



# Friends World News

The Bulletin of the Friends  
World Committee for Consultation  
*Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)*

[www.fwccworld.org](http://www.fwccworld.org)

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**About the Friends World Committee for Consultation**

The purpose of the Friends World Committee for Consultation is to encourage fellowship among all the branches of the Religious Society of Friends. The Quaker community circles the globe, spanning a rich diversity of regional cultures, beliefs and styles of worship. FWCC programs unite Friends around the world through Spirit-led fellowship.

Our association with the Quaker United Nations Offices offers a means to monitor and present Quaker contributions to world affairs. Our consultation extends to those of other faiths through work with the World Council of Churches.

**Our Mission**

Answering God’s call to universal love, FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications, and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world. (Approved 2006)

**History**

In 1937, after years of concerned work to reconnect a fragmented Quaker world, the Second World Conference of Friends created the FWCC “to act in a consultative capacity to promote better understanding among Friends the world over.” Today, Friends from yearly meetings and groups in 75 nations continue this work. Around the world there are four cooperating, autonomous FWCC Sections serving Africa, the Americas, Asia and the West Pacific, and Europe and the Middle East. FWCC’s World Office is in London. Since 1948, FWCC has had “consultative” status with the United Nations and is responsible for the two Quaker UN Offices in Geneva and New York.

**FWCC World Office**

The world office is based at Friends House in London, England. It serves four main roles:

- Organise world gatherings, including triennial meetings and consultations of Quakers world-wide.
- Support and maintain contact with the work of the four FWCC sections and the Quaker United Nations Offices.
- Coordinate the International Membership programme, which joins isolated Friends and worship groups to the wider Quaker community.
- Promote an understanding of the world-wide character of the Society of Friends, through conferences, staff travel, correspondence and publications, and through ecumenical and interfaith work on behalf of Friends.

Further information about FWCC and its activities can be obtained from the World Office or the Section Offices, whose addresses are on the back cover of Friends World News. Contributions to the work of FWCC are always welcome and can be sent to any of the offices.

**Friends World News**

Friends World News, the bulletin of FWCC, is published twice yearly. If you wish to receive a personal copy, please contact the World Office (or the Section of the Americas if you live in North America). There is no set subscription fee, but a donation would be welcome. Please send to the World Office anything you would like considered for publication in Friends World News – articles, letters, news, photographs and other illustrations, about the activities and religious witness of Friends. All materials received will be acknowledged although the editor cannot make any commitment to publish. Please say if you wish photographs or other materials to be returned.

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Thank you for your donations to FWCC, past, present and future.

- Together we are building a strong and vital Religious Society of Friends.
- Together we are strengthening the worldwide network of Friends.
- Together we are bringing our Quaker message to the world.

Please give generously to support the world family of Friends.

For more about FWCC please visit our website:

[www.fwccworld.org](http://www.fwccworld.org)

# To Friends Everywhere

It is a wonderful greeting as an opening to our Epistles and sent to Friends around the world, expressing how God is moving among us. We are not everywhere, but wherever we are, we receive loving greetings from other Friends. We span the globe, living and working in all four sections, speaking multiple languages, and worshipping in ways that are meaningful and expressive in our particular ways.

In my recent travels to Africa, I was presenting FWCC and I acknowledged the facility with which African Friends moved between the use of English and Kiswahili, even though there were Friends there from multiple counties. In a room of 175 Friends, I was the only person who did not speak Kiswahili. As a guest, it would have been ludicrous to insist that only English be used just so that I could understand the words. That would be narrow and self-serving. Using this analogy, would it not be equally narrow to insist that all Quakers worship in the same way?

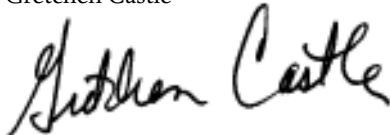
As Ben Pink Dandelion wrote in *Celebrating the Quaker Way*:

I am a Quaker. I am part of a worldwide Quaker community and I inhabit that knowledge daily. The knowledge and reality of that community membership informs my life and gives me the strength I need to live faithfully, to speak truth to power, to witness in the world. My Quaker belonging is about being part of a global network of those I have met. . . . We have known each other in the things which have felt eternal, as well as those things which truly are. We have travelled to visit each other, knowing that we will find welcome and a like mind at the end of our journey. We have known that as long as we stay within the Quaker fold, we will most likely meet again. It is a companionship of the greatest depth and trust. These are friendships “for life” in every sense.

Let us celebrate the richness of our diversity, our community, and our love of Friends everywhere. Let us be grateful for all we have been given.

*With deep appreciation for Friends everywhere,*

Gretchen Castle

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gretchen Castle". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the printed name.

General Secretary, FWCC World Office

# Around the Sections

## *Africa Section*

### The 6th Triennial Conference of FWCC

The conference was held from 16th to 20th April 2014 at Hill School situated in Eldoret town which is fondly referred to as “Kenya’s bread basket” because of its immense contribution to National food security. Eldoret is located in the Great Rift Valley 300kms from Nairobi City. It may be important to note that this is the region that is famous because of its prominent sons and daughters that have appeared on the public platform in Kenya for varied reasons. They include; The Second President of the Republic of Kenya, Daniel Arap Moi; the Deputy President of Kenya, William Ruto; broadcaster, Joshua Arap Sang who is facing trials at the International Criminal Court not forgetting the famous international athletes from the region who always raise the flag of Kenya high in different athletic competitions around the globe, just to mention but a few.

The region is one of those that bore the greatest brunt during the 2007-2008 Post election violence. Quakers are remembered in the area because of their effective tools: Alternative to Violence and also the “Listening Programme” that helped warring communities to reconcile with each other.

It is worth mentioning that the fact that the conference was falling on Easter time raised fears initially to the planners because we wondered who will be ready to sacrifice



Friends singing at the Africa Section Triennial.

their Easter holidays which give a rare opportunity for those who stay far from their families to be with them, to come and spend four nights in a Primary School Dormitory sleeping on a double-decker bed. This is also a time that unscrupulous public transport operators take advantage of the rush to increase fares meaning that it is very expensive to travel during this period.

The good news is that against the backdrop of the highlighted challenges we managed to gather 176 delegates from 22 Yearly Meetings. The delegates, although for obvious reasons majority were Kenyans, but we also were blessed by the presence of 7 Tanzanians, 8 Rwandese, 1 South African, 1 Ugandan, and of Course the General Secretary – Gretchen Castle.

It was very humbling to see the Spirit at work in the conference. It was amazing to see the attendance in the bible study groups which met early morning 6:00-7:30 AM. The bible study was based on the book of Jonah and there were lively discussions in the groups, hence the admirable attendance.

It was not a mistake that the keynote speaker was Oliver Kisaka who is one of us and who represents us to Quaker United nations Committee in New York. He challenged the Yearly Meeting leaders who were present to own up the Section by supporting it. Soon after the message we had an individual who stood and gave a donation equivalent to what each Yearly Meeting is to donate annually. A Superintendent of one Yearly Meeting promised that immediately after the Conference they were going to send some amount to reduce their balance and for sure they honoured this promise. Other leaders pledged their support as well and we are hopeful that these pledges will be honoured.

The Nominations Committee's report was received with unprecedented sobriety and decorum, not with the common theatrics that characterise this exercise most often than not. It may be helpful to mention that the decision of the out-going Clerk David Bucura to advise the committee not to consider him for another three- year term in office as clerk after serving only one term was a very rare one in Africa where once one assumes leadership whether in secular or spiritual office, he/she becomes an ungazetted king or Queen, sitting in an unimpeachable position; ruling supreme and for life. The Nominations Committee was led to nominate Joshua Lilande from Lugari Yearly Meeting who was one of the two assistant clerks to David to take over the mantle.

## **A Bridge to the South**

The nomination of Nokuthula Mbeti to the position of assistant clerk is very significant at this point that we are yearning to move closer to the Friends in Central and South Africa. It is our hope that Nokuthula will in consultation with the local leaders facilitate a visit of the Executive Secretary to the Region in the near future.

## **A Blend of the traditions**

Closing worship every evening gave a chance to the delegates to experience worship of a different kind than what they are accustomed to, as one evening Friends from Chwele

Yearly Meeting (Programmed) led the worship, the next evening was led by Friends from Tanzania (mixture of programmed and evangelical) and the last evening was unique because it was shared between Evangelical Quakers International from Kenya, Nokuthula and Gretchen both from the unprogrammed traditions.

## Historic Young Friends Event

Plans are underway to host a Quaker Youth Pilgrimage in Africa in 2016. The event is jointly organised by EMES and Africa Section. We ask for all the necessary support to materialise the same for we believe it will be a life-changing program to the participants given that they will be coming from two extreme worlds.

### *A prayer from Africa*

Bring us back to you, God – we're ready to come back. Give us a fresh start. As it is, you've cruelly disowned us. You've been so very angry with us. Lamentations 5:21-22, The message.

Churchill Malimo  
Section Secretary

## *Asia-West Pacific Section* Update on The Philippines

On October 15, 2013 at 8.12 AM, an earthquake of 7.2 magnitude hit the small province of Bohol, The Philippines. Three weeks later, on November 8, the world's strongest cyclone (Haiyan) ever to hit land swept over the country.

Local Quakers were quick to respond to both of these events. Boni Quirog, a resident of Bohol and member of the local group of Friends was involved in the immediate distribution of food and water to those affected by the earthquake.

Early in November, Boni told us there were 218 casualties, 73 thousand plus families still homeless (currently living in tents), many wounded, churches destroyed and 27 schools totally damaged from 19 municipalities. He thanked all of those who had sent messages of love and concern, money, goods, services, various forms of help, prayers and well-wishes.

Then came the devastation from cyclone Haiyan. Bohol was affected but most of the impact was felt in the province of Leyte. Boni and other members of the Bohol Quaker group again thanked Friends for the love and solidarity they felt as they continued on their difficult journey. Social media, particularly Facebook was used by many Friends around the world to offer support and to stay in touch with the unfolding impact of the typhoon.

Until recently Boni served on the Geneva QUNO Committee and noted at this time that he was "glad that QUNO has decided to take up climate change, an advocacy/concern that I considered topmost from the outset or since day one of my QUNO involvement owing to the fact that the poor of the world stands to suffer most from its adverse affects;

the Philippines being the hardest hit (suffering an average of 20 typhoons annually; this year, we already suffered 24 typhoons and 3 more are expected before the year ends).”

We look forward to finding sustainable ways of helping our less fortunate fellow Bohol neighbours whose houses were entirely wrecked, farms and work places destroyed, churches, schools and various infrastructure devastated.

Philippine Evangelical Friends International Ministries (PEFIM) is based in Manila, however many of its churches are in Leyte. Crisanto Dela Cruz is a senior Pastor in the church, based in Manila, and we have been in constant communication with Cris over the last few months.

As news of the earthquake and the typhoon spread around the world, both the FWCC World Office and the FWCC Asia West Pacific Office began to receive queries about how Friends could donate to Quaker groups in the Philippines. It was decided to launch a time limited appeal and this was done by the World Office in mid November. Once again the word was spread by email, websites and Facebook.

Friends from all around the world have been generous and we have received approximately \$US60,000.

Pastor Cris was able to deliver food aid to Tacloban, Leyte before Christmas, knowing that funds would be coming from FWCC. Chris wrote:

Dulag in Tacloban was among the worst hit area when the super typhoon hit Leyte province. We used 3 vehicles to transport all the goods to be distributed to Leyte.



Aid distribution in the Philippines following the earthquakes and cyclone last year. Friends from around the world donated almost \$US60,000.

What I saw upon arriving was beyond my expectation and imagination. It was only a miracle I would say that there are any survivors in the area. Up to this time over a month after the landfall the place is still in total disarray. They are not given much attention by the government or the media thus lacking international attention. The relief effort of the government there is very irregular and is only once a week. Upon our arrival to the community, my heart was really crushed at the sight of mothers carrying their children immediately following our vehicle. There are many children as well who cheered upon seeing us. I can't help but cry at the sight of the extreme suffering of my people. Our team immediately unloaded our goods in our target location. We prepared 250 food packs for 250 families. It's such a wonderful experience to be able to extend help to people in great need. Your generous gift enabled us to increase the value of our food packs and to extend it as well to many more.

The people appreciate so much the love and kindness being shown them by people from Friends all over the world. Truly the need is enormous and task is so huge. But through the strategic partnership of Friends all over the world we can make an impact in the lives of many who are suffering from this tragedy brought by the super typhoon. Please feel free to extend the information in this email as well as the photos to our generous donors and supporters. I must say once again that I am truly grateful and rejoicing in the Lord for the wonderful and strategic partnership we have in advancing the work of the Lord. May our good and loving God reward you for your generosity and kindness toward us. We praise and worship God every time we remember you in our prayers. God bless you and thank you very much.

Funds that have been forwarded from the FWCC appeal was initially spent on food, water and shelter.

PEFIM staff have worked with the affected communities to reestablish food sources to communities who lost their means of food production. (in particular supplying goats, chickens and assisting to fix fishing boats).

Their current projects involve working with local government authorities to develop vegetable gardens, poultry raising, and planting fruit trees and hardwood trees. Beginning to plant hardwood trees is a very good long term project as so many of them were lost during the typhoon.

The appeal was launched by the World Office and the Asia West Pacific Section and we continue to collaborate as we manage the distribution of funds. An Australian Friend, Dave Hodgkin, has worked in The Philippines for many years and spent time in Leyte over the last few months working with a number of aid agencies. Dave has been able to meet with Pastor Cris and offer support and advice to the AWPS Office.

I join with our Friends from the Philippines in giving humble thanks for the support that has come from many many places over the last few months.

Ronis Chapman  
Section Secretary



## *Europe and Middle East Section*

The winter of 2013-2014 brought strange weather to various parts of the Section – prolonged cold spells and lots of snow in the Middle East, mild temperatures but constant rain and flooding further North. Extreme weather events, already familiar to some people in other parts of the world, are beginning to become apparent to people in Western Europe too – discussion of global climate change has increased, but, alas, the political will to tackle its causes seems as elusive as ever. Many Friends have been faithfully working on this concern for many years – Eco-Quakers in Ireland, the Good Lives project in Britain, deep Ecology in Norway, pioneering partnerships in the Netherlands.

Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva has been bringing its quiet diplomacy on this topic, both at the Warsaw meetings at the end of 2013, and in Bonn at the beginning of 2014. At the same time, the Quaker Council for European Affairs, together with Britain Yearly Meeting's Quaker Peace and Social Witness, offered a very well-attended and thought-provoking conference on Economic Justice – Guaranteeing a Fair Share. Papers and podcasts from the conference are still available at: <http://www.qcea.org/home/events/conferences/>.

Friends working on the Israel-Palestine issues came together at Woodbrooke in December to explore the current state of the peace process, and work on a distinctive Quaker message for the area. We acknowledged the long-standing Quaker presence, and the need to continue to uphold local actors who are working for a just peace. With the latest deadline for negotiations approaching without hint of progress, we continue to hold the situation in the Light, as well as the on-going fighting in Syria.



Some member of the EMES Executive Committee (left to right): Leo Vincent, Clerk of EMES Quaker Youth Pilgrimage Committee; Marisa Johnson, Executive Secretary; Neithard Petry, Treasurer; Rachel Bewley-Bateman, Clerk; and Dag Hovda Sture.

Many countries in Europe are beginning a series of commemorations of the war that ravaged the continent between 1914 and 1918. Friends in Britain are documenting the resistance to the war, and the price paid by those who opposed it – see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/news/cranks-or-heroes-telling-untold-stories-wwi>. FWCC-EMES has been encouraging Berne Weiss of Budapest Worship Group and Roman Branberger of Prague Meeting in sharing their “Imagining a World Without War” with Friends at the Peace and Service Consultation that took place in November 2013, and Annual Meeting of Representatives, which will take place in Strasbourg in May. Our theme will be “A Confident Quaker Voice,” and as well as “Imagining a World Without War,” there will be a focus on ecumenical engagement, especially after the promising progress made in Busan by the World Council of Churches on pursuing a Just Peace agenda. Can Friends make use of the call to pursue Pilgrimages of Justice and Peace until the next WCC General Assembly? And, if so, how do we negotiate the gulf between “conventional” Christian theology, and Liberal Quakerism? We shall explore language and meanings to bridge some of the gaps that divide Friends within different Quaker traditions, as well as from other Churches.

Friends in Norway will begin to celebrate their bicentenary in July. Norwegian sailors captured by the British navy during the Napoleonic wars were visited on their captive ships by Quakers, and when they returned home they established Quaker communities.

We are in contact with a very small number of Friends living in Ukraine. The eyes of the world are looking on with growing concern as the country appears to be on the brink of civil war. Moscow Monthly Meeting has been considering its response to events, and issued the following statement:

Please pray for all those involved in potentially hostile confrontations, that wisdom and humanity might always prevail and that bloodshed be avoided.

May faith replace fear in all situations.

Marisa Johnson  
Section Secretary

## *Section of the Americas*

### **Let the Living Water Flow! ¡Que Fluya el Agua Viva!**

Our four Living Water regional consultations were a tremendous success, each with over 100 participants, together representing over 40 different yearly meetings and groups of Friends. One participant commented on the . . .

. . . unanticipated ways people can find their way to unity with each other across seemingly irreconcilable differences in theology and “conviction.” In some ways we accomplished this in spite of ourselves. This is wonderfully encouraging.

Another wrote:

It’s so special to know that no matter the language, or race, we all have something to contribute, and moreover, to learn to share our love and understanding of different

ways. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.” [Psalm 133]

Continuing with the theme “Let the Living Water Flow! Friends serving God’s purposes,” all four conferences offered workshops for Friends to develop our intercultural communication skills for intra-Quaker dialogue and our everyday lives, and for supporting Quaker leadership in the 21st century. Co-clerks for planning the consultations were: Dorothy Grannell (New England YM); Karen Gregorio de Calderon (Guatemala Holiness YM) and Daniel Limachi Mendoza (National Evangelical Friends Church of Bolivia). The new Living Water Study Book in English and Spanish is available online, as a free download file. More details are at <http://fwccamericas.org/events/2014-Consultations.shtml>.

The first Consultation in El Salvador featured three plenary workshops: *Intercultural Communication: Many Ways to be Bilingual*, with Robin Mohr, Executive Secretary, FWCC Section of the Americas; *Bivocational Ministry and Quaker Leadership for the 21st Century*, with Esteban Ajnota of the National Evangelical Friends Church of Bolivia; and *The History and Future of Friends*, with David Byrne from the Coalition for Hispanic Ministries, Evangelical Friends Church, Mid America Yearly Meeting.

Both North American consultations in California and North Carolina featured the same workshop topics, with different leaders. The workshops on *Conflict Transformation* were led by members of the New York Yearly Meeting Committee on Conflict Transformation. Given that many Monthly Meetings are troubled by tensions among members, these workshops explored commonly-arising incidents and shared insights into how they can be acknowledged; how they can be addressed; and how the Meeting can use conflict as an opportunity for advancement and transformation.



Friends attending the FWCC Section of the Americas Consultation in El Salvador.

The workshops on *Intercultural Communications* were led by Alan Amavisca, EFC-Southwest YM in California and by Debbie Humphries and Lisa Graustein, of New England YM in North Carolina. These workshops explored the challenge of listening to understand in those circumstances where each party brings a different background to the conversation. They considered the significance of the Incarnation, conflict mediation tools, and the art of listening on our efforts to listen across social, ethnic or linguistic boundaries. They built practical skills for deep listening and deep communication, grounded in an increased awareness of ourselves. They sought to both understand and be understood by those with a different perspective in ways that nourish that of God in all of us.

The two North American workshops on *Quaker Leadership for the 21st Century* were led by students in the Quaker leadership programs at Guilford College and George Fox University. In North Carolina, Keenan Lorenzato (Pacific YM) and Emily Albert (North Carolina YM-FUM) invited workshop participants into an interactive exploration on leadership, integrating concerns about the fast pace of technology vs patience and waiting on the Spirit; and stewardship for the environment and each other. In California, brothers Mark and Tim Almquist (Northwest YM) shared their experiences of being in positions of leadership in the Friends church as young people, touching on leadership development, holistic leadership, humility, and submission to the way of Christ's dynamic leadership.

The 2012 Kabarak Call for Peace and Eco-Justice reminds us that . . .

. . . we must become careful stewards of all life . . . a light in the darkness of greed and destruction . . . we are called to see what Love can do – for the earth and all peoples.

In North Carolina Friends reviewed the Kabarak Call and then learned about the efforts of the Friends Emergency Material Assistance Program (FEMAP) and how it helps in emergencies and issues relating to long term deprivation. They assembled hygiene, infant care and school supply kits while exploring how to join with North Carolina Friends Disaster Service or how to replicate FEMAP at home. In California, participants learned about Sacramento Friends Church's ministry of foot washing with the homeless - why and how it is done, and how it is received - and practiced foot washing with one another. They reflected on our attitudes about providing and receiving such a personal service, a reminder of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. Tyla Heulton (Co-pastor, Sacramento Friends Community Church) and Kylin Navarro (Co-clerk, Pacific YM Young Adult Friends and former FWCC Quaker Youth Pilgrim), with support from Alyssa Nelson (Pacific YM Youth Program Coordinator), led this exploration of the do's and don'ts of service, the servant-leadership approach, and local-global connections through the Kabarak Call.

In Bolivia, the plenary workshops included Manuel Coronado and Ruth Bueso de Coronado (Friends Ambassadors Evangelical Church – Guatemala) on *Reading the Scriptures with Early Friends*, Simon Lamb (Ireland YM) on the *Diversity of Friends Around the World*, Louise Salinas, former Associate Secretary of FWCC Section of the Americas, on the Kabarak Call and the work of Friends around care for the environment, and Esteban Ajnota (INELA Bolivia) on *Bivocational Ministry*.

Every generation of Friends has to rediscover the purpose and the strengths of the

Religious Society of Friends for themselves and in their own time. Without this renewal, the unique combination of individual faithfulness and social gospel that is the heart of the Quaker movement will risk being lost. These consultations helped Friends to learn new skills from one another to sustain and grow our meetings, to affirm our mutual Quaker identity, to consider the future of Friends as a whole over the next century and commit to practices to foster a thriving Religious Society of Friends.

## **Quaker Youth Pilgrimage in Peru and Bolivia**

The Section of the Americas is blessed to host the 2014 Quaker Youth Pilgrimage. Young Friends from Europe, North America, Central America, and South America will once again travel together in the traditional month long spiritual and historical exploration. The difference is that Young Adult Friends in Bolivia and Peru took the initiative and invited the Pilgrimage to come to South America. More than ever before, the QYP planning committee includes older and younger Friends, FUM, FGC and Evangelical Friends, from North and South America. They have been meeting by Skype almost every other week for the last year, working bilingually in Spanish and English. Taking the equally diverse group of Pilgrims and Leaders to the Andes, well beyond the traditional boundaries of the Pilgrimage, is a vivid example of how the Friends World Committee brings together the whole world of Friends, especially young people.

## **Woven Together in God's Love**

What does the Religious Society of Friends need from a Friends World Committee? The Section of the Americas is examining deeply how God is calling us in the 21st Century and will be presenting new responses at the upcoming Section Meeting. The next meeting of Representatives in the Section of the Americas will be March 12-15 in Mexico City. The theme will be "Friends Woven Together in God's Love" or "Los Amigos Tejidos Juntos en el Amor de Dios," with reference to Colossians 2:2.

Robin Mohr  
Section Secretary

# From the World Office

Answering God's call to universal love, FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications, and consultation to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world.

The World Office supports, communicates, and promotes the work of the Sections – and works across Sections. We sent visitors to the Africa Section Triennial, to the Europe and Middle East Annual Meeting and to the four Section of the Americas Consultations. We will be attending the Asia West Pacific Section meeting in January of 2015. The World Office brings the Section Secretaries together for collaborative discernment of ways to work together. Each Section is challenged and blessed with multiple languages and cultures, and within each Section there are all strands of Quakerism. With a cadre of volunteers, the Section work is still done by very small staff groups, so the value of collaboration is felt strongly.

The World Office gives Friends a presence at the world level. Through the FWCC World Office, the Quaker United Nations Office in New York and Geneva is given the highest consultative status by the UN, allowing Friends to have influence at this level. Similarly, the World Office has observer status at the World Council of Churches, where it has participated in the Faith and Order Consultation, sent a Korean Friend to the 10th Assembly on “God of Life, lead us to justice and peace” in Busan, and will be sending an observer to the WCC Central Committee meeting in July 2014.

As General Secretary of the World Office, I am invited to the annual meeting of the Secretaries of the Christian World Communions, where we discuss issues relevant to our communions. As one of the smallest, I sit with others who represent huge communions and have very long and formal titles, yet we seem to experience very similar issues, such as growth in the global south and bridging cultural and theological differences within our communions. Friendships and spiritual support have grown in the short two meetings I have attended. I am very grateful for this group.

Reaching out to Friends, attending yearly meetings and other gatherings of Friends, building the Quaker network, give life and energy to my work. I am grateful to so many wonderful Friends for their friendship, financial support, and care of FWCC as a vital Quaker organization.

FWCC brings Friends together for the big events; the World Conference in 2012, and the next International Representatives Meeting (formerly the Triennial) in Arequipa, Peru, where Friends appointed by yearly meetings will come, as well as those filling open spaces. It will be the next great worldwide gathering of Friends, from January 12-20, 2016, held for the first time in South America, held largely in Spanish and clerked by Ramon Gonzales Longoria from Cuba, another first, and held for the first time among evangelical Friends. Friends from Peru and Bolivia have attend Triennials in many parts of the world, and we are delighted to meet with them in their community. Please consider giving to the travel fund, brushing up on your Spanish, and joining Friends in Peru!

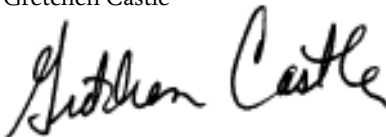
FWCC also brings Friends together across the internet. We are working to strengthen the network of Friends through the links on our web site, through Facebook and other social media, through writing, and by expanding into digital storytelling, producing short film clips to build understanding among Friends.

Having been accused of being overly optimistic, I admit it is true. I am an enthusiastic Friend and am excited about FWCC and the ways we support the Religious Society of Friends by *Connecting Friends, Crossing Cultures, and Changing Lives*. As you will have read in the Section reports, these three elements are alive and well in each of the four Sections. The greatest challenge in the World Office and in each Section is to strengthen Friends financial support, building a sustainable organization worldwide. We are grateful to our thousands of supporters. It is remarkable and encouraging how many Friends give. And the demographics have changed, where many Friends who gave substantially are no longer with us. We are working to widen and strengthen FWCC support so we can serve Friends with the energy and commitment of a strong spiritual community. God is good, and we pray that our continued work to “answer God’s call to universal love” will continue to move from strength to strength.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you to go a bear fruit - fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.

—John 15:12-17 (NIV)

Gretchen Castle

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gretchen Castle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

General Secretary, FWCC World Office



**WORLD OFFICE**  
173 Euston Road  
London NW1 2AX, UK

GENERAL SECRETARY: Gretchen Castle  
PHONE (OUTSIDE THE UK): +44 207 663 1199  
FAX (OUTSIDE THE UK): +44 207 060 3323  
PHONE (INSIDE THE UK): 020 7663 1199  
FAX (INSIDE THE UK): 0207 060 3323  
E-MAIL: [world@friendsworldoffice.org](mailto:world@friendsworldoffice.org)  
[www.fwccworld.org](http://www.fwccworld.org)  
**UK Charity 211647**

**SECTION OF THE AMERICAS**  
1506 Race Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102, USA

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: Robin Mohr  
PHONE: +1 215 241 7250  
FAX: +1 215 241 7285  
E-MAIL: [robinm@fwccamericas.org](mailto:robinm@fwccamericas.org)  
[www.fwccamericas.org](http://www.fwccamericas.org)

**AFRICA SECTION**  
PO Box 41946  
Nairobi, Kenya

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: Churchill Malimo  
PHONES: +254 2 570 077  
+254 2 567 601  
E-MAIL: [fwccas@gmail.com](mailto:fwccas@gmail.com)  
[www.fwccafrika.org](http://www.fwccafrika.org)

**EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST SECTION**  
PO Box 1157  
Histon  
Cambridge CB24 9XQ, UK

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: Marisa Johnson  
PHONE: +44 1223 479585  
E-MAIL: [emes@fwccemes.org](mailto:emes@fwccemes.org)  
[www.fwccemes.org](http://www.fwccemes.org)

**ASIA-WEST PACIFIC SECTION**  
38 Rongapai Street  
Palmerston North 4414, New Zealand  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: Ronis Chapman

PHONE: +64 277 418794  
E-MAIL: [ronisc@fwccawps.org](mailto:ronisc@fwccawps.org)  
[www.fwccawps.org](http://www.fwccawps.org)

