



Epistle from German Yearly Meeting 2016

Concern for our planet and worries about sustainability and climate change were at the forefront of our Yearly Meeting in Bonn right from the start. But the Yearly Meeting was also encouraged by the hope of unreasonable optimists who spoke to us through the epistles of many other yearly meetings. We found it exciting and inspiring to hear excerpts from selected epistles from around the world, read to us by several Friends.

During the Cary Lecture, "Open to New Light", given by Janet Kreysa, we heard about important scientists who had – or have – a Quaker background. Janet left us with the thought that, if we want to create a better world, "we have to be well-informed as regards political, technological, and economic issues". We need science for observation and analysis, and religion to guide our actions.

The fact that no concerns were formally submitted to the Yearly Meeting this year gave rise to both critical reflections and encouraging thoughts which were expressed during ministry in our meetings for worship.

We are dismayed that Europe, when confronted by the suffering of refugees, is surrounding itself with barbed wire fences. We feel keenly the lack of our corporate peace work, especially in the face of the growth of conflict around the world and in the context of huge increases in arms expenditure. We feel that we have some responsibility for what happens in Europe, so we are increasing our support for the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA).

We are trying to reduce our expenditure on salaries in order to reduce our financial deficit. At the same time, we feel that our Society is being enriched as members, groups, and regional meetings take on some of the tasks on a voluntary basis once again. For similar reasons we are also moved to consider the future of our Quaker House in Bad Pyrmont.

One-hundred-and-ninety-eight participants met 13-16 October in Venusberg, Bonn, for the Yearly Meeting, which was enlivened by music this year. Thirty-seven children and young people enriched our gathering. Delegates and many other guests brought greetings and inspiration from other yearly meetings.

We are thankful that we have been able to meet together here in the spirit of love, mutual respect, and listening, and in the spirit of making an active contribution. And we are full of confidence as we send hopeful greetings to Friends throughout the world.

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