

PHILLIPS, B., with LAMPEN, J. (eds), *Endeavours to Mend: Perspectives on British Quaker Work in the World Today* (London: Quaker Books, 2006), pp. 128. ISBN 0-85245-388-4, Paper, £10.

Individual members of the Religious Society of Friends, who are also academics engaged in the scholarly study of Quakerism, are of necessity constantly aware of the dilemmas of 'insider research'. Such dilemmas have exact organisational analogies which impact on this journal. Where is the boundary between an article with an implied audience of interested Quaker, and a scholarly article addressed to fellow academics? What is the place in *Quaker Studies* for a review of a book written by Quakers, issued by a Quaker publisher, about aspects of Quaker work, addressed primarily to interested Quakers?

The interested Quaker will find in this book much both to warm the heart and challenge the mind. It contains accounts of actual pieces of Quaker work in the world, discussions of the faith underpinnings and rationale of such work and questions about the relationship between the corporate dimensions of Quaker life and individual leadings.

Brian Phillips opens with an overview, with historical context, of the provenance and nature of 'Quaker global witness in the twenty-first century', which includes mention of his own work as a Rowntree Quaker Fellow; and he derives five defining qualities of Quaker twenty-first-century global witness (identifying those who can make a change; a ministry of presence; continuity of commitment; acts of faith; pragmatic approaches to reconciliation). Grigor McClelland addresses the polarity of 'prophet' and 'reconciler' (describing both as present within himself) by first presenting the text of a public address he gave in 1960, and then commenting on it—and on the prophet/reconciler duality—for the early twenty-first century.

Diana and John Lampen discuss, with historical as well as modern examples, the nature of Quaker 'concern' and discernment, and the balance (or not) between individual 'leadings' and corporate sponsorship or ownership of work undertaken by

Quakers acting 'under concern'. They describe the processes whereby individual leadings are acted on individually, or taken up by others (becoming a 'listed informal group'), or are perhaps adopted by the formal structures to become pieces of recognised 'Quaker work'; and they question whether adherence to Quaker principles ought perhaps to lead to more open recognition of work undertaken individually. Examples drawn from their own work in Northern Ireland and Uganda illustrate the processes and issues they explore.

Rachel Carmichael describes a project closer to home—Leicester Quakers supporting refugees and asylum seekers—and includes accounts of the actual work with individuals and discussion of the ways of working involved (corporately among Quakers and together with other local agencies). Chris Hunter describes responding to conflict in the North Caucasus in his role as Quaker representative in Moscow. His is an account both of work 'on the ground' and of issues arising from conflict between his own sense of what was a right course of action and the corporate views of his employer, Quaker Peace and Service.

Rachel Brett gives an account of working institutionally at a high level on issues concerning child soldiers, which started as an individual concern, tested through Quaker channels. From her position in the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva she has been centrally involved in this project which has been adopted and integrated into corporate Quaker work. She describes some of the issues around the concern for child soldiers, as well as the institutional processes involved in making the concern effective at international levels. This dynamic is also central to Robin Robison's chapter on 'Speaking truth to international financial institutions'; with the added dimension that this project involved not only Quaker Peace and Social Witness, but also the American Friends Service Committee and grass-roots activists in Nicaragua, in talking with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the UK Treasury and the Bank of England.

In the final chapter Diana Francis positions herself as both 'prophet' and 'reconciler' and writes of her passion for the Quaker Peace Testimony, in all its manifestations, and her desire to inspire other Friends with passion for it, as well. She argues that it is equally within human nature to be altruistic as it is to be warlike—we have the choice. She again takes up Brian Phillips's five defining qualities and urges us to take the risks of faith in a world inimical to it.

So far, so Quaker; but let the interested Quaker reader now put on her or his scholar's hat and approach this book as an academic—what will be found there? To put it simply: data—that is, descriptions of pieces of work of interest to an historian; accounts of institutional processes of interest to a sociologist; accounts of beliefs and explanations for individual action of interest to an ethnographer. Doubtless, many readers of this journal will approach the book from both positions.

Pam Lunn
Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre
Birmingham
England