



Friends World News

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World Committee for Consultation
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

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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 1957, 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 and the West Pacific, and Europe and 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 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.

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Dear Friends,

Recently a Friend wished me “as many miracles as I can take in.” It is a lovely wish. Most days I teeter on that edge, with so many blessings and hardly enough time to absorb their beauty and meaning.

As I travel among Friends and as I read the articles in this issue, I feel encouraged. As Friends we tend to lean toward the Light, to see our lives as a continuum of experience that informs our spiritual lives, to live experimentally in the presence of the Divine. All that we experience informs our inward grasp of deeper meaning for our relationships and for our lives.

Rufus Jones wrote about his friend John Wilhelm Rowntree, who in early adulthood began to lose his sight:

He was told that before middle life he would become totally blind. Dazed and overwhelmed he staggered from the doctor’s office to the street and stood there in silence. Suddenly he felt the love of God wrap him about as though a visible presence enfolded him, and a joy filled him, such as he had never known before. From that time, he was a gloriously joyous and happy man. His physical limitations have all along been turned into inward profit. His long hard battle with a stubborn disease which was attacking the very citadel of his powers – his sight, his hearing, and his memory – has only made him more heroic and gentle.

What brings us to this place of joy where we are able to be more heroic and gentle? What causes us to feel the power of the Inward Christ in the face of human struggle? In worship, whatever surrounds us, whatever internal strife we face, we can know an inner calm, a place of great joy that overcomes the darkness. God’s presence feeds us, and like the living waters, we are refreshed. We know joy, and it surrounds and covers all things. It allows us to experience life as a miracle and as a series of miracles when we dare to be open.

I thank God for the miracle that is you, for the miracle that is us, for what we are together as Friends. May God continue to bless us, each of us and all of us, as we share our life on earth together. That is miracle enough, and may come close to being as much as I can take in!

Wishing you as many miracles as you can take in . . .



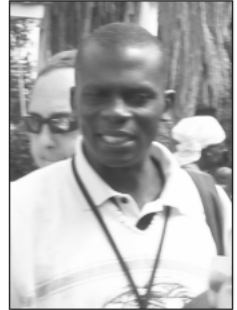
Gretchen Castle, General Secretary, FWCC World Office

Around the Sections

Africa Section

Elections in Kenya

Who validates elected leaders in Africa? Is it the number of votes that one garners in an election? But most election results in Africa are never without disputes just as happened in Kenya recently. Is it the massive support by the voters? Most of the voters don't participate in an election to make an informed choice, but they may vote because of bribery, euphoria, affiliation to ethnic political outfits, intimidation or just ignorance. Is it sanctions by the international community? This has not stopped Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe from becoming an "ungazzetted king, sitting in an unimpeachable position; ruling supreme and for life" as Bishop Henry Okullu, late priest of the Anglican Church of Kenya put it. Is it the western media? Negative media publicity did not stop the new President of Kenya Uhuru Kenyatta from visiting UK recently. Or is it the International Criminal Court? This has been rubbished by Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, Sudan's Omar-al-Bashir and a host of other African leaders under the auspices of the African Union.



Churchill Malimo Adavaji
(Executive Secretary,
Africa Section)

The political transformation in Africa now is an assertive statement to the rest of the world by the African leaders and the phraseology, "the big brother is watching," which refers to the keenness and close monitoring of political events in Africa by the west is tired, clinched and corny.

China seems to be very swift in responding to this latest development to seize the moment. She is ostensibly playing a good guy! A spokesman of the Chinese Embassy in Kenya Mr Shifan Wu wrote in one of the dailies:

Many Africans view China's engagement in Africa as an opportunity to finally rise up and be counted among great nations. China and Africa need each other to realise common development, to maintain peace and stability, and speak for developing countries in the international arena. (*Daily Nation*, Tuesday, 14 May 2013)

Africa appears to be saying that she is inviting the rest of the world to establish a working relationship geared towards dialogue about issues affecting her people, resulting in enhancing/mobilization of local resources in order to respond to the key challenges and establish good democratic governments in the continent.

This goes against the scenario where the rest of the world is seen to be refereeing political events in Africa and choosing to isolate any part of Africa that resists this role, hence, the existing tension between most African States and the West in particular.

We therefore submit that the new leadership in Kenya of Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, does not need any validation. The two leaders, who have cases at the International Criminal Court, have a daunting task of doing a very sober reflection on the state of affairs and conducting themselves in a manner worthy of respect by both friends and foes alike as King Solomon eloquently stated:

Mean-tempered Leaders are like mad dogs; the good natured are fresh morning dew. (Proverbs 19:12, *The Message*)

We have something to learn from the aforesaid as we seek to connect African Friends with those in the Europe and Middle East Section, Section of the Americas, and Asia-West Pacific Section. How do the African Friends consider their brothers and sisters from the other sections? Do they see them as partners, referees or Friends in the common union?

Investment

We have acquired a ¼ piece of land for Africa Section at a cost of KS 5000,000 situated 60 miles from Nairobi town, and 10 miles from the ambitious Konza Technological City which is going to be the first global technological hub in Africa. This is the first fixed asset that the section owns in 40 years and we are grateful to God for the provision. The plot will be a good investment indeed if we put it to good use. What comes to mind quickly is the ambitious Quaker Peace Centre; we extend our invitation to interested Friends to partner with us to realize and fulfil this noble dream.

Goma Crises

When M23 rebels seized the mineral-rich city of Goma in Eastern Congo, many people had to flee from Goma to Rwanda. Although the Rwandan President was accused of using the rebel group as a proxy to annex some territory in the city, the Friends Church in Rwanda did a wonderful job of caring for the victims who sought refuge in Kigali. Our clerk David Bucura was actively involved in this humanitarian mission.

Divisions in the Church in Tanzania

The Quakers in different regions in Tanzania are not working together. It is very unfortunate given that we have new Friends evangelical groups which are ready to work with the rest of the Friends in that country. With accessibility to the funds we intend to organize a meeting of leaders from all the meetings so that

we can try to establish what the problem is and agree together on how best we forge ahead as united body of Christ.

Burundi Fire

The Church in Burundi suffered a big blow early this year when a fierce fire destroyed a whole market that was a source of livelihood for many families including members of the Quaker Church. We received an appeal for support from the legal representative which we forwarded to Friends. Support will still be needed for a little longer to normalise the lives of the victims.

Transformative Mediation

Transformative Mediation focuses on addressing crises in relationships thus restoring relationships. Through the local administration in the slums we have some on-going work which is going very well. We are planning to extend the same mediation work to other informal settlements in Nairobi. The challenge is finance because apart from just mediating cases that are referred to us we also wish to train people and equip them with the same skills.

Sexual orientation

This is a very emotive subject in Africa. Nobody wants to confront the situation, yet there are people in the meeting suffering quietly. The section continues to encourage Friends to be ready to listen to members who may be struggling in this area so that they can be assisted.

Travel in Ministry

The month of August is going to be a very busy one. The Yearly Meetings in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania will be having annual gatherings on different dates in that Month. We intend to go round the Yearly Meetings during these sessions to fellowship with them and share about the work of the Section. We feel this is one way to make our presence felt among Friends and make a strong appeal for their support to the work of FWCCAS.

Visiting Kenya?

Please contact us to arrange your pick-up from the airport, travel within Kenya, accommodation, tours of interesting sites etc. at reasonable rates. We offer these services to Friends who are visiting Kenya following the experience we got and the networks we established with different service providers during the planning of the World Conference.

– *Churchill Malimo Adavaji, Executive Secretary*

Asia-West Pacific Section

Having taken on the Secretary position in January this year I am still feeling pretty new. Luckily Valerie Joy is very generous in being available to answer my questions.

In March I attended the Section of the Americas Business Meeting in the lovely Brown County, Indiana, and then my first meeting of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) in Richmond, Indiana. What a privilege to attend both these meetings, to make new contacts and renew friendships with those I had met in Kenya at the World Conference in 2012. The meeting was a reminder to me that each Section has its own individual challenges in bringing Friends together. People travel long distances and contribute time and energy in order to keep in touch and share what “being Quaker” means to them.

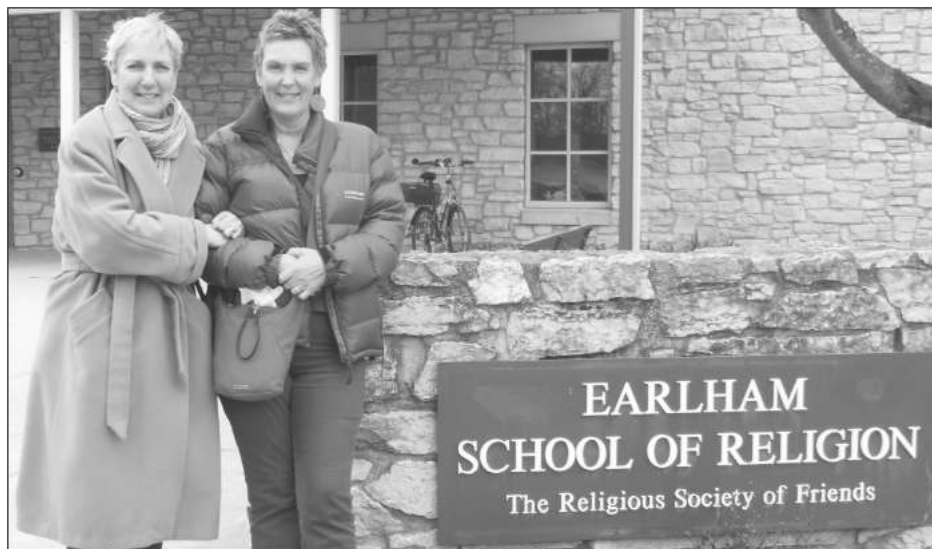
The CEC meeting was an absolute pleasure to attend. One of the highlights for me was to discover that our Treasurer is very skilled at presenting financial reports in a way that everyone can understand. Alistair Reid showed immense patience with us and also reminded us that these were not just figures we were looking at, but figures that are the means to making FWCC a vibrant and relevant and spirit-led organisation.

The AWPS Clerk, Patricia Macgregor, and I recently visited Hong Kong Monthly Meeting. Friends meet in a room at the Anglican Cathedral on Hong Kong Island. While there Patricia and I were well looked after by the local Quakers and walked and talked and ate (well!) with various members of the Meeting. We saw many parts of the city and surrounds as we traveled to meet up with people in their homes, workplaces and favourite cafes to chat about being a Quaker in Hong Kong.

There are many individuals and small groups of Quakers scattered over the Asia West Pacific Section. If you are traveling through the region and want to visit Friends, please be in touch with me for local contacts.

Aotearoa/ New Zealand (A/NZ) Yearly Meeting was held from May 10-13 and during this time a General Meeting of AWPS Inc was held. Australia and Aotearoa/ New Zealand always send a representative to each other's Yearly Meeting and each year A/NZ Friends invite a representative from another country in the Section to attend. I close with a quote from the Epistle from this Meeting.

The importance of inclusion, drawing on the roots of our many layered communities, recognising our interdependence, and the need for respectful participation has been a recurring theme.



Marisa Johnson (EMES Secretary) and Ronis Chapman (AWPS Secretary) at Earlham School of Religion in Richmond, Indiana.

That we are part of the worldwide community of Friends was recognised in many ways, we welcomed the presence of our invited representatives from Japan and Australia Yearly Meetings as well as our current Wellington and Auckland Resident Friends from Britain YM. The FWCC Asia West Pacific Section AGM was held during our time together giving us a greater opportunity to participate.

We recognise the need to let our light shine as Quakers, and not hide it under a bushel. To avoid growth simply for growths' sake we have to support and nurture those we have as well as look for and welcome newcomers. We need to enrich our worshipping communities by getting to know one another in that which is trivial as well as the eternal. Our worship underpins and supports our communities' spiritual and educational development.

— Ronis Chapman, *Executive Secretary*

Europe and Middle East Section

The Section's Peace and Service Consultation took place in Kortenberg, Belgium, in November 2012. There were 19 organisations represented – all but one Quaker. The exception was Church and Peace, represented by their newly appointed General Secretary, Davorka Lovreković.

As well as exchanging news and information, we focused on:

- how Friends can respond to the Kabarak Call to Peace and Eco-Justice;
- support for the World Council of Churches (WCC) to adopt more fully the call from their International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica in 2011, for the development of a Just Peace doctrine to replace the “just war” theories and work for war to be made illegal, at their General Assembly in Busan, Korea in October 2013;
- how to prepare for the commemorations for World War I which will begin in 2014 and will continue for the following four years;
- what is happening in the Middle East.

We were reminded of the 50 years history of the Peace and Service Consultation in our Section, and how it began with a joint project in Algeria, which several Quaker Service Committees across Europe worked on together.

The exploration of the theme *Being the change we want to see in the world* (Gandhi) was led by Helen Rowlands of Woodbrooke. The message that came from this work is that just noticing our own and other people’s complaints, commitments, worries and assumptions, bringing awareness to bear on difficult and complex situations can and does change patterns of behaviour and outcomes, even where no active decision to make changes has been made. This is a different way of expressing deeper truths we are already familiar with from our Quaker and Christian roots – that when we give up judgement and blame, when we stand still and bring things into the light, transformation is possible, that we are nourished and sustained by faith, hope, and love – and the greatest of these is love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

We can speak truth with power, rather than “to” power, always bearing in mind that we do not have exclusive rights to the “truth.” We can be both humble and empowered, as individuals, and as communities of faith.

With funding for our Ministry and Outreach Programme coming to an end at the turn of the year we have spent time consulting widely with Meetings within our Section, through conversations, mainly carried out through Skype, and a weekend event held at Svartbäcken in Sweden. The messages that are coming back are that our work of connecting Friends, and introducing them to resources to deepen the understanding and practice of the Quaker way is very much valued, and we shall put together a workplan for the next three years, which we hope funders will want to support.

– Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary

Section of the Americas

Section Meeting draws Quakers from 45 yearly meetings, 14 countries

The meeting of Representatives of the Section of the Americas was held in good order in Morgantown, Indiana from March 12-17, 2013. With the members of the Central Executive Committee, there were Friends from 14 countries and 45 yearly meetings present. Among the important business discussions were those related to the Section's goal to strive for full integration and a visioning exercise to help plan for the Section's work beyond 2015.

The Section Meeting began with two days of meetings of the Committee of Latin American Friends, followed by a full day of meetings for other committees, from Finance to the Wider Quaker Fellowship. In business sessions, a two-year budget and nominating report were approved, paving the way for a two-year period of programming. Saturday was a full-day workshop, part of our Living Water series. Cristela Martinez (El Salvador YM), Howie Baker (Ohio Valley YM), John Fitzgerald (Ireland YM), David Millar (Canadian YM), Emma Condori (Bolivia Holiness Mission YM) and Rob Yurisko (Lake Erie YM) all had roles in this interactive program, utilizing the readings and exercises in the Living Water Study book, which is available online at fwccamericas.org.

The next Section of the Americas meeting will take place in 2015, in a location to be determined. In 2014, instead of holding one Section of the Americas meeting focused primarily on business, there will be four Section Consultations, one each in South America, Central America, the West and the East of North America. Each bilingual weekend Consultation will feature workshops on practical skills for thriving Friends meetings, some common to all four conferences and some tailored to local needs.

Let the Living Water Flow! Friends Serving God's Purposes

Drawing inspiration from speakers and threads running through the 6th World Conference of Friends, the Living Water theme is deeply spiritual, and a call for renewal. The Living Water is also a practical expression for the ecological concerns of Friends worldwide, recognizing water as a precious and increasingly scarce resource. The "Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice," appended to the World Conference Epistle, offers: "We dedicate ourselves to let the living waters flow through us." This theme, then, is a call to act. As Kenyan Friend Esther Mombo cautioned in her keynote address, *we can't be so heaven-minded that we are useless on Earth.*

Dr. Esther Mombo, of Bware Yearly Meeting, recently spoke to Friends at the Pacific Northwest Regional Gathering at Reedwood Friends Church in Portland, Oregon; at George Fox University, Guilford College, and the North Carolina Yearly Meeting (FUM) Peace Conference.

John Fitzgerald and Simon Lamb, both Irish Friends, brought the Living Water theme and queries about discerning God's call for our lives to Portland Friends Meeting in Maine, in conjunction with New England Yearly Meeting's Mid-Winter Gathering.

Cristela Martinez (El Salvador YM) and David Millar (Canadian YM) jointly presented a program at Memphis Friends Meeting in Tennessee on the connections between spiritual and environmental issues facing Friends.

Ramon Gonzalez-Longoria (Cuba YM and Clerk of the Friends World Committee) spoke in Denver to English and Spanish-speaking congregations in Rocky Mountain and Intermountain yearly meetings. Later he traveled to Southern California to speak at East Whittier Friends Church (Evangelical Friends Church Southwest), Santa Monica and Orange Grove Friends Meetings (Pacific Yearly Meeting).

Kansas and Iowa welcomed Karen and José Luis Calderón, of the Guatemala Holiness Friends Yearly Meeting in Chiquimula. From an early age Karen and José Luis have served in leadership roles working with children, youth and adults. Their current work includes the Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP) training, with support from other Friends, which is bringing good results into the community. At last year's World Conference, Karen opened the conference with a personal testimony of experiencing violence associated with the drug trafficking culture.

From Texas:

Thanks to FWCC for the effort in bringing Friends together and specifically for getting Karen to this area to share her testimony and to challenge Friends to "Let the Living Waters Flow." Lives have been touched and inspired.

In Madison, Wisconsin, Brian Young led Friends in considering what practices or actions can help the Living Water of spiritual vitality to flow more freely in us, in our communities and in the wider world. Brian grew up in the unprogrammed tradition and has spent his adult life among pastoral Friends. He serves as the pastor at Berkeley Friends Church, part of Western Association of Friends in California.

From Madison, WI:

The Living Waters theme is powerful to me. . . . Brian presented scripture showing, among other things, how Jesus reaches across a variety of cultural boundaries, [and] helps the water to flow.

The queries challenged how I seek the presence and guidance of Living Water in my life.

After almost two years of planning and several postponements Cuban Friends Heredio Santos and Odalys Hernández were able to travel to Bolivia in November to lead FWCC programs.

Next in the series of local events on the theme “Let the Living Water Flow! Friends serving God’s purposes” Jonathan Vogel-Borne and Minga Claggett-Borne will speak at Canadian Half-Yearly Meeting, similar to the series of programs they did in Ohio in February:

Centuries ago, in deserts of the Middle East, a cup and a cistern of water would be placed in front of a house to provide water for thirsty travelers. In Arabic the name for the cistern is Sabeel. With time, the word also took on another meaning, “the way,” since pilgrims would journey from one cistern to the next. Aren’t we each on a journey? How can we be channels of water for one another as we journey on the way? Jesus and the Samaritan woman shared the water of life. Can we offer the radical hospitality of a cup of water to a world where deserts are increasing?

See our website www.fwccamericas.org for more details.

— Robin Mohr, *Executive Secretary*

I Bring Greetings from Around the World

I delight in saying, “I bring greetings from Friends around the world.” It is an important element of traveling among Friends – for each of us, whether we bring greetings from the neighbouring monthly or local meeting, or whether we are returning from the World Conference of Friends. It is a reminder that there are other Friends who care about us.

I learned the real value of encouragement from John Muhanji and Eden Grace on a trip to Turkana in northern Kenya a couple of years ago. As we travelled to several different monthly meetings, gathering under the Acacia trees or in open air meeting houses built from branches and clay, John and Eden asked each of us to offer a few words of encouragement. While this generally feels quite natural to me, I found myself asking, “What in the world do I have to offer these Friends?” Part of my timidity came out of the noticeable difference between the worlds in which we live. Part of my reluctance came from my own emptiness in the face of the people I was with – people who survive daily in such a harsh environment, people who gather together as Friends around ministry without access to readings and history and much exposure to other Friends. I was in awe of these Friends.

As we warmed to each other, we shared the joy of watching children, of meeting clerks and elders, of praying together. Children were curious about my funny white skin and would touch it and quickly pull back. The story goes that we have a suit of white skin that can be unzipped and removed to reveal the beautiful darkness underneath. They gave us each a name: mine was Akiru which I am told means water, which can change everything in the desert. It holds the power of both creation and destruction. Hmm . . . I prefer the former!

As encouragement, I found myself expressing joy and gratitude in meeting them and being together. I said that I would pray for them if they would pray for me. I said that I would remember them when I looked up at the moon, since we all live under the same moon. And I said, “I bring greetings from Friends around the world.”

While Turkana may paint one of the most stark cultural differences as compared to European culture, the love of Friends is ever present, communicating through interpreters, heart to heart. God’s presence was palpable.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them (Matthew 18:20).

When I say, "I bring greetings from Friends around the world," I am hoping to simply express a keen sense of awe . . .

- . . . that Friends worship all around the world,
- . . . that God moves within and among us in miraculous ways,
- . . . that God is accessible to all of us,
- . . . that we encourage one another simply by being Friends,
- . . . that even as we are each a blessing to God, we are a blessing to one another,
- . . . that we all live underneath the same bright moon, in perfect spiritual equality.

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment (1 Corinthians 1:10).

I ask not only that we bless each other in our daily thoughts and prayers, but that we remember that God also blesses the space between us. May we greet one another warmly in our hearts, and may we remember the sacredness of the spaces between us.

— *Gretchen Castle, General Secretary, FWCC World Office*



Gretchen Castle (FWCC General Secretary) and Robin Mohr (Section of the Americas Executive Secretary) at the CEC meeting, Richmond, Indiana, March 2013.

Contributions

FWCC relies on contributions in order to carry out its ministry. To contribute to the work of FWCC please fill in the form below, indicating the amount of the contribution and your method of payment.

If you would like to know more about legacy giving, please tick that box.

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FWCC Publications

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_____	<i>Being Salt and Light DVD</i>	£5 + £1.50 P&P/\$8 + \$2 P&P
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