

# Netherlands Yearly Meeting

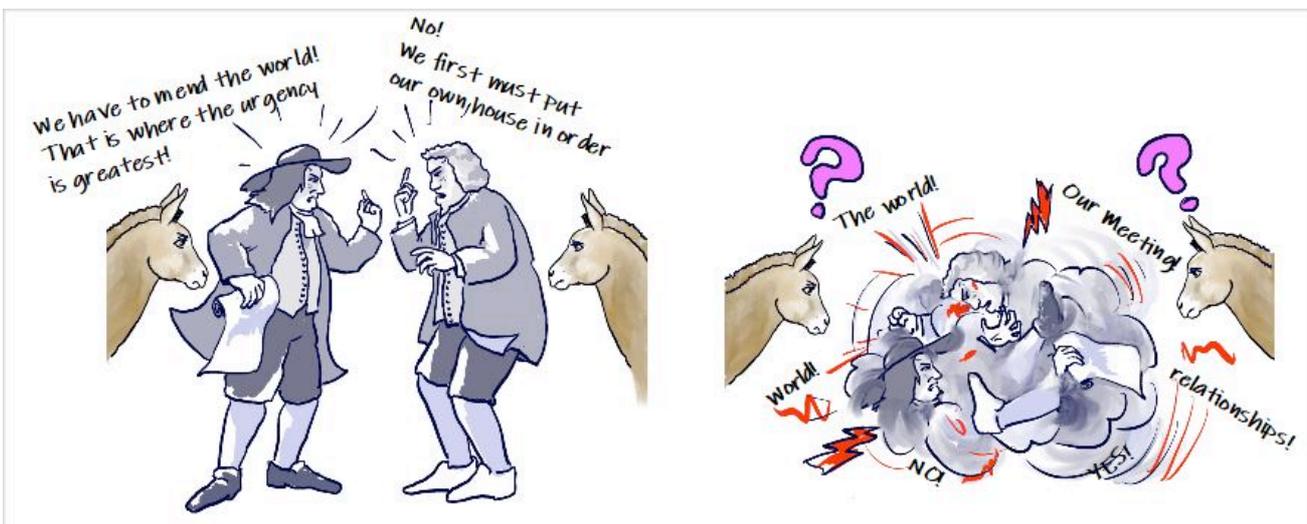
Epistle 2021

**Dear Friends, lieve Vrienden, teman-teman yang baik, kjære venner, chers amis, liebe Freunde, queridos amigos, cari amici, kära vänner, kære venner, rakkaat ystävät, kallid sõbrad, draží přátelé, dārgie draugi, dragi prijatelji, Kedves Barátaim, drodzy przyjaciele, a chairde, Salamaat Asdiqa; marafiki wetu wapendwa; 親愛的朋友們, E hoa ma;**

We send you warm greetings from the Online Annual Meeting 2021 of the Dutch Quakers. Too bad that again this year, we can't meet in person. Online we were still able to see each other, speak, inspire and discuss urgent matters. There was technical support for those less familiar with Zoom. We also received help from Elders specially appointed for this, to uphold the Quaker way of doing business when meeting in digital form. Many Dutch Friends have gained experience with this in the past year, both among themselves and internationally, so that we could hold a good digital Quaker meeting.

Our theme this year is: "Let us then try what love can do." (William Penn)  
"Our life is love, our life is peace, our life is tenderness and bearing with each other, and forgiving and helping each other with a tender hand." (Isaac Penington). Appropriate words nowadays, with the global threat of disease and its potentially long-lasting consequences.

We began with these words; this was our guideline. It made us look at ourselves. A Friend produced a parody animation of the fable of the two mules, of which 2 pictures shown here:



He showed us that within our mutual relationships we do have some "homework" to do with our egos, so that we can respond to each other out of love. For example, within our annual meeting there are people with much or little affinity for figures, financial risks, opportunities and positions. There are also very different insights into how to deal with our possessions as a "good Quaker". It's great that at this Annual Meeting we could see from the smooth handling of the agenda items, that we learn from things that are not going well. We are taking significant steps towards closer cooperation.

The group of Friends within the Netherlands is small in number and big in dreams! We have to rely on collaboration with other organizations. This is visible in;

1) "Working on the world" is something we like and enthusiastically do in eucumene with other faith communities in the Netherlands. 2) We like to think at European and global level. Quakers play a unique role in "silent diplomacy" at both levels. We wholeheartedly support this from the Netherlands.

The two speakers at this meeting showed us opportunities and growth in that area.

Kees Nieuwerth (Neth.YM) talked about his religious anchors in his work in Africa and his many years in the Council of Churches, both in the Netherlands and internationally. That work reaches far!

Timmon Wallis (QCEA) showed us his development from persistent activist to silent diplomacy worker at our European Quaker organization. He mentioned the special power of the Quakers to stand for what we believe in: the Divine in every human being. It is important to work with this without being co-opted into other ways of thinking. This takes courage and gives confidence in the reliability of Quakers. In the Sunday meeting we read a prayer that a Friend drafted and that is spoken today in many churches in the Netherlands for the refugees on Lesbos.

Our Dutch message to friends worldwide is that everyone can play their own role, no matter how great or small. QCEA, FWCC, QUNO, the Council of Churches, these are organizations that focus on simplicity, peace and equality in word and deed. Our Annual Meeting was hopeful.

**With Friendship, in vriendschap, dalam persahabatan, i vennskap, i vänskap, i venskab, ystävyydessä, bien amicalement, in Freundschaft, en amistad, in amicizia, v přátelství, u prijateljstvu, draudzība, a barátságban, sōpruses, w przyjaźni, le cairdeas, fi alsadaqa, tunatuma urafiki wetu, 在友誼中, i te whakahoahoae**

Peter Spreij

Netherlands Yearly Meeting, Clerk