

Quakers

NEDERLANDSE JAARVERGADERING VAN
HET RELIGIEUS GENOOTSCHAP DER VRIENDEN

Epistle Netherlands Yearly Meeting 2014

To Friends everywhere,

During a sunny weekend some seventy Friends gathered from 16 to 18 May 2014 at the *Friends of Nature Home "De Bosbeek"* in Bennekom.

Our theme was: "Dwelling on what moves us".

On Friday evening six Friends introduced the theme, each from a personal perspective. A variety of aspects was presented to us: mysticism; being prepared to work for peace and justice; the question who God is to us now – "what or whoever this is, we are the hands and feet to do the work"; the inspiration of George Fox and the early Friends which may be traced back to the Mennonites from the Waterland region in the Netherlands having fled to England; simplicity and sustainability; and to be happy being with Quakers. In small base groups we discussed the elements in the introductions that had moved us most.

During an epilogue, one of our elderly Friends told us in a video message how she had come to decide to embrace life again for as long as it is granted her.

We elaborated on the Yearly Meeting's theme in inspiration groups, such as the one titled "Answering to that of God in extreme right politicians", a topic of the day in the run-up to the European elections and their predicted outcome.

During another inspiration group we listened to "*The Living Spirit*," a musical interpretation of a Quaker Meeting for Worship. In yet another inspiration group we practised meditation by walking, which cleared up our minds.

We feel very inspired by the work of our Friend Kees Nieuwerth in the Council of Churches who has started a working group on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace that the World Council of Churches has called for. This is very close to the heart of our Quaker Peace Testimony. The ultimate goal is to declare war and the production of arms illegal.

Our Yearly Meeting was brightened by Friends knitting in pink colours –women and men- for the action of "*Wool Against Weapons*."

During the Meeting for Worship on Sunday we welcomed more dear Friends.

In the words of the song, we "felt the winds of God today." This was expressed in the ministry and the songs we sang. This made the meeting for worship the crowning point of this weekend.

We can look back at a moving weekend full of inspiration and encouragement.

The program offered much space to meet and share which greatly contributed to the good atmosphere.

We wish Friends everywhere in the world Light, Love and Just Peace.

Marlies Tjallingii, Clerk.