

On These Islands
I runga i ngā motu nei
Quaker Faith and Practice
in Aotearoa New Zealand

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri

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Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends
in Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri

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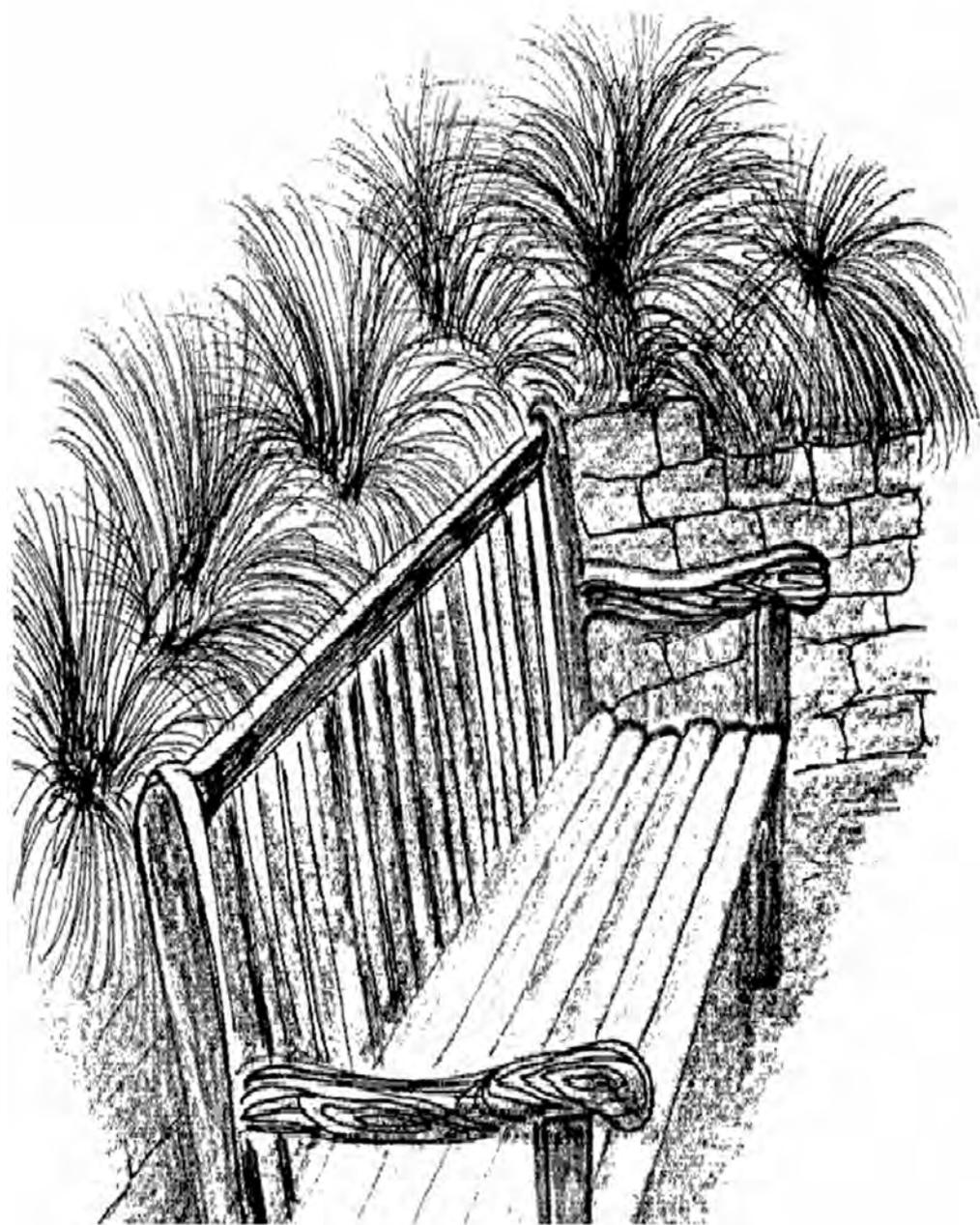
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Introduction

Kupu Whakataki

This book is offered as a source of inspiration, information and understanding of Quaker thought and experiences in Aotearoa New Zealand. It has been compiled from contributions sent by Friends from all over the country and consists of both contemporary writing and extracts from our various archives and collections since the arrival of the first Quaker settlers in about 1835.

Hundreds of contributions were received. There followed a process of reading and selection which involved Friends in every Meeting forming small Consideration Groups. These groups read through the material submitted, and commented for the guidance of the committee set up by Yearly Meeting to oversee the project and bring it to completion.

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri, does not formulate creeds, doctrines or dogma; rather Quakers try to live the revelation that something of the divine, 'that of God', is within every person. Knowledge of this presence came to George Fox in the middle of the seventeenth century, when, in the religious turmoil of the time, he had sought in vain for spiritual enlightenment and guidance from theologians and well-known preachers.

In near despair, he came to feel the certainty of an inward presence assuring him that 'There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.' Inspired by this, George Fox founded a movement that did not rely on priests, preachers, liturgy, physical sacraments or sacred buildings.

Ever since, Quakers have sought to listen, individually and in group worship, for the inner voice of God to lead them in new lives and a different form of worship. This book illustrates the experience of Friends as they have attempted to follow these leadings in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The early Quaker settlers came from Britain and although Quaker immigrants also came from other countries — such as Ireland, the Netherlands and the United States, until 1964 the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in New Zealand was part of British Quakers under the aegis of London Yearly Meeting. The British book *Quaker Faith and Practice* is used by Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand as it contains accounts of the experiences of Quakers from the beginning of Quakerism, but a need has increasingly been felt to compile, in addition, our own book. *Quaker Faith and Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand* is therefore complementary to the *Quaker Faith and Practice of Britain Yearly Meeting*, and reflects the life and thought of Friends in this country up to this time.

We are seekers, but we are also the holders of some precious discoveries. As each generation grows, we must find the Light for ourselves, and interpret it. We can then hand on to future generations this history of lives lived faithfully, insights gained at times painfully, but above all our vision of the truth which will, again and again, grow and change. This volume, therefore, can never be complete, but is our first attempt to gather together these threads.

Through the process of reading and reflection, we have struggled for our authentic voice growing out of the colonial experience, influenced by the indigenous culture and the natural world. This book is one sign that we now have our own Quaker stories.

We acknowledge the rich historical framework of our European Quaker heritage on which we are now weaving our own spiritual cloth, as richly coloured as the pōhutukawa in bloom, as bright and clear as the light on the moana Pacific. Invisible among these threads are those Friends who did not leave behind a written legacy but whose lives also sustained the developing identity of Quakers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

We hope that you will find within these pages help on the spiritual journey, and new insights, along with knowledge and appreciation of the many Friends who have contributed to Quakerism in this land.

*Committee of Oversight for the 2003 Faith and Practice Project:
Nigel Brooke, Sandra Jones, Phoebe Macdiarmid, Phyllis Short, Sue Stover*

George Fox walked the highways and byways of 17th century England, but his spiritual insight — his confidence in ‘that of God’ abiding in all of us — continues to challenge and uplift us as Quakers here in Aotearoa.

In 2021 Friends asked for a revision of our Faith and Practice, seeking more visibility for contemporary concerns, insights and communities.

This revised Faith and Practice integrates new material with the 2003 material. In the process of working with hundreds of pieces of Quaker writing, we became aware of a spirituality grounded in the experiences of walking in the Light here in Aotearoa. These experiences are reflected in the title of this revised Quaker Faith and Practice.

We continue to be seekers after truth, broadening our understanding of our Quaker whakapapa and striving to be relevant to the times we live in and to the place where we give expression to our faith: on these islands.

*Committee for the Revision of the 2024
Quaker Faith and Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand:
Carril Karr, Elaine Ludwig, Marion Sanson, Sue Stover,
Annabel Taylor, Deborah Williams*



1

Beginnings Tīmatanga

- 1.01 *The first Quaker to see these islands was Sydney Parkinson (1745-1771). He was the young artist employed by Joseph Banks who travelled on Captain James Cook's first voyage to the South Pacific, arriving in New Zealand in 1769. As well as extensive documentation of local plants, his portraits of Māori and Aboriginal Australians were the first ever seen in Europe. After leaving the port city of Batavia (in what became Indonesia), Sydney Parkinson died on board the 'Endeavour'. His brother Stanfield Parkinson wrote of him:*

I have heard many of the surviving companions of this amiable young man dwell with pleasure on the relation of his singular simplicity of conduct, his sincere regard for truth, his ardent thirst after knowledge, his indefatigable industry to obtain it and his generous disposition in freely communicating, with the most friendly participation, to others, that information which perhaps none but himself could have obtained.

1.02 In the aftermath of the American revolutionary wars, US and Canadian Quakers were deeply involved in establishing whaling expeditions into the Pacific, especially by the Starbuck and Swain families. By 1793, these expeditions had reached the waters of Aotearoa with the Bay of Islands becoming a regular port of call.

While other whalers were implicated in kidnappings and forced labour, Quaker whalers had a generally positive relationship with Māori reflecting Quaker testimonies against slavery and concerns for just relationships with indigenous peoples. Māori were employed on the Quaker whaling ships. Thus, began early visits by Māori to Port Jackson in New South Wales such as by Te Pahi, a rangatira in 1805.

In 1819, the missionary Thomas Kendall in the Bay of Islands described Captain Swain of the 'Indian' — a whaling boat — as conducting himself in a most 'friendly manner' towards both the missionary and the 'Natives' with parties of sailors attending 'Divine Service' — 'weather permitting'.

While the Quaker whalers were keen traders — they looked to Māori for food and timber, for example — at least some were unwilling to join the growing trade in muskets which meant some could not trade with Māori and had to rely on missionaries for provisions such as potatoes and pigs. When approached for guns and powder for Te Rauparaha, Captain Samuel Joy of the Quaker whaling ship the 'Mary Mitchell' refused as he was concerned that demands would escalate.

1.03 It may be of minor historical interest to Friends that William Trusted, who came from a long line of Quakers in England, was the first Quaker settler in Aotearoa New Zealand. He lived in the Hokianga from 1836. However, for the hapu Te Hikutu (the tail of Maui's fish) of Whirinaki, Hokianga, it is a living truth to this day, for they count themselves William Trusted's descendants.

William Trusted and his partner Pikare had an only child, Betsy or Peti, who married Kamariera Morunga of Whirinaki, and they had 17 children. Their descendants in this generation decided to

honour their ancestor William Trusted by placing a bronze plaque in his memory, in the wall inside the old Symonds Street cemetery (in Auckland) where he was buried. The unveiling was on 4 January 1998 and Friends were specially invited.

In the 1960s the Quaker connection with Te Hikutu was reinforced when Young Friends and others held several workcamps (organized mainly by the Knight family) at Whirinaki in the Hokianga. They repaired and painted an old Methodist church, cleared scrub, and built a piggery to enable the local people to use the skim milk from their herds, as only the butterfat went to the factory, the skim being poured into a stream! Remember that this was a very depressed area at that time. The workcampers stayed on a marae on the land of a descendant of William Trusted, Wehi Morunga, and family. None of this has been forgotten by Te Hikutu.

Phyllis Short 1998

- 1.04 *With his son Charles, Daniel Wheeler spent several months in the Bay of Islands in 1836-37, in the course of his missionary journeys in the South Seas, which lasted over three years. He was well received by the Anglican missionaries, with whom he stayed. In his copious diary is this account:*

Twelfth Month, 11th. (First-day). Since the last Sixth day morning, way has opened in the minds of those about us, in a remarkable manner, as if the ever-blessed Master had directed our steps to a place, where He himself intended to come, in his own appointed time, in condescending mercy to a poor way-worn, unprofitable servant. It was now proposed by William Williams, that I should attend their place of public worship. He said, 'if you have a word for the people, I will interpret for you'.

This was more than I had looked for, or dared to hope, but a few days ago. Although not exactly accordant with my own views, yet I have of late, I think, learned to be willing almost to become all things that would lead to an opening for me to proclaim to others the glad tidings of salvation, through a Saviour's love. We sat on one side of the congregation, on a low form, attracting the attention of many, by retaining our seats, while all, but ourselves, stood, or knelt, as

occasion required. When all was gone through, William Williams threw aside his surplice, and fetched me to the appointed spot, where we stood together in silence.

I had largely to testify of the love of God, as it is in Christ Jesus, and to turn the attention of the people to the light of His unspeakable gift, which shineth in every heart. The countenances of some of these dear people spoke louder than words, their brokenness could not be hid; to such, the message of everlasting love flowed freely, and I humbly trust, was as a shower upon the thirsty soil. It was an open and relieving season: it was the Lord's doing, and, I believe, marvellous in the eyes of some present. There were several European families, besides those of artizans, attached one way or other to the mission; which, with the boys school and the natives of the surrounding neighbourhood, formed a considerable body of the people: but the praise was His alone, who wrought the work.

In the afternoon we attended the meeting again, but my lips were closed up: it afterwards appeared that some were looking for words, and were disappointed.

- 1.05 We would entreat those who may establish themselves in newly settled countries to reflect upon the responsibility which attaches to them when they are the neighbours of uncivilised and heathen tribes. It is an awful but indisputable fact, that most settlements of this description, besides dispossessing the natives of their land without equivalent, have hitherto been productive of incalculable injury to the moral and physical condition of the native races; which have been thereby more or less reduced in numbers, and in some instances completely exterminated.

Earnestly, therefore, do we desire that all those under our name, who may emigrate to such settlements, may be careful neither directly nor indirectly to inflict injury upon the natives, but that they may, on the contrary, in their whole conduct, exhibit the practical character of that religion which breathes 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward men'.

From Advices and Queries of London Yearly Meeting 1840

1.06 Frederick Tuckett came from a prominent Quaker family near Bristol. In 1841 he came to Nelson as the NZ Company's principal civil engineer and surveyor for the intended settlement there. He saw at once that the site was unsuitable, with very little arable land nearby. He criticised the Company for receiving money under false pretences as there was not enough land for all purchasers.

This put him at loggerheads with Captain Arthur Wakefield, the settlement's leader. Tuckett was one of the party who went to survey land in the Wairau Valley in 1843, where he refused to bear arms. When Rangihaeata's wife, Te Rongo, was shot, possibly accidentally, he retaliated. Wakefield and Cotterell were killed but Tuckett escaped. Tuckett was appointed as resident agent in Nelson in Wakefield's place, but his high-handed manner and quick temper alienated many people.

He hated the continuing warlike atmosphere in relation to the Māori, and planned to return to Britain in 1844. However, he was offered a further appointment with the NZ Company, as principal surveyor and agent for the projected New Edinburgh settlement. He accepted on condition that he should have a completely free hand in selecting the site. He spent two months travelling by sea and on foot, from Port Cooper (Lyttelton), the Company's choice, to Bluff and Stewart Island. He was described as 'of stalwart frame, great endurance and an excellent pedestrian'.

His journal shows his great care in assessing all the natural features of each place for their suitability for a settlement. He was determined not to repeat the mistakes that had been made at Nelson. He talked with all the local Māori chiefs about what he was doing and gained their consent before carrying out his preliminary surveys. Otago Harbour impressed him as by far the best site, and in June 1844 he negotiated the purchase of the Otago Block with Tūhawaiki and the other chiefs, for a price he considered fair.

In 1846, Frederick Tuckett left New Zealand for good, but always maintained a close interest in the Nelson settlement, where he had helped establish the first school, and was active among the small group of Quakers. On leaving, he gave the Lutheran congregation

his house, and the school his books and the rents from some property. He never ceased to speak out about the robbery of the Colonists and of the Natives by the New Zealand Company, and “the folly and short sightedness of the company’s attempted system of selling land by lottery.”

A letter written by him in 1844 from Ōtākou to Dr Hodgkinson in America includes this extract: “I consider that your visit to America has fully compensated you in that you have arrived at a decided opinion (that America was unfit for settlement by Britons). I like decision, and that men should embrace error heartily, rather than hold the truth in doubt or apathy, and I consider it of universal application that he who doubteth is damned if he acts, because he acts not in faith”.

Christina Gibb 2003

- 1.07 *In 1842 John Silvanus Cotterell (1819-1843) a young surveyor, arrived in the Nelson area intending to settle there. Less than 18 months later, he had died — among those killed in the Wairau dispute. A newspaper in his hometown of Bath, England published the following tribute:*

We have it on the best authority that he took no part in the affray, except as an unarmed peacemaker; that during the whole of his sojourn in New Zealand, he was on the best terms with the natives; and the very last letter received from him mentions the pleasure he experienced in having acquired sufficient of the native language to be enabled to converse with the ‘Maories’ on religious subjects. In Mr. Silvanus Cotterell the New Zealanders have slain one of their best friends. Indeed, we cannot but reflect with feelings of the most distressful character upon the early removal of this young man and by means too painful to contemplate.

We last saw him in 1841 at the New Zealand House in London, when on the eve of embarkation for that distant country. He was then in the bloom and pride of manhood — tall, strong, active and robust. In a word, as fine a specimen of a young Englishman as we have ever remembered to have seen. At the time of his death, he wanted only a month of being 24 years of age.

- 1.08 Thomas Mason came to New Zealand with his wife Jane from York in 1841 at the age of 22. In later years he was prominent both in public life and commercial affairs, and as a major pastoralist. He also created the finest botanical garden in New Zealand. As well as cultivating 100 acres of land in the Hutt Valley, where he and Jane lived for many years, he acquired 12,000 acres of run land in the Hawkes Bay in the 1850s.

Because of an error in the survey of the land purchased, the house, woolshed and sheepyards were built on adjacent Māori land. Thomas Mason came to an agreement with the Ngāti Kahungunu chief, Kurupō Te Moananui, to pay an annual rent and a sum for timber used. In 1861, on Moananui's death his former rival, Te Hāpuku, of Ngāti Te Whatu-i-apiti assumed ownership and demanded a further £300 for the previous use of the land and seized 2,000 sheep. Thomas Mason shifted all his buildings off the Māori land; 1,000 more sheep were seized, but in line with his Quaker principles he refused the promptings of other Māori to allow them to take back the sheep from Te Hāpuku by force.

The Rev. Samuel Williams of Te Aute made an unsuccessful attempt at persuasion and Thomas records "I told him (Te Hāpuku) that I felt no ill-will whatever. My earnest desire has been that no act or deed of mine may be the occasion of strife." Te Hāpuku ultimately relented and a few months later returned the sheep.

James and Audrey Brodie 1993

- 1.09 *The first example of Quaker conscientious objection in New Zealand is recorded in the Hobart Monthly Meeting minutes of 1864. An isolated Friend living in the Hutt Valley, Thomas Mason wrote to the Meeting reporting that his sons John and Thomas had been called for military service and that they had refused. Thomas Mason wrote:*

It is a trying time, and one which requires much circumspection, but by constant reliance on the Divine aid, and that alone, with humble and earnest seeking help from him, who is ever willing to assist his poor dependent creatures, I trust we may be kept in safety. Few seem able to understand the great law of Christianity — love to all — would

it were more greatly recognised. How different then would the intercourse of the settlers and natives be!

In a later letter, Thomas Mason reported to Hobart Friends:

The Captain of the Taitā militia had written to the military authorities in Auckland, to know what he was to do in our case; and the reply was to the effect that he was to swear in and drill the Quakers, and in case of actual hostilities to employ them as clerks.

On receipt of this intelligence, I at once communicated with the Major commanding to whom I represented the impossibility of acceding to his wishes, and that we could not agree to obey a military officer, as such. He then consented to give us leave of absence but expressly stated that he would not allow anyone but a Quaker to shelter himself under the same plea.

The Judge of the Supreme Court who was present at the interview told him it was the best thing that could be done, and commended him for considering my case, and consenting not to press the service, especially as I had, as a juryman so frequently been called upon. He further said that the Militia Act left no choice with the inferior officers who would be compelled to prosecute.

Altogether I have much cause for thankfulness for the kindness shown and expressed — one of the Magistrates going so far as to say he was certain that if we had been fined, no one would be found to issue the warrant for distraint. The case has given me the opportunity of stating the reason why Friends refuse to bear arms, and I would hope some good may result.

- 1.10 During the mid-late 1800s, Quakers arrived as individuals and as family groups — many of them became farmers. When Thomas and Ann Fletcher Jackson immigrated with their seven children in 1879, they brought with them rudimentary medicines — a gift from their English Quaker meeting — which benefited both Māori and Pākehā at Otonga, near Whangarei where they initially settled and where Ann also established a rural school.

The Jacksons maintained contact with their English Meeting and with their support, Ann began travelling in the ministry to reach

isolated Quakers. Between 1886 and 1899, her travels took her to eastern Australia, and in Aotearoa from the Far North to the far south on horseback and steamers. Her journals show that she travelled 38,368 miles. Closer to home, she and Thomas were instrumental in establishing local Quaker meetings for worship and Quarterly meetings, especially in Auckland.

Her time at 'Home Farm' at Otonga was her introduction to colonial poverty as the land was only marginally suitable for farming. Her granddaughter, Ruby Dowsett, wondered whether when the time came to sell the farm and move to Auckland in 1899, "Did she look back and sometimes remember an entry in her diary 16 years earlier in 1883? 'Our cows are dry and not likely to be milking until November. My heart aches when I think of the children being without milk or butter. Dry bread and water is their only fare for the evening. This evening, when my eldest son came home from a hard day's work, I only had dry bread and weak tea to offer him?' And she says that she wept."

Looking back at the hardships suffered whilst on the farm at Otonga, Ann Fletcher Jackson wrote: "Often and often have I wondered why we were led into such an out of the way place as this, and why we had so many losses and difficulties and trials to encounter, but I see now that it was the way and perhaps the only way in which I could be brought really, because experimentally, to sympathise with others similarly situated."

Remembering Ann Fletcher Jackson (1833-1903)

- 1.11 Fifteen years were spent in London, when it was decided to leave England, as for many years M. Harlock had felt a concern to immigrate to New Zealand, where the prospects in life would be more encouraging. It was a serious undertaking to leave old associations and friends behind and also those who were in religious sympathy with you, to come to a land where our Society had no church organisation. But the decision was made to come, and in 1880 Dunedin was reached. Coming from amongst Friends to a country where Friends were little known, was a great change. Owing to M. Harlock's strong belief in the principles of Friends, she could not feel comfortable in attending

other places of worship, so it was arranged to hold a meeting every First Day evening. Since 1886, a meeting has been regularly held on First Day morning, which has proved of much blessing.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Mary Harlock (1819-1893)

- 1.12 *The first recognised Monthly Meeting in Aotearoa was Auckland in 1910, but that actually followed the first national New Zealand Friends Conference, held in May 1909. The conference took advantage of a visit by Thomas Hodgkin, travelling in the ministry from England, and between 60 and 70 Friends gathered in Wellington for it. An unnamed observer provided a stirring account, describing those gathered as:*

... a large company of very ordinary men and women, taken suddenly from all sorts and conditions of life, and dumped down to transact business together. Most of them were absolute strangers to one another and there were plenty of strong individuals with widely different views. Yet the one thing they had in common, the Quaker method and tradition, was enough to transform them into an organized body in less than five minutes. A Clerk was chosen, and a two-penny Minute Book bought: the sense of the Meeting did the rest and was simply sufficient to deal with the most knotty problems as they arose.

Dr Hodgkin said that he considered the deliberations were quite on a level with those of London Yearly Meeting, and he was surprised at the high level of the whole. It certainly did seem most strange. Here were those Friends, some of whom had not been able to associate with others or attend a Meeting for Worship for many years yet, when they met once more, the atmosphere overshadowed them, and they fell into old ways and usages of the Society.

- 1.13 One Friend spoke of it being seven years since he had been in a Friends Meeting. Another Friend — 32 years since in any Friends Meeting, not even in a cottage. Alfred Quartier told us how his Quakerism was well known in his district in the extreme south. A few visits had been paid by ministering Friends and he had always put together a good company of neighbours to meet such, but it was 57 years since being in a regular Friends Meeting.

General Conference of Friends 1910

- 1.14 A deputation of Quakers of the Society of Friends waited on the Prime Minister (Sir Joseph Ward) to-day in reference to the provision of the Internal Defence Bill. The Friends had already petitioned the House entering a conscientious and religious objection to compulsory military training.

Mr. Thos. Wright said they wished the Government to understand that they were with it in every way. It was in no factious spirit that they came forward — they simply desired it to be known that taking part in war was against the spirit of Christ, as far as their religious principles were concerned. They thanked the Prime Minister for including the conscience clause, and were prepared to undertake civil duties as long as they had no connection with war.

Correspondent, Auckland Star 1909

- 1.15 It has been stated that the training in our schools is physical not military; but this is contrary to fact. Whether the school be primary or secondary, military movements and the use of the rifle form an essential part of the instruction, and this in spite of the insistence by authorities on physical culture that military drill is of little value in bodily development. We are entirely at one with the Government in desiring to raise the moral, mental and physical standard of the youth of the country; but to do this, radical measures must be adopted. The system of physical and other training should be carried on long after the primary school age.

It is pitiful that, whilst the older countries are feeling the intolerable burden of their war expenditure and are seeking to lessen it by treaties of International friendship, in this new land our Government is making such pacific relationships very difficult for the future, in that during their most impressionable years the spirit of racial suspicion and fear is being implanted in our boys. If preparation for war is felt to be necessary, it is worse than folly to lay its burden on the children. Far better, surely, to teach them, as all past history proves, that only righteousness really exalts a nation; and that do as they would that men should do to them, would lessen strife, both amongst individuals and nations.

Annual Meeting of the Society of Friends in New Zealand 1912

- 1.16 *As early as 1913, John Holdsworth had brought his concern that a Quaker school should be established before the annual meeting of the Society. Finally in 1917 Friends recorded:*

New Zealand public education being free, secular and military, cannot be satisfactory to Friends. Friends cannot do less than establish a school of their own. We are not standing to teach Quakerism, but principles which are fundamental truths.

- 1.17 *In 1917, Friends delivered a manifesto to the press and Members of Parliament stating why all conscientious objectors should be allowed exemption from military service, regardless of whether they belonged to a traditionally pacifist church. The statement had been approved by General Conference 1916:*

Our belief is founded on the guidance of the individual by the Holy Spirit, which works in the human conscience irrespective of creed or church membership. We also believe that freedom from the scourge of war will be brought about through the faithfulness of those individuals who live under the guidance of this Spirit, and that at this time many in this land have been so guided. Faithful adherence to these beliefs has brought untold suffering in the past, and we feel that to simply exempt a few descendants of those who won for us the principle of religious liberty and the right to live in accordance with the leading of our consciences, has the effect of denying the principle which was so dearly bought, and makes a pretence of religious toleration which does not exist.

We claim that the life service of every conscientious man in his ordinary avocation is of inestimable value to the nation; that to remove him from such work as he has taken up from a sense of vocation or special fitness and placing him in some other sphere for the sake of punishment for right-doing is a most disastrous policy.

- 1.18 Adherence to the teachings of Christ should raise His followers to a plane where the boundaries of nationality do not exist, but where all who profess His name, to whatever nation they belong, have only one interest to serve — the promotion of the building of the City of God. With that supreme claim to our loyalty, the claim of no lesser loyalty can conflict — neither loyalty to family, nor friends, nor state.

General Meeting of the Society of Friends in New Zealand 1915



2

People, Place

Ngā Tāngata, Ngā Wāhi

2.01 The disquieting discomfort
and burdensome weight
of failings and frailties
has no place here
here where the sand on which we walk
was once the mighty Southern Alps.
Our little lives are merely
little lives
and what we are made of will
someday make something else.
The tide comes in
the tide goes out
comes in
goes out
and the light shines on
regardless.

Jude Zwanikken 2017

2.02 There's a beautiful area of native bush in the central North Island called Ohinetonga Scenic Reserve. The many massive rimu, tawa, matai and kahikatea are an imposing presence. Some of these trees have stood there for more than 500 years and as I spent time with them, I imagined the comings and goings of many human generations they had witnessed over their lifetimes. These encounters with giants in the bush elicited a palpable sense of awe and wonder and I realised I had no sense of awe and wonder for the image humans have used to try and explain what might have created these giants.

As I reflected on that, it occurred to me that whilst humans have worshipped such an image, they have continued to destroy trees at an alarming rate. The significance of my story is that my sense of wonder and awe was focussed entirely on the natural environment rather than on the image of God as the creator, a separate object or force.

Murray Short 2022

2.03 I shuffle down to the sea's edge
With stick in hand, steps churlish,
Halt-stepping like our host's old dog
At home pining for his mistress —
Within my range there the shore is.
Taking care to place my slip-shod shoes,
Fearing a fall and tearing stitches,
I cannot both walk and take the views,
So I halt and perch on an old log.
Searching over Cook Strait tides,
Stick grasped between legs like a Koro
On the paepae, I listen to the other side.
Whakarongo nei ki te Kore.
Mihi mai, kōrero mai, mihi mai.
Listen to the Void, the spirit fog,
Calling, talking, summonsing across the divide.

Brian McNamara 2015

2.04 The village of Parihaka, in Taranaki, was developed in the 1860s and 70s by the prophets Te Whiti o Rongomai and his uncle, Tohu Kakahi. Like early Friends, Te Whiti and Tohu spoke (in Māori) a language that relied on the Bible for much of its imagery, and they drew from it a message of peace and trust in God to ensure justice. Despite their refusal to take up arms, they were far from passive, and spoke truth to power in the face of persecution and imprisonment. Their cause was the cultural and economic integrity based on Māori tribal land that the Government was confiscating to distribute to settlers, and they chose with wit and inventiveness the way of large scale non-violent resistance.

Te Whiti and Tohu illustrate tantalising thematic links between the experiences of Māori under colonisation and those of early Friends in England. Both groups saw themselves as ‘peoples’ with a right to a degree of independence from the dominant culture. Māori and early Friends have suffered for this. For us there is an especially interesting link between Parihaka and the seventeenth century Diggers in England. The Diggers also created a non-violent communal movement to hold and use the remaining common lands against the encroachments of early capitalism. They were promptly suppressed, two years after George Fox began the ministry that led to the Quaker movement, and some of the Diggers (or True Levellers as they called themselves) became Friends, possibly including their leader Gerrard Winstanley.

The European missionary who in 1846 first came to Te Whiti’s village was startled when he greeted the young man with ‘I come in peace, bringing God’s word,’ to be answered “We know that word and greet you, in God’s peace.”

When Te Whiti spoke in 1881 as the mature leader of the Parihaka community, it would be hard to tell his translated words apart from those of James Naylor or Gerrard Winstanley: “Do not think I am fighting against men, but rather against the devil and all wickedness. Let us not use carnal weapons. Listen. Do not let us seek that which is lost — not look back to what is left. There is to be nothing about

fighting today, but the glorification of God and peace on the land. Put both your hands and your feet on the new land and stand in the ark of patience.”

David James and Jillian Wychel 1991

- 2.05 At one of the performances of the Friends School Concert, we had the pleasure of entertaining a group of Māori children from St Joseph’s School, Jerusalem, about 40 miles upriver from Whanganui. Not only did the children and the two Sisters attend our concert, but 12 children spent the night in the school, having meals with us and sleeping in extra beds put up in the children’s bedrooms. Next morning, they gave us some songs and went into classes for a short while before leaving. It was a delightful occasion and Sister Walburga wrote as follows:

“Again we have the pleasant task of saying thank you very much for the wonderful way you have extended your hospitality to us. The children are just full of their visit. For me it is a treat that we have something real to talk about, write about and draw about. I do hope we did not interfere too much with your routine.

“Would you please thank the members of your staff who so warmly welcomed the children and made us all feel so very much at home. You are certainly doing your share to prevent the rising of racial barriers in the minds of these children.

“I was very impressed with a remark I overheard after we arrived home. One of the boys was telling his younger brother about the trip. The younger asked, ‘Any Pākehās there?’ The reply was unexpected but deeply significant. ‘No, all Friends.’”

Howard Dyson 1963

- 2.06 I wish I could give you the feeling of a life lived with the opportunity — in fact the necessity — of working out the age-long human values, not in the old world in which they originated but in the new, that is in these small islands, mere specks at the bottom of the Pacific ocean — more than a thousand miles from our nearest neighbours who, with the exception of white Australia, are all Asian, not European peoples. And not as first

comers either. After a century and a half of relationships often marred by actions caused by arrogance and deception, we are now trying to build a new nation with the values of both cultures.

Dorothy Johnson 1966

2.07 For one whose family has lived in New Zealand for nearly 150 years, and whose grandfather grew up speaking Māori before he spoke English, it is an admission of which I am not proud when I say that this visit to the marae at Rotorua was practically my first real contact with the Māori people. It was both a moving and a humbling experience.

On the happy occasion of the announcement of his engagement, Murray felt the need of having members of his Quaker 'tribe' with him, and for many of us who had known Murray and his family for many years, this was an opportunity not to be missed. We came from the north and the south, the east and the west, young and old, children and grandparents, in the true spirit of Quaker family gatherings, which to me are the strength of the Society of Friends in New Zealand.

Through his work with the Māori people in Rotorua and now through the more personal contact of his engagement and future marriage to Niwa, Murray has opened a door of opportunity for New Zealand Friends which, to my knowledge, we have never had before. We are now accepted on the Mataatua marae at Rotorua as welcome friends. We are able to talk with, work with, and eat with the Māori people there in love and friendship. We slept in their meeting house, the guests on one side, the hosts on the other; we joined in their prayers each morning; we shared the experience of part of a tangi, when the 'death' was brought back to the marae, and the old Māori Ringatu minister carried out the sacred ritual; afterwards everyone present was greeted and 'hongied' by the mourners.

We joined in the wonderful hangi feast prepared for the engagement celebrations, and the joyful social gathering afterwards, with speeches made by Māori and Pākehā in turn. When we parted on Sunday we felt we were leaving our friends. "Next time you must come and stay a week", said our hosts.

Elsie Bennett 1972

2.08 *In 1978, John and Muriel Morrison learned of the tragic death of their foster son Jim in a car collision. It was difficult deciding whether to travel the distance from Christchurch to Te Puke for the tangi. But once they got there:*

We stood together shivering in the dark and cold beyond the fence of the Marae, waiting to be led in and welcomed; someone came up and said, ‘We were expecting you. We knew you would come.’

We were led slowly forward, called to come in and stood together at the foot of the open coffin — Jim lying quietly asleep, it seemed — surrounded by flowers. I was helped to sit on the mattress beside him, with Johnnie his oldest son, only fifteen and heartbroken. Speeches of welcome in Māori were made to us, my neighbour translating for me. John in reply sounded hoarse and stressed — a difficult task for him. With me, tears welled up. We were then led right round the circle of those seated on the mattresses and greeted with tender kisses, embraces and tears, from women and men alike. Some greeted John with a hongī.

We returned to the Marae early next morning, and were ushered straight into the tent to sit beside Jim. Newcomers arrived and were welcomed with speeches and women’s singing. Some came to greet us tenderly, some to bend over Jim and weep. In reply to the welcomes the spokesmen said ‘He did so much for us. We loved him.’

The children ran up to touch their father’s face, came close to a grown-up to be comforted, and ran off again to play; people chatted, ‘When did you have Jim first?’ ‘When he was a little boy about ten, he belonged to us for most of his life.’ ‘Oh yes, I remember you when you came to see Jim and Rose at Linden.’ Another group was welcomed — the children were shushed. ‘You kids be quiet when someone is speaking.’

As the time approached for the coffin to be screwed down and the service to begin, the sound of weeping heightened, the old grandmother’s wailing intensified as she made her last farewells. Sitting opposite her, I felt ‘pākehā’ — scarcely showing my grief.

The service began. A great crowd of people had gathered. We sang hymns, said the Lord’s Prayer, followed the service in Māori.

The coffin was carried slowly out, the children following with the flowers to place in the hearse, and we proceeded to the cemetery. When the words of committal had been spoken, the coffin lowered, some handfuls of earth and some flowers thrown in, the minister called on any who wished to speak. 'It is our custom,' he said. Several spoke, John to express appreciation of their acceptance and inclusion of us, young Johnnie to say 'Thank you' for his father's sake. We filed silently past, 'Goodbye Jim, Goodbye' came from my heart.

Muriel Morrison 1978

2.09 In the years preceding World War II, there was an on-going assumption that the British Empire would continue to offer opportunities for white settlers. To be growing up in the UK during this period was to be unconsciously shaped by our education and to assume that the opportunity to emigrate was ours of right. Very few of those contemplating migration were concerned for the indigenous people of their chosen land of settlement.

As were all other assisted immigrants, my family and I were 'processed' and plenty of information was available about life in New Zealand, but as far as I can recall, nothing about understanding the Tangata Whenua or the Treaty of Waitangi. In fact, the general emphasis was that New Zealand was a little England overseas. In company with many others who have become New Zealanders by emigration, I now have to meet the challenge of biculturalism and the rights of the Tangata Whenua.

Eric Camfield 1986

2.10 We recognise the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a living document fundamental to the life of this nation, and we commit ourselves to the principle of partnership which it embodies. This is in accord with our longstanding commitment to social equality and peaceable co-operation. We accept that honouring the Treaty will have implications for our personal and collective lives. We cannot yet know in detail what this will mean for the Religious Society of Friends, but we acknowledge that it will certainly involve equitable

sharing of resources and giving up by Pākehā of exclusive decision-making in the institutions of society.

We call upon all our Meetings and individual members to recognise this commitment by becoming better informed about Maoritanga and the bicultural history of this country, and by seeking ways of expressing this partnership in action.

On our side of the partnership, we recognise the values of the European basis of Pākehā culture, including our Quaker heritage.

The building of a just partnership between Pākehā and Māori lays a sound foundation for relationships with diverse ethnic groups in this country.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 1988-89

- 2.11 Māori in Aotearoa are now in a minority, and sometimes express feelings of powerlessness, so they do need to know that, for the long haul, ignoring the sideshows and temporary setbacks, there are Pākehā who remain committed to what they are really on about. In other words, that they have reliable allies.

Of course, I will have doubts and hesitation. Sometimes I will be unsure of the form in which my support can best be expressed. I will often have to be patient, but to trust that in faith, I will be rightly led by the spirit.

Philip Macdiarmid 1997

- 2.12 A few years ago when I first heard of Māori claims for rangatiratanga (sovereignty or self-determination), I could not see how it was possible. Were not the Māori only 14% of the population?

Conditioned so thoroughly to western ‘democratic rule by majority’, I couldn’t grasp the concept of equal partnership. Yet that was the situation when the Treaty of Waitangi was signed — more Māori than Europeans, and the European population dependent on the Māori for safe passage, for land for their homes and food supplies. Gradually I have been able to recognise my equality with Māori and to allow that they will know best what is right for them. Māori radio programmes gave me an insight into attitudes and aspirations that have often been hidden from Pākehā but are there — for all to hear if they wish.

The idea of Māori self-determination seems to me right and sensible and I applaud the movement towards finding and establishing a constitutional solution. I have not forgotten the step-by-step process by which my mind was wrenched round from its position of a colonialist conditioning, to one of freedom to accept and support choices by Māori on their own behalf. It is for this reason I venture to write in encouragement of Friends who are on the path and taking steps of their own.

Barbara Mountier 1997

- 2.13 Standing in this place, Aotearoa New Zealand, means recognising the first peoples of the land and respecting their rights. Standing in this place means doing everything possible to ensure that the Treaty of Waitangi is honoured in both spirit and letter.

David James, Jillian Wychel, Murray Short and Linda Wilson 2014

- 2.14 My interest in Treaty issues started in 2004 when the foreshore and seabed controversy was raging. As Māori have become more willing to share their experiences, I have become acutely aware of the long-lasting intergenerational trauma and disadvantage that they have suffered and the degree of my inherited privilege.

At Easter 2018 I attended a family reunion in New Plymouth, during and after which my father's family history was fleshed out and circulated. I had grown up believing there was so much to be proud of: the ancestral settler coming from lowland Scotland as a carpenter, working hard, developing a farm, becoming a public figure and eventually the grandfather to my grandfather who was a lawyer, a magistrate, the Mayor of New Plymouth during World War I, and, for a short while, the Chief Justice of Western Samoa. Then I began to read the history through the lens of Māori dispossession and see the key achievements of this branch of my family in a very different light.

The point of all this is not to vilify my forebears, who were no doubt (with the exception of any involvement in the Parihaka atrocities) doing what they were brought up to do: serve King and country,

work hard to support family, and obey superiors, but to recognise that I and my family have prospered on the back of land loss and trauma that has had severe intergenerational consequences for Māori and the people of Western Samoa.

What can I do about it? I can't turn the clock back, but I can acknowledge the reality and implications of this history and support any moves by tangata whenua to seek redress.

Heather Denny 2022

2.15 As I see it, when talking about racism and privilege in Aotearoa in the 21st century, we can be more precise, more sensitive to cultural difference and diversity. The shorthand of skin colour reduces diverse cultures to a few words which conflate people from very different parts of the world. Where possible, let's find out what people call themselves and use their words. There are terms which are in current usage in Aotearoa: indigenous/coloniser/settler/immigrant or tangata whenua/iwi/tauiwi/pākehā.

The basis of racism in Aotearoa is colonisation by the English and the abuse of the Treaty, through mass migration and violent land grabs, actions which came close to genocide.

Recently when preparing a talk about Quakers in Nelson, I researched the ships on which the earliest Quakers arrived here and found that 3,000 settlers arrived in Nelson on 18 ships in the space of a few years. Imagine if 3,000 refugees arrived in our town today. We'd feel shocked and overwhelmed, even with our current population of 50,000 and all the infrastructure we have. The blatant abuse of the Treaty is there in the numbers, even before the injustices of land grabs, violent invasions and the suppression of indigenous knowledge and language. This is our tragic and unjust history in Aotearoa.

Jan Marsh 2022

2.16 The challenge of co-existing with a different cultural perspective, especially the challenge of an indigenous culture in a colonial society, can be dealt with by destruction and assimilation, by marginalizing, or by ignoring it. These are the attempted solutions of the past. The only alternative that we can see is to set out consciously to make

space for other cultures and to share decision-making power with them. Liberation for the oppressor and the oppressed, and entry into the dialogue and dance between cultures, have to be both spiritual and social. It is a dance because changing circumstances, and the dynamic nature of culture itself, will keep both parties in a constantly changing relationship in which first one and then the other will take the lead. This is the enterprise of bicultural development on which some in Aotearoa New Zealand have embarked.

David James and Jillian Wychel 1991

- 2.17 On the question of biculturalism, and the racist structure of New Zealand society, we were forced to admit that we had failed to live up to our earlier commitment to work for genuine partnership with Māori people. This would demand sharing of resources, and giving up some of our power and privilege.

We know that indigenous peoples regard the land, and indeed the whole natural world, not as something they own, but as something that owns them. A Friend who is Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment spoke from her Quaker background of her realisation that the present ecological crisis in the world may in fact have its roots in the Judaeo-Christian tradition. According to Genesis, God gave human beings dominion over creation, so we are having to learn from other cultures the meaning and importance of stewardship of natural resources. Environmental management and social policy must work together to mend damage resulting from years of arrogant exploitation of privately-owned land.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 1991

- 2.18 Given the prevalence of the Māori-Pākehā bicultural narrative in our thinking, it is not surprising that we struggle to embrace multiculturalism. Biculturalism and multiculturalism are often thought of as incompatible and competing. Two effects of this framing are: first, the dominant Pākehā culture has largely ignored the ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity that make up

multicultural Aotearoa New Zealand. Second, ethnic communities are marginalised within the treaty partnership.

We need to be open to pursuing the co-existence of biculturalism and multiculturalism and the discomforts and uncertainty that this will involve. Every New Zealander has an ethnicity — many of us have multiple ethnic identities — and everyone must belong.

The way forward is to embrace the democratic values that underpin the Treaty of Waitangi, as the basis for respectful political relationships based on generosity rather than self-interest. As Quakers, the healing power of *kōrero*, silent listening and generosity offer a peaceful pathway forward and will allow us to promote the best of ourselves as a nation.

The goal: to build a shared commitment to a treaty-based multicultural Aotearoa, in which each of us feels we can locate our relationship to place.

Graham Storer 2022

2.19 To some, decolonisation of New Zealand was the process, over many years, of gaining independence from Britain, which culminated in the Constitution Act 1986. This was the point at which New Zealand gained full legal independence. This view overlooks the fact that colonisation is much more than an economic, political and 'legal' process.

The ideology which was the driving force behind colonisation persists long after the political and legal process is complete and it continues to exert its damaging influence until recognised, exposed, challenged and replaced.

From a religious mission perspective, colonisation is justified as a process of liberating peoples from 'heathen, uncivilised practices' and bringing them the 'blessings of a superior belief system and way of life'.

Far from being complete, therefore, decolonisation is still in its infancy. The challenge, especially for Quakers in view of our strong commitment to equality, is to identify all vestiges of the underpinning story in our thinking as a step toward rethinking, reframing and

reconstructing. We also need to challenge this type of thinking when we detect it around us because while it persists, progress to a truly diverse, inclusive and just society will be slow and painful.

Murray Short 2022

2.20 I didn't understand the deepest meaning of 'Arohanui' until about 25 years ago, when a large group at Summer Gathering climbed onto buses and visited several Marae down the Whanganui River. This was thanks to the strong connections with local Iwi, built up over decades by members of Whanganui Meeting.

As a South Islander, I had never been welcomed like this, sharing breath (hongi) and embraces with everyone in each community, and so generously fed by people who were not as well-off as many of us.

For the first time in my life, I felt like a true New Zealander and wept at the joy and relief of it.

At last, I understood how Arohanui is the great heart-connection, the tender, inclusive kindness and warmth, stronger than steel, that holds whānau and iwi together. On this occasion, Arohanui amazingly included ourselves.

Arthur Wells 2022



3

This I know
experientially
Ko ōku whēako
whaiaro ēnei

3.01 I am renewed
as God's love flows again
like the upwelling sap of spring
Glory to Thee my soul does sing
and every leaf and shade
blade and flower sings in this hour.
I am a living thing whom death's blade touched
Yet God clutched
the soul and brought it whole to light again.

Michael Wiltshire 1959

3.02 In the graceful gannet's flight
I saw you
In the ever-shifting sand
I touched you
In the skylark singing her bliss
I heard you
In the salty sea spray
I tasted you
In the tiny scent of the manuka flower
I smelled you
In the quiet stillness within
I met you.
Oh yes
I did
I met You.

Jude Zwanikken 2017

3.03 In the deep water of silence, tangled and withered leaves and branches are disentangled, and, revived and refreshed, can wave about freely, while the root is still firmly attached to the bedrock.
Down there is where I need to be, to hear the 'still small voice'.

Judith Child 1995

3.04 *A Silent Morning*

Silently the tide flows in
Silently we listen for the voice of love
Silently we open our hearts to hear
Silently we commit to follow where it leads

Barbara Mountier 2005

3.05 On the Damascus Road, Saul heard the voice and saw the blinding light. The words struck home, "I am Jesus whom you persecute."
It was as Son of Man that he became real to me — in a poor slum Meeting House, God was there in a living silence, manifest as Spirit

and as man. He did not leave me when Meeting ended. We walked together, the Son of Man and I, mingling with brawling, breadless men and half naked women and children in crowded, filthy, drink-soaked tenements and in the cobbled streets. Often his garments smelt of fish and chips, cheap whisky, human vomit and stale night air. But his love was steadfast.

Months after, worn out by long nights, near death and only wanting to die, I, like Saul, saw the rift in the sky. The light shone clear, and I heard the voice, “To live is Christ.”

That was over half a century ago. Whatever may have happened to the bones of Jesus is unimportant to me. I know he lives. Fox would have said I know experientially.

Edward Dowsett 1968

- 3.06 On a clifftop above the blue Waitemata Harbour about 50 of us were gathered in a circle. Our altar was set out in our midst — a tapa cloth lay on the grass, a banana leaf on it carried the bread, there was a bottle of wine and a pottery mug. Three young men tuned up their guitars and we sang — “The answer is blowing in the wind”, but on this perfect day there was scarcely a breeze. We broke the bread and passed the cup with murmured greeting each to each. We had personal acquaintance with but few of those there, but suddenly we were among close friends.

The children, running freely about, tumbling on the grass, were our family. Then we walked down to the beach and prayed together for the blessing of the waters as a place of life and health, free from nuclear terror.

There on that hilltop, on that walk down to the shore, on the sands by the waters, I felt that I died as an individual, as a Quaker, and became one with God’s creation, with humanity, with earth.

Margaret West 1975

- 3.07 I was brought up in a Coronation Street in the northeast of England. Religion and God played no part in our lives. I liked school and

worked hard and, by the age of 33, I had a good husband, healthy children, a sound home, and the knowledge that I was captain of my own soul.

I was also at a loss to find that although having all these things which should have made for happiness, it wasn't the case. Inwardly I was not at peace. Nothing gave me joy, and although my health was good, everything felt like dust and ashes. I decided something else had to be found that would give me peace. Looking around and reading, I concluded that people with God in their lives appeared to have those elements that were still lacking in mine. But was there a God? If so, I was determined to find Him/It.

Some months after this, I woke up feeling more alive than I ever had been. Every sense was keener, and I felt unbounded goodwill towards all. I concluded I must have been sickening for something all those months, and I had now thrown it off.

Our five-year-old daughter became very ill, and the doctors didn't know why. I visited her each day in hospital, and to my surprise, in spite of the seriousness of her case, I didn't feel at all worried. A saying had come into my head: "underneath are the everlasting arms". I thought I must have seen this message on a church billboard outside of some church. Deep within me had come the knowledge that if she lived all would be well, and if she died all would still be well.

However, one day after leaving my daughter wan and exhausted with an evil-smelling brown fluid oozing from her mouth, for the first time I felt anxiety and I went into the bedroom for a cry. As I crossed towards the bed, I was arrested by a stern inner voice saying, "You haven't enough faith". This halted me in my tracks. This isn't me saying that or I would have known what I was going to say. This must be God — I've found him, I thought.

Even as I thought this, I knew that wasn't the case. He had come to me. It was an undeserved gift. I was then drenched (that is the most expressive word I can find, as there was such a torrent) with love from God. I stood there, with my entire being responding to so much love. I also knew that God loved each of us with this same generosity.

Our daughter recovered quite quickly. Months later I found she had eaten some berries from a hedge on her way home from school. I too had extra health and energy. I not only had the inner peace I had longed for, but there was this wonderful joy, and the feeling of a loving companion by my side.

Vera Dickinson 2001

3.08 As I carried on down, hand over hand through the steep high manuka, my mind was completely taken up with the morning's conversations. So much so, that when I stepped out of the manuka where the track crossed the stream below a high cataract, I was taken completely by surprise by the sudden awareness that the whole of that tiny valley was filled with God's love. Tangible and available as the air you breathe. As sunshine on the skin.

I stood on a couple of stepping stones in the stream, feeling, "I must stay here all day", but then after a few seconds, "No, I know now that God is love, no need to stretch out the experience". And walked on down the track, my heart singing.

Tony Maturin 2016

3.09 I really only discovered God's presence in my life by his sudden absence. After the death of our second son (another son died seven years before), I fell into a black hole.

It was the valley of the shadow of death. I had no contact with God, nor did I sense the prayers that Friends said for me. I lost all faith and said to my mother that I thought that I would throw God out.

Her reply was "I don't think you will be able to." How right she was.

For about six months people came unbidden and shared their deepest experiences and insights — the things that are eternal. A friend visited with her three daughters and baby pukeko they were rearing. I was entranced. Through my love of the natural world and the goodness of people, God gradually reasserted his presence in my life.

It is only in retrospect that I can recognise the rod and the staff that were comforting me.

Viola Palmer 2002

- 3.10 During those busy years, anthologies of inspirational writing lifted me above my little life and cleared my mind. Through these writings I at last realised that others had had experiences like mine, the Christian mystics especially.

On two occasions I had the sensation whilst standing on a hill of an imminent presence in me and in the Earth itself. Like a window of perception opening and then, just as suddenly, closing. It was a relief to find I was not mentally unbalanced!

I feel that I did not become a ‘Quaker by Convincement,’ if that implies that I have been convinced of the truth of Quaker beliefs and practices and thus have adopted them, but rather that I held these views strongly inwardly before, and have found people who individually and corporately embody them.

There are few things as consoling as finding people who feel as you do. Even the tolerance of different viewpoints within the Society resounds with me, as does the balance of mystic contemplation and social action, the emphasis on simplicity, equality in all its forms, the method of decision making and the Peace testimony.

The Society of Friends has confirmed me in the experiences of my life. It has made sense of the intimations of a transcendent reality, which have flashed intermittently before me like a guide all my life. My previous spiritual life has been haphazard, now I believe I have a structure within which it can develop more steadily. Out of this too will come the outward service.

Anne Pōtaka 1999

- 3.11 The light — and the darkness — came into focus for me during Quaker meeting one Sunday morning. A man going through intense personal pain stood and spoke: “It is only at night that we can see the stars.” Similarly, it is in adversity and distress, he said, that we can see most clearly the big picture — the Light. As the Psalmist wrote, the glory of God is evident day by day, but “night unto night sheweth knowledge” (Psalm 19:2). It is in the ‘night knowledge’ that the Light becomes keenly understood.

To 'hold' someone 'in the light', as Friends try to do, is to bring that person more closely into the presence of the Holy Spirit, knowing that what we want or intend — our will — can draw on their craving to feel connected, to be included, to be gathered.

As George Fox wrote, we need to be connected one to another, to have a “sense of all conditions”, and in this is “the infinite love of God.” But he also saw that “there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love which flowed over the darkness” which revealed again “the infinite love of God,” bringing “great openings.”

In my experience, it is a connection to the “infinite love of God” which is sought in Friends' praying.

Sue Stover 2012

3.12 *On New Years's Eve 2015*

On New Year's Eve as custom has,
With a wee dram, I sat outside
Under a clear and midnight sky
To review the year just past.
I examined the starry heavens
for meaning and marvelled. Gratitude came
And as I made my resolution for integrity
To be the leading virtue of the new year
I was gifted a breeze which sprang up
and quietly and gently surrounded me,
growing in power as the air flowed around
And over me, caressing with the kiss of the Spirit.
Not the first time during contemplation
That the Spirit has visited. Whether or not
Does not matter. Confirmation
Is a question of faith.

Brian McNamara 2020

3.13 There is a still silent place in the centre of each of us — a profoundly still pond. In that still, silent pond we may perceive reflections of the inner cathedral, the Mountain Top where we take off our shoes and are hospitable to God.

I remember recently arriving a couple of minutes late for Meeting for Worship. A few friends had arrived early and were already in the depth of worship. Sitting down in Meeting was like entering living water. With communal prayer, the pond becomes a communal shared pool.

Ponds can be still or have ripples or waves. As we enter Meeting for Worship, we can be like a seal smoothly entering the pond, or like a frog jumping in with a splash.

Marvin Hubbard 2002

3.14 When I first started coming to Quaker Meetings the silence was something I hadn't experienced before. I tried out new ways of handling it. I might keep my eyes wide open, unfocussed, trying to be aware of everyone at once in a low-key sort of way. Or I might listen to sounds: birds outside, shufflings and rustlings within. It was all very strange.

Thirty years later, it's a very different experience. I don't actually try to do anything at all. It just happens. An idea or thought comes to mind. Often it's something I'd been thinking of in weeks before. I'd mull it over or, rather, it would take on a life of its own and do its own mulling. It would develop. Someone's spoken ministry might add to it or change its course. To begin with, the ideas would be fragmented but then they'd begin to coalesce into a whole. Sometimes, rather rarely, it would lead to a spoken ministry. I'd resist though, unless I was really impelled to get up and say something. Mostly the mulling would simply be internal but no less powerful for that. And in the end, when it worked well, I'd be left with a feeling of deep contentment and, even, of privilege.

Unnamed Christchurch Friend 2008

3.15 I had an experience in Meeting for Worship some time ago that has stayed with me. In my imagination, I was sitting on the way to Porter's Pass, and had a strong sense of being given a little parcel of Grace wrapped in red ribbon, just my size, not too large and not too

small. Humanity has to live with all creation and the balance and harmony is threatened by human greed. So my task as a human is to enjoy my share and deal with my greed of wanting more than I need.

Rosemary Tredgold 2000

3.16 I had been attending Whanganui Friends Meeting for only two months when I had one of several experiences of the light of Christ. That particular Sunday I entered the meeting room as usual, but with a sense of despair and spiritual crisis, wondering what might be the purpose of life and how one might find meaning and joy.

As I closed my eyes to pray from the depths of my being over and over in my mind, “Jesus save me, heal me, help me,” I became still in spirit within half an hour.

Following this, God laid two impressions on my heart; the first being a customer in my workplace who was disgruntled with the service he had received from me. The second was a close friend whom I had fallen out with before coming to Friends.

“Do you forgive?” A still small voice from within called out as the first impression ended.

I knew it was God’s voice, and so from within I answered, “Yes I forgive.” I let that go.

As soon as I had answered, the first impression left and the second took its place.

Again a still small voice from within called out, “Do you forgive, do you really forgive?”

From the depths of my soul I answered, “I forgive; I truly forgive” and let that go.

As I spoke, I felt an ocean of light, love, and peace well up within me, flowing over the ocean of darkness, death and despair.

The power of the light of Christ flowed over me in waves, refreshing me and lifting me up out of my despair.

I felt fully empowered to follow after and live for the things of His Kingdom in a deeper way.

The Meeting for Worship finished with the shaking of hands, and silently I slipped out to go home, touched by the reality that Christ has come to teach his people himself.

Mathew Harding 2002

3.17 The first thing I do is look around to see who is there. I notice if there are any of our regular attenders, especially our elderly members, who are missing and wonder how they are. A beautiful hymn that I learned as a choir member in my Anglican days helps me to centre down into Meeting for Worship. I sing it silently in my head:

It starts: “God be in my head and in my understanding/God be in mine eyes and in my looking”. I have now changed the word ‘God’ to ‘Love’, having tried various other words. Unfortunately, the word ‘God’ still conjures up a picture of an old patriarch, so it had to go.

I find it takes a while to get past that first line as I know, if Love is not in my understanding, none of those other things will fall into place.

Finally, I am ready for some deeper thoughts if someone has not yet spoken. I find it really difficult if speakers come too thick and fast with not enough time in between to absorb what the last person said.

As for speaking, I find that Meeting is a great discipline for one like me who talks too much. I must wait until my heart starts beating very hard and I know I must speak. I have learned to stand up feet well apart and grounded and then wait for my voice to come.

Deborah Williams 2008

3.18 Children differ in their ability to sit in silence and this should never be forced, but children should be brought into Meeting as early as possible — even babies sense the atmosphere of a gathered silence. One Friend, speaking from experience, said the deeper the silence, the quieter and more receptive the children became.

Anon 1965

3.19 The children talked about things they could do to centre down in meeting. Here are two of the suggestions.

(1) Unwrapping a parcel. We imagined a parcel with five layers. First we looked at everyone and smiled at them, and then we threw that wrapping away. Second we thought of things we were doing for the rest of the day... then we threw that wrapping away. Third, we thought of our worries... and then we let that wrapping go too. Fourth, we listened to noises outside the meeting... and then we threw that wrapping away too. Then at last we looked right deep inside ourselves and we saw how lovely each one of us is.

(2) Using our five fingers. The children held up their five fingers. For their thumb they thought of thanking people who had done nice things for them. For their first finger they thought of some of the things they had not done the way they wanted to, felt sorry and decided how to make it better next time. For their second finger, they thought of someone who needed a bit of help. For their third finger, they thought of a bit of help they needed themselves and tried to listen to ideas that come from inside them or from others on how to make it better. For their fourth finger, they thought how wonderful the world and their lives were. Counting on your fingers in order helps you concentrate on things in Meeting, step by step.

Shenagh Gleisner 1995

3.20 When someone stands to give ministry, I shelve my thoughts and listen attentively. If spoken ministry is hard to follow, I try hard to follow. I listen for the message, not just the surface words. If the ministry is very heartfelt, I hold the person in the light.

A big challenge for me is not to judge what is said. I really have to shove aside the part of my mind that wants to label it “good/bad/clever/deep/ill-worded/overly long”.

Questions and Counsel urges me to take the time to reach into the deep meaning”, and the Quaker Handbook gives similar advice. So that’s what I seek to do; giving the time whilst ministry is being spoken and then, after the Friend has spoken and sat down, I may relate it to earlier ministry or my own shelved thoughts. Its value to me may not become apparent for some minutes later.

Maybe, it may not be relevant at all. In this case, I let it pass with cordial indifference saying, “Perhaps that spoke to someone else.”

If another person stands up before those processes are finished, I feel annoyed. He or she can't have taken time! I'm one of those Friends who wish each spoken ministry to be like an island, surrounded by a sea of silence, not a 'minute moat'. I actually like it if no one says anything in the last five minutes of meeting for worship.

Unnamed Christchurch Friend 2008

3.21 The Ministry

There... in the silent centre of
the meeting
With the world and all its noisy insistence
retreating
And the pool of worship reverently
in waiting
stilled to a placid mirror of peace...

it comes

Speak!

No, no ...Not I!

Speak for me!

But I'm not worthy, Lord...

let this cup pass

to those of wiser tongue
and deeper understanding.

Yours is all the tongue I have...

So speak!

But what should I say?

My words are feeble
and stumbling.

Nevertheless

It is your voice I need.

Have faith, child,

And I'll do all the rest.

And so... with trembling hands and voice...
some words... at last...
are uttered.

Later amongst the clatter of the teacups
and conversational chatter...
a human hand rests upon one's shoulder
a human voice whispers in one's ear...
“Thank you, Friend, that message was
for me”.

Kathleen Flower 1999

3.22 On that day, looking round at the other persons sitting there in the circle, I saw (I thought) much the same as I would have seen in any waiting room of similar size, occupied by a similar number of persons. Forty-five years later, I still think that at the beginning of any Meeting for Worship, the scene does bear some resemblance to, say, a railway waiting room. The sitters sit; they wait; they have the protection of enclosure; they have brought with them as little as possible in the way of life's impedimenta; they travel light, as light as they dare; they have come with a purpose out of the hustle and bustle of the streets — and they expect something.

Thus the similarities. What of the differences?

Nowadays when I enter the room and sit, it is still true that in one sense I wait. In another sense, I have a much stronger recognition of having arrived at the beginning of another stage in my chosen journey. Although I do not now gaze on my companions (how hungrily I gazed on them on that first occasion!), I do at first look around a little, sufficient only to see the presence of, or absence of, familiar trusted travelling companions and a few newcomers like my earlier self (and with whom I feel a great sense of fellowship). The chief difference is that I now sit down and, with William Penn, rest in the belief that: “Nothing hurts, nothing harms, nothing makes afraid, on this holy mountain.”

Claudia Fox 1995

- 3.23 *Ann Fletcher Jackson (1833-1903) was known as a minister, yet even she struggled to know whether to speak during Meeting for Worship. Her granddaughter Ruby Dowsett wrote:*

Ann Fletcher Jackson never found it easy to speak in Meeting. Often it seemed as if a message was almost spoken to her, so clearly did it form in her mind. Yet just as often it seemed to her as if there were no one present who needed just these words. She would try to shut it out and forget it, but back it would come until Ann could bear it no longer and it became more comfortable to speak than to remain silent. Again and again she learned afterwards what her words had meant — they had brought comfort, answered questions, rekindled someone’s faith and love, and after such happenings we find little entries in her diary something like this: “God forgive me for rebelling so. If I had only been quiet and still I should have known that these words came from Thee. Make me willing to be faithful.”

- 3.24 Do not think that all spoken ministry in any one Meeting must be on one or two themes only. This to me is a most regrettable error. We frequently do have Meetings when one theme seems to be developed, but this should not be our aim. Our Meeting is for worship, not for meditation alone, and worship includes so much more than thought; wonder, awe, confession, thanksgiving, adoration, remembering our Lord Jesus Christ, communion with the Holy Spirit, and complete willingness to be used for the good of others.

Phyllis Thompson 1969

- 3.25 What do I expect from Meeting for Worship?

I go. Why? For many reasons. My motives are mixed. I go. Usually reluctantly — and nearly always I come away thankful that I have made the effort.

I expect — mainly stillness, that myself and others sit without too much fidgeting, that we shall not withdraw into ourselves by reading, knitting or other distractions. I expect a stillness which becomes

a togetherness, a stillness that may bring a strengthening of my best intentions, a stillness that is healing to my hurts, a stillness that helps me to lose my self-preoccupation, a stillness that helps me to identify with others. I expect no miracles to take place — perhaps I should!

Alan Gilderdale 1972

3.26 Sometimes when I go to Meeting, I am miserable. I love the sun, and the Sundays of sun and cicadas and joy and fullness, it's the easy time to be joyful to bring the gift of gladness and joy to the Meeting. But those days are not with me all the time.

And there are days when I just want to cry or rather groan, and I come in need and despair, bringing nothing but a poverty of spirit with me. Is that a proper burden to bring to the Meeting House? Heart and mind prepared, beds made and dishes done?

One day in extremis, the comfort came of itself. It's as important, I felt assured, to bring that poverty of spirit, that depth of despair and grief, as to bring the glad gratitude of a summer day. That it is a gift too, which the Meeting needs, though it mayn't feel like it, I was assured.

Mel Bogard 1998

3.27 Three of us visited two sick Friends
And talked of Monthly Meeting trends,
Of who'd been there and what they'd said,
Of minutes made and letters read.
Then suddenly the chatter ceased
And silence fell, each Friend a priest;
The child of our party, not yet six -
Paused in her play with doll and bricks,
And all of us felt the Presence there
As real and as close as the evening air. '
Where two or three are gathered,'
He said, "I am in your midst, you are Spirit-led."

So our thoughts went out to those distressed
In body, in mind by fears oppressed.
Then we rose, went forth with lighter hearts:
It's with two or three that a Meeting starts.

Norman Bennett 1971

3.28 When I heard that Mum's Testimony was to be read out loud at Meeting for Worship and received into that space, I felt it was a good ending for the process of writing her life for Quaker records. When I was young, perhaps in my early 20s, I heard a testimony read in a Meeting. At the time it greatly affected me to hear that person's life lovingly but honestly spoken about and made me think about how what we do in life and the decisions we make (or don't make) will become a story we leave. How everyone in Meeting has their many threaded story, and all these stories together contribute to what Meeting is.

I thought then, as I do now, that it is a great responsibility to write a testimony, to gather the stories, to trace a path. I was glad to have the opportunity to join in Mt Eden Meeting by Zoom from Australia to hear Mum's Testimony. I wasn't sure how I would feel when it was read. I presumed I could just turn off the computer if it was too emotional.

Connecting in, I was slightly overwhelmed. I didn't expect to see loved people immediately and be part of the live presence of the Meeting. I was in my bedroom but also 'in' the Meeting room so central to my growing up; the space we felt safe, loved, and part of something bigger and wiser/older than ourselves. A place also intricately connected to Mum for me. When I heard the Testimony being read out loud, I already knew the words because I had helped contribute to the piece, but in the listening silence — it was new.

I could feel Mum being read into the space and the words settling into the walls of the Meeting House along with all the other stories of that room past and present, and it felt right.

Haydie Gooder 2020

3.29 Because of the experience of worshiping online during the pandemic, I now understand more keenly why gathering in person matters to me.

The space physically shared with others holds for me the possibility of an embodied experience: the experience of being part of something larger than myself, and of the experience of being one small timeless part of a transcendent spirited 'We'.

Sue Stover 2022

3.30 *On Milford Sound*

If you take God from me,
Whom shall I thank for sun on my face
As the bubbled spray in the boat's wake
Spins laid-on-water lace,
And the leaping dolphins make Parabolas on the sea?
If you take God from me,
Whom shall I praise for the ice-scarred snow
On peaks reaching to the clear sky?
Who has given me heart to know,
Mind to ponder if and why,
Wonder and ecstasy?
Is not my God to me
Magnified here in grandeur of bush
That clings and grows on the cliff's slope?
Flung veils of water's rush —
Thin falls like silvered rope —
Gossamer tracery?
Must we in logic seek
God, when rock and sky spell his name?
Must we prove our God with our small wills?
Let mountain and cloud proclaim
'Lift up your eyes to the hills',
And stones and water speak.

Anon 1966

3.31 Long ago I sat upon the shingle bed of the Ashburton River. There in still small pools, I watched water spiders at their work and marvelled. As they ran over the stones they looked very ordinary grey-brown creatures, but as they descended into the water, they were hung about with loveliness, for as each spider dipped below the surface, it blew around itself an air bubble. This bubble appeared to be a radiant silver sphere. Within it the spider went its little way untouched by the surrounding water. Amongst dark interstices between stones it travelled, and followed a devious path amongst weedy entanglements. It was in harmony with its little water-world. Foul and muddied corners held no terror for it, for everywhere it moved it carried its silver bubble around it.

So with one of the finest and most difficult achievements of the Quaker way of life: to take part in this world as human beings, and in a bond of loving understanding to be in touch with all sorts and conditions of human lives. To experience the more pitiable and murky states of being, and yet to keep the beauty and enchantment of that which is of the Spirit, and to wear this fragile thing in no such manner as to separate us one from the other by any degree of 'bitterness', but only to attract by the enthusiasm and magic of love of all God's children.

May we think in reverence, and in some hope of copying such lives that have impressed themselves upon us. Some may have shown the way gravely and with exhortation: others there be who may never have spoken the word of guidance, no! not one word and who have been merry and full of laughter withal yet knowing of places where there can be no laughter. But in either case there has been a radiance round them the silver bubble of the Spirit, the very Light of God. And if so many of us live so closely to earthly things that we cannot recognise quickly the Divine, we might say of such that have touched us in passing, "How he drew out my very heart towards himself! I wish I could be like him."

"Let your light so shine before men that they may glorify your Father which is in Heaven."

Mary F. Perrin 1933

3.32 Crucifixion, resurrection, salvation, grace of God, Redeemer, Saviour.

These are words, which I struggle to understand because I do not have the religious links with the ancient Near East, which alone could make these words live. I need those links with the past for decoding and translating those words correctly into concepts I can understand so that I can discover the religious truths to which they are pointing. For myself, I could do this only by becoming a religious historian, rediscovering the context in which those words were originally uttered by the early Church, rather than knowing I lie in the same unbroken religious tradition and that no process of rediscovery was required.

Fundamental to everything is meaning. Meaning is closely connected with what men call God, and indeed, meaning and God are the same. To say that God was in the beginning is to say that meaning was in the beginning. All things were made meaningful, and there was nothing made that was meaningless. Life is the drive towards meaning, and life has emerged into the light of humanity, the bearer of meaning. And meaning shines out through the threat of absurdity, for absurdity has not destroyed it.

Roger Martin 1976

3.33 Early Friends were tireless in their challenge to the Church and as long as they continued to argue, they were perforce taking the Christian tradition seriously. They rejected it, true, but they had to consider it. They had to find reasons for their faith. Their message thus constituted a commentary on the tradition. But early in the 18th century, the argument died down and Friends proceeded to the refinement of their own side of the case. The tradition was not so much rejected as ignored. Theology was no longer challenged by the appeal to experience; it was no longer even understood. That, I believe, is the very situation some Friends find themselves in today, they seem to be engaged in a last-ditch stand, alas it is only a last-ditch defence of their particular views. It may well be that the duty of the faithful is to go on guarding the truth, but also searching ahead as well, otherwise they turn out to be only museum attendants, guardians of a dead past.

Frank Davidge 1968

- 3.34 Ask me about God, and I'd have to say that I don't really know. However, I have settled for using the word God as convenient shorthand. Of course, I have degendered the word, and de-anthropomorphised it (that is, I don't see God as a human figure).

God represents for me a mystery, a mysterious spirit, presence, power, that we can sense sometimes when a special moment comes upon us. It could happen in a Meeting for Worship, in the bush, by the sea, in an encounter that brings relationship, hearing or making music, in fact engaging in any creative activity.

Then somehow we know that there is something beyond ourselves that we mysteriously respond to and feel part of. This sense of knowing without really knowing is what delights and sustains me. There might be a special moment at any time!

Phyllis Short 2002

- 3.35 Opposites have always strongly attracted me — a certain thing could be true, but equally its reverse could be too. Such a stance can be quite disturbing, giving no solid ground, but once I learn to live with my own uncertainty, it is liberating and mind expanding. I believe it is essential to avoid dogmatic thinking, and to be wary of anyone who claims they are the sole source of universal truth.

It took me a long time to see that the golden rule — “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” — is not necessarily the right approach, because someone else may not want to be treated the same way as you in that particular situation.

Jillian Yorke 2021

- 3.36 The answer that I have found, paradoxically, is that ‘there are no answers’, and that the search has no end, the answer is the search itself, this very experience called life. I realize that everything is an inseparable whole to which the self inseparably belongs. Everything is sacred, all life is religious. The Divine is not something out there or up there, it is everyday life, the actual experience, the mundane, the profane, all is sacred. And the sacred everything is beyond words, beyond our symbols and language.

How dare I believe that with words I can reach the sacred, can explain the infinite Mystery. George Fox remained a Christian and I am one no longer; but this does not change the strong affinity I feel with his conclusions. However, if others insist that to be a Quaker I must be a Christian, or believe in God, or be a Pacifist, or believe in anything, then I would not be a Quaker. This is because I identify myself as a mystical seeker/sojourner. If Quakerism requires me to have faith in any ideology or principle, then I would be submitting to an authority outside myself (one called Quakerism), and this would be a restriction on my ability to honestly sojourn in this amazing experience called life.

David Goldsmith 1996

3.37 The highlight of the workshop for me was the privilege and opportunity to experience a clearness committee. This traditional Quaker practice has been refined and developed as presented in the Courage and Renewal programme. Each of the participants, focus person, committee members and clerk of the committee was taken through a session of preparation so that they understood the process and their role within it. Particular attention was given to understanding and practising the skill of asking open and honest questions. These are rather different from the advice-giving, solution-seeking questions commonly used and are part of building trust that enable deep sharing. I found the time spent in preparation for the clearness committee helpful because the prospect of a two hour session was daunting.

It is many years since I have experienced a clearness committee. This time I was the focus person. For two hours I was gifted the total attention of four people who shared silence with me, listened to me talk about the concerns I was bringing to the clearness committee and asked the gentlest possible questions that enabled me to go deeper in my exploration of my concerns, longings and realisations.

It seemed to me that in that space, I met the dynamic living spirit within: my soul.

As I kept silence, listened or spoke, my attention was focused on the centre of the circle; a small table holding a candle and flowers.

At the end of my time in the clearness committee I knew I had been deeply heard; renewed, with fresh vision for my way forward.

Mary Rose 2022

- 3.38 All of us, all of the time, have random thoughts arrive in our heads. They arrive, they depart, just as every tree may experience the random arrival in its crown of a changing variety of birds. I like to think of my random thoughts as birds, that come and go, but they don't necessarily belong to me. I can now remain unmoved by their arrival and their departure, whereas once I bent and swayed, as a sapling bends and sways under a weight.

The challenge of development is, as I see it, to grow till I no longer need to frighten the random birds of thought away; or catch them; or bother with them at all; no matter how large, how loud, ugly, beautiful, brilliant, light, heavy or sweet singing they may be.

Claudia Fox 1995

- 3.39 The last thing you should do in Meeting for Worship is to think about yourself. That way lies madness. It is idolatry, in old-fashioned language. If there is a God to be found by Quaker worship he/she is accidental to seeking. Jesus made that quite clear: "Anyone who tries to save his/her life will lose it", and "Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven".

What is this Kingdom? Watch Jesus, who lived in it, and see what he did. Not a single case of him encouraging anyone to look 'inward', not a single case of him searching his own soul. He ate and drank with anyone, regardless of rank, or sex, or nationality, or race, or religion or holiness and he healed when asked to, and he was faithful to his message of universal loving till he was killed for it.

So let us get on with doing things together — eating, planning, acting to heal every sort of hurt, where we can. That way we reach towards God, who is merciful and righteous, or towards God-likeness.

Llyn Richards 2003

3.40 All I know is back in the early days of Quakerism when faith was a brilliant burning light, those who contained the volcanic urge to spread the Truth were persecuted, suffered and were killed for their beliefs. In those times they needed each other's support and Meeting for Worship kept the Light burning; but there was one place in which all the adults were imprisoned. During this time no doubt they grieved for a Meeting that could not be held, the Meeting transmitting the energy in all their affairs.

Those who returned upon release were scared maybe of what they would find when they returned home. And what did they find? A Meeting for Worship held regularly and with conviction by the children of the meeting. I wonder whether they imagined that 300 years later their example would get an elderly lady out of her nice warm bed, and prepare to go out in a hurry and set off through the fog.

The fog is thinning.

Still no one comes to join me. It's hard to centre down, but gradually I become aware of those I expected to meet who are absent. They become very close and gradually I become aware of my need, and appreciation of each of them; of the gift each one brings and my own lack of tolerance, how this one challenges me intellectually, that one warms with a smile; the other reassures me with stories of the past and another opens my eyes to new vision. There are those who have constant comforting tenderness, great bakers and after all isn't bread the stuff of communion? I miss another who never fails to bring a laugh with him. Today they are not here and I just plain miss seeing them.

How about the fruits of the spirit? I ask myself. "How come these same people can sometimes be so annoying?" John Betjeman's words come to mind. "It's strange that those we miss the most are those we take for granted."

Josephine North 2000

3.41 I guess I had always been influenced by the ‘fact fundamentalism’ that Karen Armstrong says characterised the period of human cultural evolution called modernity. This view held that if something can’t be proved scientifically then it doesn’t exist, which is the mode in which much of the God debate has unfolded. It was the idea introduced during the period of modernity by Newton and others that the existence of God would soon be proved scientifically, which opened the way for the opposite idea, that the existence of God could be disproved, an idea called atheism.

For a time, I would have described myself as atheist because I was approaching the religious stories in the ‘logos’ mode. The idea of reading the Bible as ‘mythos’ may seem obvious to others but was liberating for me because it led to an exploration of other ways of conceptualising and describing the underlying meanings that the Bible stories were designed to explain.

Murray Short 2022

3.42 *“Be Still and Know That I Am God”*

This beautiful psalm for me holds the kernel of making these decisions — an open silence and stillness, going down to the core of your being, stripped of all surface concerns to establish what is of prime importance at the moment. I think it is essential to be alone and suspend any busy-ness for that moment to be open and receive what God might be wanting to tell you at that time.

I think that if I could take the time to meditate on these words any time I had a dilemma or decision to make, or just felt uneasy with myself, then it would create more clearness and peace in my life.

Liz Remmerswaal-Hughes 2002

3.43 Let’s be honest with ourselves. We are proud of being seekers. Let us recognise why our Society is inadequate as a family party, or clumsy in business, or unable to arouse the world. We are immature in the Spirit.

It took George Fox seven years up to the point of discovery, which advanced his soul to eternity and enabled him to act. Until we are wrapped up with eternal values, like a smiling infant helpless to move unless his mother carries him, we shall not achieve great things. We cannot achieve great things by thinking up some good act and then praying for an obedient God-theory to make an indulgent blessing. At the most we shall lead a useful life — as many non-Christians lead useful lives.

Which do you seek for: a useful theory to produce a useful life, or a lasting encounter from which “Behold! All things are made new”?

Elizabeth Douglas 1968

3.44 Prayer has been defined as the solemn request or thanksgiving to God. So often the request in the prayer is for change, a happy issue out of affliction, for the resolution of conflict. Such prayers may not be answered directly: instead of immediate solution we are given the power and strength to weather the storms and confidence in the knowledge that the storm will end. We may also acquire coping skills on the journey to equip us as storm riders in the future.

Penelope Dunkley 1996

3.45 What has influenced me most in life I think is the quality of the lives of people with whom I have come in contact, and feeling what was the mainspring of those lives and what was expressed in them. Prayer played a large part in my mother’s life. We had no family prayers, but knew of the importance my mother gave to private prayer. “I will make it a matter of prayer,” she would say when important questions arose, and later, as we grew older and had decisions of our own to make, she would advise us: “Make it a matter of prayer.”

Certain ideals and standards of conduct were put in front of us and we were given to understand that it was not always easy to live up to them but that we could find strength from God if we asked for it and that would help us.

Kathleen Daamen 1971

3.46 What a comfort Meeting for Worship is. This morning I was thinking about James, my grandson, his inability to talk and his asthma. I suddenly realised the intensity of this concern was me being prayed through or, as Thomas Kelly puts it, “infused prayer.” This was me and the Lord in communication. I understood that I didn’t need to make a conscious mental effort to hold James in the light because my prayer was already being accepted while I was experiencing the intensity of the concern in the presence. After this happened, I felt a great happiness. I received further clarification from ministry — that when we pray for others, it is not so much asking God for help as standing alongside the person spiritually. For some reason I found this very helpful in relieving my ever-present doubt that I am really doing something that will be of help.

Gwyn Nonweiler 2002

3.47 Many years ago, my grandmother had a very bad stroke and survived, she believed, because all her church friends prayed for her to live. She was not happy. “They had no right,” she told everyone. She had wanted to die. Prayers of supplication, I learned from that, need to be very carefully worded. “Thy will be done,” is the key.

Many of my prayers have been about making the best choice in a situation. Again, I have found great care in word choice is important. I ask for guidance in making my choice, I ask that I will see and understand the right path. I don’t hear ‘a still small voice’. Shouting might help. Nevertheless, I do my ‘due diligence’ about the problem and then set out what I might see as guide points, if the spirit will be so good as to provide them.

Well, it’s almost like “if this happens then, if that happens, follow the other path’.

You can see I’m not only deaf to the spirit but rather stupid as well. I need all the guidelines I can get. But it works for me.

Carril Karr 2021

3.48 *The Almighty in a print dress*

When
I lay in my sickbed sick
of people
of problems
of conflict
of life
sick
that is
with worry
held close in my arms
she comes,
and she visits me
she comes with flowers
to sit at the end of my bed
The Almighty
in a print dress
with flowers
and sometimes
grapes
To sit at the end of my bed
Where,
she takes off her sunhat and laughs aloud
and talks to me
of trivia
And I am amazed
not just that
The Almighty
would come
to sit with me
this way,
but that
such visit
should have
such good effect.
And that worry

(held so close
in my arms)
could dissolve
so easy
under her
tender gaze.

Ian Burn 2002

- 3.49 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control... (Galatians 5:22,23).

I like this scripture. I went back to find this scripture about three or four years ago when I was feeling overwhelmed and burned by life. I was needing some soul food. I use these qualities as a model for personal and spiritual growth; as a set of values and ethics to live by. This scripture is my framework for being. When I contemplate these fruits of the Spirit, I experience great strength, life and passion welling up within me.

They are qualities that I was startled to realise that people I really admire and enjoy being in their presence have. These are qualities I want to find and cultivate in myself as I see a calmness, equability and centredness in my friends who have these qualities as well as a pleasure in life and nature, a simplicity in their lives that has nothing to do with their material possessions or success or lack of it as seen in the eyes of the world.

This scripture speaks to my condition at present because it is a reminder of the comfort and solace and renewal I can find in my connection with spirit. It gives me hope when I am feeling demoralised and burdened with the struggle of life, my own personally and on a wider scale throughout New Zealand and the world. Reading it —contemplating it — has been, is, a source of strength. Practicing these qualities and integrating them into myself and my soul in the face of external worries and doubts and times of spiritual drought has given me the experience and belief that I am not alone, that I can be peaceful in spite of what's going on around me.

Ruth Steven 1999

3.50 *“Mind the Light, that is — pay attention to the kind of awareness that arises when you are still and silent.”*

Fidgeting, trying to settle, remembering to breathe, relaxing a bit, getting ready for the next prompt, which comes sooner than I expect...

“Open your heart to the truth.”

OK, so what’s really going on in my life?

I’m ill, not much energy, recently out of a difficult relationship, looking after my deaf, 95-year-old mother, hanging on to another remnant of an old life it’s well past time to move out of. I have devised a programme for change but somehow the joy and enthusiasm I was used to was being slow to return. I’m missing it. Very much. I guess I could have called myself depressed.

“Wait in the Light. Let a word or image arise.”

As I pondered these things, an image did arise.

It’s cold, and dark and the sleet is slanting across some big wet rocks. There’s a figure huddled in between two of these soaking, black boulders. It’s covered in some damp sacking, shivering. I realise it’s myself. As this realisation comes, words conjure themselves out of the silence. They bring a smile to my face. Kindly, rather humorous tones ask me “Where’s your roaring fire and toasted crumpets, Ann?”

Good question! Real living flames warming the bones and the heart. And crumpets, toasted so they’re crisp on the outside and soft inside. Dripping with butter. The contrast is startling.

Self-denial to the extreme, everyone else’s needs before my own, no effort to top up my own emptiness. Taking what others were telling me as true, not really believing it, and beating myself up about it.

My programme for change was called ‘honouring my own experience’. Too long worrying about what others were thinking, concern that my own experience was totally at odds with that of others who mattered to me. They must be right, mustn’t they?

This session of Experiment with Light completely changed me. These images and words suggested a degree of intimacy with me and

my own likes and dislikes that is quite beyond human comprehension
Whoever 'said' it knew that a warm fire and toasted crumpets
are for me, the pinnacle of comfort, relaxation, enjoyment, and
the ability to be in the present moment. It was the confirmation
that I am truly known. And loved.

Ann Banks 2022

- 3.51 Returning to the Dominion by the steamship Maunganui we arrived
at Bluff too late to catch the morning tide and were anchored
outside the whole day. Our ship was held by one anchor, and we
rode the sea easily, unresisting to the tide. A single sure anchor saved
stress on the ship.

A single commandment, said Jesus, is sufficient for any man to live
by if he includes with his love to God his care for his fellowmen.
I suggested that this phrase of Augustine's was parallel to the saying
of Jesus: "Love God and do as you like". How could anyone love God
and then do the things that displease Him?

"If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments," said Jesus. John
says that it is a sign that "we have crossed from death to life" when
"we love the brotherhood." This one thing done, loving God with
our whole heart, with our whole soul and with our whole mind,
all others fall into place.

Philip Thorne 1939

- 3.52 "Seek and ye shall find." As I clamber about on the hills with my
plant-loving husband, John, I look under all the rocks near my
path. On some rare occasions, I have thus found a plant John
particularly wanted to see or to record, and I long to repeat such
an exciting experience. Nearly always I find some dear little well-
known and well-loved ferns and I feel my spirit refreshed by
their beauty.

So it is when I go to Meeting for Worship — I go as a seeker. On rare
occasions I am given a message to deliver. Often another's message
speaks to my need. Once a few words changed my outlook from
near despair to hope. Always, without fail, my spirit is refreshed by
worshipping with my dear friends.

“Being rooted and grounded in love.” The beautiful sweet-scented flowers that bloom among the shifting shingle on the mountain-sides remind me of this text. They have very long, tough roots firmly fixed in the clay below the shingle and so come to perfection in the most unpromising surroundings.

Amid the ever-changing circumstances of our lives, the sorrows and burdens that are our lot, we too can steadfastly diffuse the love of God if we put our roots down deep enough.

Phyllis Thompson 1967

- 3.53 I was wandering round the garden one day and noticed how all the plants and trees which had been so badly battered, bruised and burnt with salt spray during the terrible cyclonic gales of February 3rd had all set to work to send out new shoots and, in some cases, fresh flowers and fruit, and the thought came to me, how well it would be for us if we were to model our lives in that way. When we have been beaten and bruised by the trials and tribulations of life — there are few of us who escape — we should set to work with a new vigour and try to repair all the damage and, if possible, make an even better show than before.

Annie B. Isaachsen 1936

- 3.54 As I work with little children, I marvel every day at their trust and simplicity and joy in living, and I realize more and more the meaning of Christ’s words, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.” I regret that as we grow older many of us seem to lose that simplicity and trust which we had when we were little and become beset on either side by the complexities of this life, until by great striving we draw near to that simple and receptive state again.

There may be some of us who have never managed to get as near to God as we were before when we came “trailing clouds of glory from God who is our home.” How far we might go if we were able to go steadily forward from childhood instead of growing away from it and having to be converted to become as little children again that we might enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Margaret Gibbons 1943

3.55 The Spirit is a breath so strong
it can blow a thousand candles alight!
When my daughter turned four
we lit candles on the cake.
She blew out two first blow
and on second blow the rest, BUT
the first two came alight again:
“How wonderful! How wicked!”
And indeed they were, being Magic Candles,
the kind that only seem to go out,
since each contains a fuse that refuses
to die — if you look very close
you can see the point of it
glowing and ready to flame.

In Friends’ eyes, people are candles
that burn, some bright, some fitful.
But even those who seem hopelessly dimmed
still hold at their core an inner thread,
an ember waiting to be stirred
by the wind of Transforming Power.

Peter Low 1999

3.56 *Love Provides*

Love understands
What fear would attack.

And Love heals
What fear would destroy.

Love provides
What fear would deny us.

For Love unites
What fear would divide
For Love always gives
And fear always takes
And the choice is always ours.

Alan J. Pitt 2002

3.57 *Compassion — a New Year prayer*

May we have a special place for stillborn things, the things that never were, yet should have been. The little songs no singer ever sang, the beauty of a picture left unhung, a tender heart that loves with no return, a deed well meant, which, somehow, turned out ill, a lovely flame that vainly tried to burn, but could not last, though all the winds were still, the ambitious Caesar, whose lust for power makes him unacknowledged and unloved, and those whose sense of nothingness makes them struggle for a false identity.

O God, help us to realise what the pain of stifled things can be, so that we may treat the stillborn very tenderly.

Doris White 1969

3.58 Last night our family went to the Easter Vigil at St Luke's Anglican Church over the road from the Meeting House. It started in darkness and moved into the light.

It seemed entirely appropriate to celebrate Easter with a light ceremony when New Zealand is entering Autumn rather than Spring. The ceremony, however, has broader significance than just being a celebration of light.

Our culture normally has negative feelings about the night, yet night, darkness and sleep are all critical for our ability to enjoy and take advantage of the day and the light. Positive things happen in the night.

Something transformative happened that first Easter night — the stone was rolled away from the tomb with light and eternity flooding in. Nights continue to provide opportunities for growth, refreshment, renewal, re-creation and re-birth.

Kevin Clements 1991

3.59 The highlight of my summer was completing the hardest tramp I've ever walked. Since then I have spent some time thinking about these incredible things we call muscles. My legs (in particular) took

me up, and then down, more than 1000m of difficult terrain. My preparation had been my usual exploring of the mountains around home, and whilst reasonably fit, I certainly wasn't as strong as I could have been. I paid the price for this lack of strength on the way down and for the days afterwards.

I have also been thinking about my other muscles. My leg muscles are muscles that I prioritise in my everyday life, and as a result I could complete (just) what was an out-of-the-ordinary walk for me.

But what about my compassion muscle? My risk-taking and bravery muscles? My generosity muscle? Which muscles will I wish I had exercised so they were strong when life throws me a curve-ball? Which muscles will help me achieve my dreams and goals?

Which muscles will make a difference to the lives of those around me? If I don't prioritise and exercise THOSE muscles, will they waste away?

Nicole Fawcett 2019

3.60 Unlike the flower

We can refuse or choose
Our turning to the light
Which enlightens all of us,
The light which is your light.
So let me today
Be open to your radiance
Be discovered by it, walk freely in it,
Face its harsh definition,
Trust its clear revelation,
Its warmth, its loving touch
Its most mysterious glory.

Ruth Fawell 1965

This I know experientially Ko ōku whēako whaiaro ēnei



4

Promptings

Ngā whakahautanga

4.01 *Karakia nā te Hāhi Tūhauwiri*

Kia ārahi te wairua
i aku mahi,
i aku whakaaro,
i aku whakatau,
i taku pono.
He ira atua kei roto i tēnā,
i tēnā o tātou.

A Quaker Blessing

*Let the spirit guide
in my work,
in my thinking,
in my decisions,
in my beliefs.*

There is that of God in everyone.

Sigrid Speidel 2022

4.02 The basis of our religion is the invitation to ‘come and try’. What we offer is a seeking, perhaps a finding, and there are two aspects of this seeking — perhaps contradictory aspects — which explain why we don’t formulate for one another what we should find or should have found.

Two quotations commonly used among Quakers show these two sides. In the first George Fox recognises the failure of human attempts to grasp God, and at this point he receives revelation:

“As I had forsaken the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those esteemed the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do, then, oh, then, I heard a voice which said, ‘There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition’; and when I heard it my heart did leap for joy.”

In the second, Margaret Fell, a great figure among early Quakers, records the preaching of Fox which called on each individual to be the vehicle of light:

“And then he went on, and opened the Scriptures, and said, ‘The Scriptures were the prophets’ words and Christ’s and the apostles’ words, and what as they spoke, they enjoyed and possessed and had it from the Lord’. And said, ‘Then what had any to do with the Scriptures, but as they came to the Spirit that gave them forth?’

“‘You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of Light and hast walked in the Light, and what thou speakest, is it inwardly from God?’”

Elizabeth Duke 1987

4.03 Through everything we must adhere to a vision of what might be and not allow ourselves to be constrained by what is. Only in his way will we unleash the energy and purpose to start a new beginning and head towards the final jubilee when justice and peace shall reign supreme. Without visions we remain

rudderless and prone to dominant religious and secular fads and fancies. Friends and other Christians must demonstrate a luminosity that comes from purposeful lives; such purpose comes from adherence to bold and unshakeable visions and images of what the world might be.

Kevin Clements 1988

- 4.04 God is a forcefield of power for good and loving kindness and courage that human beings generate around and between themselves. And the whole is greater than the sum of the parts and is very energising, empowering, healing, inspiring and enjoyable. Where there is pain and injustice and natural deformity and accident and disease and human deprivation and meanness and death — God occurs in what we do about it.

Catherine Benland 1993

- 4.05 Years ago, being newly caught up in the love of God — and I mean just that — I could feel it, I joined Friends. Meeting for Worship was the highlight of the week. I used to virtually run there in my eagerness, and after a fruitful hour, I'd come away refreshed and strong for the week ahead. I couldn't do without it.

When considering Meeting for Worship today, I am struck by how my attitude has changed. The joy and elation of those early days, which I regarded as unwarranted gifts, gradually died away, and I was left alone and floundering. Not quite in the same state as before, however, as I now had an inner peace. For a long time I tried to recapture that feeling of rapture. I read, prayed, talked to people and even wandered down blind alleys of mysticism. Meeting for Worship became an agonising plea to be reinstated in that former light and joy.

It slowly dawned on me that if I was to find God again, not only singleness of purpose was required, but practical work was necessary in trying to live the sort of life he'd have me do.

Vera Dickinson 1972

4.06 Friends have, I've found, an enormous sense of personal responsibility to act. Early Quaker writings encourage this. William Penn, an early convert to Quakerism, wrote in 1682: "True godliness does not turn men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it, and excites their endeavours to mend it" — surely an invitation to grapple with complexities of a world worth mending.

And in addition, Quakers have a long history of scrutinizing each other's lives. John Woolman, an early opponent of slavery, urged Friends to "look upon" their households and consider "whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions."

And yet social action does not define us, and Quakers do have a tradition of prayer, in the form of gathered silence, for example at the start of meals. But more especially in the sense of 'prayer' as an attitude; a spirit of humble openness to leadings.

And there is no need for consistency or uniformity amongst Friends. "I don't pray," one Friend told me. But then she said that sometimes she did, recalling urgent petitionary prayers when her children were seriously ill.

Sue Stover 2012

4.07 Twice lately I was asked "What is the Society of Friends for; what is its reason for being; what is its message?"

I answer this: that its cause and reason for existence, and its message is just the same as that which Jesus expressed. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord; and also to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourself.

I believe this is our whole reason for being. I believe that realizing, nurturing, and letting God firmly establish His Spirit in ourselves and others is our chief concern. I believe that nothing less than this can justify our existence.

We have the greatest opportunities. Let us pray for Light, Strength and Love to see and use these opportunities.

Annie B. Pudney 1931

- 4.08 As Quakerism has developed, it has been based on the experience of God in the lives of men. As we see doubt and disillusionment around us, a re-affirmation of the real place of God in life needs and calls for our testimony in this age.

Our affirmation will be powerless without our serious study and search to understand the relationship of a vital religion to individual and social life.

At a time when all the world is calling for action, it is essential that we find out how to act. Right action is more important than action alone. Let us together set out on a living quest through study, through individual and group meditation for vision to guide our action.

The challenge of Jesus lies not only in his profound understanding of how to live, but above all in the fact that he did live, venturously and daringly, losing himself in the will of God. We must not blindly accept the discoveries of Quakerism unless we are willing to experience them personally and to accept their deepest implications.

Needless to say, Friends have been seekers who have ventured. Our very principles demand action, demand verification in personal and corporate life. We cannot shut them up in musty books. We cannot keep them in the peace and tranquillity of the walls of our Meeting Houses. We must fearlessly venture in every reach of our lives.

Elizabeth Pudney 1933

- 4.09 Discussions as to the nature of God or of the nature of Jesus Christ and our relationship to him may be interesting but they are not as important as coming to decisions as to what living the Christian life means in terms of social action and personal lifestyle in New Zealand.

If Friends are to be considered Christ-centred, then it ought to be in the sense that Jesus Christ did his best in his situation as he saw it, and we've got to do precisely the same in our situation as we see it.

Anonymous Young Friend 1970

- 4.10 This Inner Light is not frozen, it is dynamic, it is now, it is the eternal now. The Inner Light requires our individual willing attention, our readiness to be changed. This change involves an evolutionary process.

Through this process we become more nearly the person we are meant to be. We are given courage, and the fruits of this experience are joy and peace.

David Buller 1981

- 4.11 We think of power as electricity or political power, but the power of love is above all powers in its ability to bring change.

Raewyn Scott 2022

- 4.12 The experience of Quaker worship seems to have brought me naturally to a place most accurately and authentically expressed in a spirituality of stillness and testimony.

Quaker spirituality draws me within. In Australia Yearly Meeting's *This we can say*, I read that from stillness, loving words and action grow. The fruit of silence, as a Friend once said in spoken ministry, is communion. Communion sends me out to the world, shaping my life as a moral actor. Moral action then leads me back into silence. In Meeting, I seem to encounter prophets and artists engaged in a mystical project of discernment, a vital search for the divine which orientates towards loving service and back again to spiritual practice. This is a constant and persistent process of creation circling back to itself and from which the best human qualities emerge.

We are all bundles of electrical energy and networks of chemical reactions oriented to love and creativity. Quaker spirituality shapes us so we go beyond physical being into spiritual being. To me, then, silence is the authentic spiritual task — I think this is the core of all great spiritual thinking — bridging our neuropsychological selves with our numinous selves, resulting in prophetic creativity: living out the reality of the lives of our consciousness which we don't yet fully understand. Meeting for worship and social action oriented to love, being the rights and duties of membership, provide the spaces in which our evolving prophetic creativity is tested and nurtured in loving communion and has shaped, through the centuries, our corporate worship, witness, and action.

Vincent Wijeyesingha 2020

4.13 One Quaker phrase keeps returning to help me.

In 1841 while sitting in Friends' Meeting, Caroline Fox, a young Quaker who acknowledged that she was depressed, heard these words 'articulated' in her spirit: "Live up to the light that thou hast and more will be granted thee."

For me, these words travel comfortably alongside the traditional Friends' saying: "Proceed as way opens." Both phrases allow for both waiting, and for faithful action without fully knowing the destination. As a Friend once said, "We can start up the stairs without knowing exactly how many there are or exactly where the staircase ends."

Such steps in faith can rankle amidst the drive for clear objectives, processes and accountabilities. Such steps require discernment. The design is recognised as it unfolds.

Sue Stover 2013

4.14 *The Holy Spirit*

(Thoughts prompted by a Meeting for Worship in Auckland 1971)

The messages of truth and love
Don't come to us in packets
Clearly labeled
"From the Holy Spirit".

They come in strange unlikely ways.
They come when we are quiet and listen,
When we let go and let the spirit
Work through us,
When we get our busy, noisy selves
Out of the way
Out of the way
Of its mysterious working.

How very hard it is for us to get out of the way
And let the spirit through,
But help us, painfully maybe to do just that
To get out of the way,
With our judging, moralising
Always speaking, speaking
With our desire for praise, appreciation,
The bolstering up of our pathetic egos,
One way or another,
In our own eyes or in the eyes of others.

Help us quite simply
To be quiet and still
In our own mind and spirit,
And in the space left spare,
Let trust in you,
Acceptance, love of others
Flow in.

Help us to trust your spirit
Wholly and completely
As it does its secret work
Hiddenly,
Persistently and quietly
In the stormy world around us,
In the stormy world within.

Ruth Fawell 1971

4.15 “... be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your life and conduct may preach among all sorts of people, and to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one; whereby in them ye may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you: then to the Lord God you shall be a sweet savour, and a blessing.” — *The Journal of George Fox, 1656*

This fundamental belief inspires Quakers not to kill or use force and violence for personal or political ends. It also means that work for justice and right relationships between people can only be achieved by non-violent means.

Kevin Clements 2010

4.16 From early in the war, there was considerable ill-feeling towards those who, for whatever reason, were unwilling to participate in the fighting. In 1940 the government issued badges to volunteers who had been rejected or were waiting final acceptance so that they might avoid being mistaken as a non-volunteer. There were certainly no opportunities for humanitarian service such as that open to British COs in the Friends' Ambulance Unit. This lack of opportunity for service concerned many pacifist groups in New Zealand, among them the small but influential Society of Friends. In both the first and second world wars the Society's members were virtually automatically exempt from military service. Nevertheless, this did not totally shelter Quakers from some of the harsh consequences of pacifist ideals. In World War I, thirteen New Zealand Quakers (a significant number among a community then comprising only 260 members) were imprisoned, most for refusing to comply with the Alternative Service Regulations which required exempt COs to agree to undertake non-combatant work under the direction of the military. Quakers, however, have never been isolationist and their preferential treatment over other pacifists made them distinctly uncomfortable.

Caitriona Cameron 1996

4.17 At the recent peace workshop with Adam Curle, we were told that we do not need to grind our way up to a state of goodness, but rather that we have to peel off the overlay — the superficial characteristics which we identify as us — which have gradually covered the delicate but precious spark of the divine — our very essence. Much of the time a false self is operating. But much more stress was laid on becoming aware of ourselves and other people, on living at our deepest level and on creating areas of peace around ourselves — which would in turn spread outwards. I recall that Jesus in preparing his disciples to go out into the world spent little time in strategy. Most of his teaching was to ensure that their ordinary daily activities would demonstrate their love and inner serenity. He too, knew great conflict and worked through it by withdrawal and prayer.

Katherine Knight 1980

4.18 Defining nonviolent action is difficult. We may not be talking about the same things. For example, at first sight the act of blowing up by explosives the registration office in Amsterdam during the occupation of the Netherlands looks much more violent than the act of quietly removing overnight the tongs in a main railway track.

Yet the first act did not cause any physical harm to anyone and saved most probably the lives of Jews and of those who tried to hide them. The second caused derailment and most probably physical harm to the train crew. Nonviolent action cannot give results on a short-term basis, but it carries onward as it has done from early times. It cannot always avoid provoking violence, but it fails when other people than nonviolent activists die or get hurt as its consequence.

Did not Jesus provoke violence against himself?

Jos Brusse 1973

4.19 The quest for peace and justice needs to begin with the interests and needs of the weakest and most vulnerable. It is these persons who are often most severely damaged by violent conflict and the insecurity that flows from it. Too much of the war against terrorism

is being articulated by privileged elites for their purposes rather than for and on behalf of impoverished people who experience daily existential terror at being unable to satisfy their basic human needs. It is important, therefore, to ask how and in what ways the current war against terrorism is going to help or is currently helping the weak and vulnerable.

Kevin Clements 2002

- 4.20 When the Japanese invaded Indonesia she, her husband and two small sons were taken prisoner and Be' spent four years in a camp. During these years her husband and youngest son died in prison camp. Life was very difficult for Be' being separated as she was from her remaining son who was in the men's camp although only 14 years old at the end of the war. Be' harboured no feeling of hatred against her captors but just told people they were only doing their job.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Beatrix Margarete (Be') Vogel 1906-1995

- 4.21 One of the great theologians was St Augustine in the 5th century. He developed a theory that has been very influential in Christian thinking. This was the theory of the Just War. He said that in certain circumstances a Christian could go to war. That is, if the cause was Just. He said that the military action should not be indiscriminate, that civilians should not be targeted and that the ultimate aim should always be reconciliation.

It seems to me that there are real problems with the Just War theory. Once the Dogs of War are loosed there is no way of containing them. War takes on a momentum of its own often becoming more and more barbaric and indiscriminate.

I do not believe that modern warfare can possibly satisfy the Just War conditions — inevitably civilians are going to suffer as much as the military, probably more so.

Another approach often used by Christians to justify War is the argument of Self Defence. In the case of personal self-defence, violence is only used to deal with the immediate action of the

attacker. The person defending need not — and should not — have any intention actually to kill the attacker.

But when Self Defence theory is applied nationally or internationally, the circumstances are very different. Because armies have to be provided with weapons, a flourishing arms trade has developed.

If the money spent on the arms trade could be put to combat poverty and disease, many of the causes of war would be removed.

Alan Gilderdale 2004

- 4.22 *Several times during the 1970s and in several different New Zealand ports, an armada of small boats — a peace squadron — met incoming US warships. In 1976 in Auckland, Kathleen Rose saw this:*

A host of Davids in a fleet of little boats
Had stopped the giant in its tracks
Edging towards anchorage audacious people
Not to be put off by size and bluster;
Banners and pennants fluttering their message
Under surprised and downturned faces of the crew.
No exercise of thumbing noses this but
Brave attempt to reach the hearts and minds
Of sailors; and, through ripples of reportage,
Of their masters back across the sea.

Ashore we maintained vigil shifts
(The lamps of those on night watch
Glimmering on tired faces by the kerb)
Believing that each caring heartfelt effort
Engenders widening ripples joining ours with those of little boats
To rock on the tide with them to Wellington
(And perhaps America).

Kathleen Rose 1976

- 4.23 Personally, I ascribe to an absolute pacifist position and will not take up arms against anyone. I believe very strongly, furthermore,

that it is absolutely essential that groups such as Friends, and other Peace churches maintain a vocational witness to non-violent alternatives to war. Having expressed my position, however, I am conscious of the fact that my views are not shared by all the community, and for the foreseeable future, therefore, we cannot expect to dismantle the armed forces. In this situation, I am in favour of working to ensure that the New Zealand armed services adopt non-offensive defence strategies and direct most of their efforts to disaster relief, fisheries protection, and humanitarian assistance.

Kevin Clements 1985

4.24 Up the mountain, over the saddle.
Between the red and white peaks
Springs bubble up from within.
Letting go of possessing
Letting go of the need to use other people.
Letting go
Down from the mountain.
Down in the subways.
Down in the gutter
The least of these I see.
I feel the face of God
God sleeping in the streets.
The Messiah is crucified by greed.
When will the blind see God in the face of the poor?
The deaf hear God in the cry of the oppressed?

Marvin Hubbard 2018

4.25 *Pathways to Peace*

The Principle of Enough will lead our path to happiness.
Enough, not More, the way to find Contentedness and Peace.
Acquisitiveness is the demon that blocks our peaceful path.
The way through is satisfied with having just enough.
Avoiding loud aggressive folk who want more than they need.
Appreciation, gratitude, protecting all our blessings,

While living in the moment of mindful where we are.
Yesterday has been and gone, tomorrow's yet to come
So living in the Now is where we might find peace,
And smell the roses, join the sea and walk the living bush,
To follow Christ's commandment that we should love each other,
In gratitude with just enough from Planet Earth our Mother.

Jim Halliday 2012

4.26 For decades contemporary Friends have pointed out how our greed, selfishness and ignorance are threatening the future health of the earth, and how the stewardship of the earth is a major concern. I think there is now a general understanding among us that the present environmental crisis is a spiritual and religious crisis, something that is beautifully expressed in our recent YM Testimony on Sustainability.

Gudde Moller 2000

4.27 Let us recognise the diversity of life, its interdependence and balance. The inherent wisdom of life astounds us. From cells to ecosystems we see a self-organising, self-repairing, co-operative whole. Our human focus needs to be widened to encompass the whole web of life. We need to change from domination to participation. The process will not be easy. Our belief in simplicity will help us to live full and joyful lives without devouring the earth's resources. We can cheerfully do more with less.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 2000

4.28 God's universe in all its complexity has never been static. Constant change, including death and decay, is part of life and evolution, and is universal. In addition to our global responsibilities, we, as inhabitants of Aotearoa New Zealand, have a special responsibility to protect the unique life forms which have evolved in these islands. We find our concept of stewardship and the Māori concept of kaitiakitanga helpful.

Bay of Plenty/Auckland Monthly Meeting 2001

4.29 I see us as integrally part of the environment. We're not detached from it. The atoms from which our bodies are made were forged in the stars a long time ago. We can't survive without the water and plants and other animals and the complete ecosystem. And, because of our huge power over the natural world, we have a correspondingly huge responsibility to look after it. I have moved away from the dualistic interpretations of man over nature, spirit over matter, the hierarchies of God, Man, Woman, Nature. That doesn't tie in with my understanding of God, or of people. I have always had a very strong sense of awe in the face of the mysteries of the natural world. My sense of awe is by no means diminished by my scientific training and an increasing understanding of how things work.

Christina Gibb 2002

4.30 The fundamental concepts inherent in ecology are interdependence and the notion of limits. Given the reality of ecological scarcity, many ecologists now believe that the ground has been cut out from under our present political and economic systems, making merely reformist policies of economic management all but useless. As William Ophuls states, "At best, reforms can postpone the inevitable for a few decades at the probable cost of increasing the severity of the eventual day of reckoning". In brief: Capitalist democracy, the free market, competition and the exploitation of people and nature in general are concepts and practices that are doomed by ecological scarcity.

Joe Short 1982

4.31 *Some New Beatitudes*

Blessed are those who have the intelligence to see the Great wonder that we live amongst.

Blessed is a species that knows that the world was not made for it alone.

Blessed are those who know enough, to know how much they don't know, so they can see how much they need faith in the web that supports them.

Keith Beurtrais 2002

4.32 Spirit derives from the Latin word spirare, which means breath. Breath is essential for life and spirituality for me is the foundation for living in right relationship with each other and the natural world so that all life is sustained.

I am driven to address the climate crisis because spirituality to me is living in ways that sustain life.

Murray Short 2019

4.33 I have been working with a group of young Quakers around the world to run an online webinar series about climate change and action through a youth Quaker lens. Each workshop was based on one of the Testimonies in relation to Climate Truth: Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Sustainability and Equality.

I also burnt out this year, and I'm working on being as open and honest about this as possible because in the activist space, it isn't something we talk about enough.

Anya Bukholt-Payne 2021

4.34 Because the life force (source of life — God — however you wish to put it) flows through us all, including the animal kingdom and the plant and mineral worlds, we are therefore one with all life — not apart from it.

If humans were to leave the world, the animals and plant kingdoms would all go on exactly as before, possibly with a huge sigh of relief. But if they were not here, then humans, for all their superiority, could not exist.

Dori Clayton 1986

4.35 **Some Friends' Responses to Climate Change**

“By retaining a Quakerly reverence for the mystery in the world, the sacredness of nature, as well as having an attitude of humility, we are more able to move forward with a sense of peaceful deliberation as we play our part in addressing the issue.”

“From the inception of the Society of Friends, the Quaker view has been that God is present in the world without as well as within us. George Fox, in his mystical experience or ‘opening’, saw ‘that of God’ outside himself, in nature, saying, ‘All things were new, and all the creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter.’ This type of experience has also been reported by other early and later Quakers. They express a sense of unity with the world, a feeling that the world beyond humans is ‘shot through with the Sacred’”.

“In silent Quaker worship we can discern spiritual reality, feeling its reassurance of the hidden wholeness of life. We should trust our spiritual intuition and turn to spirit for guidance on environmental challenges, just as we would for challenges of conflict or personal difficulties.”

“It is not only the beauty of Nature which shouts to me of God, but the intricacy and delicacy of natural processes. The force and power of storms, volcanoes and earthquakes are awe inspiring. Kenneth Boulding in his Naylor sonnets calls it ‘the burning oneness binding everything.’”

The Futures Committee 2017

- 4.36 Can you recognise the simplicity in things that are beautiful? Can you recognise the beauty in things that are simple? Simplicity begins with awareness.

Elizabeth Duke 1995

- 4.37 The Testimony to Simplicity is a challenge, at least to me, a complicated person in a complex world. Some Quakers seem to be naturally frugal, no-nonsense, plain-speaking folk, but not I. How good am I at avoiding things that are un-simple: the fussy, the fashionable, the superficial, the self-conscious, the showy, the wasteful?

In any case, we may ask, is that really a Testimony? Or is it just a cultural preference, like sitting cross-legged, or opting for plain clothes and minimal makeup?

No, Simplicity is a Testimony because past Friends saw its spiritual value. They gave us the simplicity of silence-based worship in uncluttered meetinghouses. In their experience, simplicity helped them to approach the deeper reality, the core of things, and sometimes to hear the promptings of love and truth. Quakerism is a spirituality of inner Light, not outward Display.

The challenge for me is to discern, to prioritize, to focus. Perhaps I should declutter my life? Perhaps I should simplify some aspects of my speech, my behaviour, my effects on the environment?

Humans are easily distracted. Simplicity cuts down on outward noises — notably the clamourings of the consumer society. It may also help to calm the inner noises, the loud chattering voices in our brains.

Peter Low 2022

- 4.38 In waiting together in silence and expectancy, in being ‘tendered’, as early Friends called it — made aware and open and tender-hearted to the needs of others — in sharing the divine communication, we are preserved from relying on the infallibility of our individual guidance.

The group can be a strength and a check, and in the group meeting for worship we may know our own individual experience extended and enriched. “It is not the scattered embers, but the piled-up logs that send great leaping flames to heaven.”

Ruth Fawell 1965

- 4.39 Every person who speaks from the spirit is giving a gift. Yet, for the speaker, the gift consists in being heard. Thus every person who listens in the spirit has given a gift of equal or greater worth.

Gemma Mason 2022

4.40 I have for some years had a mental picture of a volcano as a metaphor for religious fervour, but it has been the Tongariro/ Ngauruhoe complex rather than those which dot the suburban landscape in Auckland. Friends in the heady days of the 17th century are represented by the Tongariro of a former era, in full spate, full of energy, some of it misplaced, which gradually as it cooled down and solidified became rigid, a historical icon. However the energy, not to be denied, has found other outlets, some the gentle warming springs of social endeavour, or the new mission fields of the secondary crater.

I often think that I would have kept well away from the lava flow of the early Friends; I would have stuck with the familiar solid earth. And yet I am drawn to take Friends' message to parts of the community, the prisons, where instability, creativity, and unexpected revelations continually catch me unawares. In spite of myself.

Fran Hintz 2000

4.41 I think my main concern is caring for the individuals, not the decision making. The process, the listening, valuing of contributions, building with them, respecting individuals. These things feel more important than coming to decisions that we can act on. The Spirit within each of us, contributing in whatever creative way each can, is surely the priority in Monthly Meeting, to move forward as a Meeting.

One of my understandings of the responsibility of the clerk, is to introduce items in such a way that the Meeting can consider them, being informed of all the facts without any personal views from the clerk. If the clerk feels compelled to state a view, the clerk needs to stand away from the chair as facilitator for the Meeting decisions. The clerk's responsibility is to find 'a sense of the Meeting', keeping personal views out of the role as much as possible.

Ann Olsen 1998

4.42 Gael seemed to have a special gift for befriending those whose personal style may otherwise land them in the ‘too hard basket’, approaching them with kindness and warmth. While others might whinge and avoid them, Gael would share coffee and a chat, showing no sign of irritation or personal fatigue with these difficult characters. It wasn’t a matter of ignoring their objectionable qualities, but of still being able to see that of God in everyone.

Remembering Gael Howell (1945-2014)

4.43 *In a reply to a Wider Quaker Fellowship subscriber, Olwen Palmer wrote:* You ask for information about Friends. We are for the most part ordinary people who adhere to the beliefs and practices set out in the booklet you read. But we are also aware that in our search for the Truth, we must follow the promptings of the spirit within us, or if you like, our Inner Light. This means that although we all agree that we must eschew violence and do all we can to work for a peaceful cosmos, we may choose different paths to the Truth. We do not all agree on the subject of alcohol, for instance. The important thing is that we accept others with as much love and understanding as possible.

Olwen Palmer 1987

4.44 People like harmony and are willing to preserve it at almost any cost, for they think conflict might be unbecoming or improper. But is conflict bad? Psychiatrists don’t think so. In fact, they point out that conflict has good aspects. Out of conflict can come constructive change and growth. People get very uncomfortable when a community gets distressed by dissension and controversy. But out of these things can emerge new and better development.

It is unrealistic to think that conflict is something that must be resolved. Every community has its irreconcilable groups. They will never agree. But they can still live together, in love and acceptance.

Friends, it is not necessary that we agree. Outward harmony is not required of us. What is necessary is that we love one another.

Clive Packer-Doust 1978

4.45 I came to Friends through reading an intellectual rather than a spiritual approach. It seemed an experimental and growing form of religion, not set out once and for all in a precise form of words to express belief, prayer and praise, in ritual which seemed to me then to become unreal through repetition.

At that time, I did not appreciate the fuller symbolic meaning in those forms and rituals as I hope I do now. I believe strongly that man cannot live without symbols and that our call and challenge is to become conscious of the symbols we use. Symbolic understanding is the other side of the coin to our belief that truth can never be finally expressed in a form of words.

There is a long, often difficult road to travel to reach membership. One commits oneself before one is 100% sure in the human sense for one's faith, as trust must have a chance to grow. One walks and acts in the Light at a particular time and place: in New Zealand in the middle of the 20th century in my case. It means that one has been accepted by a particular group of people, one's chosen second and larger family, and in it one further learns about the business of living what is life for, what is its significance and meaning?

So you see that the Society of Friends is my home. It contains my chosen and beloved family. It is that place where I have a sense of security, where I know and am known by other members. Just to meet together is a pleasure to look forward to, hallowed by the experiences of worship and work we share. We are conscious of one another coming together in the silence into the presence of the Eternal. But this security is not an end in itself. It gives us the strength to respond to God's call to be his human hands and feet in serving His world.

Dorothy Johnson 1966





5

Openness Tuwheratanga

- 5.01 Quakers call themselves a ‘religious’ society; they come together to worship. So who/what do they worship?

For much of their history, Quakers would have answered that they believed in God as did any other Christians, and that led them at the time to describe their beliefs in very orthodox terms. But from the start there was an explosion of newness, of rediscovery of truth, which expressed itself in strong images — Light, Seed, Spirit.

George Fox puts his peak experience in terms of light and darkness:

“I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. And in that also I saw the infinite love of God: and I had great openings.”

Elizabeth Duke 1987

- 5.02 Life, the whole of life, confronts us and, however precious our organisation and the accepted pattern of Quaker practice may be to us, we shall test and re-test its validity in every generation. As individuals, as we follow the guidance of the Spirit, we shall be led into some strange places and, like Jesus, may be numbered with the transgressors and accused of consorting with sinners.

Edward Dowsett 1964

5.03 Having long questioned the idea of God as an all-powerful creator and controller, my conception has also shifted away from the personal God who is my guide and teacher, to God as a relational Spirit, whose strength is sensed and made manifest in encounters with the 'other', whether 'other' as person, or the rest of the natural world of which people are an inextricable part.

There are two important implications of this perspective. First, it is strongly oriented toward the collective and the relational rather than the individual. Second, it is dynamic in that it is interactive which stimulates learning and continuing 'revelation' by confronting us with the different views of others.

This shift I find helps us to focus on the collective. We learn and change not by isolating ourselves and seeking individual inspiration in some sort of vacuum, but by engaging with others, whether in person or through others' writings and other recordings. Everything we know and understand is a product of this collective process. We are vessels carrying the combined learnings of the generations before us, not messages from God.

It is a matter of balance because individual insight, vision and creativity are critically important for breakthrough ideas. However, they are still one way or another, a product of, and building on, collective learnings.

We also need always to keep in mind that our inspiration can be faulty. We can misinterpret 'God's message,' or we can lack key pieces of information to mention just two of the many ways in which we can be misled as individuals.

There are as many false prophets as true ones and a large dose of humility is always necessary as it opens our hearts to hearing the views of the other.

Murray Short 2022

5.04 I don't believe that God invented religion to reach humankind. I believe that humankind invented religion to reach God. Indeed, it truly is our greatest invention — and we have done it in so many beautiful different ways.

But I don't know if we will ever be able to complete this invention and fully articulate the majesty of God's glory. We can feel God's love. We can feel it so deeply our eyes water and our bodies quake... our souls sing! We can even hear and heed God's call. But we cannot construct an absolute narrative that fully explains God's role in our lives and the mystery of life all around us.

I don't think this is anything to be lamented or ashamed of. Not knowing everything is an important part of being human for it inspires us to have true faith in that which is beyond us.

But this also means that we create different ways to understand the world, and that our different — and differently flawed — concepts will often come into conflict with each other. And this presents us with a great choice.

We could choose to focus on the brokenness between us, to glorify the 'us' and exclude and condemn the 'them'. We could choose to see the separations between us as more important than the solutions to unite us. We could choose to ignore our broken relations — to sweep them under the carpet and deny they exist. Though I fear they would only return to haunt us in unpredictable ways.

Or — what I think is right — we could confront the brokenness and address our differences. We could compassionately listen to our 'others' and to seek that of God even in those with whom we disagree and don't understand. We could acknowledge that brokenness is in the eye of the beholder, and see through this scratched lens to the purity of the Universal Spirit beyond.

If we can do this, then we can transcend the trappings of our human-made systems and truly live the Kingdom of God. For the Kingdom of God knows no exclusions.

The kingdom of men does — the kingdom of broken relations — the kingdom of 'us' and 'them'. But in the Kingdom of God there is only one — there is only 'we'.

And how may we reach this?

I think the answer is the same as it's always been. Only love will get us through: our love for God; our love for that of God in each other;

our love for the faith that none of us may be right, but all of us are righteous.

While human relations may be broken, the human spirit is not. The human spirit is truly transcendental. It is not bound by the colour of our skin; the amount of money in our pocket; the name above our church doors; or the names of our ancestors. Quakers, Christians, Muslims, Pagans, Atheists, criminals, offenders, victims, oppressors, and the oppressed...

God's Light shines in all of us. No one is forgotten.

We are all brothers and sisters of the faith community that stands shaking in the wind of Spirit.

We are all Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri.

Thomas Owen 2012

5.05 Throughout my life I have never ceased to be thankful for my Quaker heritage. I am grateful that I was taught that the whole of life was my Bible: that the word of God, though found within the covers of the Bible, was not confined to it. I was glad that I had not to accept some ancient creed, whether I believed it or not, but was free to build up my own.

Friends are often said to be woolly in their theology; but this is good if it means working things out for oneself, even though there may be fallacies, and our beliefs may be different from those held by others. I built up a working hypothesis on which to run my life.

It is important for all of us, as we grow, to see that our philosophy is not static, final, unchanging. It must grow as we grow. If we believe the same at 70, as we believed at 20, or even 50, it is a danger signal: we need to watch that we are not stagnating, caught in a rut.

It soon becomes obvious that truth is many sided: that in fact to the basic questions of life there may be no answer. We may have beliefs and have faith: but there is no certainty. It becomes a test of our maturity to live with doubt, knowing our theories, our working hypotheses, may not stand the test, being ready to abandon them, or more likely develop them.

William Sewell 1974

5.06 The Quaker community was made up of those who obeyed the Christ within. Their relationship with Christ was direct, unmediated, a matter of experience, not of dogma. They tended to see Christ in three complementary ways: as the prehistoric Light, the Word of John's gospel; as the historic Christ, the Light made incarnate; and as the Christ within. They were definitely Christian, but not in any narrow, dogmatic sense.

The experience of the Christ within was for many of them a shaking experience, one that involved (as it did for Fox) a terrible struggle against self-will, and one that involved at first a great sense of guilt and inadequacy.

Thus, the negative aspect of the Light was important. Margaret Fell shows this in an epistle: "Now Friends, deal plainly with yourselves, and let the Eternal Light search you... for this will deal plainly with you; it will rip you up and lay you open, naked and bare before the Lord God, from whom you cannot hide yourselves. Therefore, give over deceiving of your souls; for all sin and uncleanness the Light condemns."

Larry Jones 1973

5.07 It is the prophetic tradition which requires us to ask questions such as: Are we perpetuating dependency or facilitating self-determination? Who benefits most from this action or programme, who is making the decisions, and who is bearing the cost? Is this action moving us towards a just society, and is the process itself an empowering one?

The spirituality that is real to us finds its inner strength in the mystical experience of connectedness with each other and with the whole of creation. This is the deep, still and vibrant centre that transcends time. From that dynamic place it is possible to turn outwards and work in one's own available and chosen action spaces to help make manifest the harmony that is already known.

David James and Jillian Wychel 1991

5.08 I believe in a divinity which must, because of our bounded existence as humans, be beyond our ability to comprehend fully or describe in words. I see all human religion as an outreach to that divinity, shaped and formed by the society in which that religion grows.

But the totality of human religious experience persuades me that this divinity can be experienced as personal and reaches out to us in ways for which various forms of human relationships are suitable images. But it is probably a limitation to think of the personal as summing up the nature of God: it is surely impudence for us to attribute to God the imperfection of being either male or female.

I see the most powerful embodiment of this divinity in Jesus, but I know that for others he is not a unique revelation, so I have to recognise that I may be wrong, bounded by my place in space and history.

Similarly, the Society of Friends has its place in history, which sets it within the Christian tradition, but I feel that it would be wrong for us to go back, to be nothing but a Christian church.

Elizabeth Duke 1984

5.09 Meantime in my attitude to the wider Church, I had come round full circle. From repudiation of the Church, I now felt real respect. For had not the Church preserved the great truths of Christianity for 16 centuries — up to the time George Fox took over!!! Now she was striving for unity, and looking at the problems of peace. But only a handful of Friends in our Meeting were active in the ecumenical movement, and some were indifferent or even hostile. Yet without the literature, Bible study, radio devotions and church services, the visiting theologians and the fellowship provided by other Churches, my Quakerism would have been poor indeed.

Katherine Knight 1968

5.10 I am not one who can experience a personal God or have a felt sense of the numinous. But I feel strongly that our task in life is to be the best we can be, living kindly and harmoniously with one another and with nature, and within that there are daily miracles to delight and guide us.

Among Friends, I have a sense of seeking the best way to live my life with the support of others who also want to be the best they can be. Precisely how we go about that matters less than that we do it. In the end it comes down to “What canst thou say?”

Jan Marsh 2015

- 5.11 God is both within and without us. The kingdom of God is within you. We have to have the right climate of faith and love to draw upon that power that within us lies.

For whilst love is the wiring that connects our souls with God, faith is the switch that turns on the power.

Percy Gourlay 1989

- 5.12 I have been thinking — what is my spirit? Body, mind, spirit: I know the first two. I do not know for sure what is the third.

Keats wrote: “Beauty is Truth; Truth beauty — that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know”.

I do not know that this is true. Certainly, there are many things that would be very beautiful, if they were true, and yet they are not. But there is a part of me that seeks Truth, and a part of me that seeks Beauty, and a part of me that seeks the Good.

These parts are not separate; they form my spirit.

Gemma Mason 2023

- 5.13 Lying on the floor alongside a nearly-but-not-yet-crawling infant, I became aware of feeling a mixture of delight and deep contentment.

Wow! Isn't the human infant extraordinary. I can't fix this child, I can't rescue him from the extraordinary task of learning how his body works, how his mind works, how gravity works, why that ball is just beyond reach.

But I can be part of the sticky web of relationships that people his world; the infant's bewitching smile tells me that I am included.

For me infant watching is a form of meditation. Time slows down, heartbeat slows down. Waiting. For a while at least, handing over initiative and intention and waiting. To see. To know. To what comes next.

I've come to believe that regardless of culture or homeland, the human is born wired for relationship, born to be connected, born to be part of something larger than itself.

When George Fox spoke of “answering that of God” in everyone, I wonder if he had slowed down to the pace of an infant and recognised ‘that of God’ in the child’s craving for relationship?

Sue Stover 2013

5.14 *Some seminar participants’ responses to the question: How do we understand ‘that of God’?*

“As a Quaker, I believe that in everyone there is an essential essence of goodness, of thoughtfulness, kindness and caring of others that is worthy of being accepted and recognised for what it is. It may be that the ‘that of God’ is tarnished, is difficult to recognise, but it is still there or should be considered as such. In that case I should tread carefully, listen thoughtfully and endeavour to search out the positive strengths in the other.”

“How do I see ‘That of God in everyone’?”

- “God is a being providing goodness, guidance, support, compassion.
- “All of us have a piece of God inside us. All pieces of all of us add up to the whole God.
- “The certainty that there is a positive core in every human being gives us confidence that it is worth working on good relationships, social projects, and accepting a wide range of attitudes and beliefs.”

“A concept different from the notion of God as external, God in Heaven, but rather an awareness that each of us has within us that can connect with and communicate with God within. That if we stop and listen, within that listening silence, there is the presence of God that is always available and always accessible.”

“That of god is the wellspring of meaning, purpose and values. It connects us to each other and to all things in the universe. It leads us to ask why we are doing what we are doing and how we can do it better.”

Anonymous Friends, 2017 and 2018

- 5.15 Quaker theology is generally implicit rather than explicit. It is exemplified by lived practice, rather than embodied in doctrinal pronouncements. When Quakers speak of ‘testimony’, they mean bearing witness — as often through committed action as through words — to what they stand for.

Elizabeth Duke 2018

- 5.16 Quakers have been and are often reluctant to talk intellectually about their beliefs and usually reluctant to describe that as theology when they do. There are many reasons for this. Quakers have never seen the need for a creedal statement of belief because it diminished the importance of spiritual experiences.

George Fox and early Friends were critical of priests and ministers who had a university education at Oxford or Cambridge because many had no experiential dimensions to their faith. Their spiritual experiences were often difficult to explain in words that did full justice to its richness, power and impact.

During the Quietist period of the 19th century, many Quakers were very suspicious of reason and conscience unduly influencing their spiritual experience. In more modern times, a number of Quakers have come to the Society of Friends from Christian denominations because of Quaker doctrinal tolerance and flexibility. They are reluctant to enter a theological debate which may lead to narrow boundaries for faith being imposed.

Robert Howell 1998

- 5.17 Quaker theology is grounded experientially, recognising continuing revelation.

To Quakers, creedal statements, as developed through history, can be respected as reflecting the attempts of churches to express their experience in the language of their time and in words which might be generally acceptable.

For us though, this does not give creeds authority to control how we describe our experience of the Spirit to ourselves or to

others. We are aware of how disputes about the meaning of credal wording have over the centuries resulted in conflict and schism, and we also believe that it is always possible we may be mistaken. So we do not seek to impose one set of words on one another.

Elizabeth Duke and Ashley McMillan 2022

- 5.18 The Inward Light is often mentioned amongst Friends because it is our sure apprehension of God. We must not, however, despise the Outward Light, for what is Inward Light to one must be Outward Light to another. Similarly with our Society as a whole, we must be ready to see and adopt from any other group the good which we see in them.

We are a dynamic, and not a static Society. Institutionalism and tradition must give way to Life. Jesus is the Life, and all the good there is, and He is not limited to any one group. Heaven is expansion. This necessitates a continual removal of what once sheltered, but soon imprisons, and stifles.

Annie B. Isaachsen 1936

- 5.19 Quakerism is not a creed, but a way of life; a fearless search for truth, not something which makes us peculiar and aloof from our fellows; not something which keeps us lagging in the rearguard, but something which compels us always to the vanguard in that fearless search for the common good. If our belief means anything it means that we must follow that inner urge, no matter how it cuts across our preconceived convictions, our prejudices, our love of a comfortable and tranquil life.

Alan Shackleton 1940

- 5.20 If there were any single idea, which might express what is living and precious for me in Quakerism, this seems to be the quality of openness. First, it is the unmediated openness to the Will of God and the Source of Spiritual Energy. This is the historical and spiritual base of Quakerism. It is the reason for our

continued existence as a separate church. It is the ever-present reality of each day of our lives. It is our most valued privilege, ours at any time or place. It is by virtue of this first openness that all other freedom becomes a strength rather than a weakness, a power for good rather than the cause of a fall, and a source of confidence and joy, rather than uncertainty and fear. It is by virtue of this openness that we survive as a church without external authority and an unchanging creed. Instead of these, we claim a Guide who is more adventurous than we but who is ever patient with our faithless and uncertain steps, a Guide who will always help us back to his path when we have, in our freedom, made our mistakes.

There are two more faces to openness. The next, we turn to people. As we claim our own potentiality for openness with God, we must recognize this potentiality in all others, regardless of any consideration, and especially regardless of their attitude towards ourselves or our ideas. The feeling for openness is the key, which can open or loosen a closed door while preserving our own readiness to receive and learn.

The last face of openness we turn towards ideas. Whether they be of science or art, politics or religion, no ideas need be forbidden to our examination. New thoughts are repugnant only to those who have already built a wall to protect their truth. If our openness is first to God, then not only need there be no fear of truth but much more reassuring, we need have no fear of losing our way in the search. It matters not where our wanderings may have carried us; we can if we will, turn to the one truly ubiquitous Guide waiting there to suggest a new direction for our feet.

Paul Knight 1966

- 5.21 If asked whether I am a Christian, agnostic, atheist, pantheist, Buddhist, I would say “A bit of all those, thank you, except the atheist.”

Christian: we are helplessly embedded by our culture and our Quaker roots in Christianity. That’s fine with me, but when I say that, I don’t mean the church or being a traditional or conventional Christian; nor does it mean that I can’t be influenced by other faiths and cultures.

In any case there are similarities. I discovered when visiting Buddhist monuments in India dated 400 BC, carvings on stone slabs showing the immaculate conception of the Buddha, his impregnated mother lying under a bodhi tree, and the holy spirit flying away in the form of a bird. This convinced me that many of our Bible stories are mythological too.

The description 'Quaker' covers for me all those terms (except atheist, as I said). It is my way of being, my tribe with its particular spiritual whakapapa — an inclusive community whose spiritual ancestors become yours if you join it. It lives not for itself but for the whole world.

Phyllis Short 2002

5.22 I am still a Christian at heart. I am not always happy with Christian religious language, but I understand it and can see past it to the basic truths that are meaningful to me. I came to Friends more than 20 years ago to join in worship with an accepting and trustworthy group. If Christian language and stories express what I am called on to say in ministry, I want to be able to say it and to have the contribution received in a loving way. If it isn't going to be heard because a non-Christian or a post-Christian person refuses to listen to any contribution couched in religious language then the group is not accepting and trustworthy, and it appears I am not truly worshipping with them but merely worshipping in the same room.

Carril Karr 2000

5.23 We need to be more open, less shy in sharing our spiritual experience if we can find the language. Nevertheless, we need to be careful to avoid mistaking passion for emotionalism. As George Fox, surely a man of passionate feeling, said, "Stand still in the Light". This means much more than going to Meeting for Worship once a week. The Society will flourish or fail according to the extent we individually respond to the call for spiritual renewal.

Alan Gilderdale 2000

5.24 We come to an experience of God in diverse ways for we are very different. Many of us come to know Him in terms of human life. Indeed, we cannot know Him except in terms of our human existence, in terms of our life situation. The disciples who had known Him felt, with Paul, that they had seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and many a modern Friend has had his first inkling of the nature of God in the person of the man Jesus, and can say with Fox that He speaks to their condition.

Others have trodden different paths. Some seem to have come to Jesus through an inner spiritual apprehension. Like the woman of Samaria, they have learned through some encounter with the Divine that God is Spirit and, believing, they have been able to worship Him in spirit and, worshipping, have found themselves near to the Jesus of the Gospels. Such a one is Gurdial Mallik, a Hindu Friend, who knows more about the Grace of God than most Christians.

To worship with Gurdial is to be lifted into the very Presence of God. Then there are among us some who feel that they lack that assurance of faith. They are not mystics like Gurdial Mallik, nor have they the certainty of the reality of the Risen Christ like George Fox, yet, led by the spirit of God within their own souls, they are honestly seeking and finding meaning and certitude in life. They have come to an awareness of the Presence of God.

Edward Dowsett 1964

5.25 I have found life full of paradoxes. In the act of putting into words what is felt as a basic truth to me (however small), I also become conscious of, or rather see, a fleeting picture of truth in its opposite. As Pascal says, "A man does not show his greatness by being at one extremity but rather by touching both at once, or, the truth lies in both extremes, not halfway between the two."

Dorothy Johnson 1966

5.26 We certainly need guidance, but perhaps the emphasis on seeking and not being sure if we have found or rightly understood our guidance

makes for uncertainty as if there were nothing on which we could anchor. While 'it is the will of God' had its weak and rather fatalistic side, it did give a certainty and a peace of mind. God is in charge not we.

How can we put these two aspects together? Perhaps it might be done this way.

Suppose we think of all the small events of our daily lives as tests, as stimulants to growth; as if God said to His children "Now here you are in this situation; how are you going to use it?" And then besides being interested in our endeavors, He would also be there to help when we asked, as any father would. God is in charge.

He will help, but we have to act on what we know in order to know more, whether His will leads to activity or to acceptance of limitation. And even then, perhaps the influence of a life lived under God may be an effective help.

I do not believe an endeavouring life is wasted; though how God uses it is a matter beyond our knowledge.

Margaret Benson 1959

5.27 *The Threshold* (Footnote to Luke 19)

Zacchaeus reaching for the lowest branch
 passed an unseen threshold. Where would it lead?
 To what challenge, to what momentous change?
 He didn't know: "I don't often climb trees.
 This seems rather silly. Yet it's a risk
 I feel like taking. I hope nobody sees."
 And those who did noticed only a twisted,
 shrivelled figure half-hidden by leaves.
 Except for one. He saw Zacchaeus already
 changed from breaking that invisible thread:
 A live man needing — greeding — to be free
 to give and smile and love, a new disciple

waiting only to be picked, the ripest
fruit ever on a sycamore tree.

Peter Low 1999

5.28 When I think about my place in the Quaker tradition, I realise that I am part of a faith tradition that is almost 400 years old, a tradition which sprang from a faith that is almost two thousand years old, which itself developed from the 4,000-year-old Jewish tradition. And Judaism has its origins in even more ancient belief systems, stretching back to the dawn of humanity.

I am, then, a leaf on a twig, on a branch, on a bough, from the trunk of the tree that sinks its roots deep to the wellspring of Life.

And when I fall from the tree, as we all do, that is not the end because the leaf returns to the root and gives nourishment to the tree from which it came. And the leaf is not an end in itself but only one part of a great and ancient Whole.

Paulette Archer 2022

5.29 Ministry on Diversity
(Christchurch, 15 October 1995)

The magnificent force of life
The ineluctable power of love
Far, far transcend
Our puny capacities of comprehension,
So prophets invent symbols and myths
To represent them.
Because we are human, we then endow these myths
With the reality they are meant to represent,
Creating the religious tragedy
Of separating us from those groups
Who believe in other myths
To represent the same magnificent realities,
The force of life and the power of love.

Bill Willmott 1995

5.30 To me, working with and among members of the other churches is just the chance of showing the validity of the Quaker point of view, especially the emphasis on the Spirit or the Inward Light. Enabled by the Spirit I seek to recognise the Spirit in others, not misled by the different garments and beliefs in which it is expressed, nor desiring to impose my pattern as a condition of unity.

Dorothy Johnson 1966

5.31 The big thing we all learned is not to dismiss a man whose beliefs you cannot accept, but rather to find out why such sensible and admirable men think the way they do.

Mavis Airey 1966

5.32 We have in ex-colonial societies the special privilege of living alongside peoples with alternative myth systems which will in some circumstances be more illuminating than our own. Awareness of this will encourage us to compare, to reinterpret, and to look beyond the surface of our own myths for their meanings. We shall be less likely to assume that either set of stories represents literal reality, when both are actually pointers to underlying truths.

At the present time of ecological crisis, it's especially valuable to be able to draw on creation-centered traditions close at hand and evolved to fit the lands where we live. Metropolitan Europe is inclined to see Australia and New Zealand as frontier societies in a somewhat condescending sense; perhaps we are frontier societies in the other sense of being the settings where major discoveries can arise from the long deferred true partnership between indigenous and settler cultures.

David James and Jillian Wychel 1991

5.33 I suppose you all have read that little poem that tells of six blind men of Hindustan who inspected an elephant and decided that it was wholly like the portion that each one happened to feel and not one would listen to the opinion of another. In one way those six blind men were right. We cannot follow the truth as it appears to another. We must follow the road that seems to each of us individually to

be the right path. What we must remember is that our road is not the only one that will lead all people to God. Let us help each other as far as possible, but at the same time remember the words, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.”

Bob Gibbons 1934

- 5.34 To be a Religious Society with a corporate experience of God in our lives, we need words to describe and share the experience. It is a paradox that if the silence of worship in our Meetings is to be a living, creative silence we cannot remain forever wordless before what John’s Gospel calls The Word: “And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.”

In the silent assemblies of early Friends, the Word did dwell among them, and was made flesh both in their passionate vocal ministry and in their willingness and eagerness to share their faith and practices with outsiders. If we remain silent too long, we run the risk of losing sight altogether of that which we need the words for.

I question whether we have not gone too far in rejecting many words and terms still used by the other churches. We have become so afraid to use cliches and tired old language that we have left ourselves with too few words for communicating our religious experience among ourselves and to others. But communicate we must, if our worship is to be revitalised and our corporate faith to become revolutionary again.

We have two options: one is, where traditional God-talk is stale, insipid, suspect, or unsound, to coin new words: this is being done in every other sphere of our rapidly changing and moving modern world; as our religion becomes dynamic again, we will find it happening with us.

The other option is to reassess the worth of much traditional God-talk: it is too drastic to throw it out lock, stock and barrel. We will never better Fox’s wonderful term, ‘opening’; some of the language in the old Bible translations has no parallel as powerful in modern English; and we can borrow from the other more articulate churches where vivid and authentic language has developed, if we have the humility.

Cathy Wilson 1978

5.35 Whatever words we use, the inner journey cannot be made without commitment to learn the truth about ourselves and the world in which we live, or, as somebody put it, to move forward spiritually we must first grow in a personal sense. Part of this is a willingness to listen to each other more often, and a willingness to be changed by what we hear. It's important, I think, that we allow our certainties to be challenged so that we do not become locked into a static state of self-satisfaction.

Gudde Moller 2001

5.36 I have the same problem many people have with religious language. Each word is so loaded. I use the words, but they are modified in my mind to something more useful to me. How else can you be a believer and still be true to whatever 'it' is?

So what is 'it'? Is there an 'it'? I tend to think 'spirit'. My little mind can barely conceive of my own small experience as a human alive on this earth, so I am not equipped to describe 'god' or 'spirit'. All I can do is to consider my own experiences and the experiences described by other people, and to try to find a comfortable position within them.

I am writing from the perspective of a person who is not able to conceive of the existence of our world, universe, without some spirit enlivening it. I have tried when I have been in a greatly enraged state. I've tried when I've been distressed and depressed. But the spirit is still there when I come more to myself.

The spirit is there in the sunrise, in the beauty of flowers, in the hand of the artist, in the voice of the singer. The spirit is there in the people who labour to help others, to help animals and birds and the earth. The spirit is there in all that suffers.

Carril Karr 2021

5.37 I have, for most of my life, needed solitude and silence. In my younger years this was met by spending weekends and holidays climbing mountains. Mostly this was done with likeminded friends, although the times alone had the most nourishment for me. There was time for reflection, an absence of human talk when thoughts could emerge and be pondered upon.

At the time, I did not think this was awareness of the spirit, but I do now. Of course, there were other factors too, being in the open air with distant views where one was a tiny part of creation and the self-diminished. I always felt renewed after a day or weekend away.

Patricia Knutson 2002

- 5.38 Quakers have said that every meal, every place, every day and season is sacramental. I extend this to consciously and often naming where I am, who I'm with, what I'm doing, what I see, taste, touch, smell, hear, feel and think as sacramental. On top of this, I often recall from my teenage years a priest's phrase: 'The Sacrament of the Present Moment', and I dwell in the preciousness and uniqueness and brief gift of the present.

Goodness is not necessarily replaced by Badness. If you don't seek or find God-consciousness, you aren't necessarily evil or an evil doer. In between Good and Evil is busyness. I think one can spend a whole lifetime being busy. The same priest who preached on the Sacrament of the Present Moment said (and this was 30 years ago) that women have different temptations from men. And the worst was busyness. At the time I thought "Easy for you to say, waited on hand and foot by nuns — who's out there making your lunch and vacuuming your room?"

But now I see automatic watching of TV or reading Sci-Fi and romances or taking on too many good causes or being too often racing for time against deadlines, as busyness which fills up all the space and leaves no chance for replenishment or for seeing patterns or reflection or contemplation.

Catherine Benland 1993

- 5.39 Testimony to the importance of pausing comes from all sides. Donald Nichol in his book, *Holiness*, said that pauses enable us to respond to people and events instead of merely reacting to them. When we are criticised or offended, we react in almost reflex fashion in defence of our bruised egos. But if we can pause and put

distance between events and ourselves, we have an opportunity to make a considered response.

We seem to feel that unless we are doing something or saying something, nothing is happening. Nothing is further from the truth. It is the pauses that make possible much that is essential for our welfare. We are able to appreciate the meaning of what we read or hear. We collect ourselves, make sense of our lives and get back on course.

The gospel writers tell us that Jesus sought solitude and silence in the early morning or during the night. They tell us that he went apart to pray when crucial decisions had to be made such as the calling of the disciples, and before major experiences such as the transfiguration and crucifixion. But Jesus did not only seek to be alone and silent in times of crisis. In a public ministry in which he usually seemed to have a crowd around him, he sought silence and solitude as a regular practice. Yet there was so much to be done and his time was short. He could fairly claim urgency.

Richard Thompson 1996

5.40 Taste, really taste,
 this slice of home-made bread,
 good for the tastebuds, palatable,
 on your breakfast plate.
 Touch, really touch
 softly, as in childhood
 this smooth old sheet beneath your fingers
 cool against your face.
 Smell, really smell
 these last cream and purple-red sweet peas,
 tender, delicate
 upon the table by your bed.
 Look, really look
 steadily at this shapely silver spoon
 this convoluted shell
 upon your windowsill.

Listen, really listen,
to the gentle sound of rain
upon the roof, the nearby walnut tree,
the thirsting pleading earth.
Then praise with all your heart
these often only partly
realised gifts
upon your very doorstep.
Praise, too, your senses five,
wonder-carriers of beyond-ness
into your present.

Ruth Fawell 1975



6 Lives Oranga

- 6.01 Quakers have always seen the outer life as an expression of the inner and therefore have been both mystics and activists. Deepening our spiritual roots is an ongoing process that gives our work in the world a greater integrity and authenticity.

Spiritual Nurture programme brochure 1998

- 6.02 Laurence was one of those rare persons who managed to combine scientific outlook with that sense of wonder which most of us enjoy only during the freshness of childhood. He revelled in the feeling that science in his day was discovering more and more of the marvels of God's creation. His great zest in observing, and in serving, the miracles of plant growth was well known and endeared him to many; and the eloquent but controlled expression of his wonder and appreciation of all creation, from the viruses to the stars in their courses, widened the world for all who heard him speak in Meeting and elsewhere.

Laurence's high mental abilities and the depth and breadth of his studies were widely recognised; but what drew people to him was the spiritual in him, which shone out so that his other gifts were seen as in a shade. People noticed above all the sense of expectancy that was in him, the awareness and alertness to the deeper things of life; the interest he showed in other people; and the kindness.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Laurence Addis-Smith (1904-1965)

6.03 Charles Ward was born in 1898 of Quaker parents who worked at Hoxton, the abode of the poorest of the poor. It was in this setting that Charles Ward, a practical Quaker indeed, learned about service to his fellow man. Occasionally he would talk of his youth when he helped to deal with bug-infested houses and underfed, tubercular children.

We know little of his middle life after World War I when he was wounded in the throat at the battle of Jutland. Charles Ward became a well-known figure at Dunedin Meeting with his powerful frame, strong hand grip, loving manners and great dignity. He represented something we lacked with his simplicity of manners, speech and action. He was worried lest we had lost some of the essence of Quakerism in what he regarded as our over-intellectualism. He was at his happiest among young children, be it at the Meeting House or in a home.

To him Quakerism was something to be lived and he taught us by his faithful example, regularly making tea, helping in the garden and doing odd jobs. During his last illness he made a glass fronted poster box for outside our fence, putting it up when he could scarcely stand. After his death, at the Meeting for Worship, there were many testimonies to the impact that this fine, simple and loving man had made on us.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Charles Ward (1898-1972)

6.04 What is the nature of spiritual progress and how is it evident in the life of each of us? Easier I found to say what it is not. Spiritual growth can't be physically measured, like a Plunket book with graphs, nor is it the number of Quakers listed by the census. It seems to me rather to do with quality. The quality of our being within our doing, in how we deal with others and with ourselves as we go along. Our Quaker spiritual progress is flavoured by the Christian culture though not confined within it. The spirit operates for me often, in mystery and paradox, often sending me in circles and spirals so that I may end up back at the beginning, but in a different dimension, or with deepened understanding. Sometimes in head-bangable frustration, and sometimes in cheerful synchronicity.

Friends keen on action may see progress in their good works, their political activity, campaigns and concerns. Or simply, while dealing humbly, justly and mercifully in their daily lives, at work, with family, friends, and children. Is it the trying that counts? Or must we have results?

It has been pointed out to me that other religions don't worry about progress but concentrate rather on the here and now, or Nirvana or... Others make progress by being engaged in the absorbing business of personal growth (and I think spiritual growth may intersect with this sometimes) by being more sorted out, clear in relationships and careers, by being forgiving, honest, assertive, understanding and wise, more balanced and better able to serve others.

Mel Bogard 1996

- 6.05 To me, the essence of spiritual growth is not about meditating, social action, being or not being Christ-centered, but about a sincere striving for Truth in our lives. Pain and adversity can act as strong motivating factors, but anyone with a strong enough desire to find the truth can grow in the Spirit. Being prepared to honestly examine ourselves and our responses to others (not easy, often very painful and needing courage) and endeavoring to act out of purity of motive is a move towards the search for Truth, as is an openness to leadings that come from somewhere purer and higher than our own minds. I think too that it is possible to be close to the Spirit without being consciously aware of its existence, just by humbly acting out of pure love, untainted by faulty human thinking. I also think that acceptance of and respect for another's path demonstrates a freedom from the need to assert one's will on others, and that relating from Spirit and a position of trust will bring unity.

Margaret Burling 1996

- 6.06 I was 18 when I joined Friends Relief Service. This was a liberating experience for me. Like for so many people, World War II had turned their lives upside down. My family had escaped from Germany which had been my home for most of my life one week

before war broke out. My parents were on Hitler's blacklist for helping Jews. We were lucky to get out in time. BUT we had no home, no income.

I remember at 15 landing in Dover wondering where on earth we were going to live. My schooling was curtailed and after some time Father managed to get a teaching job in the Northeast of England. Mother was constantly ill, so it was inevitable that I should help to settle us into our new home, look after Mother and do all the housework. I felt utterly hopeless and could see no future for myself.

Two years later I joined Friends Relief Service which was beginning to take on work in Britain, with evacuees and relief work for bombed-out people especially during the London Blitz. My first assignment was at Chaigley Manor in rural Lancashire, which had been turned into a school/hostel for bombed out children from Liverpool.

They were the toughest kids I had ever met — violent, swearing and all kinds of behaviour problems. We spent hours discussing their problems and trying to find ways which would be more co-operative and less punitive. Gradually their behaviour improved.

It was hard work, but also lots of fun, and a great joy to be working with a bunch of such enthusiastic and committed people.

Enid Bloomfield 2001

6.07 People are tough. They survive trauma, horrendous accidents, bombing, abuse, business collapse, divorce, even torture. So do not be afraid of breaking them by mere talk. There is no irreparable harm in disagreeing with someone, and telling them so; no harm in being sure you are right and they are wrong, sometimes. It is persisting in trying to get some other person to change that can be pathological. Killing is the ultimate end of such a drive, and its ultimate failure too. If you are right, time will prove you so.

Make the point you are sure about, whether it looks like hurting or not. Plain speech; playing the ball not the player.

Llyn Richards 2003

6.08 With the coming of World War II, we found ourselves in an occupied country. The other day, taking a book from the shelves, which I had not opened for some time, I found a leaflet between the pages, which must have been there since the war. It said, in Dutch, “Bayonets cannot stop thoughts”. It goes much deeper than that though, for we discovered, together with many others, how absolutely necessary it is at such times to have a quiet place within oneself to which one can retire, which is untouchable by events crowding on us, but open to that Power of Love which is forever surrounding us at all times.

At times of great stress when all one’s strength is needed to cope with just everyday occurrences, there is a danger that one regards that as the whole of life, feels that it will always be like that, and loses sight of all else. If you have the inner sanctuary, you know that that is not so, that what is happening is only part of a great whole and that the life of the spirit flows on through it all and beyond, linking us all and pointing forward. One can get strength to go on even in the most difficult circumstances and can give others strength and they us.

Here again I think of the phrase ‘in the Life’ with its sense of continuity, something which was there before us, is present now and will be there when we are gone.

Kathleen Daamen 1971

6.09 The spiritual journey is a long one and attempts to take short cuts via drugs or other undesirable practices can lead to disaster, or at best unnecessary difficulties.

Perhaps in the minds of many, the term ‘wilderness period’ has come to mean that stage before there is any abiding sense of inner joy and peace in which for a long time and amidst great inner stress and often painful outward experiences as well, there appears only uncertainty and darkness. This is the travail of the first rebirth into a conscious spiritual Life. It is by no means the last, but once a measure of inner joy and peace has been experienced, one knows one is not alone.

At all times it is the motive that counts. Times of seeming failure, of discouragement, of the feeling of unworthiness, of divided loyalties,

of inner conflict, of deep grief over failure rightly faced can all be drawing us nearer to the Great Love. He asks only our willingness to endure the process and our obedience to such Light as is given.

Margaret Lenk 1972

- 6.10 Like a lot of people I've spoken to, we can be aware of privilege loss without necessarily using this term. I spent a year of school in Spain and became aware of the loss of linguistic privilege. I supported my parents through cancer and dementia and watched their loss of able-bodied privileges. But it was in 2017 when I spent the year living with my wife's people, an isolated community in Northern Canada, that I began to use the term 'privilege loss' to examine these things.

It is a different world up there than I am used to, revolving around hunting, mining, and cold climate Arctic living. My skill set, and the privileges of my identity categories that enabled it, were unrequired. In addition, it is an actively decolonising self-governing First Nation, where the last thing needed was another well-meaning city-educated white man trying to solve problems. So I found myself transitioning from being in privileged positions, and making a useful contribution in Auckland, to being a bit redundant and in the way.

And what fascinated me was how bad this felt. To be clear, I had expected the change in identity categories, and welcomed it in principle. But in practice, I was not prepared for the rush of negative feelings that came with the experience of irrelevance — the indignation, the resentment, the temptation to blame others.

Looking around the news at the time, it was pretty clear other people were struggling with this too. Brexit, Trump, white supremacist killers, toxic masculinity; it looked like one of the main stories of our time was the struggle people faced as their social statuses were challenged, and the dangerous manifestations their privilege losses could take.

But I could understand their resentment. Privileges don't just grant us special advantages others don't get — they also condition our minds. They tell us we are special. They give us a bigger share of the pie, and gently whisper in our ears that we deserve it.

So, when we lose privileges — even if we politically support the loss — the experience can jar against our conditioned mindsets, and that can confuse us, hurt us, and even inspire us to hurt others.

The experience emphasised to me that transitioning to a more equal world is more complicated than just changing social structures. We also have to change ourselves in the process.

Thomas Owen 2021

- 6.11 Does racism matter more to Quakers? I think it does because our testimonies challenge us to create a fairer world. We talk about how to practically achieve this, even if sometimes it takes decades to see change. Does calling ourselves White matter? I think it does because it is how our society still systematises racism. Other people do not have the privilege of saying “Well, I’m not exactly black.” Their healthcare, career opportunities and intrinsic self-worth have already been damaged by overt and internalised ‘white spaces’ before there is any conversation about the relevance of skin colour. While we have systematic racism, we need to own our Whiteness, its meaning and power in our society.

Quentin Abraham 2022

- 6.12 *When she was ten years old, Dorothy Johnson (1891-1980) came with her parents to New Zealand from England. She was one of the first women to gain a Bachelor of Science in Home Science. Research and science teaching occupied her until her marriage to John Johnson. They had a family of five sons. At 47, Dorothy returned to work and became a rural sociologist. Her visits and regular broadcasts were especially appreciated by rural women. She was deeply influential in the ecumenical movement, especially through her work with the National Council of Churches. Dorothy inspired many people particularly Young Friends to grow spiritually and in understanding of themselves and their place in the world.*

The delay in going to the university was by no means all loss. On the contrary at 23, I was far more able to benefit from university

life. And it made a pattern of experience that has served me well. (So Young Friends, don't wallow too deeply when you meet your early rebuffs.) Had I been able to start at 18, there would have been no science degree for me. All my 6th form friends graduated in English, Languages or Botany. But five years later there was the opportunity that completely altered the direction and scope of my adult life.

I mention this because it is fundamentally the pattern in which I have experienced guidance not understood as such at the time. But looking back, how many times have I been aware of the guiding hand of a Power and understanding which in denying the present desire, makes possible in due course a richer experience.

Dorothy Johnson 1966

- 6.13 For quite a while, life has appeared as an upside-down triangle. I am at the bottom point. Way at the top is the large, grey and foggy pandemic, below that are decreasing levels of anxiousness, until we come down to the immediate problems.

In March I caught Covid; it affected me like a head cold. By April I was, I thought, over Covid, but that was not the case. I confess I am not an energetic person but after Covid I felt really lethargic. I kept doing things, but it was as if I was glued to my chair, so hard to get up and active. The pandemic does cloud everything we think and do. And that cloud does cause confusion in our thinking.

So, it is up to us to look away from the fog and confusion. George Fox (1658) said, "Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts..."

That is not easy when you feel overcome and confused, but when you do, "then thou wilt find the principle of God to turn thy mind to the Lord God, whereby thou wilt receive his strength and power from whence life comes, to allay all tempests, against blusterings and storms. That is it which moulds up into patience, into innocency, into soberness, into stillness, into stayeredness, into quietness, up to God, with his power."

When we can achieve a modicum of stillness by leaving our own thoughts and opening our minds to the spirit, we receive the help and power we need to give thanks, and to think how we can cope with the ‘confusion’.

From my own experience, I know that prayer brings me closer to whatever the ‘spirit’ is and gives me strength.

Carril Karr 2022

6.14 Turbulent water reflects nothing.

Still water reflects the sky.

Into still water, as movement returns, come ripples. Let them be.

Gemma Mason 2023

6.15 In te ao hurihuri — our ever-changing world — where our sense of trust and security is constantly challenged, the capacity to recognise and build trust in our daily relationships is essential to living rich and fulfilling lives in healthy, resilient communities. Conversations with trust at the centre help me to explore with young people how to be in strong, caring relationships as a friend, a child, a partner. A robust sense of trust opens the possibility of fostering felt connections to the human and non-human others.

My hope for these conversations is that they contribute to young people growing open hearts, openness that allows them to reach beyond themselves to a sense of Oneness.

Judith Graham 2021

6.16 Respectful relationships don’t just happen and sometimes we need support. In seeking to engage with mutual respect and trust, to have a willingness to check out our own reactions, to seek clarity and be open to ‘that of God’ in the other, we are living our Quakerism.

Raewyn Robinson 2022

6.17 Alan wrote every day, and I could see that our relationship might be blossoming into an engagement, and ultimately into a marriage. I had to consider this carefully. Being the child of a broken marriage, I had determined that if ever I married it would be a stable and happy relationship. I realised that I could be happy with Alan, but there was one worry: I was unsure about his stand on war as a conscientious objector. If the unthinkable should happen and there was another war, could I support his principles?

Walking round the Black Lake, I did eventually come to a conclusion: the ends do not justify the means. We can never predict the outcome of any course of action. Enterprises started with the best of intentions can still alter course and produce unforeseen consequences. It seemed to me, therefore, that one could only look at the means taken to solve a problem. If the means were unethical, then the ends would not be satisfactory.

Every war that had announced itself to be ‘the war to end all wars’ had only led to further conflicts. So many causes of war came from economic practices, and these could be settled by negotiation. As St Paul had said in his letters to the Romans: “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Some years later when there was a vibrant peace movement, there were banners with the slogan ‘Give Peace a Chance’. This was exactly the conclusion I reached walking around the lake. I could accept Alan’s pacifism and agree with him.

When we met again after the vacation and he asked me to marry him, I was able to accept his proposal wholeheartedly. We would be in philosophic agreement and have the basis for a happy marriage. More than 60 years later, I have never regretted that decision.

Betty Gilderdale 2012

6.18 Sometimes
 our words
 go round,
 from heart
 to mind
 to voice
 to ears
 to mind.
 But no heart
 is melted
 no tears unfrozen
 no logs unjammed.
 But sometimes,
 just sometimes
 just you,
 just me,
 just speaking
 just hearing,
 my pain
 your sadness,
 is enough,
 is more than enough,
 pressed down and running over
 in joy and relief.

John Daly 1999

6.19 If you stop: huge holes will open in the land;
 The earth will crack and old roads become impassable;
 Great chunks of territory will disappear; impossible
 Slips will take whole gullies of trees, a full stand
 Of totara, a lone kauri, groves of kanuka, well planned
 Vege gardens, decorative borders, herb knots, indivisible
 Long stemmed roses ... And as I watch, movements, invisible
 Will take, a millimetre at a time, whole plains jammed
 Full of people down below the sea, whilst dreary plateaux rise

Where springs, creeks, estuaries, harbours and whole oceans
 Once moved and were moved upon. The land waves and writhes;
 The sea skids and jolts; neither drowned nor dry will cease motion
 Till I stop. And though I follow you, for me no quaking;
 No shattering cataclysmic hell; just no waking.

Llyn Richards 2003

- 6.20 I know that I walk tallest, stand straightest, work best and feel happiest when I am with people with whom I can talk about whatever difficulties come among us. When painful knots in relating are unravelled, I dance. When there is no way of tending to those knots, there is heaviness within.

Going into and through the dark in any relationship allows the light to happen.

Mary Rose 2002

- 6.21 We cannot really love our neighbour as ourselves, until we have learned to love ourselves rightly — to accept and understand and value our worth as human beings and members of the vast human family. There are people who seem to do this naturally — who have neither an inflated opinion of themselves that leads to conceit and boastfulness, nor an under-estimation of self that may lead to apologetic uncertainty or lurches from self-abnegation to over-importance — and we love and treasure such fine, balanced natures. But most of us, as well we know, are made up of the wolf and the dove battling with one another, or the thick-skinned rhinoceros and the rabbit, or the lion and the gazelle, and we have the task of accepting our limitations and our natures and bringing all into a whole.

Columba combined within his nature the wolf and the dove, and recognising his own diversity must have given him more understanding for the diversity of others. Sometimes we seem to feel that it is a choice of either/or in our relationships with others and in our community life rather than a combining of

different qualities and gifts into one whole. Is there a Quaker image that includes with approval serenity, gentleness and calm but excludes passion, vigour and movement? Do we find a place for the dove and the wolf in our own natures, in those of others and in our community life?

Ruth Fawell 1965

- 6.22 Soon after becoming a Friend, I attended a teacher training college and on one weekend trip back to see my parents, I had one of my very first gay encounters. This took place at Hyde Park Corner where I met a man and walked into the park with him only to find that we were almost immediately surrounded by about 12 policemen. First we were separated and then I was told that I would be charged for indecent activities even though we were only walking together. In the early 1960s in Britain such a charge would have been a disaster for my teaching career as well as having my name all over the newspapers.

The only people I could think of to tell were the Friends and I chose an elder. He immediately took action and arranged for me to see a Quaker barrister and also a Quaker psychiatrist (a member of my Meeting). The first helped put my mind at rest but did say however that it was not beyond the police to fabricate evidence if they wanted a conviction.

After two meetings with the psychiatrist, I was told that being a homosexual was perfectly normal and that I was to go away and have an exciting and wonderful life. This was at a time when current thinking amongst psychiatrists was to advise 'aversion therapy' in order to 'cure this illness'. In fact, several of my friends did have aversion therapy and what a mess their lives are in now!

To this day I continue to be supported by my Meeting and feel happy that New Zealand has such a fine statement affirming who I am.

John Goodey 1999

6.23 *In 1975, the NZ Friends Newsletter encouraged Friends to contribute their own Advices and Queries. A Young Friend, Tim Smithells, offered these ten, which he said he had found helpful “perhaps because they helped me to clarify my position.”*

1. Do you see each person as a unique individual, and do you show every person who comes into contact with you in your daily life that you see them?
2. Do you listen for the meaning behind others' words? Do you let others know that you need them to hear the message behind your words?
3. Do you listen to, accept, and show respect for the feelings, attitudes and ideas of others, especially those much older or much younger than yourself? Are you honest in showing them who you are?
4. Do you care for others? Do you give them your help, your good will, your understanding, your acceptance, in order to let them grow? Do you seek the good in people?
5. Do you unselfishly place the needs of others ahead of your own needs? Are you there when others need you? Do you accept that others need you, perhaps more, perhaps less, than you need them?
6. Are you openly accepting of changes in others, in their feelings, attitudes, ideas and needs? Are you aware of changes in yourself and of how these may affect others? Do you cope within yourself?
7. Do you set time aside each day for yourself? Do you think of others in this time of solitude and wish them well in their lives?
8. Do you try to bring to the place where you live, be it house, home, flat, hostel or room, an atmosphere of gentleness, warmth, encouragement, friendliness and acceptance? Do you willingly take others in and share with them?
9. Do you part with your possessions and encouragement freely where others have greater need? Do you receive the gifts and encouragement of others graciously?

10. Do you, in every loving relationship you enter into, place the other person unselfishly ahead of yourself? Do you accept those behaviours, which you view as faults in them? Do you tell them of your expectations in the relationship, and do you accept that their expectations may be other than yours? Do you seek honestly to share the sexual responsibilities in your relationship?

6.24 *The Other Person*

Help me not to lose this other person,
 Whom I know to be
 Cherished and loved by you
 Behind a cloud of petty faults and failings
 Negativisms, captiousnesses,
 Which I, drawing my portrait of her
 Stress against my better judgement
 With black and heavy strokes
 At the expense of her many
 Generous acts, her vitality, her laughter,
 Her most unique contribution.
 Help me to stand away,
 To see her truly and draw her truly,
 To preserve her whole,
 Even as I long
 That others, too, may draw me whole.
 Help me not to lose this person
 Behind a cloud of petty faults and failings.

Ruth Fawell 1971

6.25 I believe Quakers, in general, age well. I have reflected on some of our testimonies and practices, thinking how they affect us and those around us.

Seeking after the Truth

An active mind, no matter the age of the owner, is an asset to well-being and health. Do older Quakers read, embark on new learning, discuss and even argue more than the average person? If they do, it seems to be good for their health.

That of God in us all

Quakers know of that of God in us all: from the beginning of life to its ending. The best age is the age you are. So all are respected, valued and included. I think of Summer Gathering as an example of this.

Honesty and Integrity

Honesty and integrity, and therefore acceptance of the natural processes of life, illness, disability, dying and death without denial. Not exclusive to Quakers, but integral to our being, is an honesty within ourselves and to those around us. It should not be a brutal honesty but tempered with tact and tenderness.

Simplicity

Sometimes doctors come across as wanting to take all the enjoyment out of life — the ‘thou shalt not’ attitude. Joy and laughter and singing are all health-giving too, of course. But in an age of overindulgence and demand for instant satisfaction, watching what we eat and drink, and avoiding harm to our bodies and brains, without being obsessional about it, makes sense. I see aging Quakers as proving this point.

Stillness

Much of the illness I see is due to bitterness or unfinished, unforgiven business. We Quakers can be passionate people, active in many fields of justice, peace, and on behalf of our planet. We can come back to the stillness of the Meeting where there is a balance, back to our centre, group, and individual.

All that sitting in silence brings down the blood pressure and slows the heart rate too.

Testimonies to those who have died

We are careful to record the lives, work and gifts of those who have gone before us. This helps to keep our sense of continuity and history as a group. We also have many living, well-rounded, wise, active and vibrant older Quakers and I am grateful for and to them.

Helen Kingston 2001

6.26 The part of the Alternatives to Violence Project that enchants me, is that it has given me — a woman in her late seventies — the opportunity to use all my talents and to keep on growing. Because we affirm one another I have been strengthened enough to have the courage to look at my dark side and bring it out into the open. We spend a great deal of time community building and making it a safe place to speak freely and openly. This takes time, but the results are amazing. We can move mountains.

Myra Giese 1998

6.27 Judith in retirement. Retirement of a kind. Judith immediately took a non-European language course at the University of Auckland...

Before she left the library, Judith mentioned with her usual diffidence that she hoped to start a group. Amnesty International. I didn't know what the organisation was about but I joined up. This was in spite of having to drive across Auckland at night to attend meetings. And of course I had to regularly write letters which I hated. I followed Judith. I followed fearful Judith on to Auckland's Queen Street to protest against apartheid Rugby football. Judith had never attended a Rugby match. I had been to plenty. I followed conservative Judith into one of Auckland's main theatres, perhaps the Civic, to protest against the Vietnam War. Judith had to sit beside a hippy figure with long dark hair and wearing a long dark overcoat, Tim Shadbolt. Judith smiled faintly, looking nevertheless as if her worst fears had come to pass. I envied her absolutely.

Remembering Judith Child (1924-2005)

6.28 Although Jack had been an attender at Quaker Meetings since 1953, it wasn't until 2020 that he applied for membership. He had carried some uneasiness about his lack of religious spirituality throughout his time with Quakers. Greatly influenced by the writings of Lloyd Geering, Jack eventually recognised himself as a non-theist, whose deepest spiritual experiences arose in the wilderness, especially tramping in the mountains.

His values aligned with Friends' Social Testimonies, and he recognised that his practical skills and capacity for leadership

could contribute to the life of the Meeting. When the Mt Eden Meeting House was declared an earthquake risk and needed strengthening, he was the main project coordinator and worked hard to achieve a satisfactory outcome. He was well into his 90s.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Jack Woodward (1926-2023)

6.29 *David Bowskill (1937-1993) was deeply involved in the small Kaitiāia meeting. He travelled long distances to worship with Friends even when unwell.*

The silence of meeting was always important to David and Friends felt very privileged to share regularly with him in worship both in health and through his illness. Throughout his illness he talked openly of his feelings about his approaching death. At times he spoke of his impatience with the sense of powerlessness that his physical deterioration brought but he faced the future with an acceptance that was characteristic of his nature. Always he shared his belief that life should be lived to the full in the here and now.

6.30 *In her late 90s, when Ruth Fawell was knocked down by a car and seriously injured, her life was saved through the work of the emergency services and hospital staff. Later, she acknowledged that — if given the choice — she would have preferred to die. She struggled to believe that her life still had value.*

God spoke to me last night,
 He spoke through the negligence, the carelessness,
 the accident I had sustained.
 He told me that every being
 is of infinite value in his sight,
 that my life which I had been
 so willing, heedlessly, to throw away,

is precious as are the lives of all
 the vast multitude of his creatures.
 That I must learn to treat it
 as something of intrinsic value.
 He told me that I was to learn
 humbly simply, truly to value myself,
 not for any virtue, any gift
 I might possess,
 not just for the need of me
 by husband, children, friends,
 but just because I know myself to be
 treasured and loved by him.

Ruth Fawell 1998

- 6.31 What is different between being old and just being a Quaker at any time of life? The most obvious thing is one's inevitable closeness to death. I am unlikely to embark on ambitious concerns demanding energy and strength, although I still believe in the Quaker counsel to live adventurously and one can certainly still think adventurously. In more physical things one has to remember that one can become a liability.

The chances of having a significantly unpleasant terminal illness and of then being a lingering liability to friends and family are quite high. Accepting impotence and actually being prepared to hand over in humility to others seems the only option, a stage on the way. The urge to be in control, at least of things concerning our intimate selves is strong in most of us.

Will being a Quaker help when it comes to the crunch? Being at Meeting seems a good time to confront the suffering as well as the beauty of the world and makes me hope that it will, but I can only wait and see.

Roberta Highton 2001

- 6.32 To pray for the removal of symptoms would be telling God what to do but finding and highlighting the things of value and that which is good, the eternal Light within, is what a support group can foster and nurture by affirming its power to transform. The art of listening, an openness and vulnerability are essential on both sides of the communication.

Wholeness means openness and results in healing. This confidence-building process requires a transparency and an open dialogue in which all who take part can contribute. A readiness is required which is the personal responsibility of each in the group, a constant vigil. Healing, wholeness, freedom and depth are all one in the Spirit and in Truth.

Chris Daamen 1989

- 6.33 Paul's life was an ongoing search for healing. He was a survivor and drew on Quaker and other mystic traditions, including Buddhism. His knowledge about comparative religion he often expressed in creative ways, writing and drawing about spiritual ideas. "He was focussed on the things that are eternal."

Paul loved companionship, yet connection was a challenge and Paul found confrontation terrifying. With courage and patience, he was a seeker of truth and inner peace.

He found spiritual nourishment through imagery and dreams, writing poetry, drawing, reading and study, in meditation and dance, but above all by immersing himself in nature.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the Life of Paul Thornton (1959-2017)

- 6.34 All his life Jim was physically active and community involved. In 1999 he was diagnosed with terminal cancer but lived until 2017. He focused his energy on his experiences and his understanding of spirituality and his place in the universe.

For Jim, “any activity done with love and presence is a spiritual practice”. Including dealing with cancer symptoms.

A daily practice was choosing four words to guide him during that day, e.g. connection, love, being, gratitude. ‘Gratitude’ was frequently on the list.

Remembering Jim Halliday (1927-2017)

6.35 *Gratitude*

Sometimes, when alone
 in this my old age
 I feel that if I could see my blood flowing
 I would see in it here and there
 gold flecks of gratitude
 for benefits previously unrecognised,
 but certainly received
 in youth, in middle age,
 and now, too, while old.
 Seemingly, as grit and ignorance dissolve
 along with the rest of me
 into nothingness,
 gratitude replaces them.
 Those unthanked benefactors!
 so many gone, gone, gone:
 those givers of my life’s needs.
 Perhaps I could think of Heaven
 as a place where,
 despite departures,
 we still get to offer our belated thanks
 For blessings received
 and not even noticed at the time.

Claudia Fox 2002

6.36 We do not know what form if any, life after death may take; each of us is free to conceive of death as an end to consciousness as we know it, as the continuation of our spiritual life or as a new beginning. We feel that we are called to work for the reign of God on earth; therefore, we do not need to dwell on an afterlife.

Quakers in Aotearoa 2002

6.37 When alone one fine first day afternoon with my dear wife, some weeks before she died, and when her mental faculties were unclouded, but when she felt her earthly life was drawing to a close, she wished to give me messages for members of our family and relatives, in case she should not be able to do so later on, and after receiving special messages from her, she said, "Tell all my friends" (and I am sure she would include not only Friends who knew her, but even those who did not, so wide was her loving outlook, seeking to encompass every soul in tender solicitude) "of my love for them and of my deep concern for their happiness and well-being, and of my trust that they will find this happiness in yielding themselves wholly to the loving, living Saviour, not only for salvation, but for constant guidance and strength to walk in the narrow way and to do God's Will on earth."

John Rigg as testimony to his wife Hannah (1852-1927)

6.38 Another Friend has been taken away from this world of shadow and has entered into the realm of light. Those left behind have had to mourn the loss of a dear one yet they have not mourned as those without hope; for they know that through faith in a crucified and risen Redeemer, death to her has been an entrance into life eternal.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Mary Harlock (1819-1893)

6.39 On the face of it, my mother's acute suffering and death in 1951 should have been a devastating, faith-shaking blow. Instead, without ameliorating the physical suffering involved, affecting the outcome or resolving any of the intellectual problems, I was caught up in my mother's ordeal and rescued by wholly unexpected encounters with what Rudolph Otto described as the "numinous."

Amongst this experience a day-time world transfigured, light, unity, quiet joy and a night watch of profound peace. All familiar enough in the literature but for me it was 'saving grace' and profoundly affirming. Since then, life has had its moments but there has been no repetition of those earlier experiences.

Richard Thompson 2004

6.40 I was with Terisha at the Otago Community Hospice while she was dying. Terisha entered the hospice on Friday. On Sunday, Terisha was sleeping most of the day and not very conscious. My bed was next to and level with Terisha's.

It was around 10-11pm and it was dark, and I woke up and was looking in Terisha's direction and suddenly she turned towards me, and her face was animated, and her eyes seemed to be filled with love and light. She had light around her face, it felt like the light was in Terisha, but was infinite, which was an indication of where she was and where she was going. The light seemed to overcome my grief and fear, and she reached out not only to hug me, but to be hugged. When I woke up the next morning, she was unconscious and didn't regain consciousness, before dying on Monday night.

While my grief and sense of loss have not gone away, they have been lightened, and certainly my fear of death, both for myself and her has dissipated to some extent. I believe her consciousness or soul is on a journey towards light.

Marvin Hubbard 2022

6.41 *Gone, no address*

When people die
I wish they'd leave
A forwarding
Address.
I'd often like
To share with them
Our joys and our
Distress.

Norman Bennett 1971

Note: After reading the above, Edward Dowsett wrote:

I was deeply moved by Norman's short poem. He expressed a very natural feeling that all who have been bereaved must at times experience. His lament, however poetically expressed, appears to be a sort of half-truth. For me it is less than that. It may well be that some, perhaps many, die and leave no address.

On the other hand, it is the testimony of many that this is not always so. I can only speak for myself but, through the years there have been not a few whom I have, in this life, known in the 'things that are Eternal' who have definitely died and in dying have left an address. The address is simply God. In God we have a meeting place — a place of fellowship — a Holy Communion. This I have known.

6.42 The grace of God in the lives of committed people will always have testimonies whether written or silently stored up in the hearts of those who believe. It is a strength to many of us to remember such people and to feel their influence as a continuing factor in our own lives. We recognised the grace of God while they were with us but later it seemed even more telling as we recalled it.

A Friend who was sitting through a funeral service became caught up in contemplation of the statement in Isaiah about the word of God. "It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." The life that was gone and the lives that remained seem all to be the words of God, returning as they accomplished what they have been sent to do, returning not empty-handed. The willingness to be sent, to live as committed people seems to matter tremendously.

Through such lives of obedience, the secret and powerful word of God is spoken bringing us into the renewal of life and an answering obedience. This is part of the continuing revelation, the witness of the spirit with our spirit that, whatever our age or situation, we are still the children of God.

Winifred McNaughton 1975

6.43 I have been puzzling quite a bit on the problem that has clearly been perplexing Davy as he wonders where his Uncle Ted has gone — his sudden disappearance. That must be quite a jolt for a youngster to encounter something he was quite unprepared for. I think you told us he was asking about it, and I have been much wondering how you were managing it.

So many people are so frightened of death that it is almost a hoodoo subject. It seems to me quite natural that near the end of my life I have pondered more on this.

My conclusion is that I have only one life to live. I am living it now. That death is death, the end of my individual existence as a person. It will lead to the end of my living body and I can discover no grounds for expecting my life to go on and on elsewhere in a disembodied ethereal state. Such an eternal existence would be unbearable. Try to think of the millions of trillions of persons stuck forever, all together where and what for? To me the very idea of life eternal is unthinkable and unacceptable. A product of human egotism and vanity. Being such an ancient idea does not lend it any support. People thought that the earth was flat, and that the sun went round the earth; but that didn't change the cosmos.

But how to explain such thoughts to a little boy?

P. S. I have to confess I see quite clearly that the conclusions I have come to may be slightly or seriously in error. As the human mind tries to understand the truth of the world and life, it has to know that the complex it perceives and examines must of necessity be partial and in error in various ways. On that point I have no doubts. I have little doubt: I see through a glass darkly.

Bernard Elphick 1990

6.44 When our family friend died by his own hand, a brilliant young doctor in his 30s leaving three beautiful small daughters and his dedicated partner (also a doctor), I was overwhelmed with a sense of sorrow. The whole business made no sense to me, and I was angry too.

I went to Meeting next day and in grief, spoke briefly how he had died the day before, God knows why. Then the comforting side of those words came to me, spoken first in puzzlement, but then as a revelation. God alone will know. Despite terrible loss, and sorrow and anger, God's wisdom and God's time became a comfort of themselves.

Mel Bogard 1998

6.45 Well, I don't understand life after death at all. I only think this that somewhere or other, before I was born, I was around and that I was alright. Wherever I was, I was quite safe, and maybe when I die, I'll still be around. But I don't imagine myself having this type of existence or conceiving of life as it is now. There are some who say that souls already dead, relatives or whatever, will be there to greet you. I've heard people say that who really meant it.

Well, I don't know whether there is a soul or not, I really have no thoughts about it, except that I think whatever it is, it will be okay.

Muriel Morrison 1991

6.46 It seems that I was meant to be part of the Fellowship of Healing, just at the time when I could have been living a life of quiet desperation. The healing experiences of the Fellowship have always been related to the inner life, although together we have explored many types of healing; not dwelling on the sickness or distress of the person, but rather on the idea of their wholeness.

This was perfectly illustrated for me in my husband's terminal illness. Cases of oesophagus cancer, the Wellington surgeon said, rarely last a year after diagnosis. My husband lived for 3½ years and during that time, we came to understand and appreciate one another more than in all the previous 40 years of a very rocky and at times tempestuous marriage, and for this respite, I can thank the prayers of my many F(f)riends of all denominations.

Freda Larsen 1989

6.47 'May we hold our Friend in the Light'.

These words are frequently heard in a Healing Fellowship Meeting. We settle down and close our eyes, a few like-minded Friends gathered for Healing. We are a Spirit-motivated group, seeking in silence God's healing power. With each prayer for the sick, each loving thought, each concern and deep compassion from the heart, the Spirit touches the whole group and a power builds up within the Meeting. Sometimes a pinprick of Light appears in the deep recesses of our minds. In my own case prickling behind my eyes alerts me and I take my Friend by the hand and lead him/her into the Light, leaving them there, confident they are enveloped in Love and Healing Power.

This over-simplification of how I experience the Light is my own, in the same way that God is 'my God' and 'your God' is yours.

Dori Clayton 1995

6.48 Change can be uncomfortable. Risking our innermost understandings can be painful if not received with love. Have we the courage to move closer to one another and speak our truth in a non-threatening way? For numbers of us this may be an alarming prospect. What can we do to reassure one another, to be ready to accord the same love and respect that we would hope for ourselves? In short, what is the Quakerly way to deal with differences?

We have resources to draw on from our peace testimony; from Friends' history of mediation; from our experience of the Alternatives to Violence Project; from our familiar method of creative listening. Perhaps this last, being closer to many of us and personally practiced, gives us direct guidelines for dealing truthfully and lovingly with our differences.

Being respectful, choosing for ourselves how much we wish to share, stating our own positions without trying to convince others, listening with care for the other, drawing from our own experience to help us understand the other, avoiding judgement, exercising tolerance and patience.

You don't have to be a Quaker to practice these attitudes, as many of us have found in other settings. It is an approach that many Friends find compatible and helpful.

Barbara Mountier 2000

- 6.49 I was so pregnant that Janet (who was sitting next to me) could see my skirt jump as the infant moved inside me. I was thinking about an issue of *Friends Journal* whose cover quotation read: "You move within me Lord, like the stirrings of an unborn child." I had glanced at it every night during my early pregnancy — back in the days when I felt permanently pregnant.

Deciding to have a child was one of the most difficult decisions of my life. And a strange perceptual change began from the point of that decision. I became aware of my vulnerability to time. I saw myself on a road that circles and progresses that includes my forebears and my descendants. Intellectually, I have always been aware of mortality, but emotionally — I have felt quite immune.

I sat there in Meeting on Waiheke, feeling this child stirring and stirring, wondering what does this stirring have to do with my indistinct vision of God? And what came to me was — the necessity and inevitability of change. Pregnancy is a constantly changing state, but then surely life is constantly changing, too?

The move into motherhood confronted me with the life cycle and the constancy and stability of change — I don't think that's a contradiction of terms.

My vision of God includes this infinite process of change. How we meet this challenge bonds us humans in common struggle.

The stirrings of the unborn child have brought me back to the point of acknowledging with my whole being that I am part of that process of change, which keeps our lives alive.

Sue Stover 1984

6.50 Healing came on gentle wings
 Insisted on entry
 Tapped through the frost covered window
 until
 wearied by words and arguments
 I freed the latch
 let her in.
 She brushed my cheeks with warmth
 feather soft, beckoned me
 along unexpected paths
 and opened doors of kindness.
 Healing came
 insistent
 silent

Josephine North 1997

6.51 We of the bonus time are the fortunate ones.

We have come to the devastating crisis of our lives and survived. By some miracle there is a way back. Not knowing how, and with more support than we realise, we move into the bonus time. Whether the sick one, the family or friends, we all move into this gift period.

After the anticipatory grief, anger and fear have resolved, a period of calmness and peace descends. We are happy to have this extra time and sad for those suddenly taken who have no time for goodbyes or a second chance.

With extra time comes clarity of thought; a greater appreciation of family and friends; a release from petty emotions and a crystallisation of values; we know the worst of ourselves — and the best. We have time to savour each day to the full and realise our part in the complex weave of life.

Daphne Painting 2002

6.52 A generation like no other, we have reached middle age still challenging old conventions and determined to find fulfilment in ways previously undreamed. Haltingly, often with indecision and at times confusion, we are groping our way forward to establish alternative conventions and follow new paths.

The traditional enduring patterns of love and marriage have eluded many of us. Increasingly, we have come to view the success of relationships more in terms of quality than in ability to endure. We have been confronted with shattered marriages, and for some, altered sexual orientation. We have been forced to cope with adversity and create new lives. The experience has enriched and inspired many of us. We are more confident, more aware and often more compassionate than we would otherwise have been.

The search for love, for security, for a partnership in which we can grow and be ourselves is still the priority for many. Some of us find it, and some of us don't. In the end, the quest itself can turn out to be as important as the discovery.

Some speak of what they have learned from the failure of an old relationship and the building of the new. Some describe it as an adventure, a period of a renewed sense of self and of a better future. We are, indeed, recycled people.

From our pain, our hope and our courage, we have distilled abilities to establish fresh pairings and give and receive considerable joy.

We have come a long way and learnt a great deal; we have much to offer and much to bestow, for, as many of us have discovered, there is nothing to compare with the giving or receiving of the reconditioned heart.

Coral Atkinson and Paula Wagemaker 2000

6.53 So I can take this message: how have I acted towards those around me? And know that this is the only valid way for my life to be judged. This is a huge and continuing personal challenge to me. It is so much easier to choose to whom I will give my love (and therefore either minister or withhold from that person the love of God).

At the very core of this man, Jesus, the base from which all his teachings and his actions sprang, was compassion, a love that embraces all. His life asks me to consider love, the source of all good and how this operates in my own life and how to give this love. I need to be careful that what I am giving is love, not simply preference. The example that his life sets is that he lived his message instead of just holding theories and proposing philosophies. I am invited to do the same in each day of this life I have been given.

I can start afresh.

Linda Fisher 1999



7

Walking in the Light Hīkoi i te Māramatanga

7.01 Lord, I pray to keep always within me that awareness that all my actions, even to the turning of a tap, affects the lives of others. Let me be so sensitive to the needs of others and to the glories of your universe that I live as delicately and as harmlessly as possible.

Betty Fowler 1979

7.02 If we are to serve the world, we have to try to understand it.

Ruth Fawell 1968

7.03 What are we Quakers doing? Some of us, recalling the noble support that our Society has given in the past to forward movements, have been glad to believe that numbers mattered little and that we might yet ‘build bravely’ despite our decline in numerical importance. Have we not the secret of power — faith in the human personality, with its spark of the divine? Has not that faith moved mountains in the past? Friends spoke much at General Meeting about the challenge that comes to our Society in this time of stress. The challenge has been before us long enough. What have we done? What are we doing? Is our light hidden under a ‘bushel’ of formalism and exclusiveness? Or have we the vision for lack of which the people perish? How can we reach the people? The challenge is to each of us.

Jennie Street 1933

7.04 The idea of a relational God is consistent with my understanding of the Quaker idea of Meeting for Worship, which emphasises the corporate rather than individual, meditative nature of worship. The idea of spirit-led decisions emerging from the ‘gathered’ Meeting for Worship for Business is another example of relational rather than individualist thinking. Quaker discernment is an exercise in seeking the leadings of the Spirit in the connections in community, through which truths emerge for that community for that time. The Quaker mystical tradition has also always emphasised the path of engagement rather than withdrawal from community in the search for ‘Truth’.

Furthermore, the Quaker idea that all of life is sacramental has taken on new meaning for me as I have thought about the implications of a relational spirit. A sacrament has been described as “a means through which the spirit is experienced” (Borg, p. 31) and in many churches, sacraments became ritualised observances on particular occasions. Quakers have always rejected this ritualisation and believed that all of life was sacramental and the Spirit could be experienced even in the most mundane tasks of everyday life.

Murray Short 2022

- 7.05 During the day when decisions need to be made about what to do, where to go and what to say, I pause, take a breath and ask, “What does Love require of me?”

Remembering that Love is kind, patient, tolerant and compassionate, I wait for a leading which could be a whispering, a nudge to act, a feeling or a direction through something I read or someone I speak to. Or there could be no answer. This usually means do nothing. Solutions sometimes unfold in the most unexpected ways. My day ends with a period of silence in which I express gratitude for the guidance given and a sense of Oneness with the Loving Spirit of God.

Samuel Hartman 2022

- 7.06 The metaphor I developed for my spiritual practice is: to tend one’s spiritual home.

The home-tending metaphor is grounded in place, locates the spiritual process internally rather than externalising it, and is concerned with life in the present rather than the future.

As such it is feminist and relational because it includes and attends to relationships with the earth, people, and time. It is structurally non-hierarchical — there is no best home or single model.

We can all have one: you can create yours and I can create mine, and they will all be different in style, decoration, and location, even if they include many of the same components.

Linda Wilson 2016

- 7.07 Any insights that come these days are as likely to happen at the clothesline as when worshipping. As I sit there, all too often my silent thoughts seem to wing away into emptiness. However, I have a chance to review past actions and future plans, holding them up to the Light for flaws. During this time, I want to hear from other people about their seeking and insights in the hope that it will help me in mine.

World problems I hear about every day, but in our prosaic day-to-day living there are too few opportunities to speak about the things of

God. At the end of the Meeting, I find that two things have invariably happened to me: there is a lessening of tension and pressure within, and I feel more tender to those around.

I must be content with this state of affairs at present. It has become clear to me that the inner life cannot be rushed. On the other hand, it will remain static at this state unless I continue the quest and wait on God without ceasing. My past taste of nearness to him has whetted my appetite. I must continue to 'grow in the life' by every means possible. One of these means offered is the Meeting for Worship, and I gratefully use it, knowing that if I am faithful, it can lead me where I must go.

Vera Dickinson 1972

Postscript: Now aged 77, I can look back. The good supply of health and energy I have been given, plus the support of a loving husband enabled undertakings which cold logic would have steered clear of and necessitated a closeness to God in order to be carried out successfully. With deep thankfulness, I continue the journey.

Vera Dickinson 2003

7.08 I did it! I spoke during Meeting for Worship! It was a small Meeting, about 20 were there. It felt gathered. There were at least five who spoke. I was third going around the room! Betty N. started, then Olive with a reading of an epistle.

I had listened to the radio before rising, when three mothers spoke about Mother's Day memories and what was important to them. I heard one express the value of being present to the family as members were growing up. This triggered further thoughts for me. During Meeting various questions rose for me about sharing the importance of being present with the Spirit in and around us all when relating to others. We don't have to be physically present always. Being present with someone as we talk on the phone, or write a letter as well as being present while talking in person, is valuable. It's important to be with each other in Spirit, in caring, sharing and love.

Ann Olsen 1999

7.09 Claudia was born in Merivale, Christchurch, shortly after the end of World War I. Her father was greatly affected by the ‘Great War’ and the ‘Depression’. The family moved many times during her childhood, both in Christchurch and Wellington and there was little stability in her family life. After her parents’ separation, the frequent moves continued. She found refuge in reading and was largely self-educated, as her formal schooling ended for financial reasons when she was just 11. In her late twenties Claudia completed a BA in Economics by correspondence.

Claudia was a true Quaker contemplative. Every morning she listed possible ways of using her energy for that day and waited for her Guide to lead her. Many found it comforting and inspiring when she talked unselfconsciously about the practice of ‘forgiving her younger self’. She was a poet, writing reflective pieces as life, and her spiritual journey taught her new lessons. She was known for her divergent thinking, her deep values and feelings, and her curious mind.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Claudia Fox (1921-2018)

7.10 I have often wondered whether Jesus meant us to regard as attainable in this life his advice, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect”. Howard Brinton has something to say on the subject. For the Quaker, perfection and its consequent inner peace can be reached when all of God’s immediate requirements as understood are faithfully met. These requirements are never so great that the individual cannot meet them.

God requires more of a man than of a boy; more of a saint than of a sinner. As Isaac Penington put it: “There is a growing in the life even where the heart is purified from sin, even as Christ did grow and wax strong in spirit, for a state of perfection doth not exclude degrees.”

It is so encouraging to feel that we may try for perfection in easy stages, so to speak. The God of Ages has not changed. The harsh and fearful Yahweh of old is the same God whom Jesus regarded as Father.

So if God is always perfect, then it is man's view of perfection that has changed. Perhaps what has happened over the ages could also happen in one man's lifetime, so his goal of perfection is raised.

I don't see this as an elusive chase of the rainbow's end, but rather as the satisfaction of ticking off the milestones on the uphill road towards union with God at some stage beyond this life.

Kathleen Rose 1972

7.11 The seemingly impossible situations, the humanly insoluble problems can drive us deeper and higher to seek for a strength and wisdom beyond the human. True, help may come through human channels, but if the right solution is to be found, only after the inner contact has been made.

Once we have had some experience of God, we can be held from the Centre at all times or rather we can know that we are so held, for he has never left us but there are many degrees of awareness and each new degree is preceded by a time of stress in one form or another. Sometimes the inner and outer conditions are so turbulent that we may need the upholding of others if we are to maintain or regain our equilibrium, but always there is that bit we have to overcome on our own, trusting to the unseen angelic mediation, or we should not grow.

Wisdom is needed to know when to ask for help and when to refrain as wisdom, too, is needed by those who mediate and here, too, the Spirit will guide. The Lord is our Shepherd and there are times when that is the one thought we can cling to. "Yea, though I walk through the valley darkened by the shadows of evil, I shall not fear."

The valley experiences do not last forever. Each one leads on to the next immediate height to be attained, thanks to the Infinite Love and Wisdom of our God who is drawing us all slowly or quickly in the measure of our response back to Himself.

May we become aware of the inflowing magnetic streams of His Love and be willing to respond and arise!

Margaret Lenk 1973

7.12 I have seen advice to Friends to ‘live in moderation’ — No, No, NO!

Since when have ‘moderate’ people attracted a challenged and inspired following? Jesus, Gandhi, the redoubtable Elizabeth Fry, the many Friends who have done remarkable and costly things, often in uncomfortable and dangerous circumstances to advance their vision of God’s Kingdom on Earth?

Or, in perhaps more widely understood terms, to make the world a better place for those who most need it to be a better place.

Shall we promulgate a new beatitude, ‘Blessed be the moderate’? Is it moderation that will drive us to constantly deepen our awareness of the essential needs of those of our fellow creatures who have least, or none, of this Earth’s resources? Is it moderation that will lead us to an equitable sharing of our resources?

Will a moderate attitude to life aid us in habitually examining our thoughts and actions, so that we may prevent outcomes which do too little to diminish poverty, protect the environment, seek justice in the world?

Is it moderation that will instill in us an abomination of and outrage against injustice? How do we apply the principles of moderation to prayer? And please tell me, how will being moderate lead to our developing our full potential?

Yes, moderation is to be shunned as a boy shuns soap, as a little cockroach shuns the light.

Tony Maturin 2002

7.13 *Located near the Auckland meetinghouse is Mt Eden Jail. During World War I — and for several years beyond — the Auckland Meeting was monitoring the status of imprisoned Conscientious Objectors, as well as providing them with practical, spiritual and moral support. Thus began a Christmas tradition that lasted over 100 years — the delivery of a posy of flowers to each prisoner at the jail. It was the imprisoned Conscientious Objectors that asked for the Meeting’s support, not only for themselves but for the ‘civil’ prisoners as well.*

During the whole of the past year the absence in prison of many of our young men Friends from the Meeting has been greatly felt. At one period 12 were serving sentences but the signing of the Armistice put an end to the re-sentencing of the religious and conscientious objectors and as the terms of their imprisonment expire, they are gradually coming back again, so at the present time (June 8) there are only four members of Auckland Monthly Meeting in detention. Of this number, John Bennett and Percy Wright are doing a further term of two years' hard labour which followed on their completing eleven months' sentences. They hoped to be released about January 1920, while Edward Dowsett and Walter Duke who have not finished their first terms of two years' hard labour, expect to be out about July or August of this year.

The matter of the continued imprisonment and differential treatment of COs was the subject of a letter to the Acting Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice on behalf of the Meeting.

Part of the balance of our funds for prison literature to conscience objectors was spent on reading and picture books for ordinary civil prisoners, and much labour was spent by some of our members in the past year preparing scrapbooks and sending them to prison for use by those who could not read and write. These were greatly appreciated by such prisoners, as was testified by our members who were released and by letters of appreciation since received.

Report of Auckland Monthly Meeting to General Meeting 1919

- 7.14 *During World War I, Young Friends' Newsletters described the events affecting their group and other conscientious objectors.*

Conditions change rapidly and events are continually happening during these days of war and as each day passes, we wonder who will be the next to be caught in the Militarists' net.

Arthur and Robert Farrand, Percy Gill, Harold Wright and Fred Parr, all members of Auckland Meeting, are daily expecting arrest, as also are others known to us, among them being Brian Allely and Arthur Blanchard. I am due to parade on 15th inst.

We are feeling greatly strengthened and desire that all who are in touch with our circle may feel the deep joy and exhilaration which comes as we face the unknown future. That perfect love which casts out fear is surrounding us and you.

In closing, may I express the deep desire that we young men and women Friends may dig deeper still? We have only just begun to turn the soil, let us delve. Great treasures await us, our hands are upon the plow, let us make a deep furrow.

On behalf of Auckland Young Friends,

Edward Dowsett 1917

- 7.15 Since our last letter, one of our number, Harold Wright has received a sentence of two years hard labour. He was taken to Mt Eden Gaol on the morning of Dec. 4th, and within two hours of his arrival there was at work on the stone quarry.

After spending two nights there he was taken along with three other prisoners to Kaingaroa, 30 miles south of Rotorua. It was raining when they arrived at their destination so T. Bentley and H. Blundell were ready to give Harold a welcome, and they had the afternoon free for a chat, being very glad to hear all the latest news. The clock at Kaingaroa is put forward 75 minutes so they rise with the lark, and when 'lights out' comes, it is still twilight. Each man has a hut of his own containing bed, table, chair, lamp, billy, plate, knife and fork, and a hearth brush. Their work consists chiefly of planting trees, and sometimes is several miles away from 'home'.

Little or no communication is allowed with the other prisoners, except on rare occasions: one of these occurred recently when a bush fire necessitated strenuous exertions, and the COs did a good share in saving many miles of private fencing and preventing the destruction of the young trees.

Mr. J. Olley of Hastings has now joined the Kaingaroa group, after spending four months in Hut 21.

George and Joseph Billings, and Colin Robertson, members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Auckland were court-marshalled on

Dec. 7th, and are now awaiting sentence at Fort Cautley, Devonport.

Another of our circle, Robert W.E. Pudney, had his appeal heard on Dec. 14th, and on its being dismissed was taken under close arrest to Fort Cautley where he now awaits Court Martial.

The rules are much more strictly enforced now, owing to the recent escape of German Prisoners, so visits are limited to 15 minutes each.

Evelyn Wright 1917

- 7.16 *When remembering John Brailsford (1884-1956), Edward Dowsett wrote that he "lit many lamps" including in prison where his passionate pacifism deeply affected conscientious objectors in World War I.*

John was an inspiration and a source of strength to the small band of conscientious objectors. Those of us who were in prison with him knew full well that he expected of us an unswerving loyalty to the pacifist cause. Few of us could keep pace with him. His idealism was so terrific that he was always ahead of us. Sometimes he asked more of us than we were able to give, but he stirred the flagging zeal and simply made us follow. It was John Brailsford who refused to let any one of us give way to self pity; it was John who helped us to think first of our fellow prisoners and to refuse all concessions that were not also granted to the outlaws from society serving sentences for crimes of a different kind from ours. It was, it must also be recorded, John Brailsford's outspoken championing of the 'civil' prisoners' cause that landed him in close confinement and led some of us into a prolonged hunger strike.

- 7.17 Minute 2: The conscientious objectors of our Society, and others like minded have fared badly; but some of our members considered it right to help our Empire in its hour of need and chose ambulance work. Three members of our meeting, Henry and Cecil Wardell and J. H. White (James) left New Zealand to assist in ambulance work, and we are pleased to record that their work was appreciated by the state. We are thankful that travelling mercies were granted them. Though often exposed to danger, none of them were wounded.

Dunedin Two Months Meeting 1918

7.18 All efforts in the cause of peace lay near his heart and from 1912 onwards, during the years of practical protest by New Zealand Friends against the compulsory military training of boys and conscription under the Defence Act, Egerton Gill shared in many attendances before Magistrates on behalf of conscientious objectors, whether members of our own Society or of other shades of conviction and was ever ready with sympathy and advice. His office was several times searched by the authorities and he was twice fined for peace publications — then legally seditious.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Egerton Gill (1878-1937)

7.19 Taking his standing courageously for peace he suffered much for conscience's sake during the period of the First World War. In speaking of his experiences in prison, and it was seldom he mentioned them, it was noticeable how lightly he dwelt on the injustice and cruelty he endured. He would tell of his relationships with his fellow prisoners and how, below a tough and criminal exterior of some of them he could discover finer feelings and aspirations. One can remember a smile on his face, as he would tell of his efforts by a look or undertone of speech to try and bring nobler sentiments to the surface. He was so much revered by his fellow prisoners that they found ways and means at the time of his release of presenting him with a beautiful token of their esteem. Greatly did he prize this gift.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of William Newby (1893-1958)

7.20 In Flanders Fields red poppies grow
Between the crosses row on row
And in some corners white poppies grow
Honouring those who chose to say "No"
Mourning for those who did not go
To war, but had it thrust upon them, ravaging
Bereaving, displacing, their Mother Earth damaging.
For them and for soldiers, the white poppies say
With the dawn of each new day
We can find a better way.

Stephanie du Fresne 2018

7.21 I have tried to make it clear that our Peace Testimony is rooted and grounded in a spiritual experience, an experience that is an intimate Divine-human relationship. It is bound up with another and greater testimony, also born of that relationship. I refer to our testimony to the worth of the individual soul and of the right of the individual to a full measure of spiritual freedom. In its 'appeal to the nation' on the Military Training Bill in May 1939, the Meeting for Sufferings declared, "The compulsion of men to learn how to destroy their fellow men is an assumption by the state of an authority over human personality that is an outrage upon God and man." It seems necessary to emphasise that phrase 'an assumption by the state of an authority over human personality.'

Let us have no illusions about the present situation, nor let us minimise the issues that are at stake. The nations of the world are engaged in a life and death struggle — a struggle that threatens to assume titanic proportions. The whole world may yet become a shambles at best; our civilisation may be shaken to its foundations. Unable, because the way of Christ has not, yet, been made the way to peace to cope with totalitarian aggression, the Allies are at war. At war, they believe, to save the world from tyranny; to save what is left of freedom. The Allies may fail — it is not inconceivable. The result of that failure we hardly dare imagine. The Church of Christ may again be imperiled. She may be driven underground as were the early Christians to the Catacombs — it is by no means beyond the range of possibility. And greatest of all dangers, in their attempts to vanquish their enemies, the Democracies may, themselves, be forced to use the weapons of totalitarianism. So might freedom be lost in the attempt to save it.

But what are we Quakers to do? Are we still going to maintain our testimony against all war? Let us be serious about this for the times are desperately serious. And let us be ready to lose our lives and, if needs be, the life of our Society, if by so doing, we can save anything of worth for the world and for the Kingdom of God. The call comes clear to all of us irrespective of age or sex,

not merely to enlistment for the duration of the war, but to enlistment for all time.

As a Society, we must stand aside from this war of nations. We do not believe that matching force with force is Christ's way. But ours can be no 'holier than thou' attitude. We must, with all men, accept our responsibility for the war. We have not, since 1660, lived enough in the 'life and power' that would have taken away the occasion of all war.

Whether we like it or not, we are part of the world that is at war and our responsibility to the community and nation of which we form a part must be fully recognised. If we will not fight and die for our country — still more for the principle of sound democratic freedom — we must, at least, be prepared to live for it.

Edward Dowsett 1940

- 7.22 *In 1939, her poem 'Flowers of war' won a prize for Patrice Morant (White). She later wrote "That prize was followed by a visit from a plain clothes policeman, questioning my views on the war.*

"The application for my training college was refused so I decided to get a job in the interim at the Hokitika Mental Hospital. I lasted only a few months when word came through from Wellington that I was to be dismissed immediately. No reason was given."

Flowers of War

The rata is too red this bitter year,
 We who have known so much of suffering
 Can't quell our rebel hearts, while flowers fling
 Blood's colour at us like a vengeful spear.
 The Kowhai flaunts her gold too boldly here
 Avert your eyes, it is not good to see
 That guilty colour worn by any tree,
 Since gold has laid youth on a bloody bier.

- 7.23 Jos Brusse (1913-1987) was born in Rotterdam, Holland and immigrated to New Zealand in 1954. As a 14-year-old schoolboy

he printed illegal pamphlets in his father's basement raising issues of social justice in Holland. As a young man Jos trained in agriculture.

He was asked by the International Quaker body to set up a farm section at their International Boarding School in Ommen. He was in charge of that throughout World War II, hoping to train German-Jewish boys for work in the USA and so help them escape from the terror of Nazism. In this workplace he found his belief in God among people who like him cared for the peace and justice issues so dear to his heart. He also met and married Angela, a teacher from the primary school section.

Together Jos and Angela kept the Quaker Farm School going after the German occupation had commandeered everything else belonging to the school, including some pupils who had been unable to get away and were sent to concentration camps. The farm was close to the German border, there was an ammunition dump, a local concentration camp and a school building now occupied by Hitler Jügend (Youth) all within easy walking distance. Yet both Jos and Angela were able through those years to play their humble role in the Dutch underground resistance.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Jos Brusse (1913-1987)

- 7.24 While he was in the army, he began to learn the Japanese language, as he felt a need to improve understanding between nations, even those who were our enemies. He joined the Allied Translations and Interpreter Service and was used by the armed forces as an interpreter notably at the peace negotiations in September 1945.

The interest in the Japanese language and culture continued throughout his life, and he found many ways to cement friendly relationships with Japanese people. In the last year of his life, he finished an article for which he had done much research, arguing that it was not necessary to have used the atom bomb against Japan. Driven by the same spirit of developing understanding, he chose to study Russian at the height of the Cold War.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Eric Thompson (1922-2000)

7.25 After I'd been living in Japan for only a few months, my parents came to visit. When I introduced my mother (born in 1922) to the mother of a Japanese friend who was about the same age, the two of them were amazed at how similar their experiences during the Second World War had been despite being in nations that were at war with and demonized each other. Both Mum and Mrs. Oshima had been through heavy bombing, seen the resulting numerous injuries and death, undergone strict rationing and swapping what they could for food, and had nightly blackouts. This was revealing, uplifting, and moving for all 3 of us, showing that 'the other' suffers just as we do and that we are all essentially the same with our common humanity — or, as Thich Nhat Hanh says, we all “interBe”.

Jillian Yorke 2021

7.26 *In 1944, John Johnson of the Quaker Relief and Reconstruction Committee reported to New Zealand Friends that, despite the apparent needs of war-torn Europe, they needed to be prepared for post-war service work within this country.*

One cannot help but be deeply impressed with the earnestness that is being shown by those responsible for the present early organisation for postwar work, but as one who went through it here in New Zealand at the close of the last war, I would add a word perhaps of caution lest we feel that distant fields are more ready for harvest than our own.

There is every likelihood of 'history repeating itself' here in New Zealand in the form of some scourge or epidemic. Is there any better preparatory training than to make ourselves ready to give moral, mental and finally spiritual help in such a struggle? Those that went through the 'epidemic' in 1918 know that 'struggle' is a light term to use.

What is wanted then more than anything is a supremely unconscious, selfless and altogether faithful labour of love. It is no easy test to move here in New Zealand amongst those who struggle for life amongst poverty, hunger, dirt and loved little ones needing

aid, yet that should be work to which we feel called should the need come. Our Quaker faith has room for its utmost and most practical practice. How many are ready now? If we fail to stand up to that test, is it any use our seeking to go overseas where we might be but a handicap and have to meet conditions far worse and possibly more dangerous to life?

The first training necessary is to be able to live adventurously. Our Society badly needs 'Commando' Quakers at this stage in its history. How many are there really in New Zealand? Are we able to explain how the Spirit of God heals both body and soul and brings calmness and trust to those who suffer, through example, what we have so long done in precept?

7.27 Just as World War II was ending, a group of 12 young New Zealanders, including four Quakers, arrived in southwest China as part of the Friends' Ambulance Unit. In difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances, they helped run hospitals and transported medical supplies. The experience changed their lives.

In the 1940s, living and working in China was a highly adventurous undertaking for young New Zealanders. For most, however, it became more than just an exciting interlude in their lives. Some found that the China experience led to new careers, or to specific fields within already chosen careers. Others found their time with the FAU encouraged them to use a more cooperative approach in their work relationships. Some became more politicised in their views of poverty and aid, deciding that hunger was more often caused by economic inequality than by the simple unavailability of food. For all, the years in China led to a deep affinity with the Chinese people and lasting love for China.

Caitriona Cameron 1996

7.28 *The lost peace*
(September 3, 1939 beginning of World War II)

To stand up and be counted just thirty years ago
Was required of every person — whether soldier or C.O.
You couldn't dodge the issue — the Government saw to that

So you ended up in prison or became a Desert Rat
But to stand up and be counted in 1969
Needs a different kind of courage — and I would that it were mine —
For it means to stick our necks out when as long as you lie low
All your mates at work will take it you support the status quo.

Norman Bennett 1969

- 7.29 *Betty Duffield (1910-1994) showed herself to be an independent thinker from an early age and became a pacifist whilst nursing in an Egyptian underground hospital during World War II. She lived much of her life in South Africa, came to New Zealand in 1978, and settled in Tākaka.*

In this new phase of her life, Betty became involved in many community activities including the Golden Bay Peace Group. When war threatened in the Persian Gulf in Sept 1990, Betty felt very strongly that Quakers should do something positive to prevent the war and had a vision of Quakers from around the world gathering in the desert between the opposing forces. In December she read in the paper that the Gulf Peace Camp was being set up on the Kuwaiti border and she knew that she had to go there too.

Despite having said that she was too old and tired to go to Summer Gathering that year, she set off for the Gulf instead, fully prepared to give her life in the cause of peace. Such indomitable spirit! News of that action affected many people around the world, who were amazed at the courage and determination of this 80-year-old grandmother!

- 7.30 Once convinced of something, she was in boots and all. Christina was a passionate woman, interested in all of life and not known for her half-heartedness. Christina had been profoundly affected by the destructive forces of war and, in particular, the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This led to a growing involvement during the 1960s with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, anti-apartheid and anti-Vietnam war campaigns. She was also involved in programs for social equity such as Prisoners Aid, Student Christian Movement, and Meals-on-Wheels.

She came to believe that peace should not be viewed as something passive, but rather something that — both individually and as nations — we should put as much energy, commitment, and resources into as we do into war.

In 2004, and by now in her mid-70s, Christina decided to join the Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT), living and working in Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, for a total of 13 months over four years. On returning from her first stint, she observed “Once you go there, there is absolutely no doubt about the one-sidedness of the situation.” Each time she returned to New Zealand she embarked on a countrywide tour of public meetings and speaking engagements and provided articles for various newspapers. She described a ‘school patrol’ that she and other CPT members ran every morning to make sure that the children at five different schools could get there safely. In 2004 Christina was arrested and detained by Israeli police for eight hours on suspicion of being a terrorist.

Christina was a spirited woman with a strong belief in herself, and yet she questioned her thinking, and had doubts, which meant that along with the largeness of her life and activities, she also possessed a humility and was able to walk alongside people from all over the world.

Christina lived adventurously and followed George Fox’s exhortation to: “be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them: then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.”

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Christina Gibb (1930-2019)

- 7.31 Spending the hour in worship with fellow Friends from around the world helps me to regularly force the war back into my awareness and hold the victims of the violence in the light.

I often find myself not only feeling some connections with the Ukrainian Friends, but also the faceless Russians who have undoubtedly been forced into participation in the war which, I imagine, was not of their choosing.

By joining in the group worship, I regain a sense of connection with our common humanity, and sense that God is with us all.

Beth Cizadlo 2022

- 7.32 During meeting for worship one Sunday, a thoughtful man stood with some urgency in his voice to pray, “Save us from the blasphemy that we believe we must do something about everything. We must,” he said, “have trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in everyone — and not only in ourselves”.

Sitting quietly absorbing his words, I realised that there was a corollary: “Therefore what we can do, we must do.”

Sue Stover 2012

- 7.33 Just before the war in 1939, Richard had retired from active work. As a Friend, Richard felt especially the need to help the enemy aliens who were in difficulties through war conditions — internees on Somes Island and later in the Wairarapa — dependants of internees who found themselves suddenly deprived of their bread-winners. Tirelessly Richard interviewed government officials on the one hand and the wives of Italian fishermen or relatives of German nationals from Samoa on the other, to reach reasonable arrangements. His casework was always kept human; common sense and humour were more noticeable than righteousness or indignation.

Richard tried to get the internees on their tight little island interested in handwork, and both he and they succeeded. Fellow members in the (Wellington) Meeting were organised to collect the paua shells and scraps for this, and were rewarded by viewing and purchasing the finished products.

Later in the war when Japanese prisoners of war were brought to New Zealand, Richard would visit them, seeking out rice which was in short supply to give a special treat to a sick prisoner in hospital and later recounting with gusto how to conduct an entire conversation with the one common linguistic phrase ‘OK’ and lavish use of gesture and intonation.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Richard Harris (c.1877-1962)

- 7.34 I really believe that peace is catching if we can hold true to it. And therein lies the difficulty. What do I do with the anger and hurt that I feel sometimes? I often want to respond in kind when arguments get heated or someone is being loud in their own hurts and misunderstandings.

Sometimes I do respond in a way that I later regret or I will physically absorb the hurt and anger which just makes me feel ill. It is at these times that being with like-minded people is so important. When I am feeling low in resolve, Meetings for Worship become a time of reaffirmation and allow the rejuvenation of the Spirit.

Carolyn Davies 1994

- 7.35 What has impressed me most about John Woolman's life and character is that he was never an agitator, but a sincere and clear thinker, who then acted with courage. He gradually founded his opposition to slavery on experience, clear reasoning, deep sympathy and divine guidance. He dealt with the root causes of slavery, and to avoid having any connection with the slave labour he was wearing only undyed clothing, even if risking to be ridiculed. He also gave up profitable legal business work and shop-keeping so that he could maintain a simple life style just by doing some tailoring.

Yet, I wonder if I could ever have John Woolman's determination to seek and find out what God's will would really be in my life and then have such unfaltering obedience to the prompting of the Inner Voice as he did?

What also impressed me about Woolman is that he was not merely a conscientious objector (he refused to serve any military purpose), but he was primarily a conscientious affirmer of right and truth. People were often converted to his point of view, at least partially if not wholly, and in no instance does Woolman appear to have failed in winning at least their respect. And Love was indeed his first motion.

I hope and pray that John Woolman will continue to speak to me and to really change my views, feelings, words and actions, to be more aware of and true to my own promptings by God. I can't be another Woolman, but I'd like to be a more genuine Lea Rasanen Wiltshire.

Lea Wiltshire 1998

7.36 He spent his boyhood in Christchurch and graduated at Canterbury College with a B.Sc. degree in maths and physics, then went on to take an honours degree in maths at Auckland University. On the outbreak of war he registered as a conscientious objector and eventually left New Zealand in 1945 for Friends' Ambulance Unit work in China. After the end of the war, work in the field of scientific research appealed to him but the avenues open at that time were of a military nature, so he relinquished the prospect of a vocation and turned to accountancy, which he studied by night while working as a clerk during the day. He worked with the same company until his death, resisting promotion because of the ever-greater demands it would make upon his time, though inevitably his responsibilities and workload increased with the expansion of the company. Had he so desired he could doubtless with his qualifications and ability have carved out a more spectacular career for himself, but his priorities were of a different nature and he directed his energies to other fields, primarily for the benefit of the Society of Friends, but also for a wider community.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Neil Johnson (1921-1975)

7.37 'Let your life speak.' This relates to a similar expression that resounds for me: "Aportamos nuestro granito — We each contribute our little grain of sand," said by Guatemalans in reference to their desire for peace.

Many grains of sand together can make a tangible difference. To me our Quaker peace testimony expresses this. One of the most important reasons I am a Quaker is that I want to be part of a collective voice for peace in the world.

This is one of our Quaker community's strengths — it is resounding, we are known for it (and we can turn up the volume!)

Saskia Schuitemaker 2014

7.38 Keep peace in your mind
for it will comfort and guide you
do not listen to the violence in the air
Keep open to those words that bring comfort
and always be aware that peace is
around and within us
Peace can never be lost unless
we ourselves do not remember
how it should be.

Penny Challis 2017

7.39 While our thoughts were still on the upbringing of our young ones, John and Muriel Morrison gave us a graphic account of the deep and pressing problems that confront them in their work at a home for maladjusted children. To meet violence, hatred and deceit, they have found that the only effective action to take is to give love and yet more love. This is not easy, particularly when responsible for the everyday running of the home with all the accumulating chores.

They have learnt the truth of Jesus' reply to Peter: "Not seven times, but seventy times seven." This ever-readiness to forgive, determination to get at the truth, however much time it entails, and the mixing of boys and girls in normal home life, though slow to show results, does in the end bring rich reward working 'miracles' in reformation of character.

John Morrison does not punish those boys if they speak the truth about their misdeeds and in that way, he gets to the underlying causes. No corporal punishment is used, for it has always done more harm than good and some of the boys are inured to it.

Instead, any damage done has to be made good by some constructive work assessed at an agreed price. A member of the staff works with the mis-doers, making them feel that they are still within the pale. Thus, resentment does not grow, and the mis-doers learn to be responsible for their actions.

We felt that only their deep concern, sense of humour and unshakeable faith in God enabled them to carry on under the

strain of caring for 36 difficult children who had suffered all their lives from bad homes and the unnatural life of harsh institutions.

Report on the Summer School and General Meeting, Whanganui 1954

- 7.40 On his father's side his Quaker descent was unbroken from George Fox's time; his mother came of a committed Methodist family. The Wests naturally took part in the religious life of the church in Helensville and the Meeting in Auckland. Besides his work for the mill which included rafting trips on the *Minerva*, later carting logs by truck for long distances after many hours work in the cold and mud, and many struggles with recalcitrant engines in addition to managerial responsibilities which increased over the years, Arthur accepted every opportunity to take an active part in the Helensville community. He made many friendships. It was appropriate he was president of the Old Scholars for their Silver Anniversary and mayor of Helensville for the centenary.

Arthur's standards of life and conduct were firmly based on his reading of the New Testament, which he had studied thoroughly in his apprenticeship days. He did not think it necessary to preach or make a show of religious observance. It was no surprise to find that he marked in his well-worn Bible the passage in the Epistle of James illustrating his verse, "But be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. What doth it profit my brethren though a man say he hath faith and hath not works, can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled'; notwithstanding that ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?"

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Arthur West (1912-1966)

- 7.41 His concern for the underfed peoples of the world led him to relinquish his position as a solicitor in order to show, by intensive cultivation of half an acre, that many could contribute in some small measure to the world's food supply.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of William Pudney (1893-1956)

7.42 The most important times of my working life were those when I was working not in paid employment but without pay, and purely for the love of the work and its ideals. It is only some of us who are privileged to give our time in this way; we are not among the millions of poor who live just to survive.

Enid Bloomfield 2001

7.43 *In 1993 Neil Pugmire was at the centre of a medical and political crisis which led in 1996 to the 'Whistle Blowers' legislation protecting employees who expose corrupt, negligent or dangerous practices. In the midst of the crisis, Neil's upbringing as a Quaker helped him. He told an interviewer in 1994:*

Quakers believe in acting on their conscience. They were involved in prison reform and psychiatric reform in the very early days. They were among the first to release slaves in America and they were conscientious objectors. I was surprised to find how much that helped through the whole business. I derived some strength from the fact that Quakers had been through this sort of thing before.

7.44 Bidy embodied many of the Quaker values of integrity, concern for social justice and equality. She had the courage to persist in making a difference in areas where her principles were challenged. For instance, she became elected as the first woman member to sit on the board of a large corporation, a position she held for many years, respected for her common-sense and fearless upholding of principles, of speaking truth to power.

Bidy described herself to a friend as “a late developing geriatric peasant.” Eventually she acquired a cow, Gwendolyn, who “swamped me with milk so I had to teach myself to make cheese.” She developed a hard traditional farmhouse cheese. Ministry of Primary Industries paperwork and regulations became increasingly frustrating. Bidy became a tenacious and persistent fighter for a change in regulations for small artisan cheesemakers. She addressed in person the Parliamentary Select Committee on food safety reform. After years pressing for amendments to fit

small cheesemakers, she won. “There’s a principle involved. Life is ridiculous and silly, so that behoves you to make it more sensible.”

Testimony to Grace of God in the life of Biddy Fraser-Davies (1942-2018)

7.45 Gael was a gardener. She saw the world as a garden. She did not treat the garden or the world as a coal mine — to be exploited for economic growth to benefit the rich. To grow a garden, it is necessary to harvest the water, nourish the soil, plan and plant within the seasons and the Earth’s capacity to support life, and then share the surplus.

She did not believe in a Great Gardener in the Sky. She saw God as a spirit, an internal experience where you go when looking for guidance. There is a spiritual element to sustainability, intertwined with the natural and non-natural world. There is no WHY to Creation. It just happened. Just marvel at its intricacy and feel connected and revere it.

Remembering Gael Howell (1945- 2014)

7.46 For many years it was clear to me that nowhere did a general blindness and callousness prevail more than in the attitude towards animals; not deliberate or extreme cruelty such as is abhorred by the majority of people and finds its ways into law courts and newspaper items, but the systematic brutalisation of animals for our profit and pleasure. I flinch to see goats tethered for years on two or three metres of rope, unnaturally solitary and often exposed to the weather and all sorts of hazard. The plight of battery hens is now well known. In order not to support this practice we keep our own hens.

However, I have a concern that is not usually voiced; that of farm animals, and in particular, sheep; the mild, dumb sheep in paddocks fenced in, unable to run from worrying dogs and deliberately bred to lamb early in the bitter cold so fat lambs will be ready to kill for Christmas. Cold also hastens the production of wool so they are shorn twice a year; the second shear in early winter as the cold comes on. As long as animals don’t actually die, the farmer feels justified. It is, after all, he thinks, general farming practice and the general

acceptance anaesthetises him to any finer feeling for the creatures on which he and his family depend.

And we the consumer don't look at the poor pressed-in things in the sheep truck, don't see or smell the fear as they are forced in to be slaughtered, don't think how lambs are separated from ewes (the calling goes on for days and days) or are castrated, or get fly strike — that burrowing of maggots into live flesh.

When we came to live near Taihape (possibly the sheep rearing capital of the world) and had to kill one of our own sheep with fly strike, it looked at me with its innocent, uncomprehending eyes and at that moment the full horror of what we do to animals struck me. I stopped eating meat.

It won't stop farming animals, but it is all I can do. If I am pressed on my reasons for vegetarianism, I express concerns for animals. People often regard me as oversensitive and put forward many arguments against my views on this matter. But inwardly I know it is right to feel concern for these sentient creatures and believe that one day we will reject meat eating as we did cannibalism and slavery.

Anne Pōtaka 2000

7.47 We sometimes forget that as individuals we are a fragment of the whole family of man and that our little life, either as a strength or as a weakness has its influence on the whole of society. So we see the significance of the social emphasis in the Lord's Prayer our Father, our daily bread, our sins.

How important this is we see when we come to a consideration of our social standards and the quality of many of our social institutions. In New Zealand, for example, we still have demands for tougher penalties for crime. Why? Because we still have greater faith in the power of punishment than in the redeeming power of caring and concerned friendship.

We do not care to acknowledge our share in the guilt of the offender, nor to have any responsibility in bringing about the conditions, which have produced the criminal.

Ruby Dowsett 1974

7.48 We believe that alternatives to imprisonment should be used more widely. These include diversion, intensive supervision, mediated restitution and community programmes. Restorative Justice, based on community group conferencing, is a process that brings together victim, offender and other people involved to empower them to work towards reparation, reconciliation and healing. We have heard that this process can be effective when it is properly supported, and look forward to a full and independent evaluation of results.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 1999

- 7.49
1. Are you more a consumer than a producer in NZ society?
 2. Do you spend more time and energy on the maintenance and improvement of the various types of machinery which you own than on the maintenance and improvement of your relationships with your fellow human beings?
 3. Are you actively considering the meaning and relevance of the Quaker ideal of simplicity in your daily life and do you try to put this ideal into practice?
 4. Do you buy clothes on impulse because you have money to spend, or because you really need them? Consider carefully whether or not the old could be mended and used rather than discarded.
 5. Do you try to be sincere and authentic in your relations with others, or do you concentrate too much on presenting to others an impression of yourself which is essentially a mask to conceal?
 6. Consider carefully whether or not your concern for your own privacy is a kind of individualism which is in fact stifling your individuality.

Roger Martin 1973

7.50 *In his book 'The path from Guadalcanal', former Japanese POW Michiharu Shinya wrote of his experiences of being imprisoned at Featherston. In this section translated by Eric Thompson of Auckland Meeting, he recalled being visited by a Quaker, who Eric believed was Donald Whisker of Carterton.*

I cannot forget his good intentions, or what could be called his love. That there should really be here and on this earth even one person

willing to humble himself to take notice of me, an outcast among mankind and the most lonely and pitiful creature in the world, and willing to greet me warmly and without remoteness like an old friend, was a marvel and a boundless consolation, an encouragement and source of strength to me.

As I learnt later, he lived in a nearby town where he ran some radio business, and was a Christian of the Society of Friends. They said he came to the hospital from time to time and visited the Japanese prisoners of war there. With him it was a case of literally putting into practice those words of Jesus Christ, “Love your enemies”, even right in the middle of a war. His activities were perhaps trifling and not worthy of notice, yet through them, he became one person I shall not be able to forget in my lifetime.

7.51 *Joe Short's love of plants had taken him away from NZ in the 1930s to a horticultural apprenticeship at Kew Gardens in London, then on to work in the Berlin gardens in pre-World War II Germany; and later to India where he visited Gandhi's ashram and worked for Friends Service Abroad.*

These experiences had helped him develop a strong understanding of religious and faith communities beyond Christianity. The gap between expressed faith and lived practice led him to later write:

We have presented to the world two very different faces of Christianity. Any discussion of Christianity and World Religions must, it seems to me, take this very much to heart at the outset. What we believe has not always been apparent in what we have done.

In 1948 he wrote to New Zealand Quakers about the work that he and Phyllis Short were undertaking in rural India:

One of the greatest services that we can perhaps render in rural India today is to study, while working on immediate problems of providing more food, the main lines of cultural change that are coming about through the wide contact India now has with the rest of the world and through their introduction of scientific method and the development of technology.

We hope that working side by side with Indians, we may be able to help them avoid some of our mistakes. We believe that we work together with a people who have much to give us out of a very old traditional rural civilisation as well as from the modern inspiration given by such as Gandhiji (Gandhi).

- 7.52 *Nelle Beck (1900-1996) had a lifelong focus on the wellbeing of young children and was for decades the face of the children's programme at Christchurch Meeting. She was deeply affected by the effects of poverty on families — especially on women and children. In 1991, she said:*

If I'm asked what is the essence of Christianity, it is what Christ said: "I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly." The richness came home to me when we lived in the King Country. There was hardly anything for the children — a social hall where we met. The children came and listened. A Brethren man used to talk to the children. Women weren't to speak.

Opportunity lay in going into homes of unemployed timber worker families. I really learned what true Christianity meant. I got to know people. Little children were put to bed as they had no decent clothes. The District Nurse was informed. My house became a depot for clothes needed. It was a very rewarding experience for me.

- 7.53 I need to be aware of oppression, racism, stereotyping and practices that do not offer Iwi the opportunity to live life as they choose, to actively participate as citizens of the world and to enjoy good health and a high standard of living. After all, these are the goals that I have for myself and my own family.

Linda Wilson 2014

- 7.54 Our Yearly Meeting met within a very special context this year. Our country is much exercised by race relations and the question of what constitutes the rights of New Zealanders to live in this land. The tribes of indigenous peoples have rejected the government's unilateral proposals to settle Treaty grievances. We wrestled with

these very complex issues of right and wrong and, because we have Friends who are very well informed, we learned a great deal. We are committed to continue trying to discern the things that are eternal in events as they rapidly unfold.

One small Monthly Meeting is located in a city which has been a focus of national media attention because local Māori are occupying central city land to highlight their claim. Local Friends have contributed to ensuring peaceful processes of dialogue and to averting violent confrontation.

On a flash point day there, when the country expected the police to evict the Māori, local Friends including half-a-dozen women in their eighties participated in the human shield that stood between police and Māori. We are proud of this Monthly Meeting.

Although our Yearly Meeting is small, we are confident that there is much we can contribute because of our Quaker heritage to achieve a durable foundation for the justice and harmony so yearned for by the many peoples in this land.

Throughout this Yearly Meeting we have tried to dwell in the Light of God. A Friend spoke to us about transparency and translucency. If you are transparent, you let the Light pass through you. But if you are translucent, you let it also bring out your own special colours.

We celebrate the unique colours that our Yearly Meeting brings to the world family of Friends.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 1995

7.55 During the 79-day occupation of Pakaitore/Motua Gardens, in Whanganui in 1995, on the first eviction day up to 2,000 people stood on the land and the Quakers led the formation of a hand holding ring round the perimeter. I remember a morning during the occupation in Whanganui when an early phone message came “The police are hassling us!”

Three Quakers, Laurie, Michael W. and Liz A. went down and mingled with the crowd ringed by police in riot gear with long batons drawn keeping the people surrounded while they searched

the tents. They became aware that there were two men for whom they had arrest warrants in the crowd.

A brave Quaker woman, Liz A. negotiated with the police chief and with the two men and got agreement that they would not be arrested then and thereby perhaps causing a riot, but that Liz would accompany them to the police station — walking off the site between a row of young men performing a spirited haka.

Michael Wiltshire 2003

7.56 *In response to a call in 1999 for Christians to show their support for social justice and efforts to overcome poverty, Marvin Hubbard decided to join the Hikoi of Hope.*

I felt drawn by the spirit to join the Hikoi of Hope. This feeling was reinforced by my Dunedin friends, Quaker Meeting, Jobs With Justice, and the Dunedin North Branch of the Alliance. The Hikoi seemed hopeful and a different, more spiritual way of expressing what I have been trying to articulate for the last eight years or so.

After coming to the decision to walk the Hikoi from Bluff to Invercargill, I was led to make a personal commitment to put the Hikoi, its goals and purpose, the kaupapa, first before any personal feelings or concerns of my own. It was this which carried me forward through the difficulties and hard places on the journey. This was probably the most important decision that I made on the Hikoi; that simplifying concentration was what kept me going.

Hikoi

Walk through sadness

Walk through regret

Walk through love

Walk with love

Hikoi gift of New Zealand

Hikoi awash with love of Aotearoa

New Zealand

Marvin Hubbard 1999

7.57 When I think of the events since the devastating Christchurch earthquakes, I am in awe of the power of the earth. In 42 seconds, it raised the Port Hills by 40 centimetres, unblocked springs and streams and did untold damage to the man-made infrastructure of our city. But it also unleashed great kindness, from strangers both locally and from around the world who gave generously, from government agencies who have tried to ease our load, from friends and particularly family who are supporting us, and from the spirit of the meeting which upholds us.

Daphne Erasmus 2013

7.58 Joe's compassion for the human condition and commitment to living out his belief in social justice in a quiet positive way, were exemplified by his work for Corso for over 30 years. The quality of being truly present to his friends, focusing on each individual and penetrating to the essence of that person, created for many a unique quality of relationship. Wherever his interests led him, Joe made friends.

His approach to life was a spiritual one; everything fitted together and was seen as part of the integrated wholeness of life. Trees, plants, and all living things concerned him, and he felt himself and all of us linked to natural growth and development. His generosity in sharing his time and knowledge is reflected in the many gardens he helped establish throughout Wellington and the whole country.

Joe's commitment to Friends was total; his involvement at all levels of the Society made him widely known and loved amongst Friends in all parts of the country. Summer Gatherings provided wonderful opportunities for him to share something of his understanding of plants and trees and their interrelationship, during trips to nearby areas of interest in all parts of the country. In Wellington Meeting, it seemed to matter little which particular appointment Joe held at any time; he made himself available to all, reaching out in a thoroughly nonjudgmental way to those in need.

We are all part of God's Universe, and even after we have become dust, the everlasting earth will remember Joe's stewardship of it. His touch was everywhere, and everyone and everything will remember how he cared and nurtured growth in all its aspects.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Joe Short (1916-1982)

7.59 In working out my faith in relation to my Quaker experience, I try to be the same every day for everybody all the time, whether at work or outside my work. I try to maintain the same standard of dress and behaviour seven days a week.

The clothing industry carries the stigma of sweatshops, poor pay, long hours and poor working conditions — the sort of industry no parent would have wished his child to enter. Yet the industry has its importance: we all wear clothes more or less according to the dictates of fashion and have done so for quite a long time.

I belong to a group within the industry which acknowledges that the labourer is worthy of his hire. My fellow workers are no longer 'hands' but members of families with widely varying responsibilities which they hope to meet from their labours. The majority of my work colleagues are women and I appreciate the acceptance and respect which Friends have shown for the service of women. Having no male responsibility axe to grind has generally enabled me to gain response from co-workers without arousing industrial problems.

My job is preparing young people to enter this exciting industry. I enjoy my work and I hope that some of my pleasure in it brushes off on to them.

Eric Camfield 1972

7.60 *New Zealand could be said to be a country of many small businesses — but not many are Quaker-run. An exception was David Minifie's pharmacy and later his makeup business, which he observed were run differently than many other retailers.*

When considering the question 'How do Quaker testimonies work in business?', David reflected:

Simplicity — Not paying excess for advertising. Simplicity in living helps when there is a downturn in business as lower business drawings help the business to survive.

Integrity — Whenever I am attracted by an offer which focuses on money and ignores benefits to people, I think again. I may be a little naïve and trusting in my approach to people, but this principle has saved me from a number of scams.

Peace — listening to both sides and trying to be clear in my instructions help in conflicts. I have two managers who tell me clearly when I overstep the mark.

Equality — Treating staff, customers and landlords well. My landlords appreciate me because I pay the rent on time. Giving good service, having good product knowledge and giving quality and value to my customers has kept me in business for over 20 years.

- 7.61 Jim found the male role fulfilling. By the turbulent 1970s with its changes of understanding of male-female roles and adolescent-adult roles, Jim held leadership and pastoral roles in high schools. But uncomfortably, he came to realise Kiwi male ways had serious moral inadequacies. He had the fortitude to see his life in the Light, and to make the changes the Light revealed to him.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Jim Halliday (1927-2017)

- 7.62 In over 61 years it is believed he was away from morning Meeting on about six occasions. He was doorkeeper for about 40 years. His quiet and kindly welcome and happy presence was a blessing to the whole Meeting.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of James Mancy (c.1887-1974)

- 7.63 There will be many Friends in New Zealand who remember with joy their association with Frank when he and his wife were in charge of Friends' School, Whanganui, from 1923 to 1929.

Friends' School, under Frank Moreton, was a place where children's individual differences were really catered for, where motivation for learning was developed through children's interests and activity and where the full personality development of the pupils was a genuine aim of teaching and learning practices, which were decades ahead of their time in New Zealand.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Frank Moreton (1892-1974)

7.64 *When Russell Gregory contested the Mt Eden election in 1974, he didn't win. But the campaign gave him a chance to state why he was standing and what he believed. He wrote:*

There are many social attitudes that I don't like. I may be right, I may be wrong, but I do know that if anything is for the good of the community it will prevail; if not, it will disappear and something better will emerge. No one can stem the flow of social change and ultimately that change must be for the better. Why? Because all of us are basically good. We all want a better way of life, not only for ourselves but for mankind.

Therefore, I don't look on those with different outlooks from mine as suspect, but as other individuals striving to better mankind in their own way. I may even think their way antisocial and, if indeed it is, I believe that by constructive action and dialogue others will cause them to see the light, and joint efforts will bring forth something better. We all make mistakes, but we can learn by those mistakes. In the extreme, I believe that if one is persecuted by the ill-informed and ignorant, who no doubt think themselves right, the repercussions of that persecution are such that good rises from it.

In other words, I believe that every cross has its resurrection. Man can and does overcome evil with good. History, I am sure, gives practical support to this theory, if theory it is. I hope that extreme bigotry is no longer found in our country. I can only be grateful that the evolutionary process has moved so far during my lifetime. The conservative of today would certainly have been classified a radical in the early years of this century.

Yes, I have faith in people. I believe, no I know, the world will progress towards a society where everyone will have a fullness of life beyond my powers of comprehension.

7.65 In the olden days, we knew each other as a community because we lived near one another and often had to depend on each other. Then the silence at Meeting for Worship had greater depth. Now

we are an urban group from scattered areas often with little in common except the silence.

Worship on its own is not enough. To know each other in the life eternal we also need to know one another in 'practical' life. The query of "How are you? What is important to you right now? What are your hopes and fears? Are your finances OK?" These are bits that we need to listen to. Also when have we had sheer fun together?

Myra Giese 1998

7.66 We looked first at ourselves. How faithful are we to our callings to worship, witness and care for one another? Is our spirituality a little thin? We recalled that a number of Friends have left our Meetings, burnt out by the demands we have made on their energy, time and expertise. Thus we have lost a little of our collective memory. We are conscious that by and large we belong to middle-income groups. The extensive urban areas that are Quaker-less indicate that though we may give to the poor, we are not with the poor.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 1991

7.67 If I am in my right mind, I know that I have only a limited measure of the truth; it is unlikely that I, being finite, have the whole truth in any given situation. I may also assume that you too have a measure of the truth. My motives are mixed; there are complicated hidden forces which affect my decisions, even my most prayerful ones.

My point of view needs checking, likewise your point of view. When we meet as a group, in Monthly Meeting perhaps, to deal with a sharp difference of judgement or opinion among members, we need time. We must try to be very much aware of what we are saying and how we need to create a climate of freedom where there is acceptance of every point of view and opportunity and encouragement for everyone to speak out without fear. There must be careful listening and analysing of opposing views.

It helps to provide this climate if we recognise freshly the human dignity of each individual, the complexity of our motives, and if we accept the negativity of another person as a sign of his involvement. “You have never heard your opposition’s point of view until you have so savoured its essence that you begin to feel the power of its persuasion.” If we choose to work at it, we can turn any point of tension to creative use.

Muriel Morrison 1972

7.68 The flier for this weekend said it was “open to all interested in exploring together what is involved in this appointment (Clerkship) and the Quaker process”. The word ‘process’ was repeated often during the weekend and for me it had resonance from the Playcentre phrase ‘the process, not the product’. I realised that in my brief experience of Meeting for Business, I have been very product-oriented, and hence felt frustration. I was anxious to quickly achieve a result. I had missed the final part of the name ‘Meeting for Business in the spirit of Worship’. I need to think more of the process.

Margaret Blakeley 2001

7.69 Our Meetings for Worship for the Conduct of Business is another reason for my allegiance to Friends. Seeking for the sense of the meeting in making decisions instead of voting to gain the majority viewpoint, is a worthwhile exercise, despite the frustration in slowness of action taken, if any! The fact that each person, ideally, has a chance to be heard, and there are opportunities to build with each contribution to reach the final decision means our decisions can be greater than the sum of the parts. We often develop our ideas as we share. We do not need to get stuck with what we initially expressed — our truth can evolve as we are open to the leading of the Spirit.

Ann Olsen 1999

7.70 In a world where intellect and logic are highly valued, it can be very sad to see a beloved Friend affected by dementia and at times it seems that they are not the person we knew.

However, the essential spirit of the person remains and perhaps they give us the opportunity to see that more clearly as we “meet together and know one another in that which is eternal”.

Lesley Young 2012

7.71 Much of our communal Quaker life depends on unspoken patterns of practice, on understanding of what is appropriate. Friends try to support newer attenders in learning this informally, as they become more part of the group.

But as cognitive problems gradually undermine our sense of what is appropriate, how can we still be fully part of the body, without disrupting the involvement of others?

As the Meeting happily sees the chatter of a young child as ministry, will it also see ministry in my future erratic diversions?

Do we understand Friends to be ‘neurotypical’, so that, for example, those with gifts and needs on the autistic spectrum are to be accommodated with kindly special provision?

Or are we able to see and trust the gifts of the Spirit in one another, and recognise one another’s needs, so that the resulting harmony is more true than any single voice?

If someone’s emotional or mental health leads them to speak emotionally, aggressively, too long or too frequently, advice given is for an experienced Friend to spend time with them in another room. But what happens after that?

How easy do we find it to be friends with the person who is disrupting the worship we find precious, or the social events which bind us together? How can they feel they belong? How can the Friends who have been hurt by the aggressive behaviour of others feel that they belong?

Elizabeth Duke 2022

7.72 It was a director of studies at Woodbrooke who said, “Give us each day our daily discovery”, and such discoveries are not made only in the realm of intellectual ideas but in the realm of emotional life, in art, music, poetry, painting, drama.

This is not just a seeking after novelty, but a deeper seeking after ways that speak to our own time, to this present. Perhaps again in renewed faith, we may learn to meet our world with something of the zeal and confidence of earlier Friends, earlier Christians and with also the sensitivity and tenderness required in the modern world, which so badly needs the quietness, simplicity, the truth and the caring love that are the fruits of the spirit for which our Society has stood from its earliest days; fruits that we can only grow if we are deeply rooted in the source of our strength.

Ruth Fawell 1968

7.73 For me, the Goddess has her essence in everything of nature, especially the sea, which for me is a special source of spiritual nurturance. It is magnetic in its attraction. It is a source for my inspiration and creativity. I can meditate on the beach and feel literally transported. I have to struggle to hold down the outflow of feeling and poetry that flows as a result of what I can only describe as a dive into a well of insightfulness, emotion and creativity.

Lee Pinder 2000

7.74 We can follow the wisdom and knowledge of tradition up to a point, as an artist studies art of the past, poetry, music, etc., but one comes to a point when one has to develop alone — strike out a new path. Jesus forged ahead from the traditional Jewish teaching, which he knew well. So must we. The past you share with others, the future is all your own.

Doris Addis-Smith 1959

7.75 To me it's essential that art is affirming that life is worth living in spite of everything. In other words, it should assert the truth of intrinsic goodness through the expression of beauty. To me life

seems more and more like a process, a process of being and becoming, of maturing and evolving. True religion does not require us to believe, but to become.

It seems to me that religion is all about relationship; relationship with ourselves, with those nearest and dearest to us; with our neighbours in the widest sense of the word; with the community; with the earth and the cosmos and with this mysterious 'other' which may or may not be transcendent. The spiritual is between us in everything we do and think and say.

Perhaps I was born under a sceptical star as I cannot accept the idea of God, at least not as a personal being, but neither can I completely leave the idea alone. I have faith, although I am not sure in what.

It's more like trust that everything will be well; that the mystical power that I believe resides in us is strong enough to actually make a better world.

Gudde Moller 2020

7.76 The Inner Light shines in many artists, yet this does not mean that all art is beauty. Often in Meeting for Worship we may hear ministry which does not speak to our condition or seems to be a ranting on of a political agenda. The opportunity to 'Elder' (another standing in silence until such ministry ceases) has occurred infrequently.

But, how often have we 'Eldered' ourselves in remaining silent and not speaking? The same Inner Voice, which moves me to paint or draw or create or to write poetry, is the same voice which stirs within me at a Meeting for Worship.

If I remain still, I cannot remain still. My heart begins to pound, and I feel a nervous energy within. The energy suddenly surges forth and causes me to speak.

It is this same 'quaking' within which moves me to write poetry, paint, draw or play the piano.

Larry Matthews 2000

7.77 Her creative talent was reflected in her beautiful handwork, which was a joy to herself and to many others. We remember the tremendous effort she put into the Friends Service Committee's 'Bring and Buys' at the Meeting House. She worked hard throughout the year making many acceptable articles for sale and, to a large extent, assumed the responsibility for the successful running of the events. In this way an appreciable sum was handed to FSC each year.

Testimony to Grace of God in the life of Constance Gill 1882-1969

7.78 Even the fire drill was beautiful. Blossoms blossomed, nine ducklings followed Mama Duck; the sun shone on our backs and the creativity flowed. "My heart is full of gratitude and delight", mused one participant. And so it was; we were all gratefully and delightedly beavering away on poems, watercolour, sketching, woodwork collage, knitting, harakeke weaving, and contemplative creation.

We sang, cosied up by the fire, shared our work, and smiled. The food creators created wondrous culinary delights and we slept safe in our beds in the warm presence of Friends...

Painting wet on wet
Coloured lines float across page
Sea, land, sky emerge

There was something magic. At one point an excited voice exclaimed, "I had not seen such eagerness and enthusiasm for 15 years". Beyond the physical, other things seemed to be happening...

Just as we witnessed the magic of the experimental watercolour washes on the page, a growing gentle trust enabled conversation where there were no right answers or correct ways of seeing.

Philippa Fletcher (Revell) 2022

7.79 I became extremely tired and ached all over. I was so tired I found I could not engage in conversation as I could not concentrate on what another person was saying nor enter their world to respond. Doing the washing took 4 days... Was this me, who had run up mountains and mixed cement without hesitation?

One evening at a shared meal, I was listening to a Life Story from a man whose schizophrenia had made his life one of struggle and homelessness. He described walking from Raetihi to Jerusalem in winter with leaky shoes “I was cold, I was so cold,” he said. Then he lived rough on the streets of Wellington “I was cold, I was so cold,” he said. I felt for him and said, “I’ll make him a quilt”.

I am long irritated by the amount of waste in this country and, since I live minutes from a large good op shop, I negotiated with them to give me bags of clothing destined for the dump.

For his 63rd birthday, I gave him his quilt with his name embroidered on the back. He wept. He wrapped it round himself and cried.

Soon I was asked to make one for another man with mental health issues who lived in the ruins of his house in damp bush. He also wept, not believing that someone would actually make this for him, not just give him an old one that was no longer needed.

So I went on to make a quilt for each member of a large family, plus their several additions, on their birthdays, finding motifs and graphics from T-shirts that suited the person. One was for a young man and was covered in rugby boots and motorbikes. His mother said, “If you can interest a 13-year-old boy in patchwork, you’ve achieved a miracle”. I thrived on the joy and laughter from everyone when each quilt was presented.

Now behind all this lies the progress I made in getting better. I found that, instead of sleeping most of the day and night, I was now up for increasing hours at a time absorbed in simple sewing and anticipating the joy of machining something another person needed.

I was distracted from pain and fatigue, I felt more cheerful, could do some gardening again, converse and do the washing without effort.

So it is my experience that to get better from chronic conditions, ‘take the pills and do as you are told’ may be beneficial, but lose yourself in some simple activity that brings joy to others — and keeps them warm — and you will recover while distracted.

Christabel Jackson 2018

7.80 For us, for our country, and for the world, it has been a time of change, fear and loss. We feel particularly for all those who mourn, and those who suffer from the direct effects of the pandemic and from the impact of the various measures taken to control it. Many of those who are worst affected, often losing their livelihood, are those who were already suffering from the inequality of political and economic systems, globally and nationally, and from the impact of climate change.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 2020

7.81 Quakers have a strong sense of the sanctity of creation. We are committed to the development of systems and new societal norms to rebalance climate disruption, preserve biodiversity and water quality and enable New Zealanders to live simpler lives within sustainable natural boundaries. We support the use of national resources to provide housing, low-carbon transport, and regenerative food production to benefit future generations.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 2020

7.82 *Yearly Meeting 2022 was held entirely online, a new experience for nearly all who attended. One participant wrote afterwards:*

Screens are no substitute for kanohi ki te kanohi. Surely part of the success of this online YM is that it was underpinned by the relationships built on meeting in person over many years.

Quakers in NZ are a tiny group, widely scattered.

How do we balance the need to be with one another with the inclusiveness of being online and the need to avoid making the climate crisis worse?

Katy Sinton 2022

7.83 Bill's capacity for exercise and activity was extraordinary. Avoiding using the car when travelling on his own was part of his philosophy. If he couldn't cycle, he took the train whenever possible. The bush was a special place for Bill. He shared with Friends the sense of wonder and sacredness he found there of feeling in touch with

the invisible power which surges through all things. This spiritual awareness was a strong factor in Bill's deep concern and love of the planet and his dedication to work for sustainability.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Bill Moxon (1931-1994)

- 7.84 Breathing deepens, lungs expand, walking.
Muscles and minds coordinate better, walking.
Worries can melt away, walking.
Fatigue can disperse, walking.
Poems can be composed, walking.
Grief can be lessened, walking.
Songs can be sung, walking.
Reverses can be accepted, walking.
Resolves can be strengthened, walking.
Hates can dissolve, walking.
Hearts can soften, walking.
Confusions untangle, walking.
Blessings can be counted, walking.
Responsibilities can drop off your shoulders, walking.
Friendships can grow, walking.
Meditation can occur, walking.

Queries:

Are you guilty of thinking that walking is wasting time? Do you skim over or miss out on valuable mental, physical and spiritual experiences by a too liberal use of your car?

Olive Smithells 1971

- 7.85 *In the mid 1970s, Jack and Mary Woodward were resident in Lae, Papua New Guinea. Keen trampers, they explored the highlands on foot. One of their expeditions took them along an old trading route which Jack described as an "ill-defined route that crosses the Sarruwaged Range close to its highest peak (over 12,000 feet)". It had seldom been used by Europeans since the war, "and thousands of sick and wounded Japanese soldiers died during their retreat over those mountains in 1945 from successful Allied forces capturing Lae. So there was something spiritual about that journey and we knew it".*

It was a long difficult trek and towards the end of their journey, Mary recalled:

Now we made good time to the river and followed clear tracks to the first high village. We had been warned that the area was ‘rotten with cargo cult’ and unlikely to welcome us but we were greeted warmly, just as usual.

When reluctantly we took our leave, we were given an escort of eight carriers to take us on to Iloco and shouts across the valley prepared the people there for our arrival several hours later.

Our last night in the bush was the best. Sitting round a blazing fire, the mountain men of this village talked with us for hours telling us stories about their land.

The spirit of the mountains must be respected, they said; one must not pick flowers for nothing, break live trees or leave rubbish lying around.

Yes, we said, we understand. We have the same rules.

7.86 The ‘Inside Out’ Prison Bag project grew from a small group of people concerned about plastic pollution. We took a count of how many bags came out of all our major supermarkets in a single hour and publicised the total. One of our ways of raising awareness of the scale of the problem was to collect the equivalent number of bags from one supermarket in one hour and string them together along the riverbank, a striking visual message.

These kinds of actions were an important part of building grassroots support for the government to feel it had a mandate to take legislative action to ban single-use plastic bags at supermarkets and other shops. Before that happened, we had also begun a conversation about ways to promote use of cloth bags, which over a lifetime of 20 years would replace 1,000 plastic bags.

With support from the NZ Friends Trust Board which funded industrial sewing machines, we were able to negotiate with our local men’s prison to establish a bag sewing project utilizing the

time and energy of some of the inmates, and source material that would otherwise go to landfill. What an example of a win/win model, with the men gaining useful skills in addition to the satisfaction of their efforts making a positive contribution to the community!

Peter Watson 2022

7.87 I have been particularly mindful of the Quaker injunction to examine myself 'for the seeds of war'.

For me, this extends to the current plastic attack on marine mammals, fish and seabirds the world over. It's a war being waged by powerful plastics manufacturers and a corporate packaging industry lobby, tacitly supported by citizens.

One 'seed' I have discovered is how I continue to normalise the acceptability of plastic packaging when I give it a place at my table.

No longer! No plastic on my table! It's a small gesture but for me it is significant. It is not easy de-normalising old habits.

Jane Banfield 2019

7.88 'Amazing Grace' was written by John Newton, a former slave vessel captain turned clergyman. It is a hymn that I've loved since a child, when the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards version introduced me to the spine-tingling power of well-played bagpipes (much better than my own attempts on a recorder which didn't endear the tune to anyone).

Whilst no big fan of the patriarchal language in some verses, I can do the 'Quaker translation' in my head to words and pronouns, or lack of them, that I'm more comfortable with. The beauty of the te reo Māori version has added another layer to my appreciation of it.

Grace is a term that is often linked with loss; taking it with good grace, graceful acceptance of an unpleasant situation etc., but also with the

positives of life; as in our testimonies to the 'grace of god' in the lives of Friends, and 'there but for the grace of god go I'.

I don't see it as a passive response to life, indeed quite the opposite, as following a calling of the spirit/your-word-of-choice can certainly be a challenge and being able to be graceful about difficulties takes great strength, often assisted by great faith.

Anna Dunford 2018



8

Our Religious Society of Friends

Tō Tātou Hāhi Tūhauwiri

8.01 We are fortunate people here in New Zealand; our life together in the Friends School, amid beautiful and peaceful surroundings, has given our General Meeting a very happy atmosphere.

Sometimes we hesitate to write of happiness and peace to those who are suffering and in turmoil, but it is in the sympathy and understanding of our common faith that we greet you.

We have not forgotten that some of you are in circumstances of extreme danger. We have heard of your courage and your loyalty to truth. For that courage and loyalty, we give thanks to God and to you. Wholeheartedly we believe that out of the chaos of these present days will come, through your faithfulness and ours, a new sense of those personal relationships that will enable men and women to build a world wherein spiritual freedom will take the place of suppression and fear.

It is clear to us that we must stand fast to our historic testimony against all war. It is clear, too, that we must find realistic expression for that testimony in our service to our fellowmen and to God.

We have tried to face the fact that we also may be stripped of all things material; we have prayed that we might hold our possessions lightly, and have courage to make bold experiments in our endeavour to find new modes of living that take away “the occasion of all war.”

In facing the danger and difficulties of our times may we all be given strength to journey on, undismayed, with a song in our hearts.

Mary Thorne, Report of General Meeting 1940

8.02 All Monthly Meetings have continued sending gift parcels to Europe and Japan. While Friends Service Committee is still gathering fresh information from the Neighbourhood Centre in Tokyo about the needs there, new directives were given in regard to the changed needs in Germany and Austria. In answer to an appeal, a special effort was made in supplying with blankets and bed linen to a Children's Home near Hamburg under the care of German Friends. Besides many personal parcels sent by individual Friends, the total number sent by Monthly Meetings during 1949 was 327. Postages on these amounted to £126, the estimated value having been £245. A major donation for inclusion in the parcels was 420 lbs. of honey.

While a group of some thousand Displaced Persons from Europe came to New Zealand for resettlement, a message of love and fellowship was sent to the new settlers in the camp at Pahiatua. Monthly Meetings have been encouraged to contact them after their dispersal to various districts.

Following a call from the Quakerhaus in Vienna, which is deeply concerned about the future of thousands of destitute refugees who do not come under the care of the International Refugee Organization, a letter was written to the Minister of Immigration asking him to state the Government's policy on immigration. The Committee pointed out in this letter the profound need for greater reverence for the human being as created by God and urged that the motive for selection and admission of new immigrants should not be solely from the point of view of their immediate usefulness and advantages.

FSC Report to General Meeting 1950

8.03 Have faith in God. How simple it sounds! Yet how difficult for those wracked by pain, of tortured mind; and how difficult for the lonely, the starving, the homeless and the hopeless. How difficult, too, for honest searchers after truth when the collective faith seems to be disintegrating. Yet Jesus was as simple as that. His simplicity confounded the intellectuals of His day; the simplicity of the early Christians confounded the sophistry of the Greeks, and the simplicity of the Quakers confounded the theologians of the 17th century.

As a new Yearly Meeting we enter into a new phase of our life as a Quaker community in New Zealand and we face a very different religious and secular atmosphere than did the early Christians or the early Friends. For the early Friends the Word of God was not only the Word spoken through the prophets and by Jesus himself, it was the Eternal Word made flesh and therefore intelligible to man in terms of human life in the person of Jesus. More than that, it was the authentic Word of God recreated again and again in the personal life of men and women who wait upon God for the renewal of their spirits and the revealing of further light.

We need to take a fresh look at the faith of our fathers and in the language of Paul: “Put all things to the test and hold fast to that which is good.”

Edward Dowsett 1964

- 8.04 One of the lasting benefits of my Pendle Hill experience is a much more acute awareness of the natural world. The deciduous forests of Northeast America hold great reserves of power for the spirit. They inspire beautiful people to go on working, praying, and loving for peace. I think of the enormous 600-year-old oak tree in New Jersey under which William Penn signed one of his treaties with the Native Americans. It would have been 300 years old when the little group pledged peace with each other. They trusted. The tree was leafless when I stood there. The pale sky was criss-crossed with its bold tracery of twigs — its boughs reaching the sky and sweeping the earth. It reached out and touched my spirit. It spoke to me of peace.

Oiwen Palmer 1986

- 8.05 Like many others, I have been interested to read and think about feminine spirituality, the Goddess religions etc. I have been pleased to pull into my internal picture the fact that other cultures have recognised either equality of worth of both sexes or even a bias in favour of women. However that did not help me to accept standard Christianity completely, and I continued to feel apologetic for my conviction that the Holy Spirit was a vital and lively part of

myself when so much that was attributed to Christianity was counter to many of my beliefs and leadings within. This dichotomy has blocked my spiritual growth and I have continued to be somewhat ambivalent about Christianity as a result.

The part of the Friends World Conference that I attended in the Netherlands was the most spiritually rewarding experience I have ever had. For nine days we were surrounded by warmth, caring and sharing and most of all by the tangible presences of the Holy Spirit. It is no longer possible for me to be apologetic about my commitment to the will of God, to the definite leading of the Holy Spirit and it is therefore imperative that I dispense with the contradictions and internal controversy which I have had. As is the way of the Holy Spirit, I was immediately aware of being guided to find some of the answers.

Jill Gooder 1992

8.06 The FWCC Triennial – A gay man’s perspective

Alan and I were invited to India as guests of Indian Friends at the All India Summer Gathering and then onto the Asia West Pacific Section Gathering being held at Bhopal.

Should Alan and I go to India and possibly make our hosts uncomfortable with our presence? We decided that it could be unfair to impose our lifestyle on our unsuspecting hosts who have a clear and unambivalent biblical and cultural view on homosexuality. So we became ‘Mr Nice Guys’ and declined to go.

Several months later I found myself at the seminar ‘Experiment in the Light’ held before Yearly Meeting in Whanganui and facilitated by the British Friends, John and Diana Lampen. The only reason I went was because I was extremely sceptical and felt obliged to find out why this was so. Rex Ambler, another British Friend, after several years of research, has discovered how he thinks early Friends worshipped and it was this exercise that we were asked to follow.

After just one try I found myself revisiting the question as to why I had really decided not to visit India. This was strange as I was very comfortable with my earlier decision and had long forgotten

about it. During the first session it came to me very loudly and clearly that, as a Quaker, it was not my job to make people feel comfortable — that that was their problem.

Truthfulness is a prerequisite for the Inner Light having access to our lives! It would be truthful to say that this insight was like a religious experience for me as it altered my whole direction within the Religious Society of Friends and I now felt able to attend the Triennial without fear of making Friends from other traditions feel uncomfortable.

For me I took the unprecedented step of wearing a pink spot on my name tag to denote my sexual orientation, something I had never done before amongst Friends. I was delighted at how many Friends noticed and approved of this simple stand and I found myself talking to several North American Friends whose Meetings were undergoing a new inclusive shift in their corporate understanding of this issue.

However, the experience that underpinned my time at the Triennial was undoubtedly my 'Worship and Sharing Group'. Within this group I found myself face to face with a Fundamentalist Friend whose pamphlet, which she gave us and which she urged us to read, expressly stated the abhorrence her Friends' Church felt about homosexuality. However, the group was so composed that we found ourselves sharing experiences never before talked about and at a very deep level. We discussed 'Leadings', 'Religious Experience' and even what we understood by the term 'Being Saved.' Of course, our final conclusion as to what holds such a diverse group of people together is our capacity for giving each other unconditional love despite our coming from such diverse traditions.

The Triennial wasn't without its moments of laughter. When an ardent Bible-based Friend asked me if I had considered repentance for my 'condition,' I replied that my knees were far too arthritic for such an exercise, an answer that the other Friend found hilariously funny.

For me the jury is out as to whether I find holding such a conference morally justified when I know how much relief the money would

give to the plight of HIV/Aids amongst African Friends, their extended families and projects. However, I cannot but marvel at a Church with such diverse traditions, worship and theologies actually talking and worshipping together for it shows me that the Inner Light is both dynamic and a constant source of love.

John Goodey 2004

- 8.07 If one believes in that of God in each other, then to disrespect the ‘other’ is to disrespect God. To exclude the ‘other’ is to exclude God. To kill the ‘other’ is to kill that of God in them — not only in the present, but also in any future movement of the Spirit within. This radical belief in each other’s precious Divinity is the seed that guides our actions.

This is why in Aotearoa New Zealand, Friends uphold the rights of Māori and other minorities, why we advocate for the rights of prisoners, and why we condemn all wars and the taking of lives. This is also why we affirm the rights of same sex relationships.

Thomas Owen 2012

- 8.08 My wife said she wept on seeing rugby goalposts from a train in England. I wept when a New York restaurant pianist struck up ‘God Defend New Zealand’ and our party stopped eating and sang it; and didn’t stop there, singing ‘Pōkarekare Ana’ and ‘Tūtira Mai Ngā Iwi’ as well. Best of all was going to Meeting in London; it was just like being at home.

Llyn Richards 2003

- 8.09 I read in George Motley’s article, ‘The Quakers: Where are they?’ (*The Friend* June 22) about “the Reader’s Digest complete atlas of the British Isles where there is a map peppered with hundreds of black square dots, each representing a local meeting and some larger black dots for areas where Quakers are particularly dense.”

‘Are particularly dense?’

That will surely give offence.

Friends who live in big black dots

Won't like being called crackpots,
They had better join our number,
Come and live with us Down Under,
Where our black dots are so small
That they hardly show at all.

Norman Bennett 1979

- 8.10 *Quakers were involved in the early industrial revolution in England and the development of new technologies and a new approach to industrial relations. Their commitment to honesty in business dealings and plain dealing with others became valued at the time along with advancing the wellbeing of their workers through housing, pension schemes, health services and libraries.*

These principles and values have remained with Quakers in carrying their belief of 'that of God' in all people in their approach to workplace relations. The 1951 Waterfront Dispute in Aotearoa challenged relationships between capital, labour and the government which took draconian measures to deny support to families of those caught up in the dispute.

While individual Friends, such as Russell Gregory in Auckland, were active in the trade union movement, Friends collectively called for conciliation:

To the Prime Minister, Minister of Labour, Leader of Opposition, Interested Organisations, the Press.

This General Meeting of the Society of Friends is concerned to call upon their fellow New Zealanders to lay aside all bitterness and party strife in the face of the present unprecedented industrial situation. Friends believe that only as a spirit of tolerance, mutual respect and goodwill replaces the implacable attitudes of both sides of the dispute will a just and lasting settlement be effected.

There is no human problem that is not soluble through negotiation provided that the right spirit is present on both sides to guide such a practical method of settlement. While recognising the difficulty of generating such a spirit at the present time, we are confident that only thus can a permanent solution, satisfactory to the contending parties and to the community, be achieved.

General Meeting 1951

8.11 *What can Friends do about injustice occurring several continents away? In the case of the apartheid system in South Africa, Friends like many other New Zealanders struggled to use the existing links especially through rugby to push for change. Rugby tours to South Africa or by South African whites-only teams became focal points for anti-apartheid activities. After an anti-apartheid conference in 1972, Muriel Morrison reported to Friends:*

Our Prime Minister will not stop the tour because he believes it will help to build bridges, which he prefers to walls. He does not, or will not see that he is building a wall between us and seventeen million Africans, and that as for the bridge, it will only be used by the white minority as before.

A delegation of representative churchmen, Protestant and Catholic, (Joe Short among them on our behalf), spent two hours with Mr Marshall, two days after he had stated that he would not stop the tour. They expressed their concern with his statement and tried to make it clear to him that what he had said was in effect condoning apartheid.

We are involved in a struggle which is a matter of life and death for millions of people, but it need not be 'violent' here. This may be the time for us to show that our Peace Testimony means more than just saying 'no' or opting out.

8.12 We affirm Science as a search for Truth.

We call for recovery of the integrity of science. It should not be reduced to the pursuit of short-term goals while unacceptably risking our natural and social environment. We are concerned by the shift in funding from public to private sources and by the decline in full honest sharing of information because of the demands of financial backers. We oppose patenting of lifeforms and genes.

Scientists must always remain aware of the possible long-term effects of their work. We should consider our individual responsibility and work cooperatively to develop ethical standards that temper knowledge with wisdom. Teachers must involve ethics in all science-related courses.

The media has an enormous responsibility to improve its understanding and presentation of developments in science and technology.

We hope scientists will regain their respected place in society and be employed to meet the pressing needs of humanity and the biosphere.

Friends' Science and Ethics Seminar 2001

- 8.13 The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Aotearoa New Zealand commits itself to be a community of reconciliation, responding to the love of God in equality of participation and service, and recognising the gifts of God in one another. A cornerstone of Quaker belief is that of God in everyone, which makes each person precious, and of value to God, to the planet, and to her or his community.

In Quaker practice we believe that we all are equally called to ministry, through our worship, our daily lives, our service to others and in the activities and celebrations of our Meeting. Lesbian and gay Friends have played, and will continue to play, a significant part in Quaker life, thought and ministry both locally and nationally. Particular gifts are brought to our religious life from the struggle of gay and lesbian Friends, in the face of oppression, to find and express their faith. We need the spiritual gifts which are unique to each individual's personality and experience. We give thanks for all our gifts and service.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 1992

- 8.14 So we walked — 28 ordinary-looking Friends amidst extraordinary exhibitionism. With our beloved octogenarians (and nearly octogenarians) smiling in our midst, we walked without visible costume or uniform with the all-in-black, sultry gay and lesbian deaf dancers in front of us, and the outlandishly costumed marching band behind us. Perhaps we explained ourselves with a banner that said, "Society of Friends Quakers — A Reconciling Church". Or maybe we didn't. The fact that Friends some years ago declared itself a 'reconciling congregation' and open to gay and lesbian people explains the

language, but being a ‘reconciling church’ probably didn’t make much sense to the uninitiated. Cryptic message or not, we were visible and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

Sue Stover 2001

- 8.15 On the eve of commemorations of World War I, Quakers in Aotearoa New Zealand are concerned that history is not reinvented to glorify war. We remember the loss of life, the destruction of the environment, the courage of soldiers, dissenters and conscientious objectors; we remember those who still suffer the ongoing trauma of war. We also note the increasing use of scarce resources for war. In Aotearoa New Zealand over \$10 million a day is being spent to maintain our armed forces in a state of combat readiness. We actively support alternative processes for resolving conflict and violence both within and between nations.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 2014

- 8.16 A Friend suggests that because we Quakers are a collection of individualists, we are unable to achieve unity; and yet to me, this very singularity is the paramount principle that attracted me to Quakers.

After years of exploring other channels of worship and to find contact with that which is over all yet within this vast universe, I found within the silence of Quaker Meeting for Worship a veritable storehouse of inspiration.

As a young man, I found within the Church of England and the discipline of the Book of Common Prayer, a framework wherein I could travel happily on a reasonably well-laid path, in the certain security of a community; like being a member of a large family or an association with lines laid down for one’s guidance, not too dictatorially but definite.

As I grew older, I began to want to ‘think for myself’, to accept responsibility for myself; to stand upon my own two feet; and this eventually, when I was ready, by the grace of God, led me to Meeting for Worship.

I too was puzzled at first by what seemed to be a lack of order and cohesion. I remember saying to dear Richard Harris, “I’m afraid I’m not a very good Quaker” and he replied with a twinkle in his eye, “My boy, there aren’t any!”

Clive Packer-Doust 1978

- 8.17 How has the spirit been moving amongst us? Is the name ‘Quakers’ still appropriate?

These questions were highlighted by a proposal we had to consider. Friends had asked the Māori Language Commissioner to suggest a Māori name for our Society. He proposed the name Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri, which can be rendered as ‘the faith founded on the inward spirit moving us’. We consider this name to be a beautiful gift.

This name is a challenge to us to respond more faithfully to the movings of the Spirit, and notably to the call to work for greater social justice for all the people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

During our Yearly Meeting we have been made more aware of those who are exploited and marginalised in our country; but also of the beginnings of alternative structures whereby some people are empowering themselves to build their own futures. At the same time we have been warned against the dangers of being overcautious and un-experimental.

We have been encouraged by the radiant growth of the Alternatives to Violence Project in the short time since it was initiated at our last Yearly Meeting.

We go forward from this Yearly Meeting with a renewed knowledge of who we are as a family of Friends, and with a resolve to use more fully and adventurously the gifts that we have been granted.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 1993

- 8.18 I know Friends have a testimony of simplicity. But I want to make a plea for complexity. My vision is of an organisation with multiple strong ideals. Visualise a circle marked by magnets, each powerful, important.

Imagine each magnet as being a quality of Friends' faith and process that you love. Many of the magnets come in sets of two, which are powerful polarities. The power of the individual pulling against the importance of the group; a faithful heritage pulling against the promise of here and now relevance; Christianity pulling against paganism. Imagine yourself being pulled towards all of these magnet poles at once.

I see myself as magnetically attracted to Contradictions, which means the magnetic fields almost work backwards. So if I find myself proclaiming the importance of the individual, something reminds me of the importance of the group.

If I leave Friends' heritage for too long, the inadequacy and often mediocre qualities of the Here and Now faith start to loom in front of me and I need to edge back towards the historic legacy of Friends. When I find myself drawn to the familiarity and stability of Christian tradition, something happens and I find myself repelled — perhaps by the piousness and remoteness of its language; or the hierarchical nature of its organisation — and I find myself being drawn instead towards the mysterious intrusions of the natural world.

Living with Contradictions means acknowledging the inevitability of inconsistency and conflict. It also means change is a constant. I believe that Friends have survived as an organisation because of our capacity to move — dance — within the energy of ideas whose expression changes with time.

Sue Stover 1999

- 8.19 For me, the Society of Friends must be grounded in worship. You are my worshipping community, as opposed to a social club or a political league. Everything needs to stem from our worship, be related to it not by pious God-talk but by passion, by an infectious faith, by a presence felt and shared, as John Woolman says, by “what we have tasted and handled spiritually.” Our worship of God needs to be a fact, which we can take for granted in each other, which we express in our unique tradition of spiritual ministry.

The Quaker tradition of vocal ministry is one of the aspects of our heritage, which I treasure most. It is so flexible, so free, so adaptable to the passing of centuries and the changes of location. It has enormous potential for renewing faith and vigour in each successive generation of Quakers. But we can't take it for granted as something that will always happen, that cannot qualitatively vary.

The prophetic tradition can and must continue: the Spirit will find new ways and many voices, not all of them Quaker or even Christian. But I pray that our Quaker vocal ministry will continue to provide one of the ways, and that Quakers will continue to discern and respond to the 'openings' of the Spirit in them.

Cathy Wilson 1978

- 8.20 To come to Meeting for Worship is an act of hope. We come knowing that God is present and that we may be fully present to God and each other. For the Society of Friends everything starts with our presence to God and each other. The most important single thing that we can do for the Religious Society of Friends, the greatest gift we can give ourselves and each other, is our regular presence at Meeting for Worship.

Marvin Hubbard 1984

- 8.21 If our Testimonies are taken 'as a rule to live by', I think few, if any, of us would claim to be perfect in our living. We all would confess to failing at least one Testimony in some respect. There are two comments I make about this.

Firstly, I don't regard the Testimonies as rules to walk by but rather as ideals to aim for, as guides and reminders of how we should try to live.

Secondly, we are still 'learners in the School of Christ'. We have not attained perfection, we are still on our way. I, for one, feel I have a very long way to go, but I hope that no Friend will demand my resignation, because I fail to live up to Friends' ideals.

I need to belong to the Religious Society of Friends because it provides me with a route map and helpful companionship on my life's journey.

Kathleen Douglas 2000

8.22 Historically, Friends have seen our structures as religious testimony, a key witness to putting our faith into practice.

But if we cling to them in detail mechanically, they become a box to imprison us, rather than a trellis on which we can grow, flower and fruit.

Elizabeth Duke at Yearly Meeting, Waikanae 2013

8.23 *Traditionally, many Friends have been totally opposed to the consumption of alcohol in any form. However, in 1976 Philip Macdiarmid wrote:*

Wine is one of God's gifts: it is a 'Pleasant creature', so think many Friends, myself included, who see no harm in the moderate and responsible use of alcohol.

We all on the other hand deplore the tragic effects of overindulgence and addiction and would encourage all efforts towards its better use. Some Friends, probably a minority, are abstainers, and believe that complete abstinence is the only Christian response, for these and other reasons.

We do not as the Society of Friends have a corporate witness that the taking of liquor is wrong.

8.24 I hope that in the Society of Friends in New Zealand we not only allow but welcome playfulness. I don't mean we should encourage irreverence; to me this kind of play is a reverent activity. Nor does it mean irresponsibly taking on all new ideas we happen to toss up, and mindlessly discarding tried-and-true ones. Playfulness will not threaten the true value of what has come down to us, though it may give it new vividness and meaning.

I do not think we need to fear playfulness; our heritage is strong enough, our belief deep enough and our hold on our values firm enough, to take the risks and re-examination that playfulness calls

for. We may find ourselves changing; I do not think we shall find ourselves falling apart. We can believe devoutly and live righteously without being prigs.

Let us stay with our tradition and our principles. But let us do all we can to avoid the control of priggishness and be open to receive fresh light from whatever quarter it may come.

Shelagh Cox 1979

8.25 *In 1979 Kathleen Johnson was one of 2,500 women who attended the 4th United Women's Convention in Hamilton. Kathleen reported to Friends:*

It is through tension and conflict as well as through unity and excitement that we move forward, discovering new strategies and reassessing old ones. To expect achievement without internal conflict is like expecting the patriarchy to welcome us, or petrol to last forever. Looking back I realise I learnt more about myself from the upsetting events than from the stimulating ones. I have seen my sisters angry and felt emotionally what I knew intellectually — that while women remain convinced that being polite will gain their ends for them, the patriarchy has still won. Not only can the men in power feel safe that our demands will not be followed by any inconveniencing action, but by remaining reasonable we are remaining less than human.

Being angry, being unreasonable, being intolerant are part of the full human being. As a middle class person, a Quaker, a woman, and a liberal, I have been taught a fear of raw emotion, to reject anything unpleasant. But this fear will hold me back in my struggles for womanhood far more than any overt threat of the patriarchy — the same patriarchy that teaches women they should be nice and polite and considerate.

There is a story about one of Margaret Fell's servants who felt the call of God to go and preach in a village. The villagers stoned him and threw him off a bridge into the water. But he stood there in mid-stream with the blood from his cuts turning the water red and continued preaching. Such courage cannot be achieved by rejecting violence and being nice.

So much of my Quaker heritage is in tune with my feminism. There are many similarities in attitudes and methods.

But Friends what are we doing for the revolution?

- 8.26 Rainbow Quakers contribute rich lives to our communities, and in all parts of society, with an incredible sense of humour, with flair, often with joy in the celebration of their diversity, loved and valued in their differences.

Alan Greenslade-Hibbert 2023

- 8.27 Quakers in Aotearoa New Zealand, reaffirm our commitment to creating a loving and inclusive community where sexual orientation and gender identities can be expressed. We seek to ensure that all who have grown up among us, or who find spiritual affinity with our faith tradition and practice, can be fully who they are, and that all can feel safe and at home. Further, we reaffirm our stand to advocate for a society in which all people can contribute authentically to public and private life.

We recognise that in many times and cultures, people who express sexual orientation and gender expression identities and orientations which differ from the accepted norms have been rejected, condemned and persecuted. In much of the world today their hard-earned rights are under organised attack, and we are deeply troubled by the prevalence in society of fanatical hatred and hostility.

As Quakers, we are called to examine ways in which our life and organisation may still be 'normative' and excluding whether we take some forms of identity as standard, and in what ways do we unintentionally make other people feel unwelcome or 'othered'? Are we able to manage our own feelings about ways new to us and are we able to make space for people to be vibrant, vital and even flamboyant?

The time is ripe to renew our commitment of 1992: "We affirm the beauty and equality of all people as a part of this planet. We will work for reconciliation within ourselves, within our Meetings and within society in general."

"Let us then try what love will do" (William Penn).

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 2023

8.28 *Our children*

(Monthly Meeting Sunday)

Shuffle, snuffle, puff and blow,
That's the way the babies go,
While the girls, a little older,
Get the giggles round my shoulder
It's noisier than other days,
But who would change their childish ways?
What's more, in a few short years
They will be our overseers!

Norman Bennett 1971

8.29 Quakerism has always been a massive part of my life and influences every aspect of my work. I was born at the Quaker settlement in Whanganui and as a child, Summer Gatherings were a highlight of my year. From a young age, the Quaker community helped me to form a deep passion for the environment, social justice, and taught me to stand up for what I believe in. Coming from such a strong socially focused community, I was incredibly excited to begin high school. Finally, I was old enough to make a difference. I was sure the education would be all about supporting me to make change in the world, and my peers would want to join me in taking action — that climate change and poverty would be the primary topics at the lunch table. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case. I hadn't realised until then just how privileged I was to grow up in this community where even as a child, I was included in discussion on complex issues and supported to take action on them.

Anya Bukholt-Payne 2020

8.30 When I was seven, we moved to Whanganui to live in a Quaker community. We all had our own houses around a central communal venue that would host gatherings of Quakers from around New Zealand and the world. We always had people knocking on our door or staying at our house. I think it taught me a lot about manaakitanga and accepting people from all walks of life.

Airini Beautrais 2021

8.31 I twigged early on that being a Quaker might not be a great thing to mention at school. Being part of any religion was foreign to many kids in my class. But even by religious standards, Quaker was tough to explain. Quakers did things in silence, although people in the meeting might individually and spontaneously rise to speak — ‘to give ministry’. But Quaker is not a ‘meditation group’ either — it’s not an Eastern Religion. It has its roots in Northern English rabble-rousers of 1652, rather than revelations under the Bodhi tree.

The Quaker upbringing gave me core values such as integrity, doing what you say you’ll do, and striving for a fairer, more equal society where people are treated with respect.

I have a lifelong curiosity and respect for other people’s religious experiences, and a sense of peace around different experiences of God, or a higher power.

I’ve learned the best way to be a Quaker is to preach not with words, but by example. Or as Quakers like to say: “Let your life speak”.

Charlotte Gordon 2023

8.32 I remember Young Friends’ and Junior Young Friends’ Camps as a source of salvation throughout what felt like tumultuous teenage years. When high school friendships felt bitter and fickle, the Quaker community while distant felt constant. I carried those friendships around in my back pocket. I felt that I could be myself at Quaker gatherings. A self that existed separately from social baggage and drama at home. At my first YF Camp, now eight years ago, I remember thinking: It’s just me, as I am, right now. I feel seen.

At camp this year, many shared the feeling that most friendships just don’t live up to the high bar set by our Quaker whānau. During this conversation, I almost said “Don’t worry! It gets better!” I had moved past that feeling, and since found many friendships that felt as much like home and traversed many of the topics that felt taboo in non-Quaker circles.

I am so, so lucky to know what this kind of unconditional love feels like. And so fortunate to fill up on it like we did over Easter.

And that yes — these days I have many friendships that feel as deep, honest and truthful as my Quaker mates always have. But I didn't just find those friendships. By offering others the kind of friendship I learned inside our Quaker bubble, I created them.

Rosie Remmerswaal 2018

- 8.33 One advantage of a Quaker background is learning to speak to groups of people. Our Meetings' children, JYFs and YFs become quite natural speakers as they experience leadership in their groups, and telling the rest of us about their plans and activities. And they seem to grow up with a most an instinct about how to work in a group, being inclusive and sharing responsibility.

Now I'll try to list what I see as possible disadvantages of a Quaker upbringing, in the form of questions. Did we grow up too trusting?

Certainly, I still tend to take people at face value and not to look at what's behind their words. Are Quakers still, as previous generations were, poor at dealing with conflict among themselves, letting it be covered in polite Quaker silence? I believe that here in Aotearoa New Zealand in my generation, we have begun to be able to face and deal with such difficulties.

Is there a danger of us being 'all sweetness and light' and not facing reality? This tendency is robustly counteracted in my Meeting by our being brought face to face with the realities of the world; on the whole, realism underpins our looking at people and situations 'in the Light'.

Phyllis Short 2000

- 8.34 I had been instrumental in shifting Junior Young Friends camp from October to July and to the Settlement. All we needed was a team to run it. There was no team!

I don't know what happened but before I knew it, I had opened my mouth and undertaken to find a team at Yearly Meeting. If a team was not found, the camp would be off. This coloured the rest of my Yearly Meeting. There were two meetings over meals.

It was amazing and wonderful to watch and work to bring this together, so many Friends helped, I could see the tentacles move, lots of suggestions, ideas, names, and commitment. There was a Spirit at work.

Before the end of YM, we knew that there was enough structure and people commitment in place to run a JYF camp at the Settlement in the July school holidays. All I had to do was send out one email linking everyone.

I was really pleased and totally exhausted. And yes, I am Angela Brusse's daughter and I found that I grieved her passing a lot of the time at YM. She worked to make JYF camps part of our YM structure and I queried — "Was I right in pushing this project or should I have shut up and left it?"

The proof of the pudding is in the eating; hopefully the JYFs will have a great time together.

Mia Tay 2013

- 8.35 Our responsibility as Young Friends then seems a heavy one to make our own lives peaceful as an example to others, and in other positive ways help them to achieve the same happy state; to create peace, or rather to create an atmosphere in which peace and goodwill can flourish naturally. Our responsibility, yes. But not ours alone.

Frances Moore 1958

- 8.36 A Young Friend spoke movingly of the Prodigal Son. She helped us realise our concern should not be primarily the loss of young people from the Society, but first and foremost the spiritual need of each child. If that had been met, even though he might still leave, he would know there was a home to which he could always return.

Anon 1965

- 8.37 The purpose of a Young Friends' Camp is to create an unforgettable experience, which comes partly from things like epilogue and Meeting for Worship, and perhaps most from discussion and the deep friendship and love that is experienced there.

Avon Pugmire 2001

8.38 For me, my first Yearly Meeting gave me a chance to learn about the people who are part of the Aotearoa New Zealand community of Friends. The exciting thing for me was to meet people of my parents' and grandparents' ages who were still enthusiastic, concerned and involved in peace issues and social change.

I know many 'radicals' of my age lose heart and become 'conservative' in the grind of work and mortgages. I gained a seed of hope that not everyone follows that path.

Helen Gibbs 1992

8.39 A high proportion are Friends by conviction and have had to learn to be Quakers from scratch, rather than absorbing Quaker life from childhood. This means that we aren't constrained by a heavy burden of tradition or knowledge, but at the same time we find it hard to be in touch with that tradition when we do need it. Do we tell our stories enough?

Elizabeth Duke 1995

8.40 Do we, in Friends, spend so much time leaning over backwards to shun anything that smacks of 'doctrine' that we leave our children without a basis for a living faith?

Norman Bennett 1970

8.41 To my mind, the essence of Quakerism lies in the name: Religious Society of Friends. Our purpose is to be a community that gives love and support to our members as we find our way through the trials and joys of life. For this we draw on our values, our inner Light and the insights of other Friends. It is important to remember that without this loving community we are no longer unique; there are other secular organisations that embody the values we profess.

Kindness and community are essential, or as Isaac Penington said in 1667:

“Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusation against another, but praying for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand.”

Jan Marsh 2022

8.42 The important thing at Summer Gathering was the way in which the diversity unified itself and sought a balance. I should never have thought that I would have left a sunny beach in mid-afternoon by my own desire to listen to a discussion of the historical background of Vietnam, but one wanted the balance of substance and concern which the Gathering offered.

I should never have thought that I would willingly be drawn from a jubilant dance welcoming the New Year to listen to the tape-recorded cries from Qhi Nhon hospital of those who would have little reason to welcome the New Year but the sound of the dance music from across the courtyard met dramatically with the cries of the distant sufferers to give one a deepened sense of the meaning and importance of both of those sounds.

The Gathering was rich in such experiences, and the unifying principle was to be found in that faith which had brought us all together as Friends. The message was that of drawing together in the spirit of that faith drawing together where diversity seems greatest and gulfs seem unbreachable on any other than deeply human terms.

The Gathering itself was such a drawing together, not merely for silent worship but for every aspect of living. It seemed that what we so often feel, think or say had there come alive in practice, and that such living together, if only for nine days a year, was so important and revitalising that it had to be continued, insofar as possible in our separate Meetings until we could all gather communally again.

Hal Smith 1969

8.43 With mainly two generations present at Summer Gatherings a heavy responsibility falls on the ‘parent’ age-group to cope with the physical and spiritual aspects of the whole group. There is a real need for

older Friends, the young (and young-at-heart) grandparents to attend. They may not feel that this kind of family gathering is their cup of tea for a holiday, but to be willing to come, to talk, ‘to be available’, will be valuable.

Carol Emslie 1971

8.44 The feel of us all being equal before the Lord seems to give the Summer Gathering a special quality that one meets nowhere else, and which engendered a most amazing sort of disorganised regimentation, by which all the chores were done efficiently and expeditiously by volunteers with great joy in their work.

Joan Smith 1979

8.45 I think sometimes you get what you need, not what you want. So mop in hand, I proceeded to join my fellow loo cleaning crew to make a safe and clean environment for our fellow Summer Gatherers. Our little cleaning crew came from all walks of life and my eyes were opened to the layers that people carry with them. The stories and experiences they were willing to share to try to understand themselves and help each other were mind-blowing. I felt a warmth and kindness surround me as I settled into this moving and beautiful experience...

How can you get so much satisfaction and reward from such simple activities?

Sue Mostom 2022

8.46 *The theme of the 2020-21 Summer Gathering was ‘Kindness: — Kindness to the planet, Kindness to other people and Kindness to oneself’. A Māori whakatauki ‘He taonga rongonui te aroha ki te tangata’ was adapted by our Quaker kuia to cover the three parts of the theme:*

He taonga rongonui te tiaki i te whenua
He taonga rongonui te aroha ki te tangata
He taonga rongonui te manaaki i a koe anō.

It is a great gift to care for the land
It is a great gift to love people
It is a great gift to respect oneself.

8.47 All of us must take account of the major world religions but there are other issues, which depend on where we live. Where Quakers are part of the mainline culture, as in Britain, the challenge is from immigrant faiths and new religions (e.g. modern Rastafarianism) often arising within immigrant groups. Where we are part of a colonial culture, as in New Zealand, the issue is different and potentially more fundamental.

There were Christian missionaries in New Zealand before there was any concerted attempt at European settlement, and when the Māori, who had arrived about 1,000 years before, adopted Christianity, they did so with some seriousness. Church activities are a focus for a Māori community, and many events which European society would consider secular, such as adult education courses or even protest marches, include prayers and hymns.

This has not meant that knowledge of the traditional religion (with a number of gods concerned with nature or human activities) has been lost. Christian speakers at a Māori funeral will still invoke the spirit of the dead, inviting it to pause on a local summit to say farewell to the familiar scene, and then to journey by stages northwards, until it reaches the final rocky cape and slides down the roots of a red flowering pohutukawa tree to travel to Hawaiki, the home of spirits.

Māori resistance to the seizure of land sometimes expressed itself in Christian terms (one village, Parihaka, saw the development of techniques of nonviolent resistance which anticipated Gandhi by several decades), but sometimes by a revival of old religion or the development of new ones which combined traditional beliefs, part of Christianity, and other elements.

Today's resurgence of Māori identity includes a new focus on spirituality and a call to the non-Māori community to recognise the value of Māori beliefs, for example the religious significance, not just the hygienic need, of not polluting seafood by sewage. I have expanded on this as one example of the calls, which are likely to be made on Friends in different parts of the world.

If we have a real commitment to seek for truth, we should be listening; yet it is Catholics rather than Quakers whom I have heard

suggesting that the work of the spirit can be experienced in Māori religion, and that it should be seen as the Old Testament of New Zealand.

Elizabeth Duke 1985

8.48 Here in Aotearoa New Zealand, we Friends have a metaphor embedded in our Māori name: Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri: The people who stand quivering in the wind of the spirit.

This metaphor — the wind — connects us to a compelling not always focused energy.

At Matariki, we are invited to fly kites; an invitation that on a blustery day brings the instant satisfaction of ascendance and achievement, with relatively little effort, other than to hold on and feel the force.

On a relatively still day, kite flying requires a sensitivity to small prompting breezes and a willingness to either run to create the lift, or to stand poised ready for the breeze. When it comes, the breeze comes at its own bidding, not at ours.

We may live in unprecedented times, but the human experience of navigating a challenging trajectory — pushed and pulled by the wind — is an ancient one. With spring in the air and with awareness of the overwhelming importance of the decisions that we individually and collectively have to make, this reflection speaks to me:

“History teaches us that darkness and death take different forms in every generation, but the challenge of gathering the forces of love and light to oppose them remains the same”.

Sue Stover 2020

8.49 Bill had a capacity for putting an opposing point of view without being confrontational or antagonising the other party — a true Quaker quality. Bill attended the eighth International Ecopolitics Conference in Christchurch, the second only to be held in New Zealand. When he arrived at the conference he was asked to sit at the front, to help fill empty seats so he thought. But as he sat down, an elder asked if he would make a welcoming speech.

With only a few moments to collect his thoughts, Bill stunned the gathering, first with what most thought was a very long silence — about one minute! — then with a passionate and sensitive speech. He connected the Māori greeting and agenda — offering to the meeting his own spiritual and philosophical commitment in the Society of Friends, and skilfully linked both of these to the business of the meeting.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Bill Moxon (1931-1994)

8.50 Is it possible that someone without Māori heritage can be understood to be ‘tangata whenua’? If so, then William Tailby would surely qualify. His turangawaewae was Te Hiku o Te Ika, more specifically Kaitāia. A lifelong learner of Te Reo and Tikanga Māori, William was held in high esteem by local hapū and iwi. William sought to bring out the best in the students he taught. He ended his final newsletter as principal of Kaitaia College with the following whakataukī, which epitomised his attitude towards his students:

Me maumahara he tino toa i roto i ia tangata. Rapua te toa nei, me whāngai, ka tupu, ka puāwai.

Remember there is a champion in everyone. Search for that champion, nurture them and they will grow and flourish.

Testimony to the Grace of God in the Life of William Tailby (1951-2018)

8.51 Good intentions are not enough. One needs to maintain constant awareness of the wider context within which one acts. This is as relevant for supporters of justice as for indigenous peoples. A good ally needs this wider awareness in order to avoid the risk of exacerbating the very issues that are being addressed.

Murray Short 2014

8.52 On one of the early marae visits, the Tāua of the house called out rapidly and assertively to a student who was sitting on the pillow while unpacking her overnight possessions, telling her not to

do that, correcting her behaviour, and explaining why. I felt sympathy for the student and spent a longtime trying to decide how I could make it better for her.

Did I have the courage to talk to a senior iwi woman about ways to avoid scaring the students? Could I improve the sense of safety that we were trying to build on the marae? If I as a relatively senior member of the profession had difficulty in plucking up the necessary courage, what could I expect from students? I witnessed similar incidents in the next three or four years, and told myself that it wasn't my place to offer advice. I consoled myself with the thought that I shouldn't show her up, while recognising that I was a wimp. Advice from a Pākehā colleague that things were done differently here, helped me.

Several years later, I finally got it. I finally realised that the student might feel embarrassed, but that all the others would be able to learn from the rebuke. More importantly, speaking individually to 60 students could breach the mana of the house 60 times. I saw that I was giving greater status to an individual than to the community.

I now understood that conditional respect (respect for actions and decisions only if I can understand them) is not true respect. True respect is acknowledgment of the rights and legitimacy of another way of doing things whether or not it makes sense to you.

Linda Wilson 2014

- 8.53 Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand did not arrive with a mission of conversion. This means that unlike some other Christian churches, we have not recognised and learnt from a Māori or a Pasifika body within our structure. In our ongoing work to see our calling within the obligations of Te Tiriti/the Treaty of Waitangi, I and others with Pākehā ancestry have recognised that Friends here came into being historically within the Tauwi/settler party to Te Tiriti.

How is this for Friends with Māori whakapapa? Do Friends with Pasifika ancestry feel fully at home?

Elizabeth Duke 2022

- 8.54 We make uneasy compromises, until it can be said that Quakers are of the world, but not in it. In our relation to New Zealand society, it is difficult to revolt, difficult not to be co-opted and corrupted.

Thus, caught in a sticky web of a secular society, moved by forces neither our own or God's, we feel ourselves to be in a different relation to history than that of the early Friends. We do not feel ourselves to be on the cutting edge of change, but rather washed along in the sudsy tide of affluence.

Take as example, overuse and abuse of the automobile. If the devil had approached us and said, 'I will provide you with a quick convenient means of transport, if you will sacrifice to me 700 lives a year, burn offerings that will poison the air, and design your cities and your lives so as to minimise the possibility of 'community,' we would probably have turned him down. But our society has accepted all this piecemeal, and Friends have drifted along with it.

So here we are dependent on our automobiles, perhaps vaguely guilty about it, but caught up in a system we cannot extricate ourselves from.

Larry Jones 1973

- 8.55 Representatives of our newest Monthly Meeting led our hearts and minds to examine Friends' responsibilities in the wider New Zealand society. We see the current emphasis on lowering inflation as a kind of idolatry. The welfare state has been replaced by the tyranny of the powerful and wealthy. This allows the sinful theory of monetarism, based on the false criterion of profit making, to undermine in particular our health, welfare and education systems. We feel contaminated by these forces, sometimes to the point of paralysis. We need to look to our centre to see the Light of the Spirit, so that we may be empowered to speak and to act collectively.

Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand 1991

- 8.56 *Following the Christchurch mosque shootings of 15 March 2019, 56 people came at short notice to a meeting, and a lively informative evening ensued. Rosemary Tredgold reflected:*

It was important to me in gaining greater understanding of Muslims and the mosque with its 40 or so different nationalities attending. I gather such meetings have been held by Friends in other places. May these continue.

So now where next in a journey in a country changed by violence towards Muslims in 2019? This is not the first act of such violence in our country, but can we learn lessons from this and not deny its reality or danger?

Firstly, I think we need opportunities to listen to each other's stories and reactions to the horrific event.

Secondly, I think we need to use opportunities to gain knowledge of other religions and cultures.

Thirdly, and the most difficult, to have the courage to explore our racism in a safe place.

How are we to do it? With love in our hearts. We are called to serve in peace, gentleness, transparency and integrity.

8.57 In our Anzac Day event we carried a coloured banner, a rainbow. A bystander asked, "Why carry a homosexual banner?"

Well, for me the rainbow symbolises peace but for some, it symbolises diversity — and the two are related: If you can't cope with diversity, you won't get peace.

But why does the rainbow symbolise peace? There are deep cultural reasons. For example, in the book of Genesis, it meant the storm and flood were over, and God promised not to destroy everything. Other traditions have other supernatural versions.

Yet the natural version is perhaps better. Scientists like Newton showed that light can be reflected or refracted into different wavelengths, and that white sunlight contains the many colours of the spectrum. Diversity is the truth about light!

Peter Low 2022

8.58 Growing up in a Quaker family, I was introduced to George Fox as the founder of Quakerism — and to Margaret Fell who married him. She was also important. But how was she important? We hear a lot more about George than we do about Margaret, perhaps because his was the role of visionary and hers was the role of movement building. While George preached the radical idea that all could access the divine — and not just through ordained ministers — Margaret organised meetings and support systems for Friends. But what were her ideas? Where is her voice?

Recently, I found it in the final chapter in a book on Quaker history. That final chapter was entitled ‘The freedom of the Spirit from outward uniformity.’ It was an epistle written at Swarthmore Hall in 1698, when the earliest generation of Friends was gradually dying. Margaret Fell — or Margaret Fox as she was by then — was alarmed by the focus on the outward conformity which was normalising amongst the next generation of Friends.

Given that many of the earlier chapters concerned the various disagreements and schisms in the emerging faith, this call by Margaret Fell spoke to me of the heart of Quakerism: to put aside disagreements and come back to the spirit. She wrote:

“It’s a dangerous thing to lead young Friends much into the observation of outward things, which may be easily done; for they can soon get into an outward garb, to be all alike outwardly, but this will not make them true Christians: it’s the Spirit that gives life; I would be loth to have a hand in these things. The Lord preserve us that we do no hurt to God’s work; but let him work whose work it is. We have lived quietly and peaceably thus far, and it’s not for God’s service to make breaches.”

Annabel Taylor 2023

8.59 Quakers have not been immune to the awful divisions that exist within families, individuals and communities. Quakers have a deep concern for peace. So how do we deal with these divisions without permanently fracturing relationships?...

Some suggested steps:

1. What is it that keeps me apart from the other?
2. What do I want from a division?
3. What is it about the other that I value and share?
4. Can I put my feelings for the rightness of my position on one side and explore what it has been like for the other? Not discussing their thoughts on the subject that is dividing you; rather focus on the experience of having those views.
5. Explore what you would like from the other to be able to heal the fracture.

Rosemary Tredgold 2022

- 8.60 I've been rattled by the angry protests at Parliament against the government's vaccine mandates.

I've been thinking about what a Quaker way to respond might be. It's my experience that such conversations get nowhere unless the person feels heard and cared for by me. I've resolved for myself to say something like this:

"It's clear that you care very much about getting at the truth about vaccines. And you care greatly about people's health and any possible harm that vaccines might cause. Also, I'm getting it that freedom is very important to you, and how much you hate to feel controlled by the government. Please help me to understand better your thoughts and concerns about this. Then, if you are willing to hear me too, I'd like to tell you some of my concerns."

Arthur Wells 2022

- 8.61 Nelson is the home of the first Friends' Meeting House and the site of that house is preserved as a historic place, with a plaque, which identifies it. It is at 136 Rutherford Street and was the acre allotted to John Sylvanus Cotterell in 1841. He was about 23 years old. An etching exists which shows a cottage with a picket fence surrounded by farmland. Today the spot is five minutes' walk from the town centre.

Cotterell was a surveyor and died at the hands of Te Rauparaha's band at the Wairau Incident (1843), although he was known to be popular with local Māori.

In 1853, Robert Lindsay from Brighouse Meeting in Yorkshire, England arrived in New Zealand to support local Friends. He encouraged Nelson Friends, who had been meeting in the home of Samuel Strong, to own a Meeting House and in consultation with Isaac Mason and Martha and Samuel Strong, he bought Cotterell's cottage. They made some modifications to the house and grounds and the first Meeting for Worship was held on 15 May 1853. Six adults and three children were present.

Samuel Strong died in 1875 at the age of 80. He and his wife Martha (who died in 1854) were buried at the Meeting House, along with two of their infant children. After Strong's death, worship at the cottage was discontinued. Isaac Mason died in 1885.

Jan Marsh 2002

8.62 I decided that I can be faithful by just turning up. Two successive Saturday working bees at the Nelson Quaker Meeting House had prompted this thought. By just turning up to scrape off old paint and slap on new, I got to spend time with old friends and newcomers, learn stuff about them I never knew, tell them things I'd just learned — having recently attended my first ever Mormon funeral service. I got to share hearty vegetable soup and refreshing watermelon.

I was under no obligation to be there, but had I not turned up I would have missed an opportunity to deepen my sense of belonging, to have interesting conversations, and to feel part of creating and mending and caring for a special place.

Christine Gillespie 2020

8.63 Ruby and Edward Dowsett were the 'Weighty Friends' in Wellington Meeting when we, Terry and I, first found our way to Meeting in 1952. They were a true partnership, different but equal, both strong individuals and whereas Terry was drawn toward Edward, I was drawn to Ruby. I metaphorically sat at her feet and tried to emulate her, while recognising that I did not have her qualities. She had

a deep interest in people and the ability to draw out the good qualities in individuals. She particularly loved children and young people were drawn to her. She was a keen gardener and her garden was always full of colour. She enjoyed wearing colourful clothes and always dressed attractively with a neat simplicity and rarely was a smile absent from her face. She was sympathetic, sensitive and understanding of other peoples' difficulties and concerned and a good listener. She enjoyed poetry and paintings. She was deeply religious and always had by her bedside a copy of *A Testament of Devotion* and a copy of James Naylor's last words: "There is a spirit which I feel that delights to do no evil."

She was a very good advocate for Woodbrooke and her enthusiasm persuaded Terry to visit there when he was in the UK in 1958. She encouraged us both to study there and this led eventually to our wish to develop a study centre in NZ to bring Quaker education within the reach of more NZ Friends. So Friends Settlement, Whanganui, came into being as a direct result of Ruby's influence on us.

Ruby's favourite saying about Quakers was that we were 'learners in the school of Christ'. Friends Settlement which supports the study centre is a class in that school. Sometimes I think it is a primer class, we are very slow learners, but we do try to live our lives under the guidance of the Spirit of Christ, as Ruby herself did. I hope she can see and approve. She would be very understanding of our failures and rejoice with us in our successes.

Kathleen Douglas 2000

8.64 I am struck by the appropriateness of planting trees at the beginning of a community. They will both be long in growing; both will need much care and effort, based on love, especially in the early years. Both will provide shelter in a competitive, sometimes hostile, environment. And both can be destroyed in a fraction of the time they took to grow.

The trees are an expression of our faith in them and in the Settlement Community. I think too that somehow they are an expression of faith in ourselves.

Roger Nightingill 1976

8.65 The Settlement is an intentional community of Friends who have come together to run and care for an educational seminar facility for the use of New Zealand Friends, giving their time and energy for this purpose.

The Settlers are just ordinary Friends, with the same mix of gifts and faults as others. They are not specially chosen for their Quaker qualities and should not be expected to act differently from any other Friends. They try to live their Quakerism, as do those who live elsewhere, but fail as often and need your charitable understanding and support.

If you feel that the Settlement should be a window to show the world what it means to be a Quaker, perhaps it gives a truer picture than we would like. Certainly, some of the Settlers, if not all, would be happier if the reality was nearer the aspiration. But to lay down rules for the Settlement that do not apply elsewhere is not an answer.

Kathleen Douglas 2002

8.66 *Friends Centre, Auckland*

From crack of dawn the traffic roars
Right past the Quaker Centre doors,
An endless stream — cars, buses, trucks,
Like angry, selfish, squawking ducks,
Or lemmings, trapped in Nature's tide,
Bent on committing suicide.
Then when I lie awake at night,
Hearing a man and woman fight,
I sometimes think how good 'twould be
If Friends could all live by the sea,
But soon recall what *Edward said:
How oft from Woodbrooke he had fled,
Spurning awhile that blest abode
To walk the noisy Bristol Road,
That he might know that God was there

As much as in the garden fair,
Sharing its clamour, filth and strife
And giving men the bread of life.

(*Edward Dowsett, who studied at Woodbrooke)

Norman Bennett 1971

8.67 *Friends House Waiheke, April 24th 1988*

In our distant cathedrals Brigflatts? Swarthmoor Hall?
whose air like their benches is worn silken smooth
by centuries of meeting, how easy to slip,
to plunge as practised divers, well-supported,
into their worshipful depths; be gathered in
by all that has gone before all the way back
to the high-crowned hats, the fervour and the quaking.
In that company our tentative presence
could not signify much one way or the other.

Here though is laid upon us a strange burden,
the sensation of being responsible, innovators,
establishers of firm footings, pioneers.

Explorers too, by winds from every quarter
brought to discover, over and over again,
the same quiet island and its changing weather,
name for ourselves its peaks and promontories,
receive its view of the ocean of dazzling light.

Where we have climbed to on this glorious morning
the sound the silence holds is of work in progress:
raising the roof, driving the nails in true
(in attitudes of supplicatory prayer),
rustle, crackle of plans, deep cogitation.

A constant, proud ground-base — what can we add
but thankfulness for ‘being present where we are’,
and motions of love to the labourers in our midst,
who richly deserve that honour, from the heart,
have earned the right to those broad brims, high crowns,
and if they fancy them, buckles on their shoes.

Judith Child 1988

8.68 We built a Quaker Meeting House on Waiheke, which brought a whole group of people together who had not worked together before. Some Quakers saw that as a miracle that this whole thing had been built out of nothing. People had materialised from nowhere.

Those of us who were deeply involved in the building didn't see it as miraculous, and still had the back pain and sunburn to prove it.

I suppose the miracle was that we believed we would complete the building even though we didn't know how we were going to get there when we started.

Robin Watts 1989

8.69 The Spirit is always with us.

That Inward Light that shines for everyone.

It shines on our indiscretions, and we are challenged to do better.

It shines on our strengths, giving us an overriding sense of hope.

If only we heed the Light.

It never abandons us.

We abandon the Light when we fail to love our neighbours
as ourselves,

And fail to love mother nature who sustains us.

For it is in these relationships in the web of life that we
encounter the Spirit,

And the Spirit is made manifest.

Without relationship, an ocean of darkness awaits us.

In relationship, there's an ocean of light.

Murray Short 2024

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Rārangi Pukapuka

A note to researchers: This bibliography allows the curious to contextualise where each extract was found. Those people who locate the original piece of writing will find that some extracts have had minor changes. This has happened for various reasons, such as at the request of the author, or to correct errors (such as misquotation from the Bible). There are academic ways to show this. For example, where text is drawn together from several areas in a written piece, academic convention would require the use of an ellipsis (...). Similarly, where a word has been misspelled in the original, academic convention would leave in the spelling mistake and insert '(sic)'. However, in the interests of readability, we have chosen not to follow these conventions. Therefore those interested in original wording, may want to locate the original material.

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Glossary

Kuputaka

Arohanui	Deep affection
CORSO	The Council of Relief Services Overseas, started by various agencies including the Friends Service Committee in the 1940s
E noho rā	Words of farewell spoken to a person remaining
Haere rā	Words of farewell spoken to person leaving
Haka	Ceremonial dance with accompanying chanting and gestures
Hāngī	Earth oven in which food is cooked by heated stones
Hapū	Section of a large tribe
Hikoī	Walk, pilgrimage or march
Hongi	Māori greeting by pressing noses together symbolising the sharing of breath of life from one person to another.
Iwi	Tribe that forms the structure of Māori society. Within each iwi are several hapū, sub-tribes, which are each made up of closely related whānau groupings.
JYFs	Junior Young Friends aged 13 to 15 years or Years 9 to 11 at school
Kaitiakitanga	Stewardship or guardianship, often of land or waterways
Kanohi ki te kanohi	Face to face, an in-person meeting
Kaupapa	Theme, topic, purpose
Kōrero	To say, speak, talk; a story, discussion, conversation
Kōwhai	Tree with hanging clusters of large yellow flowers
Mana	Prestige, power, influence, high status
Manaakitanga	Hospitality, kindness, generosity, showing care for others
Mānuka	Common indigenous bush. Honey from the flowers is said to have health benefits.
Māoritanga	Māori culture in general
Marae	Strictly the courtyard directly in front of a Māori meeting house but more loosely used to refer to the complex of meeting, sleeping and eating houses
Moana	Ocean, sea or large lake
Pākehā	Māori-language term for New Zealanders primarily of European descent
Pāua	Shellfish similar to abalone
Playcentre	Parent cooperative early childhood education movement
Plunket Book	Book recording an infant's weight, height, and general health

Pöhutukawa	Coastal tree whose crimson flowers appear at Christmas
‘Pökarekare Ana’	Well-known Māori love song
Pūkeko	Swamp hen with a bright red bill, deep blue, black and white feathers, orange legs and feet
Rātā	Large forest tree with crimson flowers and hard red timber
Ringatū	Māori Christian Church founded by Te Kooti in 1868
Tangata whenua	Literally ‘people of the land’, the indigenous Māori inhabitants of Aotearoa New Zealand
Tangi, tangihanga	Weeping; mourning; the occasion of a funeral
Tapa	Cloth made from the bark of the paper mulberry tree, commonly used in the Pacific Islands
Tāua	Old woman, old man
Te Ao Hurihuri	‘The revolving world’. Used of the present day as distinct from the past
Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri	Māori name for Quakers translated as “The Faith Community that stands shaking in the wind of the Spirit”
Treaty of Waitangi/ Te Tiriti o Waitangi	Treaty signed in 1840 between representatives of the British Crown and a number of Māori chiefs. It is widely regarded as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand.
Tūrangawaewae	Place where one has the right to stand, to belong, usually through genealogical lineage
‘Tūtira Mai’	Well-known Māori song about unity
Whakapapa	Genealogical lineage; ancestors
Whakatauki	Proverb or significant saying often used in speeches
Whānau	Extended family
Whare kai	Literally ‘eating house’; a dining room
YFs	Young Friends aged 16 to about 35

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