

# Among Friends

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## Footprints of Peace

Dear Friends,

I recently attended a course at Woodbrooke called Fingerprints of Fire...Footprints of Peace. It was based on a book by Noel Moules, who is known as “a thinker, teacher and activist for peace, justice and deep ecology”. The course was co-led by the author and by Stuart Masters, a Senior Programme Leader at Woodbrooke, and I found it challenging and stimulating.

The “fingerprints” drew our attention to the uniqueness of each human being – made up of the same genetic material, each bit of DNA the copy of a code that has already manifested many times, yet each individual irrevocably distinct and unrepeatable. We pondered to what extent we are constrained by the limitations of our genetic make up, upbringing and circumstances – how much transformation is possible, given that we are who we are?

I have recently taken up running regularly 5 km at a Parkrun near my home. After each run I receive a set of statistics which include the timing of my run, my place among all runners, my place among the women runners, and an age-adjusted score that indicates the percentage of the potential I have achieved. Since the summer this score has improved from just above 50% to about 61%. I am, however, in awe of the woman runner in the category 75 to 79 years who achieves 95% of her



*Participants at Experiment with Light Conference walking in Woodbrooke's garden (see page 3)*

*Photo: Anne Olding-Ready*

potential! Will I perform as well when I reach her age? This experience has led me to ask myself, to what extent am I fulfilling the God-given potential of my spiritual life? What footprints am I leaving behind as I walk in the world? Am I a “Cosmic Visionary”, embracing horizons of hope and seeing meaning in all things? Am I a “Shalom Activist”, working with passion for wholeness in every aspect of my life and interaction with others and with the world? Would I dare to be a “Messianic Anarchist”, celebrating the way of freedom which is at the heart of the Good News of Jesus? I do hope I can already call myself a “Faith Friend”, affirming others’ beliefs and commitment to truth, sharing my own insights with humility, always prepared to learn from others’ paths, and prepared to be changed in the process.

*Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary*

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## Kendal Tapestry returns from memorable Irish visit

*Bridget Guest writes:*

The Kendal Tapestry is back home after a hugely successful trip to Ireland in July and August. Curator Bridget Guest and five volunteers took 20 panels of the Tapestry to a small town the centre of Ireland where the local community had organised a special celebration of its Quaker Heritage.

The town of Mountmellick in Co. Laois, sixty miles south west of Dublin, was once home to a major Quaker community. In the early part of the 19th century more than 8,000 people were employed in Quaker industries in the town earning it the nickname, “the Manchester of Ireland.” To celebrate and honour this important part of their heritage the managing committee of the local museum requested that part of the Kendal Tapestry might be exhibited at the museum. It was agreed to send 20 panels to Mountmellick.

“We were amazed at the response,” said Bridget, “over 2,500 visitors came from all over Ireland to see the work over the two week period. The exhibition featured on all the national newspapers and on national radio. Each day we were overwhelmed with the number of visitors and their enthusiasm for the Tapestry.”

In a wonderful coincidence the Mountmellick Museum where the Tapestry was displayed is itself dedicated to the preservation of a form of Quaker needlecraft known as ‘Mountmellick Work,’ a unique form of white on white embroidery developed by Quaker women in the town to assist local women earn an income during the Great Irish Famine. Indeed one of the panels that travelled with the exhibition recalls the marvellous relief work undertaken by the Quakers during that particular catastrophe

In a development that delighted their hosts the curators of the Kendal Tapestry decided to add a ‘Mountmellick Panel’ to the existing panels. This will



*Dolores Dempsey and Bridget Guest*

*Photo credit: Kevin Byrne*

be designed and embroidered by local people, a process that began during the exhibition and will take up to two years to complete.

“This is a great honour for our museum,” says Mountmellick Museum manager, Dolores Dempsey, “it is a real recognition of the place Mountmellick has in Quaker history and heritage.”

It wasn’t all work for those accompanying the exhibition. Bridget Guest and her volunteers found time for some fun and frolics with their hosts. On a number of occasions they savoured the warmth of the Irish welcome in the forms of food, story, song and a few drops of ‘morning dew.’ Not to be outdone, the Cumbria crew delighted their hosts with their store of story and song.

The Tapestry is safely home in Kendal. Meanwhile Bridget Guest and her fellow travellers have returned to the ‘day jobs’ with heads and hearts full of wonderful memories of a magical visit to their neighbours and friends ‘across the pond.’

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# Epistle from the First International Gathering of the Experiment with Light (EWL) held at Woodbrooke on the 27th – 29th September 2013

Greetings to all Friends everywhere.

*'How far, how deep, how wide can you go this weekend?'* was the question Rex Ambler asked us to consider as seventy-one of us from the UK, Palestine, Finland, Russia, South Africa, Austria, Canada, Sweden, Norway and the USA gathered in the Cadbury room.

*'If we are to deepen our meditation,'* he went on, *'we need to risk facing unpalatable facts about ourselves and risk speaking about this with our group, not get stuck at a comfortable level which we feel safe sharing with others.'*

*'How wide can we go? A group of non-religious friends trying the Experiment said they were happy with the words "the Spirit within you".'*

*'How far can we go? A woman in a Muslim group who had started doing the Experiment with Light said that as a result of taking part she was able to cry for the first time for her son who had disappeared.'*

*'We can take the Experiment with Light farther, deeper and wider. That is our challenge.'*

On Saturday after a meditation together and a sharing in small groups – and of course a break for coffee and hot chocolate... we came together to share our experiences with Experiment with Light that morning, in our groups at home or on our own. These were some of them:

*'The words of George Fox, "Come in to the new world", came to me with depth. And with it a feeling of immense gratitude. We must try to keep the freshness of "a new world".'*

*'This is the first time I've done Experiment with Light. I've searched many places for a profound experience like this. The phrase, "Why do you hide your Light under a bushel?" comes to mind.'*

*'I offer EWL to those who are not Quakers. I always feel anxious wondering if it's going to work. But there is always someone who experiences something profound. It is an exercise in faith – faith in the process, but even more so, faith in the Light.'*

*'Two words come to mind, trust and perseverance. Trust, that this experiment has been tested and is on-going. Perseverance, in that it's not easy; we need to keep working at it, not just accept we've found a nice easy form of meditation.'*

*'Waiting without expectation for the Light to reveal itself requires the ego to step aside.'*

*'It is open to seemingly absurd coincidences. In my meditation I had an image of myself stuck on an electro magnet. The best solution is to turn off the power, I thought. At that moment a Friend got up and switched off the light...'*

*'My experience of EWL fills me with joy. Will it last? Then I think, it's like couch grass, the kind you can't get rid of; it'll be here when I'm gone. The Experiment with Light will spread – within my own life, within my own meeting, within the world.'*

*'It is important to allow our body to experience our feelings.'*

*'EWL is for everyone. I introduced it to a non-Quaker friend when we were sitting under a tree. She loved it, and wanted to pass it on to others. We need to experiment with EWL!'*

In the afternoon we had a Meditation on the World. We connected deeply with the problems – the suffering and conflicts - in the world, yet we could also see hope, and as a result ended with renewed will to act in the various ways we were led, as well as collectively. There was also optimism based on the concept that the world is a self-renewing organism and that balance can be regained, (Gaia principle).

The shared entertainment in the evening was the best we have ever experienced. Songs, dance, games, music and poems were enjoyed by all. It showed the Light and beauty that we all have to offer.

We invite Friends everywhere to see how far, deep and wide they can take the Experiment with Light.

## Quaker Service Norway celebrates 50 years

*From Self help to Change agents*

*From kindergartens in Gaza to peace and reconciliation in Rwanda, Burundi, Congo and Kenya*

**The guiding principles remain equality, respect for partners, cooperation and trust.**

Quaker Service Norway (QSN, Kvekerhjelp) is in 2013 celebrating its 50th anniversary. QSN as an NGO working for peace and development was established as a result of a project in Algeria in 1963, a project enthusiastically supported, both physically and financially, by European and Norwegian Quakers. The project lasted till 1972 and the work was based on close cooperation with the local government and the people in the villages.

Egil Hovdenak who was the project leader for six years insists that development work has to grow out of deep trust and genuine cooperation between the partners, it is not a question of being donors and recipients. This has been the guiding principle of QSN ever since.

In the 1990s the Uganda Change Agents training programme took us a step further, village people were trained to take responsibility for the development of their villages, to trust their own resources and start running their own projects. Quakers from Burundi, Congo and Rwanda visited Uganda and saw that this training model might be used in their work for peace in their own countries suffering deeply from war, violence and genocide. QSN was in 1998 able to find financial support for this idea at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, paving the way for the Change Agent Peace Programme.

QSN's 50 year anniversary was celebrated in Oslo with



*Hezron Masitsa addressing QSN conference.  
Photo: R Cassidy*



*Egil Hovdenak and Kristin Eskeland celebrate  
QSN 50 years. Photo: R. Cassidy*

a conference called "There is no way to peace, peace is the way". International guests were representatives of our partners in East Africa, Cecile Nyiramana (Rwanda) and Hezron Masitsa (CAPI, Kenya) and friends from Israel and Palestine, Ruth Hiller (New Profile, Israel) and Hind Khoury (Sabeel, former ambassador for Palestine).

The theme of the conference was nonviolence, the guests as well as the audience were asked to discuss and reflect around the questions: Civil society as a political change agent, Breaking the cycles of violence and Reconciliation and justice - hand in hand?

About 75 people participated in the conference. The audience participated actively in the discussions with interesting comments and questions. I think we all agreed that the work for peace and nonviolence must continue at all levels, at grassroots as well as at a higher political level. That we need to meet, to talk, to listen and to cooperate. That even if nonviolence may take longer, it is in the end more effective than military actions.

After the conference members of Quaker Service Norway met at an informal, pleasant dinner.

Let us hope that QSN will be able to continue its work for peace, democracy and human rights. Let us hope that our cooperation with other Quaker groups may continue and flourish.

## Remembering Ivars Ābelis

*Inese Ansule* writes on behalf of Liepaja Worship group and personally as his wife:

Late in the evening of 5th July, in the middle of the summer, the Quaker family lost one of its long time Friends – Ivars Ābelis (25.04.1958.-05.07.2013), from Liepaja Worship group, Latvia.

Ivars was a spiritual seeker with a varied religious and non-religious background. Starting as a Lutheran pastor in his youth, he came in close contact with different religions and faiths and never stopped searching. He had excellent English and could get and read different spiritual materials. Ivars had the ability to go in depth in each case and weigh it carefully. He studied Friends' materials for a long time and established an intense email correspondence with Friends from different Quaker

traditions. He participated in discussion groups on-line and was very active and attentive. This engagement with the Society of Friends took him many years and he left a voluminous correspondences with Friends and writings that record his journey of exploration.

Ivars first learned about Quakers in 1991 from Friends House Moscow when he came into contact with Russian Friends. Later, in 1995, Ivars invited Hans Weening, Executive Secretary of Europe & Middle East Section of FWCC, to visit his home in Riga and meet the worship group of seekers.

In 1999 and then in 2002 Ivars had the opportunity to visit USA and met Friends there and attended Meetings. This helped him to widen his knowledge of the range of Quaker traditions and to determine his own position as a Quaker. In 2003 Ivars participated in a Boarder Meeting organised by Friends House Moscow. This experience

gave him confidence that he was ready to apply for membership.

The development of Quakerism in Latvia started with the First Baltic Gathering in Nida, Lithuania, in 2004, coordinated by Hans Aahen from Denmark YM. At this time Ivars found like-minded people in Daugavpils and Liepaja. He inspired the establishment of Quaker groups in Riga, Liepaja and Daugavpils. In 2004 Ivars became the first International member of the Religious Society of Friends in Latvia.

Ivars organised a second Baltic Meeting in Jurmala, Latvia, in 2005 with many participants from Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and other countries. He was also one of the organizers of gatherings in Liepaja in 2006, which included a Woodbrooke On The Road course, and in the following years 2007 and 2008.

Ivars visited Friends in England many times and kept close contact with Friends in Denmark. He participated in the

FWCC Triennial in Ireland in 2007. During the period 2007-2009 he visited some Quaker Universalists events and found this group resonated with him.

In the last 5 years Ivars retired from work and led a simple and reflective life. He was the heart of the Liepaja worship group and his insights and thoughts impressed the people in the group but this did not matter to him. He preferred to be a calm observer as a Quaker Elder. He put some effort to create our web site in the spring of his last year.

His hobby of collecting Argentine tango music took a good deal of his time. He used to say he found the deepest human feeling of unity in TangoZen but the way of inward journey started by living out of the centre when he joined the Quaker community.

A memorial Meeting for Ivars was held on 7th August, in Liepaja, with the participating Friends from Riga and Vilnius.



*Ivars Ābelis* Photo: *Inese Ansule*

## Seek the Welfare of the City

*Kees Nieuwerth* writes about the **International Conference of Church and Peace**

We met the at the monastery in Selbitz, Germany, a community that founded in 1949 with the aims of contemplation, bible study and ‘dialogue out of the silence’ as well as social witness. In 1961 the monastery and chapel at Selbitz were built. By now there are seven locations of the ‘Christus Bruderschaft’ Community. In spite of its name it consists mainly of Sisters, although there is a small number of Brothers.

The theme of the International conference was ‘Seek the welfare of the city’, after a text from Jeremiah 29:

4-8. The prophet tells the people who have been exiled to Babylon that “the Lord expects them to continue to live their lives and seek the peace of the city they now live in: “Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat the produce; marry wives and rear families.... Increase there and do not dwindle away. Seek the welfare of any city to which I have exiled you, and pray to the Lord for it; on its welfare your welfare will depend.”

Ulrich Hahn, a German lawyer and active member of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR) spoke to the theme pointing out that the prophet exhorted the people specifically to seek the peace of the city, not that of the state, the mighty Kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar. Fundamental to the state is the exercise of power, both internal (police) and external (military). In doing so the state exercises the ‘monopoly on force’.

The concept of the “city” however is one that is more associated with peace: peaceful coexistence and interaction. Jesus had the image of the ‘city on the hill’ as a peaceful place.

So in Ulrich’s view the city also allowed for collaboration for the people of God in a common search for peace and welfare. Prophets continuously challenged those in power, the authorities, the State of their day, so should the church! The consequences of the economic



*Selbitz*

*Photo: Davorika Lovrekovic*

violence inherent in the dominant economic model should be denounced and the church should work for its transformation. Like the prophets we should stand up for justice and side with the oppressed. We should even be prepared for civil disobedience when it comes to our relationship with the state: to be more obedient to God than to people... Where the state applies deadly violence a Christian cannot cooperate! We have to create an alternative and peaceful community and make the dawning Kingdom of God visible in the world. That should be the prophetic mission of the church.

Another very interesting input was given by Lloyd Pietersen, professor New Testament Theology at the University of Gloucestershire, with the title: ‘What would the Apostle Paul say to the Occupy Movement?’ He started by quoting the declared aims of the Occupy Movement: “Occupy wants to end the relationship built on money and donations between our elected officials and corporate interests. We believe this relationship has led to rampant corruption and criminal activities that undermine our economic and political system. We simply want a system that operates in the interest of the people and to empower people to be part of the process”. He said that Occupy seeks to achieve its goals by a strategy of civil disobedience – taking to the streets to protest against corporate greed, abuse of power and growing economic disparity. Some in the movement

have been influenced by a particular reading of the cleansing of the temple incident in the Gospels. From the perspective of Occupy the ‘money changers’ are the greedy, unethical corporations and their partners: the bankers, corrupt politicians and lobbyists. The ‘tables’ are the dominant economic model and its components, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the stock markets manipulated by the corporations. The selling of ‘doves’ represents the ever expanding military budget and the advocacy of wars and military interventions to keep feeding the industrial military complex, thus selling peace at the price of blood.

The ‘den of robbers’ represents the system which bails out the banks that steal money from the poor, taxes honest, hard-working people instead of corporations and pays bonuses to greedy bankers.

Lloyd continued that such a vision – at first sight - does not fit in very well with the apostle Paul’s exhortation in Romans 13:1-7, where he advises us to be ‘subject to the governing authorities’ and ‘pay taxes to whom taxes are due’.....After a very thorough examination of the context of the Christian minority in the city of Rome to which Paul’s text is directed, Lloyd concluded that the apostle wanted to protect the small congregation in Rome, warning them against acts of civil disobedience that might result in its demise. However, elsewhere in the Gospels it is made clear that we need ‘to respect the governing authorities as long as it does no harm’.... Lloyd states: ‘This means we cannot simply obey at all costs, just as the earliest Christian martyrs refused to worship Caesar, knowing that such refusal was an act of treason, so we should refuse to worship Mars, the god of war, Mammon, the god of wealth and Techne, the goddess of technology. Or in twenty-first century terms, we will not worship at the shrine of the military-industrial complex that drives so much of the world’s economies.

The conclusion of his contribution was that Paul would probably have been quite at home with the Occupy movement and, with them, would be a passionate advocate of right sharing.



Selbitz

Photo: Davorka Lovrekovic

The Reverend Martin Wirth, the minister of the Christus Bruderschaft at Selbitz, led the worship service on Sunday. In his sermon he exhorted us “not to allow the so-called “realists” in politics to get their pessimistic war policies through on the basis that there is no alternative!” We should not “withdraw in our private spheres of interest just because getting involved requires so much effort and knowledge. God does not want to be denied and betrayed! God wants to be kneaded as salt and yeast into the daily interactions of people, especially where they are strangers and where conflicts arise because of differences in mentality, language and culture...The sin of brutal violence is poisoning the community life of human beings, so that their dignity is trampled upon. Whenever people encounter each other as strangers, fuelling fear and conflict, powerlessness fuels an escalation of violence.”

Church and Peace seeks a growing renewal in terms of peace ethics within the Christian tradition, confessing God as a mystery in the midst of everyday life in a world full of violence. “The peaceful power of the Gospel shows us a liberating and saving alternative to violence. The peaceful power of God is here in Christ: human powerlessness and vulnerability don’t have to turn over into violence: there is another Way. With the power of the Gospel we can walk the path of reconciliation and, putting our trust in God, become active peacemakers”. As a Quaker I say: Amen!

## Europe and Middle East Young Friends Open House

*Leo Vincent* shares the Epistle from this event:

Set in the surroundings and history of Congénies; our Open House has brought together people from all over Europe, Quaker and non-Quaker, who are all ages and speak many different languages. Despite such differences we found, and continue to find, ways to not just communicate together but to come together as a whole group; a family - one that keeps expanding!

With no set time schedule we have challenged ourselves in creating our event as a community. All participants had and found a role in contributing to the event. In this, we have had the young people taking care for the older in organising a hike in the woods; and we have learnt that age does not matter. We have been transformed and blessed by this community. We treasure the safety and the security we have built together, and we celebrate the way we have taken care for each other.

We have been blessed with the presence of children and teenagers who have helped us to experience life in new ways. Their joy, laughter, fun and adventurousness has been as much an influence in shaping our community as any other. In turn we have enjoyed sharing the responsibility and trust to care for them.

As in any family there cannot always be perfect unity. We disagree from time to time and we come from diverse experiences that help to shape our own views of the world. During our time together we have learnt to appreciate and value each other; learning from our experiences and sharing our stories.

We are a group who have different levels of experience of Quaker worship but silence and worship has helped to shape our community time. In the silence we have learnt to listen to each others, and our own, unique voices.

We are very grateful to the community of Congénies for their welcome and warm friendship and the incredible hospitality of the resident Friends at Maison Quaker and the B and B. We have not only created connections with each other, but also with our location, and we are grateful for the way in which our environment has accommodated and held our community.

This event have just been a starting point and looking forward we hope that just as the differences between us have not stopped our community bonding here that our geographical differences will not stop our friendships flourishing.





# The Future for Woodbrooke and Woodbrooke News

As we prepare this article, Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre will have been a place of Quaker learning for 110 years. Over that time it has changed, and one of our strengths is that we embrace change. To give you a flavour of Woodbrooke today you might be interested in a few facts and figures:

- During 2012 we ran nearly 150 short courses, 10 at Swarthmore Hall in Cumbria, and around 30 Woodbrooke on the Road events, including in Dublin, Guernsey and Poland
- For our courses in Birmingham we welcomed more than 2,300 participants to Woodbrooke
- In addition, around 60 Quaker events of varying sizes were held during 2012, as well as 270 conferences and meetings run by non-Quaker groups – adding another 6,000 plus people who were able to enjoy our wonderful facilities
- One of the most fascinating facts that might help give a sense of the scale of this is the number of meals we served. In 2012 we dished up around 15,500 breakfasts, and a staggering 35,500 other meals!

Why does Woodbrooke exist? Although many things have changed since 1903 we have remained faithful to our foundational values and vision. Woodbrooke exists to:

- Enrich and sustain individual lives
- To support and strengthen vibrant communities
- And to understand and respond to the big issues in society

What we wanted to share with you is that we are just beginning a process to re-evaluate how we deliver that vision. At the last Woodbrooke Trustee meeting a few weeks ago we agreed to embark on a 12 month strategic planning exercise, to establish our direction for the next 10 to 15 years. We are starting with some questions and we will be seeking input from as many people as possible using a variety of methods, to help us discover answers to those questions. I would be delighted to hear ideas from Friends on the answers to such questions:

- 1) What is Woodbrooke's distinctive contribution to:
  - a) British Quakerism?
  - b) To the World Family of Friends?
  - c) To society?

2) What is it you, either individually or as groups, need from us?

3) How will we know when we have succeeded; what does success look like?

For 110 years Woodbrooke has been an embodiment of education, of study, of connections, of experimentation, of transformation. We very much want that to continue.

*Sandra Berry, Director Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre.  
Sandra.berry@woodbrooke.org.uk*

## News from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Woodbrooke's global communication project continues, with about 10 Friends from around the globe connecting through various technologies—text messaging, Skype, Facebook etc—to explore how these methods might work to keep Friends connected to each other around the world.

### A gathering for Friends from small and dispersed meetings

A group of about 15 Friends from around Europe will gather November 1-3 2013 to share experiences of being members of small and dispersed Meetings. We will be looking at ways of mutually supporting each other to remain a faithful Quaker witness in our various contexts.

### Do you want to document the history of your Meeting?

During 2014, we are hoping to offer an online resource for Friends interested in documenting the history of their Meetings, including documenting the lives of Friends who have been particularly involved in peacemaking efforts.

### Quaker in Europe online course

The online Quaker in Europe course remains available. Please contact Julia Ryberg if you are interested in offering it in your language. Many language versions are already available, and it can be translated into more languages if there is interest.

### Experiment with Light... using Skype

As a result of the international Experiment with Light gathering in late September, a few Friends will be experimenting with the guided meditation using Skype.

*Woodbrooke News continued on page 12*

# Love Lost in Translation: Homosexuality and the Bible

*K. Renato Lings* writes:

Since the Middle Ages, theologians and historians have believed that the Bible severely condemns same-sex intimacy. Because of intense social stigma and political repression of dissenting voices, this universal belief has remained unchallenged until well after World War II. My book *Love Lost in Translation* carries forward the break with Christian tradition initiated by Derrick Sherwin Bailey (1955) and *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* (1963), appearing in the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the latter.

In *Love Lost in Translation* I systematically examine the biblical stories, passages and verses that are generally assumed to deal with, or comment on, homoerotic relationships. Most are found in the Older (First) Testament while some are in the Newer (Second) Testament. In addition, I explore the language of sex in the Bible. It will surprise quite a few readers that I completely demolish the popular sexual interpretation of the verb 'to know' in biblical contexts. According to my analysis, the verb 'know', in Hebrew *yada*, is never sexual. In archaic, legal contexts it serves as a technical term, which may be translated as acknowledge, recognize, investigate, or marry. The sexual connotations stem from classical Greek literature. Therefore, the humorous phrase 'to know in the biblical sense' really should be restated as 'to know in the Greek sense'.

*Love Lost in Translation* provides significant examples of early mistranslations of the biblical texts into Greek, Latin and other languages. Many such errors

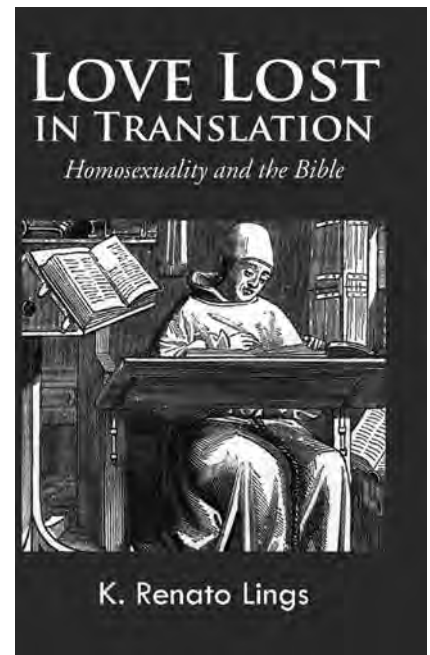


*K Renato Lings*

have gone undetected and continue to be committed by translators today. With respect to same-sex eroticism, the overall message transmitted to the Bible reading public unmistakably reflects rejection and hostility. In other words, numerous current versions of the Bible carry anti-homoerotic

messages where the biblical texts do not. In the process, the original issues discussed by the Bible are lost. To a large extent, this explains the painful controversy about same-sex relationships, which has rocked most Christian churches and a considerable number of Quaker yearly meetings for decades.

In short, in *Love Lost in Translation*, I propose a fresh approach to translating the Bible by means of linguistic and literary criteria. As I demonstrate throughout this ground-breaking book, the method enables readers to appreciate the literary sophistication, psychological insights and spiritual depth of the Bible. By combining meticulous scholarship with an accessible style, this work provides a much-needed infusion of essential learning into a subject that affects and divides millions of Bible readers today.



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K. Renato Lings is a member of Denmark YM. He holds degrees in Spanish, Translation, and Theology. In addition to studying Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Nahuatl (Aztec), he has written and taught extensively on translation as well as gender and sexuality. In recent years he has published *Translating Among Friends: A Quakerly Guide* (2008), *The Friendly Conference Interpreter* (2010), and *Biblia y homosexualidad* (2011). *Love Lost in Translation: Homosexuality and the Bible* (Trafford Publishing, 2013, 700 pp.) by K Renato Lings

# The Individual and the Community, reflections on the Mystical Path

## Border Meeting 2013

*Rachel Bewley Bateman* writes:

It was a real pleasure to attend the Border Meeting held in Kortenberg Abbey, situated between Brussels and Leuven in Belgium, from 6th-8th September 2013. On several occasions when I had met Edward Haasl at EMES Annual Meetings he encouraged me to visit Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting. By the time I reached Brussels it had become Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting and local Friends provided a warm welcome to all. There were about 55 present for the weekend, which gave us an opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new friends. I was pleasantly surprised to see the number of Friends of various nationalities that I had met at other Quaker gatherings in other parts of Europe, or perhaps even in Kenya! This immediately enhanced my belief in the World Family of Friends. It was also good to have the opportunity to meet others who were new to me and to discover a little of how their life journey had brought them to Belgium and to the Border Meeting.

After our evening meal and introductions, Davorka Lovreković, spoke to us about Church and Peace, of which she became General Secretary in January 2013. Davorka has been involved in peace work for most of her life. Church and Peace is about listening and discernment. To date groups and individuals from thirteen European countries and the Mennonite, Quaker, Church of the Brethren, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Orthodox, Reformed and Roman Catholic traditions have committed themselves to journeying together as Church and Peace. What are the next steps? - To work non-violently and to offer service to others. We need to live in community with each other in the spirit of the Peace Churches. There is much to be done, including the promotion of intercultural sharing, understanding and reconciliation. See <http://www.church-and-peace.org>. We wished Kees Nieuwerth well for his journey to Busan, Korea, to lead a workshop at the World Council of Churches Assembly in November.



*Contemplation -  
Laurens Van Esch and Michel Mudjir*

*Photo: Rachel Bewley Bateman*

On Saturday Harvey Gillman spoke to us on “The individual and the community, reflections on the mystical path.” We had been sent a paper in advance to prepare us for this journey. Harvey had taken the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela with a group from Southwark Cathedral. He reflected on the outward and inward journeys which we all have to take through life. “Art thou a child of God and dost thou walk in the Light?” George Fox encourages us to “answer that of God in everyone”. There were discussion groups, including one on “The Quaker Path – the mystic way.”

Walks, meditation, an evening social, Meeting for Worship, Alexandra Bosbeer speaking about the Quaker Council for European Affairs and suddenly it was time for lunch and our journey home. I was really thankful for a most enjoyable weekend, and also for the family who brought me to the airport at the start of my journey home to Ireland.

Remember to book early for Border Meeting September 2014 which will be held in Germany.

## Diary Dates 2013/14

More dates for 2014 are available on the website: [www.fwccemes.org](http://www.fwccemes.org). Please send items for inclusion in the diary to Marisa Johnson at [emes@fwccemes.org](mailto:emes@fwccemes.org).

**31st Oct – 3rd November 2013: German Yearly Meeting.** Contact [clerks@quaeker.org](mailto:clerks@quaeker.org)

**1st – 3rd November 2013: Being Part of a Dispersed Meeting in Europe** – a course at Woodbrooke.

Contact Julia Ryberg [julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk)

**15th – 17th November 2013: QCEA/QPSW Conference** See <http://www.fwccemes.org/calendar/qcea-qpsw-conference>

**17th – 18th November 2013: EMES Peace and Service Consultation**

Contact: [emes@fwccemes.org](mailto:emes@fwccemes.org)

**29th – 30th March 2014: Denmark Yearly Meeting.** Contact the Clerk through EMES website

**11th – 13th April 2014: German-speaking Gathering**

See <http://www.fwccemes.org/calendar/german-speaking-border-meeting>

**24th – 27th April 2014: Ireland Yearly Meeting**

See <http://www.fwccemes.org/calendar/ireland-yearly-meeting-2014>

**1st – 4th May 2014: FWCC-EMES Annual Meeting of Representatives, Strasbourg.**

Contact: [emes@fwccemes.org](mailto:emes@fwccemes.org)

*Woodbrooke News continued from page 9*

### Coming next year...

In May of 2014, there will be a course at Woodbrooke to help equip European Friends to witness more effectively in their local communities.

Please contact Julia Ryberg if you are interested in hearing more about any of these various projects and events!

For information about holding a Woodbrooke on-the-Road event, please call +44(0)121 4725171 or email [off-site@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:off-site@woodbrooke.org.uk).

*Thinking of attending a course at Woodbrooke? Catchpool Fund bursaries are readily available if financial help is needed. Contact Julia Ryberg, European Project Co-ordinator, for information on the Catchpool Fund at [julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk](mailto:julia.ryberg@woodbrooke.org.uk) or +46 (0) 175-715 30. See [www.woodbrooke.org.uk](http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk) for general information and to request a course brochure.*

### Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) International Gathering 2014

This event will take place in Maynooth, Ireland, from 13th to 19th July 2014. More information from <http://avpinternational.org/IG2014>

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.

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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)

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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

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**Deadline for Among Friends 129: 1 February 2014**