

Devon and Cornwall Quaker Gathering
The Meeting House, St Austell.
Saturday, February 11th, 2012

Minute 10.12

65 Friends are present
Bob Lovett is at the table.

We have today heard from Paul Parker, Recording Clerk to B.Y.M. He reminded us of what it means to belong to a Quaker Meeting by reading from Quaker Faith and Practice Chapter 10. He described his work as Clerk, and as Secretary to B.Y.M, to Sufferings and to the Trustees and reminded us of the critical skill of any Clerk which is “listening for unity”

He spoke of his conviction that the Society was poised to engage with a new radicalism - a “whoosh” experience and illustrated this by charting all the activities and achievements currently supported by B.Y.M. and Friends House Staff. He also challenged us in many ways, imploring us to become involved by signing up to the Quaker Life Network and offering ourselves for service on central committees.

There is also a great and continuing need for increasing our financial support in order for this work to continue and to be expanded. In real terms the value of our contributions now supports only 40% of the Society’s expenditure (compared with nearly 80% in 1994). We need to give ourselves permission to talk about these things and find the tools by which to do it. We also need to rediscover our confidence in who we are and what we have to offer, and be prepared to talk about these things.

He reminded us that we are members of a faith which is committed to action and which is about the whole of our lives, not just those times we meet for worship, and it was important to remember that ministry takes a wide variety of forms. He spoke about “Project 1%” (which was the proportion of the population who were Quakers in the early eighteenth century) Such a figure would today create 600,000 new Friends.

In order for us to be able to talk about these things both amongst ourselves and with others outside the Society, we need to develop a new language with which all are comfortable, and which is understood by all.

In the afternoon session we were presented with the following three questions to consider in small groups:

1. What have you heard today that resonates with you or your Meeting's situation?
2. What new life or signs of vibrancy do you see among Friends in the South West?
3. What barriers do we see and what steps can we take in our Meeting to overcome them?

The outcomes of these discussion will be summarised and added as an appendix to this minute.

We thank Paul Parker for providing us with such a stimulating day of renewal. We depart with renewed vigour, new ideas and new skills, and hope that membership of the Quaker Life Network will be considerably increased on its journey to the 2012 target of 2000.

The Arrangements Committee has agreed to make a contribution of £100 to B.Y.M. to support its continuing programmes.

We are grateful to our Friends in St Austell for their warm welcome and hospitality, and depart in the hope that we shall meet again in Tavistock on Saturday June 9th when the meeting will consider what the form and content of a residential gathering in 2013 might be.

Vernon White has accepted the Convenorship of the Arrangements Committee for the next triennium, and we wish him and his new committee well during their period of service.

Signed

Bob Lovett,
Clerk this time