

Thought for the month March 2017

Values of peace and justice run deep for Quakers, prompting us to consider and speak out when events of global significance demand a response. On 4th February, Quakers in Britain – referred to as ‘Britain Yearly Meeting’ – issued a statement summing up a view of the current political environment. Statements of this type are representative of the organisation’s stance; the best of them also resonate with the feelings and concerns of individual Quakers and although dissent from official lines is also a valued Quaker tradition I have no doubt that the words reproduced below are likely to be universally welcomed by Quakers throughout the UK and beyond.

So, here it is: a Quaker view on the state of politics in early 2017, issued as a news release by Britain Yearly Meeting on Saturday 4th February.

“We are a people that follow after those things that make for peace, love and unity’ (Margaret Fell, writing to Charles II in 1660). Quakers in Britain see these values now under growing threat around the world, not least from recent developments in the United States of America.

“We condemn all acts of government which set people against one another; which discriminate against people because of who they are or where they were born. We reject policies which condone suspicion and hatred; which turn away those who need and depend upon our help. We were not put on Earth for this, but to be a people of God, to live in harmony with each other.

“There can be no peace without justice; no love without trust; and no unity without equality. Our faith urges us to welcome the stranger as our equal and friend, feed those who are hungry and shelter those who are homeless, needy and frightened.

“Alongside Quakers in the USA, and their American Friends Service Committee, we stand with those whose lives are blighted by racist, discriminatory policies and those whose faith is denigrated by association with a tiny violent minority. We pray for the courage and steadfastness that will be needed as we uphold our testimony of equality, justice, peace, sustainability and truth. For us, prayer is inseparable from action.

“Humanity needs leaders of integrity and conscience, ready to be held to account by individuals and institutions, national and international. We pray for those in positions of power. We call on them, as public servants, to work with all of good faith to build the world we seek, to fertilise the soil in which the tender shoots of peace, love and unity may flourish.”

Simon Watkins, Volunteer Resident Friend, Airton Friends Meeting.