



There is a Divine Center into which your life can slip, a new and absolute orientation in God, a Center where you live with Him and out of which you see all life through new and radiant vision... Thomas Kelly 1938

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Giving to AWPS:

We welcome financial assistance to enhance the work of the AWPS Section. Administrative costs are \$5,000 HK monthly and the Travel Fund will assist Friends from less well off countries attend the Section Gathering. Please send cheques to David Bottomley or to Topsy Evans. Thank you in anticipation and also for all the support sent by our Section to the FWCC World Office and to the work of QUNO during 2004.

Editorial– Ken Co Chin-po, Executive Secretary, AWPS

Dear Friends,

In John 14:15 Jesus said “If you love me you will obey my commandments.” What are his commandments? Love God and love your fellow men. How is that to be done? Many ways, perhaps, but the heart of it is to do good, to speak gently, to forgive those who treat us in “the darkness of their hearts.” To love is to be joyful in the midst of misfortune, to understand and forgive those who do not love us and who treat us with anger and distrust. To love is to accept our mate with all his or her warts and rough spots, and return selfishness with generosity. We can love by making ourselves one with the Father. For we are told that we are gods in the making. And we are designed to enjoy that oneness with God.

Very often we think that we are well organized and well balanced persons. Yet we still do not walk with Christ daily, nor manifest the fruits of the Spirit. If we are to claim Christ promise that He goes into Heaven to prepare a place for us (John 14:3) we need to fulfill the concept of doing with our might what we find our hands to do, wherever we are, in our homes, with our spouse, in our business, among friends even among enemies. That is why we have couple of articles on the gifts of the Spirit.

In this issue you will also read Chris Lawson’s article on Gandhi and Woodbrooke - a re issue of an article Chris wrote several decades ago but which still speaks to us today.

Other articles are precursors to the section Gathering in Seoul on November 3rd to 8th 2005. More information about the gathering especially the application forms, will be made available to you when ready.

In the meantime, may I take this opportunity to wish you great joy in the up-coming holiday season and to share with you the urgency of His Command: to love God with all our hearts and minds and to love our neighbours as ourselves by doing with all our might what our hands find to do day after day. For the Christ who came into this world, who will save the world—cares for Thee.

In Peace,

Ken

THE LASTING IMPACT OF GANDHI'S VISIT TO WOODBROOKE
Chris Lawson, (Britain Yearly Meeting; member of staff in Woodbrooke, the
Quaker study centre in Birmingham, England, 1979-96)

The text of this article is from the Summer 1997 issue of The Woodbrooke Journal ‘A Matter of Pilgrimage’ by Chris Lawson (now out of print but available on the Woodbrooke website, www.woodbrooke.org.uk) and is used with the permission of Woodbrooke. The full article contains the references to the quotations.

Whenever anyone from India passed through Woodbrooke, for a longer or shorter period, they would often say, "I hear that Gandhi came here" or would very soon been told that he did. A look at the Log Book from 1931 would follow to see the records from the time of the weekend of 17-19 October that he spent there. Those who slept in the bedroom he used would feel privileged, though few slept on the floor or asked for goat's milk as he did. Nor have I heard of anyone else who had police Special Branch officers as escorts for an early morning walk. Behind such stories, however, are records of the impact Gandhi made on people at the time and, I feel, can still make on us.

Gandhi was in England for the Second Round Table Conference on India's future. He was known to some of the members of the Woodbrooke staff, particularly Horace Alexander, who had visited him in prison in India. The wider context of Quaker concern for India is evident from the involvement of Friends in London with his visit in various ways. Gandhi spoke of his visit to Woodbrooke as 'a pilgrimage'. He opened his remarks at the public meeting held on the Sunday afternoon by saying: Whereas to other places I have gone as a matter of business to deliver my message, I have come here as matter of pilgrimage because this Settlement spared and sent Mr. Horace Alexander to us at a time when we were in need of a friend. It was a time when news of *satyagraha* could not be transmitted from India, everything that was sent was censored, the principal men were all in jail. It was then that the Friends came to the conclusion that a mission ought to be sent to India and Mr. Alexander was chosen for the purpose. Not only were you able to spare him but his wife, a cripple, spared him. Now you will understand why it is a pilgrimage for me to come here.

Horace Alexander had first visited India in 1927-8. His father had been very involved in anti-opium trade campaigning. Horace became Secretary to a British anti-opium traffic committee. So when he went to India many contacts opened up for him. His interests were much wider than anti-opium, however. Marjorie Sykes in her history of Friends in India notes that: His experiences during this whole tour convinced him of the urgency of persuading the British Government to take a new attitude towards India, an attitude of genuine respect and trust which would enable Indians speedily to assume real responsibility for their own affairs. Many others shared his concern, and the Friends Service Council resolved that Quakers ought as a body 'face political issues', and to seek to promote mutual respect and conciliation between the rival interests, and particularly between India and Britain.

Many Friends were involved in the political issues. Their strong support for Gandhi and what he stood for showed on his arrival in London in September 1931. He was driven straight to Friends House for a welcoming meeting. After giving a political analysis, he said: I would specially appeal to my Quaker friends. There has always been since 1893 a growing bond between the Quakers and myself. One of the most intimate friendships in South Africa where I first met them, was with a Quaker. That friendship has been daily growing between them and myself, for we represent one common cause, that of peace.

I think that I represent the Quaker position when I say that you Quakers have said goodbye to the law of the jungle. It is not the same law which governs the brute creation which governs the human race. This should be the law of love and peace. The human race is moving consciously and deliberately to the establishment of that law throughout the whole of mankind. This is a bond which binds me to the Quakers, and therefore I expect the Quakers most of all to represent the Indian cause during these coming days.

Friends subsequently arranged for a weekly hour of silent upholding prayer in Friends House open to delegates from the Conference. Several attended, including Gandhi on two occasions. Subsequently, he introduced silence into the daily prayer of his Ashram more fully. A lack of unity amongst Friends for giving political support to Gandhi shows, however, in the fact that the Recording Clerk of the Yearly Meeting had to make clear that he had attended the welcoming meeting for Gandhi in a personal and not an official capacity.

Whatever judgement one may form of Gandhi's ideas and policy, one cannot fail to be impressed by his personality. His power of drawing forth not simply respect and honour but friendship and devotion from those who come into contact with him is amazing. Throughout the earlier part of the term, Alexander kept closely in touch with Gandhi, helping wherever he could to further the ends of the Round Table Conference. If this work has not yet borne the full fruit for which we hoped, it has been abundantly worthwhile, and we are glad indeed that Woodbrooke has shared in the endeavour to secure satisfaction for the legitimate aims of India in an atmosphere of conciliation and co-operation.

After being welcomed formally into Woodbrooke, Gandhi entered on his evening prayers. The impact on Ingeborg Olden, the reporter for the Log Book was powerful: All eyes were fixed on Gandhi. As he sat there like a Buddha statue, with his legs crossed, without moving a limb, he brought home to us the picture of an ascetic, a mystic of the East, wholly detached from the world outside. How was it that possible that this frail, old man was the political leader of millions, the aggressive champion for social and political justice? We felt strongly that the power of this man was due not to outward glory like wealth or social rank, but to his inner qualities - it rested on his personality.

On the Sunday afternoon a large meeting was held in Woodbrooke. Gandhi reiterated his political approach. He was not looking for safe and modest changes, which the British government was probably willing to consider, but for full and immediate independence. He stressed the importance of public opinion:

Responsible leaders of public opinion in Britain should inform themselves of the true nature of the struggle that Indians are carrying on against heavy odds. For unless you understand the true nature and the inner meaning of this struggle, you will not be able to bring effective pressure to bear on those who are conducting the affairs of the State here. I know enough of the composition of this meeting to know that you are all earnest seekers after truth and anxious to do the right, not only especially with regard to this, but any cause that deserves the assistance of human beings.

Gandhi made blunt comments eg: It is preposterous to suggest that the British Government would be abdicating its function if it withdraws from India. The only function that it is fulfilling today is of exploiting India. Let Britain cease to exploit India and India will immediately revive economically.

He was over optimistic, however, about unity between Indians, especially Hindus and Muslims, once a commitment to independence was made by the British:

Let the Government declare that they are going to withdraw from India whether Indians have agreed or not and you will see that we shall then soon agree.

Ghandi's most inspiring comments ...the conviction has been growing upon me, that things of fundamental importance to the people are not seen by reason alone, but have to be purchased with their suffering. Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ears, which are otherwise silent, to the voice of reason. If you want something really important to be done, you must move the heart also. The appeal of reason is more to the head, but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man. Suffering is the badge of the human race, not the sword.

These thoughts still come over with power and feel equally valid for us.

He met the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr.E.W.Barnes, who argued with him about the use of machinery to ease manual labour. This important question was not fully resolved to the satisfaction of either. The scientific Bishop made out a strong case for science and machinery, to free man from manual toil, so that he could have the bulk of it for intellectual work. Gandhi responded, he could not trust the average man to use all his spare time profitably. The Bishop demurred, "I do not do manual work for more than an hour a day. The rest of my time I give to intellectual pursuits". Gandhi laughingly said, "I know, but if all became Bishops, the Bishops would find their occupation gone".

Those invited to the meeting included some prominent Indians. Gandhi's message to such Indians in Britain was that they should return and use their skills for the benefit of India: If you are a medical man, there is disease enough in India to meet all your medical skill. If you are a lawyer, there are differences and quarrels enough in India. If you are an engineer, build model houses suited to the means and needs of our people

The support of British Friends also continued, including involvement in the work and leadership of the India Conciliation Group, established at the time of the Round Table Conference. Is this episode of more than historic interest by now? Can it inspire us, as it clearly did those there at the time? To me, the answer is yes, if we can take on the challenge of fitting the lasting insights and spirit of what Gandhi said then to our present times and looking for the contemporary situations to which our commitments should be given

A Quaker Study on Spiritual Gifts– Part 1 Stephen Palmquist

The Author is Assistant professor of Religion and Philosophy at Hong Kong's Baptist University and a long time Attender at Hong Kong Monthly Meeting, where he has been an active participant in the life of the Meeting and co-leader of several workshops.

In a recent study of 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, the Hong Kong Monthly Meeting explored how Quakers might interpret Paul's presentation of nine "spiritual gifts" (or manifestations [phanerosis in Greek] of God's spirit). The nine gifts can be neatly grouped into three categories, using Matthew 7:7 ("Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you") as a basis: the three "vocal" gifts (the spirit's manifestation in response to our asking) are tongues, interpretation, and prophecy; the three "visual" gifts (the spirit's manifestation in response to our seeking) are knowledge, wisdom, and discernment; and the three "victorious" gifts (the spirit's manifestation in response to our knocking) are faith, miracles, and healing. In a series of three post-Meeting discussions, we examined how Quakers might recover some of the meaningfulness of these classical distinctions, which have often been merely cast aside as a result of the overly-literal way they are often interpreted in some Christian denominations.

During the Meeting for Worship prior to the first discussion, one participant read the whole of Acts 2 as a voice ministry. We saw that this chapter, where the gift of speaking in tongues is first mentioned in the Bible, as a profound statement of our need to express the language of love. This is where the church begins. Speaking in tongues has the effect of universalizing God's Word by opening it up to all cultures and peoples. The gift breaks through the boundaries of human language, making "that of God in each of us" a living reality. Sadly, some Christians use this gift as a divisive tool to isolate and alienate one "special" group of believers (those who "know how to speak in tongues") from all others.

To do this is to miss the point. It is no accident that Peter's sermon in Acts 2 reminds us that "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (verse 21): asking is the doorway to spiritual understanding.

Asking for guidance from God is often difficult because of our pride. If we are too proud of our own accomplishments or understanding, this humbling may feel humiliating as well, for it is mortifying to realize that we are no better than anyone else when it comes to understanding God's ways. Quakers, it seems, rarely talk any more about speaking in tongues, even though such manifestations were quite common in the early days of the movement and even though many of us shared (in our discussion) that we had, in fact, had such experiences privately. In 1 Corinthians 14, the gift of tongues is presented as an essentially private gift. When shared in a public Meeting, the gift should be accompanied by an interpretation, and the latter would be the primary vehicle through which God's spirit would be manifested.

Likewise, we tend to be shy about using words like "prophecy," given the gross misuses this term has often been subjected to. Genuine prophecy may have been manifested in our midst. In our Meetings for Clearness, for example, we frequently find ourselves or others saying things of profound significance to an individual or to a wider group. That these words are given to us, from the spirit of God that is among us during the Meeting, is wholly in line with Quaker understanding. We shy away from calling such words "prophecies" because to do so might tempt us to take credit for the insights they contain. But we should not go to the opposite extreme by forgetting that our practice is part of a long tradition that goes all the way back to the early Church.

If the key message of the vocal gifts is "be humble," then the key message of the visual gifts, the manifestations of God's Light, is "be seekers." Of the three types of gifts, those relating (metaphorically) to sight, constitute the area of spirituality that to which Quakers tend to be most open. Our "Advices and Queries" are time-honoured tools intended to open our hearts to be more receptive to the spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and discernment that can come only from God. But even here, we are not without our areas of weakness. This was specially highlighted in our discussion when we considered a quote from George Fox, implying that the process of seeking out "that of God in every person" also requires us to discern what is not of God in others, as also in ourselves. Quakers are sometimes portrayed by other religious groups as being so liberal that "anything goes." This is to our detriment, for not everything in human persons is "of God," and we would do well to remember this in our dealings with others in our Meeting and those of other spiritual traditions. Just as Jesus was able to look one of his most faithful disciples in the eye and say "Get thee behind me Satan", we must be courageous and identify and name spiritual forces that are not of God.

Stephen Palmquist's article will be continued in the next edition of the AWPS News.

Reports from Friends' Yearly Meetings
**Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Friends
in India, 10th to 12th September 2004.**

We commenced our meeting meditating on the nature of the Inner Light, followed by considering how Quakers view the Bible. Then we dealt with one of the burning problems of today - Conflict. From the Epistles received from YMs in various countries, we learn that problems of conflict confront and engage the attention of most Friends. A Friend who has just attended the ten week 'Working with Conflict' course in England was able to increase a little our understanding of this most complex subject. Leading on from this, we considered the need for Peace Education in schools and how to go about it. A speaker touched on the relationship between Quakers and Gandhiji in the pre-independence era and the common threads in their thinking. He urged us not to be insular and to be more responsive to the other religions of the vast majority in India. We spent time considering our own small group and our great concern-how can we bring the younger generation into the Society of Friends ? What constructive steps can we take to translate our concern into action ? The Auckland Triennial and activities within our Section of FWCC engaged our attention. We value our links with Friends everywhere.

REPORT ON PARTAKING IN THE JAPAN YEARLY MEETING by Ken Co

I travelled to Tokyo on the 12th November 23, 2004 together with Bong Soo Kwag, Clerk of Seoul Monthly Meeting. We stayed at the Friends Center Annex where the Director Reiko Hewitt is the wife of a former Clerk of HKMM Kruskal Hewitt with whom I had much news to catch up. On that same day Kwag, Bae, another Korean Friend, Sachiko and Tanaka, Chairman of International Committee held a meeting for preparing the Section meeting. During the meeting the following items were discussed:

1. The dates for the Section Gathering;
2. The venue;
3. Visa application requirements and procedures for countries requiring visa.
4. Costs for running the Gathering.

The second day was full day of meetings for the Japan Yearly meeting. (Not being able to speak or listen well to Japanese, I was dependent on Japanese Friend who sat next to me to translate. So my information must be sketchy and imperfect.) Important issues were upkeep of the Friends Center, Financial matters of the Yearly Meeting, Concern that the members are ageing & not enough young Friends are attending, plus one or two Monthly Meetings had to be laid down. A pilgrimage to the 1652 Quaker country is planned next April.

The following day, Meeting for Worship was attended by Friends from Mita Meeting, plus representatives from the Monthly Meetings throughout Japan. There was much vocal Ministry and a sense of Ministry from members of Japan YM who have passed away.

A full session was given to hearing reports from the Monthly Meetings. There was lots of mirth, and the sense of humour was quite noticeable. Faced with declining membership, many of the Japanese Friends are trying various methods to attract Young Friends to attend. The annual Nitobe lecture took place that afternoon, but I was then in another meeting concerning preparation for the AWPS Seoul Gathering.

The next day, I was given a brief tour of the Friends Girl's School, not far from the Center. It was good to see a great tradition continuing in educating bright young Japanese girls to have their own careers, as distinct from marrying and staying in the home. I was told that most of the graduates from the Friends school do go on to college. The school is known for the quality of language teaching, as well as for its scientific excellence. The headmistress Luisa, is a graduate of George School and Swarthmore College in the USA.

I left Japan two days after their annual meeting, feeling that despite hardships and challenges, Japanese friends are managing their affairs and making a great effort to meet their challenges!

North Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Jon Prescott, Presiding Clerk, August 24, 2004

To Friends everywhere:

The thirty-second annual session of North Pacific Yearly Meeting convened in Missoula, Montana from July 29 through August 1, 2004. We greeted old and new Friends with joy, and shared our experiences of travel and travail in arriving at this beautiful mountainous state. In worship each day, we shared that portion of the Light which flowed through each of us. We celebrated the lives and remembered the gifts of those no longer here.

Our Friend In Residence, Eden Grace from Beacon Hill Meeting, New England Yearly Meeting, spoke of how God moved through her during a life changing traumatic personal experience. She likened her journey to that of the Israelites in the wilderness. She affirmed that the path forward lay through the brokenness, illuminated one step at a time. We understood that she was willing to relinquish her willfulness and embrace her willingness. Soon she will be working as field staff in Kenya with Friends United Meeting in conjunction with the East African yearly meetings.

In epistles from around the world, we saw reaffirmations of the Quaker peace testimony, and its roots in our religious experience. Our own local State of Society reports also reflected enthusiastic work for peace. We know we are not called to do everything; but as one worship sharing group heard, "Where the passion of your heart intersects with the world's need, that is the place to throw the frail ounces of your weight." (author unknown)

The clerk patiently educated us about Friends' business process. In speaking about our finances, he noted that we appear to follow the example of John Woolman in limiting our

income, and of the Cadburys in expending money in support of our concerns. Margaret Fraser, general secretary of the Section of the Americas for Friends World Committee For Consultation (FWCC) and Patty Federighi from North Seattle Friends Church, Northwest Yearly Meeting, joined our FWCC representatives in presenting an overview of the committee's activities. The following minute arose from an interest group convened because of recent legislative attempts to restrict marriage: **"In accordance with the historical testimony of the Religious Society of Friends on equality and marriage, the North Pacific Yearly Meeting opposes all attempts to deny legal recognition of marriage of same sex couples."**

REPORTS ON FWCC SECTION SECRETARIES MEETING AT WOODBROOK

The CEC meeting in September provided much food for thought and action for Friends in AWPS. The full report will be tabled at the Section Gathering in Seoul in Nov 2005.

I gave each participants a copy of our AWPS Constitution but received no comments or questions from anyone.

This will be in two parts; 1. Nancy's Minutes 2. my own report.

From the Section Secretaries Meeting, Sept 23-26, 2004, Woodbrooke

As a follow-up to the re-visioning work at the Triennial in January 2004, the Section Secretaries have drawn up a statement of core values

FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION

(OR) FRIENDS WITHOUT FRONTIERS was discussed as an alternative name.

Aims are to facilitate

- connecting Friends
- changing lives
- having a world-impact dimension

We aim to be a channel of communication among Friends organizations.

The focus of our work is to help Friends find ways to cross boundaries to connect with each other which leads to changed people and a changed world.

It is our experience that by worshiping together and working side by side we grow in faith and in service to God.

We affirm that some tools are Intervisitation, Events and development of Spiritual Community.

We are called to be peacemakers and reconcilers, both within and outside the world of Friends.

Where barriers that keep Friends from worshipping with each other have been erected, we seek to overcome them.

Some of the barriers we seek to overcome are those of geographical distance, age, language and culture, as well as human-made barriers of national frontiers, inequitable distribution of wealth, food and material resources, and differing beliefs and ways of worship.

In the light of Friends' testimony of equality of access to the Divine, we are committed to doing everything in our power to help Friends grow in faith by overcoming barriers/crossing borders. We do this by encouraging face-to-face encounters, large and small gatherings, inter-visitation, travel in the ministry, the ministry of hospitality, and other activities that bring Friends together.

Most Friends are connected to FWCC through their membership in a yearly meeting. Our International Membership program is available to Friends who live outside the boundaries of a yearly meeting.

Through our accreditation as a Non-Governmental Organization at the United Nations, we are the conduit for the voice of all Friends, worldwide.

FWCC represents Friends worldwide at international ecumenical and interfaith bodies.

The Section Secretaries and General & Associate Secretaries agree to take this report to the section and central executive committees and to consult them on the following questions, so that clear guidance can be available for the staff and the central executive committee when they meet in May 2005:

It has been suggested both here at Woodbrooke and at the Triennial that FWCC adopt a new name. One suggestion is Friends Without Frontiers. Is this an idea to be pursued further?

We are aware of the need to modernize communications. Work has already taken place on getting new websites in place for each section and the World office. We encourage the Clerk to establish a communications committee [as proposed in January 2004] as soon as possible so that it can report by May 2005.

As the secretaries group, we have agreed to set up our own email group for regular sharing of prayer, news and discussion.

The section secretaries will consult with Friends in the sections and will feed back to the General Secretary specific suggestions for ways in which the World Office could be working to help Friends grow in faith by overcoming barriers or borders.

We all commit ourselves in the coming year to uphold young Friends in prayer and to support them in practical ways as they prepare for WGYF.

We will seek names from within the sections for the communications and fundraising committees. We will encourage each of our sections to work on its own fundraising strategy.

We will support each other through our email group.

We realize in our work this weekend that we have addressed the Action Plan under Priority 3, Vision & Strategy. A mission statement needs to evolve from the continuation of this work, hopefully prior to and at the May 2005 meeting of the Central Executive Committee.

We recommend that in future the COAL executive secretary be included in the secretaries group.

Attending:

Nancy Irving, General Secretary, World Office

Joseph Andugu, Associate Secretary, World Office

Moses Musonga, Executive Secretary, Africa Section

Kenneth Co Ching Po, Executive Secretary, Asia-West Pacific Section

Bronwyn Harwood, Executive Secretary, Europe & Middle East Section

Margaret Fraser, Executive Secretary, Section of the Americas

REPORT OF THE FWCC SECTIONS' EXECUTIVE SECRETAIRES MEETING HELD FROM MAY 23RD TO 25TH, 2004, by Kenneth Co.

The purpose of the meeting was primarily to read and approve the 2003 audited account of FWCC. On the first day, only secretaries from the four sections with the General Secretary & Associate Secretary were present.

We worshipped together and also gave some history of our personal, spiritual paths that led us each to the present. We also shared with each other the heart-aches as well as joys of being Executive Secretary. Everybody shared from their past and from their heart, so that everyone came out with deepened personal knowledge of the other and of themselves.

The second day, being Friday, was a solid day for business when in addition to the six there were the Clerk of FWCC, Tom Hill; the out-going and new Treasurers of FWCC, and Thecla from the World Office who joined us. So it was a full meeting. After pretty rough going over the audited accounts of 2003, we came out knowing a bit more about the difficult way the funds were divided into designated and undesignated funds and therefore "Budget I" a "Budget II" which were used. We however voted to merge the two into one for simplicity and clarity. So this will be the practice from now on.

Another fact, the figures/budget of 2003 came close to be balanced which is progress. In addition, we of the AWPS have increased our contribution to the World Office considerably this year, which will also contribute greatly to the FWCC being able to have a balanced budget for fiscal year 2003 to 2004.

After the tense Friday, we then launched into re-visioning of our different sections and came up with some tentative ideas for statement of core values of FWCC which hopefully will lead to a Mission Statement. One name that came up during this time was:--Friends without Frontiers. One thing that prompted this suggestion was the feeling shared by all present that to be effective, we at the FWCC need to involve our Friends in activities, such as the Triennial, Work-camps, 1652 Pilgrimage etc., which lead Friends to a deep, personal experience of the inward spirit. Therefore, all the activities sponsored by the WO or by the sectional gatherings or yearly meetings must strive towards crossing cultural, language, as well as national boundaries.

As a group we worked until the morning of Sunday, the day of our departure before we actually called it quits! We felt the guidance of the Holy Spirit and we came out with good feelings, pledging to engage in closer touch with each other from this point on!

From 26th on I had an opportunity to visit with Friends in Bristol, Stroud and Oxford, where I stayed with Ruth Baker, the chair-person of the Friends China Steering Group, and FCC (Friends to Churches in China) which is an inter- faith group in the United Kingdom, engaged in exchange programmes with the Three Self Churches in China. We pledged to keep closer touch between our two groups.

My experience of this post-meeting journey can be described as pleasant, relaxed and informative. This was so mainly due to the good work of Chris Lawson who co-ordinated all my stays mentioned!

Now may I forward to you the Minutes taken by the General Secretary, Nancy Irving, on the secretaries meeting, with the questions for our section to consider, as a whole. Any and all feedback is welcome.

By the way, Nancy indicated to me that she is definitely coming to our sectional gathering in Seoul and that she would also like to take in Japan Yearly meeting, and some/or all Indian yearly meetings on her itinerary as well.

Poverty, Horizontal Inequality and Conflict

We live in a world that is witnessing growing experiences of conflict and deprivation and yet the two are not always directly linked. Both in the world of Quaker Peace and Service issues and in the world of development scholarship, the developmental/poverty roots of conflict are key. I am deeply indebted to the writings of Friend Adam Curle decades ago. Having myself been a Quaker Peace and Service representative of Oxford meeting and having studied and worked in conflict issues and presently being an Indian Quaker in Nepal, I would like to contribute a few thoughts on conflict and development. I write through a multi-countries perspective, as I have lived and worked through different conflict experiences in the world. Most recently my experiences have been in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

The causes of conflict are complex and it is well documented that absolute poverty, social and political exclusion, acute inequality and inequity in the distribution of resources and opportunities among different identity groups, eg gender, caste, ethnicity, and failure of political structures to address these issues have made Nepal extremely vulnerable to conflict.

This however, is not just true of Nepal, but as has been pointed out by global research by Professor Frances Stewart at Oxford University, there is a high propensity for intra-national conflict where “horizontal inequalities” are experienced between socially constructed groups within the same nation.

Friends in South Africa refer to an experience of “two nations” within the one country. This prompts me to ask what then are a possible set of common threads running through intra-national conflict, inequality and gender inequality ?

Lessons learned from working on gender and poverty in different countries and additionally in a transition country like Sri-Lanka, suggest that intra-national conflict, poverty and gender inequality all call for an analysis of inequality. All three issues should encourage space being allowed to disaggregate national averages of income and non-income poverty. They allow us an opportunity to probe into a disaggregated picture of poverty, to attend to disparities by sex, by rural-urban, by ethnicity, class and caste. They provide us an opportunity to capture the poverty of social exclusion, as highlighted by the Guatemala experience, where the levels of poverty for the indigenous people were much higher.

In order to address poverty reduction and social development, issues of access and redistribution, we need to develop a pro-poor policy framework for a country, integrating sustainable peace and development. We need to attend to ways forward at the country level to operationalize a poverty reduction policy framework. Poverty reduction is a priority, as suggested by the experience from the Solomon Is, following the conflict there. After conflict, income and food security, restoration of basic services eg education and health need to be put into place.

The broader United Nations notion of Human Security (Human Development Report 1994) lists seven categories for both men and women: 1) economic security 2) food security 3) health security 4) environmental security 5) personal security 6) community security 7) political security.

From a gender perspective, the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, Peace and Security needs to be integrated into this overarching approach. The latter would include a twin strategy of integrating gender and poverty into the framework for post-conflict recovery. Project/program interventions should better target women-headed households, internally displaced women, war widows and victims of landmines, violence etc.

The connection between deprivation and conflict is not always automatic, nor is the humanitarian work in crisis settings informed by this understanding. Unless we get our thinking right, our peace work will remain piecemeal- blind to the poverty roots of conflict to which Adam Curle long ago alerted us.

Warm Greetings from Nepal
Roma Bhattacharjia

Check out **AWPS on the Web**. We now have the AWPS Handbook, the September Newsletter, a list of Contacts and shortly this Newsletter will be posted there. We would love to receive email contact from our on line readers as well as our readers of the printed Newsletter
Valerie Joy, Associate Secretary AWPS



Hong Kong Monthly Meeting. From left to right
Kenneth Co Ching Po, Executive Secretary AWPS,
David Bottomley, Treasurer AWPS, Valerie Joy Associate
Secretary AWPS, Julian Stargardt, Clerk Hong Kong MM.

If undelivered please return to
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