



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION



Ramallah Meeting Represented at Annual Peace and Service Consultation

Once a year the Europe and Middle East Section (EMES) of the Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC) holds a Peace and Service consultation, inviting the many Quaker organizations in Europe and the Middle East who work to promote peace, prevent conflict, uphold human rights, advocate economic justice and environmentally sustainable living.

This year, the Ramallah Friends Meeting was pleased to be represented at the December 2016 consultation by Patricia Cockrell and Derek Brett --both steering committee members of the Friends of Ramallah Friends Meeting Quaker (FRFMQ).

In all, 29 Friends gathered to explore three main themes:

- sustainability and climate justice;
- conflict prevention and the future of Europe; and
- resisting the militarization of youth.

Queries, as well as a text on faith and works, were offered ahead of time for preparatory reflection.

“Remember that Christianity is not a notion but a way.” (Advices & Queries 2, BYM)

“Are you following Jesus’ example of love in action?” (Advices & Queries 3, BYM)

“Let your life speak.” (Advices & Queries 27, BYM)

“What good it is, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm and eat your fill’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” (James 2: 14-17)

Derek and Patricia presented the mission of Ramallah Friends Meeting and an update on its ministries. These ministries include: First Day Meeting for Worship, Mid-Week Meeting for Worship, Educational Outreach & Hospitality and Environmental Stewardship. In each ministry the daily living of a theology of nonviolence is encouraged, even in an atmosphere of prolonged conflict and turmoil.

Our newly launched website was shared as a fresh, up to date source of information. It includes articles and downloadable resources renewed monthly, which Friends far and wide are invited to use. Passages were read from our recent letters, Advent devotions, as well as Jean Zaru’s book *Occupied with Nonviolence*. Friends will be interested to know that her book was recently translated into French, in addition to Swedish and the original English edition.

The Meeting found that the three main themes of the consultation directly touched the reality of life in Palestine. Much was learned from this exchange and will continue to be considered in our future planning.

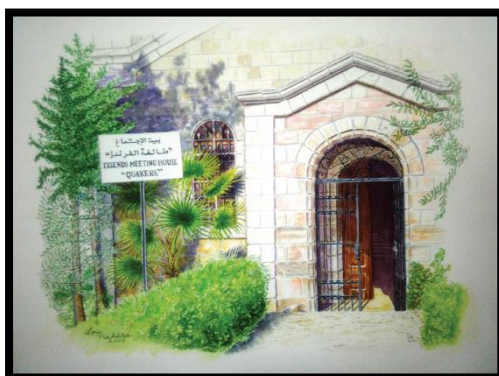
For example, climate change was presented within the framework of **climate justice** because the most vulnerable in societies will be the most directly affected, namely the poor, the displaced and future generations. Under military occupation in Palestine, communities are not in control of their own environmental resources. And environmental planning and education is left grossly underdeveloped, as the central political priority remains ending the violence of occupation. We see addressing climate justice as an area of potential growth for the Ramallah Meeting, building upon Friends commitment to the environment and the indigenous Palestinian connection to land.

Regarding the militarization of societies, we are struck with the fact that the younger generation of Palestinians have known only conflict in their lifetime. In 2017, the military occupation will enter its 50th year and the refugee crisis nearing its 70th year. Palestinian youth know no other reality and are insufficiently supported by the international community in their non-violent peace building efforts. The Meeting will continue to offer safe space for nurturing a culture of non-violence.

It was felt that perhaps the presentation on shared security most directly related to Ramallah Friends. How can we change the rhetoric from 'my' security to 'our shared' security in this interconnected world? How might we encompass a rights-based approach? How do we best support sustainable resource management and the avoidance of violent solutions? These helpful questions will be brought to Ramallah Meeting members and the wider worshipping community for their consideration.

All consultation attendees were given a postcard which included a summary of the history and mission of Ramallah Friends Meeting to share with their home organizations and Meetings (see below).

The Ramallah Meeting extends its gratitude to FWCC-EMES and all Quaker organizations, working steadfastly for peace, economic and environmental justice, the prevention of conflict and the upholding of human rights.



Ramallah Friends Meeting (Quakers)

For over 100 years, the Ramallah Friends Meeting has served as the spiritual home for Quakers in Palestine and sojourning Friends. It is a beacon of hope in the heart of Ramallah, bringing together those living in the region with hundreds of visitors each year to worship in the historic meeting house and learn from the daily living of a theology of nonviolence, formulated in the context of the Palestinian reality. The Meeting strives, in the fullness of its ministries, to build a culture of peace, equality and service. Connect at www.rfmq.org and on Facebook at **RamallahFriendsMeeting**.