

*To Friends everywhere:*

From Britain Yearly Meeting held in Exeter from 28 July to 4 August 2001, we send loving greetings to you all, affirming that of God in you and in all creation.

We have come together in celebration; all over the campus there have been moments of joyful encounter. But our joy has been overshadowed by grief: grief at the misuse of our planet, grief at our inability to love our neighbours, and the grief we have felt at the sudden death of a Friend among us. We have heard in ministry that death can enrich us; even the youngest children expressed this in their worship.

This year, the sense of urgency of the younger Friends at Yearly Meeting, and the anger they expressed, have discomfited the rest of us. We feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the issues before us and frustrated that, despite what has been achieved, there is still so much we need to do. We sense that we are moving rapidly towards deepening crisis. Throughout this meeting, we have heard repeatedly a longing to return to the still centre. We must listen to God and allow the Spirit to move us.

Mourning what human arrogance and greed have done to the Earth, we heard sung 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord?' We heard angry and moving accounts of the treatment of black people and asylum seekers in Britain. Turning to our own practice as a Yearly Meeting, we acknowledged that our membership procedures can be daunting and unhelpful to some who are part of our meetings and our work.

We decided to ask Monthly Meetings to experiment with finding encouraging and nurturing ways of helping Attenders to come into membership. We renewed our commitment to further our corporate concern for the right to conscientious objection to the payment of tax for military purposes and for its diversion towards peaceful uses.

Seeking God's guidance, we must tackle racism and the exploitation of our planet with urgency, courage and understanding. Let us engage directly with the world, and find effective ways to be heard, so that our voices can influence decisions. We must talk and listen to the perpetrators of injustice and discrimination. We must be prepared to work both outside and inside the institutions of power. Members of one body, we are each given a different witness to make; let us encourage, support and rejoice in one another within a Yearly Meeting faithful to God's leadings.

In whatever steps we take, remember that it is as disciples that we act. In our religious society, membership is a commitment to God. May prayer and worship underpin all our work. God has no hands but ours; let us not sit on them.

*Signed in and on behalf of Britain Yearly Meeting*

HELEN ROWLANDS, clerk