

THE JAMES BACKHOUSE LECTURES

The lectures were instituted by Australia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) on its establishment in 1964.

They are named after James Backhouse who, with his companion, George Washington Walker, visited Australia from 1832 to 1838. They travelled widely, but spent most of their time in Tasmania. It was through their visit that Quaker Meetings were first established in Australia.

Coming to Australia under a concern for the conditions of convicts, the two men had access to people with authority in the young colonies, and with influence in Britain, both in Parliament and in the social reform movement. In meticulous reports and personal letters, they made practical suggestions and urged legislative action on penal reform, on the rum trade, and on land rights and the treatment of Aborigines.

James Backhouse was a general naturalist and a botanist. He made careful observations and published full accounts of what he saw, in addition to encouraging Friends in the colonies and following the deep concern that had brought him to Australia.

Australian Friends hope that this series of Lectures will bring fresh insights into the Truth, and speak to the needs and aspirations of Australian Quakerism. The present lecture was delivered at the Friends' School on 4 July 2016.

Julian Robertson
Presiding Clerk
Australia Yearly Meeting



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2016

THE JAMES BACKHOUSE LECTURE

Everyday prophets

MARGERY POST ABBOTT

THE JAMES BACKHOUSE LECTURES

- 2001 *Reconciling Opposites: Reflections on Peacemaking in South Africa*, Hendrik W van der Merwe
- 2002 *To Do Justly, and to Love Mercy: Learning from Quaker Service*, Mark Deasey
- 2003 *Respecting the Rights of Children and Young People: A New Perspective on Quaker Faith and Practice*, Helen Bayes
- 2004 *Growing Fruitful Friendship: A Garden Walk*, Ute Caspers
- 2005 *Peace is a Struggle*, David Johnson
- 2006 *One Heart and a Wrong Spirit: The Religious Society of Friends and Colonial Racism*, Polly O Walker
- 2007 *Support for Our True Selves: Nurturing the Space Where Leadings Flow*, Jenny Spinks
- 2008 *Faith, Hope and Doubt in Times of Uncertainty: Combining the Realms of Scientific and Spiritual Inquiry*, George Ellis
- 2009 *The Quaking Meeting: Transforming Our Selves, Our Meetings and the More-than-human World*, Helen Gould
- 2010 *Finding our voice: Our truth, community and journey as Australian Young Friends*, Australian Young Friends
- 2011 *A demanding and uncertain adventure: Exploration of a concern for Earth restoration and how we must live to pass on to our children*, Rosemary Morrow
- 2012 *From the inside out: Observations on Quaker work at the United Nations*, David Atwood
- 2013 *A Quaker astronomer reflects: Can a scientist also be religious?* Jocelyn Bell Burnell
- 2014 *'Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness': Bringing children into the centre of Quaker life and worship*, Tracy Bourne
- 2015 *'This we can do': Quaker faith in action through the Alternatives to Violence Project*, Sally Herzfeld & Alternatives to Violence Project Members

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Acknowledgments

As is often true for me, writing this Lecture has been a collaborative process. In some ways it began nearly a decade ago when a Friend in Philadelphia approached me and insisted I should write about prophetic ministry. Other obligations meant this did not happen immediately but eventually I began work on a much more comprehensive study of the prophetic ministry among Friends today. Integral to that work were queries sent to many Friends of all traditions who are in the public ministry. Most of the stories in this lecture came from these interviews. Many thanks all those who have honoured me with their stories. I want to thank those who responded to my queries about prophetic ministry and all the many Friends who have read all or parts of this manuscript which I hope one day will be part of a much larger work. My apologies to them if I have misused their words.

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