

Among Friends provides a forum about activities within the various meetings and worship groups which make up Illinois Yearly Meeting. It also provides pertinent information provided by Quaker organizations and by interested readers of our publication. Readers are reminded that signed articles and letters express the views of the writers, and not official positions of Illinois Yearly Meeting.

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Please read: All submissions for the Spring Issue 2008 need to be in the hands of the editor NO LATER THAN April 20, 2008. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!

Informal articles about your meeting or worship group (NOT States of Society Reports), plus poetry, black ink artwork, and photos are encouraged and received with appreciation.

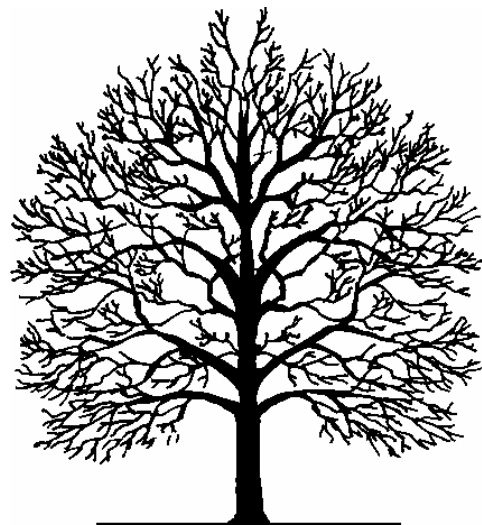
Giving to IYM

The Finance committee has developed a Practices and Procedures resource page for IYM committees and officers. Some of the documents were recently updated, and at Continuing Committee were provided in paper form to Monthly Meetings.

<http://iy.quaker.org/programs/finance/>

On this web page you will find:

- **How to Give to IYM**
- **Policy on Ad hoc Collections**
- **Tips on Planning Retreats**
- **Policy on Travel Reimbursement**
- **Forms for Paying Outside Vendors**
- **Procedure for Making Conference Calls**



To prevent people from “harvesting” email address from our web version of *Among Friends*, all email addresses are written using © rather than @.

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Gatherings: Friends World Committee for Consultation



IYM members attend FWCC Triennial in Dublin. Top row: Greg Woods, David Shiner, Sandra Tamari. Bottom row: Dorothy Day, Nancy Wallace, Dawn Amos, Elizabeth Mertic.

Inspiring FWCC Triennial in Dublin

By Nancy Wallace and David Shiner

The 22nd Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Triennial took place in Dublin, Ireland in mid-August. It was a wonderful event, as such triennials always are. The special effort undertaken by Ireland Yearly Meeting to insure our comfort was superb, and the fellowship we shared there was warm and deep.

The theme of the triennial was “Finding the Prophetic Voice in Our Time.” Many of the workshops and sermons were organized around this theme. While we can’t say that we

definitively found the prophetic voice, our speakers and discussions helped bring us closer to being able to say what such a voice should say to contemporary Quakers, and to the world.

While there are many important events at every Triennial, the core of the gathering is the “worship and sharing” group. Each worship and sharing group consists of 12-15 Friends from all over the world who meet daily during the triennial. Having everything “gel” for such groups can be challenging, given that unprogrammed Friends from the USA and Britain are brought together with Friends from the Evangelical tradition in Africa and South America, not to mention all the “flavors” of

Quakerism in between. Still, by the end of our sessions (in separate groups), we felt deeply moved by the power of such an incredible exchange between everyone present. As one African Friend said, what we have in common is that we are a family. It really does feel like a family when we meet in these sessions.

At the end of each day we came together for Reflections. Someone read a passage from the Bible in their own language, as long as the language wasn't English, Spanish, or French (the official Triennial languages). The reading was followed by waiting worship. This was a wonderful 15 minute quiet period before bedtime.

The Dublin triennial marked the 70th anniversary of FWCC, which was founded in 1937. On the last night there was a session called "Were you there?" Friends rose to indicate that they had attended earlier FWCC events back to inception. This list of events began with the triennial in New Zealand in 2004, for which both of us (among many others) rose, and continued in reverse chronological order back to the very beginning of FWCC. Each event going back to 1952 had been attended by at least one Friend sitting in the auditorium, although for several of the events it was only one person. In addition, several Friends had family members who had attended the original event 70 years ago. One of the more humorous moments was when the organizers of "Were you there?" referred to a particular event but didn't know where it had taken place. The one person who had attended let them know it was in Sweden.

Later that same evening, a group of adult young Friends did a skit from the FWCC plenary event in 2077, 70 years from now! It was very funny and well received.

Which leads to why the event in 2077 will be a plenary event rather than another triennial. For financial reasons, FWCC will no longer sponsor

a triennial in three years, but rather will have a World Conference during 2012, planned for Nairobi, Kenya. This should be a very interesting world gathering in a very appropriate location. There are now more Friends living in Africa than in all of North America. It is the fastest growing area for Quakers, and they appear to be well aware of their heritage. Some of the stories they related at the triennial are reminiscent of those undertaken by George Fox as related in his journal. They are looking forward to hosting Friends from around the world, and are keen to do so as brilliantly as the Irish did in Dublin.

FWCC Triennial Through a Newcomer's Eyes

By Dawn Amos

I was blessed and honored to serve, along with Greg Woods, as IYM's representative to the Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial this past August. While we did serve, as part of the decision-making body and by bringing input and discernment to the working group on Young Friends, in fact this gathering served as a deep personal and spiritual gift from IYM to me. I remain awestruck at the intense experience and education IYM Friends have provided for me by sending me to Dublin.

I roomed with four women, from Britain, Canada and Japan. My worship group included English-speaking Friends from Uganda, Kenya, Japan, Europe and North America – younger Friends to elder Friends, men and women. I reunited joyfully with familiar Friends from Latin America, exercising my pidgin Spanish.

Unlike the sad experience of the 2004 Triennial, visas were obtained for all representatives to attend this year, so there were over forty African Friends at the conference. Among these was Joseph Shamala, the pastor of the Kakamega Friends Church who helps organize the Friends Peace Center near Kakamega,



Dawn Amos' worship group at FWCC Triennial in Dublin. Dawn Amos center front.

Kenya, where my family worked in a service project this summer. I felt a special connection to western Kenya Friends from my work camp experience, and introduced myself to as many Kenyan reps as I could, in part to thank them for Kenyan hospitality.

The great majority of world Friends practice their faith with a different language than mine, a Christian and even evangelical language. In the U.S., there have been those who wounded with this language, condemning and advocating violence in the name of the Prince of Peace. For many years I have tried to heal from these wounds and open my heart to the deep fulfillment and love expressed by Christian Friends. Being an IYM rep to FWCC has been a crucial opportunity to develop this openness. I will say, though, that I was severely tested at the Triennial.

The conference began on Saturday, and I

remained open and accepting until Friday. Perhaps living for days in a spiritual community made me vulnerable. The last two of the daily plenary addresses were by evangelical Friends, and during the final one I became so frustrated that I thought I might leap over the railing of the auditorium risers, just to escape. I found myself in the Pastoral Care office, giving myself permission to vent my spleen upon a patient Australian Friend, complaining about "self-righteous exhortations." I don't know exactly what set me off, but I will read the transcript to see if it was just the intense context of the address that nearly sent me over the edge. I am also very certain that the speaker is a fine and loving Friend, so this experience was more about my hearing than his speaking.

In reading the transcripts of the earlier addresses, I can see now that what resonated with me was the pain of being called to prophesy as a community in an often-deaf

world. I get so distracted by the world's suffering, that I myself become deaf to the message that the Kingdom of God is always around us, that God is always available to us. The two introductory messages at the Triennial, by Doreen Dowd and Marion McNaughton, are online at <http://www.fwcctriennialtranscripts.blogspot.com/> and I think you will really enjoy them. Call me at 866-262-1625 if you would like to receive a paper copy.

Friends, I can never thank you enough for sending me to the Triennial. I hope you will ask me about it and about FWCC's work all over the world. IYM has been a faithful supporter of this organization, which speaks volumes about our yearly meeting's openness to the ministry and Light of very different Friends.

Triennial: Learning about our Quaker World Family

By Sandra Tamari

The committee supporting the work of the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in New York asked me to represent them at the Triennial in Dublin this summer. I have served on the QUNO committee since 2005 when the committee was restructured under a new memorandum of understanding between FWCC and AFSC relating to the QUNO-NY work. Our committee represents the diversity of the Quaker experience with five of our ten members appointed by the FWCC World Office and five of us nominated by AFSC. I have IYM's dear Carol Bartles (who was serving on AFSC nominating committee) to thank for my inclusion in this amazing work. My meetings at Quaker House in New York were my first exposure to the wider world of Quakers. I have developed amazing friendships with evangelical Quakers from the United States and Africa. I have become acquainted with the concerns of Friends in Europe and the Middle East. I have been amazed by the breadth of knowledge our

community holds and our long tradition of addressing international injustices through the mechanisms of the United Nations. It has been a humbling honor to serve QUNO.

When asked to attend the Triennial, I was immediately doubtful of my ability to represent the committee. I am the youngest member of the group both chronologically and as a member of the Society of Friends. (I've been a member of St. Louis Monthly Meeting only since 2005, after attending for several years.) My fellow committee members assured me that they thought I was ready to represent the group and sent me to Dublin. How grateful I am for their decision and for the opportunity.

Reflecting on the experience, I realize that part of the reason I was asked to attend Triennial was to learn about how QUNO's work relates to the Quaker world family. I was able to meet with Quakers from around the world and talk to them about their hopes and dilemmas. With this knowledge I am in a much better position to advise the staff of QUNO on future directions for program work. I can see the face of Henry, my new friend from eastern Kenya and fellow Triennial-goer, telling me about his experiences educating young, desperate Kenyan men who are caught up in a culture of violence and who express their worthiness by bearing weapons. Henry is using alternatives to violence techniques to convince these young men to lay down their arms. No longer will international discussions of small weapons disarmament be merely an academic discussion. I see Henry's face and hear his voice. His words now inform my being and heart on this issue.

The Triennial organizers scheduled several interest group forums that provided smaller venues for discussion on all kinds of issues of concern to Friends ranging from sharing of world resources to the Bible on homosexuality. I participated in an interest group on the work of QUNO.

Representatives from the staff of both the Geneva and New York offices were in attendance, including David Atwood, director of QUNO-Geneva and interim director at QUNO-New York, Rachel Brett, UN representative in Geneva, Jill Terrell, UN representative in New York and co-clerk of the QUNO Geneva committee, Michael Eccles, Britain Yearly Meeting. We all were surprised by the high turnout. We crowded into our small classroom in Kings College and talked for nearly two hours on Quaker work at the United Nations, the value of “quiet diplomacy,” and the amazing power of listening to all sides of a conflict with openness. The participants were deeply committed to the work of QUNO and repeatedly expressed appreciation for the QUNO staff and concern for their spiritual well-being as they engage in difficult work. We QUNO representatives walked away with a renewed sense of how valued our efforts are to the world community of Friends.

In a foolhardy moment, I committed to co-facilitating one of the worship and sharing groups at Triennial. Despite initial misgivings about how to deal with the cultural and religious difference among us, our group developed overwhelming trust and love over the course of the week. I have tears in my eyes as I think about my circle of Friends who came from Kenya, Japan, India, Ireland, England, and the United States. We ranged in age from 18 to 80. We cried and laughed with one another. We had beautiful voices among us and we sang in several languages. We prayed and felt God’s love for our gathering and for the world. I know that many of us feel that we have renewed joy and happiness that we carry back to our home communities.

I shared a room with five women in their teens and 20s. Needless to say, I did not get much sleep during the Triennial. Our late night

conversations taught me much about perspectives of young Friends in North America and Europe. I can confidently say that with spiritually-centered young people like my roommates, Quakerism is alive and well for the next generation.

When I asked an experienced Friend who had previously attended Triennial how I should prepare for the experience, she simply said there is no preparation, but the experience will change you forever. I was unaware of how true this statement was. I am very thankful to AFSC and QUNO for the blessed opportunity to experience Triennial.

If you’d like more information on how the Quaker United Nations Office represents you at the UN, please see www.quno.org or contact me at sandratamari@hotmail.com or 618-288-8986, and I’d be happy to talk with you.

FWCC Triennial Reflections

By Greg Woods

I loved my experience at the FWCC Triennial. Before I went, I didn’t know what to expect, but I assumed that it would be similar to the World Gathering of Young Friends (WGYF) and it was. One reason for the similar feelings between the two conferences was that more than a dozen participants from the WGYF attended the triennial. We and other young adult Friends met together several times during the week to decide what to do with the leftover money from the 2005 conference in Lancaster, England, because the planners wanted to release these leftover funds, so that the money could be used to help bring Young Adult Friends together, instead of sitting in bank accounts. These times together were very productive and Spirit-led as we discerned about where God is leading us and how God is calling Young Friends to gather. A lot of great ideas

flowed from these times together. In the end we decided to give the remaining funds over to the FWCC Central Committee to create an international Young Adults Friends committee with representation from all the regions. This committee could help, in many ways, to forward the vision of WGYF.

This year's Triennial theme focused on "Finding the Prophetic Voice for Our Time." Every morning we had a speaker who challenged us on this theme: "What is our voice as Quakers to the world?" They encouraged us to listen to what God was telling us to do.

The messages shared with us each morning represented the current diversity of Friends. Lizz Roe, a British Friend, spoke about trying to live her life to have as little as an ecological impact as possible and what that means for her. Bill Medlin of Indiana YM spoke about the obeying God's calling. Stephen Wamboka of Uganda YM spoke about the need to grow the Quaker church through evangelicalism.

A favorite part of my week was simply being able to talk with Friends face to face from all over the world. In my room, there were Friends from Africa, Europe, and Latin America. I enjoyed using my Spanish a couple times to converse with Friends from Latin America. Like my other activities with FWCC, I continued to learn a lot about Friends and Quakerism by talking with Friends from the different branches and different countries.

Throughout the conference as I listened to the speakers and shared fellowship with Friends from across the world, I thought about the theme in the context of my own life: "What is my Prophetic Voice?" and "Am I being obedient to God's Leading?" Currently I am in middle of a lot of transition, having just graduated from college and looking for what is next in my life. Throughout the triennial, I took

time to sit, to pray, and to listen, so I can hear what God is calling me to do next in life. I didn't receive clear answers, but I realized that I wanted to know Quakerism better, especially the diversity. During the conference a friend mentioned to me that she needed a housemate in Greensboro, NC, so currently I am living here in Greensboro, attending First Friends Church, a FUM-affiliated church, and working with their youth group alongside another Triennial participant, Sheila Hoyer. Also I serve as a Friendly Adult Presence (FAP) once a month for Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting & Association teen retreats. I am exploring the diversity of Friends here, attending different meetings for worship every week.

In the end, I think this could be our Prophetic voice for the world, if we Friends could overcome our diversity, to communicate and have fellowship with each other in everyday life, as we do at FWCC Triennials. In the past I have visited unprogrammed meetings that are within several miles of programmed and evangelical Friends churches and they do not even know about the churches or much less go there to worship. I am positive that the inverse of this is true too. Why can we break bread with other denominations through our ecumenical work, but not with our fellow Friends?

Some Impressions FWCC Triennial

By Elizabeth Mertic

For the first time ever we experimented with "real-time transcription" in the plenary sessions. A court stenographer sat at the front of the hall and keyed in the spoken words (in English) which were immediately projected onto a white screen. Those who have some hearing impairment, as well as those who may not understand the many accents of spoken English from Friends in Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, England, Ireland, Moscow, Norway, Finland, Sweden, not to mention