



*The Sacred Valley Peru*



*Local Friends at FWCC World Plenary*

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*AWPS Representatives at Peru FWCC World Plenary*

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### Abbreviations:

FRC - Friends Rural Center, Rasuliya, Hoshangabad  
AIFG - All India Friends Gathering  
BYM - Bundelkhand Yearly Meeting, Chhattarpur  
BhYM - Bhopal Yearly Meeting, Bhopal  
GFCI - General Friends Conference India  
MIYM - Mid India Yearly Meeting, Itarsi  
MRMM - Marble Rock Monthly Meeting  
FWCC - Friends World Committee for Consultation  
AWPS - Asia West Pacific Section (FWCC)  
AYM - Australia Yearly Meeting  
A/NZYM - Aotearoa/New Zealand Yearly Meeting  
PYM - Philadelphia Yearly Meeting  
IFWG - India Friends Working group (PYM)  
HMMK - Hariwar Monthly Meeting Karnaktaka

**CELEBRATE**

**WORLD QUAKER DAY**

**OCTOBER 2, 2016**

**"INSPIRED BY  
FAITH -  
WITNESSING  
TOGETHER IN  
THE WORLD"**

Connecting Friends, Crossing Cultures and Changing Lives.

Friends World Committee for Consultation  
Asia West Pacific Section Inc.

worldquakerday.org

## Dear Friends

### Looking back and looking forward.

In January this year over 300 Friends from 39 countries gathered at Pisac, Peru for a Plenary meeting of our world wide family of Friends. This was the first time FWCC had met in Latin America and so the first time that so many Friends from Latin America had been able to attend such an international meeting.

Pisac is a beautiful small town in the sacred valley. The town has a lively, colourful market and the mountains are majestic. It was a wonderful setting for this meeting. There were 31 Friends from the Asia West Pacific Section. They were from the Philippines, South Korea, Hong Kong, India, Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia. One of the features of this meeting was the large number of Young Friends. The organising committee encouraged meetings and churches to send their younger folk and I think we were all grateful that this happened. This newsletter has reflections from a number of people who were there.



*Jacqueline Stillwell, Jessica Bishop, Ronis Chapman*

Our third World Quaker Day (WQD) is coming on Sunday October 2 and I hope that Friends everywhere are planning celebrations for this day. I am grateful every day for this global community that is my extended family, and World Quaker Day is a time to do something special being part of this community of Friends.

The WQD poster was designed by the Section of the Americas and they very kindly said we could use it and gave us a version that includes the AWPS logo. I can send it by email to anyone who would like to use it.

Have you looked at our new website? <http://fwccawps.org>

On the home page there is the option to choose a language other than English and many people have told me that they have been using this facility.

Enjoy these treasures from the Friends in our Asia West Pacific Neighborhood

Gratefully

**Ronis Chapman**  
**AWPS Secretary**

## Friend Speaks My Mind!

It's hard to not feel spiritually connected when seeing the majesty of nature. In Pisac it was hard not to feel like there was something wonderful, more than human, something connecting us all.

Not only was it nature, but also the very unique feeling, of being at a gathering of more than 300 people, of universal love. With each person I met from the 19th to the 27th of January I felt supported, loved and connected. These connections originated and evolved from many different sources from sharing worship, in workshops and home groups, and as the website suggested, "conversations over meals and in corridors" and late night spa pool visits.

The theme "Living the transformation: Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God" spoke to me, my understanding of Quakerism, being a Quaker and my connection to the light and God. Another banner read "Connecting Friends, Crossing Cultures, Changing Lives". I wanted to stay safe in my spiritual boundaries... I did not want to explore the idea that my faith might readjust, that I had to explore deep within myself. A young friend Elizabeth Rolfe said to me; "The inner light guides so many people on such different and unique paths ... each path feels equally meaningful and fulfilling for those who walk it. Personal experience is something that just can't be argued with".

I very much enjoyed the experience of holding hands in spoken prayer in my home group and Friends who were new to silent worship said they very much enjoyed the shared space of worship. I understood in those moments that worship, as a shared process, imparts feeling beyond words.

In the evenings there were three Young Friend (YF) meetings. The first was an icebreaker and activities session where we mingled and got to know each other and introduce friends we had made to each other. The following two were business meetings that arose spontaneously. Due to the topic in the meeting for worship for business proposing an interval of up to twelve years between FWCC World Plenaries Young Friends became a little troubled. For many of us twelve years is more than half of our life! We established an International YF Gathering Committee and from the AWPS we have Ludwig Bon Quirog, Daniel Burton, Connor Chaffey and Rosie Remmerswaal on the committee. Very good hands!

I find often in Quaker communities we focus on what unites us than divides us. I have discussed this at length with the young friends I met in Peru. I have also discovered new-found strength to be courageous about my faith. I am done

shying away from talking about being a Quaker when people ask me... or telling people where I draw my strength from. I am going to share my transformation!

Laura Hadfield

Aotearoa /New Zealand Yearly Meeting

## Serving God in Bhopal India and Pisac Peru

I had a great experience in FWCC Conference held at Pisac, Peru from 19 -27 January 2016. It was my first conference and I learnt many things from the friends who were there at the conference. I was glad to be a part of this conference as friends from different diversities coming together speaking about themselves, living in faith, building a bridge of love, friendship, trust and most important serving the God through their ministry and their spiritual lives. And I felt that the Spirit of God was with us, as all decisions were taken together although friends were from different countries, cultures and languages. The sessions were quite energetic, motivating and knowledgeable.



*Young Friends at Peru. Laura Hadfield and Shikha Titus  
Left to Right. Frida, Laura, Shikha*

I was happy meeting with the Young Friends. I really liked to spent my time with them at Pisac after the sessions. I liked Young Friends sessions, which we had in the evening it was about knowing each others cultures, languages, way of worshipping. And I was happy meeting Young Friends from our AWPS Section – this was a great experience to me. After this conference we all are in contact with each other. I miss every moment spent there specially the giggles, talks we used have in the reception area.

I was inspired by attending uprogrammed worship in the morning. It was very different for me, as our church has a combination of unprogrammed and programmed worship. I too felt complete silence within myself. Secondly, I would like to highlight the AWPS Worship morning. I really appreciate that we taught a Hindi Action Song and it was joined by everyone despite of the language barrier.

I was the Co-Facilitator of my home group led by Wendy Hampton from Britain Yearly Meeting and it was a big responsibility for me to carry everyone together and in the light. Although my group members were very loving, understanding and supporting. I also took a group photo of my group.

I took beautiful and unforgettable memories from this Conference held at Pisac, Peru and shared with my church members. I hold everyone in Light and Love.

In Peace and Love,

**Merryl Titus,**  
**Representative of Bhopal YM**

## An experience to treasure

In the fertile valley at Pisac in Peru, nestled between enormous Andes mountains, 320 Friends met for the FWCC world plenary, held for the first time in Latin America.

On the first day we were welcomed to the large plenary room by local Friends and a lively, six-piece Peruvian band. We joined in singing a hymn composed for the conference, “Viriv la Transformacion” by Noe Alanguaia Canaza, clerk of the local arrangements committee.

The theme of the conference was “Living the Transformation”, with reference to *Romans 8:19* “Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God”.

Throughout the conference there was frequent spoken and sung ministry on the theme of transformation. A recurring hope was that we may eventually inhabit a world worthy of “the Children of God”.

It was disappointing that 39 Kenyan Friends arrived three days late because of difficulties with visas. This was particularly upsetting because most of us did not need visas at all. When the Kenyans arrived they were cheered and welcomed with loud applause.

Some significant highlights for me were the friendships formed during the



*Greetings banners sent to Peru from all around the world*

conference, at home- group, during workshops, study groups, worship or while waiting in the dinner queue. Faith traditions ranged from evangelical, in the style of a church revival meeting, to our familiar silent meeting and everything in between. Many of us found some traditions surprising and challenging, and the organisers warned us that this would be the case. Most of us found common ground in our shared Quaker testimonies and in open-hearted acceptance of each other's experience.

Gradually, with time, discussion and good will, the difficulties gradually fell away.

A central part of the program was a time of worship lasting one and a half hours, organised by each section of FWCC in turn. There was an additional worship session for Latin America. Friends from throughout Peru and Bolivia were invited to join us on that day.

It was a surprise for me to discover that most Friends in Peru and Bolivia are indigenous people from the high Andes and that their first language is Aymara, not Spanish. The Latin America worship was led by a Guatemalan pastor who spoke with great emotion in his native language, Aymara, and his ministry was warmly welcomed by local Friends.



*More banners with greetings*

An important part of the FWCC program were the “Consultations” on four specific topics: “Ministry and Leadership”, “Living Ministry Communities”, “Sustaining Life on Earth” and “Equipping FWCC”. The Consultations met four times during the week and everyone was asked to commit to just one topic. I chose the topic “Sustaining Life on Earth” and I was most impressed by the large number of Friends who attended and also by the facilitation team of three Friends, Jonathan Woolley and Rachel Madenyika from QUNO and Charlotte Gordon a Young Friend from New Zealand. A number of small, focused brainstorming sessions led to wide-ranging discussion and finally a central statement. This statement, together with recommendations for action, was accepted by the final FWCC business meeting. I look forward to seeing this excellent statement widely discussed among all yearly meetings.

A highlight for me was the daily, early-morning Bible Study conducted by Janet Scott. I found these sessions enlightening and uplifting. It was reassuring to find that the passage chosen as the theme for the conference has puzzled Biblical scholars for centuries. With an extensive knowledge of Biblical

scholarship and history, Janet cast new light on central words in this passage, The Lord's Prayer and the creation stories of *Genesis*.

This was the first world gathering of Friends that I have attended.

I now have a better grasp of the work that FWCC does and a better understanding of the place of AWPS within FWCC. It was wonderful to be able to meet some of the 30 representatives from the AWPS section and to feel a connection with them. The worship session of the AWPS section drew special attention from all Friends and we were bombarded afterwards with requests for photographs. I think our cultural diversity and the large number of young people in our section created much interest. I will never forget the many inspiring people I met, Friends who leaders in their fields, courageous in their commitment and friends to all. This has been an experience I will treasure always.

**Jo Jordan**

*Australia Yearly Meeting*

## Living Sustainably and Sustaining Life on Earth

From the Consultation on Sustainability, facilitated by Jonathan Woolley (Mexico City MM/Pacific YM; Staff, QUNO-Geneva), Rachel Madenyika (Staff, QUNO-NY), and Charlotte Gordon (Aotearoa/New Zealand YM)

The Light of Christ has inspired Quakers throughout the generations. As we gather together in Pisac, Peru in 2016, we feel this light stronger than ever in our calling to care for the Earth on which we live. It is calling us from all traditions: programmed, unprogrammed, liberal, and evangelical. It calls us to preserve this Earth for our children, our grandchildren and all future generations to come, working as though life were to continue for 10,000 years to come. *Be ready for action with your robes hitched up and your lamps alight. (Luke 12:35, Revised English Bible)*

Our faith as Quakers is inseparable from our care for the health of our planet Earth. We see that our misuse of the Earth's resources creates inequality, destroys community, affects health and well-being, leads to war and erodes our integrity. We are all responsible for stewardship of our natural world. We love this world as God's gift to us all. Our hearts are crying for our beloved mother Earth, who is sick and in need of our care.

We are at a historical turning point. Internationally, the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals oblige governments to take action. Faith groups and other civil society are

playing a major role. As Quakers, we are part of this movement. The FWCC World Conference approved the Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice in April 2012, while the FWCC World Office was a signatory to the Quaker statement on climate change in 2014 and divested from fossil fuels in June 2015.

We recognise that the environmental crisis is a symptom of a wider crisis in our political and economic systems. Our loving and well informed environmental actions as Friends, consistent with our spiritual values, must therefore work to transform these systems.

Many of us all over the Quaker world are taking practical actions as individuals and communities. At this Plenary, a consultation of more than sixty Friends from all over the world worked to build on these leadings with further practical action. The Annex attached to these minutes shows examples of what Friends are doing already or propose to do.

We must redouble our efforts right now. We must move beyond our individual and collective comfort zones and involve the worldwide Quaker community and others of like mind. Just as Jesus showed us, real change requires us to challenge ourselves to be effective instruments of change. We can do more.

On recommendation of this Consultation, and after some discussion, we adopt the following minute:

In this effort for sustainability, and mindful of the urgency of this work, this Plenary asks the FWCC World Office and Central Executive Committee to:

- 1. Invest FWCC World funds ethically.**
- 2. Share Quaker experiences with other faith groups** to inspire them to action, especially through the World Council of Churches.
- 3. Seek ways of connecting Friends worldwide that are sustainable.**
- 4. Facilitate dissemination of training materials on sustainability issues** for Quaker leaders, pastors and teachers.

This FWCC Plenary Meeting also asks all Yearly Meetings to:

- 1. Initiate at least two concrete actions** on sustainability within the next 12 months. These may build on existing projects of individuals or monthly meetings or they may be new initiatives. We ask that they encourage Young Friends to play key roles. We ask that meetings minute the progress and results, so as to share them with FWCC and Quaker meetings.

**2. Support individuals and groups in their meetings** who feel called to take action on sustainability.

**3. Support the work done by Quaker organisations** such as the Quaker United Nations Office and the Quaker Council for European Affairs to ensure that international agreements and their implementation support sustainability.

This FWCC Plenary Meeting asks individual Friends and groups (such as Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups and ad hoc groups within Meetings) to **Share inspiring experiences of living sustainably** on the new “sustainability webpage” of the Quakers in the World Website (<http://www.quakersintheworld.org/>). This webpage can be used as a source of ideas, inspiration and action.

***Annex to the Minute: Possibilities for practical sustainability action from the Pisac consultation***

*Individuals can:*

1. Dedicate personal time to nature.
2. Reduce consumption and use your consumer buying power to create change.
3. Cut down on meat consumption, be aware of energy costs in production and transport of all foods and methane from ruminant animals, support sustainable agriculture.
4. Travel – cycle, walk, use public transport or alternatives to private cars, keep air travel to a minimum.
5. Grow your own food and plant trees.
6. Be politically active in promoting sustainability concerns.
7. Share environmental concerns through books, publications, conversations, electronic media
8. Reduce energy use.
9. Use less water and harvest water.
10. Make time for spiritual connection with God.

***Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups and small groups within Meetings can:***

1. Live in a community, share housing, participate in a transition town movement.
2. Educate yourself and others.
3. Share transport and equipment.
4. Develop urban agriculture, community gardens, community supported agriculture, tree planting.
5. Love nature and encourage others to do so: we protect the things we love; get children out in nature; take care of nature around your meeting house (e.g., picking up trash/litter).

6. Invest ethically and divest from fossil fuels.
7. Ensure meeting houses are carbon neutral.
8. Build alliances, seek visibility, approach legislators.
9. Share sustainability skills.

***Yearly Meetings can:***

1. Support the sustainability actions of Monthly Meetings.
2. Build solidarity with local people.
3. Support Quakers in politics and international work.
4. Form support networks and alliances to make more impact – we can only do so much on our own.
5. Invest ethically, including on sustainability issues.
6. Practice what we preach.
7. Discern and move concerns to action.
8. Set targets for increased sustainability.
9. Connect and share with other YMs, direct or via FWCC Sections and World Office

*We recognise that different actions are relevant to different Quaker meetings in different parts of the world.*

## **A summary of Epistles from around the world presented to Australia Yearly Meeting 2016 in Hobart, Australia**

Glory! A brilliant sunny morning after a lightning-filled night begins our first full day... We join hearts for worship and business on the Midwest plains, corn and soy as far as the eye can see, fields flooded with recent rains.

So begins the Epistle from Illinois Yearly Meeting (2015). Other evocative openings locate Quakers from around the world in their place, time and point of journey both corporate and spiritual.

It has been an amazing privilege to read such varied and vibrant Epistles, to be transported by Friends' sharing of their communal activities. I felt I was there *with* them. This sense of connection came through the old-fashioned art of writing letters to tell one another our local news. Though we do not have Epistles from everyone and not every year, I am grateful for the ones we do have and for this precious opportunity to grow in mutual understanding.

Meetings began with joy and in sadness. Friends were missing at the start of the 2016 World Plenary in Peru, and those there 'felt a gap in our gathering the shape of God.' In New Mexico, Intermountain Friends (2015) of all ages shared

grief at the loss of a cherished member of their Senior Young Friends community.

Some Meetings have been around for centuries; others are relatively new. The United Society of Friends Women of Tanzania YM met for their 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference and a sense of expansion and growing experience was evident in their Epistle. The climax of their conference was honouring three elderly 'Women of Substance', who were each presented with a solar lamp as 'they have been beacons of light to us'.

Swedish Friends (2016), too, recognised that 'For every year that passes we get better at making the content of Yearly Meeting more accessible and the meeting more inclusive'.

Young Adults at Ohio Valley YM (2015) were still exploring how they function and welcomed eldership to deepen and live out individual and corporate spiritualities—especially for those new to Quakerism.

Late 2014 the New Association of Friends spoke openly about the impact their break from Indiana YM had had on them: for some it had been traumatic, for others liberating, yet they shared relief from tensions and hope for new life.



*FWCC tapestry at Australia Yearly Meeting. Ronis Chapman, Jong-her Lee (South Korea) Harold Wilkinson (AWPS Treasurer*

So many experiences resonate with our own:

- acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples and their traditional lands by Canadian and Pacific YMs (both 2015);
- Quaker Service Norway (2015) making important readjustments to respond to changed conditions for government support;
- at New York YM (2015), a Healing Centre which emanated energy 'through all our work and worship in ways both impalpable and precious'; and,
- Ohio Valley YM Teens found that as many grow older and leave the 'teens' group, they wish to retain their strong bonds.

Worship sharing was cited by many as powerfully inspirational and deeply meaningful. Quakers in Belgium and Luxembourg (2015) affirmed the power and potential of opening ourselves up to 'let the Light do the work.'

'Time to sit together and get to know one another in that which is eternal is a hallmark of our Yearly Meeting sessions,' said Southeastern Friends in Florida (2015), while Great Plains Friends (2015) hungered 'for fellowship and opportunities to share our stories with one another.'

I was struck by the cross-fertilisation between Yearly Meetings. As an example, in 2014 Denmark YM mentioned the possibility of future collaboration between Nordic Yearly Meetings; their Epistle of 2016 showed that this had become a reality.

I was also struck by the common thread of inter-generational activities. 'Young Friends are not your future; they are part of our joint present.' German YM (2015) was told. Through dialogue, young and old at North Pacific YM came to see one another as individuals beyond the masks of age.

Friends are diverse. Great Plains YM (2015) 'joined together across boundaries of culture, geography, and theology to do the work of God. Friends at the Europe & Middle East Section Annual Meeting (2015) were encouraged to 'Speak out our own awareness of the Divine, but also open to listen from the heart to different experience ... which might emerge from the same deep place.'

At the 2016 World Plenary, Quakers declared themselves to be Friends—willing to share deeply, pray boldly and listen lovingly to find ways to connect beyond the differences. They suggest that we listen together—pray, sing, ask difficult questions, learn, cry, and laugh together.

Community emerged as central to many Friends. Ohio Valley YM (2015) spoke of 'continual personal transformation in humility and the testing we receive in community.' Love is the first motion, they said. Friends from North Carolina YM, Conservative (2015), recognised trust and risk as integral and only possible in the power of the Lord which allows us to be open and vulnerable.

Quakers are a 'do it together' religious community and Friends at EMES (2015) longed to make that more of a reality, just as Pacific YM (2015) sought 'to make manifest the beloved community not yet fully present among us'.

Visiting speakers inspired and challenged. Friends at Iowa YM, Conservative (2015), were invited to move out of their comfort zone and seek their 'challenge zones' where growth occurs. Ireland YM (2016) explored 'The Gift of Conflict' while Sweden YM (2016) learnt how to quarrel so that 'we can meet in the conflict and become more human.'

Friends everywhere voiced their anguish at the state of the world. Aotearoa/New Zealand Friends (2015) reminded us that 'Today our neighbour

is global'. Several speakers at New England YM (2015) 'framed many of today's urgent peace, social and ecological problems as violations of covenant community.'

New England Friends felt urged to find ways 'for our own Religious Society's traditionally slow decision-making process to respond to the urgency of [climate change] and other global concerns'. In Winsconsin, Northern YM (2015) also struggled with balancing the importance of waiting on the Spirit.

With this present crisis, they (2015) chose at times to 'take steps, even if they are not perfect.' Baltimore YM (2015) recognised that this 'work before us is not new... Yet in some ways ... is entirely new for our actions will affect the future in ways that cannot be undone'.

Several Yearly Meetings, including Japan (2014), had a theme centred on peace. Swiss Friends in 2015 were shaken by a personal account of being a child soldier—for them the urgency to promote change was palpable. In 2016 they produced a document and set of actions on refugees.

This humanitarian crisis also touched the hearts of other Yearly Meetings. Powerlessness was expressed by Netherlands YM (2015) and Sweden YM (2016) realised 'with pain, how difficult it is to make a real difference in such a situation'. But as Baltimore Friends (2015) point out, 'It always seems impossible until it is done.'

Here are some other actions to share with you:

- Switzerland YM (2016) used a new 'smart flower' solar panel that moved through the day to catch the sun—or would have, if it hadn't rained.
- In 2015 and 2016 Britain YM held the first two of three sessions on their theme 'Living Out Our Faith in the World.'
- Friends at Ireland YM addressed poverty in 2015 and homelessness in 2016, discovering that 'unreasonable optimism' and positive faith were necessities.
- Friends Association for Higher Education, which met at George Fox University in Oregon (2015), was encouraged to stay in open and loving dialogue while discerning controversial issues regarding gender diversity.
- A concern of Southeastern Friends in Florida (2015) was to support the Friends New Underground Railway project of Olympia Monthly Meeting, North Pacific YM. This project provides safe passage for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer Ugandans.
- Southeastern Friends were inspired by the Spirit-led activism of their Teens against mountaintop removal coal mining. 'Their faithful practice of non-violent protest opened our hearts and minds to greater possibilities than we had imagined.'

To turn to the business of Yearly Meeting itself, Canadian Friends in 2015 knew there were many challenging discussions to have and decisions to make. They proposed major changes to their structure, anticipating a fallow year in 2017. It was a deeply felt matter which tested Friends.

The nature of membership was discussed at Ireland YM (2015); and New York YM (2015) spoke of feeling at ease and in unity 'after several years of hard but fruitful labour around our leadings and priorities.'

North Pacific YM (2015) held open, honest discussions about the difficulties of finding willing Friends to serve on the committees 'that carry forward the life of the Yearly Meeting.'

Friends at Central and Southern Africa YM (2015) sensed it was time to break out-dated habits 'to fit us for the new world emerging in Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.' They initiated change and renewal, revitalising the nominations process and introducing fresh procedures, such as clusters rather than unwieldy committees.

A number of Meetings wrestled with financial sustainability. Ohio Valley YM (2015) asked themselves how to balance the Yearly Meeting's own needs, while the steadfast concern Southern Appalachian Friends had for the condition of others, was tested by the budget and a minute about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. 'We laboured mightily on these issues,' they said.

Focussing on a possible financial deficit at Intermountain YM (2015) and how to handle this, 'Some Friends wondered if we had strayed from the traditional notion that a Yearly Meeting is primarily meant for doing the business of the Religious Society of Friends ... During this gentle and reflective session, many useful ideas were gathered and meeting priorities were clarified.'

May we be inspired by the example of Intermountain's Senior Young Friends (2015) who wrote: 'Our strengthened cohesion as community became apparent during our business meetings. We experienced an uncharacteristic surge of productivity, and our decisions on annual business were made with little contention and great unity.'

Intermountain JYFs (2015) reported that 'At the campfire, multiple Friends became one'. 'For the Elementary group at Southeastern YM, (2015) 'Our week ended much too short but was filled with joy and peace.' And a comment from Britain YM's Junior YM: 'We left with more questions than answers, and this inspires us to continue our journey of learning and discovery.' May our time together this week renew us in the Spirit as Ugandan Friends were in 2015.



freshness and enthusiasm of our Younger Friends. We are enjoined to accommodate both.

Ministry in the all ages Meeting for Worship affirmed our unity in diversity - and diversity in unity - reinforcing the importance of including children, Junior Young Friends and Young Friends in all aspects of the life of our Meetings. Young Friends remind us of our disquiet about Australia's decisions and policies in our local regions - which have directly affected human rights and freedoms, not only of refugees but also of all of us.

We are reminded in the Backhouse Lecture that the base and the nourishment for our social concerns comes from the inward Light.

Faith in action is evident in the breadth and depth of peace and social justice work done by Australian Friends. We recognise the need for longer-term projects in areas of ongoing concern. We value the links we maintain with Friends in the Asia Pacific Region and the wider world. As always we are enriched by visiting Friends from overseas.

"Everyday prophets" in our midst demonstrate courage and heroic action in answering their leadings. This requires of us willingness to change, and being prepared to go in indirect and unforeseen directions, like the sailor tacking into the wind to move forward.

Isaac Penington said:

*"When the life is at any time lost, the only way of recovery is by retiring to the invisible, and keeping there, and growing up there."*

## **Yearly Meeting Aotearoa / New Zealand 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

We write as Resident Friends at the Quaker Settlement Whanganui. We are here for 12 months from June 2016 Quakers (Friends and Attenders) in Aotearoa /New Zealand number around 1400 with 23 Worship Groups (mainly in the North Island) and 8 Monthly Meetings. Aotearoa/ New Zealand has a geographical area not dissimilar to the UK with a population of around 4 million, 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of whom live in Auckland.



Over 100 Friends attended the YM which was business orientated with no break out or optional sessions a marked contrast to Britain YM.

The key issues of the YM would, we are sure, resonate with Friends in Durham LM and Northumbria AM. How to: maintain the organisation essential for the efficient functioning of the Society without this becoming burdensome; support the many social justice and environmental issues with which Friends identify so closely; ensure that spiritual nurturing and exploration which should underpin all our work and interests are not overlooked; attract more young people and families to our Meetings. For some months Friends in Aotearoa/ New Zealand have been grappling with these issues and had set up a working group which reported to the YM with a number of proposals which would radically change the way the Yearly Meeting handled the above. Many Friends were moved to speak on the proposals but by the end of the weekend there was agreement on a way forward which in fact was very closely aligned to the original document from the working party. There was, however, one marked addition a strong desire that for the next year the YM would concentrate efforts on developing the spiritual life of Friends in Aotearoa /New Zealand even if this meant leaving other matters on the back burner.

This was the longest Meeting for Worship for Business we have ever attended. It was efficiently organised and Clerked and at the end reached clear decisions as to the way forward. There were times, however, when Friends' contributions seemed at best tangential to the matters under discussion and this eventually provoked some strong Eldering words which certainly echoed our thoughts. Again this is something that we are sure will resonate with UK Friends. How do we encourage Friends to keep ministry in business focused?

Saturday evening brought the annual Quaker Lecture delivered by Quaker and Former Government Minister for Disarmament Marian Hobbs on “a Peaceful World : how can we make it so ?”- powerful ,direct and challenging. Equally so the presentation on Generation Zero (Movement working for a carbon neutral world), which, to us, showed Quaker business at its best . A sharp presentation with clear objectives containing proposals with a realistic workable action plan. In similar vein the report on the work of FWCC and the report back on Australia YM. Focused stimulating and very interesting in both cases . On Sunday evening we were joined by Junior Young Friends who arrived at the end of their camp which had been held nearby (and which we had visited for a day before the YM commenced). At a time when many of us were feeling rather drained they lifted the mood and led us all in singing and dancing. They also spoke deeply and movingly of what they had gained from the camp.

We felt very honoured to be allowed to join our Aotearoa/New Zealand Friends for this key event. We were made to feel welcome and at home. Memories of YM and the friendships we made will remain with us.

Jeff Dean and Annette Morris

## Knowing Each Other in the Spirit

Attending Yearly Meeting in Aotearoa New Zealand, in Auckland 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016, was both a privilege and a precious personal experience, enabling me to meet with Friends from further afield in the North, the South Island, America, Australia, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom.

I had been fortunate enough to participate in the Preparation Day at Mt Eden's Friends Centre, the previous day, joining with about 25 other Friends from assorted Meetings. We spent our time quietly reflecting, holding a space for those still travelling towards Auckland, and celebrating and connecting with the lives of earlier Friends who have walked our way and provided a guide that strengthens our faith and purpose.

Once at St Cuthbert's College, there was the joyful hubbub of Friends meeting and greeting and sharing a meal together, but come the evening and our first gathering the bustle settled and, despite the gentle whirring of the data-projector, the silence thickened and the air trilled with anticipation and expectancy. There followed a beautiful Maori greeting, a song and the enunciation of those who had passed away during the year. A greeting in a language I didn't understand, but I felt the heart in the welcome. A song that I didn't know the words to, but I recognised the tune. A list of names of people I hadn't met, but came to know in the Spirit. For here was the sharing of something much 'greater than the sum of its parts'.



*Greetings went from Johannesburg to Peru to Palmerston North, New Zealand*

Our overseas visitors, in telling us about themselves and their Meetings, developed the thread of 'connectedness' in discussing our common concerns: care for the environment, working for peace, the plight of refugees and coming together to overcome divisions and provide nurture for each other.

It was particularly interesting and humbling to hear the report from representatives of Christchurch's Meeting, who have recently moved into their

new Meeting House after years of dealing with the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake. In re-building the building, they have rebuilt the Meeting and found a new energy and an appetite to be involved in things *other*, for example the *Wahakura Project*. Another connection came through Wellington Meeting's progress report with their seismic strengthening; the practical difficulties of strengthening the physical building, has inevitably called for, and is developing, a collective spiritual strengthening of Friends.

Murray Short, YM Clerk, in outlining YM's business and the review of future, structure and options for change, had highlighted the need to talk more about spirituality and the necessity for us all to be 'ministers.' On Saturday Marge Abbott, travelling in the ministry from America, addressed these themes in: *Attending to the Drawings of the Spirit: Reflections on Nurturing the Spirit Among Us*. Marge reminded us of how the early Quakers had been called upon to nurture each other in the Spirit and also gave an engaging account of how she had found herself nurtured by her own Meeting. Making the point that a nurturing community is led by the Spirit working in its member's lives, she said that we never know the consequences of simple actions, but we keep our hearts open to surprising opportunities.

Esther Cowley (recipient of the Malcome Loxley Award) followed on, explaining that when you plant a seed you never know who it will reach. The effective app. she has developed called *Play Kindly* came from her need to put her Phd. results into action. Designed to help parents improve their parenting skills it had a significant impact, but now it is also building capacity for members of the Pacific Islands community to be involved in carrying out related research.

The Quaker Lecture, *A Peaceful World: How Can We Make it so?* delivered by Marian Hobbs and the reports from the Friends World Committee for Consultation returned us to the concerns highlighted at the beginning by the overseas visitors. It was worthy of note that the young people on the FWCC, in particular, felt so strongly about the carbon footprint of so many Friends meeting up from around the world that they have agreed to hold meetings less frequently. In the open session relating to the Review of YM a question was posed, to determine the difference between a 'joyful mission' and a 'burden'. This was particularly in relation to one of the concerns raised in the process of review, about the difficulty of finding Friends to serve. The resulting discussion around 'knowing what we stand for and what we want to be known for' was both thought-provoking and timely.

A precious personal experience? A bit like the analogy of a stone being dropped in a pond of water and the resulting ripple effect – we none of us know how one thing will lead on to another or how one's initial action will affect others further

down the line. I certainly wouldn't have anticipated a few years ago that a prayer for purpose would lead me to the other side of the world to serve as Resident Friend to Wellington Monthly Meeting. However, I can certainly endorse the contribution of a Friend during YM: this service has been a joyful mission and certainly not a burden!

Sue Jenkins: Resident Friend Wellington  
Britain Yearly Meeting

**Have you looked at the new AWPS website? <http://fwccawps.org>**

## **Epistle of the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand Te Hahi Tuhauwiri**

Held at St Cuthbert's College, Auckland, 15 18 July 2016

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa, greetings to Friends everywhere.

Our Yearly Meeting gathering 2016 opened with mihi/greetings, worship and the honouring of our ancestors including the volcanoes that form the land here in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland.

What is it to be a Quaker? We talked about how our Yearly Meeting can help us to drink from the stream of Quaker spirituality and learn to become everyday prophets. We are working towards our Yearly Meeting structure strengthening the spiritual life of our local meetings. We have grappled with how to hear the calling to flourish in the ministry and the call to service. We are still threshing how best to apply our resources to living our witness within the wider world, using our heritage to support our activism and our mysticism at all ages. We aim to shift our attention to discernment and spiritual growth while living our social testimonies. What does God require of us?

Our monthly meetings are impassioned to continue our important work of peace-making and acknowledge the needs and concerns of young people in our society. We had the privilege of being joined by our Junior Young Friend's from their gathering. Along with Young Friends they helped shape our deliberations. Our Quaker lecturer, Marian Hobbs and other speakers inspire us to be faithful in our responsibility to hold ourselves, our leaders and our politicians accountable to the challenges that face our planet and our communities. We need to advocate on issues from disarmament to climate change. We are a community dedicated to equality - how do we speak plainly to meet the challenges of inequality in our own community and worldwide?

We heard from Ōtautahi/Christchurch meeting who continue to move on from the earthquakes five years ago. They have moved into their newly acquired Meeting House and are feeling a fresh energy emerge. Whanganui-a-

Tara/Wellington Friends are fundraising for the earthquake strengthening of their Meeting House.

Our developing diversity was woven as a thread through the meeting with regular use of Te Reo, our indigenous language and hearing the successful development of an app to develop parenting skills, initially targeted at the Pacific Island community but available for all families. This was made possible with one of our Quaker Peace and Service Loxley grants.

We sow seeds and we trust that they will blossom in unexpected ways. Often we wonder how effective we are being, but are aware that weaving the fabric of our community relies on organised activities such as gatherings, at the Settlement and elsewhere, as well as fortuitous growth from unexpected meetings, social media and personal journeying.

Murray Short  
Clerk

SUNDAY OCTOBER 2, 2016



Inspired by faith - witnessing  
together in the world.

How will you and your Quaker meeting or  
Church celebrate this day?

The World Quaker Day website has study material and resources  
that could be used on this day.

<http://www.worldquakerday.org>