



May
2014

Scottish Friend



Some of the Earl's Burn Wind Turbines. Fintry village community owns one and uses the profit for greening the village's energy SP

❖ Contents ❖

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Quaker Outreach in Perth | Adwoa Bittle - 3 |
| Near-death Experience | Neil Crabtree - 4 |
| James Nayler | Margaret Roy - 5 |
| New Medical Director at The Retreat | Constance Tonge - 9 |
| Report from Meeting for Sufferings | Jane Pearn - 11 |
| Statement on Just Peace | |
| from World Council of Churches Assembly in Busan | - 15 |
| Statement from Sufferings on Government cuts | - 24 |
| A plea from an Attender | Pamela Affleck - 25 |
| Going to Jail | Bill Agnew - 30 |
| Report of March General Meeting in Glasgow | Nigel Dower - 34 |
| Invitation to June General Meeting | Martin Burnell - 36 |

Please send material for next Scottish Friend by 8 August to Margaret Peacock, 16 Drumlin Drive, Milngavie, G62 6LN, or nmjpeacock@yahoo.co.uk.

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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the writers and not necessarily the opinions of the Society of Friends in Scotland, Britain or elsewhere.

Quaker Outreach in Perth

Adwoa Bittle

Is there anybody out there that wishes they had put a stitch in the Quaker Tapestry, now residing in Kendal? (Or not around when it was created!) Here's your chance!

Perth Meeting is organising an outreach event in the first two weeks of September 2014. We will be displaying 12 panel photographs from the Quaker Tapestry along with the Scottish panel, which is not part of the Quaker Tapestry. It used to be displayed in Scottish Churches House in Dunblane but is now held in Central Edinburgh Meeting House.

To top it all we have designed a new panel for Perth. It is a beautiful tribute to Perth, depicting iconic Perth scenes and activities. It is being stitched using the Quaker stitch and the other stitches used for the Quaker Tapestry. Would you like your handiwork to be part of this panel?

We would like to invite Quakers in Scotland to come and either visit the exhibition in September or come for a stitching time in the months prior to the exhibition.

Please phone Adwoa Bittle 01738 583 108 or email

adwoabittle@hotmail.co.uk to plan a visit.

The exhibition will be held at AK Bell Library 2nd to 13th September during normal opening times. (Closed Mondays).

We will endeavour to have stewards present but if nobody is available there will be paper guides to inform you of the history of the Tapestry and about each of the displayed panels. The Perth panel will be at the library for stitching at specific times. Again please contact Adwoa nearer the time for up to date information. There is also a nice café at the Library.

We do hope you can come along.

<4>

THE NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE

Neil Crabtree - Inverness Meeting

Friends who follow developments around the near-death experience (NDE) will possibly be aware that these are interesting times in this field. At Southampton hospital Dr Sam Parnia is running the Horizon project which specifically researches NDE's, and at Morriston and Singleton hospitals Dr Penny Sartori has completed a PhD on her observations of patients who have nearly died. Both have written groundbreaking books on this and describe how the NDE can occur when patients are unconscious and close to death and where they report a set of components; in particular, moving along a tunnel, meeting dead loved ones and experiencing a loving light.

Despite nearly all research into the NDE taking place in the secular field of medicine, it is surprising how much religious terminology is used, especially around the loving light.

This is often referred to by people who experience it as being God, which should be of no surprise to Friends with their belief that there is that of God in everyone.

It is my opinion that Friends need to seriously monitor developments in this field as it is already being misused by extremist groups. In America for example, some rightwing Christian fundamentalists are distorting findings to support their belief in an angry, white, male God. One train of thought being peddled is that everyone encounters a "hellish" experience which, while a small minority of people do, is patently untrue.

Imagine if, in these dangerous times, the idea of a loving God grasped the public imagination. On the other hand imagine it was successfully incorporated into the propaganda of reactionary and warlike forces — it could take centuries before an opportunity like this presents itself again.

JAMES NAYLER - More than a scandal.

Margaret Roy - Lanark meeting

This was the title of a seminar at Woodbrooke in January, led by Betty Hagglund and Stuart Masters.

Nayler was a contemporary of George Fox and indeed, although he was only associated with Friends for the last eight years of his life, he lent his skills as quartermaster in Cromwell's New Model Army, to help organise early Friends. Francis Higginson stated that while Fox was the "ringleader of the sect", Nayler was its "principal spokesman". He wrote over 30% of all the early tracts. He worked with Fox in the NW of England, but also in London Quakers formed an amazingly large proportion of the population.

Stuart Masters writes: It has been said that Nayler's popularity in London reflected his charismatic but relatively gentle style of discourse. Fox was not so successful in the capital and his approach was said to be more contentious and difficult. Early Friends were much into self-censor whereas Nayler unapologetically preached a theology of human perfectibility based on direct union with God. Though not perfect, early Quakers saw themselves as working on it, with the help of Christ working within. This did not endear them to other Christians who favoured salvation through Grace alone.

On 23rd and 24th October 1656, Nayler rode into Bristol, re-enacting Jesus' ride on an ass into Jerusalem. This riled the authorities so much that he was taken to London to be tried (extraordinarily) by Parliament for blasphemy. His brow was branded with a B, his tongue was bored through, he was lashed 360x in London and then in Bristol where he was than imprisoned. Believing his action brought shame on the new movement, he was

<6>

shunned by Friends. When his old Friend Fox eventually visited him, he knelt at Fox's feet. At this distance in time, it is difficult for us to understand Nayler's action in so copying Jesus. In those days Friends were very conversant with the Bible, often acting out scenes - as in mystery plays and Oberammergau one might suppose. Whatever, Nayler paid dearly for the action. Sadly on his release he returned to his flock in London then set off for home, his farm near Wakefield. On the way he was 'mugged' and died of his injuries.

His writings have inspired Friends down the years. His 'last words' especially were often read during ministry and still appear in Christian Faith and Practice: "there is a spirit that I know that delights to do not evil nor to avenge any wrong . . ." One of the values of going on courses at Woodbrooke, is the access the leaders enable into the writings, and especially their context. Nayler was very articulate in promoting and explaining the Quaker position to the outside world. During the seminar we looked particularly at sections of A Discovery of the First Wisdom from Beneath and the Second Wisdom from Above, Love to the Lost, Milk for Babes and Meat for Strong Men and his Psalm.

The theology in these underpins much understanding of Early Friends - for example :

a) God as creator and orderer of the creation, the light and life of every creature and the source of perfect love. There is no life in darkness, only destruction - division, conflict and confusion;

b) the Status of sin and the possibility of perfection - though created in the image of God we have separated and so are bond in darkness to evil and the spirit of the world, leading to pride,

greed, war, injustice, oppression and exploitation of creation. So there was need to undergo a period of growth sustained by an on-going hearing and obeying relationship to Christ/God. And this was salvation to Friends;

c) so Justificatiion through Christ working within us to bring us into harmony with God;

d) a New Covenant - in which Christ has worked to place the Law in human hearts;

e) No Outward sacrifices - because there was only one baptism by the spirit which raised up to a new life in which people fed on the spiritual body and blood of Christ in an on-going process of inward transformation and renewal;

f) spirituality - amongst themselves early Friends employed a contemplative process of self-emptying that was reached through the rigorous practice of the spiritual disciplines. Hence when I was first associated with Friends Christian Faith and Practice was called the Book of Discipline. Nayler was also influenced by Anabaptist spirituality which gave eminence to following the suffering of Christ. This included a willingness to embrace humiliation and martyrdom. In Nayler's final words a form of perfection can be observed in which suffering led to a deep compassionate awareness;

g) the Church - the Seekers at this time, including Friends, were looking for a true authority which Friends believed to be Christ - hence the waiting in silence for the spirit moving to speak God's word. They saw themselves as poor and despised by the world so displayed a mystical quality of detachment and holy indifference to the material world. Yet, the second birth called them to speak

<8>

plainly and truthfully condemning all evil. This was an act of love;

h) a Peace Church - See the Lamb's War.

"The intention of your mind is to have truth restrained, which takes away the occasions of all wars and brings into love and true heartedness, and there is nothing discontent with us but that which doth not abide in truth." Nayler, 1653;

i) the Last Things - Early Quakers believed that speculation about an outward second coming of Christ was pointless because Christ had already returned in spirit and could dwell in his people now. This produced an eschatology that was both realised and yet to be fully realised.

My personal favourite was Nayler's attitude to the creation as God-given and not a resource to be exploited, which ties in very much with our modern views of sustainability. Although his dying words are very poignant, many today would find his premise very difficult that suffering is necessary to truly find the Spirit.

NOTE: I have grossly over-summarised and borrowed heavily from Stuart Masters' handouts in the hope to open access to Nayler's writings, which are beautiful and challenging although written in very old Christian language. Hopefully, I have not misrepresented any part of the handouts but then, another virtue of going to the seminar, is not just the handouts but the bibliography and web addresses that enables you to go to source. And I am sure I can pass these on.

You can download some of Nayler's works from Quaker Heritage Press <http://www.qhpress.org/texts/nayler/index.html>

The new Biography by David Beelon is well worth a read. James Nayler: Revolutionary to Prophet (Leadings Press).

Scottish Medical Director appointed at The Retreat!

Constance Tonge - Perth Meeting

Chris Holman, an attender at York Friargate meeting, is retiring after 20 years of service as medical director and consultant psychiatrist at The York Retreat and, by way of keeping communications up-to-date, I have been asked to let Scottish Friends know something about the new medical director, Dan Anderson.

Dan was born in Dunfermline and, although he spent his childhood in Fife, his family later moved to Cumbria. He came back, though, to Aberdeen University to medical school and, as he especially appreciated the social and psychological aspects of medicine, he decided early on that he would specialise in psychiatry. His psychiatric training began in Glasgow and was completed, closer to his family, in Lancashire.

During this time, Dan was also involved in the care of a family member who was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's Disease and this influenced him to undertake training in old age psychiatry in Liverpool. His interests expanded to include the social and psychological aspects of both living with dementia and also caring for someone with dementia. This led to further study and he obtained his Master's degree in psychoanalytic studies from the University of Sheffield, qualifying him for a dual career as a psychotherapist as well as a psychiatrist.

Dan became a substantive consultant old age psychiatrist, moving to North Wales and then York, and is currently continuing his training

<10>

to become a member of the Institute of Group Analysis. He is already a member of the British Psychoanalytic Council and an honorary senior lecturer at Bangor University.

Despite the weight of all the above qualifications, Dan is still only 34 years old!

He feels that, although he is not a Quaker, Friends' values are underpinned by his interest in understanding mental disorders from a social and relationship focused viewpoint, and in promoting knowledge of The Retreat and its Quaker values. He is also in the happy position of enjoying the other senior management roles which he is expected to carry as well as his clinical responsibilities.

Recently the Retreat has also said "hello" to a new Director of Development, David Smith, and an Associate Director of Governance and Change, Jo Dent. Although neither of them is the least Scottish, we at The Retreat are looking forward to the changes which will propel us into important new places and increasing fulfilment of our Quaker heritage.

Constance Tonge is the Scotland GM Representative
to The Retreat

MP

Meeting for Sufferings held at Friends House on April 5th 2014

Jane Pearn - Kelso Meeting

This Meeting had a varied agenda, including 'in-house' matters of organisation; our relationships with other churches and faiths; and being faithful to our leadings.

What do we say?

We continued our consideration of a possible revision of our Book of Discipline. It's for Yearly Meeting in session to decide whether or not to proceed at this time. But revision isn't simply a matter of finding new writing and discerning what to leave out - though that is hard enough. There are many areas to explore before we reach the point of asking a group to revise the book to reflect our sense of ourselves. We need to ask ourselves 'Where are we now?' while recognising that there may not be definitive answers. Meeting for Sufferings has already discerned that this threshing should start regardless of Yearly Meeting's decision, and will be appointing a group to facilitate the process.

Some of the areas identified as not being sufficiently covered include:

- * Theism/nontheism;
- * New technology - how do we make it work for us?
- * Sustainable living, everyday ethics;
- * Membership;
- * Prayer, insight and action;
- * Our peace testimony, in relation to the current world situation, and to personal and meeting conflicts;
- * Family - changing patterns;
- * Outreach;
- * Inclusivity;

<12>

* Administration of local meetings;

* Death and dying;

* Gambling.

So - plenty for all of us to work with!

A Friend asked about consistency when referring to the 'red book' and we were advised that when talking about revision, 'the book of discipline' was the preferred term, as it hasn't always been called Quaker Faith and Practice - and it could change again. Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, suggested that using this term could serve as an interesting prompt to explore our understanding of 'discipline'.

What can we say, here and now?

A statement on the effect of UK government cuts in public spending had been requested by several AMs. The text is in the main a summary of our spiritual convictions and our concern that many current government actions are divisive and likely to lead to greater inequality. Queries were raised about who this statement was addressed to, and Helen Drewery of Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) confirmed that it was intended primarily for ourselves, rather than the wider world. She suggested it could be a starting point for meetings for reflection, discussion and action. Everyone in the room would probably have written something slightly different, and we were urged not to try to amend its wording. With two small but significant changes, we accepted it and forwarded it to Yearly Meeting. (See Page 24)

How do we say it?

Quaker Committee for Church and Interfaith Relations (QCCIR) asked us how interchurch and interfaith relations are perceived among Friends. Their report suggested that they were finding it hard to find a common language in which to engage in dialogue.

Several contributions expressed the hope that we would be positive and joyful - and not defensive - in explaining Friends' discernment and decisions, for example about same-sex marriage. We were reminded that the other churches want to hear from us and value our interpretation of traditional Christian language like 'sacrament' and 'salvation'; and that members of other churches may have their own difficulty with some of the language and concepts. 'To see where the words come from' is a theological challenge for us all. For ourselves we were warned not to be frightened of addressing questions such as 'Do we still consider ourselves a Church?' for fear of excluding those who are uncomfortable with this language. Nor should the fear of isolation from other churches and faiths prevent us from following our clear leadings. We appreciated and welcomed the Statement on the Way of Just Peace produced by the World Council of Churches. (See page 16)

Words into Action

Lis Burch, clerk of the Canterbury Commitment Group reported back to us on progress. They sense that a lot of the easier options have been achieved or at least started - from considering the environmental impact of our Meeting Houses, to BYM Trustees' decision to disinvest from fossil fuels. The next steps will be to support Meetings, committees and individual Friends who have not yet made a start and who perhaps feel daunted by the challenge; and to work towards political, systemic change. The Group feels that this commitment is not yet embedded in the spiritual culture of our Yearly Meeting and sees the need for ongoing leadership and coordination, as well as adequate resourcing. They suggest that a project approach rather than annual reporting could be more valuable.

A query was raised which has been heard among Friends: what is it about this commitment that is uniquely Quaker? Ministry in response suggested that our aims may be similar to many other groups, and we should work productively with them; but we might also share our processes for discernment: not only our business method, but meetings for clearness. One Friend highlighted the need for hard choices: for example should their Area Meeting be held only at a Meeting House with rail access; and what do we do with some of our historic but less accessible meeting houses?

Ongoing work

Revision of some procedural parts of the Book of Discipline is ongoing: the text about Quaker Life Representative Council now gives more weight to its spiritual and supportive function; and the text concerning Friends Trusts Ltd is to be clarified to make it clear that the Trust does not operate here in Scotland, as the law allows Area Meetings to hold property in their own names.

We agreed that in England and Wales (and in Scotland, as soon as we are able) that when a Quaker marriage has taken place, it should be reported as a marriage and not as a civil partnership, as this procedure was in use only as a stepping stone to recognition of full equality under the law.

Area Meetings' concerns and decisions.

The hospitality group's decision to describe the Large Meeting House as 'The Light' for outside users continues to cause a few Friends great unhappiness. Their views were strongly expressed, both in Area Meeting minutes received and during our meeting. This unhappiness seems to be on four counts: 1. the name itself; 2. that there will be two names for the same space (Friends will continue to call it the Large Meeting House); 3. that the decision was driven by 'commercial' interests only; 4. that the hospitality group should have consulted widely.

Other Friends expressed exasperation that we were revisiting this matter. Jennifer Barraclough, Clerk of Trustees, urged us to reserve judgment until we had seen the new space and the effect of the skylight, and explained how she sees the alternative name as a way of inviting others to share our light.

North Cumbria and West Cumbria Area Meetings wish to lay themselves down and to amalgamate as Cumberland Area Meeting, and we endorsed this decision.

Memorial - Southern Marches AM asked for encouragement to take forward a concern to have a memorial to non-combatant casualties of war at the National Memorial Arboretum. We supported this concern, but asked them to reconsider the use of the word 'innocent' in this context. I raised this matter: I appreciate the intention is to discriminate between civilians and military forces, but warfare is not that simple. One has only to think of child-soldiers; of the conscripted and the terrified; and of the unarmed politicians who send people to war, to begin to ask - where does 'innocence' lie?

Looking Ahead

Meeting for Sufferings Arrangements group is responsible for planning the agenda, and I was pleased to hear that they are trying to plan further ahead, and to let us know in good time about some forthcoming items. Where this is possible, it will enable Friends consider these matters in their meetings: longer advance notice may be helpful to General Meeting in planning its agendas.

Statement on the Way of Just Peace

from World Council of Churches 10th Assembly -

30 October to 8 November 2013

Busan, Republic of Korea:

Document No. PIC 02.4

<16>

The Way of Just Peace -

Just peace is a journey into God's purpose for humanity and all creation. It is rooted in the self- understanding of the churches, the hope of spiritual transformation and the call to seek justice and peace for all. It is a journey that invites us all to testify with our lives.

Those who seek a just peace seek the common good. On the way of just peace, different disciplines find common ground; contending world views see complementary courses of action; and one faith stands in principled solidarity with another.

Social justice confronts privilege; economic justice confronts wealth, ecological justice confronts consumption; and political justice confronts power itself. Mercy, forgiveness and reconciliation become shared public experiences. The spirit, vocation and process of peace are transformed.

As the Ecumenical Call to Just Peace (ECJP) stated, to take the path of just peace is to enter a collective, dynamic yet grounded process of freeing human beings from fear and want, of overcoming enmity, discrimination and oppression, and of establishing conditions for just relationships that privilege the experience of the most vulnerable and respect the integrity of creation.

Together we believe -

Together we believe in God, the Creator of all life. Therefore we acknowledge that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God and we seek to be good stewards of creation. In wondrously creating a world with more than enough natural riches to support countless generations of human beings and other living things, God makes manifest a vision for all people to live in the fullness of life and with dignity, regardless of class, gender, religion, race or ethnicity.

Together we believe in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Therefore we acknowledge that humankind is reconciled with God, by grace, and we

strive to live reconciled with one another. The life and teachings, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, point toward the peaceable kingdom of God. Despite persecution and suffering, Jesus remains steadfast in his way of humility and active non-violence, even unto death. His life of commitment to justice leads to the cross, an instrument of torture and execution. With the resurrection of Jesus, God confirms that such steadfast love, such obedience, such trust, leads to life. By God's grace we too are enabled to take the way of the cross, to be disciples and bear the costs.

Together, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Giver and Sustainer of all life. Therefore we acknowledge the sanctifying presence of God in all of life, strive to protect life and to heal broken lives.

Based on the teaching of St Paul (Romans 8:22) "For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with pain together until now", as explained by St Peter (2 Peter 3:13) "nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which justice dwells", we can state that: the Holy Spirit assures us that the Triune God will perfect and consummate all of creation at the end of time. In this we recognize justice and peace as both promise and present - a hope for the future and a gift here and now.

Together, we believe that the Church is called to unity. Therefore we acknowledge that churches are to be just and peaceful communities reconciled with other churches. Grounded in the peace of God and empowered through the reconciling work of Christ, we can be "agents of reconciliation and peace with justice in homes, churches and societies as well as in political, social and economic structures at the global level" (8th WCC Assembly, Harare, 1998).

Together we call -

The way of just peace provides a basic frame of reference for coherent ecumenical reflection, spirituality, engagement and active peacemaking.

For just peace in the community - so that all may live free from fear-

<18>

Many communities are divided by economic class, race, colour, caste, gender and religion. Violence, intimidation, abuse and exploitation thrive in the shadows of division and inequality. Domestic violence is a hidden tragedy in societies everywhere.

To build peace in our communities, we must break the culture of silence about violence in the home, parish and society. Where religious groups are divided along with society, we must join with other faiths to teach and advocate for tolerance, non-violence and mutual respect, as Christian and Muslim leaders are doing in Nigeria with ecumenical support.

Local churches working for peace reinforce international church advocacy for peace, and vice versa. Ecumenical advocacy at the International Criminal Court is one reason why at least some war criminals today face justice in a court of law - a historic advance in the rule of law.

Churches can help build cultures of peace by learning to prevent and transform conflicts. In this way they may empower people on the margins of society, enable both women and men to be peacemakers, support non-violent movements for justice and human rights, support those who are persecuted for their refusal to bear arms for reasons of conscience, as well as offer support to those who have suffered in armed conflicts, and give peace education its rightful place in churches and schools.

For just peace with the earth - **so that life is sustained**

Human beings are to respect, protect and care for nature. Yet our excessive consumption of fossil fuels and other resources is doing great violence to people and the planet. Climate change, only one consequence of human lifestyles and national policies, poses a global threat to justice and peace. The World Council of Churches (WCC) was among the first to warn about the dangers of climate change. Now, after 20 years of advocacy, churches have helped bring ecological justice into the

international debate on climate change. Concern for eco-justice is evident in the attention given to victims of climate change in international negotiations and at the United Nations Human Rights Council. The 10th WCC Assembly meeting in Busan strongly reiterated the ecumenical commitment to climate justice.

“Eco-congregations” and “green churches” are signs of hope. The churches and parishes of many countries around the world are linking faith and ecology - studying environmental issues, monitoring carbon output, and joining in WCC-led advocacy for governments to cut emissions of green-house gases. Some governments, such as the Seoul city government, are collaborating with local churches to help Korea’s sprawling capital conserve energy and recycle waste. In the wake of the Fukushima disaster, Christians and Buddhists already united against nuclear weapons are now united against nuclear power plants as well. They are raising a prophetic call for a nuclear-free world.

To care for God’s precious gift of creation, the reform of lifestyles and the pursuit of ecological justice are key elements of just peace. Concerted ecumenical advocacy is needed so that governments, businesses and consumers protect the environment and preserve it for future generations.

For just peace in the marketplace - so that all may live with dignity

There is something profoundly wrong when the wealth of the world’s three richest individuals is greater than the gross domestic product of the world’s 48 poorest countries. Such deep socio-economic injustice raises serious questions about economic growth which ignores social and environmental responsibility. Such disparities pose fundamental challenges to justice, social cohesion and the public good within what has become a global human community.

<20>

Churches should be strongly committed to economic justice. The WCC and its member churches join with peoples' movements and partners in civil society to challenge poverty, inequality and environmental degradation. The churches' analysis of wealth and poverty has led to an ecumenical emphasis on sufficiency and to a strong critique of greed. Some churches have now developed indicators to test how well individuals, corporations and nations are sharing God's abundant gifts.

Establishing "economies of life" is one key to building peace in the marketplace. Economies of life promote careful use of resources, sustainable production and consumption, redistributive growth, workers' rights, fair taxes, fair trade, and the universal provision of clean water, clean air and other common goods. Regulatory structures must reconnect finance not only to economic production but also to human need and ecological sustainability. Responding equitably to the different dimensions of fair labour is increasingly important in our times.

Just peace among the nations - **so that human lives are protected** - History has seen great advances in the rule of law and other protections for humanity. Yet the present situation of the human race is in at least two ways quite unprecedented. Now as never before humanity is in a position to destroy much of the planet environmentally. A small number of decision makers are in a position to annihilate whole populations with nuclear weapons. Radical - threats of ecocide and genocide demand of us an equally radical commitment to peace.

There is great potential for peacemaking in the nature of who we are. Churches together in the WCC are well-placed for collective action in a world where the major threats to peace can only be resolved transnationally.

On that basis, a diverse network of member churches and related ministries advocated with success for the first global Arms Trade Treaty. The witness of churches in war-torn communities was heard in

high places. Churches from different regions pressed governments from those regions to agree on a treaty to regulate the international arms trade for the first time. A similar approach is now building inter-regional support to make nuclear weapons illegal, a goal consistent with the Vancouver Assembly's indictment of the production, deployment and use of nuclear weapons as "a crime against humanity", and its challenge that "the nuclear weapons issue is, in its import and threat to humanity, a question of Christian discipline and of a faithfulness to the Gospel".

For peace among the nations, churches must work together to strengthen international human rights and humanitarian law, promote multilateral negotiations to resolve conflicts, hold governments responsible for ensuring treaty protections, help eliminate all weapons of mass destruction and press for reallocation of unnecessary military budgets to civilian needs. We must join other communities of faith and people of good will to reduce national military capacities and delegitimize the institution of war.

Together we commit -

Peace constitutes a pattern of life that reflects human participation in God's love for all creation.

Together we commit to share God's love for the world by seeking peace and protecting life. We commit to transforming how we think about peace, how we pray for peace, how we teach peace to young and old and deepen our theological reflections on the promise and practice of peace.

Together we commit to building cultures of peace in families, the church and society. We commit to mobilize the gifts within our fellowship to raise our collective voice for peace across many countries.

Together we commit to protect human dignity, practice justice in our families and communities, transform conflicts without violence and ban all weapons of mass destruction.

<22>

We understand that the protection of life is a collective human obligation today as never before in history. We commit to turn away from planet-changing patterns of consumption as the engine of economic growth, and refuse to accept that any nation's security requires the capacity to annihilate other nations or to strike alleged enemies at will anywhere on earth.

We reaffirm the Ecumenical Call to Just Peace which states "Although life in God's hands is irrepressible, peace does not yet reign. The principalities and powers, though not sovereign, still enjoy their victories, and we will be restless and broken until peace prevails. Peacemakers will speak against and speak for, tear down and build up, lament and celebrate, grieve and rejoice. Until our longing joins our belonging in the consummation of all things in God, the work of peace will continue as the flickering of sure grace."

Together we recommend that the World Council of Churches :

- undertakes, in cooperation with member churches and specialized ministries, critical analysis of the "Responsibility to Prevent, React and Rebuild" and its relationship to just peace, and its misuse to justify armed interventions;
- leads and accompany ecumenical just peace ministries and networks in the practice of violence prevention, non-violence as a way of life, collective advocacy and the advancement of international norms, treaties and law;
- encourages its member churches to engage in cooperative interfaith programmes in order to address conflicts in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies;
- requests its member churches and partners to develop communication strategies that advocate for justice and peace, proclaim the hope of transformation and speak truth to power;
- facilitates a programme of reflection and environmental action in member churches and related networks to build sustainable communities and bring about collective reductions in carbon emissions and energy use; promote the use of alternate, renewable, and clean energy;

- develops guidelines within the concept of "economies of life" for the right sharing of resources and the prevention of structural violence, establishing useable indicators and benchmarks; and
- convenes churches and related organizations to work for human rights protections through international treaty bodies and the United Nations Human Rights Council; to work for the elimination of nuclear and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction, cooperating with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons; and to seek ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty by their respective governments and monitor its implementation.
- reiterates its existing policy (2009 study) and reaffirm its support for the human right of conscientious objection to military service for religious, moral or ethical reasons, as churches have an obligation to support those who are in prison because they object to military service.

We recommend that Governments -

- adopt by 2015 and begin implementing binding regulations with targets for lowering greenhouse gas emissions consistent with the recommendations in the 2013 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change;
- negotiate and establish a ban on the production, deployment, transfer and use of nuclear weapons in accordance with international humanitarian law;
- ensure that all remaining stocks of chemical weapons are destroyed under the terms of the Chemical Weapons Convention and cluster munitions are destroyed under the Convention of Cluster Munitions at the earliest possible date;
- declare their support for a pre-emptive ban on drones and other robotic weapons systems that will select and strike targets without human intervention when operating in fully autonomous mode;
- reallocate national military budgets to humanitarian and developmental needs, conflict prevention and civilian peace-building initiatives amongst others; and
- ratify and implement the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by 2014 and on a voluntary basis include weapon types not covered by the ATT.

God of life, guide our feet into the way of just peace!

<24>

Quaker Statement - Government cuts - Welfare benefits

Quakers in Britain commit ourselves to action to redress the growing inequality of wealth and income in our country.

Our vision of equality springs from our profound sense of the worth of every human being. Every person's life is sacred and in this we are all equal. Neither money nor status can serve as a true measure of the value of any individual or group. Nor can wealth be true riches if it is based on unlimited personal enrichment and not shared for the good of all.

The progressive movement towards greater economic equality of the mid 20th century has been in reverse since the 1980s. Britain has become one of the most unequal societies in the developed world, where wealth is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a minority. The richest 20 per cent of our population have almost a hundred times the wealth of the poorest 20 per cent. It is estimated that around one in five of the population, or around 13 million people, live below the UK poverty line.

Government expenditure cuts have imposed unacceptable burdens on those least able to bear them. Many in Britain now go hungry or depend on food banks. Many face homelessness, or insecure housing in the private rented sector. People with disabilities and those affected by mental illness and chronic conditions are having their incomes squeezed. Poverty and hunger, and the anxiety and stress that go with them, are blighting the lives of vulnerable people, from children born into difficult circumstances to working age poor people and elderly people.

We recognise that these crises and injustices spring from forces at work within the global economic system. These forces infiltrate our hearts and minds, capture our politics and threaten our common basis

for life on earth. This is nothing less than economic violence, which challenges our Quaker spiritual commitment to peace.

Many Quakers across Britain are helping to supply and staff food banks and lunch clubs, support housing provision, volunteer in advice bureaux and community projects in areas of deprivation and support claimants. We will continue this urgent work with others to mitigate the effects of cuts that diminish the quality of life for millions in our society. We want to hear and understand the true stories of those affected, so that our shared humanity can be at the heart of our responses to poverty.

However, action that aims merely to alleviate the worst effects of inequality is not enough. As we wrestle with the implications of our testimony to equality, Quakers feel called to act more radically to tackle the underlying causes. This calling requires spiritual struggle and real practical change. Our testimonies are moving us to work for very different ways of organising our common life. We are also moving towards spending and saving our own resources in ways that are more compatible with our values, and away from uses that diminish the lives of our fellow human beings and the rich variety of life forms with which we share our planet.

As we long for a society of deep compassion and loving kindness in which we 'help one another up with a tender hand', we must witness to a different way of living, and help build the world anew.



A plea from an attender

Pamela Affleck - Aberdeen meeting

I have been attending Aberdeen meeting for more than 5 years and have been actively considering membership, probably for at least 3 years now. In that time I have tried to learn as much as possible about the Society. (The Religious Society of Friends /Quakers in Britain. I

<26>

have read lots, watched videos on the internet and spoken to Friends. I have also tried to learn by experience and so have taken part in various courses, Quaker Peace and Social Witness conference, and of course, the various meetings which form the lifeblood of the Society. Area Meeting (AM) is responsible for matters of membership so that is where I hoped to gain knowledge and experience of the process of becoming a member.

Generally my attendances at North of Scotland AMs have been a part of my growing relationship with, and understanding of, the Society, but in this case far from enlightening me, AM seems to draw a veil over the whole membership process. Attenders are excluded from matters of membership, not merely prevented from participating, but actually required to leave the room.

So I ask myself what happens in the application for membership procedure that is so confidential that only members who have been through the process themselves are allowed to have knowledge of it? Alarm bells are going off in my head because somehow this feels like some sort of secret. Oh dear! For me this isn't good. In fact it's extremely disappointing and as it's in stark contrast to an ethos of openness it strikes particularly hard. Where are the equality and truth? I cannot find them here at all. Added to this is the desire of Friends to reassure me that the membership process is not daunting. The thought of joining a group of people that I have spent time with, and share an ethos with, and have come to know and care about does not daunt me. Why would it? Now I feel even more uneasy.

So I am not able to learn from attending AM, and Friends feel I need reassured about the process. So I go to Quaker Faith and Practice - generally my first port of call for queries about procedure. Chapter 11 gives a general overview of membership. In her recent report in "The Northern Friend" Winter 2013 edition, North of Scotland AM

Quaker Life rep Diana Brockbank quotes paragraph 11.04 and highlights that the details of the membership process are left to Area Meeting. She adds "I had not known how flexible we could and are being encouraged to be."

Interesting but I am still looking for the details. So I turn to the websites where I have learnt so much about Quakers and which have explained so many things to me but unfortunately neither the Quakers in Scotland website which includes a section for my AM nor the Quakers in Britain website are any more helpful. I can easily find out about Quaker funerals and Quaker weddings but not how to join. So I did a general search and found a really helpful article produced by Quakers in Ireland

www.quakersinireland.ie/about-us/joining-quakers/.

It is disappointing that this is where I find some helpful information. I do not think it is privileged information so why don't we have leaflets, like the one recently adopted by East Scotland AM, explaining the application process in our meetings (we certainly have many useful and helpful leaflets on other subjects in Aberdeen meeting) and also some useful entries on our websites. I honestly don't know, but I've learned that, when I find something taking me outside my comfort zone, the best thing to do, is to find out as much as possible about it and that helps me to take the first step.

Could this lack of information possibly stem from some idea that if procedures are not written down and publicised then somehow that makes them more open and flexible, not being ruled by the letter of the law as it were? I would have to disagree with this idea. What I see is that the procedure becomes exclusive knowledge known only to a select number so, far from equality and openness leading to an inclusive approach, for me this creates an unwelcoming, closed, distrustful and exclusive set up.

I would, then, echo the plea Diana makes in her report, for attenders not to be excluded from the membership application process at AMs. This would reduce the "oh dear! Why is this a secret?" element and the "fear of the unknown" element for attenders considering membership but for me there is another element.

When I attend AM or indeed *General Meeting* for Scotland I am always struck by the pleasure and joy of Friends meeting up with old Friends and sharing news of all sorts. I have always been made to feel welcome and Friends have taken the time to chat to me and try to get to know me so I do feel included at these times. However the fact I have

learned is that most of those Friends have known each other and the Society for many, many years and I respect that but I recently read a leaflet on all age worship which explained that children and young people may feel at a loss at meeting because they have too few connections with that meeting - connections which adults have through "our friendships, our common histories and shared activities, our identity as Quakers, even the welcome we give each other at the door" (All Age Worship, CYPC). With the exception of the last one these are exactly the connections which newcomers and attenders may lack, and I would add another connection which only experienced Quakers have: the shared knowledge of unwritten Quaker etiquette and language.

This perhaps explains why sometimes we attenders may feel completely out of our depth. So if you can imagine feeling all at sea, and add to it the experience of having to leave the room for membership matters, it feels very much like the membership is closing ranks. The door is firmly shut in my face. I am not a fit person to take part in this or even observe it. For some this may be an incentive: "Well, if I become a member I'll get to go behind that door"; for some it may even be a welcome break from the business of the meeting; but for myself and perhaps others who value openness it is a rejection and this rejection runs both ways. For just as I expect openness so I require it of myself and I do not want to be a part of something which shuts people out, creates barriers, severs connections.

However I understand this may not be an easy issue for some Friends so I wonder if it would be possible to ask membership applicants whether or not they would want their application to be shared with attenders when considered at AM. Applicants are, after all, attenders themselves and may appreciate the opportunity to explain the process by example but they would ofcourse have the option to refuse without any reprisals. Another option would perhaps be for attenders to be allowed to stay in, but simply as observers and in this case the opportunity could be taken to inform the attenders, and maybe even remind the members, of what is expected of the meeting procedurally and how individuals should approach the issue.

I appreciate that technically there is no such thing as an "observer" at a Quaker meeting (although would that be the term to describe the journalists now allowed into Britain Yearly Meeting?). Actually the fact

that attenders can contribute in business meetings is one of those egalitarian characteristics which makes being an attender, for me, a welcome privilege. However I would balance this with how much I gain from simply watching at business meetings.

I learn by reading the rule that e.g. "There is no need to repeat a point which has already been made, or to speak twice to the same matter unless asked to do so. Try to resist the temptation to be argumentative. ("How Quaker meetings make decisions" Oct 2006) It is in meeting that I watch how this is put into action, how much of a struggle this may be and how conscientious Friends are about it.

This is not only a meeting for worship for business but also a means of learning the ways of Friends. If attenders as observers is still a step too far then I would make a plea that, when attenders are excluded from the meeting, those attenders are treated with the same tenderness and respect as members or those seeking membership. It is very unnerving simply to be expected to leave when membership matters come up. For someone quite shy it is mortifying to be one of, one or a few, whom the meeting is waiting for, to stand up and leave, especially when you've had no warning, don't understand why you have to leave and are embarrassed that you don't know why and feel you should have known if you were any good at being a Quaker. A few words of gentle explanation, prior to attenders leaving, (and preferably not squashed in as they are leaving and wondering whether to take their belongings with them) as to what will happen and why it happens could make all the difference.

My last request is simply for more information to be available and a more open and frank approach. I believe there is a balance to be sought between the negative aspects of self-promotion and the positive effect of saying or rather explaining: "this is what we do,,

<30>

this is why we do it and this is how we do it" while acknowledging that if our procedures aren't good then we can adapt them. Isn't it one of our qualities as Quakers, that we are capable of adapting?

Note from the Editor.

West Scotland was prompt in responding to the freedom to innovate. Under the last Clerk but one, we agreed a standard minute in response to an application from X. "We appoint Y and Z to visit X and ask them to support and help her in preparing for this important step, and to report back to this meeting when the time is right."

This took care of applications made in euphoric ignorance, and assumed that Y and Z would not report until it was bound to be accepted.. The report was to be signed by X, as well as Y and Z, and X can choose whether to remain in the meeting or not. MP



Going to Jail

Bill Agnew - Dumfries meeting

Quaker history includes going to jail both ways, as prisoners and as visitors. Of course, we also exist as citizens, and contribute to the laws that send people to jail, and to the conditions in the prison. In Scotland, that is ruled by our own government. This is important. Newspaper reports told us that Westminster *banned prisoners from receiving Christmas gifts.

In Dumfries, we have a prison. Built in the nineteenth century, it is a fearsome building and gives out the threat of dread. As visitors to one of the inhabitants, we have discovered that the atmosphere is

not as hostile as expected, but of course we only saw the visitors room, not the real prison. But an opportunity arose to ask if a group of Quakers might see round the prison, and the response was welcoming, and soon arranged.

When we arrived we were welcomed by the Governor. Her briefing was comprehensive - and seriously challenging. Perhaps, as Quakers, we pay more attention to what we find in the media, and think we are up to date?. We are **wrong**. The briefing shot down nearly all of our "understandings", from the average age of convicts to the attitude and roles of the guards. For example, these titles have gone away.

The media (and sometimes politicians) seem to see the purpose of the prison to be punishment, and history says that Quakers suffered from injustice and ill treatment. Quakers have worked against this coarseness, as witnessed even today on a Bank of England banknote. Fair enough. What is now apparent is that there is still much to be done, and that progress is being supported by the prison staff and by the Scottish government minister responsible. For Quakers to be useful contributors and influential citizens, it is important that we are knowledgeable about the problems and the issues. We are (as usual) in a minority.

What did we find in our tour? Two things were quickly apparent. Prison security, and mutual respect. The different roles of officer and prisoner cannot be avoided or ignored but, almost as in the armed services, that should not prevent decent human behaviour. And this civility is, of course, rewarding. Day by day and person to person, in morale on both sides, in effective use of time, and (as nowadays must be mentioned) it is cost effective.

Overall, it is good in both the short term for those involved, and in the longer term when sentences are over.

So what is happening? Organisational change is always complicated, and

<32>

multi-dimensional. Objectives, relationships, resources, culture, routines, roles. Some of the officers with long service (20+years) commented on the change in their work, and how much better nowadays.

In brief, it appears to me that the essential change in these twenty years is to recognise that to be imprisoned is in itself the

punishment, and that the aim in this long period is to release the prisoner as one able to live as a successful member of the community. The crime committed is a failure in the community, by the individual criminal. Harsh treatment may be "Punishment", but it is not going to enable the person to become a good citizen, especially if they are incarcerated in circumstances here power is brutal and daily life is regimented in emptiness.

What did we find in our tour? The Victorian prison building was altered and improved during the last century, with extensions and alterations to create an environment which is tolerable in this century. In this century, the change has been to more humanity, and that process is continuing. It will be no surprise that money is short. Everyone faces cuts, and politicians, the media, and the public communities are not inclined to favour prisons.

The resistance to change is complicated, and not unreasonable. There is fear. Fear that we might land in prison ourselves, and since we would be criminals then we must be punished. Fear that since the prisoners are convicts, they must be brutal gang-members. Fear of the chain-gang and the sadistic guards. Fear of the unknown!

We are not as well versed as we should be, to support treatment for criminals, which cures, rather than reinforces, bad behaviour.

An English "You gov" survey recently showed that 'only 25% thought fewer criminals should be sent to prison, and 50% thought that more should be imprisoned. Does this mean the majority wants just to punish? What do they think the result would be? Do they know what the results are now?

It is also not unreasonable to be angry. Victims have been robbed, hurt, bullied, cheated. "An eye for an eye" is a dreadful piece of scripture, but it sticks in the mind and suits a need for revenge. Modern social sciences may know better, but scientific knowledge doesn't sell newspapers or win votes. It is an interesting opportunity for Quakers to take on an unpopular problem.

What does it mean when the Prime Minister plans to imprison people for life, and when that is deemed inhuman, to look for sentences of a

What can we do? There are so many things that need help! The law and the legal profession, to name but a few lifetimes. The politicians, whose attitudes are sometimes heavy on punishment and ignorant on causes and treatment. And the media!

At the more personal level, there are individual prisoners who are isolated and lonely, and would welcome a friend, even if a Friend. This is the role my wife and I have taken on, and we have found it a good experience. A visit every couple of weeks is not a great burden, and

the friend we have made is a real and interesting man. The trepidations have not been well-founded, the appreciation is really rewarding. Of course, it is not a normal friendship because it is all in the visitors tea room in the prison, and all within the prison rules. That does not stop the friendship growing!

The future is bringing more opportunities. Prisoners are recognised as people with problems, and that the institutional life cannot convert to outside without a lot of learning. We are part of that outside, so that we can provide a gentle help simply by being our ordinary selves.

It can do no harm to make contact, maybe just by telephoning the local prison and asking if a visitor is needed, and if you would be acceptable? But do remember that you are dealing with prison security!

<34>

General Meeting for Scotland, held in Glasgow on 8 March Nigel Dower - Aberdeen Meeting

The Scottish Referendum, now only six months away, was the main subject for discussion in the afternoon at General Meeting for Scotland (GM) held on 8 March.

The Glasgow Meeting room was filled to capacity - around seventy people in the morning when routine business was done and over eighty in the afternoon for discussion of the Referendum. Martin Burnell, our new clerk, ably steered us through the morning business.

Of note was the latest Tabular Statement showing that the number of members in Scotland now stands at 692 - a little down from previous years (but this may be because one Area Meeting had done a rigorous pruning of its inactive membership). Even if we add roughly the same number of attenders, it's still a tiny proportion in Scotland - 1 in 3,500!

After the accounts and Meeting for Sufferings report, we heard from three GM Function Groups (FG). First the Parliamentary Liaison FG reported that they recently had a fruitful meeting with Britain Yearly Meeting's parliamentary engagement officer Jessica Metheringham, and that plans are in hand for the appointment of a GM parliamentary engagement officer to deal with specifically Scottish issues.

Second, members of the Outreach FG gave us the challenge of going beyond faithful living by expressing in words our faith in various ways. without (of course) proselytising, and told us of an exciting new venture by Perth Meeting in making a tapestry panel on the city of Perth and combining this with an exhibition in the autumn of twenty photos from the Quaker Tapestry.

Third, from our Children and Young People FG we heard about a wide range of events for children and young people in Scotland, including a new venture - a family weekend for younger children and their parents. All these events are particularly important given that the large geographical distances in Scotland render many Quaker children and young people rather isolated most of the time.

As I have said, we were divided for most of the afternoon into five groups in which we first mapped out our significant identities (on our own) and then shared them, and then in a worship-sharing mode shared our hopes, fears and uncertainties regarding the Referendum. It was clear from what was said in my group and what I gathered from others afterwards over tea that the process had been helpful for Friends in taking their thinking forward.

What struck me, at least for my group, was a disconnect between the discussion of identities and the later discussion of issues. In the former we all recognised that we had many meaningful identities including our sense of global concern for all humanity.

In the latter though we were not directly supporting "yes" or "no", various contributions did indicate (in code) different positions and not much seemed to depend on identity but rather on what would lead to visions of the Scotland we would want (peace, no nuclear weapons, no poverty, care for the environment).

One suggestion which several Friends favoured was the idea of shaking up the bag of tricks and seeing what fell out! Whether this was a good use or misuse of the Quaker adages - both mentioned - of "live adventurously" and "trust the process" I leave to the reader to discern!



**Tulliallan Castle, the Scottish police college, MP
where the United Reformed Church holds its
annual synod.**

General Meeting for Scotland

14th June 2014 from 11 am to about 4 pm in the Friends' Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace, EH1 2JL

Tea and coffee from 10-15. Lunch about 1-00. Bring your sandwiches, but bread, cheese and salad will be available if you forget. Tea about 4-00.

"We should be open to learning from the experiments undertaken by other meetings. Being set in an unsatisfactory routine 'because we've always done it this way' may be as detrimental to seeking God's guidance as throwing our traditions to the wind"

Quaker Faith and Practice 3.03

Dear Friends and Attenders throughout Scotland,

There are a number of important matters which will be considered during the morning session of *General Meeting* in June. We will hear reports of the views of Area Meetings on the proposal to employ someone part-time on parliamentary engagement work and Trustees will report back on discussions with Friends House. This may enable us to reach a decision on the way forward.

We will also consider whether we should be represented at the service being held in Glasgow Cathedral in August to commemorate the centenary of the First World War.

We will receive the annual report from our Trustees, and hope to hear a report from Clunie Conochie, our representative on the ACTS group on Human Trafficking.

In the afternoon, Sarah Richards of Northumbria Area Meeting will give an account of the experiment they undertook with arrangements for the holding of Area Meeting and we will discuss in groups what we might learn from this.

Our last *General Meeting* in Glasgow was attended by a record 87 Friends and Attenders. I hope that as many as possible will be able to join us at our meeting on 14th June.

Martin Burnell, Clerk