

# Among Friends

No 100: Spring 2006

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Published by the Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation  
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## Dear Friends

This issue of Among Friends has a strong Peace theme. We have contributions which illustrate two quite different ways in which Friends live out the Peace Testimony – Jalka in Austria with her work with young people and the Westmorland General Meeting in Britain with their Preparing for Peace project. Then we have news of the Middle East Yearly Meeting planned for September (the first possible for several years) with the theme: Leading the Middle East to a Lasting Peace.

I was reflecting on how serious attention to our Peace Testimony will challenge each of us in a different way. But also that for our peace witness to be effective we all need to start with ourselves and very near to home. Then I remembered a light-hearted statement pinned to the wall in the FWCC World Office and it seemed appropriate to share it with you. I hope you enjoy “Symptoms of Inner Peace”.

So no more words from me for now

Peace, shalom, salaam

*Bronwyn Harwood*

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## *Symptoms of Inner Peace*

Be on the lookout for symptoms of inner peace. The hearts of a great many have already been exposed to inner peace and it is possible that people everywhere could come down with it in epidemic proportions. This could pose a serious threat to what has, up to now, been a fairly stable condition of conflict in the world.

Some signs and symptoms of inner peace:

- A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than on fears based on past experiences.
- An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- A loss of interest in judging other people.
- A loss of interest in judging self.
- A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- A loss of interest in conflict.
- A loss of the ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom.)
- Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
- Frequent attacks of smiling.
- An increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- An increased susceptibility to the love extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

### **Warning:**

If you have some or all of the above symptoms, please be advised that your condition of inner peace may be so far advanced as to not be curable. If you are exposed to anyone exhibiting any of these symptoms, remain exposed only at your own risk.

## Lend me your Light

*Your lights are all lit - then where do you go with your lamp?*

*My house is all dark and lonesome - lend me your light*

*Rabindranath Tagore Gitanjali*

Jalka, a member of the Vienna Worship Group, is running a project called 'Imagine Peace' in schools under the auspices of the Bertha von Suttner celebration. This is her way of seeking peace with the hope of founding a better world.

It is indeed difficult to imagine peace in this war-ridden world of ours. Peace is a concept many of us are struggling with and peace is hard to formulate. War is all around us what with the war industry gaining strength, one hears of the war on terror; computer games and war toys keeping the children busy in war games and excitement win situations. It is indeed commendable of Jalka to busy herself with imagining peace.

Our media brings home to us daily the threat of war, which spells 'Gloom and Doom'. What is this concept of peace? And where does it come from? We speak of peace as an aftermath of war. Who has not heard of the many peace treaties? The laying down of arms as a step towards peace; of the many peace demonstrations everywhere as a struggle to restore peace and move towards a better world. How often have we heard of women in the home or job place saying: 'for the sake of peace I put up with it'. What is the definition of peace? When I looked up Webster's Dictionary, I found it to mean in the noun form: a state of tranquility; a state of security or order within a community provided by law or custom; freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotion; harmony in personal relations; a state or period of mutual concord between governments; pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war or in a state of enmity. In the verb form, peace means to be, become, keep silent or quiet, used interjectionally. Where does peace come from? By and large the belief is that it is given to one by an outside force. According to the Catholic Church it is a grace given by God and can be had by prayer and sacrifice. Or by governments or nations who bring it about with negotiations and signing of treaties. Religious teachers and sages of yore

say that peace comes from within with meditation and by inculcating certain principles and modes of behaviour. All this is true in part and no one belief is fully right or fully wrong. Peace means different things to different people.

I grew up in India, a land abounding in tradition and religious culture, where peace is extolled as a state that one arrives at, by negating conflict, being selfless, not to give way to anger, to 'live and let live'. Indian people, on the whole are a very tolerant people, their religion stresses giving up of 'oneself' as a virtue, which is practiced widely and in women particularly this virtue is desired and expected. This virtue enjoins that state of harmony which is good for oneself and for the family extending to the general welfare of the community; it means to endure, to relinquish one's 'self' for the larger well being. All this is well and good but how durable is such peace? And at what cost to one's self?

Jalka's concept of peace is different and has a different meaning altogether. She works in the field of 'Konfliktkultur'. According to her: Peace is not a tranquil serene state but a state one has to actively engage oneself in. The tools for this exercise are listening, thinking, careful consideration, patience and alertness. She believes that life is beset with conflict and admits to the existence of conflict and tension all around us in daily living. She exhorts us not to sweep this aroused tension caused by conflict under the rug or to disqualify it as 'bad' or 'evil' but to accept it as part of reality and calls us to action in dealing with it. Peace lies in finding a workable situation for the two parties confronted with the problem responsible for the conflict. Listening, understanding and considering the problem from the other person's point of view gives a whole new perspective, and 'something new' is born which can be called peace.

This new thing or state born is exciting and arrives surprisingly before aggression sets in and helps forestall violence. With this discovery aggression has been put aside and there is joy in the coming together and finding a solution. To get the young involved and engaged in this habit of mind would bring about a healthy society. This is in keeping with the values, Quakers hold so dear to their hearts. It is to 'speak to that of God in every man' which indeed is the essence of Quakerism. It is a spiritual quest! She is carrying

this project to schools to enable the young to think and be active in building a new and better world; not to be engaged in the success of winning but to learn to cooperate and develop a new situation; which will be new and wonderful.

## Preparing for Peace

Inspired by a centenary lecture by the late Nobel Laureate, Joseph Rotblat, delivered to Westmorland General Meeting in North West England where seventeenth century Quakerism first emerged, a small group of Friends decided to raise a concern in favour of analysing whether as the 21st century dawned our global testimony against war could be interpreted afresh. "Preparing for Peace" was the result.

Across five years we asked 25 world experts to speak at public meetings in our area, as to the efficacy of war as a tool of modern diplomacy. We knew that many top Generals, as well as military academics were noting that modern war is "futile", almost "ungovernable", "unlikely" to secure its declared objects, having "limited utility", almost "impossible to manage" so as to secure anything approaching a sustainable result, and so on.

We posed five questions:

Can war be managed and controlled sustainably?

Can war secure its declared objects with confidence?

What are the economic, human and environmental costs of war?

Why are human beings willing to kill each other in huge numbers?

What policies ought we to pursue in the light of the answers?

All kinds of facts emerged – like civilians being ten times more at risk than soldiers in modern war; that since 1945 84% of war casualties have been civilian; that we are killing each other at the rate of half a million humans per annum, yet, as Margaret Mead had said in 1940, "war is only an invention – like writing or marriage or mathematics"; that the UN Seville (Spain) statement of 1986 explained that there is nothing inevitable in the human, genetically or in our brains, in favour of war.

Our guest speakers included only two pacifists, but all gave welcome grist to our mill. They included the

Come join in this spiritual quest and stretch your imagination - 'Imagine Peace' and allow ourselves to move closer to a peaceable world.

*Hamsa Eichler, Austria Quarterly Meeting*

Swiss CEO of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the first High Court Judge of the International Court of Justice who had chaired South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Tribunal, the UK Ambassador to the U.N. Security Council, eleven eminent academics half of whom were from other countries, the General in charge of all ordinances in World War Two, and a Muslim Imam.

We placed each lecture on the web site [www.preparingforpeace.org](http://www.preparingforpeace.org), published the book "Preparing for Peace – by Asking the Experts" and designed a teachers' study manual, "The Anatomy of War", for use in citizenship, history or religious studies

Since presenting our findings to Britain Yearly Meeting last August we have held seminars in Brussels for +100 Members of the European Parliament, in London for 50 British members of parliament, and in various schools, Quaker and public meetings. We have sent our literature to a small number of African counties, to North America and the Caribbean, to Austral-Asia, to parts of Europe and Russia. We are exploring the possibility of a seminar for young people drawn from Israel, Palestine and Jordan. Friends in Scotland, Wales, and Ireland are trying to secure access to their legislatures. We hope Friends around the world will respond to this article as may seem appropriate. The Rowntree Trust and the Southern Trust under-wrote our concern as did + 100 British PM's. One of us has designed a computerised presentation, and a small but enthusiastic "Campaign" group has evolved.

"Preparing for Peace" available at £6.99 per copy including postage (from PFP, 4, Beetham House, Milnthorpe, Cumbria. LA7 7AP. U.K.); "Anatomy of War" study manual cost £5 each or bulk orders of 5 or more at £2.50 each, from 1, Barnacre View, High St. Garstang PR3 1EB. U.K.).

*Brian W. Walker, Westmorland General Meeting*

## Three-Country Border Meeting

Initiated three years ago by our Swiss Friend Heidi Blocher these meetings at the French/German/Swiss border are becoming a tradition. One reason for this tradition becoming so popular is the place where the French and German and Swiss Friends meet.

If you are looking for a powerful place...this is it. It is high up in the Black Forest Mountains, overlooking a wide range of hilltops. From there one can look down into a deep green valley and then across the wide Rhine river valley to the Vosges mountains of France. There, in an ancient place of pilgrimage called Maria Lindenberg, fourteen Friends came together for a weekend of encounter. We were also very lucky with the weather: This last weekend in October felt like a late summer weekend, with its sunshine and mild temperatures encouraging morning and afternoon walks and group meetings outside in the garden.

The topic was the oldest prayer of Christianity, "Our Father." Very soon it turned out that everyone had his/her own personal story about this prayer, and we all had our problems with it. One example of these problems was the sentence "and lead us not into temptation." - Why should God lead us into temptation?

Various approaches were tried out to help people to come to terms with this prayer. One solution was to try to reword the prayer, using our present language, for our needs. Johannes Bircher of Switzerland wrote three versions, one of them beginning with the words:

"Thou Maker of the universe and Creator of us..., be the most important (thing) within us, and fill our inner life with Thy strength. May the plan of Thy creation pervade us and all of Thy creatures so that it may be realized more and more. Kindle our thankfulness for the abundance of life that Thou givest us, for our health and zest, and for the material goods that Thou entrustest to us, and forgive us if we do not always and in all our activities seek above all Thee, as we meet without grudge those people who have done us harm..."

Another approach was to try and look at the prayer's origin. What did Jesus really mean when he taught this prayer to his disciples? It is generally accepted that Jesus spoke Aramaic. At Jesus's lifetime Aramaic was widely spoken and understood in what we today call the Near and Middle East. The American scholar

of the Aramaic language, Neil Douglas-Klotz, looked at all the shades of meaning that the words of "Our Father" may have in the Aramaic language and came up with a broad English translation based on Aramaic. And indeed some passages were richer and made more sense than the common translation which is based on Greek and Latin.

So here is the so-called "Aramaic Our Father":

*"O Birther of the Cosmos, focus your light within us  
- make it useful*

*Create your reign of unity now*

*Your own desire then acts with ours,*

*As in all light,*

*So in all forms.*

*Grant us what we need each day in bread and insight:*

*Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,*

*As we release the strands we hold of other's guilt.*

*Don't let surface things delude us,*

*But free us from what holds us back.*

*From you is born all ruling will,*

*The power and the life to do,*

*The song that beautifies all,*

*From age to age it renews.*

*I affirm this with my whole being."*

As there happen to be some Aramaic refugees living in this area of Germany we were even fortunate to listen to "Our Father" in Aramaic as it is spoken today.

Another way of dealing with "Our Father" was to write it on cardboard, widely spaced, and then to invite the participants to add their own individual versions to each line. These suggestions were then combined to form a flexible booklet of sections of this prayer enabling people to create their own versions of "Our Father".

Perhaps this playful approach may lead some of us to take a fresh look at this ancient prayer or parts of it and, if it had lain dormant, to take it up again.

*Eckard Teichert, Freiburg, Germany*

## News in Brief from Friends and Meetings around Europe and the Middle East

### Austria/Hungary

Five Hungarian Friends joined the small Austrian Worship Group on Saturday December 3rd for the week-end to celebrate Advent. This is an annual event we extend to our neighbours. We worshipped together on December 4th and the messages of contentment and expectant waiting and wakefulness were appropriate to the Advent season. It was pointed out that both Advent and the Quaker silence shared the expectant waiting of the Spirit and wakefulness to the world around us. We enjoyed roasted chestnuts and played games reflecting our likes in the animal world and values we hold dear. While some wandered off to be introduced to the historical sights of Vienna (managing to stay away from the commercial offerings); others helped to get ready to set up a pot luck lunch and share news of one another and enjoy the blessings of food and the brief appearance of the sun!

*Hamsa Eichler*

### Norway

The Norwegian Yearly Meeting continues to enjoy a stable membership and is thankful for an economic situation that squeaks by in the black. Also the quarterly Tidsskriftet Kvekeren continues to be published regularly.

Visits to our Internet pages are continuously increasing. This is also the case during the summer when the schools are not in session, suggesting that those accessing our pages are not only school children or students with papers due.

As a follow-up to the conference on universalism in 2004 we had a Woodbrooke on the Road weekend on Christ in the Quaker Faith, with Tim Peat, autumn 2005.

Our great joy is the many young Friends; a large children's group and an active youth group. Each autumn we hold a weekend gathering for all ages in the mountains drawing from 20-40 participants. Significant numbers of children and youths also attend

the yearly meeting and are an integrated part of the four days of activities.

*Judy Rangnes*

### France

Our Friend Jeanne Henriette Louis has recently published a new book on Quakers in French. It gives a very readable overview not only of the history but also of the current state of the Religious Society of Friends around the world. There is a copy in the EMES office free for the first volunteer to write a review for the next issue of Among Friends

Les Quakers, Collection «Fils d'Abraham»2005, Belgique:Brepols, ISBN 2-503-52039-1

This year the Quakers have booked a stand at the "Salon des initiatives pour la paix" in Paris at La Villette, June 2-4 2006, which will include a French section and an International section. For the International part we have a selection of Quakers representing Quaker work in Europe. We are delighted to accept any information about your activities that can be put on

the stand and you are also very welcome to come and assist in sharing the Quaker message of peace. We hope to do a number of walkabouts using mime and actions to illustrate this subject.

*Joy Liengaard*

### Belgium and Luxembourg Monthly Meeting

Brussels Meeting has great pleasure in announcing the wedding of our friends Jean Vliegen and Anneke Van Bostraeten, both Attenders at this Meeting. In addition to the civil ceremony required by law, Jean & Anneke are having a Quaker wedding as well, in Aalst, Belgium, on Saturday 25 February. Many Friends from Belgium, Britain and elsewhere will be attending to



wish them joy. As well as enjoying this happy event, Brussels Meeting is also experiencing the continuing pleasure of a revived Children's Meeting. Anne Stone leads the small group of enthusiastic little girls, with the help of Randy Rzewnicki, on the first Sunday of the month.

*Kate Macdonald*

## Greece

Athens Christian Friends Meeting (Quakers) updated contact information:

Meeting for Worship every First Day at 5:00 PM.

Contact Information:

Athens Christian Friends Meeting  
C/o Themistoklis J.  
Papaioannou  
papathem@gmail.com  
P.O. Box 21121,  
Athens 11410, Greece.

Web Site in Greek: <http://acfmt.bravehost.com/>

Web Site in English: <http://www.ohioyearlymeeting.org/athens3.htm>

## Italy

The real good news of the past year is that now there is again a Meeting for Worship in Rome. The group in Rome meets twice a month, first and third Sunday, at the home of Ulisse and Antonella Di Corpo. A good number of people attend the meetings. In Bologna we have moved to new premises (Scuola di pace, via Lombardia, 36, quartiere Savena, 2nd and 4th Sunday). In addition to Bologna and Rome, we have had meetings with Friends in Tuscany, including a weekend retreat last September. A "national" gathering is planned (to be held on 12th March '06) and we hope many isolated Friends within Italy will also attend. As in the past, we will have our annual retreat at Guscella near Bologna in June. "Lettera quacchera" will resume publication shortly, thanks to efforts of two members Dino and Pier Cesare. A number of documents about Friends in Italy (in Italian) can be downloaded from our website: [www.quaker.org/Italia](http://www.quaker.org/Italia)

*Mauro Bonaiuti, Bologna*

## Quakers in Germany

With no more than 300 members living in the whole of Germany and Austria, Friends (or Quakers, as we are known here) don't often make headline news. The word "Quaker" doesn't usually refer to today's German Friends but to the feeding and relief programmes that saved the lives of so many children in the first half of the last century. Cologne Friends were therefore surprised to read in their local paper that a notorious Quaker has been found living in the newly-opened Eifel National Park. Until this year this area was closed to the public because it was being used by the Belgian army for military training. So is this Quaker a lost peace protester? No, it is the Middle Spotted

Woodpecker, a woodpecker that doesn't often drum but whose cries of "Quaaae-quaaae-quaaae" echo through the woods in springtime.

Even more surprising was to find that the name "Quaker" is being used for a new type of disposable baby nappy, a high-quality product without added perfumes, noted for its comfort and reliability.

But from time to time the real Quakers do get a look-in. The Pyrmonter Nachrichten published a very sympathetic account and photo of our Yearly Meeting in November. The award of the Bremen Peace Prize to Roswitha Jarman was accompanied by a radio interview in German with the English Quaker Roswitha describing her experiences in the Caucasus. Another radio broadcast celebrated the 315th anniversary of the death of George Fox, describing the birth of Quakerism and then interviewing Hanna Jordan who explained why she is a Friend today. The programme spoke approvingly of the fact that German Yearly Meeting had, after September 11th, appealed to the government to try to reduce the spiral of violence.

This is a small sample of the type of publicity we get. After such publicity there are often enquirers who try to find out whether there is a Friends Meeting in their area. Since few meetings have their own premises, the search isn't always easy. The Middle-Spotted-Woodpecker-Quaker is heard but rarely seen because



it stays in high tree-tops. The question of how to make ourselves more visible is one that should be, and is, keeping us occupied.

*Janet Kreysa*

## Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre

Woodbrooke has recently welcomed Natalie Fedorchenko from Russia, who is an Eva Koch Scholar. Natalie is a teacher living in Electrostal, near Moscow, where she runs a private school. Her research is focused on Quaker Education and how this can work in the Russian context. Having spent a month at Woodbrooke, Natalie will return in early summer to complete the scholarship.

## Events and opportunities

### 22nd FWCC Triennial

11-19 August 2007 Dublin, Ireland

Plans are well underway for the 22<sup>nd</sup> FWCC Triennial, to be held in Dublin, Ireland from 11-19 August 2007. The invitations to Yearly Meetings for representatives were sent in April 2005, and we have now received the majority of names; we wait for the remainder from those YMs which are scheduled for early 2006. The venue is Kings Hospital School, a comfortable, compact and welcoming place, close to Dublin Airport.

The theme is *Finding the Prophetic Voice for Our Time*, with the text: 'It is love, then, that you should strive for. Set your hearts on spiritual gifts, especially the gift of proclaiming God's message.' (I Corinthians ch 14, v.1). A number of people have been invited to contribute short pieces towards the Study Booklet, exploring their personal approach to the theme. The next meeting of the International Planning Committee 19-21 May 2006 will continue to plan and develop the programme, addressing the theme and including the next phase of strategic discussion about the work of FWCC.

We are very aware of the issues around travel and visas encountered during the 21<sup>st</sup> Triennial Conference and the World Gathering of Young Friends, and work is

## Young Friends in distant places

Europe and Middle East Young Friends did not send me any text for Among Friends this time so I thought I would chase some, sent off an email to Jason Schweiger the named contact person (as per their web-site) and within minutes had a response from northwest Bangladesh. Jason wrote I am visiting Bangladesh for a little over 3 months. I have been out here for 10 days and will be returning to the UK in early May. I'm visiting Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service. Maybe by the next issue of Among Friends I shall have discovered who the current EMEYF contact person is!



Friends World  
Committee for  
Consultation

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

underway in both Ireland and the UK to make the processes as smooth as possible. The key mailing, with registration forms and essential information for participants, will be sent by the end of March 2006. All of the details will also be on the FWCC website, and we are encouraging participants to register and pay online (via PayPal).

The fee (decided by IPC) is £675.

Invitations to apply for observer places will be publicised by the end of April 2006. There will be up to 20 places for allocation to Friends from Europe and the Middle East. Anyone may apply, although not all will gain a place. Serving the Triennial in some capacity forms the baseline for the criteria for selection.

Pre and post conference events in both Ireland and the UK are being planned:

Events before the Triennial:

- 6-10 Aug 2007 Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland, Moyallon Centre, Northern Ireland
- 21-28 July 2007: Summer Gathering, Stirling
- 6-10 Aug 2007 Faith and Order, Woodbrooke, sponsored by BYM CCIR

Events after the Triennial:

- 20 -26 Aug 2007, Irish Quaker History with time to relax, Newtown School, Waterford.
- 1652 country (under discussion)

The potential for homestays in the UK is also being investigated.

*The Local Organising Committee in Dublin is convened by Jonathan Pim (jono@indigo.ie). Lee Taylor (leet@fwcc.quaker.org) is working with Nancy Irving as the Coordinator for the Triennial.*

## Europe and Middle East Young Friends Spring Gathering 2006: Cross-Cultural Spirituality

Dates: April 13 – 18

Location: Nr Barcelona, Spain

Come and explore cross-cultural spirituality in Spain next Easter from 13 to 18 April. At the World Gathering of Young Friends, we were exposed to different interpretations and ways of living out the Quaker tradition.

Spring Gathering 2006 will build on the experiences and dialogue shared at the World Gathering by exploring how a variety of sources inform our spirituality- both from different traditions within the Quaker community and including those from other cultures.

In today's globalized world, religious concepts travel and implant themselves in entirely different cultural contexts. How do these concepts challenge and enrich us? Have they caused us to perhaps expand our own spiritual lives and imagination?

The 2006 Spring Gathering will be a unique opportunity to rethink the boundaries of our spirituality in the beautiful and sunny setting of Spain.

Contact Anneke Spreij: a.spreij@demon.cx

## Middle East Yearly Meeting Leading the Middle East to a Lasting Peace

7 – 10 September 2006.

Friends in the Middle East are planning the first Yearly Meeting for several years and hoping for good attendance not only from the scattered Friends from across that Region but also from Quaker visitors with a particular interest in the Middle East.

Guest speakers are: David Atwood of the Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva, and Dr Tarek Mitri, H.E. Lebanese Minister of Cultural Affairs.

Interested Friends are invited to contact Sabah Baz, Yearly Meeting Clerk. Places will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

bazfamily@hotmail.com

## Border Meeting Meeting our Neighbours: Quaker and Mennonite Views on the Peace Testimony

Every year on the third weekend in September there is a border meeting between the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Luxemburg and France (and this year Switzerland is also being invited). This year it is being organized in Strasbourg by France YM. It was decided to go beyond not only our geographic borders but our theological borders also and investigate our concern with regard to the Peace Testimony which we share with the Mennonites. It is also a time to meet with Friends from other countries, to share our concerns and to worship together. It will be from 15 to 17 September in the centre of Strasbourg, near the train station. Please contact me if you want additional information.

Aller à la rencontre de son Prochain: Témoignage de paix des Quakers et des Mennonites

Chaque année lors du troisième week-end de septembre il y a une rencontre frontalière avec les Pays Bas, l'Allemagne, la Belgique, le Luxembourg et la France (et cette année la Suisse est aussi invitée). Cette année elle se tiendra à Strasbourg, organisée par l'Assemblée de France. On a décidé de traverser non pas seulement nos frontières géographiques mais aussi nos frontières théologiques. Nous allons approfondir notre "concern" exprimé dans le témoignage de paix, que nous partageons avec les Mennonites. Ce sera aussi un temps de rencontre avec les A/ami(e)s d'autres pays, pour partager nos préoccupations et notre vie spirituelle. Ce sera du 15 au 17 septembre au centre de Strasbourg, près de la gare. Veuillez me contacter si vous voulez plus de renseignements

Nancy Krieger, 12 rue St. Martin, F-68440 Habsheim, 0033 389 54 10 72, nancy.krieger@wanadoo.fr

## Ferguson Quaker Fellowship 2006-7: Could this be for you?

Woodbrooke is now searching for the next Ferguson Quaker Fellow. You will have substantial experience in an area of work of interest to Friends. You will use the time of the fellowship to reflect, research, draw out fresh insights and share them with a wider audience. You will help to enrich Quaker understanding of spiritual aspects of global, social, moral or political issues and to spread Quaker insights more widely.

You will be highly motivated, able to organise your own work and a good communicator. You need not come from an academic background – we are interested in practical outworkings of Quaker faith. Your particular interests will determine the shape and outcome of the Fellowship - subject to negotiation, you may give seminars, run workshops, or maybe write for publication.

Woodbrooke offers an ideal environment, with support from knowledgeable Quaker staff and access to a wide range of resources.

Appointments will be made for September 2006 or January 2007 onwards, and will normally last 9 -12 months. Application forms must be returned by 19 May 2006

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, 1046 Bristol Road, Birmingham, B29 6LJ, UK

Tel: +44 (0)121 472 5171 Fax: +44 (0)121 472 5173 email:enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk

web: www.woodbrooke.org.uk

### Quakers Worldwide: similar testimonies, different witness

A conference to look at world Quakerism is to be held at Woodbrooke in September. Organised by the Quaker World Relations Committee of Britain Yearly Meeting, the gathering aims to illustrate Quaker witness throughout the world. There will be an opportunity to participate in programmed meetings from Kenya and the USA, and attend workshops on Quaker witness in China, Palestine, Latin America and Europe. There will be time for reflection and discussion at what promises to be a stimulating and interesting weekend. Facilitators will include Nancy Irving, John Punshon, Kenneth Co and Anna Seifert (other Friends to be confirmed)

The conference runs from Friday 8 September until Sunday 10 September and costs £145. Support is available from the Catchpool Bursary for Friends from Continental Europe. Further details and booking forms from: Woodbrooke



**STOP PRESS – ACT NOW – NOTE DEADLINE OF 17 MARCH**

Places still available (with apologies to readers in Britain who will receive this after the dead-line but who should get plenty of information about QCEA and QUNO events by other means)

## Fortress Europe or Europe for all?



**QCEA Study Tour  
(22-30 April 2006)  
Brussels & Luxembourg**

**Interested in Europe  
& the EU?**

**Want to learn more?**

The QCEA Study Tour provides the perfect opportunity to learn, discuss and reflect on the future of Europe and what it means to you.

Application forms available from  
[www.quaker.org/qcea/](http://www.quaker.org/qcea/)  
or contact:  
QCEA  
Square Ambiorix 50,  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel: +32 2 234 30 61  
[studytours@qcea.org](mailto:studytours@qcea.org)

**Deadline for applications:  
17 March 2006**

## Learn about the UN at the UN

Quaker United Nations  
Summer School  
9-21 JULY 2006, GENEVA

Do you have an active interest in international affairs?

Would you like to study the UN at first hand?

Do you want to meet people from all over the world?

Are you aged 20-26?

Yes?...

Then write today for an application pack to:

Helen Bradford (QUNSS), Friends House,  
Euston Rd, London, NW1 2BJ, UK.  
Email: [helenb@quaker.org.uk](mailto:helenb@quaker.org.uk)

**Deadline for applications Friday 17th March 2006**

## Christianity, does it have a founder? - Felix van der Wissel

**Book Review:** Felix van der Wissel (1892-1962), father of Dutch Friend Anton van der Wissel, was a pastor in three Mennonite communities. He graduated in the ministry in 1916, but refused affirmation as pastor, shamed by the tolerant attitude of the Churches, including the Mennonite Community, in relation to the Great War and its horror.

During the 1940s and 50s he worked steadily and in isolation on the manuscript which is before us now and which was only discovered by Anton after his father's death in 1962. Anton is responsible for the translation from the original Dutch into English as well as for the publication of the brochure.

The manuscript opens with the research of the influence of the Babylonian Diaspora on Jewish life and thought. Hillel, the well-known rabbi, returned from Babylon, where also the later very important Babylonian Talmud developed. For this study, the Hellenic Diaspora is more important than the Babylonian exile. Large Jewish communities lived in Alexandria, on Cyprus, on the Ionic Islands, in Asia Minor, Greece, Italy and North Africa. In contrast to Judaism in Palestine, which closed itself to foreign influence, The Judaism of the Diaspora was strongly influenced by the surrounding paganism. The Jewish community carried many spiritual values, like their ancestral myths and legends, their concept of God, legislation with high moral norms and values. All this, including their Wisdom literature, was thrown into the melting pot of syncretism and transformed by it. This contact of Judaism with Hellenism is considered a turning point in Jewish thinking.

The Logos replaces the godhead in its human interventions. According to Philo it is the Logos (or Wisdom) in the form of a pillar of fire which guides the Jews through the desert.

Of particular interest is the research into the transition of the mythical messiah figure to the pseudo-historic messiah figure. The Christian image of the Messiah as love that bears all things stems from the gospels. However, four or five concepts of Christ have been identified in the New Testament. A further development is seen by the Christian community as "the body of Christ", God who descends and comes to live in the heart and soul of the human being. Purity of life and soul becomes very important not only for the individual, but also the Church

becomes the body of Christ. He lives in it as the Spirit. The same is true for the concept of the resurrection: the Lord rises from the death with his faithful.

For a long time the emerging Christian thinking was just one of the ways of thought within Judaism. The figure of Judas, the traitor, was introduced as the relationship between the rabbinate, the scribes and pharisees, and the young Christian community became more difficult. A large number of anti-Jewish statements, parables and stories originate in that period.

Many young Christians were converts from Greek paganism. They introduced very many elements of the ancient mystery cults into the new faith. The concept of "redemption" becomes central and changes the relationship with God. Whereas before "salvation" referred to the whole group, the need for individual salvation was fast getting stronger. Over time the figure of Christ became clothed with the piety and the Orphelian characteristics of the mystery cults and so became the Ideal Christ onto which all desires, longings and needs of the community could be projected. The fulfilment of all longing is in being united with the godhead, who, as one accepted, became visible in Christ. In the ecstasy of this unification the believer temporarily loses his ego-consciousness. This results in a pure state of mystical unity. Purity is only made visible in the relationship between the living God and the energetic human being. The end phase of religious development is characterised by religious symbols becoming totally superfluous.

The last chapter describes the birth of the Church after the rejection of the Christians by the Jewish Synagogue.

Published in English the brochure remains easily accessible. It testifies to great erudition and a real talent for reproducing the results of complicated research in a transparent and brief way.

I can highly recommend it to anybody who remains involved with thinking about the origins of Christianity.

"Christianity: does it have a founder?" by Felix van der Wissel is available from Anton van der Wissel in Amsterdam, email [avanderwissel@zonnet.nl](mailto:avanderwissel@zonnet.nl) and from the publishers William Sessions Limited, York, England.

*Anita Wuyts*

## Diary Dates 2006

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

**13 - 18 April EMEYF Spring Gathering**, Barcelona, Spain. Contact Anneke Spreij, a.spreij@demon.cx

**13 - 16 April EMES Annual Meeting**, Scottish Churches House, Dunblane, Scotland. Contact Bronwyn Harwood, emes@fwcc.quaker.org

**20 - 23 April Ireland Yearly Meeting**, Dublin. Contact Rosemary Castagner, Quaker House Dublin, Stocking Lane, Dublin 16. office@quakers-in-ireland.ie

**28 April – 1 May Woodbrooke on the Road in Liepaja, Latvia.** “Coming Home to Friends.” Further information - Inese Ansule: nese172001@yahoo.com

**28 April – 1 May Central European Quaker Gathering**, Český Šternberk, Czech Republic, on the theme “Simplicity”. Contact Pavel Marusinec, [pavel.marusinec@czk.cz](mailto:pavel.marusinec@czk.cz), for registration forms to be returned by 15 March.

**12 - 14 May Netherlands Yearly Meeting**, Woodbrookers Huis, Barchem. Contact Hadewijch Touwen, secretariaat@quaker.dds.nl

**26 - 29 May Britain Yearly Meeting**, Friends House, London. Contact Michael Hutchinson, michaelh@quaker.org.uk

**2 – 4 June France International Salon for Peace Initiatives, Paris.** French Friends are coordinating international Quaker involvement on behalf of FWCC. Contact: Jeanne Henriette LOUIS,

[jeannehenriette@ifrance.com](mailto:jeannehenriette@ifrance.com) or Joy Liengard

**2 – 5 June Switzerland Yearly Meeting, Aeschi.**

**6 – 8 June France Eurosatory.** For further information about the planned Quaker presence at the International Arms Fair contact

**29 June - 2 July Nordic Yearly Meeting**, (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden Yearly Meetings) Nordiska Folkhögskolan, Kungälv near Gothenburg, Sweden. See [http://www.kveker.org/index\\_trossamfunn\\_eng.htm](http://www.kveker.org/index_trossamfunn_eng.htm) for more details

**13 July – 11 August Quaker Youth Pilgrimage** in Ohio and Indiana, USA for young people aged 16 to 18.

**29 August – 1 September France Yearly Meeting.**

**7 - 10 September Middle East Quaker Yearly Meeting**, Brummana High School, Brummana, Lebanon. Contact Sabah Baz, bazfamily@hotmail.com

**15 - 17 September Grenztreffen Deutschland, Belgien, Nederland, Luxemburg und Frankreich**, Strasbourg, Deutschland. See <http://www.quaeker.org/termine/index.php> for more details

**12 - 15 October German Yearly Meeting**, Schloss Scheny, Lichtenfels, Bavaria

**17 - 19 November EMEYF Annual Meeting**, Bad Pyrmont, Germany. Contact [emeyf@qcea.org](mailto:emeyf@qcea.org)

**17 - 19 November EMES Peace and Service Consultation**, Brussels. Contact Bronwyn Harwood, [emes@fwcc.quaker.org](mailto:emes@fwcc.quaker.org)

Among Friends is the newsletter of Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation.

Also available at: <http://www.fwccemes.org>

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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