

**Press release** This Light that Pushes Me

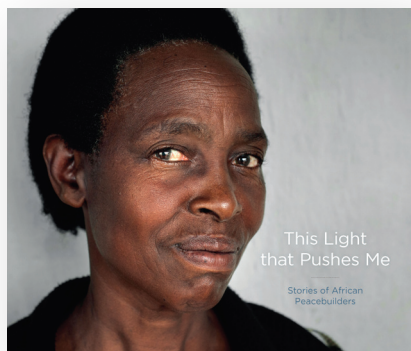
# This Light that Pushes Me

## Stories of African Peacebuilders



**QUAKER**books

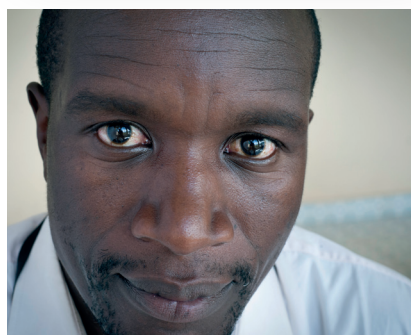
A new title from Quaker Books



In the week that marks the twentieth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, Quakers in Britain launch an extraordinary book of photographs: *This Light that Pushes Me*.

The book features more than 20 peacebuilders from sub-Saharan Africa; all are Quakers or involved with Quaker work and all have experienced violence. Using photographs and personal testimonies, *This Light that Pushes Me* traces the journeys that have transformed that suffering into a force for social change.

Among the testimonies is this from Cécile Nyiramana from Rwanda who says: "Someone can't forgive with a broken heart. We need first to heal our wounds... Then start the work of peace and reconciliation."



More than 40 peacebuilders in Africa offered their stories and conducted many of the interviews with one another. The stories were gathered and edited by Laura Shipler Chico, programme manager for Peacebuilding in East Africa for Quaker Peace & Social Witness, a department of Quakers in Britain.

**"Moving and extraordinary... These friends exhibit tenderness in both senses: carrying an acute awareness of pain and yet treating those around them with care and hope."** Peter Woodrow, Executive Director, CDA

**"Extraordinary accounts of people who experienced the worst that a human can do, yet turned their suffering into grace, forgiveness and healing. Each story is an inspiration."** Carolyn Hayman, Chief Executive, Peace Direct



The photographer, Nigel Downes says: "I want people to look at these photographs and recognise something of themselves in them."

Speaking about the inspiration for the project, Laura Shipler Chico says:

"Weaving throughout these stories is the belief that somewhere within our imperfect selves, however hidden under layers of grief, loss, tragedy, hurt, and disillusion, there is something good, something wise, something knowing. And it is this Divine kernel that pushes us to keep struggling to fix our broken world; to transform hurt and grief and the human lust for vengeance into something new, into a commitment to peace no matter the cost. This book invites us to do what the peacebuilders in this book have been striving to do for a long time: listen – with simplicity – for the truth. And when we hear it, let us walk side by side right into the heart of hurt, the deep and frightening darkness, and look for light."

### **Bibliographic information**

**Publication:** 12 April 2014

**Price:** £12

**ISBN:** 9781907123665

**Format:** Hardback

**Extent:** 80pp

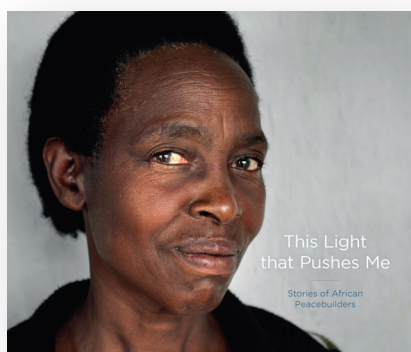
### **Quaker Books**

Friends House  
173 Euston Road  
London, NW1 2BJ

[www.quaker.org.uk](http://www.quaker.org.uk)

**See overleaf for information about the accompanying exhibition and notes to the editor.**

## A new title from Quaker Books



### A Note about the exhibition

An exhibition of the photographs featured in the book is running at Friends House, London until 8 May 2014. A series of film nights will generate discussion around conflict resolution and the Quaker commitment to peace which leads Quakers to put their faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause violent conflict and injustice.

### Notes to editor:

- *This Light that Pushes Me*, published by Quaker Books, ISBN 9781907123665, extent 80pp, hardback, price £12.00. Contributors: Nigel Downes (photographer); Laura Shipler Chico (editor); Hezron Masitsa (Foreword).
- For review copies, electronic extracts of the book, and to interview Laura Shipler Chico call Anne van Staveren on 07958 009703 or email [annev@quaker.org.uk](mailto:annev@quaker.org.uk).
- The book is available online at [www.quaker.org.uk/africa-peacebuilders](http://www.quaker.org.uk/africa-peacebuilders) and from the Quaker Centre bookshop at Friends House.
- Listen to the peacebuilders at [www.quaker.org.uk/Peacebuilder-stories](http://www.quaker.org.uk/Peacebuilder-stories)
- Quakers are known formally as the Religious Society of Friends.
- Around 23,000 people attend nearly 475 Quaker meetings in Britain. Their commitment to equality, justice, peace, simplicity and truth challenges them to seek positive social and legislative change.

### Further praise for *This Light that Pushes Me*

“A unique and innovative narrative on the human tragedies of armed conflict and how victims can defy the odds to rebuild their lives. Highly recommended reading for students and practitioners of conflict intervention and peacebuilding worldwide.” Professor Kenneth Omeje, Centre for African Studies, University of Bradford

“A beautiful book... about the human capacity to give heart and soul to work for nonviolent change in the hardest of circumstances.”

Simon Fisher, author and trainer, co-founder of Responding to Conflict

“A message about the human spirit’s capacity to seek love over hate, to turn darkness into light, to overcome adversity. It is a story of ordinary people – traditionally the weak, the powerless – becoming powerful in their own right.”

Tim Langford, filmmaker

“Enter this book with care. Turn the pages slowly. Watch and read with respect, the kind that asks you to look, and then look again. Hold the gaze of these eyes longer than normal, for they speak from deep, too often invisible and silent pools of compassion. Listen, as they have, from the ear of the heart and you will find what has long been understood and true from Quaker tradition – there is that of God in every person. And when we notice that divine spark we feel the hope that our broken family can find the way to restitch the fabric of our common humanity. Here are the faces of our beloved community. Prepare to receive their gift and hold it close.”

John Paul Lederach, Professor of International Peacebuilding Kroc Institute, University of Notre Dame

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