting from some time, coming back again is 'coming home'.

I feel identified and connected with the Quaker community with whom I worshipped in UK.

I feel most connected to a small web of deeply faithful Friends in Australia plus a new network here in California which includes Young Adult Friends, FGC Friends and others including some from my Monthly Meeting

I have 2 Quaker mentors, my husband and a few others scattered about with whom I feel I have a Quaker link.

I was very involved with the committee that brought out 'this we can say', and a couple of other committees; and several mutual support groups..

It is happening very gradually but I am coming to understand the importance of other Friends outside of my Regional Meeting. I did attend some sessions of 2014 Yearly Meeting in Brisbane.

Living Experimentally Circle at Wahroonga - I guess that's a spiritual nurture group - and Silver Wattle Q community

Local clerks' group, local M&O, QLA committee until recently, Hearts and Minds Prepared groups

Local Quaker Peace & Justice group

M & O, QLA, Premises

Meeting for Learning alumni

Meeting for Learning retreatants monthly catch up AYM Publications Committee

Membership & Hospitality Committees -- Quaker News editorial team

Ministry & Care (previously M & O at XXX)

Ministry and Oversight Committee

Ministry and Oversight, and participants in the Monthly Vigil for Peace

Monthly QSA stall

My former RM, as I have moved interstate from where I became a member

Nominations Committee

Note- early days yet and have not experienced all on list

Other families with children

Our local meeting is regional meeting. Also in a small worship sharing group

Peace and Justice Ministry and Care previously also Children's committee

Pendle Hill, Philadelphia, USA

Permaculture group

Permaculture, gardening, handicrafts, or creativity circle if it includes writing . Also true discussion groups ,with back-and-forth talk looking at each other, with fairly equal time for all. Not Worship-Sharing and not responding to the previous speakers and looking straight ahead while you spout your point of view. What connection is there in that?

QPLC

QS committee Q. Tapestry group

Quaker Women's Lunch Ministry & Care Committee

Regional gatherings

Regular coffee mornings for members of our local worshipping group

Relationships with individual Friends; Silver Wattle

Silent Vigil for justice for the First Peoples Interfaith projects and Quakers who are involved with such groups and also with Quakers helping asylum seekers.

Silver Wattle

Silver Wattle

Silver wattle

Silver Wattle community

Silver Wattle Quaker Centre

Silver Wattle Quaker Centre community

Silver Wattle Quaker Centre community

Silver Wattle Quaker Centre, Elders, more recently Friends Fellowship of Healing participants.

Small groups

Small regional Meetings which are part of Local Meeting, but which tend to operate independently. Some committees, and some spiritual nurture groups such as my Meeting for Learning Support group, now many years ago.

The Fremantle Meeting Study group, held every other Tuesday evening.

The friends who have created the Quaker websites in the UK

The Healing group - a spiritual nurture group and a role to play which extends to every night

The ones I work with.

The people I live with.

The QLA Meeting for Learning program

The Regional Meeting Peace Committee

Those weird ones (like me) - who occasionally speak Truth to power internally - and who critically consider - and (sadly) who are too few!

Treasurers and Children's Meetings, Premises

Vigil for justice for First Peoples

We are not an official Quaker group, even though we are seeking the true (original) Quaker Way. We do it separately as our aim is not welcome in our Meeting

Werona

When able to participate more regularly, I appreciated the 'fellowship' of working together with like minded F/friends on various Social Justices issues & campaigns.

When I was living in Lismore - The meeting there.

Appendix 11. Groups that Friends feel most actively engaged with (n=126)

As a member of the Board of The Friends School

A one time I was very involved in the above - the committees were Peace and Quaker Service. I am currently attending only the Local Meeting and plan to attend Yearly Meeting Jan 2015

AFFH

AFFH

As elder, overseer, member of care and ministry team, GM organisation group, clerk, Friends House representative committee

As in 24, various study circles, Silver Wattle Quaker Centre. A/NZ YM Peace C'tee.

Australian Friend

AYM Officer

Brisbane 'Pay the Rent' Melbourne Vigil for Aborigines Interfaith activities or being a rep. on such bodies for Quakers.

Canadian Yearly Meeting

Children at local meeting JYFs at AYM

Children of the Meeting & their committee Ministry & Care Committee

Children's Interest Group (including being in charge of rosters for who is looking after children during Meeting) -- Membership & Hospitality Committees -- Quaker Newsletter wrapping team (& singing group) -
- Quaker News editorial team -- House Committee for XXX Meeting House -- Non live-in Warden -- Co-correspondent for Local Meeting

Clerk team, Ministry and Care, QLA, Thanksgiving Committee

Clerks, elders, QSA, education committee

Coffee mornings

Committees - Local Meeting and Regional Meeting: Nominations, Ministry and Care (Elders and Oversight), Outreach

Committees in preparation for Yearly Meetings over many years, Hearts and Committees for preparation of Yearly Meetings, Hearts and Minds, Quaker Basics, Child Protection, AVP, Newsletter editor, Registering Officer, Funeral Committee.

Convenor of the house committee

Council of Churches Western Australia

House Committee, DSLM Business Meeting, DSLM M&O

Earthcare committee

Editor of Quaker Journal

Facilitation Quaker Basics group

Fellowship of healing ministry and care (pastoral)

Felt quite "at home" attending M4W when overseas...ie feel like part of the worldwide community of friends whilst not actually pursuing contact. Internet is useful for this also.

Finance, Oversight, Publications. Also, Quaker-run work camps as a participant (in France & Palestine)

Friends Fellowship of Healing.

Friends Peace Teams

FWCCAWPS QUNO (Geneva)

Gay & lesbian

Have been on Epistle committees and Pastoral care Committee at YM. Backhouse lecture c'ee

Healing group, meeting for learning, house committee, ecumenical and interfaith, newsletter, and others

House and Grounds, Outreach

I do not know how to answer this question.

I have been a member for over XX years and have served in many roles such as Clerk, Public Officer, QSA Management Committee, M&O, etc.

I have been a member of Ministry, Oversight, Outreach and the Quaker Peace and Legislation Committees.

I have been to meetings in NZ & Japan.

I have had roles of Respectful Relationships and Funerals Contact Friends. As such I have met with

Pastoral Care and other members of committees.

I have not been active because of infrequent attendance at Meeting

I have served my Regional Meeting as Treasurer, and as a member of several committees including Outreach, Membership (W.A.'s version of Overseers), Nominations and Clerking Team.

I ran a workshop at Yearly meeting

I was asked to help out with the Quaker Website, which I'm responsible for.

In England, with the Leaveners, Quaker music and drama group

In Jakarta we had to be very low-key, as the Indonesian gov't only allows 5 religions: Islam, Katolik, Protestant, Hinduism and Buddhism. Quaker meetings there were thus illegal.

In the past, Nominations Committee, Outreach Committee. Ministry and Oversight.

Just did above.

Lesbian and gay group

Library committee

Library, Ministry & Oversight

Lifelines: a group from the UK, founded by Quakers but no longer purely Quaker, writing to condemned prisoner on Death Row in USA.

Local and Regional Ministry and Care. Quaker Tapestry Project. Local Meeting Nominations Committee

Librarian Newsletter editor Housekeeper

M & O, QLA, Premises

Marching for Peace

Meeting for Learning

Meeting for Stitching, PCO, Penn Friends, ex officio on other meetings.

Ministry & Care. Nominations.

Ministry and Oversight (now Care) and Nominations committees

Ministry and oversight, outreach, nominations, respectful relationships, several discussion/spiritual development groups.

Ministry and Oversight. Peace and indigenous concerns, QSA groups. QPLC

Most of them

NCCA; positions of service

Neighbours and friends who are Quakers but who do not attend meetings

Newsletter M and O co clerk

Nominations Committee

Nominations, Sanctuary, Australian Friend, Child Protection

NSW RM Nominations committee

On a recent visit I felt a deep sense of communion with New Zealand Friends.

Once I went to a course at Silver Wattle - Australian Quaker Centre.

Only briefly, I found the process of reaching a decision frankly weird, a lot of talk about discernment but in the end it was reached by a single executive choice.

Overseas study centres and meetings.

Overseer, Elder, Nominations Committee, Child Protection Committee

Oversight

Oversight, Ministry, interest group Permaculture, QSA

Pam Bye Committee for Queensland Regional Meeting

Peace and justice

Peace and justice Children

Peace Committee Nominations Committee The Friends' School

Peace Demonstrations

People I live with who are Members, but very rarely attend meetings.

Premises committee

Premises Committee Ministry and Oversight
 Property Working Group of Victoria Regional Meeting
 Property, finance, futures, YM Secretary Search, PC support group, YM outreach, YM P&SJ fund, etc etc
 QLA, Quaker quest talk
 QP&J as above
 QPLC
 QPLC and some activities related to social justice and environment.
 QSA
 QSA
 QSA management committee
 QSA, Peace & Social Justice Fund committee, YM2015 organising committee, and on a world level the QUNO New York committee.
 Quaker Learning Australia Respectful Relationships Contact Friends Assistant Clerk - RM Library
 Committee Premises Committee
 Quaker Learning Australia; Meeting for Learning
 Quaker Service
 Quaker Service Australia
 Quaker stall; QSA;
 Re JYFs as adult coordinator
 Recently, I have been asked to serve on the M & O committee at Regional Meeting.
 Retreats'
 See also answer to previous Q.24: When able to participate more regularly, I appreciated the 'fellowship' of working together with like minded F/friends on various Social Justices issues & campaigns.
 Silver Wattle
 Silver Wattle
 Silver Wattle; Liberal Indian Friends
 Silver Wattle Quaker Centre
 Silver Wattle Quaker Centre
 Silver Wattle, Woodbrooke.
 Silver Wattle; Werona; Meeting for Learning; School of the Spirit (FGC); Woodbrooke; Central Executive Committee FWCC; 5th and 6th World Conferences, 4 Triennials; 4 AWPS Gatherings; Taking the FWCC "Salt and Light" course to the USA and 3 Meetings in Australia
 Silver Wattle.
 Standing committee representative, Elder, Child Protection Friend, Children's committee, QSA committee, Retreat time at Woodbrooke in UK, Pendle Hill (brief times) Local meeting correspondent
 Study centres: Woodbrooke, Pendle Hill, Silver Wattle, Canadian YM camp & YM, FGC
 SW Quaker Centre
 Thanksgiving Committee, Publications Committee, Quaker Learning Australia committee
 The committee of QSA. The committee to produce a short list of applicants for YM Secretary.
 The Earthcare committee when it included Robert Howell
 The Thanksgiving Fund
 The vigil
 Various administrative committees
 Various in the 80s and 90s
 Various local meeting roles; treasurer, member of ministry and care. Regional role in property sale
 Women in Black
 Woodbrooke
 Working for a Quaker organization in Philadelphia, assisting the Annual Gathering of Friends
 Working party looking at committee structure. Meeting with a group several times from my LM

Appendix 12. Additional comments on roles held in Quakers (n=59)

'Hearts and Minds Prepared' leader
As member of NCCA QUNO, Geneva
AYM Secretary 2004-2011
Backhouse Lecturer Helped with the Children. Young Friends Camp organiser.
Children's convenor at local meeting JYF convenor at AYM
Children's Meeting coordinator for local meeting Children's Meeting coordinator for AYM on one occasion
Clerk of the Board of Silver Wattle Quaker Centre Convener, Advisory Committee, SWQC Many nominated, committee convener, voluntary roles in Honolulu Friends Meeting 1995-2004. Above answers apply to Australian Quakerism.
Convener, Gatherings for Wholeness (NSW) with another Friend;
Convenor Oversight, delegate to QSA, Hospitality
Correspondent for local group
Delegate to Safe as Churches? Conference. Elders committee for Silver Wattle Quaker Centre
Elder, overseer, nominations, School Board, Quaker Service, etc.
Friend responsible for communications within the Regional Meeting
Friends School Board
Have contributed to some local actions, painting a sign for a peace vigil, organising vigils for asylum seekers.
Helping edit 'this we can say' for Australian Quakers
I did speak at and run a group at a Yearly Meeting two meetings ago
I have been Clerk, Treasurer, and Librarian and on both M and O committees. Also other committees and groups, and fund-raising.
I have recently accepted a nomination to be on the clerking team for NSW RM in 2015.
I organise the Readings Roster
I organise the small local Worshipping Group which is why I have ticked the top box in 'local'
I participated in an AYM group who prepared over a number of years, details of our commitment to gay marriage. We prepared a change to the handbook to reflect what was ultimately agreed as the AYM position in relation to gay marriage.
I was employed by QSA as their administrator. I served as Friend in Residence at Woodbrooke in XXXX. I serve as a member of the National Commission for ACT for Peace (NCCA) and as a member of the QUNO New York committee
I've been heavily involved in past years in many areas.
In the past - Children's committee member and convener. Nominations Committee. Overseer and Elder (one or the other for continuous 19 years). Respectful Relations Contact friend. Current - Child Protection Contact Friend. Also on the AYM Child Protection Committee.
Indigenous Concerns Committee, Morrow Bequest
Inter-GM group to resolve issues arising from abuse at a summer school
It support at national and voluntarily at regional level.
Local Mtg ,Elder, Regional Nominations, VRM Peace and Social Justice C'tee.
Marriage Celebrant, Discussion Group Leader, National Council o Churches in Australia
Member of Earthcare
Member of Hobart group Premises committee
Ministry & Care - a valuable role and one I value as being vital to our way of being, and our community
Nametags
NCCA and NSW Ecumenical Council
Newsletter editor
Outreach and links with Prisoners Aid and Canberra Interfaith Forum
Peer support committee at AYM one year, YF representative in New Zealand and England for the WGYF

planning event, education (person? I don't think I had a title) for the Silver Wattle project.

Produced Dovetalk on 2XX for 18 years

QSA management committee

Regional in this case refers to Young Friends - I was YF Clerk (Coordinator), YF Nominations committee member, member of YM committees as YF representative etc.

Representative on Tasmanian Council of Churches

Represented my RM and YM in Ecumenical bodies.

Responsible for a midweek Meeting.

RM correspondent QPLC LM doorkeeper, neighbourly relations meetings re shared premises

RM Elder, YM Nominations

Secretary of the Peace Tax Campaign AUP in prisons

Signatory to bank account

Silver Wattle librarian.

Sorry, I have never been in a position to hold any office.

The distance to travel to meeting is difficult

This reminds me: I was asked to consider becoming an Elder and joining the Local Meeting's Oversight Committee when at the time I had NOT YET become a Member; ... my Local Meeting had assumed that I had been whilst in reality only an Attender for some years in Canberra? It triggered my becoming a Member - see also my early answer about my moving interstate resulting . . . ?

Very briefly. I have also led workshops and played a key role for a while with YFs which is not captured by formal role titles.

Volunteer at the Quaker stall

We don't really have committees here in Alice. We are a small group and discuss whatever issues arise and each take on whatever we are able to.

While the Quaker Powers that Be were more than happy for me to be the Ed of a newsletter for several years, when my name was put fwd for say, being part of M and O, they quashed it with those words - see above #23. Good thing being a Quaker professional was never my calling! As for the next question, I was a significant financial contributor to the Society for about 20 years at which time I finally saw the Light.

Years ago I was editor of The Australian Friend, on the Peace and Social Justice Committee in Melbourne regional Meeting and on QSCA as it was then. Locally, I was active in the Children's Meeting in the late 60's and 70's.

YM Peace Worker,. QOV (FSC)

Appendix 13. Additional comments on aspects of spiritual awareness (n=61)

A meditation practice that I have discovered through Brahma Kumaris but which is not following that or any other path.

A strong belief that Jesus of Nazareth is God, Yahweh, incarnate.

ALL THAT IS

An inward voice

And I like Sarah Bachelard's arguments in her recent book, Resurrection and the Moral Imagination, that Goodness and abstract ideas are made more powerful by stories from the religious traditions.

Appreciation of beauty, for me especially in the bush and plants in general.

Beauty

Community

Compassion

Compassion, grace

Delight; Freedom; Flowing

Depends on how God is defined

Despite my ambiguity in the belief of God I am still seeking. I hope to transcend my very human existence by nurturing all the mentioned aspects of spiritual awareness until I am a decent and kind human being. (also, in a light hearted vein, I wouldn't mind being a bit more practical than I am).

Divine Grace.....

Divine Light the work of Catherine Ponder and Ernest Holmes

Don't know

Fellowship Mutual-caring Community

Finding God through within people, and bible study.

Following your conscience

Freedom, Respect for life, Peace

Friendships

God as ticked relates to my understanding - Divine energy of all that is

I am an atheist

I am not comfortable with the word "God", with "Lord" Jesus and all the baggage that accompanies those terms.

I avoid the term God as it has been so abused by people. And what I experience that I think people call god is beyond the ability of words to describe. It is beyond words, literally, so I don't try to use them.

I do not believe in "God" but I do believe in the inherent goodness of humans. At this time I believe that there are far too many forces in the community that militate against humans expressing that inherent goodness. This is through competition for personal power, for possessions through a drive in many people to amass even the most petty of power to themselves and in a social drive to demean and diminish others in order to make oneself look good.

I do not understand Q.30 (define spirituality) and I do not understand this one either. I am more Christian than anything else, because that is my background. I am more Quaker than any other Christian group because I appreciate the lack of dogma, and the lack of ritual and practice.

I don't know if there is a God as taught a Sunday School. I have been hung up by this in the past. Friends allow me to believe and I have found that whether it is God, Spirit or something else it doesn't matter now.

I have not marked 30. Why? Something about this word 'spiritual' gets up my nose. At the very least it is over used. I do believe all humans are mystics. But spiritual sounds as if we are sprouting wings...trying to be angels.. we are incarnated...infleshed human beings, I prefer terms like 'inner life'...'interior life' at least then we sound more of a unit...now I have tried and failed in avoiding this word 'spiritual' on many occasions but I think it should be used with care and qualification.

I KNOW (rather than believe in) deep spiritual processes that bring me to a still centre that I find holy. In that state, I've known "given" moments of bliss that leave me thinking, "This is what life is for, this is what life is, this is that than which no more need be said!" Beauty, insight, meaning, tenderness, reassurance, love, calm, joy, compassion, creativity, courage flow through me and the world – as I allow myself to be transformed by God, Spirit, Higher Self, Ultimate Reality.

I steer clear of ambiguous words. Hobbes: The light of humane minds is perspicuous words, first snuffed of ambiguity. The opposite is sedition, confusion, and contempt.

I'm a hardcore naturalist / scientist / humanist, and would argue that 'there is no transcendent being or reality to which religious languages and practices refer, and that the source of religious meaning and value lies in us, human beings' (Nuyen) - which is not to say that I do not acknowledge the value of spiritual awareness or practice to the individual or community.

Immanence incarnation

It's hard for me to know whether or not to tick "GOD" - as it is such an indescribable concept.

Jesus.

Kenosis, the self emptying of Jesus, Contemplation. Nonviolence. Speaking truth to power. Incarnation. Mutual ministry.

Like very much the term Unknown Presence

My "true religion" (in the sense of the Latin "religio") is modern Representative democracy within single-member electorates (proportional representation is anathema to me) involving a government and a strong and encouraged alternative government. Life is NOT about good vs evil but instead about discerning between differing VALID ways of planning for the future. The things which unite us are FAR GREATER than the things which divide us. Most people agree about most things most of the time (which is why democracy works). Quaker Business Meeting practices dovetail beautifully with Parliamentary practices.

My spiritual growth greatly affected by education and experience as a research scientist

Mystery. Confusion and paradox. A range of metaphors, eg deep pool of clear water.

Mystic heritage

Mysticism, faith, accepting the discipline of the Meeting, connection with nature

Nature

Nature and music are important spiritual spaces for me.

Openness, patience, peace, firm foundations, a sense of confidence, justness and justice.

Peace, joy.

PRAYER is very important to me, inward prayer. Thy Will, not mine, O Lord. I believe it is effective, personally, publicly, nationally, even internationally. I think we all ought to pray a lot more - for Peace, for example...

Probably the greatest thing in my seventy years was a series of significant spiritual events beginning in 1995 relating to the Eagle. There is a passage in Deuteronomy - really, the only passage in the whole Bible - which equates God as an Eagle. Over time, the Eagle became a dominating factor in spiritual life and remains so. Quite subtly and unwittingly, it has led to me living in Victoria in the land of the Kulin Nation whose Creator Spirit is Bunjil the Eagle. So in this sense my spiritual life has gained a totemic element.

Sense of the presence of God

That is a pretty good summary- but forgiveness needs to be there- of myself and others

That of God in self and others

The Christ

The concept of infinite potentials

The notion and example of Jesus Christ as The Son of Man

The order of the natural world

They all are laden with spiritual meaning. I went through years of not wanting to use the word God. I even rewrote A&Qs replacing God with another suitable word. I then decided, especially if using early Quaker and other writings for wisdom, it is necessary to develop an understanding of God. I have done this, and find a strong connection with the Christian mystics of God, as

This reminds me of Ben Pink Dandelion's Ph.D. questionnaire with the question "Do you believe in God ?" having to be modified by a wide range of descriptors. To me words are inadequate to answer that question, but I will answer yes to the next question to save lengthy explanations.

Trust

Trust/faith

Using science to realistically understand our inner selves

Wonder and awe when I consider the beauty of the world

Appendix 14. Reason why unable to answer about belief in God (n=57)

Also wanted to tick 'I do not use the word "God" - too laden with human meanings to do with a higher authority sued to justify all sorts of folly and wickedness, and also it does not carry for me the sense of the numinous in all of the universe and its diverse life.

An imagined figure

God can have various meanings eg creator, messiah, ultimate wisdom, judge

God is a mystery. I have no sense of a personal God. There are so many conflicting views and there is no objective proof of "God". And yet there is something deep inside of me that believes in a purpose and creative force that underpins all existence.

God is somewhat indefinable to me, beyond words.

I am not wholly convinced one way or the other if there is God.

I am willing to use the word God, though I do not mean a divine "person."

I certainly have experienced a beneficent healing energy

I do not believe in a God, interventionist or otherwise, or creator of the universe(s?) or not, but I do believe in a spiritual existence, beyond our physical existence. I'm finding all this discussion about atheism, non-theism etc. imprecise, difficult and rather meaningless without some definitions.

I do not believe in an objectified god figure. Life force, yes, or whatever

I do not claim to know all things

I do not use the word God as it means so many different things to others, and that causes misunderstanding.

I do say "god" - as shorthand for what I believe and am unsure of.

I don't believe in a 'supreme being,' and I think the term 'God' is laden with objectionable connotations (to which some people continue to subscribe) that cannot be expunged. Hence I decline to use it.

I don't know what I believe; but I do know what I don't believe, and that includes most things in the three creeds in the Book of Common Prayer.

I don't think it's important to me to define god. I feel certain ways at times but don't want to say there is or isn't, as I don't feel worse of or threatened either way.

I don't use the word because it does not communicate without clarification. There is no question in this questionnaire here that I feel is written for those who like me believe in an ultimate spiritual reality that others might call God but I don't for the reason given.

I don't use the word God as it usually means to people the male God the one who expects women to be less equal and subservient

I don't believe in A God. I believe in my god or guiding spirit

I experience "spirit" or the "spiritual dimension" of life, as I experience the physical, the intellectual, and the emotional dimensions. It is not a matter of Belief. "God" is just a word to label what is unknowable with our heads, but knowable in our "hearts." But it might as well be "turtles all the way." Our attempts at explanation or naming are equally simplistic. However to help simple me to talk about what I experience, what I mean, I do use many of the words above (eg all in Qn 34, except "holy")

I find a lot of God talk and Christocentric words unhelpful.

I find Q 36 irrelevant. I seek the promptings of love and truth in my heart when making decisions.

I find the notion of God neither helpful nor necessary

I find the term God to be unhelpful. It means so many different things - some of them quite distasteful.

I have a problem with "believe" in God. Belief is for me a weasel word just as is faith

I have moments when it seems convenient to believe in God. I allow myself this, without judging myself.

I look for evidence and see a little evidence for these things and for denying them

I recognise that there are positive and negatives at work in the cosmos. I recognise good and evil. I think one can seek what is good but "that which is more" cannot be confined within deity. It is beyond comprehension and while inclusive I doubt it is personal. I think it is possible I, and we, may be mistaken.

I seldom use the term unless I can explain or qualify, OR that I feel I know confidently what those to whom I am speaking, will understand what I'm trying to convey by the term God?

I sometimes call upon God even though I'm not a theist. Maybe I'm just hoping that God is there. Any port in a storm?

I think it is part of a human's thinking to be able to blame/rely on someone stronger/cleverer than that human eg a

child relies on his/her caregiver to protect him/her and for the caregiver to encourage the child to experience the wonder of his/her environment.

I think that faith, prayer and God are anthropomorphic concepts which have been generated to make sense of what is ultimately inexplicable

I think that God is a creation and a concept by human beings to make sense of the limits of our understanding of our own life and the world around us

I use the word God to mean healing loving embracing light

I used to use the word God but now find that I can't - I do feel that there is a greater Spirit and I do find some worship/places/ experiences 'sacred' - but can't any longer believe in "God" as such. What on earth does this mean? Until I can answer that I can't use the word. Having said that I do listen to a deeper inner guidance/the light and try to live by that: but is that God? I don't know

I'm not sure there is anything universal until I am in Meeting for Worship and feel the settled Meeting or in a special place and feel the eternal

Idea of God to vast to take in but worth searching for

If I "believe" I close my mind. And so I deliberately remain open, as much as I can, in order to be clearly unbiased.

If we use the word Spirit instead of God (which has become a corrupted and bureaucratized term of exclusion) it all worked in Q 34 to describe me

My atheist upbringing and deep dislike of church dogma, control and hypocrisy has left me uncomfortable with the word God. At the same time, I have a deep longing to connect with the deep, wise, loving force that I sense is present within us all. Therefore when I hear or use the word God, I try to envisage it in this way.

My concept of a god is more than a single entity, perhaps spirit, universal life-force, what-is-right, my smile-in-the-sky

My concept of a god is that such a being is beyond knowing; the virtues are the important aspects

Nor do I use the word God.

Not often do I use it. 'Spirit' sits more comfortably with me: such as the Spirit of Life, Life inner energy.

Not the least bit interested in the notion of believing. As Arnold Bennett said: there is no virtue in believing. There is only experience, and that is for the good of the world, not to bash other people with and try to force them to think the same as me.

Please define your terms

Please see above.

Please see my answer to Question 31.

The concept of god, to my mind is clearly made up to keep confusing the credulous, keep social order, and allow cruelty and greed to be justified.

The evidence of what God is and what he/she does is not available. Acknowledging God is a matter of faith

The problem for me is the term 'believe in'. I experience something mysterious at times, but I don't find the term 'God' very useful for that.....it has such anthropomorphic overtones, and I know that knowledge about the psychology of religion would suggest that such experience is rationally explicable. However, I experience a sense of the numinous at times, which I ignored for 10 years from about ages 24-34. I feel more authentically me when I acknowledge it.

The term God is used in reference to a wide range of spiritual beliefs and deities.

The word "God" has limiting connotations

The word gets in the way of my experience

The word God means something different to everyone I prefer not to use the word at all

Thinking of God or no God - impossible (for us) concepts of nothing, infinity, eternity But evolution - wanting to survive - suggest purpose, therefore The Purpose Giver

Too complex and changing to deal with in a survey

Appendix 15. Additional comments on terms that describe God (n=49)

A guiding presence within each person

All these things and more can be attributable to the Infinite. However God for me is a definite objective infinite existence not just subjective feelings though I acknowledge that it is only through subjectivity it can be experienced. God is ALL and beyond ALL.

Among Australian Friends I often feel as though I'm not permitted to speak plainly about my faith, as I will offend someone.

An energy, a divine Energy. The Spirit. (Not "A" Spirit.) Consciousness. The Absolute. Eternal. Infinite. And therefore, it seems to me, ultimately Unknowable!- except as an experience, as a gentle vibration in one's body and a nudging to do the Right thing.

An outer energy or light connecting with my inner light and inner light of others

As you will see, I answered this question when I shouldn't have, given my answer to question 32. The problem for me is the term 'believe in'. I experience something mysterious at times, but I don't find the term 'God' very useful for that - it has such anthropomorphic overtones, and I know that knowledge about the psychology of religion would suggest that such experience is rationally explicable. However, I experience a sense of the numinous at times, which I ignored for 10 years from about ages 24-34. I feel more me when I acknowledge it.

Beyond description or human understanding, not adequately captured by any one religion or form of spirituality. A combination of scientific and spiritual knowledge.

Divine Light, omniscient, natural laws, law of attraction, what you think about you bring about, gratitude, freedom giver Divine Knowledge, kingdom of God, Heavenly Kingdom, heaven, brilliance Creative Design Divine Design

For me, God is all that I know and all that I don't know

God is a 'verb' as Bill Oats said. It is an action not a thing.

God is best experienced, not described. Poetry and song are best, if words are needed. But the word attracts so many meanings and I am very aware of the tendency to anthropomorphise it.

Goodness

Ground of our being

Humans do make up our understanding of God and so human contracts are limited and Good is not limited. Divine Spirit. I am aware of the Divine Spirit. Belief is not knowing - knowing is certainty

I am a panentheist, finding that God is a spirit, and in everything. It is a spirit of love and peace, kindness, understanding. It reaches everywhere.

I believe in a God, but a god of all things, I do and I don't hard to answer. It changes, I believe in inward light and a spirit, which moves us and can take form or be described as God. I believe in god, or a godly figure, but not necessarily, the story and the bible and gospel so forth, yes and no

I believe in the Trinity so God the Father (of the Old Testament) and Christ the Son of God (New Testament) and the Holy Spirit

I do not use the word God..... I use Divine Grace.....

I think the human imagination is a sacred gift. I use it to imagine God and I apologise to Him that I know he's not really like a person or anything I can really understand but that I appreciate the opportunity to come close to the way the universe works via my imaginary Friend. I don't really think the verb 'believe' is useful or possible to define and I don't think we should use it any more because of the obvious problems it brings us! I think we should be humble enough to say we know we imagine numinous things so that we can live better. We need to live as if there is a transcendent being or existence in order to sustain our hope.

I think there's supposed to be an instruction to skip the next couple of questions here.

In answer to question 33

In human form I do not think we will every fully understand although science might help with quantum physics partly explaining some of the phenomenon. I am biblical so far as believing God gave up direct intercessions and gave us free will to make huge mistakes and bear the consequences and its nothing to do with all powerful God, however I leave details as a mystery

In the crude sense each of us is a cell in the body, where the body is God.

Inscrutable in terms of intellectual processes

Love, yes, but a bigger love than we understand.

Not a person! See answer to Q35 - the above reflects my own "definition" (insight)

Not always there, sometimes out for a cup of tea, sometimes finds me boring and goes to sleep on me
Of course a human construct built from our own and others' experience - we cannot expect to be Tillich's
'the ground of our being' and process theology in general makes sense to me.

Often these and other things intersect with a human construct, as otherwise they seem unfathomable and
difficult to grasp. Mostly for me it is God that is beyond comprehension but is eternal and love and
can therefore be trusted even when things feel wobbly or difficult or dangerous.

Probably all these. Something so much greater than we can imagine but we can contact part of this and
also feel connected by it at times.

Reality. Life

See previous reference to God as Eagle - a wedge-tailed eagle, BTW.

Sorry, you've turned the question inside out and upside down: before asking someone if they believe in
'God' you have to agree what you mean!

Spirit all encompassing

Spirit, Life Force (the indefinite article isn't right for me)

That Which Is.

The boundaries of contradiction -- "A God all merciful is a God unjust"

The creator

The Divine, not describable

The hound of heaven- Francis Thompson

The One Who Comes

The truth

The word God distresses me...Unknown Presence: My divinity.

This is a subject I do not believe should be answered. Buddha said to Malunkyaputta that it was a
diversion from what he did teach, essentially good behavior.

Too hard to describe personal experience.

Whether I believe in God or not is very difficult. I prefer to use the term "That mystery which we call God"

Why were there only three options in Question 32? And God singular.

Words don't matter. It is the experience/reality that is important. "A rose by any other name is still a rose".

Yet, I answered No?

Appendix 16a. Meaning or metaphors of the term “God” for those who do not believe in God (n=107)

'Does not compute'

'In the beginning was the Word and the Word was ...'

A being that others believe in

A common, universal spirit

A force beyond human understanding

A force for good

A guiding spirit

A mystery that helps us transcend the everyday human frailty

A one-word poem

A projection of people's spiritual needs

A representation of the good in all

A supreme being

A too ambiguous/corrupted term

A truth for some

A universal awareness

An ethical energy, connected to my conscience, but existing outside human description

An idea important to the speaker or writer

An obsolete construction

Awareness of mystery

Communal good

Connecting force, something beyond being one person

Creator

Creator - the unknown and unknowing behind creation

Depends on context: eg: nature/causality/healthy instinct..

Divine overseer

Each person has his or her own understanding

Fictitious and a little annoying for me

For me the task in Meeting for Worship

For me, to acknowledge 'God' is to express an awareness of our 'givenness', our (positive) dependency, the roots and trunk of the tree of life of which we are twigs and fruits - not a personal being.

Godde! Is neither male more female but before such creation.

Godness ie a term of some universal understanding

Good

Good

Good within and without and all around

Goodness

Goodness

Goodness - Love in action

Ground of all being, ultimately meaning, love

Have to translate in various ways

Higher (Highest!) being

Highest power

Holiness, Love, Glorious, transcendent AND immanent, Ultimate Reality

Human Construct

I am confused as to what it means
I believe there is "that" of God in all
I don't like hearing that someone felt the presence of God or that God moves them in particular ways because I don't believe in God
I translate God into Holy Spirit. I do not think of God as a being, a "person."
I try to discern what they mean to the speaker or writer.
I'm still trying out that word. Sometimes it evokes a feeling of discomfort, sometimes safety, sometimes wonder.
Intuitive awareness of a hidden dimension of life
It all depends on the context of the ministry
It depends on the context. I often add an extra O to make the word meaningful for me
Life force
Life force
Life force: ground of all being
Love
Magician in the sky
Man made control measure of power freaks
Meaningful for others, but also a connection I feel at times
Might be too strong
Mystery
Mystery - being part of the earth
Mystery, Creative spirit
Nature
Nil
Not a lot, I am antagonistic to this term
Not acceptable to me personally
Not in my belief system
Not relevant
Not the Sunday School person and don't worry about it
Nothing other than what it means for those who have that belief.
Old man on a cloud - not relevant
Omnipotent being
Person, creator, personified spirit
Respectful that it means something to someone else
Some other people's view of God
Someone else's idea of the Spirit
Someone, somewhere -I know not who or where
Something transcendent
Something universal
Spirit
Spirit
That I am loved
That than which there is no higher
That which IS
THE Abrahamic God
The Divine energy of all that is
The Divine Energy that connects all that is IS-ness

The Divine, the spiritual, the numinous
The goodness, which people see in the world around them
The Jungian archetype of Self
The natural order of things
The spirit or essence within
The Spirit that enlivens the Universe
The Universe
The unknown
Their inner light
This person has an experience of God about which they can speak
Try to think of what word means to speaker/writer
Uncertain
Unhelpful construct
Universal truth
Universe, the Divine, the Shared Spirit
Unselfish goodness within all persons and groups. The awe of the natural world.
What others may understand as God
Yearning for goodness and truth
Your own inner wisdom

Appendix 16b. Meaning or metaphors of the term “Spirit” for those who do not believe in God (n=53)

A guide

A guiding force, connecting those who listen

A guiding spirit

A sense of an intelligence intrinsic to the universe that causes all to cohere

A thread joining everything

An awareness (probably from my Roman Catholic childhood) of the idea of the Holy Spirit, a habit of thought training.

An awareness that is beyond human understanding

An underlying bond between people and things

As above

As above

As paraclete (as in 4th gospel)

Beyond material, rational expression. Connects with our intuitive faculties

Can be used for God

Ditto

Ditto

Everywhere in the natural world

Goodness

Guidance,

I am confused as to what it means

Inner light

Invisible but powerful. Force for goodness.

Is to seek the meaning/am understanding of Spirit

Just that - the Spirit which is part of our existence

Knowledge beyond our conventional wisdom

Love

Member of the Christian triumvirate of God

More acceptable/meaningful if used in a non God way, like inner light

Mystery - being part of the earth

Nil

Same [as God]

Similar to God but not the same I think of The Spirit as our inner light

Some all-powerful sprit of Love and goodness

Some other people's view of Spirit

Something intangible that connects us

Source of energy within individuals and groups

Spirit

That spirit in us that binds us all to good

That which binds people together for the good of themselves and the world

The common ground of all conscious being

The depth of our spiritual being

The difference between dead and alive

The ground of all being

The impulse to do good

The ineffable - the unnameable mystery

The One Transcendent Law

The power of love and humanity that moves between people

The still small voice within

This person has an experience about the Spirit about which they speak

Uniting concept

Universal

Whatever inspires

Will to joy, both instinctual and cultured

Your own inner wisdom

Appendix 16c. Meaning or metaphors of the term “The Inner Light” for those who do not believe in God (n=101)

'Godliness' within; natural inner good sense
A force that connects to each other
A meaningful truth
A more personal version of above
A person's goodness, the best most selfless parts of a person
A powerful feeling.
A sense of alignment with the spirit (as above)
A sense of opening to inner truth
A sense of something good and powerful within yourself, beyond logic
A state of heightened awareness of being alive
A visual description of goodness within everyone
An awareness of truth or love
An inner awareness and strength that is beyond human understanding
An inner guide, based on intuition and love, beyond ego and emotions
An inner voice that connects us
As above
As above
As above
As for Spirit
Attention held on the spirit
Basic decency, right minded caring
Being centred.
Belief in finding a way forward towards good decisions
Christ (as distinct from Jesus)
Conscience
Conscience
Conscience
Conscience
Deeper knowing born of the Spirit
Ditto
Ditto
Empathy
Faith
Feeling of an all-loving presence.
Good in people
Goodness, spirit
Higher Self, Deepest Self, that which guides and leads me and helps me to discern.
I don't see a lot of difference between this and the first two.
In other humans
Innate goodness
Inner goodness
Inner numinosity unique to each person
Inner teaching, the light of love within me
It is there somewhere but too Quakerish and vague jargon

Maybe inner peace?
Much as above
My inner wisdom - that is perhaps connected to others
My own deeper knowing which is aligned with something bigger than me.
Mystery - being part of the earth
Nil
Not relevant
Ok expression
Ok with this
One's inner wisdom, knowledge of the best in oneself
One's own inner wisdom
Our conscience, but in a sense, a guiding light
Our more-than-physical senses
Our own ability to discern truth and meaning
Part of That of God in every thing
Peace
Personal understanding
Realisations that take our awareness beyond the everyday explanations
Recognition of the living energy within
Same
Same as above
Seeking from within what the divine promptings are for me
Sense of being
Something that helps me understand emotions and facts
Sometimes
Spirit
Spirit within me, humanity - Christ light - Discipleship
That guides every person
That of God in every one
That of god in every person
That which IS
That which is pure within a person
The awakened realized Self
The direction towards truth and goodness
The feeling of wonder in Ministry
The form of, or the way to, spiritual guidance
The god within
The good in everyone
The good within each person arising from a common source
The indwelling "Christ" spirit of transformation.
The inner essence that is within us - love, light, potential
The inner guide
The inner spark/flame - mystery within everyone
The light of conscience, the awareness of connectedness
The positive essence in all of us
The presence of that guiding force in us

The speaking of the uniting energy within an individual
The Spirit of Love guiding action
The spirit within me and everyone.
The strength we find in our common being
This person has an experience of the Inner Light about which they speak
Through the words of the other
Unselfish goodness within all persons.
Wonderful
Yes
Yes I believe humans are 'temples of this Light'
Your own inner wisdom

Appendix 16d. Meaning or metaphors of the term "That of God in every person" for those who do not believe in God (n=121)

A challenge
A choice for communal support and cohesion
A connection between us all of the best in ourselves and what we can potentially be
A defining Quaker concept. I refuse to make it "Good" instead of God
A handy formula to express the challenge of faith
A potential power for good,
A precious link
A recognition of the innate goodness of every human
A sense of connection with others
Absolutely true
All equal, all full of love, all capable of learning, changing, forgiving...
An important idea
An inner voice that connects us
An old fashioned way of describing inner light
Another phrase used by early Friends to avoid the laws of blasphemy!
As above
As above
As above
As for Inner Light
Christian values
Common humanity as part of the natural world
Common will to create beyond the self
Ditto
Each person's centred innate goodness
Equality is there for everyone
Equality, the worth of every life, connectedness
Essence
Everyone can become nicer if treated with love
Everyone holds a measure of this living energy
For me in ALL life
Genuinely held deep understanding and centeredness
Good in everyone
Good in everyone
Good in people
Good rather than God
Good, light, hope
Goodness and love.
Goodness that can be found somewhere in the human heart
Human goodness
Human potential for goodness and greatness
Humanity
I believe that there is god in everyone - but not an external God
I don't believe there is God in anyone but I believe everyone has the capability to be good and kind
I have found that there is God or whatever else is within BUT also the other side as I have come to know that it is in me and I have to be aware of it whether at Meeting for Worship or other Friends gatherings, or

outside.

I read George Fox said the words differently and inferred that if people desired God, there would be that of God in every person but it was not an absolute

I think of the untouchable core

I use good with students, and that is a start, But God connects the good with the creative spirit

Important concept for me

In my way, I think I feel this is correct?

Inclusiveness. Acceptance.

Inner light

Inner strength and goodness

Look for the good in others

Love this

My life force

Mystery - being part of the earth

Not relevant

Ok expression, how I explain friends to others

Other's inner light

Past wonderful and a core of my being

Peace

Positive action - love, compassion etc

Positive nature of all beings at birth

Really resonates - I think of this concept often and sometimes talk to non-Quakers about it

Remembering not to judge others.

Same

See above

Seeing beyond ego/body to the pure light in each person

Seeing that every person has value, and should be treated as such

Shared potential for Good

Something bigger than our material and quotidian human selves

Something worthy, even if obscured

Soul

Spiritual connectedness

That everyone has something that calls them to be better, and that you can learn to be better from.

That of good in every person

That of Good in every person

That of good in every person

That of good in everyone

That of goodness in every person

That of goodness in every person

That we are inherently good

The ability each person has to touch the spiritual existence we each have

The best

The capacity for good that each person has

The common bond of "life" in every person & living thing

The connectedness of all things

The connections between us

The Divine does not require a God.

The Divine/sacred/holy potential in us all
The feeling of kinship and shared spirituality
The fundamental goodness of each human, in spite of any accumulated damage from not having basic needs met
The fundamental preciousness and goodness of each person
The good in everyone
The goodness in every person
The Goodness that each person has, in reality or their potential to develop it
The goodness that transcends the petty irritations of our humanity
The inner spark/flame - mystery within everyone
The love and compassion we feel for others
The only impermeable part of our being
The positive side of human nature
The potential for the best in every person
The potential goodness and sameness within all
The spirit within me and everyone
The worship of diversity
There is good in everyone
Too difficult to believe
Translated to the good in every person
Unique value of every person
Universality of life
Unselfish goodness within all persons.
Value all people. All others no meaning.
Very important to me
We all have the above
We all ought to be heard, valued, engaged with
We are all part of everything.
We are created by God and therefore we reflect God
When consciously looking or sudden attraction
Which means I seek to understand what they
Yes
Yes but it is damn hard to see in some people.

Appendix 16e. Meaning or metaphors of the term “The Kingdom of God” for those who do not believe in God (n=83)

A Christian concept, which doesn't mean much to me
A dimension in which humans are fully their highest possible selves
A fictional place that some believe in
A kind of utopia in which each person was striving to live with love, compassion, integrity, and wisdom
A Matthean concept, not used by Luke
All people
An ideal world
An outdated expression, but is the vision of hope of a society on earth in which the practice of the Testimonies are more realised
An ultimate/optimal world without defect
Archaic construct
Available to each of us when we are aware of stepping into God's grace and presence
Can't do a translation for that
Can't do this one
Christian heaven
Community
Do not really understand
Doesn't hold relevance to me
Don't Know
Don't like this phrase at all
Don't relate
Don't relate to this phrase at all
Early Quaker personal breakthrough in religious understanding
Everything
Fictitious and a little annoying for me
Has a historical ring to it, not relevant to me
Heaven
Heaven on Earth
Heaven, but I don't believe in it
Heidegger's Fourfold
Humans living and acting peacefully and with compassion for one another
I am a religious Republican :)
I don't believe there is a heaven or hell. When we die we turn back into the molecules and compounds that every living thing is made out of
I don't know what this means
I find this a very woolly concept
In Zen this is also located on Earth/ The Body of Christ.
Love, communion with all that is
Meaningless
Meant to the person speaking, not necessarily
Mystery - being part of the earth
N/A I turn off
Natural order, peace,
Nil
No idea

No meaning
No meaning
Not a phrase that resonates at all for me. Too patriarchal.
Not clear
Not in my belief system
Not much
Not relevant
Not so helpful
Not sure
Not sure.
Nothing
Nothing
Of no importance
Peace, social justice, right stewardship of the Earth
Some other people's view of afterlife
Spiritual connectedness
The awakened reality from the false-self into the true-self that Jesus (and Buddha) and others taught.
The better world we create by nurturing That Of God
The collective part of everyone's Inner Light
The community of people, past and present, who look for the Light in our lives on earth
The Dreaming of God? For goodness/love/beauty to manifest all round and connect everything.
The environment associated with a good way of life
The oneness of the world, realized
The optimal state for contemporary human life
The realm of truth, beauty and goodness
The universe
The world
This is the spiritual reality that infuses all.
TRUE
Unhelpful construct
Us mob here. *All* of us.
What others may understand as an afterlife
What we aim for in this life on earth
When the world and all its people are spiritually aware and directed.
Where love is the law
Within and without
Within each of us
Working towards a better, more loving world
Yuck! Too much like setting off for war
Yuk!

Appendix 16f. Meaning or metaphors of the term “The Divine” for those who do not believe in God (n=86)

A rather remote concept.

A way of expressing one's spirituality

Acceptable

An awareness that there is more than we can experience or know

An understanding that underpins human life

Another word for God

Another word for god

As above

As for Spirit

Bit uncomfortable with this: more Spirit

Ditto

Ditto

Do not really understand

Doesn't hold relevance to me

Don't know

Don't know

Don't relate to this phrase at all

Eternal Values

Fictitious and a little annoying for me

Find this very useful to avoid falling into the trap of the word God

God

God related entity

I don't find that concept helpful

Life force

Love

Love this

Lovely word

More than human - above

Mostly I see this as what humans desire!

Mystery

Mystery - being part of the earth

Nature

Nil

No meaning

No meaning

Not easy to access, but it is a realty

Not much

Not relevant

Not relevant to me

Nothing

Nothing

Ok but vague

Others belief construct about God

Our imagination of infinite beneficence

Part of all life. Within us, leads us to live well.
Sacred
Sacred
Same as above
Same sense as 'God'
See all my words above!
Sense of being
Similar same as god
Some other people's view of God
Some spark within all
Spirit
Spirit
Spiritual
That inner core of human experience of Love common to all faiths
That of God
That which relates to our expressions of God, as I understand God
That which we don't understand, particularly if referenced to god (or similar)
The alignment of Spirit with That Of God
The best
The best and highest calling for each of us
THE Christian God
The eternal
The goodness in humans
The numinous
The Quaker position is that all life is divine, but paradoxically changeable and imperfect
The realm of the Self
The same as God so I don't believe in it
The spiritual, the numinous, etc.
The Symbolic
The uniting energy of universal Mind - The Oversoul
The very best
This does not require a god.
Too much popery.
TRUE
Ultimate goodness
Uncertain
Unhelpful
Unselfish goodness within all persons and groups.
Very good
What seems most worthy
What they can reach if they open themselves to love
What those words might mean if I used them

Appendix 16g. Meaning or metaphors of the term “The Sacred” for those who do not believe in God (n=87)

A conscious awareness of, and reverence for, ultimate the ultimate worthiness of things - specifically or generally

A construct

A manifestation of the Oversoul

Absolutely- all of nature

Acceptable

All life

An attitude of mind that attributes a holy dimension to material objects of a person/groups choosing

An awareness of the value of the gift of life and being alive

An extra-material dimension of life

As above

Connected Indigenous People (and some others) still know - but most of the world see this in the measure of pleasure!

Dancing in safety (off all living things)

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto!

Do not really understand

Doesn't hold relevance to me

Don't relate to this phrase at all

Ethical and moral goodness/creativity

Fictitious and a little annoying for me

Getting into popery here

Gratefulness for all there is, even knowing there is so much more than we can know

Humans held dear

In all things

Life - finite yet more than the sum of all - wonder

Life is sacred

Life itself

Material things and behaviours, set apart from the world and pertaining to a deity.

Meaningless

More inclusive for me

Most precious

Mystery - being part of the earth

Never heard of them. I don't believe anyone is sacred. No one deserves to live over anyone else

No meaning

No meaning

No words

Not a concept I use except out of respect for things other religions revere.

Not much

Not relevant

Not sure

Not to be questioned

Nothing

Nothing
Overwhelming power alone even with others
Relating to all of life.
Requires special attention
Sacred
Sacred is good, holy, special, beyond words
Sacred seems to me to encompass a 'governing body' (for want of a better explanation) - something which makes the sun to rise and set, the moon to glow and set the tides, the earth to produce beauty and disasters.
Same as above
Same sense as 'God'
See "The Divine"
Set apart from the everyday
Similar
Something deep, still and sacrosanct
Something of special significance
Something special and common among people
Something very important to me but maybe intangible
Something very special to that person
Something which has meaning
Special but including some ritualistic element
Specially revered and separated from the profane- found in the ordinary esp the natural world as well as in hallowed places
Spirit
Spirit
That inner core of human experience of Love common to all faiths
That which connects us to our imagination of the divine
That which is worth honouring
THE Christian God; Christian saints; Bible
The Divine in the secular
The gift of life, to be alive, being, and awareness of being
The Quaker position is that all life is sacred, but paradoxically changeable and imperfect
The special
The spiritual good
The subset of the divine than a person or group chooses to recognise
Things that are of grave importance to me, and to be respected in others
This does not require a god.
Traditional values
Transcendence?
Trees
Ultimate beauty
Uncomfortable with this - reminds me of Catholics too much
Unquestionable values
Values that underpin human life
What is profoundly important to others
What should be treated with sacred respect - reflecting the beliefs of many
Yes I like that

Appendix 16h. Meaning or metaphors of the term “Holy” for those who do not believe in God (n=78)

?

???

A construct

A person or thing, that is sacred, having divine qualities

All of nature

An extra-material dimension of life

As above

As above

As above.

As for sacred

Associated also with place and an over-reaching sense of worship rather than to do with “God”

Can't do this one

Close to sacred

Depends who or what it refers to. Perhaps a particularly spiritual person or thing.

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto

Ditto above

Do not really understand

Doesn't hold relevance to me

Don't relate

Don't relate to this phrase at all

Embedded within concepts of religion.

Everything and or nothing - intention is the key

Fictitious and a little annoying for me

Focussed selfless goodness

Foundation values that cannot be transgressed

Good

I associate it with Jesus and God

Illuminated by the Light

Interbeing

Love and Truth

Material things and behaviours, set apart from the world and pertaining to a deity.

Meaningless

Meaningless

More trees

Most definitely touches my heart

Mystery - being part of the earth

Nil

No

No meaning

No meaning

Not much

Not much
Not of this world
Not relevant
Not relevant to my view of my spiritual world
Not so helpful
Not to be questioned
Nothing
Nothing
Of nature
Of the Bible
Of the dance of life
Sacred
Sacred,
Same as above
Same sense as 'God'
Set aside
Similar
Some other people's view of a state of goodness
Something someone said is sacred.
Something special and common among people
Something to be revered
Something very good
Special/sacred to those using the term
Spirit
Spiritual
That inner core of human experience of Love common to all faiths
That which makes one whole
THE Christian God; Christian saints; Bible
The Quaker position is that all life is holy, but paradoxically changeable and imperfect
This person has an experience of
This word overdone - leads to appreciation
To be treated with deep respect
Too vague
Worthy of great respect

Appendix 16i. Meaning or metaphors of the term “Faith” for those who do not believe in God (n=85)

A belief that good will prevail
A guess or feeling that something will turn out all right
A leap without complete knowledge
Ability to believe in something unprovable (I don't have it)
Acceptance
Being strongly linked to your beliefs
Being willing to live with Mystery (Morris West)
Belief
Belief
Belief
Belief in the goodness of others
Belief in the most positive, courageous and harmonious
Belief, often institutionalised
Believing that something is true.
Believing without knowing
Blind trust
Bloody annoying word
Built on experience of moments of transcendence, however fleeting
Commitment
Commitment and trust
Confidence
Confidence and trust
Confidence/trust in a set of beliefs, which cannot be verified empirically.
Confronting doubt
Conviction through experience
Ditto
Doesn't hold relevance to me
Faith
Faith is what most people hope for in the absence of commitment in trust.
Faith to me is a person's trust in someone else. Not a belief in God or Jesus
For other people
Having a belief, not always clear
Holy optimism and trust in goodness and love
Hope
Hope
Hoping for the best, fearing the worst
I struggle with the idea of faith, as it falls outside of my own sense of reality.
Implies that non faith (in God) is negative (its seems to me)
Inner light
Integrity
Love and peace
Maybe misguided opinion
Must include doubt

Mystery - being part of the earth
Nil
No purpose
Not a word that has meaning for me
Not easy to hold on to..a reality for me
Not giving up
Not having evidence for something
Not relevant
Not sure
Ok with this
Once seen, never forgotten
One's own path to the good life - to follow or not as guided
Openness. Trust. Wonder.
Optimism, reliance
Secure knowledge based on knowledge
Something I lack
Something taken on trust at a non-intellectual level
Sometimes
Spiritual commitment - Qs are a faith community
Term to describe one's spiritual beliefs
The foundation of one's life
The mystery of life beyond what science can explain
The period of silence allows me to settle and "Let Go and Let God"
The power of belief
The spiritual or religious side to people. What they use to describe the world
The things we believe, the path we follow. Also a group.
This person has an experience of
Trust
Trust
Trust
Trust and 'knowing' rather than 'belief'
Trust in other people's teachings (not your own experience)
Trust, belief
Trust, Belief, Commitment
Trusting that it is safe enough for the Spirit
Trying to live by the testimonies
Unhelpful prop
Use the word trust
Well we all have it but in what?
What a person believes
What I believe has changed over the years, and is still changing.
What I believe in

Appendix 16j. Meaning or metaphors of the term “Prayer” for those who do not believe in God (n=91)

A combination of loving, caring and gratitude.

A delusion

A form of intentional communication with a fictional God, OR a way of making an intention clear

A kind of meditation

A last resort when all else seems to be failing

A petition or thanksgiving or expression of concern for another (I do not pray, as it presumes an audience - I believe in human agency).

A process by which one opens oneself to have a wider perspective

A reaching out for the transcendent

A shopping list to God

An expression of hope

An inward dialogue with myself in times of stress

Ask for help

Asking or searching

Beginning with our human wants and needs is a way of including God in shaping our lives

Being calm and silent to reflect on one's inner self

Being connected with the spirit all the time

Being consciously with the spirit

Being open and seeking connection to good and reality

Being open to the Spirit

Commune

Communing with the Life Force

Communing with the opening feeling of talking to god or just to a special place inside yourself

Contemplation, honestly seeking truth

Conversation with That Of God

Conversing with god

Dialogue with the spirit within

Doesn't hold relevance to me

Don't know

Don't know

Each to their own, so no problem

Feeling grateful or asking for help

Have a bit of trouble with this concept

Holding in consciousness of the uniting energy

Holding in the light,

Holding people in the Light

Holding someone in my thoughts.

I believe prayer is talking to God - that is important

I'm not sure if this isn't a similar idea to 'faith'

Individual practices - each to his own

Inward contemplation

Letting go of your rationality in a heartfelt attempt to say thank you or please to some entity

Liable to be unattractive special pleading

Listening and waiting for wisdom

Making a mindful space in one's life

Maybe meditation
Meditation
Meditation
Meditation
Meditation and reflection to facilitate greater wisdom and understanding
Meditation/waiting
Mindfulness
Mystery - being part of the earth
Nil
No
Not relevant
Offering something to other things than your conscious mind to deal with
Ok but must NEVER be public
Past practice
Positive thinking
Positive thought for something good
Positive, supportive, constructive thought for people/situations
Prayer does not require a god.
Prayer is an extension of loving thought
Prayer is wishful thinking in the absence of faith for most people!
Prayer, hold in awareness,
Praying for me is praying to God and so I don't pray and I don't think it connects us with God
Recalling my relations with others and other thoughts such as how can I be a better person and what have I got to offer
Silence
Silent or spoken petitions on behalf of self or others
Silent reflection
Silent waiting for inner direction
Something I'm no good at
Sometimes as a way of focusing during silent worship
State of mind reached through discipline practice of stillness of mind, holding personal thinking back, can reach a state of loving kindness
Stillness
Stillness, listening
Talking to (at?) God; occasionally listening
Talking to God
That helps sometimes
The breath drawn in and out in wonder at the mystery of being alive
The means of requesting favours from a deity.
To be resorted to when there is no obvious other path
Unhelpful - who am I to be drawing God's attention to this or that?
Unreasonable to expect the practice to contact any being/spirit
Very powerful and helpful
Vey dubious
Waiting
Waiting for right brain not logic to guide
We are all one.

Wordless worship

Worrying, self talk, processing thoughts,

Appendix 17. Additional comments on hearing from other religious groups (n=108)

A "real life" comparative religion experience, with the aim of sharing experiences in a safe, tolerant atmosphere, could be a wonderful, thought provoking experience for all participants.

A very open question for a survey! I believe we all grow through listening to each other and ourselves and the earth, this can involve listening to other's spiritual journeys. But am not sure how this relates to Quakers and not sure what you are really asking!!

A wider understanding of the world and people

All is One - I can be blessed in a Sufi Gathering, in discussions with other persons alive in the Spirit; with someone who prays a lot;

All major religions point to the same thing - why would we not benefit from considering them, also? It would be good for world-inclusiveness. But that does not mean that we need to water down our own message.

Although I do tend to resist. I'm more open to reading of others' spiritual journeys and insights rather than connecting with them in person (too much baggage that might or might not be assumed - in both directions).

Anyone can be helped by being open to the experiences, religious or otherwise, of other people. I don't understand how on earth you're going to make sense of the responses you get to this question.

As Quakers well know, cooperation and goodwill are immensely important.

Because they are small in number, I think they should join forces with other groups who are strong on social justice and report regularly back on their contribution to these. My comment on the previous question is that I already, before attending Quakers, committed a proportion of my income to social justice groups and feel more loyal to them, despite the excellent work of Quakers around the world.

Being closed off from wider religious communities can lead to insularity and, from my observation, a sense of spiritual pride and superiority

Being interested in and paying attention to the spiritual journey of others (individuals and groups) is very helpful for me.

Depends on the nature of the groups

Don't understand the Question

Experience, and sacred writings are useful but not creed, dogma or ritual

Hard to really know about other groups unless completely absorbed in them

Having attended Church of England services at boarding school made me realise how important Quaker worship is to me

However I worry we don't take into consideration our own Christian heritage.

However we also need to learn a lot more about our rich Quaker practices.

I agree but it does not apply for everyone.

I am a member of Religion for Peace (as a Quaker) and meet many from other faiths .. it deepens my gratitude of lack (in Friends) of hierarchy and ritual that many other faith follow.. i value our gathered silence ... the opportunity of meeting others in faith also show areas where we all deeply connect.....

I am actively involved in and with a number of interfaith organisations. There is involvement of Quakers in Religions for Peace but otherwise I find little interest or involvement from Quakers in the interfaith movement. This amazes and stuns me given the history of Quakers and the belief that there is that of God in everyone. Where I am situated it is difficult to even have a conversation on this topic a) because of the small Meeting and b) because no one else participates in interfaith associations or conversations. Disappointing to say the least!

I believe it is very important to learn about the spiritual experiences of others. A Muslim relative said to me a few years ago, 'We are not evil....we all believe in the one God'. She was speaking in relation to the many, many problems which have befallen Islam over the last several years...and I realise 'problems' is a great understatement.

I believe that it is beneficial to discuss things generally spiritual with other groups but they tend to become too doctrinaire and narrow if one enters into specifically religious conversation.

I believe that the Subud spiritual practice called the Latihan Kejiwaan (Indonesian for spiritual training, or training By the Spirit) could contribute a great deal to Quaker Meetings for Worship. It brought me, an atheist, to feel and experience the presence of God in me. Which, I have to admit, I seldom feel in Quaker Meetings for Worship.

I believe they are corrupt

I continue when/where possible to be active in Interfaith groups?

I convene the JYFs in our Meeting. We have recently participated in the Australian Fair for Freedom of

Belief and Religion, where we had a stall, and JYFs were enriched, enthused and challenged by encounters with many other traditions. Following this we took up the invitation from our local Sikh community and participated in their worship and enjoyed a meal with them. For myself, I have been inspired by many traditions, most recently by Sufi readings. These enrich my Quakerism but I have no wish to join the Sufis.

I do not believe that any one person or group holds the Truth and all others err.

I don't think it should be compulsory which is why I haven't marked this as definitely yes but if we are to get to know and love each other then it helps to know something of others' spiritual journeys

I feel more affiliated with the philosophy of the Buddha than to Christianity

I find it more useful to hear from fellow Quakers about their own religious experiences as they are often most varied.

I find the experience of individuals most helpful.

I have been enlightened and inspired by other Christian denominations and other faiths, especially Muslim, Jewish, Baha'i

I have studied Buddhism and followed the precepts of the Buddha as a grown woman (I lived amongst Buddhists as a girl) but found I did not want to leave my Christian background of culture, music, art, dance and democracy. I looked at other churches and religions but found them all too hierarchical and male and dogma dominated. Quakerism leaves me free to be me. It is the only church (or religious organisation) up with which I can put; and even then I sometimes have my doubts!

I learn from conversation with friends from other faiths and from no faiths all the time.

I never again wish to belong to any spiritual/religious group who claim to have 'all the answers' because they do not. I have been supported and encouraged on my spiritual journey by many, many different people/books/ideas even a simple comment.

I see the possibility is here but not the probability, as there is a hidden dogma, hierarchy and doctrine that is muddled-up in "niceness" and wishful thinking - and the transformational spirit of (Friends in Christ) "Truth" (The Light) is almost lost completely... I think George Fox would say: "the apostasy has returned - because of the desire to feel comfortable, have fun and to enjoy a self-supporting community in order to feel happy about feeling right and being happy"! And if Fox couldn't say that in plain speech, I feel sure that Naylor found the humility and strength to be able to do so". But they are both long dead and faces only turn away from me as I try to say such things...

I still retain a respect for the old Anglican Prayer book. Of non-Christian religions Buddhism seems the most interesting.

I teach Comparative Religion so mix a lot with people of other faiths

I think all spiritual and religious groups can learn from others, keeping an open mind is a positive approach

I think Friends should always remain *open* to "hearing about the religious experience of other religious groups", especially because I believe that can sometimes help us understand where we have come FROM. However, I also believe that the overall structure of Business Meetings whereby we seek to discern the "sense of the meeting on a particular issue" cannot be improved upon when seeking a course of action for the FUTURE. I am sometimes concerned that being too open to others' religious experiences may divert us from the life and lessons of Christ.

I think it is always good to be open to other views. It does not mean you accept them, but you can hear them

I think listening to the individual experience of someone of another faith is the place of useful exchange, rather than the expectations a group may place on an individual.

I think most Quakers accept truth from any quarter.

I think religion causes so much trouble in the world so not really sure how it helps a person spirituality but I guess ideas that focus on peace harmony and self reflection like in Buddhism may help some people.

I think that Quakers can be the voice of reason, a connector, a facilitator of peace and understanding between religious groups because they appreciate that others are on the same journey and because they have no creed can take the elements of other's faith journeys and relate to it.

I think that the spirit of god is in each of us regardless of what you call god or how you reach that understanding, and that sharing experience with other groups (whether religious or other) can only strengthen community and global understandings. But I don't feel that learning how other religions pray will affect my own spirituality.

I think there are many confusions within Quakers about what Quakerism is. Sometimes being open to other ways simply dilutes.

I think we all can be helped by hearing about the religious experience of others, however, Quakers need to hear their own history, story and experience first.

I was a vigorous member of my LM InterfaithTeam for many years organising evenings where interfaith speakers explained their faith and participates in panel discussions. I am the Quaker rep in one of the Womens Interfaith Network branches in my city. My spiritual position has been greatly enriched by the discussion at these fora.

I would wish to include other Christian denominations as well as other faiths

I've gained from Metaphysical teaching, healing, deepened my meditation from Buddhist practices.

If Quakers do not hold this opinion then they are guilty of the judgement, which we should all eschew.

If the Light is in everyone then all spiritual journeys are worth hearing

If we wish to know each other it is important to understand each other

In a course of study at WellSpring Centre, I have been encouraged by meeting and sharing with others from many Christian churches who are serious about their faith lives. I am looking for opportunities to share similarly with people from non-Christian faith groups, including First Nations Peoples from different countries.

In studying other religious beliefs, I came to understand my own better.

Interfaith gatherings induce harmony, understanding, and spiritual connection.

Interfaith issues an learning about other religions

It can be helpful

It depends on who the speaker is, but I have been inspired by many others from very if fervent faith or religious traditions

It helps keep us humble to hear that other religious groups also find similar truths; stops us thinking only Quakers have the 'inroad to the Truth' and reminds us that seeking and finding meaning (and/or spiritual experience) is a universal experience

It helps us to form a Quaker spiritual identity.

It is easy to become smug if one stays only with Quaker insights. It helps me to see what it is about the Quaker way which keeps Quakerism as my main, but not only source of growth

It is good to be seeking truth

Just think we all should listen to each other rather than criticise.

Looking at my local area, I feel in order to be an active Christian, I need to be involved with other churches that are taking initiatives, particularly the Uniting Church.

Many paths, one Light.

Many people are on a spiritual journey and learning about their experiences can inspire and enlighten me.

Many religious and ethically involved groups are seeking truths in society as well as in a spiritual sense. I see the spiritual life as informing and motivating the development and search for social and environmental truths.

My own Quaker practice is deepened by years of Vipassana meditation. I find the Christian mystics and writings inspiring: Eckhart, Hildegard, Cloud of Unknowing, etc. Was also inspired by studying the Baghavad Gita (spent 7 years in India)

No one group can have a fully adequate approach to or understanding of spirituality.

No personal experience - cannot respond for others.

Not only can they be helped in their own spiritual journey, they can also enrich the experience of others, who may not be familiar with Quaker experience and work.

Not sure about this

Now that I have got over the background of one part of Presbyterianism I feel more open to listen to what others. I see the whole as a ball and where I sit I only see my little bit in front and want to find out about what others believe and are comfortable with.

Occasionally attend Worship/meetings of UCA

One of the strongest attractions of Quakerism for me is openness to all sources of religious experience and its lack of dogmatism

Only each individual Quaker can answer as to whether or not they feel it helpful. I do.

Other beliefs can help one consider further one's own beliefs, but this is not a priority for me in any considered program.

Other groups have much to offer Quakers and by understanding others spiritual journey our own is enriched. I do not believe there is only "one way".

Other stories can be very helpful and provide insight into my personal spiritual practice

Our religions...world views mature, evolve as our knowledge of the religious lives of our fellow human beings grows deeper and wider. Our respect for other peoples' viewpoint makes us more acceptable to them and their 'style' can give rise in us to what has been called 'holy envy'. So much to admire in the various branches of humanity's religious systems.

Perhaps we can, but there is more than enough to be going on with in our own tradition, to be explored. ie we need to look to our own tradition first. And if we are to hear from other traditions, I think it would be more helpful to share experiences and beliefs rather than just "hear" about them.

Quakers endeavour to be open to the Light, from wherever it comes.

So much uncertainty about all things spiritual No one right way

Some can, and we should be open to Light from other sources, but some have enough certainty in their spiritual beliefs that they don't need it.

Some of us have BAD memories of religion from the past, it helps to process those memories, however the reason I'm here (and I think many others) is to get away from other religious groups, and forget them by not hearing more of the same, or even about them

Sometimes it depends on the language. I still find lengthy quotations from the Bible difficult to learn from, although I do try to find some wisdom within whatever is said.

Spiritual journeys are just that - a journey in the spirit and the spirit is not limited to any one tradition. The wind blows where it will.

Spiritual journeys are none of my business. All that I think I should concern myself with is behavior in this world, that it be ethical.

Spiritual people experience their own Inner Light most clearly in the frame of their own upbringing and culture. In any event, the exhibition of a spiritual event, whatever its origins, tends to bring people together rather than alienate them if the event is genuinely founded in love.

St Francis of Assisi and Quakers have much in common as do Buddhists

That Of God in every person, Interfaith Dialogue, Shared Concerns (Peace, International Affairs, Refugees...) Common mystical experience, Rumi, Gandhi, Tagore and many others. Thomas Merton, Berrigans, Dorothy Day and Catholic Activists I have personally known and stood alongside. Plus other Christian, Moslem and Buddhist people. Dalai Lama...Joan Chittister, Richard Rohr, Dorothee Soelle. Jurgen Moltman, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Henri Nouwen, Jean Vanier and others.

The history of Quakers is especially revealing to me, largely because it is a reaction to other forms of Christian worship.

The more we understand others the better.

The mystical side of Quakerism has much in common with the mystical side of many other religions/philosophies

There is great value in other traditions, but I think often people find that for themselves, rather than needing a 'guest speaker' etc. to help them find it. We do not seem to concentrate very much on what we can get from our own spiritual tradition.

There is no one single path to God and we are open to all

There is that of God in everyone. (Oh, yes, that usage marks me as fairly liberal) and sometimes things speak to one's condition regardless of its source.

Through Uniting Church I am witness to & experience, many good actions & ways.

To be tolerant of religious groups we must understand the belief and with an open mind it may enhance our understanding

Various meditation practices have been helpful to me

We acknowledge 'that of God in every person', whether or not s/he has religious convictions. In particular, though, we can always gain greater insight when we learn about others' ways of worshipping and seeking to live in a manner that is in keeping with their understanding of religious values.

We are all seeking together

We need to get down with what it is that WE actually do before heading off learning about others. The core of Quakers needs to practice spiritual monogamy and actually have something to offer the world. We become a very poor religious group when we go about trying to be across other people's spiritual paths - people are more than welcome to do that but why do it within Quakers? We have our own rich tradition and spiritual path - which unfortunately is not deeply known or practiced a lot in Australia.

Where others are fellow travellers on similar paths their experiences may be of relevance

Yes! But there are other ways, too, even from those who don't profess any religion! Literature helps, too

Appendix 18. Additional comments on living the Quaker way (n=143)

Aim for simplicity, try to avoid right wing bigotry

Always try to think of the impact of my choices: in big things may seek to surrender to the direction of the Spirit; take into account the way of life that fits with Quaker testimonies

As I am no longer attending meeting I do not consider myself a Quaker but I am mindful of Quaker testimonies in my everyday life and try to apply them in decisions and actions.

Assuming you're including Attenders in 'Quaker': my Quaker upbringing must have a big effect. However I don't think about my Quakerism when making decisions.

Being a Christian does!

Being a Quaker affects how I interact with other people. I am very aware of that of God in everyone. It has changed how I relate to people.

Being a Quaker helps me stay mindful of my connection to others and the earth

Being a Quaker, even if only practicing sporadically, affects everything I think, do, and value. I am grateful for this, grateful to God, and to Quakers.

But also as a Catholic and my own idiosyncratic spirituality.

But I think I held those views before I ever became a Quaker

Choice of career, wife, politics, parenting

Commitment to live in accordance with my values. Refusing to offer more respect to people based on their position and seeking that of God in all things and all people all the time.

Daily I hold in the Light Friends/families and situation in the world.. I am more discerning of the world events... and situations in my daily life by moving into silence and being guided how to move forward .. Caring for the earth, gratitude for my home/garden security of living in Australia are always present with me ..

Difficult to say as I don't know how I would behave if I were not a Quaker, but I think that being part of a group which concerns itself with issues of fairness, simplicity etc does influence me. I can feel a chicken and egg situation here!

Environment, human rights, affect my daily life profoundly. Service to others also.

Ethical shopping (good Advice & Query on that), commitment to Peace means involvement in Politics, commitment to Social Justice means involvement with Amnesty, commitment to the Earth means involvement with environment groups.

Even the small things, helping a mother with pram and small children off the bus is a small thing to the doer but a great example to others of that of God in all

General awareness of leading a simple life at least less so than previously and progressing this gradually over time.

Honesty, not hypocrisy, clarity, thinking and judging and evaluating my conduct. Using compassion and care for others -(I do not throw around the word" love" - I think it is overdone.) My work always includes working for others, without being a doormat. I am not very interested in money-making per se. Politics and "pro bono publico" are important to me.

How can it not if one is truly a seeker? And it isn't about being a Quaker - it is about being led by God. I'm concerned by the very wording of this question.

How I am is the reason I am a Quaker, not the other way around.

How I approach everyone I meet, children I teach, social justice awareness, speaking out on social issues.

How I vote. How little I spend. My openness to all others of whatever faith path. Being Green. Prepared to stand in the way of but never fight or interfere. The way I think. Living without heating.

I act the way I do and I am a Quaker. I don't do it because I am a Quaker.

I am "me". I intend to serve Godde and not Quakerism or Australia!

I am a fairly regular Attender, but do not regard myself as a Quaker.

I am a Quaker because it is congruent with my values, and I find the challenge of hearing from others in Friends further tests and refines how I express my values in daily life.

I am always striving to live in accordance with Quaker principles.

I am committed to 'treading lightly on the Earth' and I try to make all my actions reflect this.

I am concerned for the environment and act accordingly

I am conscious of trying to live simply and equitably, to tread lightly on the Earth.

I am constantly battling with myself not to spend money on trivialities.

I am daily aware of non-violence, equality and the other testimonies.

I am in daily communion with the Spirit, have daily Quaker tasks, and try to fulfil the teachings based on Quaker testimonies in my everyday life.

I am not a Quaker, and have met another who is not a Quaker, but still comes to meetings.

I am not sure about that. I may make the same decisions if I had never been a Quaker.

I am trying to live more simply, more sustainably by growing my own food and to be less part of the consumer culture.

I came to Quakers from a belief structure that fits in with Quaker beliefs rather than having to learn those values and way of life from Quakers therefore I guess that actually my answer should be "no", really.

I don't consciously think I am a Quaker and some at least of my ethics come from my Presbyterian upbringing, eg being honest and truthful. However the Testimonies are, I think, an underlying inspiration

I don't do things because I am a Quaker; the things I choose to do often fit well with the Quaker viewpoint

I don't think I do things because I am a Quaker rather I am a Quaker or have found a home with Quakers because of the way I live my life

I don't think I would aim to live any differently than the way I do as a Quaker, that's why the Quaker way seemed so right for me

I don't consider myself a Quaker but I think that I feel a synergy with the Quaker principles and I try to apply these principles in my daily life and in my relationships with others. I appreciate the considered way that Quakers that I have met apply these principles and the testimonies to their daily life.

I eschew violent television programmes and try to live by the Quaker axiom " walk cheerfully over the world seeking that of God in all you meet" George Fox's saying helps remind me of striving to be and do your best both for myself and others

I feel more that what I do makes me a Quaker rather than being a Quaker makes me do something

I feel that is my guide to the person I would like to be.

I find myself sometimes saying "simplicity" when wondering whether or not to buy a certain item I particularly endorse the concept of "equality"

I find the political focus of Quakers judgemental and superficial. Eg Green voters who spend the year travelling on planes.

I find when dealing with "challenging people" I try to behave with integrity. That drive to behave with integrity effects my choices of how I will behave

I have a long way to go!

I have always read and discussed the way I vote, shop etc and my Quaker attendance is more of an expression of this rather than a cause of it.

I have changed my electricity provider to one which has sustainable energy. I love "op shop" clothing. My politics are green

I have found a home with Quakers and get support from being a Quaker but i think I would likely still vote, shop etc in a similar way without being a Quaker

I have found that being a Quaker is a way - a journey - not a destination.

I have held Quaker values all my life

I hope so.

I keep to a simple lifestyle, and vote conservatively as no political party has all the answers, and it is better to keep to the middle path.

I like to think that my Quaker beliefs govern much of my life, but sadly, the human side of me intervenes - probably too often! As I get older comfort in a variety of ways is more evident!

I live the way I choose to live, but it is helpful to meet with others who are supportive and non judgemental

I often fall short of true simplicity in my life but strive constantly to reduce my impact on our precious planet.

I regularly experience stereotyping by people who wish to marginalise me

I think I'd shop, vote, live, etc the same way if I wasn't a Quaker. I became a Quaker because the Quaker way speaks to my beliefs. I don't do what I do because I'm a Quaker.

I think I'm always conscious of being a Quaker (though I sometimes wonder if that's where I belong) and really strive to live the testimonies in my daily life.

I think my behaviour is not always consistent with my ideals

I think simplicity as a guide to how I live is an element of being an attender at Quaker meetings that Means a lot to me.

I think that certain Quaker values are imbued in me, but I find that I need to seek alternate communities who are actively involved in environmental and social justice issues

I too have feet of clay!

I try and live simply and mindfully

I try hard not to be such an impatient driver! Not quite ready to have a Quaker car sticker yet! On a more serious level: I try to shop and consume locally mindful of ethical production, food miles, etc. I try to combine purposes when I go out so as to avoid unnecessary car trips. I was already committed to do my best to reduce my carbon footprint and to consume ethically, before becoming a Quaker but feel confirmed in these efforts since joining. I don't buy Scratchies any more! I try to be more tolerant of different (especially right-wing) political views.

I try to apply Quaker values to the way I live my life, with some backsliding at times, alas

I try to live in accordance with the Testimony to Simplicity in the way I shop and attend to other material matters, the way I vote mainly reflect my belief in Integrity, Equality and Care of the Earth.

I try to make it do but am not always successful

I try, though often fail, to make ethical decisions about what I buy and where I buy it. Sometimes personal circumstances make this difficult.

I would behave this way even if I were not a Quaker

I would not call myself a Quaker

I find it a challenge to live in a truly Quakerly way.

I'd say my way of life already fit into the Quakers. I was living in an intentional Christian Community and regularly did peace activism. Friends fit into that well.

I've followed many of the basic Quaker principles for living all my life, long before attending and joining. Now however I do try to pay even greater attention to them and follow some practices more vigilantly.

In discussions with others on current affairs for eg

In other areas: honesty, integrity, tolerance (I'm trying), simplicity (I'm trying). Sometimes what I buy. Voting? if there was any danger in it, it would have been banned long ago.

Is the person a Quaker because they say they join and become a Quaker or are they are Quaker before they join and do not know it? This question supposes an outwardly bound rule because of status ?when maybe the values that bring you to Quaker are the ones that then are identified as Quaker

Is this because I'm a Quaker or because I have peace, environmental and social justice concerns? But these have increased since becoming a Quaker.

It affects both the ethical and environmental decisions I make

It confirms the way I have led and lead my life

It does not always happen spontaneously as everyday culture and habits are powerful. It helps if I have been to meetings regularly.

It guides my attitude to seeking the light. It opens me up to the Spirit of God in many and diverse situations - particularly creation and aboriginal spirituality.

It has been part of my life since I was born

It is an ideal that is not always achieved.

It is beginning to have more of a directed impact on tendencies that were there without a unifying structure

It is important to me to be a Quaker, and I measure my actions (political/interpersonal/ethical) in part against the standards of those who have come before us in the Society, as well as my consciousness of the inner light.

It provides conceptual support for my ethics and behaviours, though I may have developed these similarly without any experience of Quakerism

It reinforces my previous lifestyle

It underpins every part of my life

It used to have much more of an impact.

It's probably the other way around - most of my own personality, values and choices were fairly clear to me before I came to Quakers. But I do like the fact that most of those aspects of me are generally aligned with Quakers.

It's who I am rather than whether I am a Quaker to a large extent

Just listened to an exposition of 'mindfulness' and realized that people are reinventing the wheel again. Being aware of what all you do is a vital part of being a Quaker to me.

Living simply. Being kind and helpful with a smile

Many of the Quaker values are already a part of who I am. Some of the Quaker values such as simplicity are hard to live by in today's society. For example having many electronic devices or wanting more is not living simply but it's acceptable in society to have many electronic devices and they are becoming more essential to everyday life.

Mindful sufficiency is becoming more important to me as I age.

My intention to live simply prompted my decision to become an attender, which supports my intention to live simply.

My interpretation of the testimonies (simplicity, peace, integrity, community and equality) affect all aspects of my life e.g. whether I use a car or public transport, how I respond to news of violence, etc., how I respond to other people in everyday life.

My spiritual values shape my daily choices and purpose in life.

My spirituality affects my approach to every part of my life, being a Quaker is my current spiritual family

My understanding of Quakerism is that we (for a relatively new Quaker to use the term 'we' is a bit earth shattering...a good/inclusive feeling) strive to adhere to Jesus' suggestion to not judge and to love...we strive to love not only all people but the earth - therefore, it is important to shop wisely, vote for the good of all (especially vulnerable people and to protect the earth), and try to limit what we purchase (especially when purchasing from countries we know abuse workers).

No, not much definite Quaker influence. Only in so far as Quaker values arise out of 2000 odd years of Christian practice. Actually I find the intricacies of Quaker "process" boring. I was never a good 'meeting' person in my previous life. Perhaps it would be different if I were being bought up RC these days. As it is at 76 I have not got the mindset of a 'born' Quaker or those who come to Quakers and find the processes lovely and satisfying.

Not as much as I wish it to be.

Not consciously ----

Not sure that I would identify myself as Quaker

One of the aspects of Quakerism that spoke to me was the sense of 24/7 'living the ideals'. I don't mean that I stop ever time and think what would a Quaker do. I just try to be the best I can be, and make decisions from a place of light and caring..

Part of my Quaker commitment is to try live a live according to the Testimonies

Perhaps being a Quaker reflects my everyday life?

Contributions: I give a tithe to outside charities but feel that we (Q's) are so low in memberships we should sell our regional premises and use the resulting funds to hire premises and invested income for greater outreach

Quaker values do.

Quakerism becomes a way of life constantly and consciously affecting thoughts and actions

Quakers do not encourage narcissism. We are encouraged by each other to be kind to everyone and every thing, the planet included. I make my decisions based on the benefit of all of us, not just me. I learned this by being a Quaker.

Simplicity in choices, limiting consumption, 'green' choices

The constant challenge to live up to the testimonies. I also feel that I need to act with integrity not just because it is the right thing to do but because it is important to honour the Quaker brand - my co-workers know that I am a Quaker.

The influence is not conscious, but I hope all my decisions are affected by my values.

The philosophy provides support in aspect of how I try to live

The Principal of your actions not doing harm to others

The Quaker beliefs sit well with me even though I no longer attend my small local group. I find I can do my devotions alone and feel happiest in my garden communing with the God of my heart.

The Quaker Way is important to me - also moderation in most things that affect the world

The testimonies.

The testimony of simplicity has always been an important guide, and I have concerns for Earthcare and social justice

They way I think influences the way I act, which I think is true of all people

Think about what I buy and if I really need it. Have learnt to live much more simply.

This is a chicken and egg question for me - my values prior to becoming a Quaker were pretty much Quaker values - which contributed much to my feeling of 'Coming Home'

Through the Quaker Testimonies of Peace, Social Justice and Truth

To be environmentally responsible To asses poorer countries (eg, coffee) No cruelty to animals

To keep things simple

To the extent that my identity as a Quaker agrees with my attempts and successes in following Love and Truth.

Truthfulness, inclusiveness, gender balance, simpler living, mindful simplicity,

Valuing the God within in making decisions, in speaking up, in intervening in a quarrel before it becomes a serious; and asking question as to how one's life style can contribute to world peace.

Well! I don't know. It would be best to ask others what they think about me. But basically, I live simply, I guess I try to be Quakerly.

What happens in meeting for worship is foundational to my life.

What I buy, how I vote, my approach to the world.

What is the purpose of this question? It is so vague as to be unanswerable.

When I talk to non-Quaker friends, I can see ways that I respond to issues in ways that are different from the way I would think or respond if I were not influenced by my Quaker practice and others' Quaker practice.

While I am not a profoundly active Quaker. Being a Quaker is a constant reminder of my need to attend to the mystery and be open to the still small voice of the Other.

Would have done the same anyway.

Yes I try to invest and buy ethically and reduce my consumption, recycle etc. but it is often so difficult to do so consistently and Information is often contradictory.

Appendix 19. Additional comments on Jesus (n=85)

"A" son of Godde. "A" saviour. "A" person. "A" "human touching Godde.

A child of God (though he did not use that term) as we all are, who knew from an early age that he was a child of God, and who lived that relationship to the full.

A child of god, as we all are...or 'just a person', but all people are special

A fictional character - in the same way that Macbeth might be seen as a fictional character for example. He is a real historical figure but Shakespeare - and the Bible - have made him something else.

A good person/leader.

A great friend

A great teacher

A historic figure

A Jewish man. Who believed in the messiah's coming with a passion? So what he is supposed to have taught depends on you view of the man. In any case this is a man than stood for what he believed in.

A leader and friend

A man with special qualities whose teachings have been much abused. A template. An idea which can be found in other systems of belief. Universal.

A model of how to live and love in the world

A para-historical 'presence'

A particular exemplar of a human who was able to live continuously in the sense of connectedness with the "Great Spirit"

A person whose self-definition and wisdom arises from an understanding of and relationship with his God

A practitioner of inclusion in a difficult and exclusionary world.

A radical Jew

A really great human who accepted others, but not above other people in any way other than that he is an example from whom we can learn

A spiritual person who lived long ago.

A teacher of nonviolent change

A very helpful metaphor and inward figure/guide - not literally anything to me. I've never known and never will know exactly who and what he was historically, and I no longer need to know. He's a metaphorical representation of extraordinary truth and love for me.

A window on to God ...or a window through which we see the positive possibilities of becoming fully human I think there are other such 'windows' however my roots are within the Christian tradition and I am very proud of the best in this tradition and for that matter I am very proud of Jesus the Jewish teacher and my big brother in human living.

A wise teacher.

A wonderful prophet

An extraordinary human being imbued with the spirit of God

And responding to same very fully as a man of his time. as i believe in reincarnation, I easily believe he was a pretty advanced soul before that time around.

And the older I get the more I love him

Another Buddha

As a Muslim, I believe Jesus Christ was a prophet - another in a long line of prophets whom God sends when we need help.

Avoid senseless definitions. I don't know who or what he was. I feel the spirit of divine love in the words attributed to him. I seek a present connection with his love every day.

Bearing in mind my reservations about God terminology I find this to be helpful. "The incarnation is true, not of Christ exclusively, but of Man universally, and God everlastingly. God bends into the human to dwell there and we become visible manifestations of the divine" Paraphrased from the writings of James Martineau. Read more at

http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/james_martineau.html#FvtDqFEWCFyTqWHR.99 "The Incarnation is true, not of Christ exclusively but of humanity universally and

Christ is an important part of my spirituality but I am not able to briefly explain what I mean

Clearly some people see him as one or all of these things. I think the use of his name has so many hackneyed and unintelligent contexts that it's better not to use it at all. this doesn't mean that I don't use

the Biblical stories in my life. See above

For me Jesus is just what he said he is - The Way, The Truth, The Life.

He sought to save the world but did not have the language or analytical methods for doing so

He was probably just a kind soul and when he died they made up all these stories about him. He was aware of injustice I think and that is why people were drawn to him but in saying this did he really exist I don't know.

Historical figure

I am not certain that Jesus ever actually existed. Is he a construct of human evolutionary need?

I am of the opinion that Jesus very likely did not even exist but is an amalgam of various traditions

I believe that Jesus of Nazareth is God incarnate.

I do not find these descriptions of Jesus really appropriate. It is a knowledge beyond understanding or a presence beyond words

I have always had misgivings about the doctrine of redemption and original sin. These misgivings have hardened into total repudiation of John Naylor's provocative ride into Bristol on a donkey. Even Jesus was fearful and doubted the strength of his faith. Yet despite this and the body that died the love he practised and preached has lasted over 2000 years

I have read Thomas Paine, "The age of Reason." This is an argumentative takedown of both new and old testament of the bible. Since then, I progressed to point of view, the matter is not to be discussed.

I think Jesus may be part mythical, part a construct from people's ethical understandings, and may have been quite different to the way he is represented in the present Bible. I think it is even possible he may not have existed as a human. I think we should also be aware of how Jesus is portrayed in Islamic and Mandaen scripture.

I think Jesus was an ancient mystic Jew that knew the mind of God and had some of the power of that mind.

I'm not convinced he ever existed

I'm pretty sure I don't fully understand the meaning of Christ but I'm working on improving my knowledge!

In the Church of Christ and Baptist Churches, Christ is the Son of God and became Man to die on the cross for 'our' sins; however, I understand there is historical research which says the current Jesus is a 'myth' or 'construct', so I would definitely lie some guidance and study around that

Jesus apparently exemplified the "spirit of Christ" as the Jews understood it.

Jesus by his attitude, words, and acts has brought succour, hope, challenge, and peace to mankind, and therein could be regarded as a 'Saviour'.

Jesus of Nazareth was a high representation of "The Christ". I believe the current Churches have moved from seeing Jesus as directing them to God - to one of the worship of the cult of the personality of Jesus - most evident in the Pentecostal movement or the "Jesus" churches

Jesus teachings as related in the Gospels are very important to me and I consider them essential to me as guides for how I live. It isn't important to me whether or not Jesus is "the son of God" - I consider he reflects how we should live and that is enough for me.

Jesus was an extraordinary Jewish spiritual teacher of his own time and place. His teaching is still so very relevant, since our situation is very similar: living in a brutal "Roman Empire" with many religious people and leaders obsessed with doctrine and pure correct practices, rather than experiencing the spiritual reality of love and peace.

Jesus, as said the Apostle Paul, is "the first of many brothers".

My older brother.

Not sure there is any historical evidence to support the existence of Jesus of Nazareth. Nice story - sounds like a pleasant man.

One of a very small number of people (the Buddha is another) who have provided enduring guidance to people trying to understand and live by the spiritual force that sustains a viable way of relating to others and the world

One of many spiritual teachers sent within a specific culture to remind humans of how they can live in this world with a consciousness of God's presence.

Part of me loves and embraces the traditional Christian dogmas about Christ. I respect such views held on Him as such. However on a deeper level for me Christ expresses how we are all potentially God incarnate. Christ is this potential fully realized teaching us to equally fully realize it within us.

Perhaps the best example of living the correct and wise way and giving hope in that good leads to worthwhile.

Probably has been assumed miraculous due to myths and legends over the years after his death
Probably the greatest share of God's life that anyone has had

Really not sure what I believe

Social activist

Somebody to whom I can direct my evening meditations, which include gratitude, apologies for backsliding, falling short.

Something's gone wonky with that last category.

The best that mankind can aspire to

The Eternal Christ, which is our capacity for knowing the Divine and the source of love and goodness

The person in history who most embodies who God is.

The son of a non-existent entity. The positive I can take is the good ethical/moral messages. Shouldn't need to be biblical based though.

The Spirit incarnate

The term 'Saviour' is a difficult one. It's not 'saviour' as evangelical Christianity would have it, the idea is more subtle. Perhaps the term 'the Way' would be closer for me.

There is not enough historically accurate philology to venture an opinion. My best guess is that he was the preceptor of a new sect of Judaism, which opposed Roman rule.

There was a historical Jesus. A charismatic teacher - what would have been called a 'prophet' in his day.

This was a difficult one for me. In me exists a knowledge of Jesus as the Christ, the son of God, from my upbringing as a Baptist, and I do not reject this particular truth, because the life of Jesus, and the messages that he brings are still meaningful to me. However as a Quaker I do question this truth and wonder what it means in terms of my current faith. I do not expect to tie this answer down now or perhaps ever. Perhaps it is like the way I honour most laws in society but no I am prepared to break them if I need to ethically. My relationship with who Jesus is/was or might be is like that.

To me, Christ is a major historic figure who had importance politically. The Jewish hierarchy were in a state of subservience to the Roman occupiers of the land and appear to have been useful to them in maintaining civil order. He disrupted that orderly compliance by pointing out the flaws in the administration of the Jewish structure and as such the Jews decided that he had to go.

We all have "that of God" within us; but Jesus is different from us in degree, not in kind. He has more of God than the rest of us.

We are all God made human, and a tree is God made a tree and Jesus had the wisdom to see it and the courage to announce it, as have other teachers in other religions and spiritual traditions at different times.

What we strive for

While I am not always aware of this, Jesus is a living presence. A guide, comforter, always present if I open to that presence, I can turn away but it's still there.

Why do you assume that if someone believes in God they automatically believe in Jesus and then in these terms? Number 40 - why not all of the above? I can't help but feel that I am opening myself up for ridicule if I say anything except a humanist response.

Wise

You have no idea at all how much I wish that I had met Jesus. The closest I can get is John's gospel

Appendix 20. Additional comments on prayer (n=54)

A last resort when I am feeling powerless to change something terrible in my life.

All of these at different times.

An expression of hope

At a particular time it could easily be any of the above.

Being aware of others needs.

Being aware of others, the world, events, self and the connectivity of creation. Holding this in the light. Waiting. Re-balancing.

Being aware of the presence. Seeking guidance and direction in resolving issues

Being open to the 'unthinkable'

Being present in the moment.

Don't know what the last is but something of it is evident for me in some meetings for Worship and in some situations in the environment.

For question 41, if there was a box to comment I would have said that none of them are something I specifically believe in as like absolutes. But there were elements of some that brush my sense of the universe. Not Karma but a sense that what we do does have an effect. Not the idea of actual contacting with spirits of the dead but often a sense of carrying that loved one with me or at times almost feeling like they are present at an important moment.

God is the energy of the universe - he/she/it. Is us and we are of it.

Gratitude

Have a bit of a block where the word prayer is concerned

Holding an attitude of loving gratitude towards self and others

Holding others in spiritual awareness

Holding others in the light

Holding others in the light - bit like Avalokiteshvara in Buddhism

Holding people in the light, including self

I believe in the words of Paul the Apostle about praying unceasingly. I do this in a number of ways: the Jesus Prayer, the practice of the presence of God, chatting away constantly and accepting stillness when it comes upon me.

I do not "pray"

I do not believe in prayers of supplication. I believe in giving thanks to the wonder of it all.

I do not pray - apart from occasionally sitting still to draw my thoughts and intentions / attention back to people and things that are important.

I don't pray

I don't use the term prayer very often, but what I've ticked is how I understand the concept of prayer. I do find myself saying, "Thank you God," sometimes. Please note that for Question 40, I simply don't know but I remain open. I don't have any personal concept or experience of a Devil or Hell.

I don't use the word..

I have hated the idea of "prayer" since I became sentient. "They" were always "praying for me". How hateful! On the rare occasions that I am unfortunate enough to be asked to "pray" for something or for someone, I shrivel up inside and regret their words. Nevertheless, I am prepared to say that I shall pray for them if it seems that it is important for them to be "prayed for", but I do it in the knowledge that what that person thinks about prayer may have been strengthened by my agreement and thereby supported and held In The Light.

I practice mindfulness often and meditation, mindfulness and prayer tend to blend in my practice. Prayer is usually more personal.

Includes tele-healing, intuition at a high level

It's very personal and quite different for many of us

Lectio Divina is my only way of prayer now!

Letting go and awaiting for the spirit or whatever - I don't give it a name as it isn't necessary just be.

My Church of Ireland origins are with me in that the five parts of prayer always occur. Praise, Worship, Confession, Intercession, Thanksgiving.

My Father used the phrase 'telling the Almighty the news' I think this is very apt.

One's life can be a form of prayer in itself

Placing my life in God's hands

Please note that when I answer question 43 below I am referring to the meanings I indicate in 41.

Prayer = Focus + Imagination + Intent Worship = Being worshipful + Community + Prayer

Prayer is being open to the Spirit: "Thy will be done". It is not about asking for what you want, but giving in to what is right.

Prayer is Being with God.

Prayer, for me, is not so much asking for things - even Peace - but just the tuning in, the entrainment to use a modern word, to the Presence of God, which is everywhere, all the time - but which I, alas, forget so often!

Regarding Question 40 above: I just don't know about most of them, rather than believing or not believing in them.

Sadhana- A Way to God- a journey; a daily awareness

Seeking forgiveness

Seeking understanding of what life is about. Waiting to be told what is what and how to proceed on life's path.

The above does not refer to the "shopping list" in Q34

The above questions unanswered, should not be thought about, as a diversion from concentration on behaviour in this world.

The previous Qs are v difficult to answer

There is what happens occasionally, which is a tuning in to consciousness all around, and there are the more 'barren' times when it's me talking to God or seeking enlightenment and not necessarily feeling that anything is happening. All of this is part of a healing process.

Trying to find an alternative way

What if prayer is understood as the practice of the presence of the spirit within all things?

With all these supernatural type beliefs I go with Augustine who said 'When we know all the laws of the universe there will be no such thing as a miracle' or a whole lot of these other beliefs too in my opinion.

Worrying, manipulating, waste of time, selfish

Appendix 21. Additional comments on whether prayer can affect the way things are on earth (n=154)

? Sometimes with a positive result it is hard to know if the stream of consciousness has helped to bring about the result. Certainly I have had some serendipitous experiences

"Ask, and it shall be given, if you are faithful in the ways of the Lord...." I have experienced that

A friend of mine annually attends a quiet yoga seminar for 4 days in Sydney, the records show that crime in the area is reduced during those days

A group of people gathered together with a common goal may be able to translate their thinking (praying) into action, hopefully, in such a way that it is for the common good

A sense of gratitude and purpose and curiosity and generosity change a person's approach to life.

A sharing of energy from prayer can create an atmosphere for affecting thoughts and events

All of these practices can and do influence how we behave towards one another - and can and do influence daily behaviour and decision-making. This absolutely changes the way things are here on earth.

Answered by divine presence and power; expands love, compassion, peace; strengthens right action

At least it changes my consciousness, which affects by relationships with others and nature

Because it changes me, and sometimes I am given hope I cannot explain, hope and peace

Because it changes the one who prays - and in turn affects those around us.

Because of the change inside of me when I pray

Because prayer can change people and then they start changing things in life

Because prayer is loving thought, and any loving thought can have a beneficial effect and is never wasted

Because the more we are at peace with God's will the more wholesome we will be with our neighbours and the world in which we dwell, and hence changing the way things are accordingly compared to when we are less at peace with God's will.

Because thinking and imagining do effect the way we act

Being on the receiving end of prayers given by others, is a profound experience.

By affecting the way we think about things and creating a positive shared energy.

By changing my attitude from anxiety to non anxiety

Can give understanding and mindfulness - a source of comfort and strength.

Cannot say specifically - just a deep belief that small things lead to bigger transformations

Changes my mindset

Changes the perception of the person praying

Collective prayers are more powerful and will lift consciousness for mankind.

Current research on this sort of thing needs encouragement and supervision

Doctor Larry Dossey, in the US, and also the TM people in Washington DC, have done experiments with this, which prove that Prayer does - or can - change things. Also in my personal experience - but not always. I've heard it said, 'Be careful what you pray for: you may get it.' The best prayer, I believe, is THY will be Done..

Enough believers thinking in a sure direction may collectively change things in the right way

For many good people, prayer is a technique or mechanism relevant for them and leading them singularly or together with others, to "DO GOOD things". But then, maybe some, like Bush Junior, think their prayer tells them to invade Iraq, . . . need I say more?

Give comfort and strength to survive huge challengers.

Giving us strength and solace and security. Occasionally I believe that prayer can change outcomes, but generally natural laws will prevail.

Guidance can come and the possibility of right action

Healing

Holding others in the light of loving gratitude

Holding people or situations in the light is powerful, people can feel uplifted, more positive, loved

I believe collective energy

I believe in a way in destiny, but we need to pray for truth and light and not for what we want.

I believe that humans' shared spirit can be affected by the consciousness of others.

I believe that our thoughts (prayers) affect our bodies and way beyond our bodies - that who we are in any.

I believe that people working together are powerful

I believe that prayer affects our intentionality, and therefore our actions. If we imbue our lives with a sense of the Divine, then indeed we will follow a gospel of Love in our daily life. I believe this is the grain of the universe, and those who act otherwise suffer through their own and others' violence.

I believe that the power of prayer can sustain and transform us.

I can't describe it, it's one of those unanswered things but I do believe prayer heals; sometimes even when the person is unaware you're praying for them.

I do believe that prayer - constant relationship with God - changes things for myself and for others. One of the things I love about prayer is that it is subversive. No one has to know what I am up to - but I can place myself and my requests and my thoughts before God and it has amazing results. Through this constant personal relationship with God I believe I have gained insight into the workings of the universe for all of us - what can happen when we truly love God and love our neighbour as ourselves. It is truly a conversion experience - a turning around of the head and thoughts and the way one looks at the universe.

I do not believe that "prayer" changes things per se because I do not believe in a deity that intervenes in human affairs. Nevertheless, I believe, and have witnessed that "prayer", that is the deliberate and directed consciousness of the non- material can change things. This is summed up in the statement, Prayer doesn't change things, but prayer changes people and people change things. I also believe that "God" does not have any hands but the hands of people.

I feel that I have prayers answered, not always, but there is a definite sense of someone listening. I'm not that good at listening in return, so this is humbling.

I find it reinforcing and supportive and it strengthens me to change things; therefore I would say prayer affects the way things are. I think I would burn out otherwise.

I have experienced powerful leadings, and found that my life has opened up as a result. Barriers were taken away and it felt like a miracle. How this happens is a mystery to me.

I have heard from Friends that they are aware when they have been held in the Light.

I have seen it, I have family members who have seen it (have to hurry at this point, I have to get back to work - had not realized such a long survey - sorry).

I pray for relief and I'm granted relief

I really find these questions problematic. See previous question...if understood in this way, one would hope so.

I think it can alter energy

I think it can be time alone to work things out...that can make a difference to the individual and the people around them, and sometimes to their actions in the wider world. It can be a bit like journal writing... communicating with the inner teacher, the deepest part of ourselves, even when people have a traditional notion that they are communicating with someone transcendent. When people say, 'I'm praying for you', I can interpret that to mean I am in their thoughts and in hard times, that can make me feel supported and loved. That makes a difference

I think it can, but not sure why or how. I know from experience that the presence of one enlightened person can improve the health, mental or physical, of others around. Praying for peace leads us to act for peace, which contributes, in however small a way, to a more peaceful world or situation

I think prayer affects the person praying, in that they can then look differently and act differently.

i think we are all irradiated with beneficence, and opening ourselves to that helps greatly. When we 'hold others in the light' we are hopefully concentrating their dose, and making it easier for them to open to it.

I'm really not sure about an interventionist God; I think an IG is subtle at best. I think in terms of tuning in to the divine will, or realising our true nature as spiritual beings in a material world- that's mainly what prayer is for to me.

If done with and open well meaning mind and heart it can improve people's lives, which can improve life on earth.

If in tune with the Spirit, can affect change.

If one holds people/things/situations in the Light, one is expressing Love. If one keeps Love at the forefront of one's life then one is creating an example. If everyone did this there would be no more suffering.

If prayer affects the way I live there will be a flow on effect, a small one. I don't believe asking God to stop a war will have an effect.

If we all prayed on the same thing then perhaps we can affect it.

If we could term mediation prayer - then I do believe it could.

If you wait for the leading then the way forward becomes clear

In a very local way, ie. it has an impact on the person praying.

In my experience Holding in the Light has been a transforming power in some specific circumstances as well as in general use.

In some cosmic way, I believe it can shift people and therefore the way events unfold.

Inspiration and Coincidence See my paper on "Why Didn't God Stop the Holocaust") Reg Naulty, Australian Rationalist

It affects how I feel and others feel. So it changes everything.

It affects me and I am on earth. So who knows?

It alters our own mindset, opens us up to the action of God's grace. It releases spiritual energy.

It can affect my relationship and therefore my actions

It can affect people I have a close connection with - some sort of telepathic aspect. I am not sure it can impact at a bigger picture level, probably not

It can affect the way I am on earth. I don't think God is a great interventionist. Mostly I think it is over to us.

It can change the way you think

It can enable us to see our connection with all people and break down the us and them headspace that causes many of our individual and world problems

It can help me to see a way to create healing

It can make people better, raise hope, heal, and encourage. It is a positive force for good

It can provide support and strength to people during difficult times, and I speak here from personal experience.

It can provide sustenance to a group of people applying effort for good. Unfortunately (as with some groups of Jihadists) it can provide similar sustenance for evil. This is a major reason that Quaker rejection of dogmatism and its attempt to find that of good in all creeds is so important to me.

It changes me if it's needed and allows me to see an answer.

It changes us.

It creates a space in me for other wisdom or realisations to become clear. Perhaps this is the voice of God, but I don't know. Also, I sense that intercession genuinely occurs as a result of a person's prayers at times.

It guides towards the right path and affects peoples' actions. Communal prayer creates community and common purpose.

It helps me to be still and focus. To be open to the Way. In prayer I can listen. If it changes me it changes everything.

It helps reconcile me to what is and to look for positive change

It is inexplicable, but experience has shown this is the case.

It may change the person who is doing the praying, allowing to accept what they can't change or motivate them to action to change what they may be able to influence

It persuades people to act in a more Christian fashion or can do

It's about involvement. In some way, prayer involves us and God together. How this happens, and whether it has an impact in a way that we can see, I do not know.

I've had the experience of bringing difficulties into the Light, and finding that in Fox's words, they "fly away." I am changed, and am free to live fully, unburdened by what took me to prayer.

Many times when I commend a situation to God's love and care, things seem to resolve - often in ways I would not have imagined

No

No

No but it can change the way we experience/accept things

Not by any supernatural means, but by altering behaviour of the individual - leading to more considered and consistent behaviour

Not in a "supernatural" sense - only as reflection of people realigning their attention towards people and things that need care.

Not in this survey #43 reply: several times a day

Not really but I believe there is power in prayer. It's important for the individual (me) to pray - it changes

perspective and can make one more open.

Not sure if what I do would be called prayer, or meditation or worship and indeed if it matters.

Not sure, but if I pray, things happen.

One's life changes and becomes a state of "peace of mind"

Only as far as people who pray for something often do all they can to help that happen

Only if people allow spiritual change in themselves and act accordingly for good

Only if prayer is put into action

Only in as much as it affects the way I am and my connection to the divine and then I act to change things. Prayer does not cure the sick, free prisoners or feed the hungry directly. I do not believe it works miracles like that and yet Miracles happen. Deep is the mystery of godliness.

Only in that they can change the way you see the world, and with meditation and stillness you can change the world

Our consciousness has been shown to affect the material world numerous times and in ways as yet inexplicable - maybe never to be explicable.

Positive thought is effective

Prayer affects the way people think and behave. The changes in behaviour will affect the ways things are on earth.

Prayer affects the way Prayer affects the way I feel and behave and that in turn affects people around me and the way I interact with the earth I live on.

Prayer as in communion with the divine (and not soliciting prayer) will raise the vibration of love on a personal and interpersonal level which will spread across the world and can theoretically cause miracles to happen.

Prayer can strengthen me and enable me to be my best self in a difficult situation, and it always results in a direction through a confusing one.

Prayer can support one in putting one's own opinions or feelings aside for the sake of others, and this letting go of ego is welcome.

Prayer can work through people, changing the way we see things and behave

Prayer can't affect the physical things of life, but can affect the behaviour of those who pray.

Prayer changes my perception and attitudes to the world.

Prayer changes the person who prays

Prayer changes understanding, not physical reality.

Prayer doesn't change God, it changes me.

Prayer for me is the power of positive thinking

Prayer helps guide my daily actions, and those actions are the imprints my belief makes on the world

Prayer helps me centre my life in God. As a consequence, my life and actions can affect others.

Prayer is asking for alignment with the Divine/ universe. When we pray we are in a sense talking to the higher aspect of ourselves.

Prayer is both a Noun and a Verb - it is an action and can have both positive and negative consequences (see the article: 'can prayer harm?')

Prayer is unseen.. Positive prayer carries an energy of love, trust, faith, healing, peace, compassion .. All people and situations have their mission.. The whole picture I can not see, so I pray that the outcome of my prayer is in accordance with Divine Will

Prayer means we believe feel commit to something as important. When enough folk do this I believe it can change things. But it can start with one.

Prayer needs to be "in action". It is the "deeds" of the group eg a silent vigil that changes things - not just words.

Rather like telepathy. Can inspire action. Can stimulate awareness, alertness

Regular practice has a beneficial affect on me. Does not change external realities.

Resolving issues in one through prayer can clarify and stimulate

Sometimes I actually feel a warmth and energy pouring into me. I believe I can also open my self and send that energy to others and to the earth/living things. I have felt uplifted by the prayers of others for me. I regularly send Love/Light to other areas of the World, places of crisis or natural disaster. I regularly ask that illicit drugs not be available throughout the world along with a group sending out Light and joining on this issue. I constantly hear of drug raids, arrests, demise of drug dealers. More than before I began

regularly praying about this. It may be also due to increased technology, cooperation, etc but who is to say that holding in the Light has not assisted this to be possible? The witness of Nelson Mandela and others has had amazing impact on the World.

Sometimes prayer can make you feel better. I doubt if it has any more practical effect.

Spread real spiritual energy.

The collective and concentrated energy of many can manifest events and outcomes beyond what can be rationally explained

The experience of holding someone in the Light has been supportive of loved ones. Being held in the Light has been a centering and calming experience

Though I think it can change me

Through a considered decision to act on the result of meditation on an issue.

Through a personal change or action

Through collective belief (which can of course be misguided) that prayer is potent

Through community consensus

Through human action, including my own.

Through the impact between, and then for people to be empowered by prayer to work for change

Turning in to my own inner wisdom, finding stillness, affects my behaviour toward self and others positively. Similarly, if enough others have confidence individually but especially collectively positive outcomes can be achieved.

We all creative powers and prayer for things from us individuals does have some creative power. And I ask myself: "Does Godde need my help or my compliance". So I don't prayer "for" things; I pray "in" Godde "with" things!

Well, I think by prayer we consciously unite with the river of spirit, and thus we strengthen it, and we can send it to specific people, which can help them.

What I call prayer is to come into awareness of the power of Love, to recognise Love in everyone, especially people who I do not experience as lovable. This practice changes the way I see people and I believe that the way I see people is reflected in the way others behave in relation to me, themselves and others.

What we pay attention to in life thrives. Prayer is a kind of intense loving focus, and it changes us, who pray, and the world around us.

When I pray, say 'we need a bit more money' often someone phone and offer work -- that could be explained away as coincidence, except that both my husband and I have a sense of being 'looked after', having those things we need provided as we need them, that God is for us rather than against us. I have a sense that though flawed and inconsistent in my beliefs and practice, I have been greatly blessed and I am grateful.

Yes in so far as attitudinal changes in us make a real difference in the world (cosmos).

Yes, but only if prayer means action.

You have given something your very best offering.

Appendix 22. Additional comments on the Bible (n=73)

'A useful teaching text' - but with caveats. I understand the Bible to be a collection of stories that reflect generations of thought on the nature of God and human life - not an infallible authority, but important nonetheless.

A book by man and man's institutions

A book of historical belief in God. A testament of Christ's life and teachings

A book that many believe in but which I do not find helpful.

A collection of a people's most valued texts, whether for historical, religious, or artistic reasons. As such some of the texts are without a doubt if not inspired, certainly inspiring.

A collection of books by people seeking to express their experience of God and to report it as best they could. The Hebrew Scriptures tell the story of the Jewish people - there is much to learn in these stories and myths, but they are not literally true. The New Testament contains peoples' experiences of who Jesus was for them, the story of his life as they have had it passed on to them. It contains profound insights in to his teachings and what it means to be his disciple. It is not biography as we know it, but this does not mean that it contains no truth about who he is for us.

A combination of history and myth. Most of the stories were written down long after they are supposed to have happened, having been passed on in the oral tradition. There's not much literal truth left, I would think.

A helpful guide to understanding what moved Early Friends. I am particularly interested in isolating the 'primitive church' from subsequent layers of Christianity and power-seeking. I believe Early Friends were doing the same.

A means for the authors to convey what they saw as important or relevant life metaphors.

A narrative of the conflict between Empire and Creation Spirituality.

A part of the puzzle to find our way "home" (?!?)...

A series of metaphorical stories for guidance in living.

A very mis-translated and misunderstood selective set of texts. I believe that it needs to be read at a metaphysical level and not be used as a sole source of wisdom or inspiration.

A wisdom text

Again, jargon words get in the way? Please note: in Q.43: I'm not assuming that prayer includes meditation, whilst in an earlier answer; I indicated that for me, prayer is (equivalent?) to meditation?

An attempt to represent in writing the mystical essence of living in grace

An avenue to spiritual understandings

An infrequently read book that often provokes strong negative views in those who do not read it

As a guide to thinking and opening to the spirit.

But also, is the Koran and Talmud?

Contrived by men to control and to justify brutality to the animals, women, children, the credulous and the earth. A 'cover' for people with mental health issues to continue to behave madly

Distilled wisdom for whatever level we can understand.

Full of metaphors/ a book of it time open to new ways of thinking

God is progressively revealed culminating in the New Testament

Goodness knows what the original bible contained. The parable of The Good Samaritan says it all.

History, poetry, myth, metaphor, allegory, all containing elements of "truth" without being literally true.

How could something written only by men - contain a guide for humankind? Some of the stories are useful but overall far too dominating.

I do not read the Bible.

I feel the same reverence for the Bible as for the Qur'an as for the Guru Granth Sahib as for the Bahagavad Gita, as for every leaf on the tree above me as I lie on my back marvelling at the wonder of the tens of thousands of leaves and leaflets mediating between me and the sky, between Banksy and this century, between Dasein and Finnegan's Wake, between parent and child, between empathy, love, quarks and the Higgs Boson.

I generally look only at the New Testament. The Old Testament I have written off as not relevant or useful. It is the work of men and warped by evil intent. I listen for and find reflections of the spirit and light and live that I experience now

I have respect for the Bible in areas that others find difficult. I have this respect because I respect the faith communities that have kept this book/these books for us all down the millennia. I believe there are insights to be gained from these books.

I pay little attention to the Old Testament, which is largely Jewish history and myth

I see it as a metaphor and attempt to explain the inexplicable by a particular group of people at particular times in their history, it shows the gradual understanding of God to the writers. It is also very political with some of the stories written when Jews were in exile. Gospels also political and aimed at different groups eg Jews in Greece and Asia Minor, Romans etc

I think it's a very good book, often misinterpreted and used for less than good purposes

I think that the Bible, esp, the gospels, are the closest of the main sacred texts to history. I have a slightly above average knowledge for my generation of the Bible, and I do read it regularly. Quite often I find the words of the Bible, and some people's interpretation, to be inspiring. The appalling bits I just disregard, like weeds in the garden. As a Quaker community I think we would benefit from more critical study of the Bible

I would say "the word of God as experienced by its writers." I would also distinguish between the Bible as the "word", i.e. symbols on paper or papyrus, subject to the interpretation of human beings (and also subject to misspelling, bad handwriting and bad translations) and the "Word of God" as the Living Word of God.

In the OT there is a lot of theology, eg what is God up to in these events

Inspirational at times- food for thought. Can offer new ways to view issues. Too frequently manipulated for purposes of the interpreter of the original writings or stories.

Inspired by the Spirit but deeply imbued by historical context

It also happens to be the fullest account of how people experienced Jesus and chose to respond to that - even given all the riders we must put on that.

It contains passages of great wisdom and also some terrible stories, eg Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac. A good mirror of the various aspects of human nature

It is a beautiful spiritual book rich in man's experiences of this world in history, which can also be applied in various ways to man's modern existence spiritual condition. I don't believe it is the last final word of God or literal word (literal in some parts and not in others), yet it speaks so powerfully I can understand why others do.

It is an amazing record of the largely Jewish people's views of themselves, their relationships, the challenges of living with the reality of death and other suffering, and their search for meaning and purpose in their lives

It is everything and nothing.

It speaks and reflects Christian and Jewish culture

Its writers' experiences.

Literal translations are often laughable. Unfortunately the Bible falls into this.

My answers reflect both/and, not either/or. In other words, the Bible contains history and myth and stories and metaphors and analogies (over a range of centuries and from different theological perspectives). It is authoritative, but not definitively so. It is certainly not inerrant and must be read within its writers' historical and epistemological contexts.

Question needs qualification what is meant by myth, if Myth...the great underpinning stories of a culture
Yes

See previous answers

Some peoples interpretations of the stories in some religions, helpful for some teachings but also not something by which to entirely live your life

Source of good ideas

Spiritual and ethical wisdom

Spiritually inspired writing

The Bible is among several Holy Books of other religions, which contain truths and rubbish. It is not the only one.

The Bible is an historical document. The carnage in the OT one would not want to encourage (take a look at the Middle East now; much the same except they have more efficient weapons). The ethical material in the NT is more congenial. (Did you pre-test this terrible questionnaire?)

The Bible is an important cultural artefact, which underpins much of Western thought. Nowadays many believers or people of faith including me are quite ignorant of our religious origins.

The Bible is both a beautiful and horrible book. It contains the Word of God as well as terrible stories of

genocide, ethnic cleansing, rape, incest, adultery, murder and other horror stories. And yet few writings can surpass the opening of John's Gospel or the 23rd Psalm

The bible sheds light on the lives of groups of spiritual people.

The Bible, as with other seminal religious texts, collects the wisdom of eons of a particular people and as such allows us to reflect on our human experience and may have useful homilies and advice. However, decisions on how to live are very much present decisions, influenced by our lived experience, learning, and the promptings of inner truths in our hearts.

The experiences of the peoples of God, left for us to profit from (or not!) if we approach them with the guidance of the Indwelling Light

The fundamental teaching of Jesus was love, compassion, respect and caring for one another

The Old Testament is mainly history and teaching by experience and the new testament is teaching the power and morality of love

The original (now Catholic) church changed a lot. Before 440 CE, for example, reincarnation was believed by Christians; after that time it was a heresy. There are also a lot of other Gospels: of Judas, Mary Magdalene, Thomas, etc. which the church fathers decided to leave out of the bible.

The recollections of people who lived at the time. The outcome of specific decisions made by the Church about which stories and recollections and which version of the 'truth' would be published. In this way it is also a political document.

The stories, teachings and historical accounts have formed a basis for my Christian beliefs and life practice. I believe new revelation is still being given to us. There are many literal statements in the Bible that I do not support. A source of wisdom and inspiration.

The words of Jesus - the new commandments - the Lords Prayer and its deeper meaning - much in the Bible is history, and I suspect some is written with some bias

There may be more to be uncovered as Biblical scholarship, anthropology and other learnings combine

Ticks above refer to Old Testament. New Testament much more significant.

To me the bible is an important spiritual book to reflect on and having grown up in a Christian country it is the spiritual book I have most exposure to. I do not take it literally but believe the bible stories are useful to ponder on and stimulate me to reflect on my own spiritual path and choices.

Well it is many things, clearly part historical, part cultural, part literature/poetry, part imparting Christian principles. It is full of sound guidance and truth, a tool for life. But I don't think it should be used as a weapon.

Writings by men mostly, of their time, attempting to put into words what they themselves had experienced in their religious encounters with what they believed was a Divine power, and a person believed to be a true follower of God, in Jesus.

Written words are quite finite. Analysis and interpretation is also subject to the analyser or interpreter's. Clearly there are things in the Bible that are difficult. I definitely don't think it is a substitute

Appendix 23. Additional books Friends read to nurture their spiritual life (n=196)

"As a Man Thinketh" James Allen "Jonathan Living Seagull" David (?) Bach Various theosophical books and self-help or inspirational books.

12 Step recovery literature, A course in miracles literature, biblical and other books of spiritual guidance concepts and ideas, psychology and science concepts and ideas. Spong, listen to the Spirit of things on the radio, watch Compass on TV, enjoy anything that reinforces my spiritual connection with a power greater than myself and helps me to live the principles of the 12 Step fellowship which sit comfortable with Quaker principles: these are: Step One: Honesty Step Two: Hope Step Three: Faith Step Four: Courage Step Five: Integrity Step Six: Willingness Step Seven: Humility Step Eight: Self-discipline Step Nine: Love for others Step Ten: Perseverance Step Eleven: Spiritual Awareness Step Twelve: Service

A book of Quaker Readings. Friends Journal (Pennsylvania) Plus non-Quaker reading eg Henri Nouwen's "daily Bread, " "Thirty days with the Psalms"

A huge range of books on spirituality

A range of books by and about Quakers

A range of spiritual writers

A variety

A wide range of books written by and about Quakers. Far too many to list.

A wide range of mystical and spiritual books, mostly within the Christian and Buddhist traditions.

A wide range of secular literature

A wide range of theology books that provide new perspectives and diminish certainties

A wide variety of texts by a wide variety of wise and religious leaders: Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Jane Goodall, Martin Luther King Jr, Desmond Tutu, Wangari Maathai, Jim Henson, etc.

AA Big Book,

All of the above I dip into now and then. Sometimes read Daily readings of Quaker writers. Other writings by great human beings

Anything and everything that nurtures me

Anything from the Quaker library

Anything that comes up

Anything. These documents are just part of all the others.

At the moment I read a quite a bit of contemplative writing including Richard Rohr (Franciscan) Joan Chittister (Benedictine). I also read a little Sarah Bachelard. I am a regular returner to Anthony de Mello. I tend to re-read a number of Thich Nhat Hanh books, and I am dipping into some yogic literature (Light on Yoga by BKS Iyengar). I like Ben Pink Dandelion's writing, and have read one or two Rex Ambler books. I also read the Eremos magazine on an irregular basis and sometimes find some gems there.

Australian Quaker website and newsletters

Autobiographies and biographies

Bible admittedly only rarely. Some of the Swarthmore Lectures, writings of John MacMurray and others. Biographies of people whose lives have been inspiring.

Bible Reading Fellowship 'New Daylight' (daily readings and articles) Bush Church Aid Society 'Prayer Notes' Many on-line resources

Big book of Alcoholics Anonymous Deepak Chopra Various Hazeldon publications

Biographies and Autobiographies about people who have been inspired by God or served God. Ghandi for instance.

Biography/testimonies of early Quakers

Books about Nature

Books about personal experiences of the non-physical, and scientific enquiry into the non-physical.

Books by good psychics such as Sonia Choquette

Books by John Shelby Spong, and early Quakers' writings.

Books by Marcus Borg/ Karen Armstrong/ John Shelby Spong/ Tom Harpur etc.

Books by or about people I feel have achieved the peace and clarity that I'm searching for. E.g. Ramana Maharshi.

Books by religious writers.

Books by significant authors. At present these include Thomas Merton, Cynthia Bourgeault, Gerald May

and others.

Books I feel that relevant from the library

Books I hear about or are recommended by others.

Books often eg Parker Palmer

Books on Buddhism eg. Buddhism without belief; Confessions of a Buddhist atheist. Books on spirituality and ethics.

Books on philosophy. Auto/biographies

Books on Spiritual Regression eg. by Michael Newton - currently 'Your Soul's Gift - the healing power of the life you planned before you were born.' Robert Schwartz

Books on spirituality and poems.

Books on the testimonies eg. The Hidden Door, on voluntary simplicity

Books on theology, including on other faiths

Buddhist literature some poetry

Buddhist teaching eg Pema Chodra, biographies

Buddhist writings

By far the most liberating and nourishing material I have read for decades has been current channelled material - which in my experience generally corroborates other similar material, and also process theology.

Chiefly biographies

Church Live (website)

Communication with others rather than books.

Connection with others.

Cosmology and books by such as Thomas Berry, Arne Ness, Thomas Moore.

Current affairs and literature: Knox: Boom-the underground history of Australia from gold rush to GFC; Keneally: Daughters of Mars

Daily. Opening Doors Within by Eileen Caddy other book Anam Cara .. Tao te ching translated by Stephen Mitchell by John O'Donahue Arch Angel Oracle Cards by Doreen Virtue

De Numine (the journal of the Alister Hardy Society for the Study of Spiritual Experience)

Deep ecology, simpler living,

Diverse books on spirituality, human affairs, psychology, history

Eastern Buddhist writings at times like Lao Tse

Everything I read nurtures spiritual life. Spirit is a place to live, and it's a big place, so whatever I read is part of it. In the past QFandP and the A and Q have been very important.

Geoffrey Durham's latest book. I think it is called "On Being a Quaker" Anything written by Douglas Steere

Grow literature (see www.grow.org.au/grow-program) -- Scientific literature (especially recent discoveries) -- History ("To better understand where one is and where one is going, one needs to understand where we have come from")

Harvey Gillman, Karen Armstrong, Ignatian spirituality sites are sources to which I often turn

Hebrew texts,

I always turn to Simplicity and the other core testimonies. I try to let my life speak. I don't need to read a great deal of spiritual writings

I am an avid reader of theology and philosophy.

I am constantly reading books on religions and scripture that I get from my local library or from the marvellous Catholic library in Middle Park, which deals with all religions. As for the above list I don't make a habit of frequent readings from these sources these days but I have done so. I love the old Quaker Faith and Practice because of the strong links with Quaker past.

I am mainly spiritually nourished by listening to ABC Encounter programme, and the Religion and Ethics report. I am studying Bridges to Contemplative Living as part of our Quaker Study Group

I borrow books from the Quaker library and have bought some; "Quaker By Convincement", The Non theistic Quaker

I Ching, Poetry, Read books on religious topics eg by Matthew Fox or Pema Chodron

I DO NOT read the Australia advices and queries, only the red cover British ones. I believe they were hastily revised (and did not include the feedback from YFs that was developed but not sent in on time)

and are a travesty against a really beautiful and well-developed set of advices and queries. I also read Quaker journals such as the Australian Friend, Friends Journal and watch the Quaker Speak videos.

I engage with life; and I read novels.

I find biographies inspiring. So many Friends giving selflessly; living their beliefs. eg Woolman, Cadbury etc Dale Hess' series also useful in this respect.

I find myself regularly referring back to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew's Gospel. I also find statements by people like the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu very inspiring. Other reading is more eclectic and irregular.

I find the library at the Meeting House an excellent source of books - some helpful, some not to my taste

I find the UK "The Friend" and "The Australian Friend" useful inspirations to deepen my awareness of my spirituality and beliefs.

I listen to the Frogs on the dam. I'm a natural speed reader & since taking on the IT support job I have not found reading any books comfortable. My reading is from online journals and websites. Hard copy I use as reference.

I love John's gospel

I love Shakespeare! And find a lot of spiritual guidance there, particularly Hamlet...

I love the Amish stories if life and faith and find them easy to read and full of hope. I buy books from Koorong bookstore about Christian life.

Just about anything can potentially nurture the spiritual life. Poetry, some novels, some play scripts - anything that can make you think deeply.

Just about anything that comes my way

Kindler Books, Swarthmore Lectures, Pendle Hill Pamphlets

Koran - to try and understand Islam especially as I see a future need for Friends to do their traditional thing of seeing both sides and trying to keep the peace in Australia, New Zealand and the world, and also hope fully stopping the religious and other extremes of behaviour that is manifesting itself in the Middle East and other areas as a result of not looking into causes of the need for these and other radicalisations.

Koran, the Dhamma, poetry - some real jewels here -- novels, history, biographies. Karen Armstrong and her ilk. The Dalai Lama, American Indians, some Indian writers, Buddhist writers of many nationalities. Of course books in the Quaker library and environmentalists.

Large variety of spiritual books and pamphlets from Quaker Library also from the local library a collection of religious or ethically based books. Rick Hanson website, Tich Nhat Hahn, website, Quaker speak website. Lotus bud on line etc. Friends Journals etc.

Life in action!

Linda Hill Renfer's anthology of daily readings

Literature. Poetry.

Loring 'Listening Spirituality' AF Meister Eckhart

Lots. Quaker History, Fox's writings, as found in Truth of the Heart by Rex Ambler. And a recent book on Elias Hicks. Some radio programmes, Quaker and other websites, including the non-theist websites! I find non-religious books, such as First Things First by Steven Covey, to offer fine practical spiritual ideas

Mainly postings on Facebook from "friends". The Bible and other spiritual books have been very influential, I hope.

Many books about religious studies and interpretations are important to me.

Many books over the years. Too many to list. Buddhism in particular

Many other books from all faiths

Many varied readings. Some key recent ones are To Be Broken and Tender by Marjory Post Abbott; A Faith to Call Our Own by Alex Wildwood; Being A Quaker by Geoffrey Durham; A Hidden Wholeness by Parker Palmer.

Many, many books and articles.

Matthew Fox - The Coming of the Cosmic Christ Prayers of the Cosmos - Neil Douglas-Klotz Writings of Bishop Spong and Thomas Moore

Michael Leunig Dave Andrews Eckhart Tolle Sojourners Magazine

Mindfulness course from outside of Quakers

Music

Nature based books

Nature writers like Annie Dillard; poetry Rilke, Mary Oliver; Quaker writers Sandra Cronk, Patricia Loring, Parker Palmer, Woolman's journal. Starhawk.

None

Nothing

Nothing

Novels about strong people who conquer challenges

Novels and other works of fiction. Biographies

Occasionally

Only just come across faith and practice - will use in future

Original Blessings, M. Fox, Thomas Merton 'Bridges...' Discussion series, Practicing Peace, D. Whitmire

Other bits and bobs as they are found.

Other books by spiritual writers, eg Parker Palmer, Stephanie Dowrick, Buddhist leaders

Other faiths texts and commentaries

Parabola, Swarthmore lectures, Pendle hill pamphlets and a selection of books (Evelyn Underwood, Annie Dillard, Parker Palmer, Thomas Merton, Julian of Norwich, Tenzin Palmo.

Parker Palmer's books, Pendle Hill pamphlets, Harold Louke's books were valuable when my children were little, Kathleen Lonsdale's writings when I was a young scientist in my 20's trying to come to terms with an Inward Light I had felt experimentally!

Patricia C. Loring, Parker J. Palmer, Stephanie Dowrick, authors from other spiritual traditions including evangelical Christianity.

Pendle hill pamphlets

Personal lives of others whom I respect

Poetry

Poetry

Poetry Reflective and spiritual writers

Poetry such as Judith Wright's. I love the fact that when I asked for a Thich Nhat Hanh book as my membership gift, my local Meeting willingly obliged.

Qletter Australian Friend Friend's Journal

Quaker books, Pendle Hill Pamphlets, Buddhist writings, other religious books, and pieces of the Bible.

Quaker leaflets in the Meeting house. Quakers books which I borrow from the library.

Quaker newsletters, journals, many other books

Quaker writings, spiritual (but not specifically Christian or Religious) writings

Quakers international websites Douglas Gwyn Apocalypse of the Word: Life and Message of George Fox John Polkinghorne Quarks Chaos and Christianity Buddhist books - Dalai Lama

QuakerSpeak

QuakerSpeak website; The Friend, and Friends Journal UK and US magazines, as well as the Australian Friend; Sara Maitland's book on Silence, and similar books.

Recent theological works (eg. JS Spong), articles in websites and journals like 'Eureka Street', challenging novels, texts from writers on social justice and works of compassion

Rex Ambler's G Fox writings, Hay Quaker blog, Ray Brinton "Friends for 300 years", etc

Rufus Jones

Russian literature, English Poetry, Philosophy of Religion

Scientific Texts

So many books it is impossible to give a list. I always have a book on the go and the Quakers and their thinking have been part of history and our culture.

Sometimes a Pendle Hill pamphlet or something in YM Secretary's Newsletter will inspire me. I have just ordered, "On Hallowing one's diminishment"; Also I have Dr Martin Luther King's I have a Dream Speech, I have on favourites,

Sometimes the Bhagavad Gita or the Quran

Spiritual (non theist) books, fiction and non-theist websites.

Spiritual books from other faith practices - Quaker journals

Spong, JAT Robinson, Bultmann

Stories of early Quakers, books of theology and spirituality.

Sufic, Buddhist and psychology texts.

Swarthmore Lectures

Swarthmore Lectures & other Quaker literature Sayings of Meister Eckhart Religious Poetry

Swarthmore lectures, Light to Live By (and other Rex Ambler material), Quaker Speak (a US Friends Journal website), The Friend (UK), Quaker Faith & Practice online, The Universalist (Quaker Universalist Group in the UK), The Quaker Reader (Jessamyn West), Ben Pink Dandelion booklets.

Swarthmore lectures, Quaker writings (varied), Christian monastic literature, a wide variety of 'spiritual' works from many traditions

Swarthmore Lectures; Quaker journals; Quaker theology; faith-based activism

Swarthmore lectures. The Friend.

Swarthmore, Pendle Hill literature, Friends General Conference, Aotearoa N.Z., Orbis Books, National Catholic Reporter (USA), Joan Chittister, Merton, Bonhoeffer, etc. Adam Curle. John Woolman.

Swarthmore lecture "What Canst Thou Say" Wait in the Light - the spirituality of George Fox The Religious Philosophy of Quakerism by Howard Brinton Truth of the Heart, Light to Live by (Rex Ambler) Many books by Thich Nhat Hanh In the Tigers Mouth (Katerina Shields) Thomas Merton books The Way of Life according to Lao Tzu

Tao te ching books on Buddhism/ yoga poetry

Teachings and philosophies of other religious and denominational traditions.

The above occasionally

The AF, Secretary's Newsletter, an eclectic mix of books and daily email inspirations.

The Australian Friend, Spiritual writers from a wide source including outside Quakers. Psychosocial and environmental concerns

The Benedictine office of daily prayers. The Rule of St Benedict.

The Bible only occasionally but I remember many parts from my upbringing. Poetry I don't read the Bible often, but remember parts of it from my childhood. A lot of it makes me angry. I love poetry Books from Friends library including Parker Palmer, Quaker by Convincement, various writings

The founder and spiritual guide of Subud, gave many talks, which were recorded. These are being published. I find these very interesting, and inspirational. There is a also a lot of other inspirational literature around these days.

The Journal of George Fox

The mystics - Christian, Sufi, Tao.

The peaceable kingdom, Betsy (about Elizabeth Fry), Parker Palmer, Light to Live by, Truth of the Heart, Miracles of George Fox, GF's Journal (small amount) Any texts that explore the wider energetic world in a respectful way...eg Findhorn community

The Power of Now by Eckart Tolle

The Prophet: Kahal Kibram : The Road Less Travelled: Scott Peck: Simplicity by Richard Rohr: The Tree Of Man by Patrick White: Consciousness of the Atom by Alice Bailey : Peace Pilgrim. Michael Leunig "The Common Prayer"

The Quaker Way (Johnson) Australian Friend British Quaker magazine

The Sea of Faith, (Cupitt) The Sayings of Buddha. One Dharma (Goldstein) If This is a Man. (Levi) My Journal.

The Wisdom literature of Hebrew texts, poetry - Wislawa Szymborska, Etc, some Buddhist texts - Sydney Insight Meditation website and links.

The words and thought of other people in both fictional and factual literature.

The works of the great mystics. St John of the Cross-; Meister Eckhart, Rumi; William Blake; Theologians and philosophers: James Martineau; Spinoza; Heidegger; Schopenhauer

The Year if Living Biblically

There have been times when I read the Bible more than I do presently. Currently I am finding great support in This We Can Say.

Thich Nhat Hanh books. Being Peace, Fear, etc

Thick Nhat Hahn. Tenzin Palmo, Kahlil Gibran,

Thomas Kelly A Testament of Devotion

Thomas Kelly's "A Testament of Devotion" David Johnson's "A Quaker Prayer Life" and "The Quaker Way" Pendle Hill Pamphlets

Thomas Merton - a book of his writing for each day of the year. Some Parker Palmer writings 40 day journey with Dietrich Bonhoffer

Too many to list - I especially find encouragement in biographies and Testimonies to the Grace of God in a life.

Too many!

Touches of the above. A wide variety of philosophical/religious articles and books

Variable to circumstances?

Various books with a Quaker flavour

Various CDs

Various Quaker websites and texts

Various spiritual writers (Quaker and otherwise) - Thomas Kelly, Thomas Merton, Michael Leunig, John O'Donohue, Meister Eckhardt, Jim Pym, Geoffrey Durham, Marshall Rosenberg, etc

Very many spiritual books eg The Bhagavad Gita, St. Augustine, too many to count.

Wahroonga Library Books on Spirituality; Buddhist books on Compassion websites Quaker and Buddhist

What I read most often at the moment is David Hawkins Daily Reflections, 'Along the Path to Enlightenment'. I got great value from doing the daily practices in 'A Course in Miracles'. I also read a lot of other books, both spiritually oriented and not and I believe I can learn something from anywhere.

Whatever comes to hand eg AF, RM newsletters, pamphlets, Pendle Hill publications, eminent Quaker writers

Whatever else comes my way.

Whatever I read nurtures me. Yes, I do have a copy of This We Can Say.

Wide range of Fiction, writings of Thich Nhat Kohn, Parker Palmer, Thomas Merton, poetry of Rilke and others.

Writings of Catherine Ponder and Ernest Holmes - he is endlessly fascinating and I would like to study his materials further

Writings of early friends. I have unfortunately become jaundiced by the behaviour of so many friends who abandoned love for self-righteousness, ego and attention. I find more spirit in older writings. I seldom read the bible.

Writings of Quakers over time. No favourite, all key experience while I'm reading it

Writings of spiritual people, Thomas Merton, Bede Griffiths, etc

Appendix 24. Additional activities to deepen spiritual life (n=115)

A number of web sites with materials from Fox and other early or later Quakers. I have also visited friends house in Euston and gotten help from their library and bookshop staff.

Activity in service in causes that aspire to improve life for others.

Assisted other Quakers in protest against social injustices. Be involved in Quaker practice through Education, AVP, voluntary social work etc.

Attend Anglican church for fellowship and a sense of belonging. Daily devotions including scripture readings.

Attend Buddhist retreats, talk to wise people

Attend interfaith gatherings

Attend spiritual retreats of other spiritual traditions eg Thich Nhat Hanh, other ecumenical conferences. Services of other religious denominations and also music festivals.

Attend YM whenever I can

Attended Hearts & Minds Prepared course Quaker Quest

Attended other retreats in Vic. & Qld

Attended Yearly Meetings and an International FWCC gathering. Attended and run Quaker Basics or Fundamental courses

Australian Q website. The British Q website on animals. Occasionally I might find something else; but these 2 I use more regularly

Being isolated working on my own with issues

Books, other Quakers, daily prayer and time with the Spirit, meeting for worship.

British and US Quaker websites Attend Vipassana 10 courses, serve on courses

Buddhist Meditation. Quaker Retreats.

By observing other Friends - how they are with people how they cope with their adversities - what they share.

Communion with friends.

Conversations with other Friends, reflecting on what we've discussed and their views, researching what they refer to and considering how those readings might serve me on my journey

Did a term at Woodbrooke

Discovering my own ancestry and their Quaker world

Discussions with other Quakers (outside the above)

Does number three above mean general study/discussion/learning meetings? I'm not sure what "Meetings for Learning in my own meeting" could mean. Meeting for Learning specifically refers to the program you mention in number two above, although the retreats are held in different Regional Meetings over time.

Easter Family Gathering Yearly Meeting

Facebook, especially postings from spiritual friends, the elders, "the new internationalist", constant spiritual communing within myself and relating with others in that way.

Fasting, time alone in the bush

Finances are a real issue in involvement in these things, including the cost of travelling down to Regional Meeting where some of this is available. I was sponsored to go to Silver Wattle. It is so expensive.

Find a Spiritual Companion

Friends Journal is a good site, there are many Facebook Quaker sites but they tend to be patchy as far as content goes. QuakerQuaker has some interesting videos

Friends Journal weekly videos. Writing for Quaker purposes - outreach, newsletter, AF, interview experienced Quakers, meet overseas Quakers

Have a spiritual director Silent Retreats Talk with Australian aboriginal elders

Have attended meetings in other states of Aus. and in Hong Kong

Have been involved in preparation of materials for use by RM Friends- required research & clarification of my own views so very useful process. My experience as a facilitator of a 12 week (Woodbrooke designed) discussion group was extremely powerful.

Have just attended a Silver Wattle Course and found it very helpful. Am interested in further Learning opportunities.

Hay Quaker, + many others on Facebook

Healing meeting and prayer for those who are sick
<http://postmodernquaker.wordpress.com/>
I administer an LGBT Quaker Facebook page and often visit other Quaker Facebook pages
I attend Christian Meditation groups. I also attend a Benedictine Book Group.
I attend retreats, which are organised here in XXXX.
I cannot afford to attend 'out of town' events. I am hoping serving on M & O (Pastoral care) will help deepen my spiritual life and knowledge of Quaker faith and practice.
I did an online course from Woodbrooke on spirituality
I did some of this in the distant past.
I go to various lectures of interest eg Christians for Ethical Society
I have a dislike for anything that I feel is 'professional spirituality'. Probably stems from my 12 years of religious life in the 60;s, I have no hunger for it. Life is worth living Things can become artificial if one is always nursing ones spiritual life. I bet I sound very 'unsound'!
I haven't done any of these for many years.
I read a lot of blogs and websites, particularly about the Simplicity testimony
I talk to friends/Friends of all faiths whenever it seems mutually desirable, without rancour or proselytising, in all the countries I have lived. The faiths of the world are so interesting, in fact amazing.
I use websites for reference.
I used to read books written by Quakers
I've learned quite a bit about different Quaker practices by reading comments on Quaker linked Facebook groups.
Initiated study and service projects.
Introduce my children to guided meditation, participate in meditation with them and explore spiritual issues with them especially during times they are searching or at times of family grief
Last year did a very helpful course online with Woodbrooke on Deepening your spiritual life.
Learned to listen carefully to seasoned Quakers, and to appreciate their honesty and wisdom
Light Group
Live a thoughtful life.
Long ago, I went to a sort of mutual support group. For a while. A short while.
Long time member of Alternatives to Violence Program
Loving kindness meditation
Mainly through discussion groups within my local meeting - I love hearing the huge diversity of beliefs and reflecting on which ones speak most to me (although I respect all the different viewpoints and love that we can come from so many different interpretations of the same theme and still support each other despite our diversity)
Many silent meditation retreats Quaker earthcare websites.
Married a Quaker!
Meet with/ learn from Quakers of long-standing and with deep knowledge of the Society.
Meet/talk regularly with few close long standing Christian friends (non-Quaker)
Meeting for Worship is the most important part of my spiritual life
Meetings organised by our RM M&O committee
More to come!
Music is my main form of spiritual nurture so none of the above is really applicable!
None in any regular way, other than conversations from time to time with people who I admire or who spark my interest.
None of the above
Not good in groups now!
Nothing.
Now to old to participate
Peace organising and peace activism.

Personal growth, many types of meditation, counselling, yoga,
Practice seeing (or trying to see) that of God in every person, and acting as if I have that of God in myself.
Private retreats at Silver Wattle Attend courses offered by the more spiritual side of the Catholic Church
QQ and online MfW I travel a lot and go to MfW wherever and whenever I can, bringing greetings from my local meeting (recently in India; Singapore; Canada; UK, Australia other than WA)

Quaker Basics
Quaker blogs Whanganui Friends Settlement
Quaker podcasts
Quaker Speak
Quaker speak website; Friend on Line; Rick Hanson; Sydney Insight Meditation website; Lotus Bud newsletter
QuakerQuaker
Quakers Australia Philadelphia Yearly Meeting
QuakerSpeak
Quakerspeak website.
Quakerspeak; QuakerQuaker; FWCC; Pendle Hill Pamphlets; The Friend, Friends Journal; Kindlers pamphlets
Question everything! Practice doubt! Critically analyse wilful self-deceit to believe in nice things! Read a lot..
Read RM newsletter, read the Australian Friend. Am a past attendee of QLA and refer back to what I focussed on.
Read some Quaker literature
Read the writings of the early Quakers (British and American)
Recidivist at Meeting for Learning
Reflect on my self, actions and beliefs. Engage with other people. Seek wisdom. Test information to see whether it feels true and just.
See above
Share with other Members, Attenders and others to try and look at all sides.
Spent time in Catholic retreats
Spent time with Quaker friends.
Started a local worshipping group, Talked to people, Attended Local Meeting retreats, maintain a spiritual friendship
Take a walk in Nature's splendour
Talk to Friends and attenders
Talk to other Quakers, visit other Quaker meetings, volunteer in Quaker projects, make friend with Quakers in other countries
Talked over my spiritual journey with my husband, who follows Eastern teachers and meditates daily, and his mother, who used to teach Transcendental Meditation.
Talks and workshops at my Regional Meeting or other Local Meetings.
The practice of art and music
There is a sense of self-sufficiency about my spiritual life. Not that I am trying to rely only on myself. It is just that the richness of my spiritual life grew from my relationship with God and there were many times in my life when there was no one near or around me to converse with. My spiritual life has been enriched by mysticism and, although Quakers keep the silence, it doesn't always mean that they understand the depths. I have found many Friends to be bigoted in what they take into their spiritual lives. Bigoted might be too harsh a word - but I would say limited.
To clarify: I've served on Meeting committees but because they needed someone, not with the aim of deepening my spiritual life.
Too many websites to list -- I am more a "surfer" or "browser" of these websites than any kind of knowledgeable member of aficionado.
Try to meditate at home - varies how often. Practice gratitude Study non-violent communication
UK Quaker basics introductory course on-line

US and UK meeting websites, Friends Journal and The Friend

We have had weekend retreats in Alice Springs

With the Subud spiritual input, practice, and process of purification and development, I don't need (or I don't think I need) anything else

Woodbrooke Courses at Yearly Meeting

Appendix 25. Additional terms that Friends use to describe themselves (n=58)

A follower of Jesus

A part of the Great Spirit

A sojourner sometimes

Again, I need a definition - my understanding of non-theist may not be the same as yours.

Although I learn from and am guided by teachings from Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism and so on, I don't describe myself as belonging to those groups as I am not actively involved in their particular worship communities, participating only when I move around in those communities.

And a pantheist

Anthroposophist

Democrat -- Golfer (my "other religion" ... "Nearer to Thee am I my Lord" when I'm on the golf course!)

Depends on whom or why I am trying to put a label on myself!

Each of the terms I have marked is partial. I regard myself as a Universalist/Idealist.

Empathy- person who experiences and is affected by the emotional energy of others. I'm learning to not be overwhelmed, mistake this for my own.

Feminist theology is very empowering for me

Freethinker!

Friend

Hadn't encountered 'non-realist' before. Will now think about it.

Humanitarian/Activist/Environmentalist

I always say I am a 'Catholic Quaker'

I am A Believer - I tell people, if they ask. I believe there is truth in all the religions, but that, over time, the original Input (from God) has been distorted. This has certainly happened, as is known historically, to both Christianity and Islam. But I believe in The Common Source of all the religions..

I am a cultural Christian

I am a person. I never describe myself as anything. I know there is god whatever word is used. I weep that to identify as any of the above opens the possibility of enmity, war and division.

I am sometimes seen as a Universalist, but I don't describe myself as that exactly. A struggler certainly.

I avoid describing myself

I consider myself an unorthodox Christian. I do not embrace all traditional Christianity (I have beliefs that diametrically oppose it) but am glad, very glad, thankful and proud that it is my spiritual heritage.

I do not deny true Muslim, however.

I do not know how to answer.

I don't think this is non-traditional Quaker belief. I avoid theism and seek to concentrate on a living presence of the divine - love for want of a better word - and to act from that. I seek to leave aside all judgements and definitions. I experience that spirit in early Quaker and historical writings

I don't use one word to describe my spirituality because I don't feel I can fit exactly into one category, it is a mixture of the ones selected above.

I don't wish to describe myself!

I feel that I can find that of God in myself and others and that I am aware of the leadings of the Spirit and led by the Spirit

I think my interpretation of the testimonies are sometimes quite different

I've had deeply spiritual and mystical experiences but I wouldn't use those terms to describe myself to other people. I'd be more likely to tell an experience without giving a label.

Isn't it a shame. There is nothing in this list that speaks of a connection to indigenous spirituality of any form. There is nothing in this list that speaks of connection to creation, that great gift of God to us. These are all titles made by humans. I don't believe God calls us by any of these.

Labels are difficult for me, I must admit. I am not sure that the above ticks reflect me really. I don't worry too much about whether there is a real or non-real God. I think accessing the spirit of love within me, between me and others in the world and the world of nature is the important thing and whether I call that being a mystic (I don't think have achieved it enough to have that label), I don't know. I am exploring the Progressive Spirituality movement at present, and I think it has much to offer to the intellectual

categorising of my thoughts...still working on it.

Me

Me: and I'm a non-believer in boxes. I've recently found myself saying that I don't see myself as Christian, but I know people that believe I am. Regarding 48 and 49, as one with not too much grey in my hair, I'd suggest there's probably an age break here and that many of the folk that aren't collecting grey yet are probably young enough to see 48 as normal (traditional) and 49 as a relic belief system. Honestly can't answer this as 1. I hold some sort of blend and 2. Most of the time this doesn't come up enough to be able to gauge an answer. Possibly this isn't healthy.

Names are difficult too. I am open to challenge and change, but cannot deny the legacy of a Christian upbringing, though this does not suggest any sense of superiority to other faiths, merely difference and the cultural bias of a western heritage.

Not a Christian Universalist.

Panentheist, and I aspire to being a mystic

Perhaps non-theist also

Practical mystic, actually.

Prefer not to label myself. I do not think such labels are helpful, but I am a member and therefore can describe myself as a Quaker

Progressive/liberal Christian

Quaker and seeker. Why do you presume below that the traditional Quaker beliefs are theist? What do you mean by theist? Quakers can be humanist surely. I believe I am a Quaker who believes in the depth of spirit in people. Is that theist? I don't think so.

Radical Christian

Raised Roman Catholic with some Jewish ancestry.

Scientific/philosophical enquirer and writer

Seeker

Seeker, sojourner

Seeker: in my case, someone seeking to get past anxiety and depression and inability to care deeply, to being someone who doesn't get ruffled, and who cares deeply (both for people and the planet) and acts on that caring.

Shintoist

Spiritual seeker

Taoist

There is no religious group that really describes my view - I have encountered the living God, so have no doubt about that but am strictly speaking not a 'Christian' as to me Jesus was no different to any other man except that he was more in-spirited than most, and that his teaching is very very good. But so was George Fox's, and many others', also.

To describe myself? I am a person who cares for other people. I am more Quaker than anything else. And more Christian than anything else. (You really should have pre-tested.)

Unitarian

Where I tick Christian I mean in a very non-traditional sense in that Jesus is someone I emulate but do not see as a "saviour" or "the son of god" or any of that but I do feel that I am in some way a follower of Jesus

Who attends Quaker meetings sometimes

With the proviso that Christian is a very wide definition, of course.

Appendix 26. Additional comments on views of human nature (n=52)

Born essentially good - often wounded by circumstances, which affects how we respond to ourselves and others

Broken windows theory: 10% will never do the wrong thing and 10% will never do right thing, no matter what. Tragically, the other 80% will go with whoever has the upper hand.

But I think people are wonderful and have a great love for them. Most are good.

But modified by life experiences.

Capable of being transfigured by God's presence

Depending on the degree of pain inflicted a person can be intent on damaging others and appealing to their essential good will be unsafe. They need their pain dealt with professionally. People who have experienced kindness and love are more likely to relate from mutual essential goodness. I wonder if spiritual bent is a bit like visual imagery - those people who do not have it and only have words in their heads cannot imagine how it works or even believe in it.

Driven by evolution to survive, therefore essentially selfish

Essentially good nature in all but environment/circumstances determine behaviour.

Essentially good, but fallible.

Experimental...

Full of Light and Shadow

Given adequate support and a polity that has the courage to do so human nature has the potential for great good. However we are in a time when people are encouraged to be extremely lazy and frankly cowardly by bullying people in power. The current political climate is so savagely doctrinaire that only the very determined will ever get involved. It is no place for people of love and kindness.

Good but can often be misled.

Hold the view that human being are born perfect.

However there is a strong tendency to like the easy option and immediate satisfaction/comfort rather than the longer-term outcome. This is more about immaturity than it is about essential goodness or badness, I feel.

Human nature is a developing process. Eg in war torn countries children can develop resentment due to the loss (death by violence) of family members and then hostility grows. E.g. the generational bitterness in Northern Ireland.

Human nature is a human construct invented in the 19th century

Human nature is a story and the concept is a construction.

Human nature is to survive

I believe that there is that of God in all men, but this can be overlaid by flaws of nature and/or nurture (genetic psychological flaws or violent upbringing, for example). It is therefore difficult to categorise human nature in the above terms.

I believe we are all good, though we act with attachment that can elicit poor judgement

I do believe that although the light of God can be found in each person, each person has the unfortunate capacity to commit acts that may be regarded as evil. That is why I cannot accept the notion that humans are essentially good. This is what I believe the concept of original sin points to. In other words we must strive to be moral creatures as our default setting (through evolution) is egoism and selfishness.

I don't consider "human nature" as a concept - prefer to think of and seek that of God in individuals.

I don't like the words Good and Bad; I think we have LOWER impulses, and HIGHER impulses. I believe we have a choice to follow either. And, as we are all different, some choose the best, and some the worst. Yet, by being born a natural human animal, it seems to me that we have to grow into being fully human - by making those good, higher choices. But not everyone knows this, and does it...

I have studied psychology and I don't think we are sufficiently humble about 'human nature'. I think we are too optimistic about being able to understand it or predict it.

I used to think human nature was only good, and did evil through bad regrettable learning and upbringing. But watching footage of American soldiers torturing prisoners at Abu Graib, laughing as they did it, prompted me to that think evil, because it can generate laughter (and therefore endorphins, which bolster the immune system), may be hard-wired into the human physiology.

I wanted to tick both "imperfect" and "essentially good", but you won't let me . I can see your point. So "imperfect" wins. I certainly object to any notion of original sin.

Ignorant and easily frightened. We're vulnerable little animals, just barely conscious and inadequately conscious of spiritual reality.

Imperfect with a leaning towards essentially good

Imperfect, but conditionally good

It varies a lot - good and bad in incredibly changing ratios.

Most humans around the world are very good people, imperfect but not strangers, full of love and compassion for their fellow man, some governments and some radical disturbed people make it seem otherwise

Not "essentially bad" but certainly capable of very bad things!

Not sure, I think we've not been especially good for happy joyful life on earth so far ... possibly disastrous.

Nurture and heredity have a great deal to answer for human nature. I don't believe in original sin.

Often driven by self-interest and fear - the opposite of love - but always capable of being filled with light and love from a connection to that of god within.

On Q 51, I do hold that lethal force may be necessary, but because justified, it is not a violent, as in a violation.

Our ego nature is essentially bad which can do good at times. The depths of our soul, that of God within is essentially good which if nurtured can replace the ego nature we identify with, this would in essence be called living according to God's will.

Our life experiences seem to have an impact on whether the good or the bad are most accessible to others

Our true human nature at soul level is essentially 'good'.

Potentially good

Potentially good

Pretty hard to pick one of these. I do believe in the possibility of good in everyone. I also think that we are full of complexity, contradictions, of weaknesses and strengths, of prosocial and antisocial tendencies. Pretty hard to tick one of the above.

Somewhere about age 14 I conceived of the idea that there is a wonderful thing and that it is this: That People do Be People. That is what Is. And it is a wonder, the only wonder. Therefore be silent and Be.

The challenge of the human situation is to reconnect with Spirit. We all find it hard in this context at times but we all show God through ourselves at times as well.

The devil himself, hath not the wit to tell, that which is in the mind of man.

There is both Good and Evil in us all and we have to work to sort out which is which, and then use that in daily living and interaction with all others at home and abroad.

This poem by Lao Tsu reflects my view of human nature: A sound man's heart is not shut within itself But is open to other people's hearts: I find good people good And I find bad people good If I am good enough; I trust men of their word And I trust liars If I am true enough I feel the heart beats of others Above my own If I am enough of a father Enough of a son.

Views on this topic are too personal and emotional

We have a beautiful jewel of Light within, which is overlaid with layers of rubbish.

We have not yet established a satisfactory science and philosophy to live by

What best described my view of human nature is that it is human – very susceptible

Appendix 27. Additional comments on organisations/issues Friends are involved with (n=26)

Activist/stirrer/dreamer/idealist

Alternatives to Violence

Board member of local food co-op.

Community development initiatives

Donate money to human rights, health, 3rd world organisations, animal welfare, but not actively involved

Farming and CFA

Have been actively involved in many before health issues intervened.

Heavily involved in two public Interest groups one at grassroots level focussed on sustainability and the other at national level focussing on wicked problems ranging from climate change to inequality, euthanasia, illicit drug decriminalisation and asylum seeker policy.

I have been involved with many of these at different stages in my life, but not now

I have written books on the environment and justice for victims and workplace stress which focus on the wellbeing of people in areas not often discussed

I help people regain life quality as my career path. This can be after accident, or midlife crisis or after abuse or trauma or for the gay and lesbian community and immigrants - specific issues.

I like to write about my personal condition. I believe that I am not alone in my conditions, and can possibly awaken those in power to alter my condition, and carry the alteration to other people as well.

I would describe myself as a supporter of these groups rather than a member other than a trade union. I donate to various causes occasionally. I regularly donate to Christian Blind Mission International and Water Aid Australia. I support some Get Up causes and have signed petitions on specific causes.

International and local crisis aid (supporter and volunteer) Asylum seeker issues (supporter)

Lapsed, partly due to ill health

Literacy tutoring, book group, community choir, yoga

Mental Health

My support can simply be a donation, such as that I make to Salvos and Vision Australia

RFS

Should read "our environment" not distantly "the environment"

State Emergency Service - to give practical service to my community, as part of meeting our testimony

These are things that I see as important and can contribute meaningfully to with the time I have available. If it's seen as Quakerly, good but I don't see it as for me to make that assessment.

These days mainly sign petitions. In the 90's in XXXX was very involved with PLWHA and CSN. All my life with aboriginal issues.

UNHCR Supported

Visiting and helping people on a personal basis

Volunteer with AVP; Friends Peace Teams