



# Epistle, Netherlands Yearly meeting 2016

## refugees

brown (dark) tendencies in society

lecture on Refugees by Dutch Ecumenical Peace Movement

e.g. 'our' Renke (Friend) in Calais

many Quakers helping refugees

people from other churches

people not belonging to churches

many people do good work

still, sometimes a feeling of powerlessness



## sunlit weekend

encourage one another

tell what you're doing

invigorate, encourage and support each other

make website for it ?



## 8 new members!



presentation of draft Dutch version of Quaker Faith and Practice !!!

after 10 years of diligent work



## theme transformation

commemorating

regrettably

many cancellations

for various reasons

dare to live with a question

read how 'Peru' has affected people

FWCC asks to look for 'connection'

in many discussions and the base groups

in special interest groups

people who are no longer physically with us

## green

the venue's glorious surroundings

arrangements following up 'Peru'

sewing seed-balls (guerilla gardening)

cleaning up litter

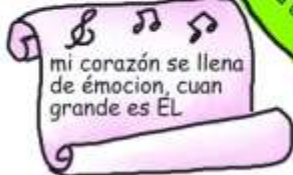
revitalise 'trees for Africa'

suggest green banking to Monthly Meetings

petition against the patenting of seeds / plants (victimizes poor farmers)

butterflies and robins all around us

spotted a rare 'Chickweed Wintergreen' (*trientalis europaea*)



Dear Friends

In this letter we send you the epistle of our Netherlands Yearly Meeting held on the first weekend in June in the nice Wildlife Friends House in Bennekom in the centre of The Netherlands. This time our epistle is made up as a mind map and I would like to add some explanation so that the reading of the mind map is understandable for people who did not attend our Yearly Meeting.

The pink branch is about the theme of the weekend: Transformation, which is connected to theme of the World plenary in January in Peru: Living the transformation. We explored the theme in our support or base groups, in the interest groups, in the Meeting for Worship and in the topics the Meeting for Worship for Business.

The purple branch stands for the Friends who died since the last Yearly meeting and whom we commemorated.

The brown branch tells about the lecture we had from a member of the Council of Churches who spoke about the work the council does to improve the situation for Asylum Seekers. After the presentation we asked Friends in what ways they are involved in work for refugees. We were very moved by the actual work Friends are doing with refugees: teaching the Dutch language, supporting families, supporting gay, lesbian and transsexual refugees. Working as a volunteer in Calais in France. Telling about this work stimulated other Friends to come and support in this work.

The yellow branch illustrates the sunny weekend. We had a weekend in October 2015 where we inspired each other, rather than doing concerns together, which is not so easy for a group spread over the country, we agreed to support each other, encouraging and motivating in what we are doing. This requires that we talk about the concerns we have in our own hometowns, like working on Peace, working with refugees and sustainability. We felt the inspiration of this special weekend last year during the Yearly Meeting.

The light brown branch refers to 8 new members we welcomed in our midst. It was a great joy to welcome so many new Friends.

The red branch represents the presentation of two new books in the Dutch language: Kees Nieuwerth presented a new version of our Dutch Quaker Faith and Practice: Quaker Geloven en Werken. A committee worked ten years to write this book. It is still a preliminary version to work with, which will be finalised in two years' time. During the meeting we all read some parts of the book right there and then. After that we shared some quotes, which made that we felt very much the value of the book. The flowers on the cover refer to the 5 chapters in the book. We are very happy that we have this new version of our own Quaker Faith and Practice. The previous one was published in 1952.

The green branch refers to the topic of sustainability which was an important topic in Peru. We made seed balls which we could take home to put in places where nothing is growing. The activity was done by Friends of all ages. We renewed our commitment to clean up litter in our own environment and to make

sure we have bank accounts with green banks, like TRIODOS in The Netherlands. We ask Friends to sign a petition against patenting of seeds by Monsanto which is very negative for farmers in Developing countries. We want to renew our support for 'Trees for Africa' to compensate for the CO2 emission when travelling by plane.

We enjoyed very much the wonderful environment of our venue, we could sit outside enjoying the terrace, the flowers and the butterflies.

We felt very blessed with so much happiness and inspiration of our Friendship, deepened by our Meeting for Worship and our connectedness to God and to each other on Sunday.

We send our loving greetings to all Friends around the world

In deep connection

On behalf of The Netherlands Yearly Meeting

Marlies Tjallingii, Clerk