

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN NORWAY

To Friends everywhere

Norway Yearly Meeting of Friends gathered for their 2010 annual session at Uppigard Natadal near Flatdal in Telemark from June 24th to 27th. Our venue was a farmstead dating from the end of the 18th century, now developed into a guest house, and we were all inspired by the atmosphere of the place which has such deep historical roots. Our total number was 56 (Friends and their friends), including 12 children aged 4-14, and seven guests from other Yearly Meetings and Quaker bodies.

Our theme was *The Quaker Business Process* which has both a religious foundation as well as being a practical method for arriving at good decisions in community. Egil Mardal Johannessen introduced the historical and theological background to the process. Wilhelm Dahllöf from Sweden YM then gave a workshop with practical exercises. His message was based on the experiences of Sweden YM who has worked on Quaker Process through the last few years.

The Yearly Meeting responded to the theme with great interest and enthusiasm and hopes to continue to work on the Quaker Business Process and its spiritual foundation. We believe this will strengthen the Society in its own spiritual development as well as strengthen our testimony to our own time, and that it will be important to maintain the knowledge about Quaker traditions which will develop in this way.

Norway Yearly Meeting also decided to support the message from Palestinian church leaders as expressed in the KAIROS document of December 2009. We will approach Norwegian authorities and encourage them to reconsider investments in companies and businesses which directly contribute to maintaining the occupation of Palestinian territories and the blockade of Gaza. We hope our efforts may help bring about improvement of the situation in the area as soon as possible.

During our deliberations about the finances of our Society we also considered ethical issues concerning the choice of bank partners for the management of our assets.

Several interest groups were engaged in information about the FWCC Global Change process, and with information about Quaker Service Norway and its projects in Palestinian territories and in Africa. The children were busy in creative expression relating to the Theme, and also contributed music and singing during our Saturday evening social gathering. Friends celebrated this evening with new and old Quaker songs as well as traditional Norwegian music and song, generating much enthusiasm. We also had time to enjoy the splendid terrain and scenery around Uppigard as we went for walks. Our young people upheld their fine tradition of taking responsibility for epilogues every evening.

We return home with renewed inspiration to continue work on Friends' traditions and testimonies, and we greet Friends everywhere with this quote from Martin Luther King Jr. which concluded our final epilogue: «Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.»

Signed on behalf of Norway Yearly Meeting, June 27th, 2010

Unni Sørsveen