

Dear Friends,

During our visit to California, we spent an afternoon in the park with an old friend and his sons. As my friend was leaving, he introduced us to some Orthodox Jewish friends who lived in the neighbourhood.

The youngest boy, who was eight or nine, was a bit unsure about us at first and asked if we were Jewish. We responded that we are Quaker. Our conversation went something like this:

'What's Quaker? Is it like being Jewish?'

'Well, not exactly. But there are similarities.'

'Like what?'

'Well, we are continually deepening our relationship with God, there's lots of questioning, and –'

'Do you have Shabbos?'

'No, for Quakers all days are sacred.'

'Do you keep kosher?'

'Um no, but we try to eat sustainably...' (I was starting to get worried at this point, having 'failed' on two counts...)

'Do you believe in God? How many?'

'Yes! We believe in one God and –' (I didn't even get to the 'we respond to that of God in everyone' bit!)

'What do you call him?'

'Well... God, the Divine, the Light, the Spirit, the Truth –'

'S'ok. It's the same. Let's play football.'

And so we played together until we had to go home for dinner!

I was so touched by this boy's thoughtfulness and the effort he kept making to find common ground with us. How do we welcome new visitors and attenders to our meeting? How do we get to know people beyond our meeting? What do others find in us?



In friendship,
Jennifer Mui, editor