

VÄNNERNAS SAMFUND I SVERIGE

The Religious Society of Friends in Sweden

To Friends everywhere

Quakers in Sweden held their 81st Yearly Meeting from 25-28 June 2015 in the picturesque surroundings of Wendelsberg Folk High School in Mölnlycke. Some forty Friends and friends of Friends, adults and children, from the whole of Sweden as well as representatives from five different Yearly Meetings, gathered under the theme *Equality – Approach and Application*.

The Quaker testimony to equality is very relevant in a social development that draws us towards an even greater inequality.

In his talk on Friday, British Quaker and keynote speaker, Martin Wilkinson, told us about the connection between economic inequality, inadequate public health and social problems, based on the book *The Spirit Level* (Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett, 2010). Cooperation is needed in order to address these challenges. Martin emphasised that cooperation is facilitated by an equal distribution of power.

“We need to cooperate, and the more equal we are the easier this will be.”

In small groups the participants talked about equality and inequality, what kind of influence these aspects have on our lives and how we can change our society so that it becomes more equal.

Through Quaker Service Sweden, the Yearly Meeting’s development agency, the Yearly Meeting heard how the work for increased equality is developing with its partners in Russia, Georgia, Bangladesh and Burundi. Another example of Swedish Quakers’ engagement is the letter sent to the Swedish Government saying no to joining NATO and continuing to be a non-aligned country.

Friends in Sweden are also trying to reach out and be more accessible. We heard about the importance of the website in spreading information about Quakers and making Quaker work better known. We learned too that new worship groups have been set up during the year, partly in Värmland, but also through Skype for people who are isolated.

Three Friends died during 2014. Although we miss them, we are also pleased to report that new members have joined us.

A positive spirit permeates our Society. We want to be among the positive forces working for peace, equality, simplicity, truth and community.

In everything we do we try to seek God’s leadings in a spirit of worship. Like Samuel we ask: “Speak, for your servant is listening”, at the same time as we call ourselves Friends (John 15:15).

Signed on behalf of Sweden Yearly Meeting, 28th June 2015

Kerstin Backman

Co-Clerk

Ann-Kristin Åklint

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