



***T***he secret of my serenity and joviality lies in my unflinching faith in God, that is truth. I know by myself, I can do nothing. There is God within me and He makes me do whatever I do. How then, can I be unhappy? I do also know that whatever He makes me do, is all for my good. With this knowledge also, I should remain happy.

M.K. GHANDI 1944

**“WHAT MORE TO YOU WANT WHEN THE HEAVENS ARE WITHIN YOU AND EVEN GOD HIMSELF?”**

GHANDI IN NEW DELHI APRIL 1946

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<http://www.fwccawps.org>

*This newsletter is posted on this website. You may  
wish to print off additional copies for Friends.*

## Editorial

This issue is devoted to troubled areas in our extended section. You will find articles on the Lebanon Israeli conflict as well as information about our Indian Friends and Indonesian Friends.

Personal encounters have made life rather difficult for me these past few weeks. But thanks to God, I have never felt without the comfort of the Spirit or being abandoned by God.

I am honoured to be one of the workshop leaders at the seminar called "Similar Testimonies; Different Witnesses" organized by the Quaker World Relations Committee of Britain Yearly Meeting. It is scary to be on the same podium with such seasoned Friends as John Punshon!.

Please enjoy this latest issue of the Newsletter. I wish and hope that you get as much out of it as I have putting the articles together!

Your Friend and servant,  
Kenneth Co

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## MESSAGE FROM MIDDLE EAST YEARLY MEETING

To Friends Everywhere

August 2006

Dear Friends

In these extremely turbulent times in the Middle East, the sad news that Middle East Yearly Meeting has been cancelled is hardly surprising. It was to have been an important gathering for Friends from the two monthly meetings, Ramallah and Brummana, and other international visitors, on the theme: Leading the Middle East to a Lasting Peace. The meeting was to have taken place in Brummana, Lebanon, from 7 to 10 September 2006.

We share with you (on page 2) a letter from Tony Manasseh of Brummana Monthly Meeting. We also wish to suggest to Friends world wide that on 10 September we all join in holding the Middle East Friends in the light, thanking God for their continuing fortitude and witness and praying that ways will open for the Middle East to be led to a lasting Peace.

Below are some contact details for those who wish to find out more or donate money.

Peace, Shalom, Salaam

*Marit Kromberg, Clerk*

*Bronwyn Harwood, Executive Secretary*

### NOTE

You can send messages for Friends in the Middle East to [meym@fwcc.quaker.org](mailto:meym@fwcc.quaker.org) for forwarding

Funds are **not** being collected for specific Quaker relief work by Middle East Friends. Brummana Friends suggest that donations should be made to any of the reputable major charities working in the field.

Donations to Friends Schools in both Brummana and Ramallah are always welcome and help them to continue their important contribution to education in the region.

**Brummana High School**  
Khouri

Principal: Dr Walid  
<http://www.bhs.edu.lb>

Donations can be made to: The Quaker International Educational Trust (QuIET) which is a charitable company registered in England and Wales. Contact for further information:

[brianmorphy@hvmail.co.uk](mailto:brianmorphy@hvmail.co.uk)

**Friends Schools, Ramallah**

Director: Joyce

Ajlouni <http://www.palfriends.org>

Donations can be made to Global Ministries, Friends United Meeting:

<http://www.fum.org>

**The Friends International Centre Ramallah** in partnership with Ramallah Monthly Meeting is seeking to serve the cause of peace and justice in the region.

It is in need of financial support now.

<http://www.Ramallah.quake>

[r.org](http://www.Ramallah.quake)

**American Friends Service Committee** is responding to the developing humanitarian and political crisis in Gaza, Lebanon, Israel, and the West Bank with a crisis fund.

For articles, campaigns and details of how to contribute

<http://www.afsc.org/>

### **August 2006**

From the midst of great suffering and unfairness, from the land of destruction and death, voices of hope and love still emerge. These are the voices of reason and humanity that the world will always need and cherish. Be sure love and peace will always win and finally reign. We need to work harder to make this happen.

We are sorry that our long awaited Middle East Gathering or Yearly Meeting has been postponed. The untimely war that took Lebanon, the Lebanese and many others by surprise has been enough reason not only to postpone our YM but also to change the face of the Middle East. The coming uncertainty will surely have a big impact on future events.

Ramallah and Brummana have been two sister meetings since the late 1800s. They have both contributed enormously to the fine education of Middle Eastern youth and contributed to the bringing together of global east and west through their schools and f(F)riends meetings. All that has happened with little means and sometimes under antagonistic forces. Yet we made it with pride and success. Thanks to our wide and diverse body of old scholars from both schools, our words of loving Peace, Friendship and that of God in everyone, continue to spread in our area. But that is not enough. We need to continue with more collaboration and inclusiveness.

In the fifty years that I remember, Ramallah and Brummana Friends met 4 times. Rarely to discuss common business, but rather as a world gathering to foster our international belongingness to the wider family of Friends. Why? Because our area had always been a conflict zone and our Quaker beliefs were daily tested by, and jeopardized by, the current events of the area. Since the 1950s our Meetings had begun to dwindle in numbers for that reason. Yet we go on. For how long? It all depends.

It depends on whether we can still spread the words of love and peace. Whether our schools can survive the destruction of war, the new / old emerging culture of martyrdom and death; the double standards that we are subjected to. It also depends on the support we get from our wider Quaker family. It depends on whether our wider family can be more active in the international arena and the United Nations.

The East West cultural gap needs to be bridged. Scholars and academicians have to work harder than politicians to find the way forward. There is an emerging Arab populace that is dissatisfied with the double standards of the west and with their leaders who have embraced the "unfair" west. Only logical and peaceful solutions can be accepted. There should be no more suppression and no more bullying. Lebanon and Gaza continue to pay the price for that. The destruction and death that has befallen these two peoples is colossal. Their reaction, if

coupled with extremist Islamic groups, is world threatening. We need to remedy that through help, real help, practical and comprehensive. Israel has to understand that brutality cannot and will not curb Arab enthusiasm. She needs to be more compassionate and attractive to her Arab neighbors. Israel's actions since the 50s have not gained her Arabs friends but only enemies and some ferocious suicidal ones at that.

Immediate relief to Lebanon can be in any form. All international aid agencies are doing good work given the embargo and blockade. Contributions should be made to agencies that have a high ratio of real aid and low overhead expenses - usually indicated in their websites.

*Tony Manasseh*

*Brummana, August 2006*

## **Mid India Yearly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends in India**

**Chairperson**  
**S.C.Lall**

**Secretary**  
**Christopher B. Lall**

### **Report of M.I.Y.M. India**

Greetings and good wishes in the precious name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

M.I.Y.M. Friends met in George Fox Hall, Itarsi on 04/09/05 to discuss some important matters regarding our Friends Boys and Girls Schools and our church council. We thought profoundly as how peace can be established on earth and conflicts and wars be avoided. No bombs and no guns be required any more as terrorism is fast increasing in almost every country threatening human peace and happiness. We were stirred and moved by the power of the Divine Light. Many Friends vividly expressed their views on the subject. Peace and human happiness is the most valuable possession. We all must try for this possession. We must try to be one with God.

We felt that the present day world is terrified as terrorism and atrocities of unnecessary and forced wars encompass some countries, causing danger to human happiness and threatening peace. The need for co-operation and co-ordination is being felt every moment to establish peace on earth. Instead of fighting and threatening, nations must come out as good neighbors.

The academic standard of our Boys H.S. School and Girl's School in Sohagpur is very satisfactory. One more girls school is fast developing in Itarsi. Imparting education to the downtrodden and poorer sections of the society has been our main concern and the Friends schools in our area are following these patterns.

Friends Boys School is encouraging the weekly meeting of deaf and mute young boys and girls, affirming their learning skills. Friends Girls School in Itarsi is supporting the education of street children of 'Udayan', a project run by the Catholic Schools of Itarsi. The Friends Girls H.S. Sohagpur continues support to the needy girls through free education in the hostel and school.

We received many visitors from yearly meetings in Britain, America and the Section of Europe and the Middle East during the Indian Friends Gathering and the AWPS Section Meeting 2002.

Regarding our projects- the George Fox hall has been renovated, but the floor is to be completed and likewise the roof. Our major project is to build the Rachel Metcalf memorial community center adjoining the George Fox hall, for the use of Indian and overseas Friends. In future this can be utilized for social purposes, stay, meetings, gatherings and offices. We have some material and funds for this project, but certainly we look forward to Friends for financial assistance. Our third project is to begin a basic teacher's training college in Itarsi under the guidance and care of F.S.G.B.I. We hope God will help us in starting this project. Mid Indian Friends would like to have their own trust formed in association with other Indian Yearly Meetings and Friends groups to safeguard property matters.

M.I.Y.M. sends its representatives in F.R.C. Rasulia, Friends School Governing board and organizing committee of the All India Friends Gathering. They serve with responsibility. They have encouraging reports in the Yearly Meeting this year. We hope they serve better next year too.

M.I.Y.M. got a good renovated office this year, but sorry to say it lacks modern equipment like computers, Fax and telephone.

We hope that God certainly help us fulfill our vision for the uplift of the society. We pray for a successful and nice Gathering in Seoul, S. Korea.

In love and friendship,  
Christopher B. Lall (Secretary)  
Mid India Yearly meeting

## **Quakers - A Minority Religious Culture In Our Pluralistic Society**

### **Sachiko Yamamoto, Japan Yearly Meeting**

The beginning of Quakerism in Japan dates back to 1886, when American missionaries came, that is, Japanese Quakers have a history of 119 years. Has Quakerism rooted in our pluralistic Japanese society? It is a very difficult question. Japan Yearly Meeting, established in 1917, consists of five monthly meetings and has several organizations affiliated with it. They are Friends Senior and Junior High schools, two kindergartens and two homes for the aged. Japan Yearly Meeting also owns Friends Center, which is available for accommodation for short and long-term-stay visitors. However, this doesn't really answer to the question itself.

The number of the Quakers has been shrinking, two monthly meetings having been closed in this decade. The main reason is aging of their members and not having got new members. Only a few members from the closed meetings joined other meetings. Total membership in Japan as of November, 2005 is only 161. Though we are such a minority group, we think we have a special mission towards our society. Japanese Friends' concerns have always been peace, education and care for the handicapped and the aged. Building up peace consciousness among us and in the younger generation is urgent today. Through my experience of teaching the young students at Friends School, I feel we should do our best to lead them to realize the presence of Inward Teacher inside themselves. It is to free them from the deep-rooted traditional desire to conform to the surrounding society. Japanese people tend to teach young people to be sensitive to the social values of the time and to follow them, which can sometimes mislead them and bring about conflicts with other societies. For many Japanese, the sense of belonging to a major and stable group is highly valued. As long as they belong to a solid group, they feel themselves well protected and well respected. Therefore the sense of being different from others is a challenge for most of them, especially for young people. Being Quakers often gives us this sense of being different though it has universal values. Japanese Friends sometimes face difficulties when we try to hold on to certain Quaker testimony. Even among us Friends certain social activities can cause disputes. Some Friends are more concerned about differences than similarities when we try to cooperate with other religious or social groups. Accurate knowledge of others, avoiding prejudices and stereotypes and willingness to talk with them honestly is what is really needed to outreach, but they are what we lack most. I feel believing in That of God in everyone is very difficult to practice at times.

Most important thing for us is to seek for the Light of Christ within ourselves, which enables us to overcome prejudices, doubts and indifference. Even if most Japanese have little knowledge of Christ, we can have them trust in what is guiding us from inside if we are considered their friends. Therefore, we should not refrain from speaking of significant personal experience with them. It can be the start of creating true friendship. If they come to enjoy our friendship, they may come to be interested in our Quaker faith.

Since we are considered unique, young people or Christians who are not content with their surroundings sometimes show interest in our meeting, but quite often they leave after a while because they feel they are left on their own and not well guided or introduced to Christian faith in our silent meeting. We should prepare better guide books and means to make them feel involved. While we have done quite a few translations and are to work on more of them, it is about time to create our original writings. Japan Yearly Meeting has been publishing "The Friend" four times a year and each monthly meeting its own newsletter regularly for years. We have expressed our faith and practice in our own way. I think we are ready to publish our own "Faith and Practice."

The difficulties for Japanese Friends in international gatherings when English is the dominant language limit our chances to take part in world-wide communications among Friends, but

we have been making efforts. This year we sent two young Friends to the World Young Friends Gathering, which resulted in a new young member.

Last April, with the help of British Friends, I led a group of Japanese Friends and people with links to Friends School on Quaker tour in Britain. It gave us a lot of hints on how we could outreach and strengthen our fellowship with other Friends. We hope we could share our own experience and insights with wider Quakers. We wish the world body of Friends would keep serious interest in Japanese Friends so that we can have Quakerism better rooted in Japan and work together to make this world a more peaceful place to live in.

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**“One Friend’s approach to Christianity”**

*Chris Lawson of Minehead Meeting, England, gave this talk to people enquiring about Quakerism at Quaker Quest sessions earlier this year*

I was brought up a Quaker. So it became a part of me from my beginning. I was born to Quaker parents, worshipped as child in the historic Meeting House at Jordans, near London; went to a Quaker boarding school in York, and joined the Friends Ambulance Unit for alternative national service as a conscientious objector. Instilled into me through all this was an approach which stressed the importance of living out one’s religious faith - not what you must believe so much as of what you must do, being of service to others in particular. No stress on sinfulness, plenty on seeking the good in others and letting that come out in yourself. Both men and women took their part naturally in the life of the Quaker community and in its leadership and I grew into the way of worship in which silence and spoken ministry were blended in a group exploration. Actually for a child, a lot of it was boring at the time and I gazed at the old leaded lights and the red floor bricks of Jordans Meeting House patiently many times! Also at the old Quakers. But now I’m a lot nearer being an old Quaker, I can look back and see what that upbringing did for me. Christianity was presumed in non-doctrinal way and without a lot of Biblical reference.

I encountered a more challenging Christianity at University through services for students, which made clear that there were choices to make around how you viewed Jesus. The Student Christian Movement enlarged my understanding of Christianity greatly. I studied the evolving concept of God in the Bible, went on silent retreat at Glastonbury and made personal commitments in the Methodist Covenant Service. I started being on ecumenical committees and haven’t stopped! I remained in the Quaker community, however, though challenged, broadened and finding inspiration in Jesus from my contacts with other Christians. And that’s how it has remained, through my life of teaching in Africa, working in a Quaker adult education centre and now in an active retirement in Minehead where the Quakers and Amnesty International take a lot of my time and interest.

So I would call myself a Christian. Or in a phrase from Quaker faith and practice, “a humble learner in the school of Christ”. For the learning goes on, fresh aspects of Jesus’ life, teaching and witness are shown to me that re-challenge, re-inspire. It’s not a doctrinal approach - concepts of salvation, redemption through the Cross and others that mean much to many don’t resonate with me. “Follow me”, does. Christ as a centre, not a boundary. Like in the story I heard once of an Australian sheep farmer who was asked why he didn’t have fences on his farm and replied, “we don’t need fences, we have wells”. The sheep stayed within range by attraction, not by definition.

I’ve also had contact with people for whom another world faith is central to their lives. A Sikh woman in Birmingham, showing a group of us around the magnificent Gurdwara to which she gives much time, taking us into a small room at the very top with a domed mirrored ceiling - and saying sit quietly and discover what you can feel. A Hindu woman speaking from great depths of the significance of the images in her Temple - getting to a meaning beyond outward forms. A South African Muslim, totally committed to the cause of change in South Africa, exploring liberation theology from an Islamic point of view - and

speaking of how after being in a South African police cell with many others following an anti-apartheid demonstration, he realised the commitment of the Christians and others and could no longer feel exclusive about his faith. A northern Kenyan Muslim woman, a leader of a community peace-making women's group living out her aims with courage and great good cheer - not wanting to be other than a Muslim. A Buddhist in Japan, taking me to his Temple to hear some really uplifting chanting. Such people are humbling to meet. Is their inspiration from somewhere different to mine, or merely emerging through different cultural and traditional patterns? I cannot claim to have the whole truth, however compelling the bit of it that I have glimpsed is to me.

A Quaker theologian (Maurice Creasey) helped me enormously when he said that "what we see of God partially in each other we see fully in Jesus". The Quaker concept of "that of God in every one" is profound. It is inclusive. It is universal. But it does not prevent my finding my understanding of God in Jesus in particular. I think that Fox gave us the Christian-universal tension when he preached both of knowing Christ directly as a power within and of looking for "that of God" in everyone. Fox's metaphors of this inner awareness as the Light, the Seed, the Teacher, the Way also resonate for me. They may or may not for you.

So I'm happy to call myself a Christian and to say that the Society of Friends is a Christian group. But I want Quaker definitions of that and I know that the definitions that many other people give to Christianity exclude mine, and have turned off many who have been glad to find us and don't find it helpful when Christian language is used. So I prefer to stress how we each develop a faith that makes sense to us and find the language to speak of it to others. And that's a process that goes on and on. It gives me a good starting point for listening to those of other church traditions and other religious faiths speaking of their experience and understanding. In another much loved Quaker phrase, it keeps me "open to new light, from whatever source it may come".

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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**22<sup>ND</sup> FWCC TRIENNIAL DUBLIN**  
**IRELAND, 11—19 AUGUST 2007**

Bringing Friends together is the work of the Friends world committee for Consultation. The Triennial is the world business meeting of the FWCC. Representatives nominated by their yearly meetings gather to review what has been done in the name of FWCC and to consider future tasks and programmes. Sharing the life and concerns of Friends worldwide is the undercurrent of these gatherings. In August 2007, friends will gather in Dublin, Ireland, hosted by Ireland Yearly Meeting.

The theme for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Triennial is "Finding the prophetic voice for our time" with I Corinthians, 14.1 providing shape: "It is love, then, that you should strive for. Set your heart on spiritual gifts, especially the gift of proclaiming God's message."

325 Friends from all over the world will meet to share worship, meetings for worship for business, interest groups and working group sessions, as well as having time to relax with Friends, and enjoy excursions to places in and around Dublin. There are pre-and post-Triennial events in Ireland and Great Britain, for those Friends who are able to spend more time.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

1. **Robert Howell** paid a visit to Indonesia in connection with the Peace Project.

May we quote Robert:

I visited **Yogyakarta, Indonesia** 12 June to 8 July. My main purpose was to attend PURI language plus, to begin to learn Bahasa Indonesia. My main secondary purpose was to visit the Centre for security and peace Studies, Gadjah Mada University, to learn more about their activities, and to follow up with the police Project where we had assisted with the arrangement for MFAT funding from the Good Government Fund. I also met a number of other people including Herb Feith (before he returned to Australia), Lance Castles, Duane Ruth-Heffelbower, Gerry and Helene Van Klinken and others.

### **Police Project**

CSPS has not received any money from MFAT yet. We talked about how CSPS is to arrange participants from the Police in the programme, how the course is to be evaluated and NZ Friends involvement in this, and how to go about involving Police trainers in the project.....

2. **Viv Hawkins** from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting will be traveling to India on her Traveling Ministry. She wrote:--

*I hope to travel to India in November 2006 for several months and am raising funds for this. My primary focus will be on coordinating opportunities for people to be, learn, and serve among mid-India's Friends and villagers. Initial research in the U.S. shows a workcamp in mid-India holds a strong interest for a wide sector of people of different ages, economic backgrounds, national origins, and physical abilities. IFWG has requested Friends in India to submit proposals for workcamp projects. We look forward to receiving them. These proposals will help shape my time in India so please submit yours if you wish to be considered for a workcamp project.*

*I hope to visit among Friends in all India's Yearly Meetings, to meet D.K. Chetsingh, Hari Khurana and other Friends who I did not meet during my last trip. I look forward to remeeting other Friends including Mallika Aiyub, Sheila Bishop, Gour family, Christopher Lall, Devdas Shisunder, Sunny Singh, Bhaskar Sonkamble, Arvind Swan and his sister, Ronald Titus and so many more unnamed. If time and resources allow, I will also visit Daniel and Hansa Mazgoanker, Sadhana Vairalle and other women with the P.D. Mandlick Trust, and Krishnamal and Jagannathan. I hope to visit Barefoot College headquarter site, Michael Mazgoanker's village in Maharashtra, Nirmitee's sustainability training center, Vinoba ashram in Wardha, a solar cooker training facility in Indore, Right Sharing of World Resources sites, Friends Rural Centre- Rasulia, Friends Girls School- Sohagpur, Satpura National Park tribal villages. I hope to co-facilitate Alternatives to Violence Project training. Those are a lot of hopes all connected to the workcamp possibility. I will see how way opens.*

*I have much to learn and welcome your prayers. Please know that you are in my prayers.*

**Linley Gregory** will be traveling to QUNO Geneva as the representative of QUNO NY a joint session of the two QUNOs. Valerie Joy's effort of compiling a list of Australian Friends willing to host traveling Friends from elsewhere has been published. It is entitled:-- **Australian Directory for Traveling Friends**. It can be ordered through Valerie.

**WANTED**

**Theme of the next section gathering to be  
held in  
INDIA, November 2008.**

**PLEASE GIVE IT A PRAYREFUL  
THOUGHT AND SEND US YOUR  
SUGGESTION TO EITHER VALERIE  
OR SECTION SECRETARY**

*If undelivered please return to:*  
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