

Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)



Applying for International Membership

If you feel led to apply for formal membership in the Religious Society of Friends, and you are living in an area where there is no Monthly Meeting or other Friends body that you could apply to, you may apply to FWCC for International Membership. International membership is managed by the International Membership Applications Committee (IMAC) in collaboration with the Secretaries from the four FWCC Sections. IMAC is based in London and meets four times a year.

Before you make your formal application, we suggest that you contact your local FWCC section Secretary to discuss the procedure and any initial questions you may have. You may also contact the International Membership Secretary in the World Office

When you are ready, you may send your letter of application to the IMAC. It can be sent directly to the World Office or through the FWCC section secretary. The letter should outline

- your spiritual journey
- why you feel led to join Friends

The letter should be sufficiently detailed to give the Committee a good picture of you as a person, including any affiliation with another religious body. Other Friends may write letters of support and it is helpful to send a photo. Include in your letter your experience of Quakers, including meeting travelling Friends, Meetings attend while visiting other countries and reading about Quakerism.

The letter of application and supporting correspondence will be considered by the IMAC at its next meeting (normally during February, June and October). The IMAC will respond to the application in one of several ways including:

- asking the applicant for more information
- appointing visitors who will meet with the applicant and discern together whether membership is the right step for the applicant at the given time
- not proceeding further with the application

If a visit is agreed, the visitors seek to discern together with the applicant whether membership is right at this time. Occasionally, the applicant needs a chance to worship more with Friends and learn more of Quaker ways and thought. In some cases it may be clear that the application should be withdrawn. The visitors will report in writing to the IMAC who will make a decision in consultation with the relevant section secretary.

When the IMAC makes a decision to accept someone into membership, the Committee appoints one of its members to write a letter of welcome. International members are encouraged to keep in touch with FWCC through their FWCC section office and through the IM Secretary in the FWCC World Office.

FWCC enables Friends to work together by

- ◆ Arranging conferences and gatherings
- ◆ Encouraging intervisitation and travel under religious concern (including Quaker Youth Pilgrimages)
- ◆ Participating in ecumenical and interfaith events
- ◆ Sharing information about Friends around the world; publishing bulletins, *FRIENDS WORLD NEWS*, as well as books and pamphlets about Friends in several languages
- ◆ Facilitating understanding and cooperation between mission and service bodies of Friends worldwide
- ◆ Maintaining contact with isolated Friends and groups through intervisitation, correspondence and the International Membership Committee
- ◆ Furthering Friends' concerns such as peace, disarmament, women's rights, economic justice, racial equality and environmental concerns, and witnessing to our faith in the world
- ◆ Acting as Friends' official voice at the United Nations and its agencies

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About the Friends World Committee for Consultation

Connecting Friends • Crossing Cultures • Changing Lives

The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) helps to transcend the differences among Friends; these differences include language, culture, nationality, and in the emphasis placed on different aspects of our common Christian and Quaker heritage and witness. It is a channel of communication among Friends, helping us to explore and nurture our identity as Quakers so that we can discover and be faithful to our true place in the world as a people of God.

The Sections

There are four sections which range in size from near 160,000 Friends in Africa Section to around 12,600 in the Asia-West Pacific Section. The Sections also differ widely in staff, programme and financial resources. Within the overall aims of FWCC, each Section is autonomous, holding regional gatherings, publishing materials and organizing its own programmes.

Your section office should be your first point of contact for matters relating to forming groups and other local issues.

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The World Office

The World Office, which is currently situated in London, England, serves as a centre of worldwide communication for FWCC and its affiliated groups. Nearly all yearly meetings in the world are affiliated to FWCC; their members are the FWCC membership. Cordial contacts are maintained with those yearly meetings that have not affiliated.

The Committee appoints a General Secretary who works from the World Office. At times, an Associate Secretary appointed by the Committee also serves the World Office. In particular, the World Office organizes Plenary Meetings and other world gatherings and consultations, implements Committee decisions and serves the Sections and maintains contact with isolated Friends and worship groups (International Members) throughout the world, as well as the Quaker service bodies. FWCC acts as the representative body of the whole Quaker family in worldwide ecumenical bodies and at the United Nations.

By means of correspondence, publications and staff travel, the office seeks to bring Friends in closer touch with one another and help them to experience the world-wide character of the Society of Friends.