



**Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
German Yearly Meeting**

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Epistle from German Yearly Meeting 2018

For the 88th German Yearly Meeting at Haus Venusberg in Bonn in October 2018, extra efforts in the run-up were necessary to find sufficient overnight accommodation. The 220 people attending, a quarter of them children, adolescents and young adults, exceeded expectations. We were particularly pleased to welcome 15 new members this year.

We feel very much at home in the global community of Friends. As an expression of this community, we listened to the reports from four delegates from other countries, and from our own delegates who had visited those countries.

Let us share what we consider to be the most pressing and moving issues: this is our motto for this year.

We are concerned about the steady growth of hatred throughout the world. We ask ourselves how and where we can offer and find sanctuary and how we can put an end to animosities – those of others and of our own. In view of the very long, hot, dry summer in 2018, we are also concerned about the preservation and future of our environment. What are we called upon to do? From the silence of worship we seek to be led from what we want to what we are called upon to do.

In this year's Cary Lecture, our South Korean Friend Cho-Nyon Kim highlighted the points of contact and overlaps between Taoism and the Quaker faith. Both religions tend to proceed pragmatically rather than dogmatically and stand for the mystical experience of everyday life. In all people there is an Inner Light or an Inner Teacher or a way to Buddha nature or to contact with the Tao. We wait collectively for the word and the leading that spurs us into action.


The latter also applies precisely to our quest for a viable and spiritually enriching future for our Quaker Meeting House in Bad Pyrmont. We are encouraged by our industrious work group which is in the process of outlining practicable approaches that preserve our roots and aspire to a responsible future.

We are delighted to hear that an organised group of Friends is making our Peace Testimony visible and participating in campaigns against nuclear weapons stockpiled in our country.

The vitality of this year's meeting also found expression in a number of concerns that have touched us. We support Friends who, together with other groups, are opposing the German armed forces' efforts to specifically recruit minors as trainees. We are also pursuing the idea, along the lines of our Advices & Queries, of fostering simple and sustainable life-styles. And, not least, we wish to hold a young woman Friend in the Light who is planning a regional march to draw attention to the urgent need to solve the conflicts between Israel and Palestine.

The ways in which we live and how we engage with others can serve to show whether lasting peace is possible. We wish to continue to act accordingly, with thanks to everyone who attended our Yearly Meeting and thanks to all of the world's Friends who are walking the path of peace.

Bonn, 28 October 2018



Ulrike Bechtel
(Co-clerk)



Neithard Petry
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