

Understanding the Friends Fellowship of Healing (FFH)

As some of you may already be aware, Bewdley Meeting offers a fortnightly meeting for fellowship, prayer and healing. This is usually held on the second Wednesday of the month at 2.00pm and ends about 3.20pm

What to expect:

A warm welcome, short reading, quiet time and holding people in the Light that have given their permission to be on the list of healing. There is no hands on healing.

March 2019 will see the third anniversary of the Quaker National Day of Healing

This will be held on Saturday 2nd March 2019 10.30am - 4pm

We invite people to join us for a short time at any part of the day, half day or as long as folk feel that they would like to experience the peace of Bewdley meeting house. We anticipate some quiet reflection, personal prayer and valuable exchange of experiences of the power of healing.

FFH was very glad to have the subject of healing opened up when Andrew Backhouse wrote a very thoughtful piece on the subject of spiritual healing and our attitudes towards it, as it can be very misunderstood on times.

Recorded in the minutes of Meeting for Sufferings, (MFS) Andrew referred to FFH members' concern that many Quakers do in fact regard healing as a flakey occupation and that the idea of healing has been conflated with new age weirdness rather than simply being, what we do. All of us, often!

As MFS were kind enough to give an opportunity to the FFH to brief MFS, below is an extract from Hilary Painter, Former Clerk to FFH Committee printed in the Friend, July 2013. Her hope was that even the most sceptical will be able to see that all Quakers engage in healing work, though we give it different names and emphasis.

' The FFH feels very strongly that healing is an integral part of Quaker life; even that leading a Quaker life is in itself a way of bringing healing to the world. 'Letting one's life speak' and trying to act from a connection with the Light, the Divine, God, call it what you will, is healing work, whether it be expressed in outward work or more inwardly. The value of reconciliation work, prison reform, prison visiting, work with troubled young people, our schools the work of Quaker United Nations Office, and so much other Quaker activity is contestably and visibly valuable. It is work which takes place in the outer world, though its effects reach into the inner world. It is all healing work; it is love in action and makes the Divine more manifest in the physical world.

The FFH works with the inner world. This can have visible and obvious results in the outer world, but this is not our specific intent; our intent is simply to make that connection between the Divine and our familiar daily world and, by consciously holding others in that Light, to enable that connection for others. We know that the inner world is as real as the outer world and that change starts in people's hearts; and that change comes by grace. We try to be a part of facilitating that grace. Of course this work is not unique to the FFH, but distresses us deeply when our part in the work of bringing healing into the world is dismissed as something which 'just a few Friends are interested in'. Surely Friends respond when asked to hold someone in the Light. We do not expect everyone to feel called to participate in the healing in the way that we do it but we do feel that in fact every Quaker does participate in

healing, be it in prayer, a welcoming cup of tea, or many far more concrete works. We all understand the value of doing what Love requires of us.

We are aware that part of the problem may be the actual word 'healing' which is often erroneously assumed to be synonymous with curing (or trying to cure) physical illness and may be considered to have failed if no such cure takes place. Healing touches the whole person and can transform us at a spiritual and mental level even though there may be no obvious outer result. Healing is not about promising miracles, nor is it a substitute for medical care. Having said that we should also be aware that historically, the otherwise inexplicable curing of illness was in fact considered to be evidence that the agent of this cure really was divinely inspired. It was simply a side effect of their connection with the Light; and this of course manifested itself in the life of George Fox.

We feel that Quakers sometimes succumb to the prevailing view that inner work is a luxury, not practical, and that letting our lives speak means going out and Doing Things. We would like the inner work of healing to be valued by the Society, and to be considered as much a part of Quaker work as is, for example, peace work. We would like it recognised that healing takes place on many levels and that the inner is as valuable as the outer. The inner life has a practicality and is very much in the Quaker tradition.'

The FFH is one of the largest single interest groups within the Religious Society of Friends in Britain, with a membership of around 500 including some overseas members. It attracts a great deal of interest and support, in particular at Yearly Meeting where it offers a healing and counselling service and often holds its annual general meeting, preceded by an address.

For further information, FFH can be accessed via the web but if you prefer, do come and join us at one of our meetings or pop along on the 2nd March. You will be made most welcome.

Tony, Sue, Margaret, Grace, Cherry.