



Friends World Committee
for Consultation

ASIA WEST PACIFIC SECTION INC

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QUNO New York Staff & Committee-names are listed on p23

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 2. Editorial & Norway's Grief | 15. News from India |
| 3. AWPS Secretary Position | 17. Kenyan Friends USFW Meetings |
| 4. Aotearoa NZ YM Epistle | 17. Sri Lanka's Killing Fields |
| 8. QUNO Reports | 18. WCC's International Ecumenical
Peace convocation in Kingston,
Jamaica |
| 10. New World Conference Coordinator | 23. Help Support the Work of AWPS |
| 13. News from The Philippines | |
| 14. News from Japan | |

Editorial:

How do we make sense of the world, where the forces for darkness and despair appear to be gathering strength? We pray for the families who lost relatives in the senseless slaughter in Norway on 22 July. Friends in Japan and in Christchurch NZ are struggling with what will be their future in an increasingly unstable “Pacific Ring of Fire” environment.

Please consider, Friends, if you are led to apply for the position of AWPS Secretary, as my term will finish in about 15 months. I am happy to meet with any Friend on Skype who would like to explore the possibilities of doing this really exciting work.

We welcome Marleen Schepers to the role of Conference Coordinator for the World Conference. Many Friends still need to register for this event.

Glory to God, peace on earth

We are standing on the front line as beacons of peace

Our mission will be long and resistance may be strong

But peace will conquer all; that's our cry and our song.....

Grub Cooper wrote this to be sung at the recent World Council of Churches Conference held in Jamaica - see article by Kees Nieuwerth on p 19 of this edition.

Valerie Joy, Secretary

Norway's Grief *Unni Sørsveen*, Clerk

Thank you so much for your mail. I have forwarded it to Quakers in the Oslo area, and we are copying all emails and sending out. Yours will be in the 3rd mail so far.

We have received mails from all over the world expressing sympathy and love towards us. We have been through a tremendous shock and now it is time for mourning.

Our Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg set the tone when he first addressed the nation asking for more openness, more democracy

and more love. At a gathering last week in Oslo - and in most cities around the country - people carried roses and torches and candles to pay their respects to the people killed and their families. I am proud that we as a nation has managed to focus on love and not on hatred. But we will have to live with this tragic event, and it is early days yet.

Secretary Position - Asia West Pacific Section Inc of FWCC:

Expressions of interest are invited from applicants who have knowledge and experience of the work of Friends World Committee for Consultation - particularly in the Asia West Pacific Section.

A job description is on page 13 of the AWPS Handbook, which also provides a reference point for the work being done by the Section. The Handbook is on the website www.fwccawps.org under 'publications'.

The position is honorary, so no salary is paid. Expenses incurred through administration, travel and accommodation whilst on work for the Section are reimbursed.

The time frame is as follows:

1 September to 31 October 2011 information discussions via skype or email with the present Secretary or other members of the AWPS Committee.

- By 1 November: Applications to be lodged with the Nominations Committee. They should contain information which addresses points a) to s) on how applicants would undertake the duties listed in the Handbook, and their vision for the development of AWPS, especially in the next five years.
- A statement on experience within the Religious Society of Friends (applicants need to be in membership) and names of two relevant referees, should also be included.
- Applicants should be comfortable in dealing with all 'flavours' of Friends.

- Applicants with a language other than English, especially an Asian language, will be regarded highly.
- Writing and publishing experience (including website) is also welcome.
- The term is initially 3 years, with a possible extension to 6 years.
- Applicants need to be in good health and able to travel.

15 November, Interviewing panel established, from within AWPS Nominations with the possible co-option of the Clerk or Treasurer.

1 December: Interviews to take place via Skype.

15 December: The Nominations Committee decision regarding the candidate recommended to be made to the Section Clerk who will inform the Section Committee. The individual recommended will be informed of her/his being recommended subject to Section Business Meeting approval in Kenya in April 2012. If the individual is not already registered for the World Conference in April 2012, efforts will be made to obtain an open place for that Friend.

1 January 2013: the new Secretary commences work following a long period of consultation with the current Secretary.

Applications should be mailed to David Purnell. Convener of the AWPS Nominations Committee, by 1 November 2011. The address is P.O. Box 6063, O'Connor ACT 2602 Australia. Advance copies may be sent by e-mail to david.christine@iinet.net.au.

Aotearoa NZ Epistle: Greetings to Friends everywhere

The Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/New Zealand was held May 20-23 2011 at the Quaker Settlement in Whanganui and included visiting Friends from Australia, South Korea and Britain.

The opening welcome, partly in Te Reo Maori, confirmed for us that the Quaker Settlement is the “*turangawaewae*” for Aotearoa/New Zealand Friends— our place to stand. The opening signalled the

importance of Maori as the indigenous people and of the land and environment which supports us. An early Quaker presence in the area was consolidated by the development of the former Friends School in the 1920s. More recently, Friends have supported the land claims of local Maori, for example, the occupation of Pakaitore/Motua Gardens in 1995.

There was an impassioned call for Friends to engage in the discussion about the need for a constitutional review that is currently taking place in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Proposals are to be presented to Yearly Meeting in 2012.

The present structure of government concentrates power in the hands of a small political elite influenced by lobbyists and overseas interests. This process ignores the promise of equal power that is embodied in the 1840 Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi.

Friends were asked to become better informed about the options for constitutional change and be catalysts for further discussion in the wider community. We were urged to take the issue to our Monthly Meeting.

A significant event for Aotearoa/New Zealand Friends in the past year was the experience of major earthquakes in Christchurch on September 4th, 2010 and February 22nd, 2011. These were followed by nearly 8,000 aftershocks, which continue to occur. Five Christchurch Friends described their devastating experience. They helped us to imagine the grief, confusion and uncertainty caused by the loss of friends, colleagues and familiar features across the City.

Christchurch Friends described how the experience has left them emotionally vulnerable and prone to tiredness and tears. They were adamant that “we will cope” and asked us to stay with them in the unknown and to hold them in the Light as they make their decisions about the future of their meeting house. The accounts of Christchurch Friends have helped us to a better understanding of the pain, grief and terror suffered by the people of Japan from the effects of their earthquake in April, tsunami and nuclear leakages.

Aspects of participation in the Asia West Pacific Section of the FWCC were recounted by our four Friends at the gathering in Manila, the Philippines in April 2011. They gave us a glimpse of the wider Quaker world. We look forward to supporting our member Patricia Macgregor as she takes over the position of Section Clerk, and support all our Friends attending the World Conference in Kenya in 2012.

Tony Taylor, member of the Kapiti Monthly Meeting and Emeritus Professor of Psychology at Victoria University, Wellington, delivered a well-attended public lecture on “*Changing the Prison System*”. The challenges for Aotearoa/New Zealand are to lower incarceration rates, provide rehabilitation for all inmates including short-term, and support for victims and the families of prisoners.

Friends exchanged impassioned views on ways to reduce or off-set the environmental cost of travel on behalf of YM. This discussion broadened to how we can reduce our carbon footprint individually and collectively. We acknowledge the imperative of moving to renewable sources of energy and changing lifestyles. The task is to find ways to do this without imposing moral ‘guilt trips’ on individuals.

We honour the land where we have been for our Yearly Meeting and remember the Friends School motto; “*The Truth shall make you free.*”

We pray that we are given the passion and energy of early Friends which enabled them to try hard to transform themselves and their world.

Claire Gregory and Linley Gregory, Co-clerks



YES, IN OUR NAME !

Since the early days of the United Nations, Friends have been supporting its work. The establishment of the two Quaker UN Offices (QUNO), in Geneva and New York, provided a focus for that support.

The QUNO mission statement reads:

QUNO will have finished its work when the UN fully carries out its responsibility to build peace and to prevent violent conflict. QUNO will work with the wider UN community in the pursuit of this goal while remaining committed to supporting the use of nonviolent means in achieving it.

As you can imagine reaching that goal is going to take a little while yet, but Friends are working hard to get there.

Since being appointed as the FWCC AWPS representative on the QUN Committee in New York, I've been most impressed by the work and the workers at QUNO. A small staff is doing an enormous amount of work towards a more peaceful world in our name.

The work of QUNO New York focuses on peacebuilding and conflict prevention and uses the traditional Quaker tools of quiet advocacy and diplomacy, networking and building relationships.

Both aspects of the program connect the work at the UN, with UN national representatives as well as with UN staff, with work in the relevant countries by Friends and by Quaker Service agencies such as the American Friends Service Committee, Quaker Peace & Social Witness (UK), Canadian Friends Service Committee and others.

Within our Quaker world community there were and are many Friends with wide experience in the field; there are Friends working in conflict areas with particular insights and there are others we can connect with to use that wisdom and experience for the guidance of UN diplomats and staff so that they may do their work better and more effectively. For instance from Northern Ireland come valuable lessons on bringing together warring sections of the population, on negotiations with armed groups and on connecting groups and individuals working for peace. That experience can be useful, for instance, in parts of Africa.

Please give your prayerful support for this work,

Sieneke Martin, Australia Yearly Meeting

FWCC/AWPS Representative on the QUNO New York Committee.

Report on QUNO Geneva May 2011, *Robert Howell*

David Atwood's Farewell

QUNC hosted a reception for the Geneva community at Quaker House to farewell David Atwood on the Friday evening. Many diplomats and colleagues who have worked with David were there. There was a moving tribute by Keith Krause from the Graduate Institute of Small Arms Survey. We then moved to the World Council of Churches (WCC) Chateau de Bossey.

QUNC Disarmament and Peace

Paulin Regnard Programme Officer, Disarmament and Peace has been appointed to take up the work from David Atwood. His profile is available at www.quno.org/aboutUs/staff-Geneva.htm

QUNC Human Rights and Refugees

There will be more emphasis in the future on children of prisoners rather than women prisoners. There will be a WCC meeting in South Korea in 2013 as 90% of the world's conscientious objectors who are in prison are in South Korea.

QUNC Global Economic Issues

Work is continuing on the intellectual property of food and Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV). A written report by Graham Dutfield was given to us titled *Food, Biological Diversity and Intellectual Property: The Role of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV)*.

Copies are available at www.quno.org/economicissues/foodustainability/foodLinks.htm#QUNOPUB

The initiative on climate change and migration and the human impacts of climate change is to be discontinued. This was to be an exploratory process with faith based NGOs in Geneva. This was to be funded by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) but they have

changed their priorities.

Governance

A few years ago when QUNC knew that David Atwood would be retiring in 2011, QUNC arranged a strategic review in order to ensure that the job description of the new Director was in keeping with QUNC's strategic direction. A revised mission statement and statement of values was agreed to.

Mission: QUNO works for a peaceful, just and sustainable world by engaging with the wider UN community. In so doing, QUNO is committed to non-violent means. We undertake this work on the basis of Quaker values.

QUNO's Values are:

- *the belief in the value, equality and dignity of each human being, while respecting the different cultures, religions and societies that make up the human family;*
- *the recognition that human life is dependent on the sustainability of the earth's natural systems, but that non-human life has value beyond their utility for us;*
- *to live simply, peacefully and with integrity working to remove the causes and consequences of violent conflict.*

A report was made to the May 2011 meeting which partly dealt with risk on governance where we found that

- the purpose and values of QUNO in the constitution are not in agreement with the mission and values of the strategic review; and
- the constitution states that all policy has to be approved by the QUNC yet this is in conflict with the establishment of an Executive Committee that decides some policy, and in conflict with a Staff Policy Manual that contains both governance and management matters and has never been

reported to or approved by QUNC.

As a result of this report it was recognised that a separate Governance Policy Manual needs to be established, and that the Constitution needs to be reviewed at the next Meeting at the end of 2011.

At the May 2011 Meeting, QUNC asked for the next meeting to consider a Table of Contents of a Governance Policy Manual, and concerns about the elements of the Constitution that require revision. Any well governed body needs a constitution, a set of governance policies, and a strategic plan. All of these three documents need to be consistent with each other. Although QUNC has done some valuable strategic work and shown foresight in linking this with the selection of a new Director, and some important constitutional and legal work, it has now recognised the need for all three steps and that they need to be consistent with each other. For a fuller report please contact *Robert Howell* at: rhowellnz@gmail.com

David Atwood writes: “I have now “retired” from the Quaker UN Office in Geneva (as of 30 June), after 16.5 years as Representative for Disarmament and Peace and, since 2004, as Director. It has been a wonderful run and I’m very grateful for all that these years have given me. I shall continue in Geneva as a consultant working on various peace and disarmament projects. I hope to continue to be in touch with many of you whom I have worked with over the years. To assist this, I would ask you to please change your address book for me from the datwood@quno.ch to davidc.atwood@gmail.com. My QUNO address will remain valid until the end of the year, as I continue with QUNO’s work on armed violence and development until then, but progressively I hope email coming to me will move to this new address. Ed: David Atwood will deliver the James Backhouse Lecture at Australia Yearly Meeting in Perth, Australia in January 2012.

New World Conference Coordinator

On 8 August a new world conference coordinator, Marleen Schepers commenced duties at the World Office. A Belgian who has lived in London for several years, Marleen worked for an international charity

coordinating emergency relief work. She has been attending Quaker meeting for about 14 years, beginning with the Brussels group and presently in London. Marleen has BA and MA degrees in Oriental Studies from studies in Leuven, Belgium and an MPhil in Development Studies from Sussex University, UK. She served as the national coordinator for Belgium for the Global March Against Child Labor, which involved not only work in Belgium but also bringing thousands from all parts of the world to Geneva to march on the International Labor Organisation. Welcome Marleen!

Nadine Hoover: Indonesian Authorities Attack Citizens

Indonesia's pledge on July 12, 2011 to resolve land tenure conflicts while protecting the rights of people in forest-based communities rings hollow in the wake of an incident on June 27, 2011 where district police, supported by local government officials and military, shot into a crowd of thousands of Javanese men, women and children in Sei Minyak Village in North Sumatra, wounding fifteen citizens with rubber bullets, live ammunition and beatings.

Attacked While Awaiting Dialogue: Over 5,000 men, women and children from Barak Induk, Damar Hitam and Sei Minyak gathered at the Sei Minyak Public Elementary School at 9:00am on June 27, 2011 with tables prepared for a dialogue with the authorities. After waiting in 100 degree heat for over three hours, news arrived at about 12:30 that the TNGL (Taman National Gunun Leuser) team was tearing down houses and fields as residents were waiting at the school.

Residents ran two kilometres to encounter district police backed by Mobile Brigade of North Sumatra (police), Emergency Response Police and Forest Rangers, in turn backed by Special Navy Unit as well as District Army and behind a wall of police shields. This force of 1,040-1,300 personnel were backed by two elephants to tear up crops; over 100 civilians, who reported being paid Rp.100,000/day; and a Red Cross ambulance and medical staff in preparation for the violence.

Police surrounded citizens as they ran to the location and seized and beat four citizens. Some police tried to hold women back as their children ran on ahead. Police shot tear gas into the crowd and bullets

into the air. Women and children were screaming. Panic ensued. Rocks and wood were thrown, while police shot rubber bullets and live ammunition into the crowd.

District Police Commissioner, Mardiono, reported that the operation cost over US\$70,000 and failed to achieve its goal of driving people out of villages of North Sumatra.

Failed Dialogues: The Republic of Indonesia has left the status of people displaced in 2000 by the war in Aceh unclear for over a decade. Thousands of people, already forcibly displaced once, experience ongoing intimidation, violence and threats of eviction. A Peace Accord may have been signed in Helsinki in 2005, but after six years, peace for the people displaced by the war has yet to be guaranteed. Village representatives maintained their position of the past decade: that the government consider the request of local farmers fairly and wisely for the right to live on current lands since they had: 1) lived on the location for eleven years; 2) already been displaced once and did not want to be displaced a second time; 3) moved into an area clearly deforested decades before they arrived; and 4) committed to living with the forest, planting only forest hardwoods and protecting the sustainability of forest trees, such as rubber, cacao, durian, mango, rambutan and mahogany, which were just becoming productive. They also requested that the government document the boundary of lands intended for forestry in an honest and clear manner. They did not anticipate an armed attack on their homes and lands, let alone on men, women and children.

The people driven out of Aceh during the war in 2000 carefully selected and allocated deforested lands with stumps and prairie grass along the edge of oil palm plantations, far from stands of virgin forest. They allocated 400 square meters of land to each household and units of two hectares of land for farming, where they planted mostly rubber and chocolate, with some rice, oil palm and vegetables. These villages are fully functioning villages with economic, political and religious activities. The mosque, cemetery, preschools, elementary schools, junior high school, health clinic and village cooperatives are organized and demonstrate a high level of cooperation among the residents and good

relationships, including intermarriages, with local farmers.

Their requests are simple, consistent and clear: 1) recognize their right to live in harmony with the forest and to enjoy the fruits of their labour and 2) permanently clarify the boundary of national lands so that productive activities may be appropriately assigned on the lands. Residents are committed to non-violence and living in peace with their neighbours and the forest. Peace with each other will require peace with the land and visa versa. (If Friends wish to read the full version of this report, please email the AWPS Secretary)

News from the Philippines: *Rose and Raffy Gaid*, very new to Friends, attended the AWPS Gathering in Manila. They write of their homecoming to Davao, Mindanao after the Manila Gathering: (They have since applied for membership- Ed)

“We kept on reading the literature given and we started incorporating silence in our classroom prayers. We have seen the movie “Friendly Persuasion” and it taught me a lot about Quakerism. From time to time, Raffy and I refresh our experience with you in Tagaytay so that we can keep on the fire burning in our hearts and most of all practice silence in our day to day journey and listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. I am texting Boni from time to time. We are looking forward to meeting you again! I am truly grateful for the information available in the net, and most of all, truly happy and inspired meeting you all!!!!”

Jaime and Lydia Tabingo are now home after extensive travelling in North America. They visited John and Lois Ocol in Canada and their daughter Stephanie in Texas. In September they are visiting Brisbane and also hope to go to Silver Wattle Quaker Centre near Canberra.

Therese Ann Asis, a Young Friend, active in the life of the Friends Church at Pasig in Manila has had her appointment confirmed as the third AWPS representative on the Young Adult Friends International

Committee, which looks to co-ordinate and plan for Young Friends events into the future.

Carmela Lao also a Young Friend has been appointed as an FWCC Representative for PEFIM, (Philippines Evangelical Friends International Ministries).

News from Japan:

Seiichi Kondo wrote: Thanks for your encouragement for the various facilities damaged by the big earthquake over the eastern side of Japan. As you recognised it was not on that area but in the inside of Kanntou inland area in Mito, Chiba area even in Tokyo.

Mito Meeting House and the Kindergarten were badly damaged.

Shimotsuma Meeting House was partially damaged with one house wall fallen down and glass was broken inside.

At Tokyo Friends Center, the chimney moved on the roof necessitating it to be taken away. It has been repaired ahead of the rainy season. I am living on the 8th floor of 11 storey building in down town. I found my house inside was completely fallen down. All furniture fell and a chest was broken into two pieces, and books and papers were spread over the rooms. After I picked up all the broken glass I made up rooms in order to go through, and then I slept. It was 4 o'clock next morning, after which I walked 7 hours on foot from town to get back home.

But the next day, Sunday, I could hear that young people of FIIWC (old Friends International Work Camp is continued) sent members to that area to research how to help people there.

I realized myself that this might be a chance to recognise and evaluate our way of living today. It might be a time to think about our faith and practices.

Kazuko Kagami Clerk of Japan YM writes:

I have been moved and thank Friends in many places who responded immediately to events in Japan by sending us warm greetings, prayers and big gifts to help us. The amounts are still arriving. These will be

used for the repairs to meeting houses and for projects for the people who are in need because of the earthquake.

I have been greatly shocked to observe how human beings are weak against nature. No human cleverness can help!

I feel that we met God's Judgment! We must be humblest in our steps. Heartfelt thanks again. In His name and love,

Greetings from Miyagi Japan

Deogratias Niyonzima from CCD Burundi writes: I am pleased to inform you that I arrived this week in Japan and I am now visiting the East of Japan where the quake and tsunami took place. We are 2 people from CCD (Christian Community Development) BURUNDI and we will be here for 1 month providing help to the victims of quake and tsunami. I hope to visit our Friends in Japan while I am here. Have a blessed time. Yesterday we visited Ishinomaki and we helped to rebuild a house, I have seen that God loved Japan, Peace to all

News of Friends in India:

Passing of Dayal Gour *Viv Hawkins* India Friends Working Group, Pennsylvania YM writes:

I write to you of the passing of a man of God. Some will simply know him as Archana Gour's father yet others will know him as a man full of hospitality, wisdom, and words. Dayal Singh Gour "is no more" as the Hindi words translate to English. But he lives on in his daughter and in many of us. Last night, as I sat with Carolyn Schodt, as I remembered Dayal's counsel to me to visit with the people of India, the people in the villages, to come to know their needs in order to respond to them, a large bird waded and patiently fished in the distance. It felt like Dayal's spirit.

Friday July 8 at around 2am, Dayal was pronounced dead upon arrival at the government hospital in Itarsi. The hospital is located not far from

the Gour family home and just behind Friends' Boys School- Itarsi where Dayal served as headmaster. I believe his casket was built by one of his students. His burial was attended by Friends from several of India's yearly meetings, Christians from other denominations, Hindus, and Muslims.

Archana's mobile from the U.S. is 011-91-9425693392. The Gour family can be reached at 292 Deshbandhupura, Itarsi M.P., 461 111 India and through prayer.

Bhopal Friends Church:

Many Friends from within India and abroad have worshipped in Bhopal Friends Church and enjoyed the rich fellowship there. The church itself is very old and an engineering report shows it must be entirely rebuilt. The cost of this is 12 lakh, or 1.2 million rupees. The local Friends have already raised 25% of this and are appealing to Friends from elsewhere to assist them in raising the remaining monies. Enquiries to Ronald Titus: titus.ronald@gmail.com

News from Nepal: *Abhishek Khwayaju* writes:

Abhishek is a Young Friend from Nepal Friends Church:

“Hello Valerie thank you for your kind message. Actually I am very much blessed and learned more than I had thought at Manila. As that was my first visit far away from my country, initially I felt nervous, but gradually I became familiar with each of the activities in the AWPS Gathering. Now I became confident I am must be thankful to all of you for your kind and warm hospitality, encouragement, and guidance. Some special things I learned were about “Global Change, peace making between religions with Shakuntala and others became challenging topics to me. Whether we are Friends or Quakers we are children of the same God. This is the most important thing that I had learned from AWPS. At present I am preparing a report of that last AWPS gathering so that all the members of my church can see that report and become blessed. Thank you very much. Praise the Lord!

Myanmar Friend *Lalthla Muana* writes:

I and my family members are well and the ministry also still going. I already received the books you send me last week. Thank you very much. I hope you always pray for me and our poor country. Also I remember everything which I experienced in our conference. Please pray continually for our ministry. God bless you always!

After the World Conference many Friends will visit Kenyan Friends in their homes. This was written by the Presiding Clerk of United Society of Friends Women in Kitale *Melissa Shitemu*.

A typical meeting of **United Society of Friends Women**

‘We start with opening prayer from the Presiding Clerk of USFW then have two songs or choruses when people praise God and dance. Then visitors greet the congregation and report. Then we have a lesson or teaching on how Mamas should behave as Christians eg. in the matrimonial homes, dressing, talking, taking care of husbands, children etc or on other topics touching lives of women and our young kids. Then we have a sermon. There after we give offerings. Plus that offering, we bring items to take care of our Pastor, i.e. buying things like sugar, salt, soap etc.

We plan visits to the sick, or those backsliding.

Then on Thursdays after meeting, we go from house to house of mamas praying with them. That is a bit of what we do.”

‘Sri Lanka’s Killing Fields’ video by Britain’s Channel 4
www.lobbyforpeace.com ‘Sri Lanka’s Killing Fields’ produced by Britain’s independent public broadcaster Channel 4. This 50 minute documentary exposes the horrors inflicted on the innocent Tamil people of Sri Lanka during the final stages of the armed conflict between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). A preview of the documentary at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva was hosted by Amnesty International on June 3, 2011, and at the UN Headquarters by Amnesty and Human Rights Watch on June 21.

This video documentary comes soon after the UN Expert Panel on Accountability in Sri Lanka handing in its Report to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in April. The Report has presented credible evidence of **genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes**, including the bombing of hospitals, killing of tens of thousands of Tamil civilians in designated ‘no fire’ zones, extra judicial killings, forced disappearances, execution of surrendered cadres and raping of female cadres.

All are requested to bring about pressure on Ban-Ki-Moon, the UN Secretary, for the appointment of an independent Commission of Inquiry on Sri Lanka to investigate crimes against humanity and war crimes in Sri Lanka, and to bring to justice those responsible at the International Criminal Court.

International Ecumenical Peace Convocation WCC Kingston Jamaica”: *Guide our feet into the way of peace Luke 1:79*

Kees Nieuwerth writes:

Some 1000 participants from over 100 different nations, representing the more than 300 member churches of the World Council of Churches gathered in Jamaica from 17-25 May 2011. There was a good representation from Asia, Africa and Latin America. There was a good balance between women and men, clergy and lay, older and younger participants (the youngsters noted that they made up at least 17% of the population!). There was a modest, but good presence of delegates from the Historic Peace Churches: some 10 Quakers and in all a little more than 30 Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren.

Margot Kässman (Evangelical Church of Germany) said: *“The message of the New Testament is very clear. In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus opens a whole set of new categories. It is not the warriors, the heroes and the fighters, the strong and the brave who are blessed. No, it is the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart: the peacemakers.”*

A keynote speaker was Paul Oestreicher, lifelong peace activist, Anglican priest as well as a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). His contribution was entitled: ‘A New World is Possible’ Jesus said *You are my friends, if you do what I command you. This I command you, to love one another as I have loved you...*”

But he said: *“We have made a pact with Caesar; with power, the very pact that early Christians called idolatry .We have squared it with our conscience to kill the Emperor’s enemies, and to do this with Jesus on our lips”*. Paul then said that *“Jesus was not an idealistic dreamer. He was and remains the ultimate realist. The survival of our planet demands nothing less than the abolition of war. The abolition of war is possible. It is as possible as was the abolition of slavery, If the churches of the world fail to embark on such a campaign, we will have nothing of unique significance to say on the subject of world peace....”*

So, it is time for the still small voices of the historic peace churches, to be taken seriously. That is why, as an Anglican priest, I have also chosen to be a Quaker, am member of the Religious Society of Friends. Quaker history, often a story of suffering, witnesses to the biblical insight that love casts out fear. When –as in England a few weeks ago- a crown prince marries in a Christian cathedral, he is expected to wear full military regalia. Such symbols are powerful. The critics of principled non-violence are neither knaves nor fools. We must answer them wisely and patiently. In theory war is already outlawed. There are courts to try not only crimes committed in war, but the crime of war itself. The only lasting victory that we can win over our enemies is to make them our friends. Kyrie eleison!”

Another impressive contribution was made by the son of Martin Luther King, Martin Luther King III. He recounted the dreams and deeds of his parents and the way in which these influenced him. In this context he revealed that his mother, Coretta King, went to a Quaker college whilst studying which laid the basis for her non-violent resistance to racism, poverty and militarism in her later life. Martin Luther King

argued that we still have not learned the lesson that those are the three great evils we must resist as Christians! *“We made this world a neighbourhood, but we still did not succeed to make it a brotherhood”*.

Some 100 states are involved in the production of arms. Worldwide expenditure on military and arms is nearly one trillion dollars! If only 10% of these funds were available for the Millennium goals these would be within reach.

At a workshop by David Atwood (Quaker representative at the UN – Geneva) and Jonathan Frerichs (WCC-staff-Geneva) on ‘Just Peace and Global Advocacy: Setting the Compass at Kingston’, we set the following priorities: combating climate change, fostering economic justice, total nuclear disarmament, curbing arms trade and banning war. Some of us gathered before the ecumenical service to hold a small Quaker meeting for worship attended also by some participants of other church traditions.

An impressive and moving testimony was given by Setsuko Thurlow, a Japanese survivor of the bombing of Hiroshima, now 79 years old, who told us about being the only girl of 13 years old to be saved from the ruins of her school, whilst afterwards her classmates were burnt alive! She then decided to dedicate her life as a peace activist to the campaign for nuclear disarmament, saying *‘these weapons are indiscriminate, immoral and illegal’*

We were reminded during this plenary that armed conflicts and war during the 20th century have resulted in an estimated 160 million dead (!!), what can we do to prevent this from happening again during the 21st century?

The final message explicitly states that the member churches of the WCC advocate total nuclear disarmament and the control of the proliferation of ‘small arms’. It also urges churches to support and protect the right of conscientious objection and to assure asylum for

those who oppose and resist militarism and armed conflicts. Moreover it advocates that peace education should move to the centre of every curriculum in schools, seminaries and universities.

The final message says: *‘History, especially in the witness of the historic peace churches, reminds us of the fact that violence is contrary to the will of God and can never resolve conflicts. It is for this reason that we are moving beyond the doctrine of just war to a commitment to just peace.’* Obviously this statement on the witness of the historic peace churches has not been formulated by those members of this tradition present at the Convocation, but by delegates from other traditions within the wider Christian church.

Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren present at Kingston have gathered several times during the Convocation to exchange experiences and views as to how it went.

The question is: what have we achieved?

- The Convocation was not to be regarded as the close of the Decade to Overcome Violence – but rather as a new beginning: a chance to harvest seeds for a new planting season with which the WCC could launch a new campaign to banish war and the use of deadly violence as a political instrument to settle conflicts.
- To develop an Ecumenical Call to Just Peace that actually urges us to follow Jesus’ non-violent way and will be an inspiring document for the above mentioned campaign.
- To commit the WCC to an active policy directed at banning weapons of mass destruction and other categories of weapon systems as well as a campaign against arms production and arms trade, in close cooperation with other world religions.
- To stimulate churches to contribute actively to non violent conflict resolution (also financially!) and to commit themselves to peace and reconciliation locally and elsewhere in our world.

- To inspire the members of our churches to adopt a lifestyle that enables all citizens of this world to live just, sustainable and peaceful lives.
- To as the worldwide church to serve as an ‘early warning system’ where and when conflicting interests threaten to erupt into armed conflicts in order for early non-violent intervention by local and international authorities, as well as the churches themselves, to be enabled. The WCC is well placed to play an important facilitating role in developing such a network.

Kees Nieuwerth

Clerk of Netherlands Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Delegate at the IEPC for the European Ecumenical Peace Movement Church and Peace.

Two Friends in Victoria RM (Tessa and Jim) have **so far this year, made and sold AUD758.30 worth of jam as a donation for AWPS!!!!** Does this inspire other readers? I hope it does.

€ £ \$ Help Support the work of AWPS: You may wish to contribute towards the cost of production of this Newsletter. Annual cost is AUD 20. Donations may also be made to our Travelling Fund, Gathering Fund, Essay or general administration.

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Thanks Friends



The Pacific Ring of Fire: Why are so many places in our region experiencing traumatic physical events?

Photo on front cover: names of back row- left to right are: Brewster Grace, Lon Fendall, Lindsey Cook, Oliver Kisaha, don McNemar, Montezi Snyder
Front row: Sieneke Martin, Sandra Tamari, Nancy Irving



Andrew Tomlinson Director New York QUNO and
Jonathon Woolley, Director Geneva QUNO planning
further collaboration in achieving world peace.

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