

Among Friends

No 112: Autumn 2008

Published by the Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation
Exec Secretary: Marisa Johnson, 22 Percheron Close, Impington, Cambridge CB24 9YX, UK emes@fwcc.quaker.org Tel: +44 (0)122 347 9585

Dear Friends,

As we went to press with the Summer issue of Among Friends war had broken out in Georgia. Our thoughts and prayers were with all those caught up in the conflict, Georgians, South Ossetians, Russians. We kept in close contact with our Recognised Worship Group in Tbilisi, who had just recently registered Friends House Georgia as a Non-governmental Organisation. FWCC was able to channel over £20,000 of donations for immediate relief to the thousands of refugees caused by the war. You can read more about Friends' efforts on our website, and on www.fwccworld.org, and we hope to have a full article in the next edition of Among Friends.

During the first half of September Julia Ryberg and I visited Friends in Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Next time we will bring you our reflections on worshipping with Friends in ten locations in just two weeks. Shortly afterwards, the Executive Committee of EMES met in Italy, near Lake Garda, where Franco Perna lives with his family. Franco is coming to the end of his service to EMES as a member of the Executive Committee. It has been very inspirational for me to meet a fellow Italian who has so much knowledge of Quakerism in Europe. I also visited Friends who have been holding Meetings for Worship in Bologna since the early 1990s. It was a joy for me to hear ministry in my own mother tongue.

In October we held our annual Peace and Service

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|----|
| The Western Balkans and European Islam | 2 |
| Quaker Youth Pilgrimage | 3 |
| Response to Kindertransport | 4 |
| Siân Cwper's Statement | 5 |
| Border Meeting in the Netherlands | 6 |
| EMEYF Summer Gathering | 7 |
| God's Tears | 8 |
| Woodbrooke News | 9 |
| Two Book Reviews | 10 |
| Non-Violent Conflict Transformation | 11 |
| Diary Dates | 12 |



Consultation, in the lovely Old Abbey in Kortenberg, Belgium, and in fine Autumn weather. For the first time we were joined by a Friend from the American Friends Service Committee, which contributed to our sense of working together across the world. We missed a number of Friends, including Olive Hobson of Quaker House Belfast. Her moving report on the work on the 10th anniversary memorial for the victims of the Omagh bombing is on page 8.

The past few weeks have turned many of the certainties of the world we live in upside down. It seems that more than ever our world needs steadfast witness to Truth, Integrity, Peace and Simplicity. As the year turns, may we commit ourselves to continued worship and service.

Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary



Jasmine Piercy (QVA) and Marisa Johnson: Peace and Service

The Western Balkans and European Islam

Callum Shaw, Programme assistant at QCEA, writes about The Western Balkans and European Islam:

I once asked a Danish diplomat working in the Council of the European Union what Europe is, if he could define it for me. He responded by saying that “Europe is Athens, Rome and Jerusalem.” He wasn’t speaking geographically, he was defining Europe by a set of values; Europe as a philosophical, legal and religious tradition. From the context of the conversation I understood his definition to have a Christian-centric dimension; that any country wishing to join the EU should embody a fundamental set of Christian values already held in common by the bloc’s 27 Member States. My immediate response was that his definition was ill-conceived, dangerous and wrong. It was not until June this year, during a research trip to the Western Balkans, that I realised my response was wrong and how there was truth in what he said.

I had been sent to the region by QCEA for 5 weeks to find out how grass roots peacebuilders were being supported by the EU as it prepares the region’s countries for eventual membership. I began and ended my trip in Sarajevo, paying visits to Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian and Macedonian peacebuilders along the way. I was warmly welcomed by the former QPSW peaceworkers who were as generous in spirit as they were with their time. In fact, I was struck by how well received I was in general and how the simple reason of being a Quaker can make one so welcome. Indeed, I was struck by many things I experienced whilst there, but the one experience that made me think of Europe’s definition was the region’s Islam: It is so very ‘European’.

What do I mean by that? I mean I experienced nothing to distinguish between the way the people live in, say, Valencia from how people live in Sarajevo or Skopje. Nor could I find any real difference in how they thought and felt about life, especially amongst the young. They, like their Christian, Western European equivalents enjoy very similar tastes in pop music and fashion, they enjoy talking about football, getting drunk and meeting the opposite sex. The more politically aware amongst them talked about the importance of Human Rights, equality and tolerance. They spoke about



Sarajevo

democracy and their frustrations with the failure of their politicians to tackle the ‘real issues’. In short, I had similar conversations with Muslims in the Western Balkans who perceived the world in a similar way to Christians I have spoken to elsewhere in Europe, both from a material perspective and from normative one.

I am in no doubt that all this comes as no great surprise to many who read this, however it is not the overwhelming impression that one receives through the mainstream media these days. Nor is it the impression I get from listening to Nicolas Sarkozy when he talks about EU enlargement, or the one I got from speaking to the Danish diplomat, who seemed to suggest that there is a fundamental relationship between being ‘European’ and holding ‘Christian’ values. As if one cannot be the former without first embodying the latter.

However, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia are all clearly European countries. Indeed, all are prospective Member States of the European Union, despite their Islamic heritage and thus despite the diplomat’s definition. I reflected on this and it occurred to me that what the diplomat had said was true, and that perhaps I had misunderstood him; and perhaps it was I that thought in Christian-centric terms: Europe is indeed Athens, Rome and Jerusalem. Only I had forgotten that Jerusalem is not exclusively Christian and hence neither is Europe or its values.

Callum Shaw, Programme assistant at QCEA

Quaker Youth Pilgrimage 18th July – 15th August

Kate Pearson of Britain Yearly Meeting reports:

This summer the biennial Quaker Youth Pilgrimage took place in the British Isles. The theme was “A Journey through Conflict to Peace”. Organised by the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), the month long journey brought together young Friends from across the world and from a variety of traditions of Quakerism. On 18th July, 24 young Friends (later joined by a 25th) and four leaders descended on Glasgow, all very excited but nervous too. There were two Friends from Mexico, seventeen from Canada and the US, one from Germany, four from Britain and one from Ireland; most of the group did not know anyone else before the pilgrimage so it was quite a daunting experience.

After home-stays with Quakers we travelled to ‘1652 country’ (the Lake District) where Quakerism started. It was here that we got to know each other really well. We stayed in Yealand Conyers - a beautiful spot which has one of the oldest meeting houses in Britain. We began our journey into Quaker history; many of us had only a limited knowledge of the start of Quakerism so it was fascinating to learn about and to consider how early Friends’ experiences was relevant today. We climbed Pendle Hill – following in George Fox’s footsteps, walked up Firbank Fell where Fox spoke to thousands and we visited Swarthmore Hall, the home of Margaret Fell. At Lancaster Castle we learnt about the persecution Quakers suffered for their beliefs, which challenged us to think about what we would have done if we had lived then. We then spanned the whole of Quaker history with a trip to the fantastic Quaker tapestry in Kendal.

After a brilliant couple of weeks with some not bad weather(!), we travelled by train to Wales where we boarded a ferry to Dublin. This was a very different experience to the one we had had in England – we were only there a few days but managed to pack in a lot of things! We had a day in the city centre, visiting Trinity



Firbank Fell

College and going shopping! We had a community service project where we raised at least £2500 for the charity Multiple Sclerosis Society Ireland.

Next we travelled to Northern Ireland, staying at the Moyallon Centre, where we explored the theme in terms of “The Troubles”. Whereas before we learnt about conflict in a historical context and in terms of the peace testimony, now we were learning about much more recent conflict, discovering the ways that Quakers had helped in these difficult times. We went to the Northern Irish Assembly and had talks from all the political parties which gave us a really interesting insight into the troubles.

Finally, we went to Wiston Lodge, on the outskirts of Glasgow for retreat time as we prepared to go home.

Alongside visiting places this we had regular discussions, games, meetings for worship and for business. We became a very close knit community – we even had rotas for cleaning and meal preparation! It was really fun and a fantastic spiritual experience – we learnt a lot from each other’s experience of Quakerism and made friends from all over the world at the same time. Everyone on the pilgrimage is very grateful to all those who organised the pilgrimage and to all the people that had kindly hosted us.

Kate Pearson (BYM)

Response to Kindertransport

Sheila Spielhofer, a Friend from Vienna, responds to Quaker Involvement in the “Kindertransport” published in Among Friends No. 111:

After the Nazi occupation of Austria in 1938, the small number of British and American Friends at the Quaker Centre in Vienna at first endeavoured to help all those who came to their door, but gradually they agreed to concentrate mainly on those who could turn to none of the other agencies for help. The Kultusgemeinde, the Jewish Religious Community, quite naturally concentrated on their members, while the Catholic and Protestant agencies helped those who had converted to their faiths, but there were many people who did not fall into any of these categories. They were not Jewish by religion but were considered Jewish according to the Nuremberg racial laws. Many of them were particularly threatened because they were also active as political opponents of Fascism, such as members of the Socialist and Communist Parties. Over a hundred were arrested immediately when Hitler’s army entered Austria, some managed to flee abroad or went into hiding. Their families were left destitute. Others could or would not leave their homes, for a variety of reasons, in spite of the deprivations and humiliations they had to endure, but as the situation became increasingly threatening, they determined to ensure the safety of their children.

It was mainly children from such families who were helped by the Quakers to join the “Kindertransporte” and who are referred to on the plaque as “non-Jewish children”. On the first such transport, which left the suburban station of Hütteldorf on 12th December 1938, a third of the 700 children were from the Quaker lists. Quakers went to Vienna to accompany all the children and ensure that they reached their destination.

Most of the children travelled through Germany to Holland and then by ferry to Harwich. On later transports, children went to Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland and Sweden as well as to Britain. Later, when the Germans invaded the first three of these countries, some of these children were trapped and sent to concentration camps, but especially in Holland, many people risked their lives to hide them. Thus, it does seem sad that the plaque makes no mention of these countries.



Westbahnhof, Vienna

As Gunnar Jahn, the chairman of the Nobel committee which awarded the Peace Prize to British and American Quaker organisations in 1947 pointed out, Friends have always offered “silent assistance from the nameless to the nameless”, so that it is not surprising that there is often no mention of their work on various commemorative plaques and in official accounts of relief work. It seems to me that it would be against Quaker tradition to insist on remedying such omissions. Nevertheless it is important for Friends themselves to be aware of such stories from the past as they are a constant reminder of what is best in the Quaker tradition and an encouragement at those moments when fear and prejudice seem to be prevailing.

Friends enabled a total of 1200 children to escape from Austria, compared to 2844 from the lists of the Kultusgemeinde. They still had 650 children waiting to leave when war broke out and the Kindertransporte came to an end.

Sheila Spielhofer, Vienna

Siân Cwper's Statement

On 7th October 2008 Siân Cwper, one of the Peace Tax Seven British protesters, should have appeared in Court charged with withholding payment of her taxes to the British Government. The following is the statement to the Court she was planning to read, first in Welsh, then in English. However, at the last minute the case was cancelled. The reason given was that Siân had paid the arrears in full – which she has not.

I have been withholding 10% of my income tax for five years.

This is how much I estimate is spent on war.

I am a Buddhist, and I don't believe in killing people.

I have taken a vow not to.

So I can't voluntarily give money to the Government knowing that it will be spent on war and preparations for war. I know that a lot of people feel the same, but they can't do the same because they are on PAYE (*tax deducted direct from pay - Ed.*).

The Nuremberg War Tribunal said in 1950: "Individuals have international duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience. Therefore [individual citizens] have the duty to violate domestic laws to prevent crimes against peace and humanity from occurring."

If I gave money to terrorists, I would be held responsible, and punished for helping them in their crimes. I am equally responsible if I give my money to an aggressive government to kill innocent people, and I could be held responsible by an international court in the future.

I am also a member of a group of seven British taxpayers who are taking our government to the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg, arguing that they are infringing our human rights to freedom of conscience and religion by making us pay for war against our religions and conscience. This group is called the Peace Tax Seven

We have been through the British courts, and have been waiting for almost two years for our case to be heard in Strasbourg.

If we are successful, the British Government, and

other European governments will have to change their laws to allow anyone who wants to, to redirect the proportion of their taxes that would have been used for war elsewhere. We don't have the right to say where, but it would make sense to use it for non-violent conflict resolution and research into the most effective methods in this field.

If enough people were to make this choice, it could lead to the saving of millions of lives, not only those that would have been killed in wars, but also those who die of hunger, poverty and lack of medical treatment because of the enormous and hideous amount of the world's resources that are spent on war. After a little research, specialists in this field, would find that the most effective way to avoid war and bring peace is to ensure a fair standard of living for everyone in conformity with their human rights. This would come a lot cheaper than all the wars and preparations for war that are going on now.

What will we do with the money left over? We could spend a little of it on rehabilitating unemployed ex-arms dealers.

I have received many messages of support, including some from New Zealand, Japan, Spain, France and the United States. Those from Elfyn Llwyd and Jill Evans are amongst them. One friend says she is asking the majority of the Quakers in New York to pray over the case.

Many people have said that I am brave. I would like to contradict this. I do not think that you, honourable judge, are a dangerous person. It is not impossible, even, that you sympathise with my stand. Of course, I assume that you will order a sum of money to be taken out of my bank account. That is your job, and you have no choice. But I don't see that it takes much courage to stand here in front of you and face such a threat.

The truly brave people are those who oppose their governments, and stand up for justice in countries such as China, Tibet, Burma, and a long and heartbreaking list of other places, where making such a stand means the threat of imprisonment, torture or death.

May the prayers that are focused on this case today be of benefit to such people everywhere.

Siân Cwper

2008 Border Meeting in Lievelede, The Netherlands,

Edward Haasl and Janet Kreysa report on the 2008 Border Meeting in The Netherlands, 19-21 September:

The Dutch have done themselves proud again. Some 33 F/friends from France, Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium met in that part of the Netherlands that's called the Achterhoek (literally the 'back corner' but perhaps best translated as the 'back of beyond') for the annual Border Meeting -- rural Netherlands at its best. We delighted in seeing old friends, meeting new ones, catching up on what has been happening in our lives.

The programme featured two speakers, Omar Nahas (Academic Director of the Summer Programme- Islamic Diaspora in Europe - at the School for International Training Study Abroad, in Antwerp), and Anita Wuyts of Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting. Omar Nahas teaches about Islam, Diaspora Communities and the EU, and has published a well-received book *De andere Jihad*.(*) Anita Wuyts needs no introduction to the wider Quaker community as she has served on more international boards and committees than space allows here to list.

Omar Nahas asked us how we can build a house of God, how we are to heal the pain of nations, the sorrows of the past that weigh so heavily, how we reconcile religion and human rights, and what we can do with refugees.

Anita Wuyts reported on what QCEA has been doing in the area of human rights. She went on to clarify points of Friends' theology that are relevant to our encounter with Islam and in dealing with human rights. She then asked us to think about which Muslim values we should consider in our notions of human rights. Should religion and the State be independent of each other? She drew our attention to the real danger that capital punishment could well be reintroduced into Europe via the back door of extradition treaties. Indeed, the Lisbon Treaties allow for capital punishment, albeit in a footnote. The recent instances of CIA 'rendition' whereby European governments collaborated in the extra-judicial arrests of suspected terrorists for transport to countries for interrogation with torture and the risk of the death penalty should disabuse us of the notion that we are safe on this particular issue. We have to keep in mind that



Omar Nahas

we do not possess 'the Truth'. Rather, as Quakers, we encounter it.

A poster session, partly conducted in silence, presented our conclusions, using a lively mix of symbols, pictures and words.

On Sunday morning, Omar Nahas led us in the Muslim manner of praying, teaching us the postures and explaining their significance. We felt the kinaesthetic power of postures and movement.

The languages of the meeting were German and English with occasional asides in Dutch. We found this to be a very natural process, and the participants quite ready and willing to take the extra time needed for translations.

Our Border Meeting will meet again in Belgium on the third weekend in September 2009 at the Kortenberg Abbey just outside Brussels. Reserve now! Further information will be published in *Among Friends* in the spring of 2009 and can also be obtained from Edward Haasl: haasl@telenet.be.

(*) *Omar Nahas in collaboration with Miriam Bouwens. De andere jihad. Uitgeverij Ten Have, Postbus 5018, 8260 GA Kampen: 2007. Available from www.mobipocket.com and doubtless elsewhere.*

EMEYF Summer Gathering, Skogtun, Norway

Vivian Barty-Taylor writes about EMEYF Summer Gathering, Skogtun, Norway:

From 10th - 17th August, 2008, fifteen young friends gathered at the Skogtun Youth centre near Nannestad, Norway for Summer Gathering. This was the first time in recent years that EMEYF has organized a summer event, and it was good to see it quite well attended. The gathering had originally been envisioned as a work camp designed to learn about fundraising, but the organizing committee decided during the planning process to make the camp a more spiritual event with the theme "Inner peace that reaches out". During the week we explored how we are led to activism, and what we feel called to do. The times that Young Friends spend together are very special to us, and we also appreciated the opportunity to be together, to cook our own meals, to play games, to talk, to sing and to worship. The surroundings were stunning, and we also enjoyed walking in the forested hills around Skogtun.

We were very pleased to have Laurie Michaelis, co-ordinator of the Living Witness project, as the speaker. He guided us in a three day programme exploring issues relating to our theme. We explored personality types with an introduction to the Enneagram, and discussed the right balance of head, heart and gut in action. This is inherent in many philosophies, but the Enneagram provides a framework for considering how we can utilize our own potential most effectively. For me, this contributed to my conviction that in some way all philosophy and religion points to the same truth which we experience differently and for which we



have different names. Laurie also led us in the guided meditation "Experiment with Light" which I personally found very powerful.

It was wonderful to see so many new faces at an EMEYF event. EMEYF has in recent years tried to reach out to more isolated groups of young Friends, and this has influenced our choice of location for Spring and Summer Gatherings. One of the aims in organizing the gathering in Norway was to make EMEYF more visible in Scandinavia. This was successful, although sadly some members of the planning committee were unable to attend. The conflict in Georgia (which began on the first day of the gathering) was also in our thoughts and prayers as one Georgian young friend was prevented from traveling.

Since the gathering, many of us have remained in contact by e-mail and the internet, and some of us will again be together in Bad Pymont in November for Annual Meeting. The spiritual life of EMEYF feels strong, and we are looking forward to Spring Gathering 2009 which will take place in **Damascus, Syria**, from **10th - 17th April**.

We were very grateful to Norwegian Friends who supported the organization. We also enjoyed a day visit to Oslo where we visited Oslo Monthly Meeting and shared in their evening meal. Many thanks also go to the planning committee and to Moritz for so ably arranging the catering.

Vivian Barty-Taylor



God's Tears

Olive Hobson of Quaker House Belfast describes the making of the Omagh Memorial:

Along with Father Brian Lennon from the Jesuit Community and the Rev Dr. John Dunlop, a former Moderator of Presbyterian Church, Quaker House Belfast was invited to become an independent facilitation team to take on the responsibility of finding a suitable form of words for the narrative that would somehow tell the story of that fateful day in August 1998 when a bomb exploded in Omagh. 31 people died that day. It was the single worst atrocity in the history of "The Troubles"

During the months of October 2007 through to March 2008 the team met with those who had been bereaved, injured and many others whose lives had been changed forever by the Omagh Bomb.

We listened with care to the moving stories of heartbreak, grief, anger, trauma, physical suffering, courage, faith, hope and in some cases a sense of peace.

We heard how for some the lack of convictions 10 years on felt like a denial of justice. We were deeply moved.

Our dilemmas hung often on the ponderings about whether we would choose to tell a story of "murder" or "lives lost". For some the word "murder" seemed too strong, for others the words "lost lives" did not tell their truth.

How could we balance these needs while at the same time cause no further harm.

The walls of Quaker House Belfast were often awash with words. Words were shuffled and reshuffled in our attempt to find a suitable form. There were many



hours of struggle both emotionally and intellectually among the team.

On 3rd March John, Brian and myself, on our 10th draft, came to an agreement about what we believed might be a suitable form of words for the narrative. We humbly made our recommendations to Omagh District Council on 6th March. They were accepted unanimously by all parties that evening.

The Chief Executive of Omagh District Council made the comment:

"We gave you an impossible task and you made it possible"

And so on the anniversary, with many people from all around the world we stood before a small platform to be with the Omagh Community as the time came again to remember, honour, and pay tribute to the 31 loved ones whose lives were cut short that fateful day of 15th August 1998.

A most beautiful glass memorial inside of which glimmers a heart shape was unveiled right where the bomb exploded.

The Garden of Light with its narrative, which tells the story of that fateful day, was strewn with flowers and wreaths. Its 31 mirrors (one for each life that was lost) threw beams of light towards the glass memorial at the bomb site.

The rain beat heavily on the tops of the black umbrellas as friends and strangers stood in silence and in awe of the courage of that community. A dress sodden with the rain, I turned to go, a whisper came to my ears, "These are God's Tears."

*Olive Hobson, Quaker House Belfast,
www.quakerhousebelfast.org*



News from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Way back in the 1930's, Corder and Gwen Catchpool lived in Berlin with their three daughters, trying to do reconciliation work on behalf of Friends. They came to know many young Germans, amongst whom was Rudi Schmidt who learnt about Woodbrooke College from Corder and Gwen and nurtured the longing to visit Birmingham and experience the study centre himself. He finally went there in 1977 and was so stimulated by the courses he did there that he decided to leave most of his fortune to the College, to enable other young people, especially from Eastern Europe, to have a similar experience. A small Trust Fund was set up and the Catchpool daughters, Jean Greaves, Pleasance Holton and Annette Wallis were amongst those who agreed on bursaries, for about ten years.

When Rudi Schmidt died in 2000, a much larger sum of money came to the Fund who appointed Susan Seymour to visit Friends all round Europe and discuss with them how best the money could be used. Literature about Woodbrooke was produced for the first time in several European languages and many more bursaries and courses were arranged. In 2006, Julia Ryberg replaced Susan as the Fund's fieldworker and has developed an on-line scheme to introduce Quakerism to people in 15 different countries, via the open source course software called Moodle.

This year the small group of Trustees have decided to pass on the Fund to Woodbrooke Trustees so that the work of the Fund can continue and grow. We are sure that Rudi Schmidt and Corder and Gwen Catchpool would greatly welcome the way in which their friendship so many years ago has blossomed into such a fruitful project.

Gill Hopkins, clerk of Catchpool Fund

European Clerks Gathering 12-15 February 2009

For Friends from Continental Europe who are currently clerking a Quaker Meeting or about to take on that responsibility. There will be a variety of experience and knowledge within the group. There will be time to explore together the ways in which God's spirit works among us and how our business method has evolved over the centuries. Topics will include: planning agendas, making minutes and the discipline of the meeting. The working language is English at a

pace for second language speakers. Participants will gain greater understanding of clerking in the meeting and learn the specifics of the clerk's task.

Judith Roads and Julia Ryberg enjoyed co-tutoring the first Clerks Gathering in 2007 and look forward to working together again. Judith has served as clerk to committees and meetings, and has led short courses on clerking. The Quaker business method is dear to her heart. Julia, a Swedish-American Friend, serves Sweden Yearly Meeting in retreat leadership, teaching and outreach. She serves Woodbrooke as European Project Co-ordinator and EMES as Ministry and Outreach Co-ordinator.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Becky Thomas at Woodbrooke or email becky.thomas@woodbrooke.org.uk

Friends from **Britain Yearly Meeting's Quaker World Relations Committee** will also be at Woodbrooke during the weekend, having a separate committee meeting. They are looking forward to meeting Friends attending the course and would also like to offer practical help. For example you might like to stay with Friends for a few days before or after the course. Please contact Helen Lockwood, email helenlockwood@hotmail.com or write to her c/o Louise Vizer at Woodbrooke, if we can help in any way.

After months of redesign, **Woodbrooke's brand new website** has been launched. Friends from around the world can now easily access a wealth of information about Woodbrooke. Planning your trip to Woodbrooke has never been easier with bedroom and course availability at your fingertips. Take a look and let us know what you think at:

www.woodbrooke.org.uk

Looking ahead:

- Opening the stable door? Exploring the nativity story, 28 – 30 November 2008
- Quakers: a people of their books? 12 – 14 December 2008
- Seeking Simplicity: *finding serenity in a complex world*, 30 December – 2 January 2009
- 'Coming Home' to Friends, 6 – 8 February 2009

Book Reviews

Jane Rose of *Finland Yearly Meeting* reviews two books

I am living with two books at the moment and I would like to recommend both of them to Friends in Europe. Both books excite me in very different ways and I feel both offer much to help us deepen our spiritual life on our own and corporate journeys.

Plain Living: A Quaker Path to Simplicity by
Catherine Whitmore (2001)
Sorin Books ISBN 10 1-893732-28-2

This is a book rooted in Quaker traditions, with all the extracts used being written by and for Quakers. In that sense it is indeed a Quaker Path to simplicity, but as the author states at the beginning the processes described are universal and available to everyone.

In these times of stressed and stressful living when there are demands on our time and our attention as perhaps never before, it can be desperately hard to even discern what simple living is in terms of our own lives; never mind what it could be for our children and others with whom we come into contact. I find it heartening to read in the introduction:

Through my personal journey I have come to understand plain living as a matter of spiritual intent, or even aim of the heart.

The book is divided into chapters which are also sensitively and helpfully subdivided into sections: starting with Ourselves and our Time, Work and Money and moving on through other areas of our lives such as, Committed Relationships, Parenting, Mentoring and Aging to conclude with Listening to the Earth and Spirit-led Service.

The chapters are a succession of short passages, poems or quotations, lovingly and prayerfully placed in such a way that one might read them as Ministry. Catherine Whitmore herself centres each chapter with a short piece of her own spiritual writing. The other very useful and loving feature of this book is that each section is followed by three queries on which to reflect. I would like to offer just one example which follows the subsection entitled Fear:

What would I do if I were not afraid?

The second book has a much wider canvass and although part of it follows the author's personal spiritual journey, inner and outer, it is a call to all of us to recognise what she calls our own 'songline' and thus our soul's whispered guidance toward our own awakening to the fullness of Love in our lives and in the world.

Awakening the Energies of Love: Discovering Fire for the Second Time by Anne Hillman (2008)
Bramble Books ISBN 978-1-883647-16-2

The book starts with a quote from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin:

*When man discovers Love
He will have discovered Fire for the Second Time.*

This quote and the wider quote from which it is taken are the underpinning of the whole book.

Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides, and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of Love, and then for a second time in the history of the world, humanity will have discovered Fire.

Anne Hillman feels that the awakening of Love in our hearts is the spiritual journey of our Time, heralding a transformation as life-changing for each of us as the taming of fire was for our ancient ancestors. The book is an invitation to go deeper into the journey of Love.

It is written in four parts: The Known, Interlude, The Unknown and Presence, which take us to the threshold of Awakening and beyond. Anne Hillman's writing spans the time of pre-history to the present and crosses many cultures and continents. She helps us to see our own spiritual journeys in a very wide context: that of the human race and indeed all creation. The writing is beautiful, but as well as being philosophical and mystical she is also practical. For example, one of her chapters is entitled 'Living in the Kingdom while Living in the World'. As living this way is a permanent challenge for many of us, it is encouraging to have the concrete perspective she offers. I like the way Anne Hillman finds the spiritual in the everyday and then places these insights within what she sees as our evolutionary journey as individuals and as a people. It is a deep book and can take many readings- I will be living with it for a long time yet.

Jane Rose

Nonviolent Conflict Transformation – a Joint European Task for Civil Society

by *Helga Tempel, German YM:*

Some of you might already have heard about a rather new instrument of peacebuilding and peacekeeping, called Civil Peace Service. In solidarity with local people in areas of crises and tension trained Peace Consultants are sent out to support them and help them to struggle for their interests non-violently. In Germany the CPS (Ziviler Friedensdienst ZFD) is just going to celebrate its 10th anniversary as a joint program of NGOs and the government under the umbrella of the Ministry for Development. Friends in Germany have contributed a lot to install this program and make it work in a professional and effective way.

Also in other European countries you will find endeavours to set up similar programs even if there are differences between the various approaches. Some NGOs are concentrating on training or have started with conflict transformation within their own society, some are lobbying their governments to promote the search for alternatives to violent interventions and are struggling to set up a legal frame for CPS as a first step.

Since more than 10 years all those different organisations are cooperating within the European Network for Civil Peace Services.

Mission Statement:

The European Network for Civil Peace Services (EN.CPS) is an international network of NGOs with the common goal of promoting Civil Peace Services (CPS) as an instrument of nonviolent conflict transformation, both on a national level as well as within Europe. It is a multinational co-operation of organisations that carry out research, information sharing and dissemination, lobbying (national and European institutions) and awareness raising activities as well as the recruitment, training and deployment of qualified civilian professionals/volunteers.

The concept of Civil Peace Services (CPS) includes long-term peacebuilding as well as medium to long-term civilian (non-military) conflict intervention and prevention. The EN.CPS gives non-partisan help to conflicting parties seeking assistance in solving violent conflicts non-violently. By promoting the establishment and use of Civil



Annual Meeting of the European Network for Civil Peace Services (EN.CPS), April 2007, Berlin

Peace Services, the EN.CPS and its member organisations work in a pragmatic and constructive way for a culture of peace, for dialogue between peoples.

They try to give support and advise to each other, to start joint projects and programs and carry out awareness raising activities within their own countries and on the EU level. In Brussels they also work via EPLO / European Peacebuilding Liaison Office trying to let the politicians understand the possible influence of civil society e.g. in early warning, active peacebuilding and in endeavours to minimize violence.

Once a year representatives of the network gather for their Annual Meeting in different places. It offers the opportunity for a lively exchange of experiences and ideas and of appointments for joint projects including lobbying to spread the idea.

There are members of the EN.CPS in 19 European countries now – but we are missing contacts to some European regions. As groups of Quakers and individual Friends have always been involved in active peacebuilding we assume that some of them might know about initiatives (not necessarily those of Quakers) around Europe that might fit into the frame of the EN.CPS and benefit of this sort of cooperation.

So, please, be so kind and let me know those addresses, so that we from EN.CPS could get into contact with them and inform them about our work.

*Helga Tempel, German YM,
helga.tempel@gmx.de*

Diary Dates 2008/09

We are short of space for full postal addresses and phone numbers. Please contact the EMES Office if you need this information.

5 – 7 December 2008: QCEA/QPSW Conference
“Not privation but appropriate living”, Brussels

13-15 February 2009: European Clerks Meeting,
Woodbrooke

6-8 March 2009: Grentztreffen CH-D-F, Im Schwarzwald, Lindenberg

Info: K. Mangels zeitschrift@quaeker.org

22-24 May 2009: Netherlands Yearly Meeting,
Information from secretariaat@dequakers.nl

29 May – 1 June 2009: Central European Gathering, Don Bosco House, Vienna Information from Jalka: jalka@konfliktkultur.at www.donboscohaus.at/

25-28 June 2009: Nordic Yearly Meeting. Danish, Finnish, Norwegian, and Swedish Friends are holding their Yearly Meetings in the same place and at the same time at Nordiska Folkögskolan, Kungälv (near Gothenburg, Sweden). Contact: kveker@kveker.org

More dates for 2009 available on the website:

www.fwccemes.org

Please send items for inclusion in the diary to Marisa Johnson at emes@fwcc.quaker.org

In Brief:

The Quakers and Business Group have recently launched their new website:

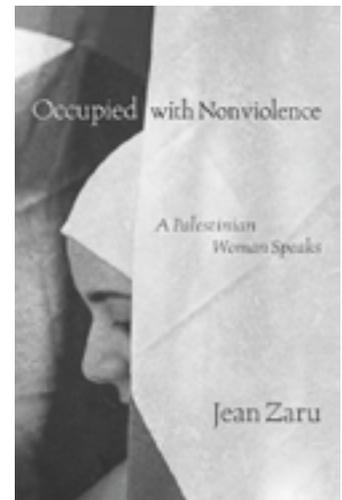
www.quakersandbusiness.org.uk

Occupied with Nonviolence - A Palestinian Woman speaks, by Jean Zaru

A moving account of a Friend's lifetime witness to justice and reconciliation.

Jean Zaru, Clerk of Ramallah Monthly Meeting, has published, through Fortress Press, a moving and inspiring book based on her life-long witness to our Quaker Testimonies in the most challenging circumstances. A woman in a patriarchal society, a Christian living among Muslims and Jews, a Palestinian who has lived

most of her life under military occupation, Jean's compassionate reflections on the struggle for liberation, justice and the path of nonviolence have the authority of experience and enduring commitment. The book is available from Amazon and the Quaker Bookshop at Friends' House in London. See The Friends International Center in Ramallah for more



Among Friends is the newsletter of Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation. We want **Among Friends** to reflect the diversity of Quaker life and experience across the Section and welcome articles, photos and news of forthcoming events.

Are your details correct?

If you are receiving a copy of **Among Friends** by post, please let us know of any change or corrections to your mailing address. Also please inform us if you no longer wish to receive a copy.

EMES will only use your contact details to send you copies of **Among Friends** unless you have explicitly requested to receive other EMES related communications.

FWCC-EMES, 22 Percheron Close, Impington, Cambridge CB24 9YX, UK emes@fwcc.quaker.org

Subscriptions

Among Friends is available free of charge at: <http://www.fwccemes.org>

To receive a copy by post please contact us at the EMES office.

There is no set subscription fee for **Among Friends. We depend on voluntary subscriptions. Costs of printing and distribution are rising and we hope those who are able to pay will consider an annual donation of around 12 Euros or £8.**

If you wish to make a bank transfer, please use the details below:

From outside the UK: (Payment in Euros can now be made to a German Bank. Details from the Secretary)

Unity Trust Bank plc, Nine Brindley Place, Birmingham, B1 2HB, UK

IBAN: GB11 CPBK 0800 5150 0732 10

BIC: CPBKGB22

It is also essential that you quote the following details

Account Name: FWCC-EMES

Account Number: 20180696

Sort Code: 08-60-01

For holders of UK bank accounts please send cheques or CAF vouchers in GBP to the EMES office. Scottish Charity number: SC 036528

Deadline for **Among Friends 113: 1 February 2009**