

By
LSK

Quakers
in the
World

Chapter 14 The World-Wide Society of Friends LSK

Approximately 50 years ago the Germany Yearly Meeting addressed an epistle to all groups of Friends around the world, asking:

Does Quakerism consist only of individual yearly meetings, which, independent of one another, manage their own affairs in their own areas, or is it a great Society of Friends reaching away over all boundaries and nations?

Theirs was a most perceptive and pertinent question — then and now.

In the intervening years we have not taken giant strides in becoming a global fellowship, but we have taken several steps in that direction. And, as Justice Holmes once commented, "It matters little where we stand; what matters most is the direction in which we are moving."

The 200,000 members of the Religious Society of Friends on our planet today live in approximately 40 of the more than 150 nations which exist at this time. In addition, there are small worship groups or individual Friends in several other countries. Furthermore, there are Quakers today in several nations where there were none 50 years ago, and there is increased communication among Friends everywhere. In the last half-century there have been a few world conferences of Quakers and several smaller gatherings, with representatives present from many parts of our globe.

But a large majority of Quakers today live in the United States and Canada (approximately 120,000), plus 19,000 in Great Britain and about 1700 in Ireland. In addition, there are much smaller groups in various parts of Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. So we are still predominantly a white, middle or upper-middle class, Anglo-Saxon society. And there are well over 100 nations in which there are no Quakers. Such facts should give

us pause as we consider the world-wide Religious Society of Friends today. However, because of the rapid growth of Quakerism in parts of Africa and Latin America, those Quakers may constitute a substantial proportion of the world-wide Society of Friends by the year 2000.

Early Friends and Their World-Wide Concerns. Today's concern for the propagation of the Quaker faith on a global scale is not something new. It has deep roots in early Quakerism.

As far back as the beginnings of the Society of Friends in the mid-17th century, George Fox and other early Friends felt that they had rediscovered a universal and life-transforming message which was intended for men, women, and children. It was also for people everywhere, not just for those on their tiny island.

They felt that it was their privilege as well as their duty to share this message with as many people and in as many places as possible. They were unashamed Publishers of Truth, unabashed evangelists.

And so they travelled. And how they travelled! Despite the hazards of transportation, the barriers of language and culture, and the persecutions of the period, they set out to distant places, telling people about the availability of God without mediators and about the tremendous effect of His Immediacy on people's lives. Listen to this part of a letter from the General Meeting at Skipton in 1660, which Howard Brinton quoted in greater length in his *Friends for Three Hundred Years*:

We have certain information . . . of the great work and service of the Lord beyond the seas, in several parts and regions, as Germany, America, and many other islands and places, as Florence, Mantua, Palestine, Tuscany, Italy, Rome, Turkey, Jerusalem, France, Geneva, Norway, Barbadoes, Bermuda, Antigua, Jamaica, Surinam, Newfoundland; through all of which Friends have passed

And when those ministers and missionaries could not travel somewhere, they sent letters, messages, or Epistles — to the Czar of Russia, the Sultan of Turkey, the Pope, or To People Everywhere.

Fox himself had what we have recently begun to call today "the global perspective". Here is one of his challenges:

Let all the nations hear the sound by word and writing. Spare no place, spare no tongue or pen, but be obedient to the Lord God; go through the world and be valiant for the Truth Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach

among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.

The Spread of Quakerism to Several Parts of the World. In the more than three centuries since the beginning of the Religious Society of Friends, Quakerism has spread into several parts of the world, as already noted. There seem to be five major reasons why this has happened.

First, Friends have taken part in several migrations. The largest of them was the movement of many Quakers from the British Isles to the American colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries. Then there were smaller migrations of British Friends to Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, first in the 19th century, and to some degree in the 20th century, especially after World War II.

But there have been other migrations, too. Because of their difficulties in living in lands with military conscription, Friends in Norway and Denmark migrated to the United States in the 19th century. In recent times many Friends in Kenya have also moved to Uganda and Tanzania, in part because of the pressures of population in Western Kenya. And there is the extremely interesting story of the migration of a small group of Friends from the state of Alabama to Costa Rica in 1942 to raise their children in a country without conscription and a vast military establishment.

Second, some Friends in the British Isles and many in the United States have believed in mission work, following their interpretation of the words of Jesus: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations."

Beginning in the middle of the 19th century, British Friends began to send missionaries to such places as Pemba, Madagascar, Zanzibar, mid-India, and Western China.

Toward the latter part of the 19th century and well into the 20th century, American Friends established missions in such places as Alaska (not a state at that time), Cuba, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, and Palestine (now known as the West Bank). Such efforts were usually supported by separate yearly meetings. But most of them were included under the American Friends Board of Foreign Missions when the Five Years Meeting (now the Friends United Meeting) was formed.

Although a part of the Friends United Meeting, California Yearly Meeting has its own Mission Board, with work in Central

America and in Mexico. And Evangelical Friends carry on mission work in Burundi in Africa, in Bolivia and Peru in South America, Mexico, and Taiwan.

In many of those places educational work was carried on, with the establishment of Quaker schools. And in some, medical work was established. In Kenya, Friends work from the beginning was four-pronged — the specifically religious work, the medical work (including a hospital), agricultural and vocational work, and schools.

It is important to note that in almost all of these places the leadership and ownership has been turned over entirely, or largely, now to local groups, and that yearly meetings have been formed in most of these places.

In a fairly recent publication of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, on *Friends in All Countries, Places, Islands, Nations*, there is a brief but splendid summary of Friends in these places and their relationships with Friends in places where Quakerism has been established much longer. That publication says:

Scattered far and wide, they differ not only in language, culture, and national allegiances, but also in their interpretations of Quakerism itself. But, nevertheless, they belong to the world-wide family of Friends. Many long for more communion with their fellow-Quakers across national and ideological lines.

Third, the spread of Quakerism has come about in several other places because of the humanitarian or service activities of Friends. Perhaps the best example of this was the development of a yearly meeting in Germany. After World War I, British and American Friends were very active in that nation, especially in child-feeding. So impressive was this work of reconciliation by people from countries which had been their former enemies, and so grateful were many Germans, that the word “Quackerspeisung” was coined, meaning Quaker feeding. In this and related work, Quakers made no attempt to proselyte. But a number of Germans were deeply impressed with this mission of mercy and love and asked British Friends to come and tell them about Quakerism. So, with rucksacks on their backs, people like Corder and Gwen Catchpool and Joan Fry travelled from place to place, meeting with small groups of inquirers and interpreting to them the Quaker view of life. Largely from this effort came the Germany Yearly Meeting, established in 1925.

Fourth, to a lesser degree Quaker literature has had its impact in

the spread of Quakerism. Perhaps the outstanding example of that was the group of Norwegian and Danish civilians, taken as prisoners by the British during the Napoleonic wars and confined on a ship. Finding a copy of Barclay's *Apology* on board, they began to read it and to hold meetings for worship according to the manner of Friends. From that episode Quaker groups emerged in Norway and Denmark. Other less spectacular developments have also come from the reading of Quaker literature by seekers in other times and places.

Fifth, in combination with some of the above or completely separate from them, the lives of individual Friends in many places have led to inquiries about their faith and the subsequent identification of the inquirers with Quakerism.

A Representative Group of 100 Quakers Around the World. If we were to bring together a representative group of Friends from the various parts of Quakerdom today, it would be a fascinating assemblage, and a revealing and instructive one, too. Here is a list of persons who would be in such a group:

North America	60
Africa	20
Great Britain	10
Central and South America	6
Asia	2
Europe, other than Great Britain	1
Australia and New Zealand	1

Space limitations preclude lengthy descriptions of these groups, but we will present thumbnail sketches of them in the following paragraphs.

Friends in North America. By far the largest group of Quakers (120,000) live in the United States and Canada. They are difficult to describe in a short space because they are so diverse and so divided. Nevertheless, here are a few facts about them which are worth noting. Additional material will be found on them in other parts of this volume.

Altogether there are now 30 yearly meetings in the United States, ranging from North Carolina and Philadelphia, with over 13,000 each, to several small groups of 300 to 500.

The four main aggregations or associations are (1) the Friends United Meeting, with its headquarters in Richmond, Indiana; (2) the Friends General Conference, with its headquarters in

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; (3) the Evangelical Friends Alliance; and (4) the Conservative or Wilburite Friends. As noted before, several yearly meetings belong to both the F.U.M. and the F.G.C. In addition there are some small associations of Friends and some Meetings which are unaffiliated.

Over the centuries, distance and the division of the total Quaker heritage among various groups have caused the fragmentation of American Quakerism but there seems now to be a strong movement for better understanding and even cooperation among these divergent groups.

Most Friends work together in the broad-based activities of the American Friends Service Committee, which is actually a corporation of 162 Friends from 22 yearly meetings, carrying on work for the betterment of human beings in the United States and in many places around the globe. Most Friends also cooperate in the Friends Committee for National Legislation, based in Washington, and attempting primarily to influence legislation and educate citizens politically.

Three of the several smaller organizations which are national in scope are the Quaker Theological Discussion Group, the Conference on Religion and Psychology, and the Associated Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs.

Friends in the United States still maintain an active interest in Quaker schools as well as in public education. There are now more than 60 elementary and secondary schools under the care of Friends, a large increase in recent years. Some are very small, consisting of three or four grades; others range from kindergarten through high school. In addition, there are 16 institutions of higher learning under the care of Friends, including the fairly recent Friends World College and the Earlham School of Religion.

The concerns of Friends in North America are numerous and include an interest in peace, race relations, civil rights, prisons, family relations, aging, the economic order, and government.

A great deal of Quaker literature is published, too, including three major magazines — *The Evangelical Friend*, the *Friends Journal*, and *Quaker Life*.

Canadian Yearly Meeting is an amalgamation of three previously separate groups. At one time there were over 7000 Quakers in that nation. Then their number dwindled to 650 in 1959. But that yearly meeting is growing now, with over 1000 members, widely

separated, from the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans. Despite these vast distances, they are held together by their yearly meeting sessions (held in different parts of the country), *The Canadian Friend*, the common projects carried on by the Canadian Service Committee (often in conjunction with the American Friends Service Committee and its English counterpart), the small and innovative Friends School at Argenta, and some intervisitation. During the war in Southeast Asia, especially in Viet Nam, Canadian Friends were especially helpful to young men from the United States who were opposed to the war and fled to Canada and to U.S. Friends who wished to provide humanitarian aid to the Vietnamese.

Friends in Africa. Most Quakers are unaware of the fact that the largest concentration of Friends in the world is in East Africa where there are now three yearly meetings: East Africa Yearly Meeting, East Africa Yearly Meeting of Friends (South), and Elgon Religious Society of Friends, the latter two being added to the Friends United Meeting in 1984. Together there are at least 50,000 Quakers in those groups, the result of missionary work begun in 1902 in Western Kenya by Friends from the midwest in the U.S.A.

From the beginning of work there educational, medical, industrial, and agricultural activities were carried on simultaneously with the more strictly religious undertakings.

At one time there were well over 300 "bush schools" for which Friends were responsible, but since the coming of political independence, the government has assumed control of many of those institutions. However, Friends today are active in approximately 80 of the "unaided" Harambee secondary schools and there is a new college at the major center of Friends in Kaimosi in Western Kenya, concentrating on vocational training. In addition, there is a Friends Bible Institute (the only Quaker "F.B.I." in the world), at Kaimosi.

As Friends in Kenya have joined the world-wide migration to cities, Quakers have established Meetings in the larger urban centers, such as Nairobi and Mombassa.

There are some Quaker pastors in East Africa Yearly Meeting, but not nearly enough for all their Meetings. Many of their gatherings for worship are under the leadership of the elders and are marked by a large degree of spontaneity of expression. They are neither pastoral nor non-pastoral, but a unique African development.

In addition, there are approximately 40 Quaker groups in Burundi, under the care of Mid-America Yearly Meeting (formerly Kansas), a small South Africa Yearly Meeting (with members in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Tasmania, and Botswana, as well as South Africa), a group in Pemba, and a few worship groups and individual Friends in other parts of that giant continent.

Friends in Great Britain and in Ireland. Of course London Yearly Meeting is considered by many as the “mother” of all Quaker groups, with Friends in many parts of the world looking to them for leadership because they seem to have some special strengths. One is the fact that they have never had a major split or division. Another is the fact that they have been able to combine their mission and service activities in recent years rather than having them as separate and sometimes competing outreaches of the Society of Friends. A third is the strength of the adult center at Woodbrooke. A fourth is their active involvement in local and national politics — far more noticeable than that of their American counterparts.

At one time in recent years London Yearly Meeting reached an all-time high record of around 22,000 members. Today it has dropped to a little over 19,000. There are over 400 local Meetings, as British Friends prefer small groups to large ones.

Friends House on Euston Road in London is a large and imposing building which houses most of the offices of the yearly meeting, small and large Meeting rooms, and an extremely well-stocked Friends Historical Library. Some of the major departments located in Friends House are the Quaker Home Service, Quaker Peace and Service, and Quaker Social Responsibility and Education.

Ireland Yearly Meeting consists of a little over 1700 Friends in both parts of that divided land. Quakers there have been especially involved in reconciliation between the opposing sides in the religious and political struggles of Ireland, as well as in Quaker schools, an institution for the mentally ill which is becoming a center for older people, and in cooperative ventures with the Quaker Peace and Service Committee of London and Ireland Yearly Meetings.

Friends in Other Parts of Europe. In addition to the London Yearly Meeting and the Ireland Yearly Meeting, there are eight other groups in Europe — in Norway, Denmark, and Sweden; in

France, in the Federal Republic of Germany and in the German Democratic Republic, and in Switzerland; plus small worship groups elsewhere.

The largest and in some ways the most remarkable is the Pymont Yearly Meeting (in the Federal Republic of Germany). Its origins have been traced elsewhere in this book. What is so remarkable about this Quaker group is the fact that it persisted during the Hitler regime and World War II and even grew slightly in numbers and certainly in spiritual power during those perilous times. Several of its members were in concentration camps or in prisons and some had their faith strengthened by those testing times. One of the most moving accounts in Quaker literature, for example, is the testimony of Eva Hermann in a pamphlet entitled *In Prison, Yet Free*.

Of special importance to German Friends is the Meeting House at Bad Pymont, built on the site of a Quaker Meeting House in the 19th century; their Bezirksversammlungen (something like Quarterly Meetings), and the Quaeker Verlag or publishing house, which produces *Der Quaeker*, their official publication, as well as other literature.

Because of the division of Germany into two countries, it was felt necessary in 1969 to establish a separate yearly meeting in the German Democratic Republic. It has a membership of only 50 but there is a large circle of friends of the Friends who attend Meetings and their yearly meeting.

Switzerland Yearly Meeting consists of approximately 130 members — both French-speaking and German-speaking Quakers. Many of the Swiss Friends have been associated with the Service Civil International or work camp movement, started by Pierre Ceresole as a part of his life-long witness for peace. He later became a Friend and he and other members of the Switzerland Yearly Meeting have been in prison because of their refusal to perform military service to their country. Consequently peace and civil rights are top priorities of that group. They also take an active part in the international work carried on at Quaker House in Geneva.

The France Yearly Meeting is also small, consisting of about 80 members, plus almost as many associate members, and a few Friends in Spain. The chief Meeting is in Paris, although there are three other localities in which Meetings are held. But the members are widely separated, which makes their conferences and get-

togethers especially important. In recent years French Friends have cooperated with other yearly meetings through the European Section Service Committee in rehabilitation work in Algeria, in peace work and prison reform, and in the world-wide Campaign Against Torture.

The Netherlands Yearly Meeting is similarly small. There was a Quaker group there in the 17th century but it eventually died. The present group received much of its impetus from Woodbrooke in England in the 1920s and 1930s. Two concerns which have dominated the Dutch group in recent times have been the International School at Ommen and work during and after World War II for the refugees from many nations. The school at Ommen still exists but it is no longer under the control of Friends. The total membership of the Dutch group is 133 at present.

Even though there are just over 300 Friends in Scandinavia, there are three yearly meetings there — in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden (including 20 Friends in Finland). These groups are in close touch with one another and sometimes cooperate on joint projects. They have also shared in relief and rehabilitation work in Algeria and in more recent activities in the West Bank of Jordan, administered by the European Section Friends Service Committee.

As indicated earlier, there were a few Friends in Denmark in the early years of Quakerism. The present group, however, dates back to the 1930s when the Halfdan-Nielson family returned to Denmark because of the depression in the United States. The chief concerns of Danish Friends in recent times have been for refugees, for disarmament and meaningful alternative service for conscientious objectors, and a school for girls who are experiencing special difficulties.

The Society of Friends in Sweden was founded in 1935. In the first decades of its existence that group included a few outstanding personalities, such as Emilia Fogelklou-Norlind (the author of an outstanding book on James Naylor) as well as other writings, the writers Elin Wagner and Jeanne Ogerdahl; and the prominent educators Per Sundberg and Greta Stendahl. Elsa Cedergren is still living but the Society today is in the hands of a new generation of Quakers. Its membership within Sweden numbers approximately 100, plus about 20 members in the Finland Monthly Meeting. After World War II Swedish Friends were engaged in trying to bring about better East-West relations, in which they are still interested.

In more recent years much of their time and strength has gone into work with refugees from Algeria.

Friends in the Middle East. There is also a small Near East Yearly Meeting, with 100 members in two monthly meetings. One is in Ramallah, in the West Bank. Much of the energy and time of Friends there goes into the two Quaker schools, started by American Friends — one for boys and one for girls — with an increasing amount of joint activities. The other monthly meeting is in Lebanon where British Friends have long maintained a school at Brummana.

Friends in Asia. Despite the enormous population of Asia, there are very few Friends in that part of the world. The largest group by far is in Taiwan, and consists largely of refugees from mainland China, some of whom were Quakers there. This work in Taiwan is a mission outpost of the Evangelical Friends Church — Eastern Region, and is now a yearly meeting of its own, with slightly less than 3,000 members.

In Japan there are approximately 300 Friends, growing out of the work of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (Arch Street) over a long period of time. When a National Christian Church was established in Japan in 1940, many Friends joined that united group. But a few continued their separate existence as a yearly meeting. The project with the highest visibility is the Friends Girls' School in Tokyo. But there are other activities of Japanese Friends, including a center for children, sponsored by the Japanese Friends Service Committee.

One of the smallest but most valiant groups of Friends in the world is the tiny Meeting in South Korea, one of whose leaders — Ham Sok-Hon — has undergone frequent imprisonment and ill-treatment for his challenges to the government on the issues of civil rights and peace.

In India there are three small groups. One is a result of the mission work of what was the Ohio Yearly Meeting at Damascus, Ohio (now a part of the Evangelical Friends Church-Eastern Region). Another is the Mid-India Yearly Meeting, with mostly unprogrammed Meetings. There is also a General Conference of Friends in India, formed in 1959 by both Asian and European Quakers who were members of groups outside India.

Friends in Latin America. There are organized Friends Meetings or Friends Churches today in nine Latin American nations, plus worship groups and individual Quakers in a few others.

In three of those countries Quaker work was begun by missionaries from yearly meetings in the United States which are now a part of the Friends United Meeting. As far back as 1881 Iowa Friends went to Jamaica, eventually starting schools there as well as establishing Meetings. Today there is a Jamaica Yearly Meeting of 450 members, which is a part of the Friends United Meeting. Particularly prominent is the Happy Grove School, a coeducational institution for 800 students which has provided many leaders for that island nation.

Friends in Cuba were hard hit by the changes in government brought about by the Castro regime. Many of them migrated to the United States in the 1960s, especially to Miami, Florida, where there is a Friends Church today, composed largely of former Cuban Friends. The Cuban government also took the five schools run by Cuban Quakers. But there is still a Cuba Yearly Meeting, with 250 members in several Meetings.

Much earlier a somewhat similar fate befell Mexican Friends when their government forbade missionaries from abroad to work there. But there are still around 200 Friends in Mexico, many of whom gather at 18 months intervals as the Mexico General Meeting.

Very different is the history of the small group of Quakers in Costa Rica. They are largely members of the Fairhope Meeting in Alabama who migrated to Central America in 1942 to live and bring up their children in a country free from military conscription. They have a school and Meeting House on a large tract of land 125 miles from the capital city of San Jose. Those Costa Rican Quakers are active in dairying and the production of cheese.

In 1970 a Central America Yearly Meeting was established, with 2300 members in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. This is the outcome of missionary work by Friends in California Yearly Meeting and is closely linked to that group.

By far the largest group of Quakers in Latin America live in Bolivia and Peru and they are organized in a yearly meeting which is closely associated with the Evangelical Friends in the United States who have been responsible for that Quaker outreach. There are approximately 10,000 Friends in those two nations.

Friends in Australia and New Zealand. As noted earlier in this chapter, most of the Friends in these two countries had their origins in Great Britain. For a long time Australia was a General Meeting

under the care of London Yearly Meeting; New Zealand was a Quarterly Meeting under that same body. Both became yearly meetings in 1964. Both groups are growing numerically. For example, there were 400 Friends in New Zealand in 1950 and 700 in 1979; there has been a comparable increase in Australia until that yearly meeting now numbers over 1000.

Among the many concerns of Australian Friends are peace, relations with the various Asian nations, work with the Australian aborigines, and the administration of the Friends School in Hobart, Tasmania, with over 1000 students.

As in Canada, the vast distance between the various Meetings creates problems of communication, so the yearly meeting sessions, the publication — *The Australian Friend*, and some intervisitation are extremely important as unifying factors.

The major interests of the 700 Friends in New Zealand can be seen by a look at the list of yearly meeting committees — peace, service, public questions, extension, and the newsletter.

Some Problems of the World-Wide Society of Friends. It's quite a society, this world-wide family of Friends — diversified as it is in languages, cultures, nationalities, economic and educational backgrounds, and religious beliefs and practices.

Consequently there are bound to be problems in it, just as there are in any family. Without elaborating upon them, let us mention a few of them.

One is the same problem that plagues Quakerism in the United States — the wide spectrum of religious beliefs and types of worship, from the highly evangelical groups to the silent meetings groups, and from Christ-centered Friends to those who are basically humanists. Can they learn to live together in One Quaker World — and even cooperate on some common concerns?

Can they even learn to speak to each other — because of the differences in languages as well as in theological vocabulary?

Similarly, can Friends in the Anglo-American orbit yield some of their power and influence to Friends in other parts of the world and be enriched by association with Quakers from a variety of cultures and nationalities?

Even more difficult is the question of how Quakers can cope with the problems of relations with their national governments, as cited in this chapter on such places as in Switzerland, Cuba, and Korea.

Another enormous problem is whether Friends here and there

can begin to reach out to persons of other faiths, as Douglas and Dorothy Steere have done in recent years in organizing colloquia between Hindus and Christians in India, and Buddhists and Christians in Japan.

There are other problems, but these are typical of the difficulties which confront us as we try to create a more closely-knit group of Quakers around the world — a more cohesive family of Friends.

What Binds All These Friends Together? Despite our difficulties, there are several ties which bind us together. They are often only tiny threads, but they nevertheless do exist.

One such unifying factor is our shared pride in a common past. No matter where Friends live and work and worship, they tend to be aware of their common background in 17th century England, the story of The Quaker Adventure, and some of its heroes and heroines — such as George Fox and Margaret Fell Fox, Isaac Penington, William Penn, John Woolman, Elizabeth Fry, and Lucretia Mott.

Then there are several general beliefs and practices we have in common — such as our belief in a creedless church, freedom and spontaneity in worship, the lack of sacraments, and the conduct of our business meetings.

Further, all or almost all of us share some common concerns — on peace, civil rights, education, prisons, education, and better standards of living in larger freedom.

Then, too, we share some common dreams for the future of our beloved Religious Society of Friends — for a new outpouring of the Spirit, for a prophetic ministry, and for the transformation of the lives of our members and attenders.

The practice of travelling in the ministry had a tremendous influence in the early days of Quakerism but it has declined, unfortunately, in more recent decades. However, it still exists and is another of the practices which foster friendship among the different groups of Friends in the far-flung parts of our planet. It is a practice which needs to be extended in our time.

To a lesser degree the reading of Epistles at the many yearly meetings around the world influences those who hear them, enhances our feeling of belonging to a world-wide family, and often encourages Friends to deepen the spiritual dimensions of their lives and to redouble their efforts for needed economic, social, political, and educational changes.

Further, the regional and world-wide meetings of Quakers have considerable impact on those attending them and indirectly on others through the use of the study guides and other publications prepared for them.

Of increasing importance are the many efforts of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, about which we will write in the final paragraphs of this chapter.

The Work of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. Friends have always been leary of over-organization at the top of the pyramid of Quakerism; they have always maintained that the foundation of local Meetings is what matters most. Nevertheless, there is a need for consultative and coordinating bodies which function for larger groups of Quakers.

Such a body was created as a result of the recommendations of the representatives from many yearly meetings around the world who attended the Friends World Conference at Haverford and Swarthmore Colleges, near Philadelphia, in 1937. In order to make it very clear that this was not to be a superstructure, legislating for Quakers, it was called the Friends World Committee for Consultation.

After approximately 50 years, it is recognized by many individuals and groups as the capstone of the world-wide community of Friends, and almost all Quaker groups participate now in its meetings and work. Its international headquarters are at Drayton House in London and there are regional offices in Kenya, the United States (in Philadelphia and in Plainfield, Indiana), and in Scotland. The three sections of the committee are for Europe and the Near East, for Africa, and for the Americas. A fourth section has long been discussed, for Asia and possibly the West Pacific Rim, but that section is still under consideration.

Every three years the representatives from the various component groups in the World Committee meet in a different part of the world to review their current work and plan for the future. Meetings have been held, for example, in such widely separated places as Sidney, Australia; Nairobi, Kenya; Sigtuna, Sweden; Germantown, Ohio in the U.S.A.; and in 1979 in Switzerland.

Among its many activities have been the planning and carrying out of such world conferences as those held at Oxford, England in 1952; at Guilford College in North Carolina, in 1967; and a special meeting for Friends in the Western Hemisphere, held at the Friends

University in Wichita, Kansas, in 1977.

The European and Near East Section, organizes conferences of Friends in that part of the globe every six years, while the African section has convened meetings of Friends from that continent.

The World Committee for Consultation publishes the *Friends World News* and several useful pamphlets, directories, and study guides; arranges intervisitation trips; sponsors pilgrimages of Young Friends to the Fox country in northern England; and promotes the international concerns of Friends, such as the abolition of torture and the right sharing of the world's resources.

The World Committee is also recognized as a non-governmental agency with consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations; the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; and other bodies of the U.N. System. As an integral part of its status with the U.N., a great deal of work is carried on by the Quaker Program at the United Nations, based at the Quaker Houses in New York City and Geneva. From time to time Quakers from different parts of the world are brought in as consultants on special issues being considered by the U.N. and its affiliated bodies.

Yes, They Are All Quakers. Perhaps it would be fitting to conclude this account of the World-Wide Society of Friends with the verses written by an English Friend, Sydney Bailey, in honor of the World Committee, composed when he and his wife, Brenda, were in charge of the work at Quaker House in New York City. He titled the verses "Diversity of Gifts" and they are reproduced here with the author's permission:

There are farmers and lawyers and teachers and bakers,
There are nurses and salesmen and furniture-makers,
There are artists and dentists — yet they're all of them Quakers.

Some gather in silence in old Meeting Houses
In old Quaker bonnets and old Quaker blouses,
While others in churches have followed new trends
And "programme" their worship, and yet they're all Friends.
Some welcome all strangers with smiles in the doorway,
In Pemba and Britain, Ohio and Norway.
Some break fast on bacon, while some are cornflakers,
Yet, in spite of it all, they are all of them Quakers.

Some worship on benches, some worship on pews;
Some fight for their country while others refuse.

Some feel that their job is to clean up disasters,
And some serve their Meetings as Elders or Pastors.
Some ask all the questions, some give all the answers,
In Ireland, Mexico, Cuba, and Kansas.
Some are Lord's Day observers, and some sabbath-breakers,
Yet, in spite of it all, they are all of them Quakers.

Some Quakers are tiny, some Quakers are massive;
Some Quakers are active, some Quakers are passive;
Some Quakers are divided and others unite;
Some Friends are convinced and some are birthright.
Some live by the sea and others live inland
In Fritchley, Nebraska, New England and Finland.
Some rise with the dawn while some are late wakers,
Yet, in spite of it all, they are all of them Quakers.

There are those who believe in Original Sin;
There are others who value the Light Within.
Some Quakers are urban, some Quakers are tribal.
And most of them reckon to study the Bible.
There are Quakers who sing, there are some who square-dance,
In Italy, Lebanon, Baltimore, France.
Some are midwives for births, some for deaths undertakers,
Yet, in spite of it all, they are all of them Quakers.

There are Quakers at Wilmington, Earlham and Whittier
(But the young Quaker ladies at Swarthmore are prettier).
There are Quakers in dresses and Quakers in trousers,
There are Quakers in saris and dhotis and blouses.
Some Quakers dress simply while others dress finer,
In Kenya and Oregon, Holland and China.
Some Friends live in towns, while some farm the acres,
Yet, in spite of it all, they are all of them Quakers.

In Paris they drink, in London they smoke.
At Westtown they dance, at Sidcot they joke.
Some Quakers are ugly, some Quakers are pretty,
Some Quakers are stupid, some Quakers are witty.
Some flourish in deserts while some like it windier,
In Germany, Sweden, Jamaica, and India.
Some practice simplicity and still are plain speakers,
Yet, in spite of it all, they are all of them Quakers.

So listen, all Friends, the roughest and gentlest,
Conservative, liberal, or plain fundamentalist.
To each one we offer our friendliest greeting

(Which please take back home to your own Yearly Meeting).
I've wearied you long with this light-hearted ditty.
Written to honour the Friends World Committee.

Some Questions on Chapter 14

1. What idea or ideas in this chapter struck you most forcefully? Why?
2. Have you or someone else in your Meeting lived or visited in a yearly meeting outside the United States? If so, what information and insights can you or they contribute from that experience?
3. Have you or someone else in your Meeting attended any of the Friends World Conferences or any of the triennial meetings of the Friends World Committee for Consultation? If so, what information and insights could you or they contribute from that experience?
4. If you could visit one of the yearly meetings outside the United States, which one would you like to visit most? Why?
5. Which of the obstacles to increased communication among the different yearly meetings around the world do you consider the most difficult to overcome? Why?
6. Which of the unifying factors among Friends in different yearly meetings around the world do you feel are the most promising? Why?
7. Do you, or does your Meeting, contribute financially to the work of the Friends World Committee for Consultation? Should you?

A Brief Reading List on the World-Wide Society of Friends

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- Oats, William N. *A Question of Survival: Quakers in Australia in the Nineteenth Century*. 416 pp.
- Stevenson, Charles. *With Unhurried Pace: A Brief History of Quakers in Australia*. Australia Yearly Meeting, 1973. 43 pp.
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