



**Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
German Yearly Meeting**

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Epistle from German Yearly Meeting 2018

Loving greetings to Friends everywhere

The theme of the eighty-ninth yearly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends in Germany and Austria was “When words break through silence - words and deeds as Quaker faith”.

The meeting was attended by 201 Friends from all age-groups; among our number were 3 infants, 14 children and 24 “juniors”. We rejoice in the presence of so many younger Friends enriching our meeting. We rejoice too in the slight increase in recent years in numbers of Friends in membership.

Epistles from all over the world vividly illustrated the way both words and actions are expressions of Quaker faith. The range of topics was wide. We heard for instance of the lack of protection for indigenous peoples, and of the dominance of “whiteness”; and in this context we heard self-critical statements. There were less references to climate change and migration than we had expected.

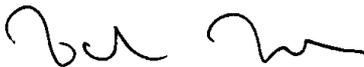
We listened intently to this year’s Richard Cary Lecture, given by Ursula Seibold-Bultmann, “Daring words- language and Quaker faith”: Ursula spoke about the reasons for using words, about words arising from silence, and about the need to express things precisely. She dwelt on the use of the word “God”, on the creative use of language, and on poetry as artistic expression of spirituality. Our Friend encouraged us to make an effort to understand the language of early Friends, while simultaneously seeking our own creative and contemporary way of expressing ourselves. This involves using language adventurously, with poetry opening up a new dimension of perception. Meanwhile, out of our meetings for worship a further facet of Quaker language emerged: words becoming love.

The lecture provided the basis for the subsequent discussion circles, exploring more deeply the concepts of word and deed as expressions of Quaker faith. Among topics explored were “The word ‘God’”, “Quakers speaking out in public”, “The balance between silence and speaking”, “The Bible and biblical language”, “Poetry and faith”, “Politics and Quaker language”, and “Let words be followed by action”.

In our meetings for business, the future of our own "Quaekerhaus" in Bad Pyrmont continues to concern Friends, both young and old. Looking outwards, we gave serious consideration to the threat posed by nuclear weapons. We hold in the Light those Friends who are actively campaigning for the withdrawal of such weapons presently stored in Buechel. We are concerned about climate change and all its consequences. Recognising that one consequence will be increasing numbers of people fleeing their homelands, we support the decision of the German Protestant Church to provide a rescue ship to help migrants whose lives are endangered when crossing the Mediterranean. We rejoice in the degree to which Friends, particularly younger Friends, are willing to make a stand for the future of life on the planet.

We are certain that our roots are alive and well, and that our beliefs are bearing fruit, both in word and deed. This certainty enables us to summon up the courage and energy required to meet the challenges we face as Quakers.

Bad Pyrmont, October 6th, 2019



Jochen Dudeck
(Co-Clerk)



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