

Brief report with regard to Meeting for Sufferings, CYTUN and CCIR

I have not felt it necessary to report back to you on matters which come before Sufferings conscious of the fact that area meetings will have received more timely reports from their representatives. Many of you reading this will already be aware of matters which Sufferings have considered or which are in the pipeline. I do not think, as yet, there are any issues which are of specific interest to this Meeting that requires particular attention, and those overarching concerns such as equality, climate change and sustainability already touch in its consciousness.

From my perspective as the Quaker Cytun trustee their agenda, over the last few meetings, has focused on housekeeping matters which are not particularly stimulating to report on. The meeting should note that Cytun has moved offices and this will be a boon given the unsatisfactory state of their previous accommodation. They are now located at Hastings House, Fitzalan Court, Cardiff CF 24 OBL.

In the January edition of Calon, there was a full report on the activities of Cytun's LASER group (the gathering of denominational officers and representative to examine policy issues) where we are represented by David Harries, and their substantial work, carried out under the guidance of Cytun's National Assembly Policy Officer, is particularly impressive. The regular bulletin on national policy is available at <http://www.cytun.co.uk/hafan/en/policy-bulletin-january-2020/>, and will give you more detailed information. Regular access to the Cytun website for this purpose alone is well worth pursuing.

Most of you will be aware of the difficulties that arose when the Yearly Meeting's nominee to be CTEs 4th President¹ was rejected because she was in a same-sex marriage. This matter has occupied the committee for some time, since the original nomination was made in June 2018. I will not detail the complexity of discussion, not the theological challenges underlying the situation, except to note that the response of the 4th group has been incredibly supportive and positive, and the way Friends have dealt with the issues has impressed many, whilst we seek to hold the integrity of the inter-church process.

This development is not directly relevant to us in Wales and for Cytun because its structures are so dramatically different. CTE are seemingly more overburdened by issues of authority and power relevant to historical perambulations.

The other issue which has dominated QCCIR for a little while has been its commissioned report 'The Changing Face of Faith in Britain.' This has had wide circulation and discussion with the Yearly Meeting. The three written elements of the report are available at <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-organisation/our-structures/quaker-committee-for-christian-and-interfaith-relations>. Perhaps we, as a meeting should, at some time, reflect on the changing face of faith in Wales and its implications, and there is certainly no harm in us asking ourselves that age old question "How doth Truth prosper amongst you?"

Gethin Evans
27.1.20

¹ CTE has six Presidents each representing the faith groups within the organisation; the fourth President is rotated between its constituent members and serves for 4 years. Note: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/churches-plan-for-new-president-falters-because-of-same-sex-marriage> and <https://quaker-prod.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/store/130cba1a8336d483d1cee053c4fea5345a7fd70bc81e66a51960da4440b2>