



Friends World
Committee for
Consultation

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Message/epistle from the 22nd Triennial

To Friends the world over:

308 Friends from 41 countries, representing many different branches of the Quaker family, met at King's Hospital School in Dublin from 11th to 19th August 2007. At our time of arrival, we were welcomed by Irish Friends, who with great love, dedication and enthusiasm made us feel part of their lives. Thanks to their contacts and enormous work by the visa team (Ireland and the FWCC World Office), visas were obtained for a much greater number of participants than was formerly possible, making the gathering more truly representative of our whole membership.

Ireland has a long Quaker tradition dating from 1654 when William Edmundson settled in Ulster. From the beginning Quakers established a reputation for fair dealing and good works. They are still remembered for providing food and employment during the great famine in the 1840s. More recently, in Northern Ireland, they worked to bring opposing sides together and thus contributed to reconciliation. The island of Ireland contains *the Republic of Ireland* and Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, but Irish Quakers have one Yearly Meeting.

The theme for the Triennial was

“Finding the prophetic voice for our time”.

In our daily worship we have heard seven Friends giving their message on the theme. We have been reminded of the tradition of prophecy in the Old Testament and in the early Christian church. We have learned of the characteristics of the prophets, including humility and faithfulness, and even a reluctance to take on a job they never applied for. Just as the Old Testament prophets and George Fox challenged the people of their own time, we have been challenged to realise the prophetic message of God's love in our lives. “Let the love of Christ flow into us, and through us to

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others that they too may know Christ.” If George Fox returned to the world today, would he feel that we were continuing his ministry? Prophetic words are however not enough – prophecy is also action. We can recognise prophetic ministry in the persistent and patient witness of our Quaker organisations and the many examples of peace and community building in the troubled regions of our world. The growing number of Friends transforming their lives to help our endangered planet are also living in the prophetic tradition.

We have felt the joy, passion and excitement of such committed living. It is our hope that we can recognise and encourage the prophets among us. Can we be open to the possibility of ourselves being called to such service which leads us to experience “the fruit of the spirit” (Gal.5:22)?

During the Triennial we worked together on many vital concerns of Friends today, such as the destruction of the environment, human rights, HIV/Aids, Violence, outreach and growth and the increasing involvement of young Friends. We were blessed by the energy of a larger number of Young Friends at this Triennial, several of whom played an important part in the planning and running of this meeting. Worship and sharing groups enriched and deepened friendships, as did the excursions organised by Irish Friends.

As we were together, news of the earthquake in Peru, the landslide in Kenya and the typhoon in the Phillipines reached us. We stopped our proceedings to pray for those affected by these disasters and continue to hold them in our hearts.

At the business sessions, some important decisions about the future of FWCC were reached. Instead of having a Triennial in 3 years’ time, there is to be a World Conference in five years’ time.

Welcome, Friends, to Kenya in 2012!

Dudzile Mtshazo, Clerk
Friends World Committee for Consultation