

# West Scotland Quaker Newsletter

May 2020

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## Clerk's letter May 2020

*My study is in the attic and a window cut into the sloping roof allows to me to see out over to two tall sycamores a few gardens down. From March I have been watching a pair of crows sort out the old nest on the right hand tree. One stood by in the other tree. They are still there, presumably with chicks by now. I've been musing on them, trying to imagine what they make of the world they inhabit. They are intelligent and seem to know exactly what is going on around them. But how closed in is their understanding of the world? How do they make sense of it? How do you think without language? They adapt too, to changes. Down the road in Alexandra Park people feed them and a whole colony now sits there waiting for food, going against their normal instinct to be separate and having to develop new ways of social behaviour that suits living in this way. The old adage to aid corvid identification (if you see a rook on its own, it is a crow, whereas if you see a crow in a group, it's a rook), no longer applies here. Yet however intelligent they are and confident of their surroundings, there are limits to their understanding as they don't have language, they are geographically limited and know only their territory and seasonal range. They live normally some 7-8 years in the wild, far less than us and so have limits of shared experience. They can't change their environment purposefully.*

*All this makes me think of our own species, that is used to being able to range widely across time and space, and accessing the experience of individuals or cultures long dead. We're used to changing the environment to suit ourselves, so we have become the dominant life form on this planet (we think). Spiritually too, we have been enriched by expanding horizons that have changed our thinking and conceptions, and can be freed from over-simple ways of thinking.*

*But are we still like the crows, to a different degree? Confident in our discoveries and knowledge but perhaps unaware there are wider horizons than we can understand? Perhaps we are biologically unable to think or experience beyond a certain point, just like the crows, and there may be a much richer and vaster universe beyond our ken or understanding. Our minds may not be built to grasp it.*

*At a time when the covid-19 pandemic is exposing the underlying discrepancies and certainties in our nations, whilst we still try to cope with the impact of our world-dominance of species on the wider environment, we need to be humble about our achievements and ability to adapt to what needs to be done to balance the world. Can we do it? Like the crows in the park, living in their bigger group, but not knowing that they are now totally dependent the foibles of humans to exist, we may not appreciate the consequences of our behaviour and a susceptible to new threats that we ourselves have unleashed.*

*It can all seem rather bleak.*

*And yet.... Yes, we may be limited, but we also have the experience of being able to break out of limitations, and our Quaker way is one of those ways that build on this. At the back of*

*the red book, Quaker Faith & Practice is an index of well-loved phrases and they give insight to this. Cast your eye over them. We have the capacity to raise our awareness through silent waiting upon the power within. We can enlarge ourselves and our common understanding, and we can practice ways of doing this that we call testimony. As some in our study group this week said, it is all in Advices and queries number 1.*

*“Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts. Trust them as the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life.”*

*And it isn't the specific words, but the meaning and experience behind them.*

**Michael Hutchinson Glasgow**

## Report Area Meeting (AM) by Zoom on 18 April

Some 38 people from all over West Scotland participated this AM by Zoom. Only one local meeting was not represented. The sun was shining and people were delighted to greet each other when they joined. One advantage of Zoom is that participants who have cameras can be seen and they automatically have name labels. It's a great way of getting to know who is who.

The first substantive item was an appreciation of the life of Bill Agnew who died at the age of 86 on 25 March. It is some years since he stopped travelling to AM, but he kept supporting Dumfries Meeting to the end. Many Friends contributed memories. He will certainly be missed.

The meeting was very pleased to learn that Bronwen Currie is to become Trainee Treasurer for the AM. This of course means that someone else will be required to replace her as Clerk of Trustees.

The topic of White Privilege was to have been the special focus of this meeting. We hadn't all been able to read the material that Edwina Peart from Friends House had provided. We plan to hold a special AM to explore this issue, in preparation for the special business for the August meeting.

There was time for people to say how their meeting was managing under the current lockdown. Some meetings had taken readily to Zoom; others rejected this but met for worship simultaneously in their own homes, or telephoned each other to maintain contact. Several had enjoyed the presence of visitors in their worship. Some had new people taking part. One had a regular daily time to meet for chat. Children's meetings could use the Zoom facility of a 'break-out room'. A concern was the absence of people who had regularly participated in face-to face meetings before the lockdown. It is

important for us not to exclude them. A psychiatrist told us something of the difficulties that people who don't have space experience under lockdown. We mustn't forget those who are suffering. And in the wider world what about the refugees in Calais and other places, who are trying to get the UK? Inequalities are increasing.

We were reminded that the AM hosts worship by Zoom at 7.15 for 7.30 for about 30 minutes each Sunday.

Although the COP26 meeting in Glasgow has been postponed from November we shouldn't forget the climate crisis at this time.

The Treasurer projects that the income from contributions may be lower than she hoped.

Some of us stayed on for a few minutes after the business for a brief chat.

Dear Friends

Please can I regrettably inform you all that we are compelled to cancel this year's Family Weekend which had been planned for June 2020 in Pitlochry.

For refunds please get in touch with either myself or Nigel Dower.

Many thanks for your understanding.

**Genevieve Orr**

## Quaker Life Representative Council

It was with excitement and trepidation that I joined with the Quaker Life Rep Council via Zoom on Saturday, 25th April. This was my second meeting with them last time in October in Woodbrooke. The theme this time was: What's at the heart of Quakerism for us?

We all connected up together over about 30 minutes and then the meeting began. Yes, it did feel strange with so many of us attending the one meeting via Zoom but it was also beautiful to faces, some familiar and some not so. We opened with worship and then were introduced to our speaker for the day, Gill Sewell, who spoke about the theme of the meeting. Her talk was interesting and certainly made me think. What is at the heart of what we do? Gill talked of taking care of ourselves, that we need input and experiences from others to experience the divine, often described as a shining light.

Stillness and the testimonies of others help us to see that of God in everyone . Then she spoke of how experience of the divine God in herself had shaped her own spiritual growth. And we need to share these experiences together in meetings, in communication with one another to recognise the divine in each other.

"What would strengthen our Quaker experience?" she asked as she closed her talk. Again, contact with each other to discuss and face change, to review and to reflect; sharing in meals together on a regular basis and virtual meetings were examples Gill gave us.

Following a break for lunch we got together again and were put into home groups which invited discussion and questions following on from listening to Gill. So much was spoken of that I can't list it all here, but here are a few things that came up: Living from love, both in grounding and application, the actual practice of living a Quaker life, allowing time and space to connect with the divine, silent worship and having an openness to doubt and a willingness to change; and to have open and honest conversations about our faith.

We asked what would strengthen us as Quaker communities? Would we come together better after the Coronavirus has finished? We agreed that there would often be conflict within meetings and it's important to know how to handle it well and remain in love. We are privileged to be able to meet together as we do and perhaps technology can be used to jeep Quakers together in faith.

At the heart of it has to be love which acknowledges that we are a community of differences and diversities and keeps us together.

Finally we camt together again to conclude the meeting with about 40 minutes worship, which I personally found to ge deeply moving. I think there were about 80 of us joining together across the other which was so beautiful; all gathered together as one. Once again, we were aware of our own isolation and appreciated our time together.

Thanks to the staff at Woodbrooke for their help in organising this wonderful few hour s. Naturally we would prefer to meet physically together but this meeting reassured all of us that we are not alone.

**Angela Stather, Islay & Jura**

The Scottish Friend this issue contains and interesting article by Robin Davies (Dunblane) on *The Gathered Meeting* which looks amongst other things at the effect of meeting by Zoom.

There is also an article by Anne McArthur (Castle Douglas) on *Popularism and the Far Right*.

If you do not receive the Scottish Friend, you will find it on the website – [quakerscotland.org.uk](http://quakerscotland.org.uk)

Below is another article from the Scottish Friend on the Book of Discipline Revision Committee.

## Book of Discipline Revision Committee update March 2020

Your committee met in January at Friends House in London, and will be meeting again in April, at the University of Warwick.

We spend time each weekend listening to each other as we worship-share: this time we spoke about how we ground our work in the Spirit and how gradually we move towards clarity and a better understanding of our task. It's a long slow process...

How are we getting on? Well, I invite you to consider the size and the scale of the project – it's not just a matter of getting a copy of Faith & Practice, cutting it into bits, rewriting some of them, and juggling the order a little bit! We are spending a lot of time discerning our way forward – what needs to be in the book; what's not currently in Qfp; the importance of explaining WHY we do things as well as HOW we do them; how we do that explaining; how to be inclusive; and how everything fits together. I am slowly learning that the weekends tend to take a particular shape: the Friday night is good as we come together again, find out how we've been getting on, and prepare for the work ahead. The Saturday becomes increasingly difficult and demanding, and I usually end up wondering what on earth is going on, feeling that everything is very muddled – and then on the Sunday morning the clerks present a draft minute summarising our work of the previous day, and everything seems clear again and we can see how to move on. [I remember having a similar experience at Yearly Meeting, listening to everyone's ministry and trying to work out what it all means/ where we are trying to go – and then Minute 36 makes sense of everything.]

### **The key messages from this weekend's meeting are:**

- We feel daunted and excited by the size and importance of our task. We continued to seek ways to make it more manageable to approach. We are thinking about how to make our book of discipline more inclusive. We are also working out what is central to explaining the Quaker way.
- What passages of Quaker faith & practice are significant to you? We talked about parts that are personally meaningful to us, and will invite everyone to do the same during YMG.
- Keeping in touch with Quakers is very important to us. Many thanks to those who helped us by attending the Woodbrooke conference in November. We will be active at YMG and hope to accept other invitations to engage with Friends. Our current communications channels are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. BYM reports on our work through Quaker News and other BYM channels.

As well as working on the 'homework' tasks we are set to do for the next committee meeting, I have been working very hard as convenor of the planning group for our committee's engagement with Friends at Yearly Meeting Gathering in Bath. The planning group was appointed in December and immediately was faced with Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee's imminent deadlines – what did we want to do at YMG? What spaces would we need? How would we describe what we want to do? A small group of us have been working

very hard for the last three months: we currently have a breathing space but will need to pick up the task again at our April committee meeting, when we work out who does what and when in Bath in August.

If you're coming to Yearly Meeting Gathering and want to know more about our work, look out for our special interest groups – Boldly revising Quaker Faith & Practice, Prayerfully revising Quaker faith & practice, and joyfully revising Quaker Faith & Practice. We hope you will contribute to our week-long project Our Book – Bath 2020: a creative BDRC community art and podcast project. Once again, please uphold us all as we do this complex task on your behalf – we can't do it without you.

**Mary Woodward, Portobello & Musselburgh**

## Covid 19

One author described the present Covid 19 crisis like a spring thaw when the pack ice melts and boats can move to places which were unreachable during winter; the pack ice is the status quo - the power relations which we were told were unchangeable. Suddenly everything changes fast and unpredictably and we find we are faced with some fundamental questions about the way we run our society.

In particular:

- What is the economy for?
- Who are critical in our society?
- What do we mean by justice and equality?
- What do we mean by 'security'?

Certain economic myths, which had been accepted without question by politicians, economists and journalists for years, have been completely discredited as a result of the present crisis. These include:

- The Government only has a limited amount of money and it can't afford to spend money unless it raises taxes.
- The Government should try and 'balance the books' i.e. avoid a deficit.

The last few weeks have shown that the Government has a duty to spend whatever money is needed to maintain a functioning economy and can in fact spend huge amounts of money quickly without necessarily raising taxes. Governments can recover some of this money through taxation or it can borrow money or even create money 'from thin air' as the UK has done in the past without harming the economy. The current obsession with 'balancing the books' and reducing the deficit therefore has little meaning.

The Government is likely to need to spend at least £200bn during this crisis. In 2009-12 the Government borrowed £426bn by issuing bonds. It then asked the Bank of England to buy back £375bn of these bonds by creating money, which effectively cancelled out most of this debt. Unfortunately, this money was given to commercial banks who spent it largely on

speculative assets, such as property and shares. Domestic inflation at the time was less than 1%. What was unforgiveable was the way we were deceived into believing that this spending had to be 'paid for' by a so-called 'austerity' policy over the subsequent 10 years, which not only caused immense suffering to low paid workers but was completely unnecessary (as the government has now admitted). In fact, the resulting cuts in spending in social care and other essential services over this time has been a major factor exacerbating the present crisis.

It has been suggested that if we could round up all the Doctors, Nurses, and Local Authority Workers together with Celebrities and Investment Bankers and send them all away, we would see who we would miss most. Covid-19 has in effect done this for us. It has brought a new respect for these critical and undervalued workers, as well as for scientific experts who, a few months ago were disparaged by some politicians, and are now appearing daily in news conferences alongside political leaders. It is interesting that the threat of both a virus pandemic and climate chaos were predicted by scientists years ago and both were largely ignored by politicians until the last minute.

There is little doubt that the present crisis is having a disproportionate effect on vulnerable people and is exacerbating social inequalities. Government data shows there were 55 deaths for every 100,000 people in the poorest parts of England, compared with 25 in the wealthiest areas. Lockdown for a single parent with young children in a crowded tower block flat is vastly different from lockdown for someone with a nice garden in a village. (Unfortunately, those making decisions as political or scientific leaders are rarely from the first category.) The history of previous pandemics also suggests that they not only have unequal impacts but also spread more quickly in societies where there is greatest inequality.

The pandemic has also questioned our definition of security, which has traditionally been framed in terms of preventing a hypothetical attack by some foreign power. Despite never having faced even a remote possibility of any such attack since the last world war, we continue to spend billions on nuclear weapons which have been of no use in any conflict we have been involved in (and which themselves pose one of our greatest threats). We need to redefine security in terms of the personal safety and well-being of all citizens – 'human security' rather than the security of the state. To do this we need to identify the real threats facing us such as:

- The decline of key natural resources and collapse of ecosystems that support life
- Changes in the Earth's climate and sea level rise
- Pollution of the Earth system
- Rising food and water insecurity
- Nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction (rather than the threat of a military attack)
- Pandemics of a new and untreatable disease
- Increasing global economic inequality

The acute Covid19 crisis could be seen as a harbinger of the much more serious chronic climate crisis which is in danger of being pushed out of our minds. The huge financial

intervention by the Government to recover from the Covid-19 crisis is an opportunity to redirect our economy towards a ‘green recovery’ in a way which the market cannot do. Such an intervention could include:

- Reduce or mitigate the potential impact of the climate emergency e.g.
  - More investment in renewable energy,
  - Disincentivise air travel and fossil fuels,
  - investment in broadband in rural areas to support home working
- Increase self-sufficiency and reduce the need for international trade
- Increase support for international organisations such as UN, WHO
- Reduce inequality nationally and internationally
- Increase diversity in decision making
- Reduce and then eliminate our nuclear weapons
- Debt cancellation for poorer countries and recognition of historic environmental ‘loss and damage’

Governments have resisted many of these measures because they are perceived to be unpopular or impractical. But we note the ease with which major weapons manufacturers, such as Babcock, have been able to change their production facilities to make ventilators, despite the claim that eliminating nuclear weapons would cause mass unemployment. The crisis has shown that we are willing to put up with restrictions and give up habits, such as flying, which have long been taken for granted; it is now hard, for example, to see the extension to Heathrow Airport going ahead. It has also highlighted our willingness to think about the wider community and future generations and our essentially cooperative rather than competitive nature. The pandemic has also shown the value of much more self-sufficiency in food production and manufacturing, while at the same time working with international bodies such as the UN and WHO.

The question then is how we can bring these policies into being and avoid going back to the ‘old normal’. In the short term our political system mitigates against any democratic change. We have a government with a large absolute majority of members of parliament (although with a minority of votes) in place probably for the next 4 years at least. Could there perhaps be an alliance of progressive parties (Labour, SNP, Liberal Democrats and the Green Party) uniting around most of these policies – few of which they would oppose? Even the conservative government has shown it is willing to adopt policies which would have seemed heretical to it a few months ago. It is a question of whether the government is prepared to follow these policies through or whether it will revert to its traditional market-based approach after the pandemic has eased. What would be really devastating would be if it tried to persuade people to accept some form of austerity, particularly if, as with the previous austerity policy, it impacted most on the poorer sections of the community. Will the government also be willing to give up the unprecedented restrictions of our freedoms when they are no longer needed?

If we want change we do have tools: we can use non-violent direct action, familiar to many Quakers and used by Extinction Rebellion, which can be effective. We should also

remember we have Parliamentary Engagement Officers both in London and Edinburgh. They are in touch with politicians and civil servants and can spot opportunities for the Quaker voice to be heard.

One of the dangerous temptations is to believe everything was fine before the present disaster and we just need to return to things as normal. As one poster said, ‘normal was the problem’.

**Martin Mansell, Glasgow.**

## Sharing responsibility for our Quaker community

### Serving the Society, 2021 onwards

How can you help make our Meeting flourish? We know we all share responsibility for the Meeting for Worship. We all can share in the business of running the organisation through the “Meeting for Worship for Church Affairs”, our business meetings. We need people to offer to help with the various tasks which a well-run society needs to make it a genuine community. We don’t advertise. Instead, we meet in worship in the Area Meeting Nominations Committee to discern whose gifts match the posts that become vacant. And January 2021 marks the beginning of a new triennium, or three year period, for new appointments. It is grand if we have Friends able to serve three years, but these days that is quite a lot to ask, and it may often be possible to help out for a shorter period. You may be able to offer to work alongside another Friend, for instance, or help for a time to gain experience with a view to helping us later. The wider the pool of volunteers the better!

You may have taken part in group discussions of the various chapters of Quaker Faith & Practice which talk about service and the Society’s structure. There are lots of opportunities, some small, some more significant, for you to contribute. We need to harness the enthusiasm and the gifts we can all bring.

You really have to talk to someone. In your Local Meeting, why not find out who does what for our Society and ask them what is involved, and the rewards this service brings. Ask them to tell you their stories. I have carried out a variety of roles over the years and each time have learnt more about the Society and indeed myself, not to mention meeting some wonderful people.

But this is not for me, surely? But wait -

Me an overseer? I am not good enough - but wait, the Nominations Committee must think I have the gifts. Talk to an overseer in your Meeting.

Acting as representative to a conference in the spring. I'd love to go but... The meeting is looking for Friends to appoint to go, but will I find all those eager Friends a bit much? Again talk to those who may have gone on other occasions.

“Door duty” at your local meeting? Everyone loves to be welcomed as they arrive, and it is actually a very rewarding job - and we can all do it. Ask the door keeper or welcomer!

Training is often available for many of the responsibilities we undertake. And don't forget that the meeting pays the expenses of those who work for it.

One important aspect of being a community is supporting those whom we ask to carry out the different roles. Even if you are unable to offer service at this moment in time, please uphold those who have volunteered. We want our Society to be a caring and friendly community. Can you help us realise this aim?

**Robin Davis, Dunblane**

**Current membership, Area Meeting Nominations Committee:**

Elizabeth Anderton (Glasgow), Robin Davis (Dunblane) assistant clerk, John Lethbridge (Dumfries), Anne Macarthur (Castle Douglas), Ian Macdonald (Wigtown) clerk.

## Northern Friends Peace Board Meeting, Derby, Feb 2020

Northern Friends Peace Board met in Derby at the end of February, just about as far south in the Board area as you can get. Thanks are due to Derby Friends for making us very welcome and to Barbara and David for kindly providing me with accommodation. The board meeting was well attended by both representatives from Area Meetings and local meetings. The two major items in our morning discussions were both connected with 2020 being the seventy fifth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. We had some reflections on the historical and planned celebrations to commemorate Victory in Europe Day which marked the end of the war in Europe. These included a concern to remember all of the victims of war, an appreciation of the hope and optimism present at the founding of The United Nations and a wariness of triumphalist celebrations of victory. Our coordinator Philip Austin hopes to draw these reflections together later in the year.

The second item was about a play that has been written by Michael Mears. 'The Mistake' is a title taken from words on the Peace Memorial in Hiroshima. Michael is a well-known actor and playwright; some of you may have seen his earlier play 'This

'Evil Thing' which was about conscientious objectors in the First World War. The new work will be performed by Michael Mears and the Japanese performer You-Ri Yamanka; it will be directed by Jatinder Verma. As Michael says, 'The subject of Hiroshima and the events leading up to the first atomic bomb is one that I am passionate about – believing it be ever more important and relevant today, as tensions increase around the world.'

The play takes the interweaving stories of three people caught up in the story, Shigeo Nomura, a young woman in war-time Hiroshima, Leo Szilard a Hungarian born scientist working on creating the atomic bomb, and Paul Tibbets, the American pilot chosen to fly the plane that drops the bomb. Telling them uses verbatim testimonies and reminiscences from eyewitnesses.

Szilard 'How can I sleep - convinced that the world is now heading for grief.'

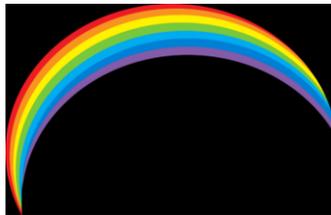
Shigeo 'Would you do it again if you have to?'

Tibbets 'Morality doesn't enter into it. There is no morality in war'

Unfortunately, some hoped for funding failed to materialise and there is now a crowd-funding campaign. More details are available at <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/the-mistake-a-play-about-hiroshima> . Planned performances of the play this summer at the Edinburgh fringe have now been postponed. The website says: 'We are all committed to bringing this new play about Hiroshima to performance as soon as is realistic. Meanwhile we will be looking at ways of putting some material connected to this project, some extracts from the play, perhaps, readings etc., online this summer as a 'taster' of things to come.'

This item tied in very well with plans being made by Perth Meeting. For the last two years we have organised a Hiroshima Day Peace walk in Perth from the Peace Pole outside the St Ninian's Episcopal Cathedral on Scott Street to the peace pole in the Rodney Gardens. In previous years it has been a modest event but still successful on its own terms. With this year being the seventy fifth anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing Perth Friends are hoping to organise a more substantial event including the involvement of other groups. Planning is at an early stage and as our ideas develop, we will keep Friends informed.

**Peter Cheer, Perth**



May Peace Prevail On Earth International  
Marking the 5th Anniversary of THE FUJI DECLARATION

The Fuji Declaration was inaugurated on May 17, 2015 at the Fuji Sanctuary with a timely message of Unity and Diversity in recognition of the inner Divine Spark.

The Core Principles of The Fuji Declaration are as vital today as they were five years ago especially in the midst of the existing planetary environment and the global pandemic.

Here is a message in the current global situation from one of the founder Dr. Ervin Laszlo:

#### PANDEMIC AS OPPORTUNITY

A global pandemic is an opportunity for global change — for rapid and effective change to a better world.

Even if some people are depressed and do not see the light at the end of the tunnel, the pandemic we are experiencing is temporary; it will pass into history as all the previous pandemics did. But the change it could bring may be lasting. It can be a change for the better, or a change for the worst. Making it a change for the better is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss.

We are in the midst of a “bifurcation”—the process scientists call a sudden forking in the evolutionary trajectory of complex dynamic systems. We are living the global systems-shift we have discussed and anticipated for years. We have learned a few things about such a shift. It is one-way, it cannot be reversed. But it is not predetermined—it allows choice. In a bifurcation, we can choose the way we go. This means that for the first time in history, we can consciously and purposefully choose our destiny. This could be a bright destiny; the dawn of a new era of sanity and flourishing. Whether it will be that is up to us, and only to us.

Bifurcation creates crisis, and crisis, we know, is both danger and opportunity. Either way, it is a prelude to change. The challenge is to choose the change that leads to a sane and flourishing world. This is a real but non-recurring opportunity. Failing to seize it means not just returning to where we have been—which is not possible in any case—but confronting the prospect of our collective demise. Because if we fail to change during the pandemic-triggered bifurcation, we leave ourselves open to the next crisis, and that is likely to be equally global, but not necessarily as temporary. The unsustainable processes we have created could reach fateful tipping points. We either evolve on this planet, or we leave the stage of history. This is a lesson we have learned on the level of theory. Now we are facing it in practice.

*Friends are angels that lift us to our feet when our wings have forgotten how to fly.*

## ARE WE RADICAL ENOUGH?

**Margaret Roy writes**, there is a mythology attached to Quakers by some that we are really with-it, adventurous types with innovative answers. That might have been the case once, as you will see exploring the Quaker Tapestry, but a few believe today that we live on our laurels.

My pet hate of Quakers is the ‘us and them’ mentality that pours scorn on those who disagree with us, and often fuels our actions. Basically it is hatred that can only be averse to love and denies our basic principle of seeking that of God in everyone – including D.Trump. I hate Quaker hatred. To me it is an absence of an ability to see more deeply, to understand, those who are different from us. Where does diversity and inclusivity start? In polarisation, we cannot see the common ground that is the Plain of Communication - it could be negotiation, empathy, discussion. Whatever. It is a meeting place.

Without respect for the other, we cannot reach across to find our common purpose, that which binds us. Without listening, we cannot walk forward together. I was at a Quaker business meeting recently where the ministry was clear and full of light but . . . despite our Quaker tradition, there was no listening space so the ministry was lost in the emotional muddle, sadly. How often does this happen? Ego reigns.

To be truly radical, we need to reach deep. One meaning of radical is to get down to the roots. To allow new growth and creative vision, we need to put aside the old clothes, ideas and strictures with the fear that binds us to them.

What might arise from the Light if we are open to the Spirit?

Below, some young, or newish, Friends look to see how our Quakerism can lead us into this new world after the Virus:

**Sylvia Wilkinson, Argyll writes . . .**

We are standing on the edge of a new world; this is where Quakers have often thrived and made their greatest contributions. Our discernment process has allowed us to drive for radical change with thorough, considered planning. We have to apply this now, and to question our concerns, discuss our methods, and share our thoughts in the spirit of worship. On that basis, I’m not going to offer my own ideas (and not just because I can’t figure out a way to do so without writing an entire manifesto!) but rather, a couple of points of caution to test your own leadings.

First: it is a bad habit of Friends throughout history to act as philanthropists. We (and I very much include myself) are often tempted to hold ourselves as the enlightened, educated few who will give help to the masses. This is something that has poisoned our radicalism and work since the beginning of the Society. Any work we do in light of this opportunity for change has to be done with the knowledge that we are not separate from the society we are

working with; we cannot consider ourselves more equipped to judge what's needed, or be blinded to the plank in our own eye when it comes to inequality, dogmatism, and injustice. We must work with, and on an equal footing with, the rest of our community, society, and species.

Second: we must strive to place the blame where it is due. While individual action is great, whether it's to be more environmentally friendly or to support people in need, we cannot give in to the temptation to hold individual action as the solution to any of the huge, systemic problems we face now. Any work we do going forwards to build a better world has to hold systems accountable, not to blame or judge individuals for "not doing enough". We have to look at the real culprits – capitalism, individualism, social power structures, systemic bigotry, and colonialism – and face up to the fact that, while we can't change them alone, those vast systemic problems are where change will actually make a difference.

Third, relatedly: we must be careful to avoid eco-fascist talking points. Be wary of anything that claims humanity is the real virus, or that depopulation will be a solution to environmental problems. Remember that any ideology that treats anyone as disposable will always and inevitably affect those at the bottom of the pile – the poor, marginalised, and struggling – and not the wealthy and privileged. We cannot write off humanity as a whole just because mistakes have been made.

Fourth: we must not be too cautious. Now is the time for utopian thinking, for grand designs, for wild philosophy. Now is the time to test our ideas – sit with them, discuss them, consider how they could come into practice. Consider what is most important, and what we can sacrifice for it. Consider what can and cannot be compromised on. Consider the limits of your own knowledge, and build on it. Many of us have an unprecedented opportunity now, in our spare time and loneliness, to read, to think, and to thresh out ideas and concerns. Now is the time to read Marx (actually, I recommend starting with Orwell, he's a lot easier and more relevant to the current situation). Now is the time to go online, to research work being done by other groups, to learn about other priorities and experiences, to study radical groups and projects of the past. I recommend the YouTubers "PhilosophyTube", "Shaun", and "ContraPoints", the website "Working Class History" (they have a Facebook page also!), and the journalist Rebecca Solnit (who you may know from the Guardian). We have the advantage of the Internet and modern connectivity; we can use this to educate ourselves, and build on our ideas and beliefs, and learn new approaches.

We are standing on the edge of the new world. Let's make it a good one.

### **Eleanor Haig, Glasgow writes . . . .**

I can't remember what I was hoping for when I came along to my first meeting for worship. Probably a life changing revelation. It has been more of a slow drip than that, but what keeps me coming back is a sense of strength - like an anchor, giving a solid base to work from. It's also a source of inspiration, and I often come away with a new perspective. I'm sure we've all been considering what kind of "normality" we want to build when the pandemic is over. I have environmental issues in the back of my mind, but for now my focus is on inclusion. I've

been thinking of people who routinely experience exclusion and isolation, for example through the lack of adjustments made to accommodate people with disabilities. During lockdown, access to culture and services has been expanded online. Work may be needed to stop progress being rolled back when the pandemic is over, and to keep building on it. I'm also thinking of those detained for indeterminate periods. We're all experiencing the horror of not knowing when a situation will end, and whether we should steel ourselves for weeks, months, or years. It seems inhumane to deliberately inflict that on people via the justice system or immigration policy. So I find myself looking into the work Quakers are doing in those areas and wondering where I can help.

*(Ed: I should say that Eleanor and Martin were limited to a paragraph!!!)*

### **Martin Hamilton, Glasgow writes . . .**

Hello, I'm Martin. I've been attending Glasgow Meeting for around a year, mostly Wednesdays and sometimes Sunday's with my wife Catherine and children Ivy and Henry. For me, Quakers is a space to explore spirituality without doctrine. And I want to say my family and I have been made most welcome, which is appreciated. I've found Meeting for Worship as a space for waiting.

I was asked about what difference I'd like to see once this 'virus' is over, but right now like many I am trying to grasp this situation without being overwhelmed. It is a great opportunity for change, and I feel in Quakerly fashion that has to begin with the self and inward change and renewal. I was led to a poem by T.S. Eliot and there's a part of it that helps me with where we find ourselves right now: "I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope, For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love, For love would be love of the wrong thing; there I yet faith, But the faith and the hope and the love and the hope are all in the waiting".

Hope to speak with you either virtually or hopefully in person in the near future.



*Ed Tyler, Argyll, sent in this article:*

I am researching how to tell the Universe-Story through 12 Scottish locations: locations which are abundant with rocks containing fossils which tell the 3 billion-year history of life on Earth.

The story tells of how and why life has become so rich and so abundant thanks to ever-increasing complexity.

The latest chapter in the story – dubbed Anthropocene – does not show the actions of humans in a good light.

What has this got to do with Quakerism? A lot, in my view, and also in the view of Maggie Taylor-Saunders, who in 2014 wrote a fascinating book called “Gathering our Senses”. In it she writes:

“Seeing a representation of our place in deep history of the Universe makes clear simultaneously our insignificance, our brevity, and the importance of all the previous steps in the evolution of life. It starkly demonstrates that while we are such a miniscule part of the story our capability for affecting our world – so much damage, in so little time –has brought much change to our fellow inhabitants. We are powerful beyond our place in the story and we need to feel the weight of the responsibility that brings, as well as recognise that we have the capability for tipping the balance in favour of the good.

“What we need to do now is to live a life that is actually coherent with our knowledge about the nature of the Universe. Over the last 100 years we have learned more about what life is than in all the rest of human history. We haven’t yet learned to live within that knowledge; in some ways we do not regard it as relevant to our personal lives. By using what we know about the Universe to make it into The Story will enable us to see who we are, where we are and what it is we are meant to do as individuals, as nations, as a species.” *Gathering our Senses*, Maggie Taylor-Saunders

I also refer to a comment in Quaker Faith and Practice:

“If we can move our human-sized viewpoint and look instead at the cosmic viewpoint, there is a sudden and dramatic widening of the lens through which we look . . . our human story, far from being diminished, is incorporated into the whole drama of an emerging universe.” Grace Bindell, 1992, QF&P 29.18.

We are talking here of a story that accords to the zeitgeist. There are many younger folk in the West nowadays who would like to adopt a spiritual outlook but feel hindered in this because the spiritual is still considered the preserve of religious organisations. However, the young are suspicious/hostile to religion partly because it had for centuries (by and large) been anti-science – but they themselves consider science has brought them great benefits.

The Universe Story is a new way to make sense of our amazing, incredible, unfolding Universe. It does not feature God – at least, a God who is in charge. God the Creator. Therefore, it’s up to us. When the Evolution Story emerged nearly 170 years or so ago, it

must have been a huge shock to Believers (Darwin included), especially as it was interpreted then as “Nature Red in tooth and claw”. Nowadays a far more nuanced approach has emerged, with most scientists agreeing that symbiotic relationships play an important role. It is not just about competition.

Quakerism has modern relevance because it holds that one’s individual actions are important.. In other words, that it is up to us.

I am hopeful that in the current revision to QF&P, language will be questioned when it “others” the natural world, i.e. treats it as an object, even if the language is well-meant and talks about our responsibilities in terms of “stewardship” and the like.

Personally, I think our language, as Quakers, should reflect this. In my view it is not being anthropomorphic. How we actually go about this and create a “Grammar of Animacy” as Robin Wall Kimmerer so eloquently puts it, well that’s another question!

References: Maggie Taylor-Saunders *Gathering our Senses*.  
Robin Wall Kimmerer *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

*Here are another two initiatives for our times: the first is the Building Sustainable Markets project, inaugurated by the Prince of Wales, the second is the Jimmy Reid Foundation, Commonwealth suggestions for a sustainable Scottish economy. The full script can of course be obtained from their website.*

## **BUILDING SUSTAINABLE MARKETS**

*produced for World Economic Forum, committed to improving the state of the world.*

### **A critical decision**

We stand at a critical juncture. Behind us are some 50 years of dramatic and unprecedented progress in human indicators: Never in human history have so many people been lifted out of poverty; life expectancy has increased to record levels; infant and maternal mortality have fallen; more girls are attending, and staying in, school than ever before; and inequality between nations has narrowed. On so many levels, ours has been a market system that has served us well. But deep fractures in the system are beginning to show. Unless we act now, the price for all this progress may prove much too high, ultimately driving us backwards.

And what has been this price? A gaping inequality that has increased dramatically within almost all countries. And income inequality is not the only by-product of today’s progress. We see record environmental degradation, loss of species at unprecedented rates – last estimated at 200 species a day – severe stress on food systems and on water, massive deforestation and the collective impact of irreversible climate change. This is the “new normal”, where short-term interests have eclipsed long-term value. Today, our markets are unsustainable. We need a new economic model.

### **A New Economic Model**

Imagine if we could take those benefits the market system has given us and mitigate the downside risks. Imagine if the financial system could become part of the solution. Imagine if

corporates focused as much on consumers, workers and society as they do on shareholder value. Imagine if the international development community could work together, pooling their activities, to support the rule of law, good governance and investment in developing economies. Imagine if consumers had the ability to easily exercise choices that make sense for people and the planet. Imagine if governments and business focused on long-term outcomes that serve future generations, with the harmony of people and nature at the core. Imagine if, instead of just GDP, we measured human happiness, natural capital health, elderly loneliness and community resilience.

*The headlines of other paragraphs include:*

*A dramatic shift in corporate business models, An aligned, incentivised and mobilised financial system, An enabling environment that attracts, Above all action.*

*Some key words and concepts used are:*

*Behavioural economists now believe that the entire premise of classical economics . . . is wrong (self-interested),*

*Inclusivity, equable, green and profitable where sustainable principles drive growth, Integration and balance of natural, social, human and financial capital, “blue ocean” opportunities.*

***Precautions are noted:***

There are dangers as well as opportunities here. The danger of greenwashing, or impact-washing; the danger that public relations becomes a substitute for meaningful action; the danger that disconnected piecemeal initiatives fail to deliver scale or critical mass; the danger of unintended consequences – that incentives or tax regimes work not to deliver a purposeful capitalism but undermine the end we hope to reach.

To move towards sustainable markets, we have identified three broad areas of practical action:

1. A dramatic shift in corporate business models
2. An aligned, incentivized and mobilized financial system
3. An enabling environment that attracts investment and incentivizes action

### **Above all, action**

As we pause to reflect on our trajectory, we must recognize that we have a choice – a choice to continue on our current path or shift to a more sustainable one. This choice brings with it immense opportunity: to put people and planet at the heart of global value creation; to create new markets and technologies; to explore moonshot innovation and disruptive solutions for our most intractable challenges; to develop new partnership models that deliver more rapid and sustainable results; and to ensure that human aspiration can be sustained for millennia to come.

Choosing sustainability does not require us to sacrifice profit but asks us to broaden our assessment of capital, assets and their value while exploring how to optimize for wider global

and future benefit. As demand for sustainability increases, remaining competitive will hinge on the ability to demonstrate contributions to, and alignment with, sustainable goals. Incremental steps will not get us to our destination. It is time for bold leadership and determined action. Each one of us has a role to play – we must simply decide if we will be early adopters or the late majority. Critically, to move forward at pace, we need a sustainability revolution – rooted in purposeful capitalism and sustainable markets – and we need it now.

*Contact For more information, contact:*

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## **THE COMMONWEAL**

The Common Weal a model for economic and social development in Scotland. It was developed by the Jimmy Reid Foundation.

For 30 years public policy in the UK and in Scotland (though to a lesser extent) has been based on one fundamental principle; that markets should drive economic and social development, that conflict and competition are the primary drivers for that development and that the role of the state is to protect those markets and ameliorate the impact of their failings. Concepts such as that society should guide economic and social development, that development should be driven by mutuality and that the role of the state is to express the democratic will of citizens in guiding that development has been driven out of UK politics. The current debate about Scotland's future has opened up a window to economic and social models outside the UK. There is much that we can learn from them. Many aspects of the Nordic countries, many aspects of economies such as those of Germanic countries, aspects of the large-scale cooperative model in many parts of Europe and other lessons from abroad are now informing Scottish debate. What we see in all these cases is that economic performance and social outcomes greatly outstrip the UK.

There has been much talk about how to achieve a 'more Nordic' Scotland. It is important to note that not only Nordic countries have things to teach Scotland and also that the Nordic countries themselves are very different. It is also important to note that they developed in a particular context so there is no 'standard' set of practices and policies which will make a country more 'Nordic'. However, drawing conclusions about what they and others do well provides the startingpoint for an alternative model of how Scotland might move forward. It is here referred to as the 'Common Weal', a distinctively Scottish version of the type of society that has been achieved in the Nordic area. This short note suggests a 'spine' of the key economic and social transformations that are needed to move towards a Common Weal vision. It is not prescriptive and is not 'owned' by anyone. It is a model for mutual development, onto which many other transformative ideas can be built.

So for example, a Common Weal Scotland would place a strong emphasis on issues such as a diverse and high quality media, a strong arts and cultural identity, a transformed approach to education, new attitudes to transport and urban planning, careful management of natural resources and the environment and so on. Developing all of these and more represent work ahead for those who support a Common Weal vision for Scotland.

But first there must be a fundamentally new approach to the economy and public governance. What can we learn from the ‘Nordic Social and Economic Model’

The first thing to make clear is that each of the countries generally considered ‘Nordic’ (Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and to a lesser extent Iceland) are very different from each other and have widely varying profiles in areas such as forms of taxation, structure of the economy, employment rights and so on. However, there are some basic aspects which are consistent:

- Income and wealth inequality are low and social cohesion is high
- Pay is higher, poverty is very low and a much lower proportion of jobs are in unskilled, routine sectors
- Total tax take is higher and this enables significant redistribution and strong public services but without endemic debt and deficit
- The welfare state is strong and public services are extensive, well funded and generally universally available
- Finance is seen as a means of sustaining industry and providing financial security for individuals, not as a speculative means of profit maximisation
- Economies are diverse with a much more balanced portfolio of industry sectors, much more emphasis on product innovation, a much larger medium sized industry sector exists, there is a much more diverse ownership profile (including more extensive public and community ownership and cooperatives), and a much more mutual and coordinated approach to economic development is taken
- Society is generally more inclusive with better gender and other equality in politics, on boards of governance, in leadership positions etc.
- There is an assumption that active democracy is beneficial for all, whether that is a very highly democratic structure of local government or industrial democracy that values the input of employees in the governance of enterprises.

Steps to achieve this:

### **Transition One:** Tax Reform and inequality

While there are different forms of tax across the Nordic nations with different balances between labour, corporation and consumption taxes, the consistent pattern is that they take a larger proportion of their GDP in tax. This both enables stronger public services and (through the redistributive effect of taxes) much greater social and economic equality. However, this is combined with higher pay and much less prevalence of low-skill, low-pay work, which means that even with higher taxes, people have higher take home pay. . . .

### **Transition Two:** Folkshemmet: a different approach to welfare

In the Nordic countries the phrase ‘Folkshemmet’ is used to refer to what we call the welfare state. The literal translation is ‘the People’s Home’, which outlines a very different attitude to welfare than the one developing in Britain. To move in that direction, Scotland should set out a set of criteria to underpin the welfare state – that public services and cash benefits are part of one seamless system, that this is then delivered on universalist principles of from the cradle to the grave and from each according to ability to pay to each according to need etc. This should then be redefined not as a relationship between the state and the people but a contract between the people themselves, delivered through the state. . .

### **Transition Three: Finance**

The UK finance sector has completely failed the economy. Scotland needs a proper national investment bank for industry. However, just as important as establishing such a bank is getting its governance right – it must be run on mutual principles (including all stakeholders in the economy working together to set long-term strategic approaches) and must under all circumstances be prevented from drifting into a role similar to the existing banks (run on the lines of profit maximisation). This should be linked to national strategies for industry development. The investment bank should look very seriously at using pension funds as a foundation for creating investment capacity. . .

### **Transition Four: Ownership**

The ownership of Britain’s industry is monolithic and by many measures, failing. It has led to a massive ‘hollowing-out’ in the middle of the employment spectrum with the dominance of lowpay sectors (often large foreign-owned multinationals) at one end and high-pay ‘executive’ jobs at the other with little in between. There are pitiful levels of investment in research and development and staff development and a general lack of long-term reinvestment.

Reversing this requires a much more diverse economic ownership profile. More domestically owned medium sized enterprises with a long-term ownership strategy focused on innovative and productive enterprise (along the lines of the German Mittelstand industries) are key to this. . .

### **Transition Five: Economic Diversification**

It is essential that the unbalanced and unproductive UK economy is diversified in Scotland. The massively damaging impact of over-reliance on financial services is now well known and the social and economic dangers of over-reliance on the housing market are also understood. The retail and personal services sectors are also much too large in Scotland and must also be diversified (these are a large part of the structural cause of low pay).

The key sector is the medium sized enterprise sector. Scotland’s economy should of course continue to seek inward investment but unless industrial strategies can develop a strong, productive, innovative domestic economy, economic precariousness and low-skill, low-wage employment will continue to dominate. . . .

### **Transition Six: Democracy and Governance**

The concept of participative democracy and diversified governance are important to the strategic themes outlined above.

## Conclusion

... the concept of Common Weal is broad and can encompass different ideas and different approaches. However, it's very basis is that it is not simply a different version of what we have now. The last five years in the UK were simply a story of repeating the same mistakes from before. Without a fundamental change in our behaviour, we are going to continue to repeat the same mistakes indefinitely. . .

## EXPLORING PATRIARCHY - Report of Zoom Meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

*Seven gathered of us gathered by zoom after the meeting face to face had to be cancelled. We were lead by Verene Nicolas. This meeting was intended as an open discussion leading into a special West Scotland Area Meeting.*

After introducing ourselves and our interest in the concern, Verene helped us clarify what 'qualifies' for a Quaker concern, what AM would likely be helping us to discern about, and what we would want to bring to AM on Sept 19<sup>th</sup> as a result. She then lead us to look at what we meant by Patriarchy (see attached word document with definitions):

1. PATRIARCHY IS A SYSTEM with all sorts of ramifications including A SET OF STRUCTURES.

There are inherent blue prints as to how we create and organise power.

It encompasses a worldview that arranges how we live with each other on this planet and how we relate to the planet.

There are guidelines re what is done with the young and how the values are inculcated/educated.

It is NOT inherent in human nature.

2. PATRIARCHY IS UNCOMFORTABLE TO MOST MEN – 'there is fear of the pain involved in oppression'.
3. PATRIARCHY IS THE ORIGINAL SEPARATION.

It's because of patriarchy that men dominate women, white people oppress people of colour, humans dominate nature etc. The word 'patriarchy' itself is controversial. Men in particular (and some women) find it very uncomfortable because patriarchy is commonly regarded as the oppression of women by men. However, its etymology means 'the rule of the father', not the 'rule of men'. what's crucial to understand is that it's the father principle that is controlling and oppressive (hence why 'patriarchy') as once social and gender structures started to change at the onset of patriarchy, men started to want to be certain of who their children were (so that they could pass on their possession). This meant they had to control women.

Alternative names to this system include 'domination system' (ref. theologian Walter Wink).

FEMINISM was seen by some as A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE.

The MOTHER principle is defined as the willingness to take care of all needs with no expectation for return.

During the discussion we spoke of the weakness of vocabulary and the multiple meanings attached to some words.

KEY ELEMENTS AROSE DURING THE DISCUSSION

What is oppression? What form does it take?

Making the invisible visible. How do we recognise oppression when blinded within patriarchal structures?

What are the hidden underlying structures? Do we need to look at mechanisms : decision making, communication, ways of holding power, involving all.

What is separation? How is it expressed spiritually, or in our relationship with Nature, in climate change and sustainability?

Quakerism is an experiential religion, not theoretical. How can we serve this?

Our role = informing, uncovering, exploring, focussing. Experiment with Light may be one of the best mechanisms we have but it needs developed beyond Gendlin's Focussing.

How do we empower to own our own power? How do Quaker structures support or confuse this?

There is much to be further explored and participants spoke of various papers they have found informative.

A data bank may be relevant to share resources and inspiration.

SO WHAT CAN WE TAKE TO AREA MEETING?

Michael H explained *What is a concern?*

Those holding it as impelled by (God) to act where the concern leads.

Area Meeting discerns and tests whether it is valid. Whilst it may be recognised it need not be adopted.

Going forward from (or to) Area Meeting may give rise to questions, ideas or projects.

ARE THERE ANY ANSWERS YET?

Is it all about discussion? Can it be real? IS THAT THE TASK?

From our discussion there were implicit understandings, bits to ponder over.

HOW DO WE GO FROM THEORY TO EXPERIENCE?

How can we accept protest against nuclear weapons, social inequality, racism and the exploitation of nature yet not raise a hair re the actual facts of violence against women?

STEP 1. To inform and expose.

STEP 2. Do we presume change – How do we achieve it? IS THIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION?

DO WE CONSIDER THE STRUCTURES WITHIN QUAKERS?

If patriarchy is *hierarchy*, how do Quaker structures reflect this?

What is *separation* in this context?

Dualism of belief and perspective – DISCUSS AND EXPOSE. Examine and link structures/ explore attitudes.

Alternatives to Violence Project can help??? Nonviolent communication???

## A VISION

A society without hierarchy– there are plenty of ‘natural hierarchies’ in nature and the world in general (based on complexity of the life force for e.g. or experience/competencies). The Vision for humans may instead be of a society where everyone’s needs matter (including nature’s)– all involved/contained and immersed in a community expanded to include the natural world/ arising from the natural world(?). There are many other types of social structure, e.g. Celtic.

All ‘equal’ but diverse and valued for individual gifts and talents. Seeing that of God in the Other.

Sense of community encompassing the individual.

HOW IS THIS RELATED TO SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE?

HOW DO OUR TESTIMONIES INFORM US?

Can we clarify this to questions to take to Area Meeting?

Do we need a workshop to further explore these?

There is an ‘old’ Quaker ethos of self-improvement. A religion that transforms us.

How do we empower ourselves to live in our own skin?

*We are looking for feedback on these thoughts. If you have any, or wish to attend the follow-up meeting in July, contact Margaret Roy.*

**Mary Wollstonecraft (1759 – 97):** I do not wish them (women) to have power over men, but over themselves.

## Effects of COVID 19 and current lockdown on women.

**Femicide Research:** Elizabeth Yardley, Associate Professor of Criminology and Director of the Centre for Applied Criminology at Birmingham City University spoke on this subject on Women’s Hour on Radio 4 recently.

Between 22<sup>nd</sup> March and 12<sup>th</sup> April, the first three weeks of lockdown, there were 16 murders of women as a result of domestic violence – *figures from Counting Dead Women Group*. The interview discussed possible causative factors, looking at unemployment, type of job, age and wealth factors. There had previously been little research on the subject so current research is looking at patterns. On the whole this is sought in the public domain, i.e. through the courts.

Some facts that emerge: the perpetrator is usually older than the victim, most victims are between mid 20s to 30/40 years old, victims are overrepresented in the caring professions

whilst the majority of perpetrators are unemployed. And the bigger picture showed convictions were for man slaughter.

Some other observations reflected Helena Kennedy's work re the inequality and injustice to women in the British Justice system. These include the stereotyping of victims – blame, why couldn't she protect herself and just leave. Re the latter, Kennedy pointed out the little problems of children and losing tenancy if in a Women's Aid Shelter. There are many hang-overs from patriarchy! However, the programme brought out another aspect, i.e. that these days the defence is often 'rough sex'.

The problem with lockdown is that with the isolation there is less access to scrutiny from friends and family.

Currently there is a bill going through Westminster on Rough Sex and Domestic Abuse. Is it going far enough?

**Women more likely victims of the current economic situation:** *Close the Gap* is a Scottish Advocacy group for women's labour market equality. It reports that women are more likely to lose their jobs especially as pre-existing inequalities already see them in lower paid roles in the service sector – accommodation, food and retail – that are impacted by consumer spending power, tourism and changing consumer preferences. Women's work in social care and childcare is undervalued. If we are not to return to the same status quo after the economy picks up then special attention needs paid to women in the labour market.

The same report drew attention to the greater impact of the lockdown on women who have to balance childcare, home learning whilst still being expected to do their job at home.

## Amma Birth Companions - celebrating our first year!

I am a retired midwife and health visitor and have been involved in working with Amma as a mentor and facilitator. It has been a privilege to be a member of the team.

A full year has passed since Amma became part of Scotland's charity sector—and what a year it has been. In the space of 12 months, we've welcomed 15 dedicated birth companions to our team; supported nearly 30 women through pregnancy, birth and early motherhood; and been inspired by the many individuals and organisations who have championed our work. We support unsupported refugee and asylum seeking mothers in Glasgow.

"Amma for me is the fulfilment of an idea which was born back in 2017. I couldn't have envisioned then where we are today, nor could I have known that so many amazing people would become a part of who we are today. My idea was to replace myself as I was more or less working alone and feeling unable to keep up the support that was needed for so many women who found themselves pregnant and alone in a foreign country.

And here we are. It is our first birthday of being a recognised Scottish charity and what was an idea is well and truly a reality. We couldn't have wished for a more caring and loving

group of women to have come together to support and care for the many women who have been, and still are, in need.

Thank you so much to all of our volunteers, birth companions, mentors and our committee, without whom, Amma wouldn't be where we are today. I would love to shout out everyone's name but that would take too long, but you know your name and the part that you have played. Thank you so very much for being the caring people that you are and for making Amma a reality. You make my heart sing."

### **Helen, Co-founder of Amma**

In the weeks that have passed since the World Health Organisation declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) a global pandemic, we have all experienced the knock-on effects of this unprecedented public health crisis. Life under lockdown is tough on all of us.

But for the people in our community who already face barriers like poverty and isolation, the effects of the COVID-19 crisis are truly devastating. This includes many of the refugee and asylum seeking women currently supported by Amma, for whom it is especially difficult to prepare for a period of prolonged isolation or illness.

Get yourself a cuppa and a box of hankies and take a look at our celebration page

<https://www.ammabirthcompanions.com/post/celebrating-our-first-ammaversary?fbclid=IwAR3ecFjLtKSoG-JCS3PYN9ZSIBHEKxsckI1vRxs4UO9Y4C1sNYb5xrxKOTQ>

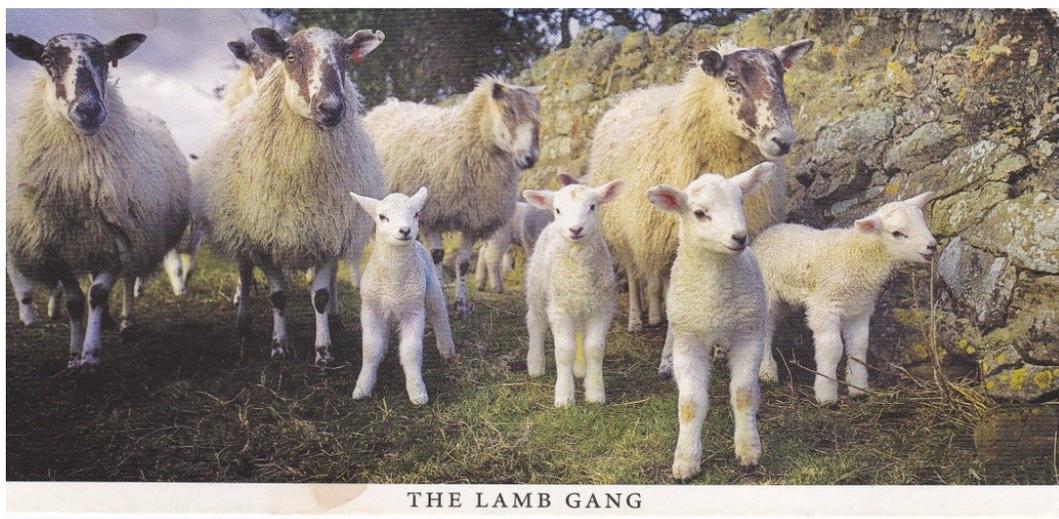
Have a look at our website and Facebook pages for more information.

We will be training more Birth Companions this year.

Facebook Amma Birth Companions @ammabirthcompanions

Website ammabirthcompanions.com

**Mary Kennedy Mentor and Facilitator with Amma**



## Friends sharing . . . .

**Bill Bingham, Glasgow** writes

### **And It Came To Pass.....**

When I was a small boy playing in the street with my pals, we suddenly became aware of the setting sun. I lived in a very long, straight, street, not far from the Quaker graveyard in Partick.

The sun was settling very low on the horizon. We stopped our play and became transfixed. The Great Ball appeared very big and very red and it seemed to us as if it was ‘touching’ the buildings on either side of the street and that it was ‘resting’ on the street itself.

An older boy then told me that this was a ‘sign’ that the earth was coming to an end and, in fact, the sun was dying. I was terrified and went to bed that night very scared indeed, and wondered if I’d ever see another day with my friends and my family. That was 75 years ago and I’m happy to report that the sun is still shining!

I have, over the years, learned to be very ‘mindful’ of what ‘big boys’ (authority figures) have to say, for in so many cases they have been proven to be wrong. They once told us that the world we inhabit was flat and that the sun moved around the earth. We now know that these notions were false, and that the truth-tellers ( Copernicus, Gallileo, Giordano Bruno etc.) were correct and that they were each unjustly condemned for saying otherwise. In fact the Franciscan, Giordano Bruno, was burned to death in Rome for telling us; “There are many more worlds other than this one.”

Giordano was right of course and the ‘authorities’ who murdered him were wrong. When we don’t understand things let’s say so, and concede that there is nothing ‘wrong’ with that. The real tragedy is that those who killed Giordano Bruno did so in God’s name, and we have all witnessed much ‘killing in God’s name’ recently. Enough already !

Today we have a pandemic, and this is not for the first time. In fact we have had recurring dis-ease for many centuries. The difference now of course is that we have the insights of medical science to guide us in our efforts to confront and to help us to deal rationally with what ails us.

I know that many Friends are not keen on Biblical quotes, and for very good reason, because the Bible has often been used in the past to justify some terrible crimes. “You shall not suffer a witch to live.” (Book of Isaiah) meant that thousands of innocent women across the length and breadth of Europe were judicially murdered by the ‘authorities’ only just a few centuries ago.

There is however one statement that the Bible makes repeatedly that very much appeals to me, and it is this ; “And it came to pass.....”

Covic19 is here and Covic19 will pass. When that happens I might not be around to see it, but of this I’m hopeful. Humanity will finally realise that we are one people, on one tiny planet. This planet is our home and we had better learn fast how to look after it and to be aware of the ‘authority figures’ who have led us astray in the past.

We can call ourselves Quaker, Jew, Muslim, or whatever else we like, but in the final analysis we will discover that we are each of us simply Children of the Creation. I will sleep well in my bed tonight!

**Harvey Gillman** writes

In this week's Quaker magazine, Joe Jones, the editor ended an article with the words: "Our first responsibility, then, is to grieve".

The following words came to me so strongly that I feel I should like to share them:

Yes, I grieve, not out of duty, or because I feel I ought, but because I am part of the cycle of things, their pain, their birth, their death.

Yes, I grieve each evening at 6 pm when the news begins again, when tired faces speak the facts they cannot understand, when the numbers fall upon me like lava from an inevitable volcano.

Yes, I grieve, and touch my partner's hand, and think, so far, yes, we have reached so far. We, for the time being, are here.

Yes, I grieve, for the numbers I cannot comprehend, and the faces I have never known, the names I do not recognise, and the ones who love them, loved them and called their names.

Yes, I grieve, for those who visit my mind from the rooms of almost oblivion, who have touched my life, and I wonder....

Yes, I grieve already that when we leave this house of confinement, we may meet again the old greed, bitterness, the fears that we have known so often in the old world.

Yes, I grieve, at the old walls, fences, frontiers, grieve that our hopes maybe snatched from us, dashed to earth.

Yes, I grieve, but at this time I also know that grief is a sign of love, and that love can give birth to hope, and that without hope we cannot live.

I grieve, therefore I love.

I love, therefore I hope.

I can do no other.

## **Midday Prayer**

**By Pdraig O Tuama**

We break from the doings of our day  
and make space to notice you.

You are always with us  
in surprising guises.

Jesus of the flesh, we meet you in  
worker and friend,  
stranger and pilgrim.  
the needy and the needed,  
the questioner and the questioned.

So when we meet you,  
may we deepen trust,  
deepen life, deepen justice  
and deepen joy.

And when you meet us,  
help us approach our activities  
with presence and power,  
with love and humility,  
with courage and dignity.  
Amen



## **A Glasgow Childhood**

When ah wis a wean, ah went tae the park,  
An' played wi' a fitba' until it wis dark.  
An' then a went hame, tae ma drunken aul' Da,  
Who hit me a skelp, an' fought wi' ma Ma.  
Ah went tae the Kirk, they said ah wis bad,  
An' God up above, wis jist like ma dad,

If ah didnae' dae, whitever He said,  
Ah wid end up in hell, an' be rightfully paid.  
Wi' a' that abuse, it's a wunn'er ah'm sane,  
Whit a hell'uva w'y, tae bring up a wean!

But when ah wis big ah thought, stuff this fur a lark,  
Ah wish ah wis back, wi ma pals in the park!  
Ah canny go back 'cause ye see ah'm too auld,  
Mah legs are aw stiff, an' ma heid it is bald.  
But ah still return, (and often I do ),  
Though ma memory's faded, ma hert is is still true.  
Tae wee Cherlie an' Tam an' the brithers McNab,  
Who played wi' a ba' , in the City sae drab.  
Ah sometimes reflect, oan why things should be so,  
In this troubled auld world, (or are we doon below' ?)  
Huv we lived 'afore, an' are back fur auld deeds?  
Ye'd hiv' tae be mad, tae follow they creeds!

Ah sensible thing, the Lord wance said mild,  
Ye'd better no' herm, whit ah ca' ma Child.  
T'wid be better fur ye, if ye drooned in the sea,  
Ye'd better know that, if yer comin' wi me!  
Noo often ah've wondered, whit is it we've done?  
Wi' the teachin's o' Him, they said wis God's Son.  
Tae threaten a wean, is no' whit He said,  
If you believe that, then yer hert's surely dead.  
For Love wis His plan, (and it always has been).  
If you kin learn that, you'll be BORN AGAIN!

**Bill Bingham Glasgow**

## **Our healing ministry**

How different is Jesus from Paul, the founder of Christianity as we know it? Some might say he was trying to teach a purer form of Judaism that was not influenced by the Dualism of Hellenic philosophy. So many arguments and perspectives but one thing is clear: he was a healer. *These things that I do shall you do also, and greater things than these because I go to my father.* The early Quakers did many things in imitation of Jesus. A recent book resurrects George Fox's healing ministry as such acts were at the time suppressed!

How do we heal? Well, for a start, it is not us who heal but the spirit acting through us. What does that mean? We might first ask, what is disease but a corruption of the template of our existence? Working in hospitals, one becomes acutely aware that some overcome illness whilst some don't and some are slow to heal whilst others are fast healers. There is something within . . .

Spiritual healing is strengthening that within. Energy flows so even in the laying on of hands, the energy flows into the needy like osmosis. But there is a key! It is an aware but passive process. The healer steps away from the WILL, stands in the Light and brings the person to mind, in the Light. Living in the Light we are strengthened and strengthen one another.

**Phillida Ball, Glasgow**

### **New books in Glasgow library**

*How to argue with a racist.* Adam Rutherford. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2020. 224p

*Roaring girls: the forgotten feminists of British history.* Holly Kyte. HQ, 2019. 464p.

*The case for the new green deal.* Ann Pettifor. Verso Books, 2019. 208p.

*A travelling Quaker writes. Vol. 1.* Dewi Heald. Dream Jellyhouse, 2019. 148p.

*Can I tell you about gratitude?: a helpful introduction for everyone.* Liz Gulliford. Jessica Kingsley, 2018. 64p

*Can I tell you about forgiveness?: a helpful introduction for everyone.* Liz Gulliford. Jessica Kingsley, 2018. 72p.

*Can I tell you about hope?: a helpful introduction for everyone.* Liz Gulliford. Jessica Kingsley, 2019. 72p.

*Can I tell you about courage?: a helpful introduction for everyone.* Liz Gulliford. Jessica Kingsley, 2019. 64p.

The *Can I tell you about?* series is aimed at 7 - 18-year olds to help them and their parents understand these concepts and to "celebrate them in daily life".

## Book Review: The Secret Life of Cows, Rosamund Young Faber and Faber, 2003, 2017

This is one of my treasures that I keep wanting to give to friends but can't bear to be parted from. You could read it over and over and it would still light a bright fire in your heart.

It is the story of how cows behave on a farm that is more than organic. It is as close to nature as you can get perhaps with mixed age groups and in some cases no gates and free flow between fields and animals. And yet, it is still productive and economic, perhaps even more so. However, what struck me most was the respectful relationship between the humans and the animals, the acknowledgement of the animal's intelligence and individual difference:

*Calves play games together, copying and learning constantly. They learn where the best and sweetest water is to be found and how to nibble young shoots on the hedgerows. Like cats and dogs and people, and I suppose every other creature, calves learn whom they can trust. A calf will settle itself down under the nose of an older animal only if it knows it will not be bullied. Some bovines are bossy; they seem to need to maintain an air of dominance, even if only by an unprovoked and often fairly gentle push, while others are always good-tempered and some are quite timid. Everything in a herd of cows comes down to character: a polled cow can often deter a horned one with a mere look.*

My favourite story is of the Dorothys. Copying out bits of their story will give you the best flavor of the book and of the success of a practice that has much to commend it:

*As a general rule a female bovine will not give birth for the first time before she was twenty-four months old. When Little Dorothy had her first calf she was only fifteen months and still suckling from her own mother.*

*Long before we realized she was in calf, Little Dorothy had decided she needed extra food. We would find her in all sorts of unusual places eating hay. She was small and neat and one night she spent in great comfort and solitude underneath a trailer that had hay both on top of and underneath it. The trailer was parked on a roadway that runs through the farm and all the other animals were confined to barns and fields.*

How did she get there?



*The main gate, which opened on to the road from the field where the Dorothy family lived, was secured by a rope loop that hooked over the shutting post. It seemed like a good fastening, and allowed the gate to be securely open or securely closed depending on the situation.*

*Either Little Dorothy had watched how we fastened it or she had worked it out for herself. . . It always swung to again behind her, which was why no other animals had followed and why everything had looked in order each morning. . . she could push her way in again to see her mother and then go back once more to the trailer.*

After giving birth Little Dorothy did not have sufficient milk for her calf so Very Little Dorothy had to have bottle supplements from another cow.

*There was grass in the fields and both Dorothys ate like caterpillars all day, but it was necessary to bring the new arrival home in order (to bottle feed her). The tiny calf understood the routine immediately but her mother (still a teenager by human standards) found it incredibly boring to walk all the way home when what she wanted to do was eat grass out in the fields with her friends.*

*To begin with Little Dorothy absolutely refused to come in without her mother so Old Dorothy and Luke (her new calf) came too. We had not considered the possibility of walking the 'baby' home without her mother but it soon became apparent that Very Little Dorothy was perfectly happy to walk home with her grandmother. Little Dorothy therefore maintained her former life style and although she loved her calf she quite forgot all about her, leaving her with grandma for increasingly long periods.*

*Before Very Little Dorothy was three weeks old she had shown herself to be wise beyond her age. She knew why she came home and was perfectly happy to come alone, like a tiny tot being sent shopping with a purse and a list to hand over at the counter of the corner shop. Very Little Dorothy became a fixture in the cow sheds at night, preferring to sleep with the older house cows, eat hay at the rack like a grown up and wander out in the morning to find her mother for her breakfast.*

*Gradually, Little Dorothy began to take more responsibility for her daughter and as her milk-producing ability improved they spent more and more time together until the bottles of milk were politely but firmly refused.*

And so many more stories of how cows look after each other but don't forget the underlying message that our relationship with animals could be much more respectful. They have much to teach us.

**Margaret Roy, Glasgow**



## Finding out more about Quakers



**New to Quakers?**

**Want to explore Quaker worship?**

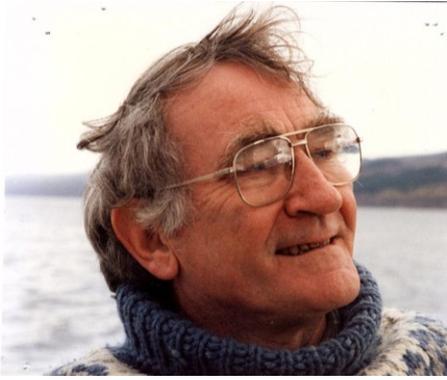
**Want to find out more about how we are organised.**

Quakers in Scotland are organising a **Zoom Meeting** for people who know little or nothing about Quakers, and for those who have been around Quakers a while and want to explore further.

Discover more about Quaker beliefs, experience Quaker worship and hear from Quakers how they live their lives.

Come and join the conversation by joining the **Zoom Meeting** on **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 10.30am until 3pm (with a break for lunch).**

For more information email [gillreid3@btinternet.com](mailto:gillreid3@btinternet.com)



## **BILL AGNEW**

Bill Agnew moved up to Dumfries in December 1987 and immediately came to Dumfries Meeting having joined the Quakers when he lived in Hitchin. He rarely missed our Sunday worship if he was at home & he was enthusiastic about our Quaker family weekends away when we were all younger & had children. Bill enjoyed being controversial & liked to stir us up to get us to think

laterally. He had a wonderful sense of humour, was a great asset to the Meeting & he served for several years as an Elder.

Bill was proud to have been born & attended school in Glasgow. He married Nan & had two much loved daughters. After the Second World War he became a pilot with the Royal Air Force in England & flew planes here & in Canada for several years. He then became a Management Consultant for Ferrari before he took retirement & moved back to Scotland to Lochmaben in December 1987.

He studied the Alexander Technique for 3 years in Kendal & then practiced this for many years locally. He spent several months in Martha's Vineyard in the U.S.A. & then 25 years ago had time in Northern Ireland

Bill and Jenny Lane had a Quaker wedding in Dumfries in 2006 & they enjoyed their life together & being part of the community at Lochmaben. They often hosted our monthly house Meetings followed by a shared picnic lunch. We all enjoyed these Meetings with the beautiful views we had looking over the Loch & the friendly chat round the table afterwards.

Eighteen months ago Bill had a stroke leaving him with poor physical & mental health & he lost his 'sparkle'. He & Jenny still came to Meeting almost every Sunday & we looked forward to his welcoming smile & quiet presence. It was a shock when we heard he had fallen & he died peacefully on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 aged 86. He will be greatly missed.

The family had a quiet service at the Crematorium on April 10<sup>th</sup> & we hope to have a celebration to remember his life later in the year. **Claire MacLeod, Dumfries**

## **GILL BROOKS**

We are very sad that our friend Gill Brooks has died on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020. She would have been 90 years old in June. For the last few months, she lived in a care home in Bearsden and sadly she had to face the end there on her own, due to coronavirus restrictions.

Gill was a well-loved member of Glasgow Quaker Meeting for more than 50 years and some of you will remember her as the lovely elegant woman who befriended and



supported so many of us , who latterly made the tea after meeting regularly and provided gorgeous contributions for any special occasions. Naturally Gill was also an overseer for many years and had a special gift for welcoming newcomers especially those who had come from far away places. Together with her husband Charles, she kept a beautiful, open home full of surprising treasures. I particularly remember the many years when she hosted the traditional Carol Christmas parties at her home, lit by candlelight, for the whole Meeting.

Gill loved travel and appreciated all the arts and supported many cultural events far and wide and was herself an accomplished weaver with a great sense for colour and texture. She was always modest about her professional life as a physiotherapist in the community in the north of Glasgow, where she made lots of good friendships in a challenging job.

We are grateful to have been friends and will miss her light inspirational touch.

**Gisela Creed, Glasgow**

## **(JOHN) DAVID BELL**



David was born in 1937 in Hornchurch, Essex where his house was a mile from an aerodrome used extensively in the Battle of Britain, so he remembered anti-aircraft guns, searchlights and doodlebugs. The bombing raids were anxiety making, especially once when the sirens went off when he was out in the open and had to run to the school shelter. The ruins left by a V2 exploding in a nearby street made an adventure playground.

He continued to live in Hornchurch when he worked at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine for 5 years as a researcher into insecticide resistance. He was an entomologist.

When he moved to Glasgow where he lived for 19 years, latterly in the Quaker community at 176 Wilton Street, he worked with the scientific civil service. When the office closed he moved with his job to Edinburgh and attended Edinburgh South Meeting.

David did a lot of hill walking - from a vista, he could point out and name all the hills. As a keen photographer he took many landscape photos that he used to paint from. When the job ended, he started painting fulltime. And spiritual growth was important to him.

Neil MacKechnie writes: I knew David (John) Bell when he was very much involved in the life of Glasgow Meeting at Newton Terrace in the 70s and 80s. In the 1970s several young Friends shared a flat in Wilton Street - David, Alastair (Reid), John and Penny (Boyle), Felicity (Bryers) and myself. David was a keen hillwalker, loved music and was interested in Buddhism. He was good company with a distinctive laugh. His work was science-based and I remember him inspecting the grain delivered by ship to the Meadowside granary in South Street for insect infestations!

I visited him at his home in Ratho. He was a welcoming host and I remember how much he loved living and walking by the canal. He kept in touch with postcards from wonderful holidays in interesting places.

Margaret Roy adds: you could not play Trivial Pursuit with him. When *he* got the dice . . . he was very knowledgeable.

Latterly, David spent his days in a nursing home in Edinburgh when Edinburgh South Meeting looked after his affairs.

#### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Currently all dates are subject to review because of the Corona virus instructions.**

**8<sup>th</sup> June** Area Meeting by telephone/Zoom  
**13<sup>th</sup> June** GENERAL MEETING Elgin  
**1 – 7<sup>th</sup> August** YEARLY MEETING GATHERING Bath POSTPONED  
**22<sup>nd</sup> August** Area Meeting Lochgilphead  
**12<sup>th</sup> September** GENERAL MEETING DUNDEE  
**19<sup>th</sup> September** Proposed date of Special Area Meeting Glasgow on Legacy of Patriarchy  
**10<sup>th</sup> October** Area Meeting Ayr  
**9 – 19<sup>th</sup> November** COP26 Glasgow POSTPONED  
**14<sup>th</sup> November** GENERAL MEETING Glasgow  
**7<sup>th</sup> December** Area Meeting by telephone/Zoom  
**16<sup>th</sup> January 2021** Area Meeting Glasgow  
**6<sup>th</sup> March 2021** GENERAL MEETING

**West Scotland Quaker News is published by West Scotland Area Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), 38 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow G2 4PS. Telephone 0141 248 84 93**

**The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individuals, They do not necessarily present the views of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The deadline for contributions for the next issue of WSQN is 15<sup>th</sup> July. Copy should be send in Word format to the editors Alastair Mclver or**

**Margaret Roy**

**EXTRA FEATURE**

**Additional article by Bruno Latour (translated from French by Stephen Muecke)**

**What protective measures can you think of so we don't go back to the pre-crisis production model?**

*This article appeared in AOC on 29th March 2020: <https://aoc.media/opinion/2020/03/29/imaginerles-gestes-barrieres-contre-le-retour-a-la-production-davant-crise/>.*

Perhaps it is a little inappropriate to project oneself into the post-crisis, just when the health workers are, as they say, 'on the front line', while millions of people lose their jobs and while many grieving families are not even able to bury their dead. And yet, it is right now that we have to fight so that the economic recovery, once the crisis has passed, does not bring back the same former climatic regime against which we were battling, until now somewhat in vain. In actuality, the health crisis is not embedded in a crisis (because they are always transitory), but in an ongoing, irreversible ecological mutation. If we are lucky enough to 'come out of' the first, there is no chance we will 'come out of' the second. The two situations are not on the same scale, but it is very enlightening to articulate with the one with the other. In any case, it would be a pity not to use the health crisis to discover other means of entering the ecological mutation without a blindfold on. The first lesson the coronavirus has taught us is also the most astounding: we have actually proven that it is possible, in a few weeks, to put an economic system on hold everywhere in the world and at the same time, a system that we were told it was impossible to slow down or redirect. To every ecologist's argument about changing our ways of life, there was always the opposing argument about the irreversible force of the 'train of progress' that nothing could derail 'because of globalisation', they would say. And yet it is precisely its globalised character that makes this infamous development so fragile, so likely to do the opposite and come to a screeching halt. It is actually not just the multinationals, or the trade partnerships, or the internet or the tour operators that globalise the planet. Every entity on this same planet has its very own way of hooking up with each other and all the other elements that compose the collective at a given moment. This is true for the CO<sub>2</sub> that is warming the atmosphere globally by spreading through the air and migrating birds carrying new kinds of flu; but it is also true for—we learn at our peril once again—the coronavirus that has the capacity to link 'all humans' by passing by way of our apparently inoffensive droplets from coughing. Germs are super-globalisers: when it is a matter of resocialising billions of people, the germs make short work of it! Hence the incredible discovery: already in the world economic system there was, hidden from us all, a bright red alarm button with a nice big stainless-steel handle that the heads of state could pull, one after the other, to instantly stop the 'train of progress' with all the brakes squealing. If in January the demand to make a 90 degree turn to land on the Earth seemed like a gentle illusion, now it becomes much more realistic: every car driver knows that to have any chance of making a sudden turn of the wheel to get out of trouble (without heading into the landscape), it is better to have slowed down a bit first... Unfortunately, it is not only the ecologists who see, in this sudden pause in the globalised system of production, a great opportunity to move ahead with their programme for landing on Earth. There's also the globalisers, who since the middle of the 20th century invented the idea of escaping our planetary limits. They too see here a great opportunity to break even more radically with the remaining obstacles in the way of their escape from Earth. A wonderful prospect for them: extract themselves from the rest of the welfare state, from the safety net for the poorest, from what remains of regulations against pollution, and, even more cynically, get rid of all these supernumeraries cluttering up the planet.<sup>2</sup> But let's not forget the hypothesis that these globalisers are conscious of the ecological mutation, and all their efforts for the past fifty years consist in both denying the importance of climate change and also avoiding its consequences by building fortified bastions of privilege, which are necessarily inaccessible to all those who are going to have to be left in the lurch. They are not so naïve as to believe the great modernist dream of the

universal distribution of the ‘fruits of progress’, but what is new is their willingness to not even give the impression of believing in it<sup>3</sup> These are the ones proclaiming every day on Fox News and who govern all the climate-sceptical states on the planet, from Moscow to Brasilia, and New Delhi to Washington via London. What makes the current situation so dangerous is not just the dead piling up every day at an increasing rate, it is the universal suspension of an economic system that gives those who want to go much further in the flight away from the planetary world a marvellous occasion to ‘put all the cards on the table’. One must not forget that what makes these globalisers so dangerous, is that they have to know they have lost, that the denial of ecological mutation cannot go on forever, that there is no chance of reconciling their ‘development’ with the various planetary envelopes in which one way or another the economy has to be inserted. This is what makes them ready to try anything to secure, one last time, the conditions that are going to allow them to last a little bit longer and to shelter them along with their children. This putting on of the brakes, this ‘stopping of the world’, this unexpected pause, gives them an opportunity to flee more quickly and further than they could ever have imagined.<sup>4</sup> At the moment, they are the revolutionaries. It is at this point that we have to act. If opportunities are arising for them, the same is true for us. If everything has stopped, and all cards can be put on the table, they can be turned, selected, triaged, rejected for ever, or indeed, accelerated forwards. Now is the time for the annual stock-take. When common sense asks us to ‘start production up again as quickly as possible’, we have to shout back, ‘Absolutely not!’ The last thing to do is repeat the exact same thing we were doing before. For example, a Dutch florist was on television the other day, weeping because he had to trash tonnes of tulips that were ready for shipping. Without customers, he couldn’t air-freight them around the world. Of course, we cannot but feel for him; and it is right he is recompensed. But then the camera tracked back onto the tulips that he was growing without soil under artificial light before sending them off from Schiphol airport, on air-freighters with kerosene raining down, which makes one wonder: ‘Is it really useful to prolong this way of producing and selling these types of flowers?’ One thing leads to another, and if we all began on a personal basis to ask such questions on all aspects of our production system, we would become efficient globalisation interrupters, just as effective, in our millions, as the infamous coronavirus as it goes about globalising the planet in its own way. What the virus gets from banal droplets from coughing going from one mouth to another—the halting of the world economy—we can also begin to imagine via our little insignificant gestures put end to end, that is, the halting of the system of production. As we ask these kinds of questions, each of us is onto the task of thinking up protective measures, but not just against the virus, but against every element of the mode of production that we don’t want to see coming back. So, it is no longer a matter of a system of production picking up again or being curbed, but one of getting away from production as the overriding principle of our relationship to the world.<sup>5</sup> More than revolution, this is dissolution, pixel by pixel. Pierre Charbonnier demonstrated it: after a hundred years of socialism limited just to the redistribution of the benefits of the economy, it might now be more a matter of inventing a socialism that contests production itself.<sup>6</sup> Injustice is not just about the redistribution of the fruits of progress, but about the very manner in which the planet is made fruitful. This does not mean de-growth, or living off love alone or fresh water. It means learning to select each segment of this so-called irreversible system, putting a question mark over each of its supposed indispensable connections, and then testing in more and more detail what is desirable and what has ceased to be so. Hence the primary importance for using this time of imposed isolation in order to describe, initially one by one, then as a group, what we are attached to; what we are ready to give up; the chains we are ready to reconstruct and those that, in our behaviour, we have decided to interrupt.<sup>7</sup> As for the globalisers, they seem to have a very clear idea what they want to see coming back post-crisis: the same but worse, fossil fuel industries and giant cruise ships as a bonus. It is up to us to confront them with a counter-inventory. If in a month or two, millions of humans are capable of learning how to ‘social distance’ at the blow

of a whistle, to space themselves for greater solidarity, to stay home so as not to overload the hospitals, then it is easy to imagine the power of transformation that these new protective measures have against bringing back business as usual, or worse, against another battering from those who want to escape from terrestrial attraction forever. Because I am always obsessed with wanting to link an argument to practical exercises, I would like to invite readers to try to answer a little auto-descriptive questionnaire. It will be all the more useful if it can relate to actually lived personal experience. It is not a matter of expressing an opinion, but of describing and researching. Only afterwards, if we tabulate the responses and compose the landscape created by their intersections, will we be able to discover some form of political expression—but this time one that is embodied and situated in a real world.

Let's take advantage of the enforced suspension of most activities to set out the inventory of those among them we would like to see not coming back, and those, on the other hand, that we would like to see develop. Reply first individually, then collectively, to the following questions :

Question 1 : What are some suspended activities that you would like to see not coming back ?

Question 2 : Describe why this activity seems to you to be noxious/superfluous/dangerous/incoherent and how its disappearance/putting on hold/substitution

Question 3 : What kinds of measures do you advocate so that workers/employees/agents/entrepreneurs, who can no longer continue in the activities that you have eliminated, are able to facilitate the transition to other activities ?

Question 4 : What are the activities, now suspended, that you hope might develop/begin again, or even be created from scratch ?

Question 5 : Describe how this activity appears to be positive to you, and how it makes other activities easier/more harmonious/coherent that you prefer and can fight against those that you judge to be inappropriate. (Write a separate paragraph for each of the activities listed under 4).

Question 6 : What kinds of measures do you advocate to help workers/employees/agents/entrepreneurs to acquire capacities/means/finances/instruments allowing for restarting/development/creation of this activity ? (Now find a way to compare your description with that of other participants. By tabling and then superimposing the answers, you should start to build up a picture composed of conflicting lines, alliances, controversies and oppositions.) What protective measures can you think of so we don't go back to the pre-crisis production model?

2 See Matt Stoller on the 'frenzied' lobbyists in the US: "The coronavirus relief bill could turn into a corporate coup if we aren't careful", *The Guardian*, 24-3-20 <https://bit.ly/3ac2btn> .

3 "We don't live on the same planet" <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/node/782>.

4 Danowski, Déborah, and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro. *The Ends of the World (Translated by Rodrigo Nunes)*. London: Polity Press, 2016.

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5 See Dusan Kazic, *Plantes animées- de la production aux relations avec les plantes*, thèse Agroparitech, 2019.

6 Pierre Charbonnier, *Abondance et liberté. Une histoire environnementale des idées politiques*. Paris: La Découverte, 2020.

7 This auto-description picks up on the procedure in the new 'ledgers of complaints' suggested in Bruno Latour, *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2018, and afterwards developed with the consortium Où atterrir <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/fr/node/841.html>