

## EPISTLE FROM 2013 YEARLY MEETING OF CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

At Easter 2013, around 130 Friends, including 15 Young Friends and 16 children, met at Oatlands Conference Centre, near Simonstown, South Africa. Our theme was Reverence for Life: silence, transformation and action.

Even before Yearly Meeting started, we were conscious of the loving commitment of the organisers. We are hugely grateful to each of them. As we sat in *silence* during Meetings for Worship, we felt the leading of the Spirit as individuals and as a collected Yearly Meeting.

During our summer school, we practised the 'Experiment with Light' process, in the tradition of George Fox. This helped us, as individuals, to identify an area of concern and to discern what action we could take.

In another powerful reflection, we examined how negative experiences can result in *transformation*. Many of us were able to share how bad things led to positive consequences, often with the assistance of loving and supportive Friends. In the words of one participant:

*Meditation made a difference*

*Pain opened my eyes*

*Kindness gentled my life.*

We were challenged as regards our *action*. We recognised that often in the past we had agreed to proposals but had failed to put that into action. We also recognised that we have tried to act on too many fronts; we feel led to focus on a few issues of peace and eco-justice, possibly along the lines of the Kabarak call which came out at the Sixth World Conference of Friends, April 2012.

Two of the significant actions which C&SAYM supports are Hlekweni Friends Rural Training Centre in Zimbabwe and the Alternatives to Violence Project training. The new director of Hlekweni, Innocent Moyo, reported on the promising developments and also some challenges facing the centre. Apart from the significant involvement of Friends in the AVP throughout the region, our Young Friends had the benefit of a two-day basic workshop during YM.

We were privileged to hear Shelagh Willet from Botswana Monthly Meeting present the annual Richard Gush Memorial lecture on the topic on the topic: ***Reverence for Life: Silence, Transformation and Action.***

On our final day, we were able to go on outings to the City of Cape Town, to the Cape Peninsula National Park and locally to Simonstown. Wonderful!

Overall, we were conscious of the gracious leading of the Spirit during Yearly Meeting.