

Some Quotations about race for spiritual reflection

1. 'We are trying to create a fairer world ... and it's complicated'
Heard in one of the Quaker Anti-Racist Network meetings.
2. 'We have to sit with all our uncomfortable thoughts which sap our energy.'
Heard during the Woodbrooke course on Reparations.
3. 'Racism is a social force which exists in the world and keeps being re-enacted. We can't delete the word but we can delete the force'. Arun Kundarian – Guardian journalist.
4. 'Our Quaker wish to believe in the fundamental goodness of each individual doesn't help here. We can be as individually good as we like but unless we actively work to dismantle a system that maintains white people in a global leadership role with a perceived right to extract wealth from countries that have already been made poor, we will continue to inadvertently act against our testimonies.' Helen Minnis, Swarthmore lecturer 2022.
5. 'Equality can only be achieved through community if we have diversity. If our communities are only filled with people like us, then we are excluding others, perpetuating inequality and missing opportunities for new insights.' Helen Minnis Swarthmore lecturer 2022.
6. 'Even our charity is essentially patronising – "Give a man a fish and he can eat for a day. Give him a fishing rod and he can feed himself." Alternatively, don't poison the fishing waters, abduct his great grandparents into slavery and then turn up 400 years later on your gap year talking a lot of shit about fish'. Frankie Boyle.
7. 'Personality, sex, race, culture and experience are God's gifts. We need one another and differences shared become enrichments, not reasons to be afraid, to dominate or condemn. The media have increased our knowledge of the world, but we need greater self-awareness if our actions are to be changed in relation to the information we receive. We need to consider our behaviour carefully, heeding the command of Jesus that we should love our neighbours as we love ourselves.' Meg Maslin 1990 QF&P 23.33

8. 'Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye with never a thought for the great plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'My dear brother, let me take the speck out of your eye'' when you are blind to the great plank in your own? You hypocrite! First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's.' Luke 6 41,42. New English Bible.
9. 'In what ways am I advancing the cause of social and racial justice, informed by Quaker values and within my sphere of influence? Because if I'm not advancing the cause of social and racial justice, what am I doing?' 'Enlarging the Tent -Two Quakers in Conversation about Racial Justice' Jonathan Doering and Nim Njuguna.
10. 'I know that I do have prejudice myself, which I have to deal with. It's about making peace with yourselfI'm a mixture of light and dark and not projecting the dark bits onto other people, demonising them and making myself feel so much better by comparison' 'Enlarging the Tent' Jonathan Doering and Nim Njuguna.
11. 'When people say 'What's the point of reparation? It's all in the past. The people are dead. There's no money anyway and it wouldn't compensate, I will repeat the words of an American Indigenous Quaker: 'The land was stolen, the languages were stolen and the culture was stolen. Repairing the harm is first of all to acknowledge what has been done'.
12. Reparations means 1. Naming the wrongs. 2. Apologising. 3. Acknowledging the harms. 4. Repairing the harms. It has to be more than money. Quakers need to look 7 generations ahead and consult with those who have been harmed, to bring justice. Starting conversations is the first step.' Woodbrooke course on Reparations.

These are quotations that have jumped at me. Are there quotations that have made a difference to your thinking? Please add them to the Racial Justice online section of the ECAM Quaker website.

Ann Lewis. Feb. 2024.

