Speaking of God

Exploring Quaker experiences of God, and how we try to hear where words about faith come from.

Speaking of God Becoming Friends



This unit invites you to find out more about the variety of ways Quakers conceive of and experience God, and to explore the language we use to describe religious experience. Quakers try to learn from other people's experiences of the Light, reaching beyond the particular words used, to hear what has nourished the lives of others.

Speaking of God unit aims

This unit aims to help you:

- explore ways in which Quakers experience God
- understand how Quakers try to reach for the deeper meaning within the words we use to describe these experiences
- consider and reflect on your own experience of the Divine and how you speak of it

Overview

There is great variety among Quakers in the ways we conceive of and experience God, and the different kinds of language we use to describe religious experience. Some Quakers have a conception of God which is similar to that of orthodox Christians, and would use similar language. Others are happy to use God-centred language, but would conceive of God in very different terms to the traditional Christian trinity. Some describe themselves as agnostics, or humanists, or non-theists, and describe their experiences in ways that avoid the use of the word God entirely. Quaker faith is built on experience and Quakers would generally hold that it is the spiritual experience which is central to their faith, and not the use of a particular form of words (whether that be 'God' or anything else).

The 18th-century Quaker John Woolman wrote:

There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places and ages hath different names; it is, however, pure and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion nor excluded from any where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become brethren.

Quaker faith & practice 26.61

This concept of the universality of the experience of God, though it may manifest itself or be expressed in very different ways in each of our lives, is still a central principle of Quakerism.

Quakers are encouraged: 'treasure your experience of God, however it comes to you' (*Advices & queries* 2 in *Quaker faith & practice* 1.02); and 'take time to learn about other people's experiences of the Light' (*Advices & queries* 5 in *Quaker faith & practice* 1.02). Sometimes this sharing of faith experiences can be challenging for us, due to the limitations of the language we must use to describe them – as noted by Harvey Gillman, a present-day British Friend:

The choice of the words soul, God, spiritual, sacred, holy, authentic, religious, devout, divine, deep, even reverence, awe and others like worship and devotion, depends very much on who is using them, when, to whom, in what context, and for what reason.

Harvey Gillman, Consider the blackbird: reflections on spirituality and language, page 31

So Quakers try to reach beyond the particular words used to describe experiences of God or 'Light', to 'sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others' (*Advices & queries* 17 in *Quaker faith & practice* 1.02).

Speaking of God Becoming Friends

In keeping with this understanding about the limitations of language, Quakers do not write creeds or statements of belief for members to sign up to; Quakers generally consider that such fixed statements of belief can never fully represent all Truth, and may limit both current perceptions of Truth and the continuing search for further understanding. While Friends try to learn from the insights of the past, we do not want those past insights to limit present and future understanding.

The variety of approaches to belief and religious experience among Quakers also extends to our approaches to the Bible: for some Quakers, it is a book of wisdom inspired by God; for others, it is of equal significance to holy writings from other religious traditions; while some Friends find its contents difficult, or irrelevant to their lives. For most Quakers, however, George Fox's words about scripture in 1652 still speak strongly to us:

You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light and hast walked in the Light, and what thou speakest is it inwardly from God?

Quaker faith & practice 19.07

Quaker distinctives

Distinctives 1

How do Quakers experience God?

The wide variety of ways Quakers conceive of and experience God is reflected in *Twelve Quakers and God*, produced by Quaker Quest. You'll find extracts from this on pages 235–237.

If you would like to read the full text of *Twelve Quakers and God*, see Further exploration for details.

You might also like to read any of chapter 26 'Reflections' in *Quaker faith & practice*, which covers experience of God, in particular *Qf&p* 26.01–26.15.

Distinctives 2

Who is Jesus for Quakers?

The following extracts from *Quaker faith & practice* talk about the meaning of Jesus in the lives of individual Quakers.

- Christ as friend: *Qf&p* 26.47
- Jesus as symbol of God: *Qf&p* 26.50
- the mystery of God as human being: *Qf&p* 26.53
- a window through to God: *Qf&p* 26.54
- Jesus is the question: *Qf&p* 26.55
- Jesus in our suffering: *Qf&p* 26.59

You could also read *Twelve Quakers and Jesus* or *What Jesus means to me*, which are short collections of very varied Quaker writings about Jesus. See Further exploration for details.

Distinctives 3

What do Quakers believe about God?

The video 'What do Quakers believe about God?', made by Friends at Watford Quaker Meeting, includes some reflections on how different Friends experience and conceive of God. You can access the video in a number of different ways:

- online at
 - > www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html
 - > www.youtube.com as 'What do Quakers believe about God?'
- on the DVD *An introduction to Watford Quakers* available from the Quaker Centre bookshop (see Further exploration for contact details).

Distinctives 4

Quakers, the Bible and creeds

The video 'Quakers and the Bible', made by Friends at Watford Quaker Meeting, includes reflections from different Friends on the significance of the Bible for them. You can access the video in a number of different ways:

- online at
 - > www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html
 - www.youtube.com as 'Quakers and the Bible'
- on the DVD *An introduction to Watford Quakers* available from the Quaker Centre bookshop (see Further exploration for contact details).

The following extracts from *Quaker faith & practice* discuss Quaker approaches to the Bible and Creeds:

- our understanding of the Bible: Qf&p 27.34
- take the Bible as a whole: *Qf&p* 27.31
- dangers of formulated statements of belief: *Qf&p* 27.23
- 'Credo' as 'I commit myself to...': *Qf&p* 27.25
- living truth not fettered by words: *Qf&p* 27.26

Distinctives 5

The universal Light

Quakers have found the metaphor of 'Light' important in speaking of our religious experience. Sections 26.42–26.78 of *Quaker faith & practice* cover the 'light that shines for all', and the following extracts in particular explore the Quaker understanding of the universal nature of the Light:

• the light for which the world longs: *Qf&p* 26.62

• the Light of Christ: *Qf&p* 26.65

• Divine principle of Light: *Qf&p* 26.78

• the Light is One: *Qf&p* 26.68

Distinctives 6

Can you be a Quaker if you don't believe in God?

A humanist Quaker explains how he sees his beliefs as entirely compatible with Quakerism in an extract from *Quaker identity and the heart of our faith*. You'll find this extract on pages 238–239.

If you would like to read the full text of *Quaker identity and the heart of our faith*, see Further exploration for details.

Discovery

Discovery 1

Discussion about Quaker approaches to Jesus

Introductory questions:

- Who do you believe Jesus was?
- Who is Jesus for you?

You might consider these introductory questions, then go to the Speaking of God unit forum, and post your own thoughts in response. You might like to comment on other posts on this forum too.

Alternatively, you could discuss the questions with your Becoming Friends companion, or others in your meeting.

You could do this during the coffee time after meeting for worship, or you might like to ask your Becoming Friends companion to help you set up an informal meeting with other Friends.

Discovery 2

Translating and letting go

Section 26.76 of *Quaker faith & practice* reflects on the difficulty of expressing our deepest spiritual truths in words. You could discuss this section with your Becoming Friends companion.

It might be interesting to ask your Becoming Friends companion or another Friend in your meeting to reflect with you on words or ideas that you have each found tricky or liberating on your spiritual journey.

You could do this by both writing down three words or ideas that:

- currently sustain you on your spiritual journey
- were more important to you in the past than they are today
- you feel attracted to or intrigued by, even if you do not use them
- 'press a button' for you or cause a negative reaction
- you use when you speak of that reality which is unnameable

• you do not use when you speak of that reality which is unnameable.

Then reflect on what you have written together.

Discovery 3

Favourite Bible or other sacred writing extracts

You might like to ask your Becoming Friends companion (or another Friend in your meeting) to share with you three favourite extracts each from the Bible or other sacred writing.

- You could take turns to read your extracts with a period of silence between each one, then spend some time sharing with one another how these extracts speak to you and whether any words are especially meaningful.
- You could also do this activity with a group of Friends from your meeting.
- Or you might like to join the online discussion about favourite sacred writings by making a post on the Speaking of God unit forum.

Discovery 4

'Speaking of God' in my local meeting or online

You could ask your Becoming Friends companion or an elder in your meeting to help you set up a small group session to explore local Friends' experiences and thoughts about God (or you may prefer to simply discuss this with your Becoming Friends companion).

- Before the group session, you or your companion could ask Friends to write a paragraph or two about their own experience of or beliefs about God (like those used in Distinctives 1 in this unit).
- In the session, Friends would read their paragraphs out, then spend some time in worship sharing mode, sharing with one another any responses, insights, experiences or challenges relating to what has been said.

Guidance for worship sharing is found in Appendix 2 – Guidance on pages 283–284.

Alternatively, you could read some young Quakers' thoughts on God at: www.newstatesman.com/200612180102 or www.fgcquaker.org/quakers-and-god and post a response on those sites, or start a new thread on the Speaking of God unit forum.

Discovery 5

'Experiment with Light' groups

'Experiment with Light' is a Quaker practice whereby Friends 'wait in the Light' for guidance and insight about our lives. You can read about it in *Light to live by* by Rex Ambler. See Further exploration for details.

Your Becoming Friends companion could help you find out whether anyone in your local or area meeting has been to an 'Experiment with Light' group or course. If so, you could ask them about the practice and their experience of it. If there is a group or course currently running locally, you might try it out yourself.

Or you could arrange to go on a course about 'Experiment with Light'. See if there are courses coming up at:

• Charney Manor Tel: 01235 868206

Website: www.charneymanor.demon.co.uk

• Swarthmoor Hall Tel: 01229 583 204

Website: www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Tel: 0121 472 5171

Website: www.woodbrooke.org.uk

Deepening

Deepening 1

Responding to an awareness of God

Our response to an awareness of God is the focus of the following extracts:

- Advice from early Quaker Isaac Pennington in *Quaker faith & practice* 26.70.
- A piece by 20th-century American Quaker mystic Thomas Kelly, which you'll find on page 240.

How does either of these speak to you?

Deepening 2

Writing your own statement of belief

While Quakers do not have creeds, it can be interesting and revealing to write your own statement of belief or religious commitment as part of a spiritual practice.

You might like to read an extract from a modern statement of belief and try writing some phrases for your own statement. This need only be very short but can still be a significant focus for understanding your own religious position.

You'll find an extract from a statement of belief on page 241.

You could also reflect on this experience with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 3

A letter about your journey so far

Many Quakers have experienced other faith traditions during their lives, or have made significant changes along their spiritual journey. This can leave us with things to celebrate, or difficulties that we wish to leave behind.

Try writing a letter – it could be addressed to God, to yourself, or to a person who is significant for you, expressing in your own words what it is that you:

wish to leave behind or want healing about

- wish to celebrate or be grateful for
- hunger or hope for now
- want to bring with you from your journey so far

You might wish to reflect on how you have got on with this exercise at a future meeting with your Becoming Friends companion.

Deepening 4

Responding to words and images of Jesus

Who is Jesus for you? You could read and reflect on an extract from Luke's gospel, where Jesus asks his followers 'And you, who do you say that I am?' (Luke 9:18-20). What would your answer be?

You could use words about or images of Jesus to help you reflect on this question, asking yourself 'What does this word or image mean to me?'

- There are Jesus word cards on pages 242–244
- If you prefer using images, you could use the Jesus postcards included with the *Hearts & minds prepared* pack (there should be a copy in your local or area meeting) or search online at http://images.google.co.uk for 'Jesus Christ' or alternative depictions of Jesus such as 'African Jesus'

You may like to take some time to reflect deeply on your own response to this activity. You could:

- respond by drawing, painting, or using another creative method
- respond in music, song or movement
- respond in writing
- go online and blog about your response
- discuss your response on a Quaker discussion forum:
 - > the Britain Yearly Meeting forum at: www.quakerweb.org.uk/forum
 - www.friendlink.org.uk (aimed mainly at young Quakers)
 - > the Speaking of God unit forum
- share some of your reflections with your Becoming Friends companion when you next meet.

Deepening 5

Sacred reading practice

It can be helpful to develop a practice of slow, meditative reading of sacred texts. Traditionally this practice was called 'Lectio Divina' and practised by monks with the Bible. Many modern Quakers find this practice helpful and use it with all kinds of sacred writings as part of their regular spiritual practice.

You might like to try it out for yourself using the Bible or whatever writings are sacred for you.

- You'll find the sacred reading practice in Appendix 1 on page 270
- There is also a short collection of extracts that you can use for sacred reading included on pages 271–274

Further exploration

If you would like to explore the subject of Speaking of God further, here are some suggestions for reading, listening or viewing.

Advices & *queries* 1–7 and 17 (in *Quaker faith* & *practice* 1.02).

The Bible: for looking up any passage from the Bible in a variety of translations, you can use www.biblegateway.com

Charney Manor's website for details of courses, including 'Experiment with Light': www.charneymanor.demon.co.uk

Consider the blackbird: reflections on spirituality and language, Harvey Gillman, Quaker Books, 2007.

Creeds and the search for unity, Rex Ambler, Quaker Books, 2004.

The end of words, Rex Ambler, Quaker Books, 2004.

'Experiment with Light' resources online: www.charlieblackfield.com/light

A faith to call our own: Quaker tradition in the light of contemporary movements of the Spirit, Alex Wildwood, Quaker Home Service, 1999 (Swarthmore Lecture).

An introduction to Watford Quakers (DVD), 'What do Quakers believe about God' and 'Quakers and the Bible' sections, Just Film, 2007. Available at: www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos.html (or on www.youtube.com as: 'What do Quakers believe about God?' and 'Quakers and the Bible').

Light to live by, Rex Ambler, Quaker Books, 2002 (about 'Experiment with Light').

Listening spirituality 1: personal spiritual practices among Friends, Patricia Loring, Openings Press, 1997.

New light: 12 Quaker voices, edited by Jennifer Kavanagh, O Books, 2008. Individual themes such as Twelve Quakers and God, Twelve Quakers and Jesus also available in the Twelve Quakers and... series, Quaker Quest 2004–2007.

Quaker identity and the heart of our faith, Quaker Life Study Materials, Quaker Life, 2008. Includes 'David Boulton's personal stance in the discussion of Quaker identity'. Available online at:

www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/Faith-and-practice-proceeding.pdf or in hard copy by contacting Quaker Life on 020 7663 1140 or email: ql@quaker.org.uk

Rooted in Christianity, open to new light: Quaker spiritual diversity, Timothy Ashworth and Alex Wildwood, Pronoun Press & Woodbrooke, 2009.

Searching the depths: essays on being a Quaker today, edited by Harvey Gillman and Alastair Heron, Quaker Books, 1996. Especially chapter 2 'To an unknown God' by Andrew Greaves.

Swarthmoor Hall website, for details of courses, including 'Experiment with Light': www.swarthmoorhall.co.uk

A testament of devotion, Thomas R. Kelly, Harper & Row, 1939.

'What Jesus means to me', various authors, *Friends Quarterly*, July 2003. This is included in the *Hearts and minds prepared* pack.

Woodbrooke's website or brochure for details of courses about God, Jesus, Quaker belief, spiritual practice: www.woodbrooke.org.uk

Many of these titles are available from the Quaker Centre bookshop:

Friends House 173 Euston Road London NW1 2BJ

Tel: 020 7663 1030 Fax: 020 7663 1001

Website: www.quaker.org.uk/bookshop Email: quakercentre@quaker.org.uk



Many of them will also be in your local meeting house library. You could ask your Becoming Friends companion to help you track down titles that interest you.

Closing activity

As you finish your exploration of how Quakers experience and speak of God, you are invited to reflect on what you have gained through this unit, how your understanding of both yourself and Quakerism has changed, and what areas you would like to explore further.

This closing reflection can be a very good opportunity for sharing with your Becoming Friends companion, or you may prefer to write in a journal or book of spiritual discipline (there's guidance for journalling in Appendix 2 – Guidance on page 282), or to reflect using creative methods such as drawing, collage, modelmaking or working with materials such as textiles or wood.

You may like to use one or more of the following questions as a focus for your reflection:

- What have you gained from your work on this unit, whether as a result of positive or more challenging experiences?
- In what ways has your understanding changed as a result of your work on this unit?
- Are there areas that you would like to explore further either as part of your own spiritual journey or relating to Quakerism?
- Has anything arisen that you would find it helpful to reflect on with your Becoming Friends companion?



From Twelve Quakers and God

1

I was brought up in a home where traditional Christian teaching prevailed. Of course I asked questions, and as life went on I found fewer and fewer satisfactory answers. Like so many others I found myself unable to accept much of what seemed important in the practice of my church. In retrospect I think that for me the external practice hid the truth. Eventually, after some really hard searching, I was confronted with the truth. With the word God.

2

I need God in the same way that I need food, drink and sleep. I am absolutely sure that needing God is an integral part of the human condition, and that some people find it harder than others to accept it. They, in their turn, of course, know that I am deluding myself. I believe in God. David Steindl-Rast has said that God is a name for a reality which cannot be named, and that is the closest definition I have ever encountered for the indefinable. For me, God is a reality. I believe in God because I experience it.

3

I can feel the force of God's light at unexpected moments: as I walk down the street, as a stranger smiles in a crowd, as I look at the sky. I feel the power of God in the vastness of the universe, in the minuteness of a grain of sand. I experience my life both as brief as the day-lily's and yet as part of the aeons of history. God is manifest in this relativity of time.

4

I feel God as a power to be drawn on and from which to receive strength. Sometimes in my life, when all else has failed, I have prayed for this strength and felt at peace.

5

Another metaphor for God is a ball of many mirrored facets. We all see a part of it, and what we see reflects back to us a unique perspective, which is a true reflection yet only part of the whole. In this way, I can accept that others will have a different view of God, different words for God, different experiences of God, and yet all these are but glimpses of fragments of the same thing, which is greater than anything we can comprehend.

6

God is a guiding force in my life. Until recently I could not feel God as love, but I have come to an understanding recently that the love is in the relationship, the connectedness which I experience consciously through others and, vividly, unexpectedly, through acts of synchronicity. Glimpses of connections that I had not previously understood: connections that show me the way, affirm my steps on the path, nurture me, not with the cuddly limited love of my imaginings, but with the mature love and acceptance of my real self.

7

I encounter, rather than believe in, God. But I have chosen, and it is a choice, to bet my life (literally) on the power, the love, the challenge, that I call God. For me it has always been a stark choice. You take it seriously (or try to) twenty-four hours a day or not at all. Like pregnancy, there are no half measures – I can no more be 'a little bit religious' than 'a little bit pregnant'!

8

This experience of the Divine comes to me unexpectedly in flashes, sudden openings, when the penny drops, or things click into place. This is a glimpse of the other, 'rumours of angels', a tangential glancing blow of the holy. No Damascus visions or burning bushes, but humble occasions which I recognise, often long afterwards, as times of inner enlargement when my own spirit has magnified or manifested something greater.

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In my life experience the Divine has been a reality. The God of love, compassion and tender upholding is one that I have known. But my God is not just personal; S/he is also power or energy, the Divine Source. This Divine Power is part of all creative energy, which cannot be defined or confined, just glimpsed in creation and creative forms. It is a mystical Other, in which and with which I am engaged. Jesus was someone who more clearly knew this Divine Spirit than most, and lived his life in joyful response to it.

10

Sometimes I think I am verging on being atheist, because I think it is quite possible that the inspiring and leading God I believe in could be a product of my mind (and the minds of other people). The human brain is such a marvellous thing, full of mystery, that I don't think it is a problem to find one more mystery in it. But God may equally be outside us all – I really don't know. I don't spend much time worrying about theology – it is the inspiration and the impetus to change the world for the better that really matter.

11

I use many names for the Divine, sometimes lingering with one sacred name, but wary of becoming territorial, my god shrinking to mere possession. Early

Quakers used Light, giving life and clarity, showing me the next steps, and Light is probably the word I use most of all.

12

The ever-present Energy is there to be drawn on by anyone who opens himself or herself to it. It calls us in the direction of love and compassion, understanding and forgiveness, and whatever else supports the unity of life, from social inclusion on local and global scales to care of the natural environment. Opening yourself up is challenging, a direction which is in tension with the opposite drive to control your life, protect and enhance your position and become less vulnerable.

from Twelve Quakers and God, Quaker Quest, 2004



Quaker identity and the heart of our faith: extract by David Boulton

I have never, since I ceased to be a child in the mid 1950s, been persuaded of the reality of supernatural forces or dimensions, even when they are smuggled in under such euphemisms as 'transcendence', 'the numinous', 'the divine', or 'the mystical'. I can no more entertain the notion of gods and devils, angels and demons, disembodied ghoulies and ghosties, or holy and unholy spirits, than I can believe in the magic of Harry Potter or the mystic powers of Gandalf the Grey. I think William Blake hit the nail on the head when he concluded, in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, that 'all deities reside in the human breast' – the human imagination.

I am satisfied – utterly, deeply satisfied – with one life in this one wonderful, natural world.

I fully understand that belief in a transcendent realm and a transcendent god as the guarantors of meaning and purpose have inspired millions. They do not inspire me. Instead, they seem to me illusions we can well do without, and I find myself raging at the toxic effects of literal, uncritical belief in divine guidance, divine purpose, divine reward and punishment.

Does such unqualified scepticism disqualify me as a Quaker? I don't think so, and you don't seem to think so, since you welcomed me into the Society after a meeting for clearness and a lengthy process of discernment, following my application for membership in which, as a matter of scrupulous integrity, I was clear and open about my humanist convictions. What is it, then, about the Religious Society of Friends that can command the love and loyalty of a dyed-in-the-wool non-theist like me? That can absorb me in its history, inspire me with its radical reforming tradition, 'gather me as in a net'?

In a word, it is the glory of the Society's creedlessness. It's our obstinate, almost obsessive refusal to be tied down to a form of words defining what Quakers believe, or what we think we should believe. Yes, early Friends described themselves as Publishers of Truth, but they were wise enough not to try to reduce truth to a set of articles of faith. We are not so foolish as to believe that what we believe doesn't matter; but our founding fathers and mothers knew that to tie beliefs down in a form of words, a formulary endowed with divine sanction, would be to kick the living daylights out of the Quaker way, truth and life: and to impose a form of words on each other as a badge of Quaker orthodoxy and sound doctrine, an approved dogma, would be to repeat the tragic history of the

confessional churches and institutional religion through the ages. Go down that road and we switch off the lights.

So we have no creed. Not even an irreducible minimum creed. Not even 'Credo in unum Deum'. 'I believe in God' is too crude, too inadequate, too loose. What about 'seeking the will of God'? What about 'answering that of God in every person'? What about being 'open to the Spirit'? Fine, but that's not a creed. Potent poetry, but not a creed.

Poetry? Yes. Religious language is surely best understood as metaphorical, not literal; expressive, not descriptive; nonrealist rather than realist. Poetry opens up what creeds close down. The Quaker humanist who does not believe that God exists may nevertheless love, honour and obey what the image of God symbolises or represents: to quote Blake again,

...Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love Is God, our Father dear. And Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love Is man, His child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart, Pity a human face, And Love, the human form divine, And Peace, the human dress.

And he concludes:

Where Mercy, Love and Pity dwell, There God is dwelling too.

So God becomes for us the imagined symbol of the human values that we recognise as making an ultimate claim upon us. We can respond with all our heart and all our mind and all our strength to the promptings of love and truth in our hearts without first having to sign up to belief in a transcendental prompter. Love and truth are themselves the prompts.

from *Quaker identity and the heart of our faith,*Quaker Life, 2008



Extract by Thomas Kelly

Open your eyes to the flaming vision of the wonder of such a life. Begin where you are. Now. If you slip and stumble, don't spend too much time in anguished regrets and self-accusations but begin again. Don't grit your teeth and clench your fists and say, 'I will! I will!' Relax. Take hands off. Submit yourself to God.... Let life be willed through you. from A Testament of devotion by Thomas Kelly,

Harper & Row, 1939

Extract for Deepening 2: Writing your own statement of belief

A personal statement of belief

I believe in God the Oneness of whom we are all part the Mother and Father of us all Creative Energy of Love from whom we all spring the Ground of our Being

I believe in the embodiment of love in our world in people of every kind

I believe in the Spirit of Lovingkindness at work in our hearts bringing peace, compassion and love transforming and challenging us to growth

I believe in the eternity of now the mystery of our connectedness through and beyond time and space

a Quaker, 2008

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	saviour	cosmic Christ	
	Lamb of God	friend	
	teacher	Beloved	
	Son of God	radical preacher	
	prophet	man of his time	

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King	universal Light	
The Way, The Truth and The Life	One with God	••
enlightened being	embodiment of the divine	••
just a man	Jesus-Sophia (embodiment of divine wisdom)	••
carpenter	healer	•••

*	
a Jew	Lord
Messiah	mystery
God	wandering wise man
leader of an apocalyptic movement	The Word of God
Christ – the anointed one God	of