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Friends World News

The Bulletin of the Friends World Committee for Consultation



**Friends World
Committee for
Consultation**

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

From the World Office

As I turn over the management of Friends World Committee to Gretchen Castle, I am reminded of the many facets of the work of the World Office. Even though we are best known for the periodic gatherings we arrange to bring together the Quaker family, we spend much of our time listening to Friends' concerns and helping make connections among Friends, holding the overview of Friends' work at the United Nations and related international agencies in New York, Geneva and Vienna, serving as the voice of Friends ecumenically at the Global Christian Forum and the Christian World Communions, and travelling in the ministry to remind Friends of our connections with each other and what we can learn from each other and how we can witness to our faith together. We share much more than just history.

Over the years, how Friends World Committee carries out its work has grown and changed and that will certainly continue. Acknowledging the challenges of arranging triennial gatherings, we now have the flexibility of having three to five years between meetings of the International Representatives and indeed the next will be in 2016. The Quaker UN Committee-Geneva just held one of its two meetings totally virtually, meeting on-line with video for a few hours a day over three days, with participants in the US, Europe

and the Philippines. It worked well enough that they plan to do it again, although they acknowledged the value of face-to-face encounters with each other. We are learning to be together and work together in new, sustainable ways. That said, we cannot overlook the energising effect of having 900 people together at the 6th World Conference. The impact of these new connections will carry us forward in the coming years.

The connections from the World Conference remind me of all the wonderful connections I have made in the course of my work with FWCC, both in the World Office and in the Section of the Americas. My gratitude for all these gifts in my life is part of my profound gratitude to God for the opportunity to serve. May God bless you all!

With faith and hope,



*General Secretary
FWCC World Office*

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Cover: Mito's rebuilt Meeting House. (See page 9.)

Photo by Topsy Evans

QUNO News

The Quaker United Nations Offices in Geneva and New York continue to bring Quaker concerns of peace and justice to international institutions and policy makers. Our offices primarily focus on Peacebuilding, the Prevention of Violent Conflict, Peace and Disarmament, Human Rights, and Refugees the Human Impacts of Climate Change as well as Food and Sustainability.

In New York, QUNO has recently hosted several events on the themes of Peacebuilding and Prevention of Violent Conflict. The situation in Somalia has offered several points of engagement for QUNO around the need to promote dialogue and engagement with all relevant stakeholders. In March QUNO hosted colleagues from the Life & Peace Institute, Nairobi, and the Kroc Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame who spent two days meeting with UN Member States, agencies, and NGOs. The delegates presented their recent report, *Somalia: Creating Space for Fresh Approaches to Peacebuilding*, highlighting the need for increased engagement between members of civil society and actors from the national, regional, and international levels in order to work toward long-term solutions to the conflict in Somalia. In October, QUNO was able to support LPI in a similar way in Geneva by arranging meetings with interested actors from diplomatic missions, NGOs and academic institutions. This theme surfaced again at a book launch hosted by QUNO in New York for Mary Harper's book *Getting Somalia Wrong: Faith, War and Hope in a Shattered State*.

Another highlight within the Peacebuilding work of QUNO was a March event in New York co-hosted with the EU Delegation for the release of Conciliation Resources' report, *Consolidating Peace: Liberia and Sierra Leone*. Also during the visit from our colleagues at Conciliation Resources, QUNO organized a smaller lunch meeting at Quaker House New York to discuss cross-regional approaches to peacebuilding in West Africa. These meetings featured key themes such as the role of civil society engagement in peacebuilding, as well as the need for reconciliation efforts within larger peacebuilding processes. QUNO has also connected civil society organizations with the work of the Peacebuilding Commission on Liberia through events that connected members of civil society with the new head of the configuration. Most recently QUNO co-hosted an event that allowed for civil society organizations to meet with the

Liberian Minister of Internal Affairs. The discussion stressed the importance of reconciliation and the crucial role of civil society in the post war recovery of Liberia.

QUNO has also engaged on the process surrounding the creation of a Post-2015 Development Agenda. In particular, QUNO hosted a side event in New York during the opening week of the General Assembly in collaboration with Saferworld, Cordaid, and the Alliance for Peacebuilding. This event focused on making the case for the inclusion of peacebuilding and prevention into development framework after the expiry of the existing millennium development goals, and included speakers from local civil society from several African countries as well as government representatives from fragile states, including Timor Leste, Afghanistan and Liberia. In addition to this event, Quaker House New York served as a strategy hub around discussions of peacebuilding and the Post 2015 agenda throughout the week. QUNO organised an event at Quaker House Geneva to bring together expertise from the peacebuilding and armed violence fields to feed into a document being produced by the Bellagio Initiative that will go to the High Level Panel on the Post 2015 Development Framework. QUNO is also closely involved in the setting up of a new Global Alliance on Armed Violence (GAAV), which aims to start its work of linking CSO's on the ground with each other and the international level in early 2013 and aims to bring together approaches from armed violence reduction and prevention and peacebuilding.

QUNO is also engaged around key issues affecting the international community. QUNO has worked for more than six decades on Conscientious Objection, and 2012 has been a successful and exciting year. A resolution on topic was adopted without a vote at June's UN Human Rights Council session. QUNO initiated the proposal for this resolution, and participated at all stages of the drafting and negotiations.

QUNO's work on Children of Prisoners has had a busy year following last September's Day of General Discussion on the topic in the Human Rights Council. In response to strong interest following our recent paper on *Children of Parents Sentenced to Death*, QUNO is taking forward this specific issue and considering how states identify children affected by parental execution or death sentence and what support is provided to them. We also ran a very successful side event about children

Continued on the back page

Around the Sections

Africa Section

6th World Conference of Friends

Yes, the Conference is behind us now! It was incredible to see 850 Friends from all the different traditions of Friends drawn from 112 Yearly Meetings and groups spread in 51 countries gathered together in Kabarak University in the county of Nakuru.

We in Africa feel highly honoured to have been considered to play host to the largest worldwide conference of Friends since 1967. We are short of a suitable instrument with which we can evaluate the impact of the Conference on the Friends in Africa but needless to say, the atmosphere reflected a family re-union. Some of us were almost tempted to be like Apostle Peter who said to Jesus after the experience of "Transfiguration" that: "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters-one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah..." (Luke 9:33). We thought we should relocate to Kabarak and continue experiencing that unique warmth of one another.

To some Friends from outside the continent, Kenya was not the best choice of venue to host the Conference due to the problems that the Nation was wrestling with then and some still are thorny issues to the Government to date, top among them being the severe drought in Turkana district situated in the northern part near the border with Ethiopia. It was also a time of alarming state of insecurity occasioned by the Al shabaab terror group which had resulted in Kenya Defence Forces moving in Somalia to pursue this terror group. Many friends showed concern at the choice of Kenya as the venue for the Conference with some suggesting categori-

cally that it be called off. We are indeed very glad that the Conference took place as scheduled from 17-25 April without any ugly incident.

Some Good News!

A cash donation was given to the Section which the Executive committee has designated to go towards investment.

A couple from France who arrived in Kenya a fortnight to the Conference and went to stay in Kuresoi, one of the rural areas that was worst affected by the 2007-2008 Post Election violence, did send a small cash donation for facilitating a peace program in the area. We managed to run a three-day workshop preparing the residents for yet another Election time in March 2013.

I had a chance to visit Tanzania from 6-12 August 2012. I visited the new meetings under Evangelical Friends Churches of Tanzania. The meetings are in Karagwa and Bukoba districts.

All the meetings are yet to put up relatively decent meeting houses although they have acquired or been allocated plots.

The place is ripe for mission work and also for projects especially English teaching. A program like computer training would also go a long way to give some skills to the many youth who live without hope. Poverty levels are also very high in the area. The umbrella organization, Evangelical Friends Churches of Tanzania is yet to be registered by the Government of Tanzania due to lack of funds.

We held our first Executive Committee meeting ever out of Kenya, in Kigali, Rwanda. It is

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encouraging to note that the members raised their own fares while Rwanda Yearly Meeting hosted us. Nancy Edith the office secretary and myself were sponsored by yet another member who attended the Conference. We had a chance to join in the celebration marking the 25th anniversary of the Friends Church in Rwanda.

Africa Section Website

We are very grateful to Nancy Irving for securing a grant of £1500 towards the creation of the website. Philip Wood who was an intern in the World Office was contracted to undertake the rebuilding of the website from the ground up.

Bereavements

In July we lost Brother Steve Guloba from Uganda who once served as Clerk to the Section between 1997 and 2003. Sometime in August, we lost Rev. Moses Biglimana who was the legal representative of Burundi Yearly Meeting.

Ministry opportunities

We are proposing ministry opportunities to Friends to participate in in order to keep the Society of Friends alive in Africa.

1. Elections in Kenya 2013: Prayers for peaceful elections under the new constitution are in order. Tension is high in most parts of the country. Quakers will continue to advocate for nonviolent approach during this time.
2. Building a training Centre for Quaker and Peace studies: We are doing very poorly on capacity building. It is about time that we can have a centre in Africa offering training in Quaker and Peace studies. Most of the workers in Quaker Institutions in Africa have very little knowledge about Quaker history. It can integrate on-campus and online courses to reach out to many people across the continent. It can also be an opportunity to Quaker scholars and leaders from elsewhere in the world to come and offer voluntary services as their investment in the Church in Africa. As we anticipate conflicts of different sorts in most parts of the continent, training many peace workers is a prerequisite.
3. Availing Ministry Van to the Section: The Africa Section is covering a very vast area although the area that has the largest concentration of Quakers (East Africa) can be reached by road. It would be very convenient to reach out to these friends if the section owned a van that can endure the poor road network. We are trying to reach out using public transport, but it is very limiting and not very cost effective as it were.
4. Economic empowerment program: Africa has a serious problem with unemployment. Many graduates are searching for jobs and most often than not, they land on jobs that can't sustain them. The cost of credit is becoming very unbearable to ordinary people. Time has come when we must consider radical measures to address this problem. Nairobi Yearly Meeting pastors and some members came together and started a savings and credit society called Quaker Community Savings and Credit Society. The society has continued to grow and it is trying to reach out to members of other Yearly meetings in Kenya. If this initiative is supported it can give birth to a Quaker bank which can offer products tailored to alleviate poverty and also demonstrate good Christian values. Again the concept can be replicated elsewhere in Africa

Churchill Malimo, Executive Secretary

Around the Sections

Europe & Middle East Section

Many Friends from the Europe and Middle East Section attended the World Conference of Friends in Kabarak, and came back buzzing with excitement. Some of the Yearly Meetings who met afterwards considered the theme and the responses that came from the conference. We are continuing to work through the implications for us and our Meetings of the insights that were gained through the event.

Recently, almost all the Quaker service organisations in the Section and representatives of Peace Committees came together for our annual consultation event, and we considered our response to the call to peace and eco-justice that emerged at Kabarak. We considered how we can be the change we want to see in the world, as Gandhi put it, how to work as communities of faith, rather than mere non-governmental organisations. We explored how complaints and frustrations in our lives often are manifestations of deeply held commitments to positive values. By re-framing these complaints as statements of commitment, we move from a habit of blame to one of taking responsibility for the issues that trouble us. We must be sustained by hope. Our way of making decisions is distinctive and rooted in the belief that when we set aside our small egos we make ourselves channels for a greater wisdom.

At the consultation we welcomed the recently appointed General Secretary of Church and Peace, Davorka Lovrekovic, a member of German Yearly Meeting. We are very pleased that she has been called to this service, and pledged to uphold and support her in this ministry.

Church and Peace, the International Fellowship for Reconciliation and FWCC-EMES will sponsor Kees Nieuwerth of Netherlands Yearly Meeting to take a workshop on practical ways to build peace to the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) which will meet in Busan, Korea, in October 2013. The Assembly will receive reports from the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation which took place in Kingston, Jamaica, in 2011, at the end of the "Decade to overcome Violence", which called for war to be made illegal, and for the Christian theories of "just war" to be replaced by a doctrine of Just Peace. This is a unique opportunity for the peace testimony that has been at the heart of our tradition from its very beginning to find new expression and energy in mainstream Christianity.

The Quaker Youth Pilgrimage brought together younger Friends from the Section of the Americas and several from our Section. We were glad that Mai Zaru, grand-daughter of Jean, Clerk of Ramallah Monthly Meeting, was able to take part, but sad that another applicant from the Friends Schools in Ramallah was not given a visa to enable him to participate. The Pilgrimage started in Birmingham, and took the pilgrims to Brussels, in Belgium, to learn about the work of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA), then to the Netherlands, where they explored Alternative to Violence training, and onto Newcastle in England. Feedback from the pilgrimage has been extremely positive.

Yearly Meetings were held all over the Section – the earliest in the year was Denmark in March, and the last was German Yearly Meeting in October. Border Meetings were held in Germany,

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Poland and Strasbourg (France).

The Executive Committee met in Berlin in September, at the flat which Friends have used since 1925. On Saturday afternoon Gisela Faust, who, as a small child, had been attending Meeting in Planckstrasse with her parents, led us in an exploration of the city, with a particular focus on Quaker connections with events over the past 90 years. Gisela brought the history to life very vividly for us, with the help of pictures and pamphlets. Our tour started at the site of a bronze sculpture just a few minutes away from the Büro, outside the Friedrichstrasse railway station. It depicted a number of children, two looking healthy and well-dressed, facing West – taking the "trains towards Life", and a group in rags looking gaunt, facing East – taking the trains to Death". We visited the Silent Heroes Memorial Center, where we saw documentation relating to people who chose to support and help persecuted Jewish people during the Nazi dictatorship. The permanent exhibition is inspired by the association "Against Oblivion – for Democracy". In fact, the preservation of this terribly painful history, and that of the cold war era, is a striking feature of Berlin, and seems to say over and over: "Lest we forget". This determination to keep memories alive, to honour those who perished and those who survived, and most of all celebrating human solidarity in the midst of prejudice and danger, gives us hope for a future where such horrors can become unimaginable.

There is change too at QCEA, with the appointment of joint representatives Alexandra Bosbeer and Gordon Matthews. We welcomed two new Programme Assistants, Bethany Squire and Chris

Venables. We said goodbye to Liz Scurfield and Martina Weitsch, who retired after ten very fruitful years at QCEA. The Energy Security project also came to an end, so we also said goodbye to Paul Parrish.

Maria Andreanszky, a Hungarian-born Friend who had died in June 2011 at the age of 100, left a legacy for the benefit of the Budapest Worship Group and Friends in Central Europe. From a testimony to the grace of God as shown in her life, we learn that in World War II Maria helped with an underground newspaper and aided endangered Jews, mindful of the loving Jewish family who had treated her as one of their own when times were hard. She faced the German, then Russian, occupation of her city and confinement to the cellar of her requisitioned home. In horrendous conditions, her husband's whereabouts unknown, Maria was to find an inexplicable inner quiet. By 1947 Communism was tightening its grip on Hungary but for Maria, a way opened. She secured the necessary visas for uncertain travel across war-weary Europe to a housekeeper's post in Britain.

The first Evangelical Friends Church was founded in Salard (Romania) in July under the care of Evangelical Friends Churches International.

A new worship group has started to meet in Cascais, near Lisbon, in Portugal. Our Ministry and Outreach programme provided a "companion" who provided F/friendship, guidance and support on line. Tbilisi Worship Group has been able to register as an official Religious Organisation in Georgia.

Marisa Johnson
Executive Secretary

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Asia-West Pacific Section

A handover to our new Secretary Ronis Chapman commenced when she and the AWPS Clerk Patricia Macgregor spent several days at my home looking at documents and discussing future directions.

During this period major events have taken place in India, Japan and the Philippines.

In India, the 6th All India Friends Gathering took place in Itarsi, attended by all Indian groups and focusing on "Loving our Neighbour". Fortunately 4 Friends from Philadelphia YM , and from Nepal YM were also involved. Immediately following this, a Study-cum-Work camp was held at Friends



Outgoing Executive Secretary Valerie Joy (centre) with incoming Executive Secretary Ronis Chapman and AWPS Clerk Patricia MacGregor (left).

Rural Centre, Rasulia, Hoshangabad from 29th Oct. to 4th Nov. 2012 for Young Friends from India, Nepal and USA.

The program comprised study and home group sessions in the morning and work sessions in the afternoon. In the study sessions experienced Friends led sessions on Prayer, Advices & Principles of Quakerism, History of Quaker Work in Sohagpur, AVP, Quakers and Christianity, Compassion, Peace Makers, and Friends World Organization. Young Friends very much valued and appreciated these classes. For some it was the first time to learn specifics about Quakerism. It was an entirely new way of thinking especially for those from Karnataka and Nepal. Three "Home" groups met four times to discuss their experience in the classes. Their feedback showed how much they were amazed to learn these things for the first time. Many said that they wanted to continue discovering more about Friend's practices.

In the afternoons work sessions tackled the rebuilding of the road from the front gate to the Meeting House. On the last day of the work camp Young Friends each claimed

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one of the holes to plant their own tree. Each Young Friend and other participants mixed manure, black soil, and water to make ready the hole for planting trees which included palms, gul-mohar and ashoka trees.

Worship united all in spirit each day before breakfast and dinner when every one came together in the Meeting room. During this time different groups of students led the worship in different languages that always included singing, Bible reading and praying as well as games and cultural programs, which included songs, drama and story telling in different languages. Then worship concluded each day during "epilogue."

It was a joy to see how willingly the Young Friends and others always worked as a group with laughter and good humour. Even though they were tired from the hard labour they kept working to see that it was all completed before the end of this camp. There was a glow of happiness when they completed the road and planting which normally would have been impossible in such a short time.

We lived together at Friends Rural Centre, Rasulia for one week as a family. Every one worked joyfully. We became closer even without knowing each other's languages, and sometimes this created good humour and laughter.

Our closeness was especially evident when Young Friends left Rasulia in tears about losing each other. Clearly, Young Friends hope to meet again. Organizers were moved to create an opportunity to continue Young Friends Study-cum-Work Camps regularly.

Young Friends from other parts of AWPS and the wider world can enquire about this event, which is hoped will be held again in November 2013. Enquiries to Devdas Shrisunder shridevdas@yahoo.com

Friends in Japan are rejoicing at their rebuilt Meeting House and Kindergarten in Mito, following the destruction of these facilities in March 2011. They were overjoyed at the financial and prayer support received from Friends worldwide. The new buildings are specially constructed to resist earthquake damage. We are still holding Friends in Christchurch NZ in the Light as they discern the way forward in relation to finding a permanent Meeting in a safer zone of that city.

In the Philippines, the Pasig Friends Evangelical church again was affected by severe flooding and its top floor became a refuge for several local families. Rebuilding has taken place using flood proofing materials and the work of the Evangelical Friends continues. Several of them participated in a national evangelical churches conference on peace, including building peace with those of other faiths.

In Bohol, Friends celebrated the International Day of Peace on 21 September, with outreach to local Youth leaders engaging in celebrating peace.

Further news of AWPS can be gained through the website www.fwccawps.org and go to Publications/Newsletters.

Valerie Joy
AWPS Secretary

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Section of the Americas

Let the Living Water Flow!

Since the end of the 6th World Conference of Friends (6WC) in April, Friends in the Americas have been exploring our faith together under the banner, "Let the Living Water Flow! Friends Serving God's Purposes" at a series of events this fall, with more scheduled for the spring of 2013. More information can be found on our website at fwccamericas.org/LivingWater.shtml.

Kenya Casanova Sales of Cuba YM, Brian Young of Berkeley Friends Church (Western Association of the Religions Society of Friends), and young adult Friend Noah Baker Merrill of New England YM, one of the plenary speakers at the 6WC, each spoke at meetings in the northeastern quadrant of the United States. Karen Gregorio de Calderon, from Guatemala Holiness YM and a keynote speaker at the 6WC spoke in Texas, USA, at churches that are part of Evangelical Friends Church Mid America YM and in the northern Mexican state of Coahuila, at churches that are part of what is now called Mexico Yearly Meeting, an evangelical YM. In late November and early December, Odalys Hernandez and Heredio Santos, both from Cuba YM, spoke at numerous churches in Santa Cruz, Cochabamba and La Paz, Bolivia.

In February Jonathan Vogel-Borne & Minga Claggett-Borne from New England YM will be the speakers at Wilmington Friends Meeting in Ohio, USA. Karen & José Luis Calderon will spend about two weeks speaking in Kansas, USA hosted by Evangelical Friends

Church Mid America YM, and then move on to Iowa, USA, hosted mainly by Iowa YM-FUM, before our Section Meeting. John Fitzgerald and Simon Lamb, both from Ireland YM and FWCC Central Executive Committee members, are set to speak in New England (USA) following the Section meeting. Ramon Gonzalez-Longoria, Cuba YM and FWCC World Clerk, is set to speak in Florida, Colorado, and California, USA. In April, Esther Mombo from Kenya, one of the plenary speakers at 6WC, will lead programs in the Pacific Northwest and possibly North Carolina, USA as well.

How is the Living Water flowing in you?

For personal reflection or small group discussions, use this new study booklet to get the conversation flowing. The book includes moving personal stories from the Sixth World Conference of Friends, a Biblical reflection on the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well and a spiritual reflection on clean water issues in the world. Studded with queries for deeper consideration and an activity guide for interactive sessions, the booklet is for Friends of all ages.

Now available for download and as an onscreen flipbook, FREE from the Section of the Americas website.

From the introduction:

As every corner of the globe faces economic, political and environmental turmoil, we ask ourselves how our small and diverse community can live its faith so that God's love and purpose for the Earth – the Good News – can be made known to the whole world.

Around the Sections

The booklet reflects on aspects of the theme from a variety of Quaker cultures. Each piece comes from the authentic experience of a member of our worldwide family of Friends, each seeking to be faithful according to the Light he or she has been given. As we learn about each other's experience of God, the divine, the ultimate reality, our task is not to judge, but rather to be open to truth as seen from the perspective of others, whose understanding of our Quaker tradition is radically different.

We hope that Friends will gather into small study groups – face-to-face and in other ways – to explore together their responses to the texts and the queries. Our wish is that by dwelling on texts they may find challenging, Friends will broaden their understanding, deepen their spiritual insights and practice opening their hearts and minds to God's leadings.

Section Meeting 2013

The meeting of the Section of the Americas, including representatives of all affiliated Latin American yearly meetings, will be held in March 2013 in the United States, in the area of Western and Indiana Yearly Meetings. The first part will be devoted to meetings of the twelve committees that do the real work of the Section.

The gathering will end with a day long Saturday workshop on the Living Water theme, organized by an international team of young adult Friends and open to local Friends. We look forward to welcoming members of the Central Executive Committee at

our 2013 Section Meeting prior to their own annual meeting.

Quaker Youth Pilgrimage in South America

Plans are underway for the next Quaker Youth Pilgrimage (QYP) to be held in Peru and Bolivia in 2014. An international and bilingual planning committee has been formed and more information will be available in early 2013.

Voices of Friends: new pamphlets from the Wider Quaker Fellowship

The latest pamphlets in English and Spanish are available on the www.voicesoffriends.org website. This year's titles are

- *Transforming Hearts, Souls and Minds*, two essays by John Edminster and Terri Johns
- *Journey to Sakartvelo* by two Friends who conducted Alternatives to Violence trainings in the Republic of Georgia
- *Where We Are Changed*, the plenary message by Noah Baker Merrill at the 6WC
- A poem by Jorge Luis Peña Reyes in English and Spanish
- Excerpts from the letters of Margaret Fell, translated into Spanish
- *De encuentro a ministerio: La vida y fe de los Amigos latinoamericanos*, some testimonies from Latin American Friends written as part of workshops sponsored by FWCC, published in their original Spanish.

Robin Mohr
Section Secretary

Be open to new light from wherever it may come...

I pass this sign every day on my way into work in Friends House London.

As I begin in the role of General Secretary, I take my inspiration from you, the thousands of Quakers across the world who call yourselves Friends. It is in your faces and in the examples of your lives that the Light shines. As Quakers, we are asked to let God's love shine through us and to live in possibility. God calls us to be patterns and examples in our lives, in our actions, in our worship. Every action, every kind deed, every thought, every prayer has the potential to shift the balance of an ailing world to one of healing and love. Would God ask any less of us? Would we ask any less of ourselves?



Gretchen Castle

At the 6th World Conference of Friends, held in April 2012 in Kenya, 850 Friends gathered from our many traditions, and each of us could say with enthusiasm, "Yes, I am a Quaker." As we heard stories of pain and suffering, we felt it especially keenly since it came from our fellow Quakers. We shared their sorrow on a deep and tender level. Concurrently, we knew the joy of being spiritually gathered, coming together as a spiritual family, sitting at the same table and sharing nourishment,

feeding one another, talking to the long lost cousin, listening with heart and mind open – the gift of being salt and light in a troubled world. Our presence to one another was palpable.

In the book *Call to Commitment*, Elizabeth O'Connor wrote:

The world may be fearful and anxious and weary, but we are not weighted by that world. We are following One who has unfathomable resources and One who makes them available to us and who says, "You must set new norms for life so that people can see what life can be." This is your task. Your primary vocation is to enter into covenant relationships with others who have also met this Christ – to be that new society into which others can be drawn.

In my travels, upon mention that I am a Quaker, people often express a respect for the Quaker voice in the world and the ways in which we are committed to peace and justice. As Friends, we may worry that we are resting on past accomplishments of Quakers. It is a legacy which we can claim honestly, but we are fearful that it causes complacency, or worse yet, might set us above others. Yet, from this world view, I see good works before my eyes, every day, all around the world. Quakers are alive and well, working hard to bring our humanity to light and to insist on treating people with dignity. Our vocation - our life work - is to enter into a covenant relationship with each other, and in all our actions to create our vision for a new society, a better world in which life can flourish. For some of us this involves peace work or sharing the Gospel, for others it means showing appreciation and caring for those in need, for all of us, it means sharing in the joy of belonging to the Quaker family and making love visible.

I bring enthusiasm and hope for the positive effect

Quakers can have in the world. I look forward to listening to what it means to you to be a Quaker and to hear how God is working in you. I look forward to discovering new ways to for us to share and learn from each other.

In all humility, God keeps working through me. It appears to be a life-long process to continue to live into God's love. What a challenging and joyful prospect this is – to deepen and make love visible

in the world. It is as simple as Jesus' admonition to "love one another," yet as complicated as the world in which we live. I believe it is our life work – for each of us – and as Quakers to do this. Would God ask any less of us? Would we ask any less of ourselves?

Gretchen Castle is Associate Secretary at the World Office. She succeeds Nancy Irving as General Secretary on 1 January 2013



Seasons Greetings from the staff at the World Office

Back row, from left: Cathy Rowlands, Erika Foden-Lenahan, Harry Albright, Kim Bond.

Front row, from left: Gretchen Castle and Nancy Irving.

Photo by Gillian Robertson

About the Friends World Committee for Consultation

The purpose of the Friends World Committee for Consultation is to encourage fellowship among all the branches of the Religious Society of Friends. The Quaker community circles the globe, spanning a rich diversity of regional cultures, beliefs and styles of worship. FWCC programs unite Friends around the world through Spirit-led fellowship.

Our association with the Quaker United Nations Offices offers a means to monitor and present Quaker contributions to world affairs. Our consultation extends to those of other faiths through work with the World Council of Churches.

Our Mission

Answering God's call to universal love, FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications, and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world. (Approved 2006)

History

In 1937, after years of concerned work to reconnect a fragmented Quaker world, the Second World Conference of Friends created the FWCC "to act in a consultative capacity to promote better understanding among Friends the world over." Today, Friends from yearly meetings and groups in 75 nations continue this work. Around the world there are four cooperating, autonomous FWCC Sections serving Africa, the Americas, Asia & the West Pacific, and Europe & the Middle East. FWCC's World Office is in London.

Since 1948, FWCC has had "consultative" status with the United Nations and is responsible for the two Quaker UN Offices in Geneva and New York.

FWCC World Office

The world office is based at Friends House in London, England. It serves four main roles:

- ♦ Organise world gatherings, including triennial meetings and consultations of Quakers world-wide.
- ♦ Support and maintain contact with the work of the four FWCC sections and the Quaker United Nations Offices.
- ♦ Coordinate the International Membership programme, which joins isolated Friends and worship groups to the wider Quaker community.
- ♦ Promote an understanding of the world-wide character of the Society of Friends, through conferences, staff travel, correspondence and publications, and through ecumenical and interfaith work on behalf of Friends.

Further information about FWCC and its activities can be obtained from the World Office or the Section Offices, whose addresses are on the inside back cover of Friends World News. Contributions to the work of FWCC are always welcome and can be sent to any of the offices.

Friends World News

Friends World News, the bulletin of FWCC, is published twice yearly. If you wish to receive a personal copy, please contact the World Office (or the Section of the Americas if you live in North America). There is no set subscription fee, but a donation would be welcome. Please send to the World Office anything you would like considered for publication in *Friends World News* – articles, letters, news, photographs and other illustrations, about the activities and religious witness of Friends. All materials received will be acknowledged although the editor cannot make any commitment to publish. Please say if you wish photographs or other materials to be returned.

FWCC Publications

- (1) Faith in Action: Encounters With Friends (£5/\$8)
- (2) 21st Triennial Talks - (set of 3) (£6/\$9)
- (3) & (4) World Gathering of Young Friends Study Book Quaker Faith & Practice Around the World £6 (\$9) each or £10 (\$16) for both
- (5) Friends World News (twice yearly by request)
- (6) Triennial T-shirts (€9, £6, \$11) plus postage
- (7) Triennial Mugs (€20, £14 plus postage) Contact the World Office for details
- (8) Cheerfully over the World, a handbook for isolated Friends – *New Edition* (£5/\$8)
- (9) Friends Around the World (£12/\$20)

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of prisoners during the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, and received positive expressions of interest from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime about their engagement on this issue.

Our work on peacebuilding also considers the role of natural resources and climate change in conflict and cooperation. This draws on the expertise of both environment and peace perspectives, an interaction with which many Friends are engaging. QUNO organised a side event on the issue of natural resources, conflict and cooperation at the September session of the Human Rights Council, as well as preparing a publication on transboundary water-sharing agreements between countries as an example of cooperation in situations of resource scarcity. Alongside this, we have been

following UN climate negotiations, and will attend the next Conference of the Parties in Doha in late November to continue this work.

QUNO's Food & Sustainability work seeks to ensure that food security is explicitly and adequately addressed in the international intellectual property, trade and investment regimes. We strive for an international system that empowers, rather than undermines, the livelihoods of small holder farmers, rural poor and Indigenous peoples. We have held lunches at Quaker House discussing the current standards on intellectual property affecting agriculture, and the progress that would allow developing countries the flexibility they need to support sustainable agricultural innovation and food security. After the World Gathering of Friends in April, we were privileged to be able to visit organic farms and see the work of the Rural Service Programme in Western Kenya.

September brought the arrival of new Programme Assistants in both the New York and Geneva office. We welcome Olivia Ensign, Amelia Breeze, Haifa Rashed and Ellie Moseley-Roberts to the QUNO team. Programme Assistantships are one-year placements that give young professionals the opportunity to get involved in, and contribute to, the work of the Quaker United Nations Office. For more information on how you can get involved, and on QUNO's work more generally, you can download our current Annual Review and any of QUNO's publications at www.quno.org.

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World Conference news



The legacy of the World Conference is still being felt around the globe. The Conference website continues to be updated, and the Conference Report will be available for download in the new year. www.saltandlight2012.org