

# **QUAKER HANDBOOK**

## **THE HANDBOOK OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE**

**of the**

**Religious Society of Friends Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri**

**Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand**

**2022**

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Friends are recommended to consult the text of the  
*Handbook* on the Quaker website - [quakers.nz](http://quakers.nz) - for  
updates agreed by Yearly Meeting, and for guidance on  
the use of the website for various tasks.

# THE QUAKER HANDBOOK

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**NOTE:** If you are using the printed version of this Handbook, consult the online text on the Quaker website for guidance on any of the website procedures associated with practices described.

## NOTES ON LANGUAGE, GLOSSARY

### Some notes on the language used in this Handbook

#### *Religious terms*

From the earliest days Friends have used a rich variety of language to express our religious or spiritual experience. So it is within our Yearly Meeting. Underlying the choices of words Friends make are some substantial differences which cannot be papered over. Friends will differ as to how they perceive, and how they describe, worship, decision-making, our communal life and our witness to the world. Are there ways in which we conceive of 'the other' as a dimension beyond the human and natural? Are there ways in which we find our spiritual seeking embodied in our everyday experience? Friends find many different ways to speak of what is central for us - light, truth, God, being, infinite love, revelation, Spirit, and many more.

The earliest Quakers lived in a Christian context, and believed themselves to be called to rebuild the original true Christian community. The Christian language they used is part of our heritage. We share it with Friends worldwide, the majority of whom identify as part of the broader Christian church.

In this *Handbook* the Revision Committee has tried to use language which will be generally acceptable to Friends within the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand. Probably each Friend will find some of the ways of expression uncongenial, perhaps even hurtful. We invite you to practise loving hospitality to words which speak truth to others. As well as re-expressing them in ways which are right to us, each of us

has opportunities to enter imaginatively into the experience of others, to share our treasures.

"Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your heart, and respond to them." (*Advices and Queries* A 1)

Respond also to the promptings of love and truth in the hearts of others.

*'Quakers', 'Friends'*

Within the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand both Members and Attenders play a full part in the life of the Meeting. In this Handbook the terms 'Quaker' and 'Friend' are used to include both Members and Attenders.

*Spiritual and pastoral care*

The terms 'spiritual care' and 'pastoral care' have been accepted by Meetings (November 2019) for use in this Handbook to refer to what was traditionally known as 'Eldership' and 'Oversight'. Meetings are free to use whatever terms they feel are most truthful and appropriate in their own life and organisation.

## **Glossary of Terms Used in This Handbook**

*The references in brackets are to sections where some terms are considered in more detail.*

*The Handbook respects the accepted practice of the use of macrons in Māori words, whether or not they were used in the original documents.*

*Attender (2.2.4)* Attenders are people, not in membership, who attend worship with some regularity, and/or in other ways are clearly part of the life of the Meeting.

*Call, calling* A sense of rightness about a proposed activity or service.

*Centring (2.1.4 & 3.2.1)* In worship or reflection, bringing our attention away from distraction towards the Spirit or the concern before us.

*Church* A community of Christians. Early Friends were clear that the church was the body of people, and not a building or an administrative structure. In many parts of the world Quakers use the term 'church' for their group and building, where in our Yearly Meeting we use 'Meeting', 'Worship Group' and 'Meeting House'. (See also *Meeting*.)

*Clear, clearness (6.4)* A sense of rightness about something, following careful spirit-led consideration. Hence a 'meeting for clearness', a 'clearness committee', to assist a Friend / Friends in reaching a decision.

*Clerk (3.3, 3.4, 4.4, 4.7)* A Friend called to serve a Meeting by convening its Meeting for Worship for Business, guiding the process, and offering minutes to embody the sense of the Meeting. The role may be shared. Clerks are the central point of contact for the Meeting, and can have other roles such as administration, and representing the Meeting to other bodies and the public.



*Concern (2.3)* A powerful call or leading to undertake a particular service or form of witness, or to support a particular cause.

*Discernment* Reaching a decision through careful spirit-led consideration of its implications, and of the right way forward.

*Enquirer (2.2.5)* Enquirers are people who have made some contact with a Meeting, including by electronic means, or who occasionally attend worship.

*Epistle (5.4.5)* A letter to Friends generally from a Yearly Meeting or other group, expressing the experience of its gathering, 'how the Spirit has moved amongst it'.

*Friend* From very early days, used by Quakers of one another, 'Friends of Truth'. Generally used within Quakers, while 'Quaker' describes us to others. In this *Handbook* 'Friends' and 'Quakers' cover both Members and Attenders. (See *Quaker*).

*Gather, gathered (2.1.4)* A sense of especial depth and unity shared by a group, in worship or on another occasion.

*Hapū (1.3.1)* Groupings within iwi.

*Iwi (1.3.1)* Peoples, tribes.

*Junior Young Friend* A young person aged roughly 13 - 16, who has some connection with Friends.

*Kāwanatanga* (1.3.1) Formulated from English "governance" to describe the role of the British Crown in Te Tiriti provisions.

*Lead, leading* The sense that words, or courses of action, are being prompted from beyond oneself.

*Meeting* Meeting has three senses: an event when Friends gather, a group of Friends, the organised structure of the group.

*Member* (2.2.1 - 2.2.3) Members are people who find themselves at home with Friends, have decided that they wish to declare publicly that they are part of the Quaker community, and have worked through a process of discernment with their Monthly Meeting, and been accepted into membership of that Monthly Meeting. Thereby they are members also of the Yearly Meeting, and hence of Friends World Committee for Consultation.

*Ministry* (2.1.5 - 2.1.13) The fundamental meaning is 'service'. 'Ministry' is also used for spoken or other contributions to worship.

*Monthly Meeting* (3, 4.1.1) The body of Friends responsible for Quaker life within its region; the Meeting for Worship for Business of this body. Membership is held with a Monthly Meeting. Together Monthly Meetings form the Yearly Meeting.

*Programmed, unprogrammed* Terms used for patterns of worship among Friends worldwide. Programmed worship includes prepared elements such as Bible reading and

teaching, other spoken messages, singing and other music. 'Unprogrammed' describes waiting or open worship as general within our Yearly Meeting. Where the two forms are combined, 'semiprogrammed' may be used.

*Quaker* The term was used with scorn against early Friends who called on people to tremble before God, and has over time been claimed. It is useful to distinguish us from other 'Friends of . . .' bodies.

*Rangatiratanga* (1.3.1), *tino rangatiratanga* (1.3.1) In Te Tiriti, describing the "leadership", "sovereignty", "self-governance" held by iwi and hapū.

*Religious Society of Friends* The formal name of Quakers, often used in legal names.

*Sense of the Meeting* (3.3) In Quaker decision-making, an understanding of how the group as a whole feels led to proceed, even though it may not be what each person would have chosen.

*Silence* is a form of ministry, an instrument for worship, which itself goes beyond silence.

*Spirit* The Judaeo-Christian understanding of the 'Spirit of God', the 'Holy Spirit', is broadened by many Friends to include the spiritual dimension of nature and the whole universe, and experience of depth, of what is beyond us. Terms such as 'spirit-led' point to a sense that an action or decision goes beyond the self-regarding and utilitarian.

*Tangata whenua* (1.2.1) "People of the land", conveying belonging, guardianship and authority.

*Te reo* (1.3.2) The Māori language.

*Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri* The Māori name of our Yearly Meeting, gifted to us by Tīmoti Kāretu as Māori Language Commissioner. Can be understood as "the faith community that stands shaking in the wind of the Spirit".

*Te Tiriti* The Treaty of Waitangi in its Māori text, as agreed to by the overwhelming majority of the signatories.

*Testimony* (2.4) Friends use the term to describe various ways in which we feel called to live, act and witness, such as the testimony of integrity. A 'testimony to the grace of God in the life' of a late Friend (traditional language) is a Meeting's attempt to express how that person's life has exemplified their beliefs.

*Unity* (3.3.3, 4.2.1) A Meeting or group finding that they are at one in a decision or practice, even though it might not be the choice of each individual. Unity differs from unanimity, which is everyone taking the same position, and from consensus, which is a practical decision to accept a position, after exploring disagreements.

*Worship* (2.1) Originally 'giving worth'. A Meeting for Worship is a time to focus, individually and together, on what gives meaning, and a recognition of presence, whether divine or human.

*Worship Group* (4.1.1) A Worship Group is a body of Friends within a Monthly Meeting who meet regularly for worship.

*Worship-sharing* (2.1.17) A group process where, in a sense of worship, each person has the opportunity to speak for themselves and from their heart on the issue before the group.

*Yearly Meeting* (5) A broadly-based self-governing grouping of Friends within geographical boundaries, in our instance within Aotearoa New Zealand. Also the regular meeting for decision-making of that body, and its organised structure. Yearly Meetings worldwide relate to one another in friendship and collaboration, but each is self-standing.

*Young Friends* Those aged (roughly) 16 - 35 who identify as having a youth focus on being Quaker or associating with Quakers.

## **Section 1 – INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 CONTEXT**

#### **1.1.1 Purpose of the Quaker Handbook**

The Handbook is a practical and informative guide to Quaker practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is not a rigid set of rules and regulations but a description of what has evolved as a result of our experience of working and seeking together.

It is intended variously for use as a "how to" manual; as a reference book; and as a guide to deepening one's understanding of the Religious Society of Friends. We hope that all will find it useful, particularly those who:

- are new to the Society,
- have been newly appointed to a committee,
- have been entrusted with a task rarely performed,
- want to find out more about Friends' practices,
- wish to reflect more deeply on Quaker life.

#### **1.1.2 Grounding of Quaker faith**

The historical basis of Friends' practices lies in 17th century England. George Fox, who became a major leader of the Quaker Movement, sought religious truth through prayer and Bible-reading, and was grieved by what he saw as the failures of professing Christians of his time. After much travelling and listening to priests and preachers, he lost all hope of help from others. Then one day, when sitting alone, he heard the words "there is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition."

This revelation answered Fox's questioning about faith, giving him hope, power, and understanding. This insight was also

expressed by Fox as “assurance of the Presence”, the indwelling Christ”, “the Light”, “the Seed”, and “that of God in everyone” .

When he spread this message that the divine Spirit was active within all human beings, his words spoke to the experience of other seekers. With their keen response, the Quaker movement took form in the 1650s.

### **1.1.3 Origins of Quaker practices**

From these insights the early Friends developed their form of worship, their religious and social testimonies, and their organisation.

In worship they rejected all material aids, waiting silently together in fellowship for an inner awareness of the presence of God.

Business meetings were held in the same manner, with Friends seeking to speak as they were led by the Spirit within them, and decisions being made in accordance with the sense of the meeting.

## **1.2 SOME HISTORY OF QUAKERS IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

### **1.2.1 Beginnings**

The earliest Quaker settlers in this country arrived from Britain in about 1840. The first record we have of a regular Meeting for Worship was in December 1842, which was established by Samuel Strong soon after his arrival in Nelson. However, we know of some Friends who visited earlier (the

first, Sydney Parkinson, was a botanical artist on Cook's "Endeavour").

Several other Quakers arrived in Nelson in 1842 having been appointed to the staff of the New Zealand Company to survey the proposed settlement there. These included Frederick Tuckett, Samuel Stephens and John Sylvanus Cotterell who were also responsible for surveying beyond Nelson into the Marlborough area. John Sylvanus Cotterell was killed in this area in what has become known as the Wairau incident. His survey party became embroiled in a conflict with tangata whenua, led by Te Rauparaha, who objected to the surveying of the land. Several others from the surveying party, and a number of tangata whenua were also killed. John Sylvanus Cotterell had always refused to carry arms and the circumstances of his death are not well understood but it is likely that he had been hopeful of, in some way, preventing the conflict.

John Sylvanus Cotterell had purchased a piece of land, called the 'town acre' in Nelson and built a cottage on it. In 1853 this section of land was purchased and the cottage became Aotearoa's first Quaker Meeting House. That Meeting was discontinued in 1885, but the land remained Friends' property until 1921. Part of it, containing a grave, is now public property in the care of the Nelson City Council, its maintenance being endowed by Friends.

### **1.2.2 Growth of Friends' Meetings**

Before the railways were developed, most journeys between towns were by coastal steamer. Overland travel was on horseback or in horse-drawn vehicles over poor roads. Visits between isolated families of Friends were therefore



infrequent, but greatly valued. Noteworthy among them were the many journeys in the ministry undertaken by Ann Fletcher Jackson of Auckland, accompanied by members of her family, or accompanying some other visiting Friend willing to share in the hardships.

Meetings were held in Auckland in the 1880s, and in 1890 the first Meeting House was opened there. The present one was built in 1913. Meetings were established in Dunedin by 1886, and soon afterwards in Wellington and Christchurch. In smaller centres, Meetings were held regularly for periods of time and then discontinued as Friends moved away. The Wellington Meeting House was built in 1929, and the Christchurch Manchester St Meeting House in 1951, while in that same year a property was bought for a Meeting House in Dunedin. A new Meeting House replaced the existing building in 1969. Subsequently, buildings have been inherited (in Whanganui and Nelson), built (in Palmerston North and on Waiheke Island).

Christchurch Meeting moved to newer buildings in 1990 and when those were damaged in an earthquake in 2011 the Meeting later moved to a building on land at Ferry Road. Since the 1960s, the trend has been towards smaller groupings of Meetings and Worship Groups uniting to form Monthly Meetings. Since 2019 there have been nine Monthly Meetings.

The first annual gathering of Friends to conduct the business of the Society took place in Wellington in 1909, and from that time onwards there have been regular meetings. From 1914-1963 this annual meeting was recognised as a General Meeting (with the status of a Quarterly Meeting of London

Yearly Meeting). In 1963 New Zealand Friends decided to become an independent Yearly Meeting, as from January 1964.

### **1.2.3 Education**

In 1907, London Yearly Meeting's Australasian Committee, concerned that something should be done for the children of Friends in New Zealand, sent Sarah Jane Lury and Elizabeth Rutter to the Dominion, where they founded a hostel in Kelburn, Wellington, where children of Friends could live while attending secondary school. As few secondary children required accommodation, the hostel was used for students from the teachers' training college and the university, and later for dental nurse trainees. Although it was a financial success, Friends sold it to the Government in 1945.

The establishment of a school in keeping with Quaker traditions had long been in the minds of Friends. In 1919 a property was bought on St John's Hill in Whanganui, and New Zealand Friends' School was opened in February 1920. It expanded and developed under the care of devoted committees and capable, dedicated principals; but the children of Friends were always a minority of the pupils. New Zealand Yearly Meeting decided the school would close in December 1969 partly because of the decline in numbers since 1964. The school served for fifty years.

The land where the school buildings stood was sold to the Government, while land across the road was retained in Friends' ownership. In 1975 the Wanganui Educational Settlement Trust (WEST) was legally incorporated, and several dedicated Friends began the process of developing the site as an intentional Quaker community with a focus on

education. This is the Quaker Settlement. The original Settlers purchased a licence to occupy by paying for the building of their house. Current residents at the Settlement include some who have purchased a licence to occupy and others who rent from WEST.

Seminars, conferences, and retreats are held in the communal buildings. Residents at the Settlement host a programme of seminars for the Society.

#### **1.2.4 Peace and service**

Friends in Aotearoa have maintained the Quaker peace testimony, and ever since the Defence Act of 1909 have made known to successive Governments their opposition to conscription and to acts of war. Support has been given to Members and non-Members who, through refusal to train or participate in warfare, have been punished by imprisonment or loss of rights. Many Friends suffered in this way in the First World War, and a few Friends suffered in detention camps for their conscientious objection in the Second World War.

As Quakers in New Zealand steadfastly opposed conscription and then compulsory military service, it became less likely for individual Friends to be refused exemption based on conscientious objection, although some Young Friends insisted on appearing before the Conscientious Objection Committee, in order to make clear why they were refusing. Friends have also witnessed to peace in wartime by service in bodies such as the Friends Ambulance Unit. The Religious Society of Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand has been publicly identified with opposition to war, preparation for war, conscription, and nuclear weapons.

From the earliest days, Friends here have shared the Society's worldwide concern for the relief of distress. During the years of New Zealand General Meeting (1914-63) a Committee collected funds for the Friends' Service Council, London, and generally supported and publicised its work. The Society was active in the setting up in 1944 of the Council of Organisations for Relief Services Overseas (CORSO). After 1964, New Zealand Yearly Meeting continued to assist the Friends Service Council in London, through the New Zealand Friends' Service Committee, which also initiated local projects.

In the 1970s the Yearly Meeting Peace Committee was instrumental in setting up the NZ Foundation for Peace Studies. In 1992 Yearly Meeting set up the Alternatives to Violence Project. Since the 1980s, Friends' concerns in the fields of peace and service are given collective and practical expression through the Quaker Peace and Service Aotearoa New Zealand Committee (QPSANZ - see 5.6.2, 5.7.3). In addition, Monthly Meetings and individual Friends are actively involved in a wide variety of service activities often with organisations such as the Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society, Child Poverty Action group, Greenpeace, and Peace Movement Aotearoa to name but a few.

### **1.2.5 Inter-church cooperation**

Friends have taken an active part in inter-church cooperation both locally and nationally. The Society was one of the original constituent bodies of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand, established in 1941. From 1987 the ecumenical body, with a new administrative structure, became the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New

Zealand (CCANZ). When this body was disestablished the Society became a member of the National Church Leaders Aotearoa New Zealand (NCLANZ), and the Yearly Meeting Clerk attends its meetings. In 2021 the Yearly Meeting became a member of the National Dialogue for Christian Unity (NDCU) (5.10).

Friends' involvement with ecumenical bodies is an opportunity to offer our insights and traditions to the various churches and to learn from theirs.

Friends in some Meetings have become involved in inter-faith activities for mutual support, friendship and learning.

## **1.3 OUR RESPONSE TO TE TIRITI**

### **1.3.1 Te Tiriti o Waitangi**

Yearly Meeting recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) as a living document fundamental to the life of Aotearoa New Zealand. In signing Te Tiriti, iwi and hapū agreed to the British Crown establishing kāwanatanga (government) in Aotearoa, whilst protecting their tino rangatiratanga (sovereignty) as the indigenous peoples. Te Tiriti also established that Māori would additionally have the rights and duties of citizenship enjoyed by the people of England.

Te Tiriti therefore provides a framework for the ongoing negotiation between iwi and hapū and the Crown over the application of their respective rights and duties. Friends have long been concerned about the Crown's ongoing failure to

act in accordance with Te Tiriti, which has led to countless breaches and major injustice.

In accordance with our longstanding commitment to social equality and peaceable cooperation we have committed to doing what we can to ensure that the vision encapsulated in Te Tiriti, and the rights established by it, are honoured.

*For more information about Friends' position regarding Te Tiriti, see the statements in Appendix 1B.*

### **1.3.2 Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri**

As an acknowledgement of the place of te reo Māori as the language of the indigenous peoples of this land, Yearly Meeting agreed in 1988 to change its name from New Zealand Yearly Meeting to Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand, Aotearoa being one of the accepted Māori names for this land.

In 1993 we added a Māori name for the Religious Society of Friends; Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri. It is a name gifted to us by the Maori Language Commissioner. "Hāhi" is a word meaning church or religion; and "Tūhauwiri" distinguishes us from other churches by including the notions of "hau" (wind or vital essence) and "wiri" (to quake or quiver). The whole name could be translated back into English as "The faith community that stands shaking in the wind of the Spirit."

## **1.4 DIVERSITY**

The origins of the Religious Society of Friends lie in Christianity, which has shaped our tradition, practice,

language and stories. Today, most Friends worldwide count themselves as Christian.

From the beginning, Friends have given primacy to direct religious experience over church doctrine and rituals. So it was that they came to recognise "that of God" in the religious experience of people of all faiths and to acknowledge the validity of diverse spiritual insights.

Within the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand, Friends are certainly diverse. Some live by a Christian commitment; some have a faith shaped by Christian tradition, while not holding particular Christian doctrines; some find that their religious experience makes sense in terms of the tradition of another faith; some draw from varying religious traditions as paths to the same truth; and some do not describe their experience of spirituality in traditional religious language.

The language which individual Friends use will reflect their spiritual experience, and indeed some find that their experience is best expressed in language which is not obviously religious. We acknowledge that words are inadequate to describe fully our individual or shared spiritual experiences.

As a Society we recognise the diversity of one another's gifts and insights and accept that each of us may change as we become open to new light.

Quaker worship and practice are based on some beliefs and understandings such as there being "that of God" in everyone. These are offered as guidance rather than as doctrine or creed, in recognition that ultimately, we must

trust in the truth of gathered experience. The Meeting offers us a home in which we each have freedom to seek and grow in community. This freedom lays on us the responsibility to respect one another's various journeys and discoveries, and to celebrate what is precious to other Friends. We come together to worship, to follow our testimonies, to share the friendship of the Meeting, and to wait patiently on the Spirit.

## **1.5 ADVICES AND QUERIES (2013)**

### **Introduction**

This is a practical and informative guide to Quaker practice in this country. It is not a rigid set of rules and regulations but a description of what seems to have worked best in the past, based on Quaker theology, values and experience.

The historical basis of Friends' practices lies in 17th century England. George Fox, the founder of Quakerism, sought religious truth through prayer and Bible-reading, and was grieved by what he saw as the failure of professing Christians of his time. After much travelling and listening to priests and preachers, he lost all hope of help from them. Then one day, when sitting alone, he became conscious of the presence of God's Spirit within himself, directly answering his needs and giving him hope, power and understanding. When he spread this message that the divine Spirit was active within all human beings, his words spoke to the experience of other seekers. With their keen response, the Quaker movement took form in the 1650s.

From these insights the early Friends developed their form of worship, their organisation and their religious and social



testimonies. In worship they rejected all material aids, waiting silently together in fellowship for an inner awareness of the presence of God. Business meetings were held in the same manner, with Friends seeking to speak to the matter in hand as they were led by the Spirit, and from this decisions were made to accord with the sense of the Meeting.

In 1682, when the Religious Society of Friends was still taking form and when many Quakers were in prison, London Yearly Meeting asked representatives of Quarterly Meetings to respond to three questions about the welfare of Friends in their areas. In subsequent years these questions became more numerous, and more devotional in character. A century later they were supplemented by separate paragraphs of advice, thus forming what was known as 'Advices and Queries'. The present document is one of many revisions and re-workings that different groups of Quakers have made over the centuries.

***Dear beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light that is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the light walking and abiding, these things may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.***

*Attached to an epistle issued by a meeting of elders at Balby, Yorkshire, in 1656.*

## **Section A: God and ourselves**

1. Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your heart, and respond to them; they are the

leadings of all that is good and pure. In each of us there is a light to show us our condition and to renew us.

2. Cherish that of God within you, so that love may grow in you and guide your life. *Do you bring the whole of your life before God, responding to the healing power of love and accepting the forgiveness and joy it brings?*
3. The Religious Society of Friends has its roots in Christianity, and has always found inspiration in the life and teachings of Jesus. *How do you interpret your faith in the light of this heritage? Are you following the example of love in action shown by Jesus? Are you learning from his life of compassion the reality and cost of obedience to God? How does his closeness to God challenge and inspire you in the way you live?*
4. *Do you use the guidance of the Spirit when seeking truth?*
5. Let others know what is valuable to you. Let your life speak.
6. *Do we try to live as a society of friends in community with one another by acknowledging and responding to that of God in each other?*
7. Consider the means of spiritual growth in your life. *Do you make time for regular meditation, prayer and reflection? Are you gaining insights and inspiration from the Bible, from other writings including the literature of other faiths, and from the religious experiences of Friends and others, past and present?*

8. You can gain inspiration from people of all ages whom you meet throughout your life and also from the example of people throughout history, including the present day. You can find inspiration all around, in the natural world, in the arts and sciences, in your work and friendships, in your sorrows as well as in your joys. *Are you open to new light from whatever source it may come? Do you approach new ideas with discernment?*

### **Section B: Reaching towards God**

1. Our Meetings for Worship, in which we join together in stillness, are the central activity of the Religious Society of Friends. In our worship, we respond to an awareness of God's presence. We seek to find through the stillness and quietness the mysterious and unknown. We can reflect and worship at any time, in any place. From our worship flows guidance for our daily lives. *How can you best prepare yourself for worship, in heart, mind and body?*
2. To widen our vision and deepen our experience, we all need times of solitary quietness for worship and reflection, as well as times for joining together in worship.
3. Come regularly to Meeting for Worship, especially at those times when you feel angry or tired, or spiritually low. Bring your joys and your hurts, your hopes and your fears, and your awareness of the needs of other people. As you do so, you may find that you see and feel things differently. In the silence ask for and accept the support of others joined with you in worship. Be open to spiritual

wholeness encompassing sorrow, suffering and anguish, as well as thankfulness and joy. Prayer, springing from a deep place in the heart, may bring healing and unity as nothing else can. Let Meeting for Worship nourish your whole life.

4. Be aware of each person in the Meeting. Enjoy and affirm Friends of all ages and backgrounds. Seek to move into a gathered silence in which you are open to one another.
5. Rejoice in the presence of children and young people in your Meeting and recognise the gifts they bring. Nurture them, remembering that the Meeting as a whole shares a responsibility for every child in its care.  
*Do you respond to the special needs of children and young people during Meeting for Worship? When they are involved in separate activities, do you uphold them and those who are with them? How do you share your deepest beliefs with them, while leaving them free to develop as the spirit of God may lead them? They may be led along paths you had not anticipated. Are you ready to learn from them and to accept your responsibilities towards them? Are you aware of the example you set for children?*
6. All of us are at times preoccupied and distracted in Meeting. Accept these wanderings and then release them so that you can move towards the still centre of your own being and find the unity of the Meeting.
7. Remember that ministry – in silence, speech, and other forms – is the responsibility of everyone; and that all

present contribute to the quality and depth of Meeting for Worship.

8. If you are prompted to speak, do not be prevented by a sense of your own unworthiness, or a fear of not finding the right words. Pray that the Spirit may guide you and that your ministry may arise from deep experience. Wait patiently to know that the sense, the occasion and the timing are right. When you are sure, have confidence that the words will be given to you. Faithfulness and sincerity in speaking may open the way to ministry from others.
9. *Do you sometimes speak too often, too predictably, or too soon after someone else has spoken?*
10. Be sure to take time to reach for the underlying meaning in the spoken ministry of others. Receive it in a tender and understanding spirit, and avoid hurtful criticism. What may seem of little value to one hearer may for another be the direct word of God.  
*Do you accept that in worship God may ask hard questions of you, and challenge you to make difficult decisions?*
11. Do not feel that your ministry must conform to that of others. You may be moved to sing, to dance, or to express something new or different.  
*Are you prepared for worship to bring exhilaration, grieving, passion or mystery? Are you prepared for worship to bring challenge? Are you able to worship even in times of spiritual dryness, when life seems humdrum or you feel lethargic?*

12. Prayer springs from a deep place in the heart. The spirit of prayer will be active in a gathered Meeting. Vocal prayer, though it may be expressed in imperfect words, can draw those present into communion with God and with one another.
13. Bring everything that concerns you into the light, so that you feel a weakening of what is unworthy in you, and a strengthening of what is good. Accept and support each other in love.
14. Even the mundane activities of everyday life can be performed as a form of worship.

### **Section C: Seeking God's will in decision-making**

1. Our Meetings for Business are an integral part of our Quaker life. They are conducted in the spirit of worship. We seek to discern the will of God rather than reach a majority decision or consensus. Listen in the expectation that the right way will become clear. The way that opens may not be the one that seemed obvious to anyone at the start of the Meeting.
2. Meeting for Worship for Business is strengthened by having the worshipful consideration of as many people as possible.  
*Do you take your right share in Meeting for Business? Do you uphold the Meeting and its decisions, even if you cannot attend?*
3. Come to Meeting for Business with a willingness to listen to everyone whatever their contribution.

Allow your insights and personal wishes to take their place alongside those of others, and if necessary, let them be set aside. Use as few words as possible, but as many as are needed.

4. *Do you apply the principles of Quaker decision-making in your home, in your work, and in other areas of your life?*

#### **Section D: Ourselves and one another**

1. Make time to learn about other people and their spiritual lives. Let your life speak.  
*Do you use all opportunities for sharing, in a spirit of worship, what is spiritually meaningful in your life?*
2. Be faithful to your experience of the Spirit, in whatever way it has come to you. Carry it into your daily life. Do what love requires of you, which may not be the same as great busyness.
3. *In our local Meeting, how can we build a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured, and newcomers are welcomed?*
4. Both within our family of Friends and in our wider communities, we need sensitivity to each other and to our various cultural roots.  
*What joys and what responsibilities does this bring? Do we aspire to an understanding of ourselves as people of Aotearoa/New Zealand and the South Pacific?*

5. A caring Meeting can bring healing at times of difficulty or despair. Listen sensitively to what, although not clearly expressed, may be a cry for help.  
*Are you available to help others, even at some cost to yourself? Are you willing to be helped, both practically and spiritually?*
  
6. Cherish friendships so that you grow in depth, understanding and mutual respect.  
When we love, we may risk hurt as well as finding joy.  
When we experience great happiness or great pain, we may be more open to the working of the Spirit.
  
7. *Are you patient and considerate, even towards people you don't like?*  
*Do you avoid and discourage unkind criticism and gossip?*
  
8. Each individual's journey through life is unique. Friends in the Meeting may be in different types of relationships. These may change through choice or circumstance. Ponder on your own choices, and try to understand the choices of others.  
*Are you inclined to make hasty judgements about other people's relationships? Do you support others as they work towards making their decisions?*
  
9. Every relationship brings responsibility. Remember the value of prayer, perseverance and a sense of humour.  
*Are you careful to avoid harbouring grudges, exploiting or belittling other people? Are you sensitive to their needs? Do you enter imaginatively into their experience?*



10. Corruption and destructiveness can grow from very small seeds, as can courage and loving kindness.  
Consider the words you use, and your tone of voice.  
*Do you refrain from verbal and psychological violence?  
When people attack you with angry words, do you listen for the underlying hurt?*
11. A loving relationship brings both fulfilment and tension, and requires long-term commitment.  
*Do you acknowledge and explore personal differences creatively?*
12. Sometimes, despite strong commitment, a relationship comes apart.  
*If this happens to you, are you willing to seek help in understanding the other point of view, and in finding the right way forward? Where children are involved, do you remember their needs and vulnerability and care for them?*
13. Be selective in the lifestyle you choose.  
Take care of your body and your own well-being.  
Consider the harm you may cause to yourself and others with unhealthy substances or selfish practices. Be aware that the mass media and other social pressures can dull your vision.
14. Aim to live simply.  
A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength.  
Value beauty in all its forms. Share what you have.
15. *How can you make your home a place of friendship, refreshment and laughter, a peaceable place where the*

*Spirit becomes more real to all who are there? Do you recognise the needs and gifts of each member of your family and household, including your own?*

16. We all have different gifts and needs.  
Discover, acknowledge and respond to your own, and those of other people. Free yourself from limiting ideas, for example about gender roles.  
*When choices arise in work, leisure, interests, relationships or education, do you follow the way that provides the greatest opportunity for the development and use of your gifts in the service of God and the community?*  
Look for the leadings of God in all circumstances, even if you seem to have no choice. Live adventurously.
  
17. Certain times of life bring energy and activity; other times bring a need for rest and renewal.  
*Do you respond to the rhythms of your life, accepting or declining commitments without an undue sense of pride or guilt?*
  
18. Approach old age with acceptance and anticipation.  
Like other times in life, it can be a time for growing. Try to discern the right moment for relinquishing long-term responsibilities, and look for new opportunities for involvement. As outward activity lessens, your thoughts and prayer may liberate love and power in others.
  
19. In bereavement, allow yourself to grieve fully.  
Allow others to mourn: let your caring embrace them. Through our acceptance of the fact of death, we are freed to live more fully.

*Are you able to contemplate your own death, and the death of those closest to you?*

## **Section E: Reaching beyond ourselves**

1. We are convinced of the equal worth and value of every individual.  
*Do you appreciate the huge diversity of human personality? Do you take into account the different experiences that people may have had in their lives and the impact this may have on them? How can you help end social practices based on prejudice or fear, and systems which involve oppression of particular groups because of their gender, race, religion, class, age, sexual orientation or other characteristics?*
2. We all need a sense of achievement and selfworth.  
*Are you able to value every individual, including yourself, irrespective of occupation or financial status? Are you striving to change society's attitudes to work and remuneration?*
3. We have a testimony to integrity, which includes honesty and plain speaking. Be utterly scrupulous both in personal relationships and in dealings with businesses and government departments or other public bodies. Do not be afraid to speak the truth as you discern it, with firmness and respect. Taking oaths sets a double standard of truth; ask to affirm instead.
4. Obey the laws of the state, except when they conflict with your inner conviction. Work to amend laws that you consider unjust. If you feel called to civil disobedience,

seek the guidance and support of your Meeting. Be prepared to accept the consequences cheerfully.

5. All those who commit crimes have that of God within them, as do those who are the victims of crime.  
*Do you recognise or share in the work that is being done towards better conditions and rehabilitation for prisoners, towards alternatives to imprisonment, and towards meeting the needs of victims of crime?*
6. *Do you strive to understand the challenges and choices offered by modern communications and technology? Do you take into account their impact, positive and negative, on the lives of people and the environment?*
7. *Are you careful that your use of financial resources is in accordance with our values of integrity, peace, equality, simplicity, and concern for other people and for the environment?*
8. Do not be content to accept society as it is. Seek to discover the causes of social unrest, injustice, poverty and fear. Bear witness to the humanity of all people. Try to discern the new growing points in society.  
*Are you alert to practices here and throughout the world that discriminate against people on the basis of who or what they are or because of their beliefs? Do you work for a social, constitutional and economic order which will allow each person to develop fully and cooperation by all?*
9. Remember our obligation to honour the status of Māori as the indigenous people of Aotearoa and partners in the

Treaty of Waitangi. Seek to discover the effects of the colonial and postcolonial history of Aotearoa. Work to ensure that the sharing of power and resources in our society is a genuine partnership.

*Do you acknowledge the values that the Māori world can offer? How can we work together as equals, with mutual understanding and respect?*

10. Remember your responsibility as citizens of Aotearoa for the government of our country and for its relations with other countries, particularly our neighbours in the South Pacific.

*How can we help our nation to promote international peace, justice and care for the earth?*

11. We are challenged to enter into fellowship with people of all faiths and philosophies, locally, regionally and globally so that we may work or worship together and cooperate for peace, justice and care of the planet.  
*Are you open to understanding and acceptance of Quakers of diverse traditions worldwide? Are you open to understanding and acceptance of Christians of all denominations and people with other faiths and philosophies?*

12. Our peace testimony invites us to live “in the virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars”. Consider whether your way of life might in some way benefit from or rely on violence.

*What are you doing to build a more peaceful world?*

13. Seek to recognise in yourself the emotions that lie at the root of conflict. In industrial strife, racial enmity and

international tension, work to foster understanding between individuals, groups and nations. Stand firm against people who commit or prepare to commit violence. Seek that of God in those who oppose you.

14. We need to respect, revere and cooperate with other life systems on our planet. The earth's diverse riches are not ours to exploit. Seek reverence for life and a sense of wonder at God's continuing presence in all of creation.  
*Do you work to conserve the earth's beauty and resources, both now and in the future, for the many people who depend on this planet and the many other species that share it?*

**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 every one.** George Fox, 1656

## **Section 2 – WORSHIP, LIFE AND WITNESS**

NOTE: In this section, when 'Meeting' refers to a group rather than an event, it may refer either to a Monthly or Recognised Meeting or to a local Worship Group, depending on the context and on local structure. The term 'Monthly Meeting' is used when a role belongs specifically to this body.

### **2.1 MEETING FOR WORSHIP**

#### **2.1.1 Central to the life**

Meeting for Worship is the centre of the life of the Society. In Meetings for Worship, worshippers come together and turn their hearts and minds towards what some call God, Spirit, or the promptings of love and truth. A Meeting may be held at any suitable time and place, and as often as the group wishes and needs. All are welcome.

Worship can take place as prearranged, either face to face, electronically or in combination. It may also be by a few Friends agreeing to gather, or falling into worship when together, or by Friends at a distance holding one another in light and love.

The spiritual experience of worship may feel different, and perhaps will be harder to enter for some people, when the group is gathered electronically, or some participants are connected on screen or by phone. Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups can find it helpful to arrange a time to reflect on this difference, and on how to assist all those taking part to have a deep and fulfilling experience.

### **2.1.2. Living worship**

Worship is an experience that transcends words. The living silence is central to Meeting for Worship.

Worship can be:

- a response of the human spirit to the presence of the divine and eternal, to the Spirit of God reaching out to us
- an offering of ourselves, body, mind and spirit, to the promptings of love and truth
- a searching for the sacred
- a stilling of ourselves, a liberation from internal and external commotion
- a time to turn inwards, and towards each other, to hold ourselves and others in the light, and to find where it leads us.

We may respond in wonder and awe, in peace and stillness, in receptiveness, in pain and struggle, in laying down things that weigh upon us, in laughter and joy, in thanksgiving, in a sense of challenge and calling, in a sense of being at home. In the living silence, we can feel the flowing of the divine spirit amongst us.

### **2.1.3 Openness**

When we come to worship willing to be open, to give as well as to receive, the full possibilities of the Meeting for Worship may be realised, and its influence may spread and grow throughout our community.

### **2.1.4 Settling the meeting**

Each of us is a living part of the Meeting for Worship. Our spiritual life from day to day and our preparation for coming to the Meeting will affect the quality of worship. Preparation of heart and mind can include times of quiet reflection,



prayer and helpful reading, and holding Friends in love and care.

Meetings for Worship can take place virtually anywhere and while some Meetings have a dedicated meeting room as part of a larger complex, others may have only one appropriate space available. Such differences will lead to different approaches to starting Meeting for Worship. When there is a separate meeting room, worship can begin when the first person enters the room and takes their place. Friends who feel called to nurture the worship may arrive before the scheduled time and enter into worship, and this can make it easier for the Meeting to settle and to find depth. When there is not a separate meeting room and Friends gather in the one room progressively, it may help to have an initial 'meet and greet' period or something similar before starting the worship.

In all circumstances, it is helpful to approach Meeting for Worship with heart and mind prepared and settle into a position which will not distract by discomfort. Once the period of worship has started, the stillness is helped if conversations do not take place at the entrance but are held over till after worship. Out of concern for others, it helps if each person arriving deals with matters such as removing outdoor clothing and taking items out of bags outside the room, in order to enter the Meeting space quietly. The doorkeeper or welcomer can help by using a quiet form of greeting, which will include a brief explanation to newcomers.

Some Friends find it helpful to read for a time as a way of settling; if this is done, Friends need to avoid distracting

others, and to retain the sense of being part of a community in worship. There are different distractions when worship is held electronically, for example background noises, which can be prevented if microphones are muted unless the Friend is speaking.

Some Friends welcome others as they arrive with a smile; some welcome them inwardly. A Meeting needs to decide whether it finds it better for Friends arriving after the scheduled time to enter as they are ready, or for them to wait quietly and all come in together at an agreed time.

Gathering in outward silence is not enough; when we seek an inward stillness, the depths reached may bring a renewed sense of the power of the Spirit, experienced by some as a consciousness of the presence of God. A traditional term for this gathering is 'centring down'. In this experience we may find direction for our lives and strength for our needs, we may be bonded to one another in love, and we may know one another in the things that are eternal. In our united search each of us may be enabled to open the riches of the Spirit to all in the meeting.

### **2.1.5 - 2.1.13 Ministry in Meeting for Worship**

**2.1.5** Silence and the spoken word are both part of Quaker ministry. The ministry of silence calls for the committed involvement of every participant in the Meeting. In silence we wait on the leadings of the Spirit; at the same time we are active, loving and supporting one another, bringing our own lives into the worship yet opening beyond ourselves. There will be times when a Meeting for Worship is held completely in silence; this experience can bring richness and

peace. However, if a Meeting regularly lacks spoken ministry, it may need to discern in what ways it can nurture and strengthen its spiritual life.

Very small worship groups may feel this lack especially, and can seek support from Friends elsewhere in the Monthly or Yearly Meeting.

**2.1.6** Vocal ministry grows out of the silence, and comes as a gift which the speaker is called to contribute to the worship. It is not offered lightly, but in response to a clear and carefully tested prompting of the Spirit. The words which are given draw upon, but may also transcend, the natural gifts, experience and inward life of the speaker.

A prompting to speak can be tested by asking oneself: "Is this a message for the group, as well as for myself? If so, is it right for these people on this occasion at this stage in the worship? Is it 'in the life' of our worship?" Waiting in trust, we can receive a sense of whether we should offer this vocal ministry.

Some struggle within themselves to discern the true source of the prompting to minister. Friends may hesitate and hold back. At these times ministry may be lost in the search. Ministry from the depths of our being can be offered in trust. The whole weight of responsibility is not ours alone.

If we come to Meeting with an insight or message ready formed, or a reading, we offer it only if so led during the worship. Often it is better to lay it aside or let it be transmuted as the Spirit guides. We may find ourselves given words which do not have meaning for us, but which speak to

others present. Sometimes it will not feel right to speak, and we find another Friend has been given our ministry more effectively. When the Meeting is fully gathered, different contributions are powerfully connected by the flow of the Spirit.

Friends have found that more than one contribution by the same person rarely feels like true ministry. If further thoughts arise after we have spoken, it is best to withhold them.

**2.1.7** While someone is speaking, others present can help them by attentive listening, prayer, or holding them in the light. The Meeting needs to return to silence after vocal ministry so that each can hold the ministry in their heart, and the inward work of worship can continue. Another contribution too soon may disrupt this process. Though a speaker's words may be inspired by an earlier contribution, worship is not the time for an explicit reply or a discussion.

Words which do not speak to some people may meet the needs of others present, or may become helpful in association with later ministry, or at a later date. Judging the ministry of others does not add to a spirit of worship; receive it in friendship, or let it pass.

**2.1.8** A very simple but heartfelt message or prayer may be of great value. Ministry from the diffident or shy who seldom speak is often particularly helpful to the Meeting. A message which appears to be incomplete may lead to further vocal ministry and a sense of wholeness by the close of worship.

**2.1.9** Some ministry points to spiritual truths which are new or imperfectly recognised, and goes to the heart of our relationship with God, the Spirit, or the promptings of love and truth. It shows us a way to follow, and how we can respond creatively to the challenges of our time. It may offer a disturbing challenge to the meeting itself.

**2.1.10** Teaching ministry combines the power of prayer and reflection, recalling to the Meeting how the lives of individuals and communities are enlightened by their spiritual experience. It may focus on the effort to understand and interpret the lasting significance of Jesus of Nazareth, and his place in history. It reminds us how men and women down the ages have sought to relate the results of their own seeking and finding to their understanding of eternal truth.

This ministry may include quoting from the Bible, *Advices and Queries*, Faith and Practice books of our own and other Yearly Meetings, this *Handbook*, other writings of Friends, or other works.

From time to time Meetings have followed the custom of regular readings from *Advices and Queries* in the course of Meeting for Worship. The Friend entrusted with this awaits a leading as to which section to offer, and whether the timing is right. Meetings have tried occasionally offering a reading from another source, to help Friends settle and focus. If either of these is done, it helps to evaluate it after a few occasions, and to make sure it does not become mechanical.

**2.1.11** Another form of ministry is the expression of one's own joys, griefs or perplexities. These contribute to the life of the meeting as one body, and are received lovingly in the

stillness. Items of personal news, or topics to be talked over with Friends, come more fittingly in the period of greetings and notices at the conclusion of worship.

**2.1.12** Some Friends have the gift of song, or of forms of ministry other than the spoken word.

**2.1.13** All forms of ministry need to be offered in a spirit of worship under a sense of leading.

**2.1.14 Children in worship**

Through their presence in worship children and adults minister to one another.

The natural noises of a young baby are not normally felt to disturb worship, and Meetings are enriched by encouraging parents to bring their babies into worship. When babies are brought to worship for the first time, it is an opportunity to welcome them into the Meeting's community by ministry from a Friend responsible for spiritual care, or another Friend.

Other children usually join the adults for a short part of the Meeting, either at the beginning or at the end or both, and for the rest of the time they may have their own activities. While this happens, both adults' and children's groups are part of a single body of worship. Quite young children can learn to be part of the silent worship. It is helpful for adults to explore with children, in ways suited to their age, what it is we all do in Meeting for Worship. Spoken ministry is welcome from all present, whatever their age.

Some Friends have a particular gift for vocal ministry which is suitable for both children and adults. Spoken ministry while children are present is tested (like any other ministry) to see if it comes from a true leading. Children may have times of worship of their own, or prepare a special contribution which can, by arrangement, be shared with the rest of the Meeting.

#### **2.1.15 Young people in worship**

We grow in different ways and at different speeds. Young people benefit by being encouraged to take part in the full Meeting for Worship as they are ready. A group of young people may also wish to have a Meeting for Worship together at a different time, and they may want occasionally to explore different patterns of worship on their own or with older Friends.

Times when younger people and adults learn about and reflect on worship together can help the growth of everyone in the Meeting.

#### **2.1.16 Variations in worship**

Friends may recognise a need for worship of a more prepared or 'programmed' (structured) form, or to include prepared contributions in silence-based worship. Sometimes this is associated with a particular event, such as a wedding or memorial meeting. However, caution is needed when prepared elements are introduced into silence-based worship, as they may become the most important part.

Worship which is substantially programmed or experimental can be particularly valuable at residential gatherings and all-age events, but it is a complement to silence-based worship, rather than displacing it. Each type of worship has its own

gifts. The preparation of programmed worship is an occasion for seeking the guidance of the Spirit.

### **2.1.17 Closing the Meeting for Worship**

One or two Friends are agreed in advance to recognise the ending of worship. While there is an anticipated time at which worship may end, Friends with this ministry may recognise that there is a sense of continuing worship, especially if time is needed to absorb recent spoken ministry; they allow the worship to continue as long as it feels right. These Friends mark the close of worship by a handshake or other appropriate form of greeting, after which those present greet one another. The Friend hosting online worship, or another Friend agreed in advance, marks the closing by a suitable form of greeting. This is a suitable time to acknowledge visitors and newcomers, and make them feel welcome.

Meetings often value a time of transition from worship to everyday conversation. During this time Friends are welcome to bring forward joys, griefs or times of new learning which they wish to share with the Meeting. It is best for these to be offered and received in a spirit of worship-sharing, including words of loving acknowledgment, rather than by discussion.

Notices usually come after this session, followed by a social time.



### **Simple guidelines for worship**

Come with heart and mind prepared.

Arrive and settle quietly and comfortably.

Let go of things buzzing in your mind.

In the silence hold others lovingly.

Listen to spoken messages from others: if they speak to you, absorb them; if they don't, let them pass.

If you feel words come to you, ask yourself:

- Is this for the group, not just for me?
- Is this the right time and place?
- Is it the right stage in the worship?
- Am I leaving enough time after another contribution?
- Are the words right?

If in doubt, wait.

If you're nervous, don't worry. If it seems to be a true message, give it.

Speak once, if moved.

## **2.2 THE RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES OF BEING A QUAKER**

Within the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand both Members and Attenders play a full part in the life of the Meeting. In this Handbook the terms 'Quaker' and 'Friend' are used to include both Members and Attenders.

All of us who associate ourselves with a Quaker Meeting are called into ministry. We have the right and the responsibility to contribute as we are called and able, to the Meeting for Worship, to the decision-making and activity of our local and wider groups, to Friends' work and witness in the world, and to being part of a community of faith and fellowship.

### **2.2.1 The nature of membership**

Application for membership and continuation in membership of the Religious Society of Friends is a declaration by individuals that their experience of Friends and their practices have led them to feel at home, and to accept Friends' way of seeking for the light as appropriate for them. It shows a willingness to seek for a life under inner guidance, a wish to be publicly associated with and committed to the Society, and an acceptance of the responsibilities and the disciplines of corporate religious life.

Acceptance of an application for membership by a Monthly Meeting on behalf of the Society is a recognition of this commitment, and a declaration of welcome and continuing spiritual development and nurturing for the Member.

*See 4.9 for an outline of the process of applying for and being received into membership by a meeting.*

### **2.2.2 Responsibilities of membership**

a) Members are called on to attend Meeting for Worship regularly, not only for their own benefit and as a way of spiritual growth, but also for the contribution their presence makes to the life of the Meeting.

b) Members are in broad agreement with Friends' faith and practice as expressed in our religious and social testimonies and endeavour to embody it in their lives.

c) The Quaker method of conducting business (*Section 3*) relies on the attendance of Members at Meeting for Worship for business; Members are called on to participate to the extent that family and other circumstances permit.

d) Members have a responsibility to give monetary support to the work of their Meeting and of Yearly Meeting, within their financial capacity. It is understood that there may be stages and circumstances in life when financial contribution is not possible.

e) Members need to share in the responsibilities within the Society; many of these tasks may also be undertaken by Attenders.

f) Members share in the collective responsibility of the Meeting to build a community and to care for all connected with it.

### **2.2.3 Discerning responsibilities**

These responsibilities are not to be understood as rigid obligations. There is a continuum of involvement in a Meeting, and our physical and emotional capabilities, our personal commitment to family members and others, our financial state, and the demands of our occupation or other activities will vary from time to time in our lives. Some Friends will find that they are called mostly to personal responsibilities, or to work for some cause to which they are committed. We all have differing and valuable gifts. Friends

can encourage one another to find the best use for these, and can support one another's choices. We all need to review the extent of our availability as life and circumstances change.

#### **2.2.4 Attenders**

A Meeting values all who take part in its worship and work. Those who are not Members but attend with some regularity may be among the great strengths of the Meeting, and take an active part in its life, in contributions to worship and service. Others, although prevented by circumstances from attending or being active, may clearly be part of the meeting. All these people who are not Members are recognised by the meeting as Attenders.

They receive newsletters and other information, and can be included in the online database and printed list of Meetings, Members and Attenders.

Some Friends may remain Attenders for a considerable period before applying for membership and some may never wish to be other than Attenders. A Meeting should take care that Attenders are aware of the process of coming into membership and are warmly invited to explore this when they feel ready. People need time to be well acquainted with a Meeting before considering the commitment of membership. An Attender may like to seek guidance from individuals, or to spend time with a small group, a 'clearness committee' (6.4), considering what decision is right.

No one should let a sense of unworthiness or inadequacy hold them back from applying. Those contemplating membership need to be clear in themselves and with the

Meeting as to what direct involvement in Quaker activities is possible for them at present.

### **2.2.5 Enquirers**

The term 'enquirers' is used for those who have made some contact with the Meeting, including by electronic means, or who occasionally attend worship.

A Meeting offers a warm welcome to those who come through its doors, and ensures in a friendly way that they receive whatever information about Quakers they are seeking, encouraging them to join in worship and other activities which will help them as they discover whether the Meeting can be their spiritual home.

### **2.2.6 Responsibilities of the Meeting to its Members, Attenders and others who form part of its life**

Because we all share in ministry, the Meeting has a collective care for the spiritual nurture and development of each person, while recognising that it does not have the total responsibility. People's needs will differ, and there are many riches elsewhere among and outside Friends.

The Meeting cares for those associated with it, in times of joy, celebration, stress, grief or trouble, in the spirit of friendship, while not attempting to be a substitute for professional help when needed.

The Meeting does not exist separately from its Members, Attenders, and others who form part of its life. We all have a responsibility to share in mutual care and in fostering the life of the Meeting.

### **2.2.7 Life within a Meeting**

Life within a Meeting involves learning, seeking and growth, which can be experienced as discipleship. It is a process of continuing revelation for individuals and the group. Those who worship must be prepared to meet surprise and change in things that matter deeply to them, and a Meeting must be prepared to be surprised and changed by the gifts and leadings of those who come to it. A Meeting cannot demand that those who are part of it accept every aspect of Quaker faith and practice. We help one another explore and understand Friends' spiritual life, religious and social testimonies and practices, and the background of faith from which these arise. We try to apply in our lives what we learn in this search, and to support the efforts of others.

## **2.3 QUAKER CONCERNS**

### **2.3.1 Introduction: the Quaker understanding of a concern**

Religious commitment implies love of one's neighbour, which may be put into action in many different ways.

Sometimes an individual Friend may feel an imperative call or leading to undertake a particular service or form of witness, or to support a particular cause. This can be experienced as an over-riding obligation or a sense of guidance. Such an experience is known to Friends as a 'concern'. The concern may be laid upon one person, or it may appear to be for a group of Friends, for a Meeting, or for the Society as a whole.

### 2.3.2 Testing a leading

Friends can encourage one another to be attentive to possible leadings. A leading is more than a strong conviction or enthusiasm: it is an experience of being rightly guided.

Some ways of testing a leading are:

- reflection and prayer over a period;
- other Friends being convinced of the rightness of the leading;
- harmony with Friends' testimonies, and with general moral principles;
- considering the consequences to other people, especially family;
- considering the consequences to oneself — is one prepared to accept them?
- whether one has the necessary gifts;
- whether one is clear of obligations which would compete;
- whether necessary resources, training and help are likely to be available;
- whether the time is right.

A concerned person needs to have patience and humility in seeking support. It is helpful for a Friend to bring such a sense of concern to their Worship Group, which may be able to test and foster it in various ways:

- by arranging for the Friend to meet with a small group of Friends in a "clearness committee", which can listen, ask questions and seek a way forward with understanding and honesty; (*On clearness committees see 6.4.*)
- by considering the concern in the Worship Group;
- by forwarding it to the Monthly Meeting.

This practice of testing expresses the mutually accepted obligation of each Friend to test a personal concern against the counsel of the group, and of the group to seek spiritual guidance in exercising its judgment. In this exercise everyone can be enriched. Both the individual and the group need, in a spirit of tender acceptance, to consider it possible that they may be mistaken.

### **2.3.3 Supporting a concern**

If a Meeting decides to support the concern of an individual, this may be done in various ways:

- a 'support group' of a few Friends who can meet with the Friend at intervals, listen, advise and encourage;
- other Friends joining in the work;
- freeing the individual from responsibilities in the Meeting;
- practical and financial support, e.g. child care, travel costs;
- providing an income for a period so that the Friend may work full-time on the concern.

If a concern is taken up by a Meeting as a whole, or by Yearly Meeting, a working group or committee may be appointed to pursue the concern with the support and involvement of the rest of the Meeting. It may be that the concern will undergo changes, and that the responsibility may move from the Friend who initiated it.

### **2.3.4 Civil disobedience**

A Friend or group of Friends may become convinced that, as a matter of witness, conscience and obedience to God's leading, they are obliged to break the law in some respect. This needs to be tested sensitively, with the help of others.



Those concerned need to take into consideration the possible harm to others, the effect on the Religious Society of Friends and society as a whole, and the possibility of alienating people of goodwill. To be done in good conscience, civil disobedience needs to be done openly, and those involved must be prepared to accept the legal consequences.

If after thorough and worshipful consideration, the action appears right, the Meeting may be able to unite with it, or some Friends may be able to give support, of a personal, practical or public nature.

Where Friends disagree as to what action may in conscience be undertaken, there is need for especial tenderness and humility, both in worship and in personal relations.

### **2.3.5 Travelling under concern**

If a Friend under concern needs to travel outside the area of the Monthly Meeting which supported the concern, the Meeting minutes at its Meeting for Worship for Business a 'travelling minute'; this introduces the Friend, outlines the concern, and expresses the Meeting's support. This minute is presented by the Friend to other Meetings visited, and is usually endorsed by the clerk or other representative, with greetings, and is presented to the home Meeting on return.

Such a travelling minute, offered specifically for a journey under concern, is different from a simple 'letter of introduction' which a Meeting can give to any Member or Attender who is travelling for whatever reason and expecting to make contact with Friends elsewhere (4.2.3 c).

### **2.3.6 Laying down a concern**

An individual Friend who feels ready to lay down a concern may wish to ask for the help of the Meeting in the decision; it may be that it is time for the concern to end, or that there may be others who are prepared to take it up.

If a Meeting or group feels that it should lay down a concern, this needs to be considered carefully in a context of worship. Whenever a concern is laid down, Friends should be careful of the needs, rights and feelings of others who have been involved, in particular of any people employed and of those whom the concern has served. (4.2.1 g)

## **2.4 QUAKER TESTIMONIES**

### **2.4.1 Introduction**

The promptings of love and truth in the hearts and minds of early Friends convinced them that they should live in simple discipleship. Their understanding of the teachings of Jesus, combined with their experience of divine guidance, led to certain ways of living, which are held as 'testimonies' .

These are not rules or creeds but patterns of life which Quakers stand for, and to which we bear witness ('testimony' = act of witness). There is much that one can read about Friends' testimonies, for example in books of *Quaker Faith & Practice*. It is only within the last 100 years that Friends have sought to list specific testimonies, as a way of helping one another to understand our way of life. In truth the things we stand for are different aspects of a whole pattern of life under guidance.

Testimonies grow out of Friends' corporate life and worship. They develop to meet the needs of differing times and places. Re-examination of testimonies can be a process of renewal for a Meeting.

The following is a brief description of the main testimonies, as currently understood by Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand.

#### **2.4.2 Religious practice**

Our religious practice grows from and testifies to the understanding that there is "that of God in every one".

From this arise the following distinctive features of Quaker religious life:

- a simple, non-hierarchical structure without ordained clergy;
- universal ministry — worship and service are open to contributions from anyone who is led, since we recognise that each has gifts to offer (2.1.1- 2.1.17);
- worship as a communal activity and responsibility;
- refusal to bind one another to creeds and dogma;
- continuing revelation - inspiration comes from more sources than the Bible or religious tradition, and leads to new understandings;
- experiences are a source of revelation;
- universal sacredness — any place, day or season is as holy as any other. Traditionally we have not marked religious festivals. Meeting for Worship is most commonly held on Sundays because this has been a day when more people are relatively free from other commitments.

From these flow our social testimonies (2.4.3 – 2.4.9).

### **2.4.3 Equality**

Each person has value and dignity, and is precious to God, however understood. On this basis Quakers work for equality in all areas of social, cultural, legal, political and economic life, rejecting artificial distinctions of race or social status. For true equality we are called to honour our commitment to Te Tiriti, and to recognise that equality can require special action to restore the rights of indigenous peoples, minorities, and other groups who are prevented by social and economic forces from full social participation. We try to treat all people on a basis of equality, preferring to address and to be addressed by names without titles.

Decisions of the Society are made by the group under guidance in a spirit of worship at business meetings open to all Members, and usually to Attenders. Responsibilities, with very few exceptions, can be held by either Members or Attenders. Friends recognise the ministry and service of all genders, young and old, experienced and less experienced. (2.4.9, 2.4.10)

### **2.4.4 Peace and social justice**

Friends' peace testimony arises from the belief in "that of God in every one". Early Friends recognised that they must seek to bring about "God's will" without the use of force or violence — a person labelled as 'enemy' is equally precious. Quakers have refused to take part in war and preparations for war; we resist the culture of military values and the social and economic distortions which militarism causes. In a broader sense, the peace testimony includes action against unjust structures of society, racism, the denial of human rights, and other forms of oppression, which are themselves forms of violence. Friends have acted to end slavery, to

relieve the suffering caused by war and oppression, to mediate between parties in conflict, and to promote worldwide economic and cultural development on a basis of self-determination and dignity.

#### **2.4.5 Ecojustice and sustainability**

A full testimony to peace includes a harmonious relationship with the many life-forms and diverse riches of our planet, and a commitment to live as part of earth's systems, not as their proprietors, as contributors not as controllers.

Responsible living means choosing not to waste, exploit or destroy. We try to remember that harm to the environment usually inflicts the most damaging consequences on people who are already worst off materially, and ultimately, damage to the whole of humanity. We encourage a reverence for life and a sense of wonder. *A Yearly Meeting 2000 statement on sustainability is in Appendix 1E.*

#### **2.4.6 Simplicity**

A centred life will be characterised by integrity, sincerity and simplicity.

***Outward simplicity*** does not require a strict formula, but influences our choices of purchases, activities and life-style. Moderate living avoids over-indulgence and devotion to what is fashionable; it requires a responsible attitude to alcohol and drugs of any kind.

There are strong pressures on children and young people to conform, acquire, consume and do what is fashionable or aggressively advertised.

Adults can help children to develop inner strength by their own example, and by working out together what is right and possible, given the family's circumstances.

Simplicity has its own beauty. Artistic creativity can feed a deep human need, and be an expression of the divine.

***Inner simplicity*** Friends seek for an inner stillness in worship and in personal spiritual life, and a simplicity which lets go of inessential commitments and activity in order to be truly centred.

#### **2.4.7 Integrity**

Integrity in outward conduct flows from a developing inner spiritual wholeness.

Quakers aim to be honest and straightforward in speech and in all our dealings. We try to honour our financial responsibilities, as family members and as citizens.

The longstanding testimony against oaths is based on honesty — we reject the implication of a double standard of truthfulness. On any occasion where an oath is expected, all citizens are entitled to make a legally acceptable affirmation; it is helpful to let the official responsible know in advance that you wish to use this alternative.

Quakers have a responsibility of stewardship over our possessions.

Historically, Friends have avoided gambling, on the principle that money should be acquired through honest work. Today we continue to refrain from gambling, and from raising

money by games of chance, in view of the adverse social consequences.

#### **2.4.8 Speaking truth to power**

From early times Quakers have felt called to remind Governments and other powerful bodies of their obligations to act justly. This may be done by letters, submissions, delegations or other means. Friends try to ensure that their own lives are clear of any practice to which they propose to object.

Friends are willing also to give praise where praise is due, and to support acts of justice.

#### **2.4.9 Racial justice**

The efforts of Friends in many places to promote racial justice and reconciliation can be seen as integral to the testimonies to equality and peace.

*On the Yearly Meeting's commitment to its responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi see 1.3 and Appendix 1B.*

#### **2.4.10 The testimonies in Aotearoa New Zealand**

The testimonies have been put into practice in Aotearoa New Zealand in many ways.

Quakers were involved in the founding of CORSO for relief and development after World War II, and have been active in various peace groups including the movement for nuclear disarmament, and in the antiapartheid movement.

We have supported moves to remove discrimination on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation, have joined

the movement for a living wage, and have linked with penal reform organisations.

Groups which have been supported financially in recent years include Christian World Service, Peace Movement Aotearoa, Generation Zero, the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Just Speak, the Howard League for Penal Reform, and Alternatives to Violence Project Aotearoa.

The Yearly Meeting is engaged in reducing its impact on the environment, while wrestling with challenges as to what actions are feasible and best for the future of our planet and its life forms, and are appropriate for Quaker faith and practice.

*Statements on peace, reconciliation, social and environmental concerns and Treaty issues will be found in Appendix 1.*



## **Section 3 – DECISION-MAKING**

### **3.1 THE GROUNDING OF THE MEETING FOR WORSHIP FOR BUSINESS**

In our meetings for worship for the conduct of business we worship together, care for one another, attend to necessary administration, seek for guidance sincerely and openly on matters of common concern, test personal concerns that are brought before us, and get to know one another in 'things that are eternal' as in 'things that are temporal'.

Friends' business method builds the community, strengthens relationships, and encourages each of us to grow. When our corporate decisions are faithful to the Spirit, they hold the seeds that change the world.

#### **3.1.1 The development of our way**

When Friends come together to consider business and to make decisions, we are seeking in a spirit of worship to find the way forward. In silent worship we trust that through the centred attention of all present the group will move deeply inwards, so, in meetings for worship for the conduct of business, we trust that the group will be guided by the Spirit.

Quaker decision-making is based on two major insights of George Fox and other early Friends: that each of us is directly open to the power of the Spirit, the spirit of Christ within as teacher, friend and guide; and that we need the gathered community to support and encourage us when testing our leadings and ideas. From these insights arose the meeting for

business where together we seek the sense of the meeting. This can transcend individual preferences.

This gathered experience of the Spirit goes beyond consensus, and means that neither an individual nor a majority has authority. Decisions are not made by the ruling of an office-bearer, or by vote. We seek unity in the Spirit for our decision making.

### **3.1.2 Evolving decisions**

Early Friends established a procedure based on broadening geographical location. Discernment made by local groups could be communicated to the wider Quaker community. Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings seek for and follow guidance in their own affairs. The matters affecting Friends over a wider area are brought to a Monthly Meeting of Friends in that region. The insights and leadings of individuals can be brought to and evaluated by their own group or committee, and as they are brought to broader groups the discernment is carried further. Each Monthly Meeting sends its minutes to all other Monthly Meetings and to the Yearly Meeting clerk who then draws Friends' attention to those minutes that require broader consideration. Decisions on these matters are made by all Friends, either in their Monthly Meetings or at the Yearly Meeting in session. The matters on the agenda at Yearly Meeting are normally first discussed by all Monthly Meetings.

### **3.1.3 Value of Friends' practice**

Friends' practice of decision-making is used in all meetings, including regular Worship Groups, Recognised Meetings, Monthly Meetings, Yearly Meetings, and committees and

other working groups. To wait together for guidance and unity is essential even when the business is urgent or seems minor or practical. Friends' experience is that patient trust leads to guidance, and the direction can sometimes be quite unexpected.

At its best, Friends business practice carries a sense of spaciousness. The search for the right outcome will take as long as it needs. There is adequate opportunity for individuals to bring and share their opinions, hesitations, and concerns. Because they will not be criticised for their perspectives, or challenged directly and personally, there is potential for the group to share in the vocal ministry to help find the sense of the meeting.

#### **3.1.4 Content and process**

As with all decision-making, in meetings for worship for the conduct of business there are two components: the content and the process or methods used. The content is the subject matter of the decision, and the process comprises the methods or ways that the decision is reached including the way participants listen and communicate. The process is particularly important because it influences the quality of decisions by ensuring that a diversity of perspectives are encouraged, heard, and properly considered. In addition, the process enhances relationships because when diverse views are truly heard, people feel acknowledged and valued as members of the community. The methods and processes are therefore as important as the decisions.

## **3.2 THE CONDUCT OF MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP FOR BUSINESS**

### **3.2.1 General**

A meeting for business may take place after a regular meeting for worship, or on a separate occasion. It may be held electronically, or with some Friends taking part electronically and others face to face. Friends attend the business meeting as for meeting for worship, 'with heart and mind prepared' (*Advices & Queries C1*). The meeting opens in silent worship then the business proceeds as a continuation of this worship. The meeting returns to silence at various times during the meeting and when business is concluded.

The length of the opening and closing periods of silence depends on circumstances. They are always more than a brief moment, to enable the quieting of mind and centring on the Spirit. Vocal ministry may occur, and the clerk may offer a suitable reading.

### **3.2.2 Introducing business**

Items of business are introduced by the clerk or by another Friend invited to do so. Those responsible for introducing an item need to provide sufficient information to set the meeting purposefully on its course (3.4.3).

### **3.2.3 Approaches**

Lightness and humour are gifts of the spirit and in the right place can help the work progress. Equally, the matters before Friends may require a business-like attention so that necessary detail is not missed or overlooked in a rush or at a time of high sentiment.

### **3.2.4 Use of silent worship**

If the meeting is experiencing difficulties in finding the right way forward, or the spirit of worship has been lost, the clerk or any Friend may invite the meeting to join in a time of silence; this often leads to new insights.

Such silent support is particularly helpful when the clerk is drafting a minute; this is not the time for either private conversations, or expressing further opinions on the topic, making it difficult for the clerk.

### **3.2.5 Representatives**

Friends appointed as representatives by their Meeting, are not delegated to hold to a particular viewpoint. Explaining the thoughts and feelings of their own meeting may be helpful, but their prime responsibility is to join with others present in seeking the way forward under the guidance of the Spirit.

### **3.2.6 Participation of Friends who are not local members**

People not in membership and those in membership of other meetings are welcome to take part in meetings for business with the consent of the meeting, usually obtained by consulting the clerk. On some occasions people not in membership will be asked to leave. Committees, trusts and groups are entitled to hold meetings limited to those appointed to the group.

### **3.3 THE SENSE OF THE MEETING**

#### **3.3.1 What does 'sense of the meeting' mean?**

When Friends join together in seeking the “sense of the meeting”, each brings their own background, experiences, preconceptions and gifts. These are used in the search for unity under the guidance of the Spirit. It may take time, but when different views are stated honestly and simply, and listened to with care, a leading of the Spirit can be experienced from which the sense of the meeting becomes clear. Some Friends may not have experienced the same leading, but nevertheless may accept the meeting’s sense of the way forward.

In meeting for worship for business we make decisions about what is right for the group. One of the assumptions is that something more than the best wisdom of the individuals is required: those present seek for communal discernment. This does not mean that all must be in agreement. Rather, a “sense of the meeting” can emerge that points to the right way forward for the group at that time.

#### **3.3.2 Evolving a minute**

The work of the clerk is to discern what sense is emerging and, when it seems clear, to embody it in a draft minute. The minute is then offered to the meeting. Friends may then be ready to accept the minute, or feel that it expresses the sense of the meeting but needs some alteration, or that it does not express the sense of the meeting.

The minute can then be altered to meet the concerns or, if it is evident that it is not the sense of the meeting, the seeking continues until the meeting is united in accepting a minute.

Once a minute is accepted, it is a record of that meeting, and cannot subsequently be altered, except for minor editorial work and correction of factual errors when the final copy is prepared.

### **3.3.3 Unity and difference**

If, after considerable work, one or more Friends in a meeting find themselves not at unity with a proposed minute, they may find themselves able to trust the leadings of the meeting and allow the minute to go forward.

On the other hand they may feel obliged to declare their unwillingness to agree. Standing in the way of a decision is rare and needs careful reflection and humility and a sense of strong obligation to an individual leading, in the face of the leadings of others.

When careful consideration has not led to unity, any Friend may ask for a period of silence during which a way forward may open. Usually, if unity cannot be reached, the clerk offers a minute to that effect which either proposes a way for the meeting to deal with the matter, or that the business is left undecided. The topic may be adjourned to a later meeting. During the intervening time a group of Friends, including those with different views, may meet to see if a way to unity can be found.

If, after consideration in a worshipful and loving spirit, a Friend's opposition appears to lack substance, the meeting may agree to the minute as drafted by the clerk. Such a course is adopted very rarely and needs to be approached with extreme care and caution.

### **3.3.4 Owning the sense of the meeting**

This way of conducting business rests on the insights of the light of God in each of us, and on the increase in understanding and discernment which grows within the worshipping community. Decisions reached in this way are owned by the whole group, and have a spiritual authority derived from the process of seeking together. This does not mean that error is impossible; a meeting may, at a later date, be led to alter its course of action, following a similar process of seeking a clear sense of leading.

The value of Friends' business procedure has stood the test of experience over the years. A sense of unity can be felt when a meeting has worked faithfully and lovingly. A course of action which was originally not accepted, or even envisaged, may eventually emerge as the sense of the meeting, and can be seen to be truly guided. Joyful surprise can illuminate our conduct of business.

## **3.4 THE MEETING AND ITS CLERK**

### **3.4.1 The clerk as servant**

Friends appoint a clerk to guide and give focus to the process of seeking the leading of the Spirit. The clerk is the servant of the meeting and accountable to it. The meeting entrusts heavy responsibilities to its clerk, but is itself responsible for conducting its business in good order and in a spirit of worship, and for supporting the clerk.



### **3.4.2 Clerking arrangements**

Meetings have evolved different patterns of clerking, depending on size and need. There may be a single clerk, co-clerks, or a clerk with one or more assistant clerks.

### **3.4.3 Setting the agenda**

It is the clerk's responsibility to prepare the agenda for a meeting, if appropriate in consultation with assistant clerks or other Friends.

The meeting entrusts to its clerk the responsibility for guiding Friends through the business and deciding on procedure; the clerk should be ready to consult Friends and ask for help and advice as necessary.

To help the meeting, a clerk is encouraged to prepare beforehand partial drafts of minutes; but such drafts are usually limited to factual and background matters, and do not pre-empt the decision on the issue under consideration. Draft minutes from committees who are giving a report can be helpful and supportive to aid the clerk. The drafts only become minutes once approved by the meeting.

### **3.4.4 Minutes**

The meeting trusts the clerk's spiritual discernment and places on the clerk the responsibility of watching the growth of the meeting towards unity and of judging the right time to submit a draft minute that contains the sense of the meeting for those present to respond to. It also trusts the clerk to lay aside personal preferences in order to be open to the sense of the meeting.

The minutes are offered to the meeting as part of the exercise of discernment. Minutes are agreed to in all details at the time, and when finally accepted become the meeting's own. A subsequent meeting may come to a different decision, but may not alter a minute correctly recorded from an earlier meeting. It is helpful to have within the draft of a minute the previous minute's number and at what meeting with the date when discernment on this topic took place.

### **3.4.5 Background work**

The clerk's work includes visible and invisible tasks. The visible tasks include preparing the agenda and providing background information, calling on people to speak, and drafting possible minutes.

The clerk's role involves significant background, behind the scenes, work of preparation, and follow-up which may not be readily visible to all Friends.

These include the ongoing concern for the business between meetings, the discernment that goes into preparing the agenda, doing the background work in preparation for the meeting, listening carefully to the vocal ministry during the meeting, being in a grounded and centred place from which to discern the sense of the meeting during the meeting, as well as being aware of what is not said. The follow up actions that result from the agreed minutes are largely invisible.

For further referencing, minutes need to be filed kept on paper, in digital form and on the website.

*(Suggestions to clerks are in section 4.7).*

### **3.5 INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

As for Meeting for Worship Friends are encouraged to come to Meeting for Worship for Business regularly with their “hearts and minds prepared”, and be open to the meeting deciding on ways forward that they had not considered.

Those wishing to speak indicate this and wait to be called by the clerk. In larger meetings it is usual to stand when speaking so that others can hear and concentrate better.

In a meeting where some or all Friends are connected electronically, appropriate guidelines for indicating a desire to speak, and for effective communication, need to be established.

Where Friends are physically present, it is helpful to Friends with hearing difficulties if speakers face the body of the meeting. It is also important to speak audibly, addressing the meeting as a whole, and to leave a space after each speaker, to enable what has been said to find its right place in the mind of the meeting. Meeting for Business is not a debate but a Meeting for Worship involving loving listening and care for each other.

Speaking to an item is a form of ministry. Together the group is trying to discern the right course. Contributions may include: factual information, suggestions that further information is required, observations of ethical, religious or other issues, prayer or reflection, a sense of what decision is required, or suggestions on how a course of action might be carried out.

Care needs to be taken before speaking to consider whether each contribution is relevant and helpful to the work of the meeting at each point in time. If it seems so, speaking openly and plainly, speaking on topic and using as few words as possible, but as many as are needed, is helpful as is the avoidance of repeating what has already been said.

If an issue affects a Friend strongly, it is helpful for them to say so, expressing lovingly and tenderly what they are guided to say. Receiving other viewpoints in the same spirit and listening carefully and sensitively for the truth in them is also vital. If others disagree this need not be taken personally or seen as hostility.

Those speaking address their remarks to the clerk so that they are speaking to all of the meeting and not to an individual. Crosstalk and personal arguments do not belong here. Discipline is the responsibility of the whole meeting not just the clerk.

Throughout the meeting those present hold one another in support or prayer and try to sense in what way the meeting is being guided.

The minutes are upheld by all, whether or not they were in agreement and whether they were present or not.

## **Section 4 – STRUCTURES AND ORGANISATION: WORSHIP GROUPS, RECOGNISED MEETINGS AND MONTHLY MEETINGS**

### **4.1 GENERAL**

#### **4.1.1 Definitions**

A **Worship Group** is a body of Friends within a Monthly Meeting who meet regularly for worship. It may be the only Quaker group in its area, or it may be a local sub-group of a larger Worship Group. It may conduct Meetings for Worship for Business on occasions.

A **Recognised Meeting** is a body of Friends within a Monthly Meeting who worship together (in one or more Worship Groups), and who, because of size, experienced membership, location and other factors, find it preferable and possible to have an organised structure and to meet when necessary for business. A Recognised Meeting is also the regular gathering of this body to conduct business.

A **Monthly Meeting** consists of the Friends within a defined area of Aotearoa (4.1.2) and the term is also used for the regular gathering of this body to conduct business. Monthly Meetings support the worship, spiritual nurture and pastoral care of Worship Groups, Recognised Meetings and all associated with the Society in their area (4.2).

The **Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand** consists of the Friends within Aotearoa New Zealand. The annual conference of this body is also known as Yearly Meeting.

#### **4.1.2 Boundaries**

**Northern Monthly Meeting** covers Northland and Auckland Regions.

**Mid North Island Monthly Meeting** covers Waikato and Bay of Plenty Regions.

**Taranaki Monthly Meeting** covers Taranaki Region.

**Whanganui Monthly Meeting** covers Whanganui, Ruapehu and Rangitikei Districts.

**Palmerston North Monthly Meeting** covers the Horowhenua District, Hawkes Bay and Gisborne Regions and the Manawatu–Whanganui Region other than Whanganui, Ruapehu and Rangitikei Districts.

**Kāpiti Monthly Meeting** covers Kāpiti Coast District.

**Wellington Monthly Meeting** covers the Wairarapa District and the Wellington Region other than Kāpiti Coast District.

**Christchurch Monthly Meeting** covers the South Island other than Otago and Southland Regions.

**Dunedin Monthly Meeting** covers Otago and Southland Regions.

#### **4.1.3 Change of Meeting status**

When a local group of Friends wish to hold regular worship after the manner of Friends, they consult the Monthly Meeting which records in its minutes the formation of the Worship Group or Recognised Meeting. At the wish of the Worship Group, the Monthly Meeting may lay it down.

When a Worship Group or Recognised Meeting covers a defined geographical area and has a sufficient, continuing and experienced membership, it may consider accepting the responsibility of forming a separate Monthly Meeting. If it decides to do this, it will inform its Monthly Meeting of its

intention. Monthly Meeting will pass the proposal with its recommendation to Yearly Meeting for its decision.

If a Monthly Meeting feels that it is no longer able to carry out its responsibilities, and wishes to become part of another Monthly Meeting, the other Monthly Meeting is consulted, and a joint recommendation is brought to Yearly Meeting.

#### **4.1.4 Meeting for Worship for Business**

Monthly Meetings for Worship for Business deal with the affairs of their own body and with its relation to outside groups. They also contribute to decision-making by the Yearly Meeting as a whole concerning Yearly Meeting's own affairs and its relation to outside groups.

Monthly Meetings relate directly to Yearly Meeting. Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings relate to Yearly Meeting via Monthly Meetings. However, Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings receive the monthly Yearly Meeting Clerk's letter and associated papers.

Members and Attenders share the responsibility for the business of the Society through the network of Worship Groups, Recognised Meetings, Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meeting.

All are welcome to participate in Meetings for Worship for Business. Practices vary from Meeting to Meeting so non-members need to consult with the Clerk as to the practice in that particular Meeting. Their presence may be minuted by the meeting either initially or each time. When confidential or sensitive matters are discussed, withdrawal of non-members of that Meeting may be required.

#### **4.1.5 Special Meetings for Worship for Business**

A special Meeting for Worship for Business may be called by the Meeting or called at the discretion of its Clerk. Such a meeting may also be called following a written notification signed by five Members, the reason for it being clearly stated. These meetings should be held at a time convenient to Members and after sufficient notice.

#### **4.1.6 Regional Gatherings**

Friends within a region (either within or crossing Monthly Meeting boundaries) may meet from time to time for worship, enjoyment, learning and other purposes. Such regional gatherings are not formally incorporated into the structure of Friends' organisation.

### **4.2 WORSHIP GROUPS, RECOGNISED MEETINGS, AND MONTHLY MEETINGS**

The size, needs and opportunities of Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings vary greatly. Each Meeting should decide from time to time what activities and structure best enable it to promote worship and spiritual growth, to care for those within it, and to give witness through action. Consultation with the Monthly Meeting is recommended. A larger Worship Group or Recognised Meeting in effect carries out many of the functions of a Monthly Meeting, and some of these may be expressly delegated by the Monthly Meeting.

Smaller Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings may choose not to have their own Friends responsible for spiritual and pastoral care, Nominations Committees or Clerks.



Where delegation of these roles by a Monthly Meeting to such Worship Groups occurs, all parties should be aware of the guidance provided in the *Quaker Handbook* and be mindful of their responsibility to carry out such tasks in accordance with Friends' practice.

#### **4.2.1 Guide to Responsibilities of Worship Groups**

The responsibilities of Worship Groups can include:

- (a) arrange regular Meetings for Worship;
- (b) minister to the spiritual and other needs of those associated with it, including the conduct and quality of Meeting for Worship; ensure that Enquirers are included in the Meeting and are guided in their growth within Friends; care for isolated Friends within its area; care for children and young people and arrange a programme which introduces them to Friends and to the Quaker way of life; ensure that visitors are made welcome; maintain a library and encourage its use;
- (c) carry out such business as is necessary for the promotion and development of the spiritual life and activities of the group, and minute its decisions; contribute to the annual report of the Monthly Meeting, including numbers attending Meeting for Worship;
- (d) make any necessary appointments: in addition to a correspondent (a Friend to relay information between the group and Monthly Meeting and other Friends), these could include a Clerk to guide the conduct of business, and a Treasurer;
- (e) attend to finances as appropriate, including encouraging Friends to make regular financial contributions;
- (f) care for and maintain chattels;
- (g) foster concerns and maintain the religious and social testimonies of Friends (2.3.1-2.3.6 and 2.4.1-2.4.10);

- (h) appoint Friends to serve with other organisations whose interests it supports and consider reports from these representatives; make information about Friends, and opportunities to meet with them, available to the public; and respond appropriately to needs and issues in the community;
- (i) as appropriate:
  - consider matters brought to it by the Monthly Meeting Clerk and the Yearly Meeting Clerk and committees;
  - bring its views on these and other matters to Monthly Meeting, where appropriate by means of a minute;
  - encourage and assist as many Friends as possible to attend each Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business, and to report back;
- (j) maintain an up-to-date page on the Yearly Meeting website, detailing information about the venue and times of Meeting for Worship, and how to contact the Worship Group.

There may be occasions when it is appropriate for a Worship Group or Recognised Meeting to be in direct contact with the Yearly Meeting Clerk. However, the making of decisions via the Yearly Meeting Clerk's Letter and in preparation for Yearly Meeting is based on unity among Monthly Meetings. Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings forward to their Monthly Meeting their contributions to such decisions.

#### **4.2.2 Guide to responsibilities of Recognised Meetings**

The responsibilities of Recognised Meetings include those of Worship Groups as listed in 4.2.1. In addition, Recognised Meetings may be responsible for the care and management of property such as a Meeting House. Annual reports on the care and management of the properties are required by the

Religious Society of Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand Trust Board, which is the legal owner of all land and buildings.

#### **4.2.3 Guide to the Responsibilities of Monthly Meetings**

A Monthly Meeting may consider any matters affecting the life of the Society and the concerns of its members. Its main functions are to support Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings in fulfilling their responsibilities as listed in 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

In addition Monthly Meetings are expected to:

- (a) care for Worship Groups, Recognised Meetings and isolated Friends; be open to the needs for Quaker worship and witness in parts of its area where there is no current Worship Group; support programmes for children and young people which introduce them to people of the Meeting and to the Quaker way of life;
- (b) attend to membership (receive into membership, transfer membership, end membership);
- (c) write letters of introduction, commending to the care of other meetings Friends who intend to travel overseas, and conveying greetings to Friends who may be visited; letters of introduction differ from travelling minutes which are provided to Friends travelling under a concern (4.4.1 h);
- (d) conduct marriages and civil unions in accordance with Friends' usage, and support Worship Groups or Recognised Meetings with the arrangements (4.10 and Appendix 2);
- (e) care for funerals of Friends; arrange for the preparation of testimonies to the grace of God in the lives of deceased Friends (4.11);
- (f) hold regular meetings for the conduct of Monthly Meeting business; record decisions and other matters in minutes (4.4.1); encourage Friends to attend Meetings for

Worship for Business; make any necessary appointments and provide support and training where appropriate; keep and preserve records (4.4);

(g) assist with the care for and maintenance of properties within the Monthly Meeting area and maintain the chattels of the Monthly Meeting; ensure that annual reports on the care and maintenance of properties are made to the Religious Society of Friends Aotearoa New Zealand Trust Board;

(h) attend to Monthly Meeting finances;

(i) prepare an annual report for Yearly Meeting showing how Quaker life, faith and practice have been expressed by the Monthly Meeting's activities, or 'how Truth has prospered' within the Meeting (4.6);

(j) attend to any other Monthly Meeting matters, such as the arrangements for Yearly Meeting when held in its area;

(k) join in the conducting of Friends' business within the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand by:

- considering matters brought to it by Yearly Meeting Clerk and Yearly Meeting committees;

- considering matters to be discussed at Yearly Meeting;

- bringing concerns and other matters to other Monthly Meetings and to Yearly Meeting;

- appointing correspondents where appropriate to Yearly Meeting committees, receiving their reports, and communicating via them the views and actions of the meeting;

(l) maintain up-to-date pages on the Yearly Meeting website, including public information about the Monthly Meeting.

#### **4.2.4 Responsibilities of a Monthly Meeting to its Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings**

In addition to the responsibilities listed above, Monthly Meetings are expected to:

- (a) notify Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings of Monthly Meeting business and other information;
- (b) consider the appropriate allocation of financial resources;
- (c) arrange visits for support and fellowship between Meetings in its Area;
- (d) arrange fuller involvement in Monthly Meeting activities by holding Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business in different centres, by assisting travel and by offering opportunities for participating electronically;
- (e) consider matters and concerns of Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings brought to Monthly Meeting through minutes or other appropriate means;
- (f) facilitate the inclusion of Worship Group and Recognised Meeting reports into Yearly Meeting Documents in Advance.

#### **4.3 APPOINTMENTS MADE BY MONTHLY MEETINGS, RECOGNISED MEETINGS AND WORSHIP GROUPS**

Suggestions for appointments are usually made by a Nominations Committee (4.8). This may be a continuing committee, or a committee set up specifically for the occasion.

The appointments of Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Registering Officer and other Friends to serve the Meeting are generally changed after three years so that most Friends

have opportunities to be involved in the work of the Meeting. Renewal for a further three years is possible.

Each Monthly Meeting appoints groups of Friends to organise care for the spiritual, personal and social needs of the Meeting (see Section 6). These committees are currently known as Pastoral Care, Spiritual Care, Ministry and Oversight, or by some other name.

Appointments to this and to other committees are if possible staggered to give continuity.

Monthly Meeting appointments may be terminated at any time by the Friend laying down the work or moving elsewhere, or by decision of the Monthly Meeting. Replacements and additional appointments may be made at any time.

Friends are encouraged to accept nomination, even if they may feel a sense of inadequacy, and to look upon their service as an opportunity to gain experience and training, and to feel more deeply engaged with their Meeting.

A list of appointments is circulated regularly to Friends.

## **4.4 GUIDE TO RECORDING MINUTES AND INFORMATION IN MEETING FOR WORSHIP FOR BUSINESS**

### **4.4.1 Minutes**

The minutes of Meetings for Worship for Business record the sense of the meeting that results from discernment, and also the following factual information:

- (a) the names of those present, and the place, date, starting and finishing time of the meeting;
- (b) the dates and times of:
  - Meetings for Worship held on special occasions;
  - regional gatherings and other events arranged by the Monthly Meeting that are not Meetings for Worship;
- (c) the names of those appointed to serve the Monthly Meeting in any particular way, including ad hoc appointments such as visitors in connection with membership;
- (d) reports received or submitted by the Monthly Meeting;
- (e) names and dates relating to membership, and to deaths of Friends;
- (f) announcements of intention of marriage or civil union, appointment of a Meeting for Worship for the solemnisation of marriage or civil union, and report of the registering officer to Monthly Meeting that the marriage or civil union has taken place;
- (g) the marriage or civil union of Members other than by Friends' usage, including names, date and place if possible;
- (h) the receipt of important letters;
- (i) the issue of travelling minutes to those travelling under concern and of letters of introduction;
- (j) other significant events.

#### **4.4.2 Other records**

Information kept but not necessarily minuted includes:

- (a) a register of Members, recording for each Member the dates when in membership of the Monthly Meeting;
- (b) a current list of Members and Attenders for publication by Yearly Meeting;
- (c) statistics of membership and participation for Yearly Meeting;
- (d) minutes of committees for spiritual and pastoral care;
- (e) documents of historical interest to the Society;
- (f) financial records and legal documents.

#### **4.5 PROPERTY AND FINANCES**

Monthly Meetings in conjunction with Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings should keep under consideration the retention, care and use of meeting houses and other properties. They are advised to encourage the use of these assets for educational and other purposes which serve the needs of the Quaker community and then the wider community.

Each Monthly Meeting appoints a Treasurer, maintains a bank account, and approves financial statements which have been suitably reviewed/audited.

Meetings which are registered with Charities Services need to observe their requirements.

Friends should be reminded at least annually of their financial responsibilities and advised of any financial needs



for different purposes. This gives them opportunities to consider the response they can make in the light of their financial situation. While all Friends are encouraged to assist financially with the Meeting expenses, participation in the life of the Meeting is not dependent on financial contribution.

#### **4.6 ANNUAL REPORT**

Each year, the Monthly Meeting Clerk or another Friend so appointed prepares a report showing how Quaker life, faith and practice have been expressed by the Monthly Meeting's activities, or "how Truth has prospered". This report includes contributions from Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings, which are combined with the general Monthly Meeting report. After approval by a Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business this is forwarded to the Clerk of Yearly Meeting for inclusion in Documents in Advance (4.2.3 i).

#### **4.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR CLERKS (*See also SECTION 3*)**

##### **4.7.1 Conduct of Meetings for Worship for Business**

Friends' method of waiting in a spirit of worship for guidance, and of reaching decisions by finding the sense of the meeting, requires the Clerk to have a spiritual capacity for discernment of the expression of the Inner Light. Other important assets are patience, and unobtrusive leadership to enable the gifts of members to be developed.

Clerks are the servants of the Meeting, which places its trust in them. The Meeting will usually respond cheerfully if clerks

find themselves at a loss and ask for help. Good clerks "keep their ears to the ground", and continually ask themselves: "What are the needs of the Meeting? How can they best be met?"

Discretion is needed in deciding whether a matter should be brought before a Monthly Meeting, dealt with by the Clerk, or passed on to a committee or an individual. When in doubt, confer with an experienced Friend. It is the Clerk who makes sure that the business is handled smoothly and efficiently, with the support of all present.

The Clerk's attitude will help to set the pattern of worshipful listening.

Remind Friends as often as necessary about the need to listen, and to be disciplined when making contributions. Remember that the speaker may be impelled by some inner necessity and should be guided sensitively to make the contribution clearly and briefly.

Keep a sense of proportion and a sense of humour. Be aware of the tempo of the meeting. Do not be overly brisk or allow matters to drag tediously. Be alert to those who may need encouragement to speak.

When a strong division of opinion occurs, a period of silent waiting on the prompting of the Spirit may enable matters to be seen in a truer perspective, and a decision may be reached where previously none seemed possible.

Advance preparation for the Meeting for Worship for Business is vital. Before the meeting, assemble the

appropriate documents and discuss the business with the Assistant Clerk. Set and distribute the agenda with adequate time for Friends to be prepared. It may be appropriate to give deadlines for accepting agenda items. Check beforehand any facts that may be in question, as this avoids leading the Meeting into fruitless speculation.

Bring to the meeting the factual parts of the minutes in draft form, leaving room to record the Meeting's decision: it will save time and contribute to unhurried deliberation.

When introducing business, try to identify and clarify the issues, and arrange for background information to be available to aid decision-making. In subsequent deliberations it may be necessary to supply further information, to advise on procedure, or to make a suggestion if none is forthcoming. On occasion, a very small Meeting may wish the Clerk to participate. Remember, however, that the main task is to discern the sense of the meeting, which is harder to do when the Clerk is also a participant in the spoken consideration. Try to refrain from expressing personal views— this detachment can lead to a new and deeper relationship with Friends. If deeply involved in a particular decision, ask the Meeting to appoint another Friend to act as Clerk while this matter is under consideration, and join the body of the Meeting for this item.

During the meeting ensure that everyone, especially newer or younger Friends, feels free to speak. When seeking the sense of the meeting try to assess the value of every individual contribution.

Sometimes the Clerk can discern the sense of the meeting even when unanimity is not achieved. When the Clerk offers a minute, Friends who do not feel in unity with it may choose to stand aside and allow the minute to be accepted. If the sense of the meeting is not clear, it is not appropriate to proceed with a decision, and the minute should record lack of unity on the matter. (See 3.3 and 3.4)

#### **4.7.2 Writing of Minutes**

When writing a minute, make sure that it covers all the points on which decisions are required, remembering that it is a permanent record to which reference may be made in the future. Provide context to facilitate understanding by Friends who were not present. Minutes recording the presentation of attached reports do not need to quote the contents.

Do not be afraid to remind the Meeting to wait in silent worship while a minute is prepared. It may be necessary to allow time for reflection before a minute is offered. This will enable it to be completed and accepted in that Meeting.

Minutes are signed on behalf of the Meeting by the Clerk.

#### **4.7.3 Other responsibilities**

Check that the Meeting carries out its responsibilities towards all visitors invited to the Meeting. Ensure that they are warmly welcomed, that their needs are met, and that arrangements and any reimbursements are made smoothly.

When notified of a death of a Friend associated with the Monthly Meeting, the Clerk sends a notice to the whole of Yearly Meeting via the current alias for all clerks. When

arrangements for funerals or memorial meetings are known, similar notice is circulated. News of deaths and related arrangements within the Monthly Meeting and elsewhere is sent to Friends in the Monthly Meeting.

## **4.8 NOMINATIONS**

### **4.8.1 Appointment process**

The Nominations Committee, in a Worship Group, Recognised Meeting, Monthly Meeting or Yearly Meeting, works to make sure that responsibilities are shared out among us, and to ensure that appropriate people are nominated to each task. This is an important role. Friends appointed to Nominations Committees should be knowledgeable about the tasks, and about people in the Meeting, open to their gifts, discerning in judgement and tactful in manner. They may invite other Friends to suggest names for consideration before a nomination is brought to the Meeting.

Responsibility for making appointments lies with the Meeting, not with the Nominations Committee. For this reason, the Meeting needs to give careful consideration to the names brought to it. At times the Meeting may reject an offered name or delay an appointment while acknowledging that the committee has given careful consideration to its nomination.

An appointment does not signify elevation to an office, but rather recognition that a Friend can serve the Meeting in a particular capacity.

Friends should expect to hold and relinquish appointments so that tasks do not rest too heavily on a few.

#### **4.8.2 Suggestions to help Nominations Committees**

The following suggestions may prove helpful to Nominations Committee members:

- (a) be alert to use the gifts and resources of the whole Meeting, recognising in any Friend, including those younger and newer, the ability to give service which would benefit the Meeting and also develop the person's own capacity;
- (b) consider the period of service and duties involved and explain them to those who are asked to accept nomination; refer them to the job description and the *Handbook* if appropriate;
- (c) bear in mind the past services of Friends in relation to the present needs of the Meeting;
- (d) do not take acceptance for granted but wait for a considered answer;
- (e) where two Friends would have to work closely together (such as a Clerk and Assistant Clerk), it is advisable to talk over the proposal with both before making a firm approach;
- (f) if a Friend can reasonably expect to be reappointed, but the Committee opts to nominate someone else, take care to convey this decision in a tender and friendly manner;
- (g) membership of the Religious Society of Friends Aotearoa New Zealand Trust Board must legally be held by Members. Friends also expect that only Members will be appointed to the office of Yearly Meeting Clerk, Monthly Meeting Clerk, or to Yearly Meeting positions where they would represent and speak for the Society. But generally, at both Yearly and Monthly Meeting levels, it is assumed that

any Member or active Attender can be called to serve (4.3, 5.7);

(h) consider the overall balance of the committee under consideration, including ages, genders, experience and, for Yearly Meeting, geographical spread.

## **4.9 MEMBERSHIP**

### **4.9.1 General (2.2.1-2.2.6)**

The Religious Society of Friends today is a continuation of the early fellowship of men and women who, through their experiences and insights, found themselves together on the same spiritual journey. Meeting in silent worship, they sought the presence and power of God within themselves and in other people, and upheld one another as they strove to follow the guidance of the spirit of Christ revealed to them by their inward light.

Like the early Friends, we welcome into membership those who find that our meeting for worship helps their spiritual growth, who feel in unity with the principles and testimonies of Friends, and who view their lives as a spiritual journey.

We express our spirituality in various ways. The insistent questioning of the seeker, the fire of the rebel, the commitment of the activist, the faithfulness of the worshipper and the contribution of the more reflective thinker all hold a place among us. This does not always make life easy. As we learn to listen and to enjoy and serve one another, we come to respect the sincerity of one another's experience and to love and care for each other.

Membership can be seen as a form of discipleship. We ask for no affirmation of doctrine or outward observances. Nevertheless, those wishing to join the Society should be aware of its Christian origins. In *Quaker Faith and Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, Quaker Faith and Practice* (Britain Yearly Meeting) and in *Advices and Queries*, Friends have tried to express the broad principles of belief and conduct on which unity is essential. Our testimonies reflect the Society's corporate insights. Respect for these is expected, although precise agreement on every point is not required. We all lapse in our discipleship at times, and no one should be held back from applying for membership by their sense of unworthiness.

Membership implies a commitment to enter wholeheartedly into the spiritual and corporate activities of the Society and to assume responsibility for service and support. When early Friends affirmed the "priesthood of all believers", others saw this as an abolition of the clergy. We see it as an abolition of the laity. This means that all Friends need to see themselves called to ministry, taking responsibility for the maintenance of the meeting as a community in which spiritual growth and exploration are possible.

Membership also entails a financial commitment appropriate to personal means. Money is needed to support the life of the Meeting and of the wider organisation.

Monthly Meetings admit Members into the Society, transfer Members to other Monthly Meetings, and release Members from membership. These decisions are recorded in Monthly Meeting minutes and given either verbally or by letter to the person concerned. The Meeting's records, including



appropriate sections of the website, are adjusted accordingly.

#### **4.9.2 Applying for Membership**

Anyone who has had experience of Quaker life and practice and feels a desire to become a Member is encouraged to consult with one or more experienced Friends in their Worship Group to discern whether the time is right.

They may then apply for membership of a specific Monthly Meeting by writing a letter to the Clerk. This may take the form of a simple request or it may include a longer explanation of the reasons for the application. Letters of application will be acknowledged promptly by the Clerk with an explanation of the membership process.

Receipt of an application will be minuted by the Monthly Meeting. The Meeting then appoints two Friends, either directly or through the Friends responsible for spiritual care, to visit with the applicant. This visit is in the nature of a Clearness Meeting and takes place at the convenience of the people involved. It is a sharing of the applicant's and the visitors' views on membership, as well as an opportunity for asking questions.

The visitors submit a report, usually in writing. The next Monthly Meeting decides whether or not to receive the applicant into membership. It is only through acceptance that the applicant becomes a Member of a particular Monthly Meeting and thus of the Religious Society of Friends.

### ***Advice to Applicants***

Applicants may consider such questions as:

- What has been your spiritual journey?
- What are your contacts with Friends now and in the past?
- What do you know of Friends' religious basis and social testimonies?
- How do you wish to contribute to the life of the Society?
- Are you aware of the responsibilities of membership, including the financial ones? (2.2.1-2.2.6, 4.9.1).

### ***Advice to those appointed to meet with applicants***

- (a) Talk to one another in advance and prepare for a wide-ranging discussion. It will be helpful to be familiar with the sections on membership (2.2.1-2.2.6, 4.9.1), and to know something of the applicant's participation to date in the life of the Meeting.
- (b) Be prepared to discuss and answer questions on any aspect of Friends' testimonies and practices, including worship, decision making and financial matters.
- (c) Conduct the visit in a friendly and sensitive manner, providing an opportunity for in-depth exchange of thought, and for sharing of experiences. Begin and conclude the visit with a period of worship.
- (d) Be clear about the Christian origins of Friends. Be clear that not all Friends consider themselves to be Christians and that not all Friends accept the testimonies in full.
- (e) Take care to ascertain how far the applicant is in accord with the views and practices of Friends and sees the intimate association between our faith and our practice. This is an opportunity to explore together whether the applicant is likely to find a spiritual home in the community of Friends.

(f) If two people from one household apply together, they are usually visited separately, at least for part of the time.

(g) It is helpful if one or both of the visitors attends the Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business which considers the application. Their report does not make a clear recommendation but tries to convey enough of the content and feel of the visit to assist the Meeting in its decision.

### ***Advice to the Clerk and the Meeting***

Letters of application should be acknowledged promptly with an explanation of the process. Receipt of the letter is minuted by the Monthly Meeting.

Visitors may be appointed either directly by the Monthly Meeting or through Friends responsible for spiritual and pastoral care. It is helpful for one of the visitors to have prior experience of visiting applicants for membership.

When the visitors' report is presented, the applicant, if present, is asked to leave the Meeting.

The Monthly Meeting decides whether to:

- (a) accept the application
- (b) decline it, or
- (c) advise that the applicant reapply at a later time.

There is also the possibility that an application might be withdrawn.

The Monthly Meeting decision must be communicated promptly to the applicant. It is common for a new Member to be welcomed in some way and offered a copy of an appropriate Quaker book.

### **4.9.3 Transfer of Membership**

It is generally better for individual Friends, and for their service to the Society, if their membership is in the area in which they reside.

Members moving from one Monthly Meeting to another should ask either Monthly Meeting to arrange for the transfer of membership. If such a request is not made, either Monthly Meeting may start proceedings, having first consulted the Friend about the Meeting's intention. The original Monthly Meeting sends a certificate of transfer of membership to the Clerk of the other Monthly Meeting. Forms are available from the Yearly Meeting website.

On receiving a certificate of transfer of membership, the Monthly Meeting Clerk asks the local Friends responsible for pastoral care to arrange contact with the Member or Members, if they have not already made themselves known. The responsible Friends will advise the Monthly Meeting on the result of this contact. The transfer of membership is not completed until the certificate has been accepted and minuted by the receiving Monthly Meeting, and the member concerned has been notified.

The transfer is notified to the Recording Officer or Membership Clerk of both Meetings. Each Meeting makes the relevant changes to its records, including appropriate sections of the website.

If there is any objection by the Monthly Meeting to acceptance of the transfer the certificate is returned to the issuing Monthly Meeting as soon as possible, with an

explanation. This is to be done only in exceptional circumstances. Although a Member may have taken little or no part in the life of the Meeting for many years, a move may stimulate renewal of association with the Society.

Nevertheless, a Monthly Meeting may properly return a certificate:

- (a) if it seems clear beyond doubt that the Member will in no way associate with the receiving Monthly Meeting;
- (b) if, in the view of the receiving Monthly Meeting, the Member concerned is more closely associated with either the issuing or another Monthly Meeting;
- (c) if, in the view of the receiving Monthly Meeting, the issuing Monthly Meeting should consider whether termination of membership is more appropriate.

#### **4.9.4 Ending membership**

Membership may be ended by:

- (a) resignation;
- (b) termination by the Monthly Meeting;
- (c) death.

It is important that minutes recording ending of membership are specific.

##### *(a) Resignation*

A Member wishing to resign membership should do so by letter to the Clerk of the Monthly Meeting. The letter is referred to Friends responsible for spiritual care for their advice. Normally a resignation is not accepted until a visit has been made on behalf of the Monthly Meeting. On acceptance the Monthly Meeting Clerk immediately informs the person concerned. The resignation is minuted and

recorded in the Meeting's records of membership, including appropriate sections of the website.

*(b) Termination by the Monthly Meeting*

In some instances Monthly Meetings may take the initiative in terminating membership. This should not be terminated solely for financial reasons.

Possible examples could be:

- (i) if over a prolonged period a Member has shown no interest in the life of the Society and there seems no likelihood of change;
- (ii) if the conduct or publicly expressed opinions of the Member are at variance with the known principles of the Society and the spiritual bond of membership has been broken;
- (iii) if the Member's address has been unknown for more than three years and cannot, after careful search, be ascertained.

Monthly Meetings should not normally terminate membership in the case of (i) or (ii) above until the Member has been visited. If the Member does not agree to the termination, a letter is sent, explaining the intention of the Meeting and offering the opportunity for further discussion. If the Monthly Meeting finally decides on termination, the Clerk immediately informs the person in writing, drawing attention to the right of appeal to the Yearly Meeting Standing Committee. The termination is minuted, and Monthly Meeting records, including appropriate sections of the website, are adjusted accordingly.

*(c) Death*

The death of a Friend is minuted, and Monthly Meeting records, including appropriate sections of the website, are adjusted accordingly.

#### **4.10 MARRIAGE AND CIVIL UNION ACCORDING TO FRIENDS' USAGE**

Section 4.10, together with Appendix 2 on Quaker Marriages and Civil Unions, comprise the guidelines and legal regulations of the Religious Society of Friends for marriage and civil union. The Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages and the Registrar-General of Civil Unions should be informed of any changes to these regulations.

##### **4.10.1 Uniting in the Spirit**

The heart of marriage and civil union is the spiritual union of the couple - a deep inner connection between them and the Spirit ("the Lord with us and joining us," said Thomas Ellwood, married in 1669). This spiritual union gives an enduring strength to their relationship. The marriage of Friends in the early days of the Society was an adaptation of old common-law traditions, where the couple publicly declared that they were man and wife.

This is the basis of today's simple Quaker act, when the couple join together with their friends in worship. It is a very natural expression of the way of life in which we believe. In the presence of God and the Meeting the two people take each other freely and equally as life partners, asking divine blessing on their union.

A Meeting for Worship to recognise and bless a couple's union is held in the same spirit as any other Friends' Meeting for Worship. It is an occasion when the couple may gain inspiration and help from the Meeting, which Friends hope will be a source of strength to them during their life together. It is also an opportunity for those present to ask God's blessing on the union and to give both spiritual and personal support to the couple.

The Meeting, especially Friends responsible for spiritual and pastoral care, together with the Registering Officer, is responsible for ensuring spiritual depth in the preparation, clearness process and holding of the Meeting for Worship. When a couple join together under the care of the Meeting, this opens up an ongoing relationship of commitment and support between them and the Meeting.

#### **4.10.2 Legal form of Quaker marriage and civil union**

Friends consider that spiritual reality takes priority over outward form. The legal side of marriage and civil union is secondary to the spiritual. However, it is important that legal requirements are completed diligently, to ensure the legal status of the couple's relationship, to honour Friends' tradition and to maintain the legal recognition of that tradition.

The spiritual union or marriage between a couple may be legally recognised by a marriage or civil union, according to Friends' usage as recognised by the law of New Zealand. Either marriage or civil union can be entered into by a couple irrespective of gender or sexual orientation. The procedures described in the following parts of this section, and in Appendix 2, apply to such marriages and civil unions; they



can be modified according to the discernment of the couple and the Meeting when a legal union is not sought (4.10.8).

#### **4.10.3 Description of the process**

A couple wishing to have a Meeting for Worship for their marriage or civil union should contact their Meeting's Registering Officer well in advance.

The "Declaration of Intention to Marry or to Contract a Civil Union and Request for the Appointment of a Meeting for Worship" (Form A) will be supplied by the Registering Officer for the couple to complete.

The decision on any request to marry or join in civil union after the manner of Friends rests with the Monthly Meeting, after a clearness process as outlined in 4.10.6. After the form declaring an intention has been received, this intention is announced after Meeting for Worship in the place where or near where it is proposed to hold the marriage or civil union. This is to enable Friends to be prepared for consideration of the request at Monthly Meeting, for any objections to be raised in good time, and for the Worship Group or Recognised Meeting to show its care for the couple.

Quaker marriages and civil unions are not restricted to Members of the Society. People not in membership, but who are in unity with our testimony as to the nature and character of marriage or civil union as a religious act, may ask to have their marriage or civil union solemnised according to Friends' usage.

Although requests for Quaker marriages or civil unions are usually approved, the procedure is neither automatic nor

speedy. Three months is a realistic lead-up time, so that the Monthly Meeting has time for careful consideration before it authorises the Meeting for Worship for the solemnisation of marriage or civil union.

The couple apply to the Registrar of Marriages or of Civil Unions, indicating their intention to marry without a celebrant "in accordance with the marriage regulations of the Religious Society of Friends" under section 32 of the Marriage Act, or to have a civil union "in accordance with the civil union regulations of the Religious Society of Friends" for which the Religious Society of Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand has been approved as an exempt body under schedule I of the Civil Union Act.

They obtain: a legal Marriage Licence, with the accompanying forms (BDM 45 & 45A), or a legal Civil Union Licence, with accompanying forms (BDM 345 & 345A), and bring these to the Meeting's Registering Officer, who holds and completes the paper-work on behalf of the Meeting. The marriage or civil union licence is only valid for three months, so it is preferable that the couple wait till the Monthly Meeting has appointed a date before applying for the licence.

If the couple are in an existing civil union, and wish to change their relationship to marriage, they apply to the Registrar of Marriages on the appropriate form. The Quaker procedure for marriage is then followed.

#### **4.10.4 Clearness meetings**

When a request for a marriage or civil union is brought to monthly meeting, it is usually desirable for two or more Friends (often including a Friend responsible for spiritual care

and the Registering Officer) to be appointed to meet with the couple, to consider their request. This is one type of clearness meeting, on which guidance can be found in section 6.4 of this *Handbook*, and in sections 16.19, 16.20 and 16.21 of Britain Yearly Meeting's *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995. The purpose is to enable the couple and the Meeting's representatives to reflect in depth on the couple's understanding of their commitment to one another and of their relationship to the Meeting, together with the Meeting's responsibility to support and care for the couple. By meeting several times the group can increase the spiritual depth with which they explore the riches and challenges of the couple's long term commitment.

A further purpose of the clearness meeting is to clarify for the couple and the Meeting how the Meeting for Worship will proceed. It is an appropriate time for the couple to discuss their desired variations to the simple Meeting for Worship, such as contributions from other faiths and cultures.

The clearness meeting is particularly important when one or both of the couple are not familiar with the Religious Society of Friends. If the couple attend worship in one Meeting, but wish their marriage or civil union to be celebrated under the care of another, the Meeting they attend may arrange a clearness meeting and send a report to the other.

#### **4.10.5 The Meeting for Worship**

The decision to appoint a Meeting for Worship for marriage or civil union is made by the Monthly Meeting. It should ensure, by the attendance of a sufficient number of concerned Friends, that the Meeting for Worship is rightly

held according to our usage. Where it is expected that many present will be without experience of a Quaker Meeting for Worship it is desirable for a Friend responsible for spiritual care, or other suitable Friend, to explain briefly the nature of the Meeting for Worship and the procedure to be followed. A written explanation may also be given, accompanying the invitations and / or handed to people as they arrive (4.10.7).

To assist the Meeting in deepening the spirit of worship, the couple need to arrive promptly.

When the Meeting for Worship is gathered, the two people as they are ready stand and, taking each other by the hand, make their vows. The wording of the vows may be worked out by the couple themselves, provided they are recognisably marriage or civil union vows as understood by the law and by the community, and provided the wording is acceptable to the Registering Officer or the Monthly Meeting.

The names of the couple should be spoken in the wording, as in the specimen Form C in the appendix. The Civil Union Act requires that the couple acknowledge that they “are freely joining in civil union with each other”. An example of marriage and civil union vows is found on the sample certificate (Form C) in the appendix. If, for any reason, either of the couple getting married or joining in civil union is unable to make the declaration distinctly, then the Registering Officer present at the Meeting for Worship reads the declaration audibly and the person signifies assent to its terms in some clear and unmistakable way to the satisfaction of the Registering Officer.

The marriage or civil union takes place within a Meeting for Worship. The time for photographs is after the close of worship.

#### **4.10.6 Quaker certificate of marriage or civil union**

The couple arrange beforehand for a certificate to be prepared. This is signed during the Meeting for Worship by them (with the surnames as used immediately prior to the Meeting). After it has been signed by at least two of those present as witnesses and by the registering officer, it is read audibly by the registering officer or other suitable person either immediately or shortly before the end of the Meeting. Others present are also encouraged to sign as witnesses after the conclusion of the meeting. This certificate is retained by the couple to become a treasured record of the occasion.

The legal marriage or civil union takes place within the Meeting for Worship. The legal forms are signed at the same time as the certificate or at the end of the Meeting for Worship. At a subsequent Monthly Meeting the marriage or civil union is recorded by minute.

#### **4.10.7 Possible explanation of the process**

Here is an **example of a text** that can be sent out with the invitations, handed out to people arriving at the Meeting for Worship and/or read out near the start of the Meeting for Worship.

"In a Quaker marriage or civil union we gather in worship, recognising the presence of the Spirit among and within us. Worship follows the regular Quaker pattern. We enter together into silence, a space within which we can seek

blessings on the couple for their life together, and we can value one another's presence.

After an initial period of silence the couple will stand and take each other by the hand. They will make their vows directly to each other. No third person acts as celebrant. They will then sign the legal documents (with two witnesses also signing) and the Quaker marriage or civil union certificate, which is read aloud either immediately after signing or at the end of worship.

Out of the following silence you may wish to share a particular reflection, prayer or other contribution. A song, a reading, expressions of feeling and humour can have a place. Anyone present is free to contribute; there is no predetermined order. We ask that people do not speak more than once. Following a contribution, we leave several minutes of silence, in which the words can be received and absorbed. After this return to silence another person may be ready to contribute.

The close of worship is marked by two previously appointed people shaking hands with one another. Feel free to greet those near you at this time. All present are invited to sign the certificate in support of the couple's commitment after the Meeting has closed.

Please respect the spirit of worship, by not taking photographs during the ceremony. There will be an opportunity to photograph or film the couple with their certificate at the close of the meeting."

#### **4.10.8 Non-legal marriage**

Monthly Meetings may, should they wish, hold a non-legal marriage in the manner of Friends. Meetings follow the procedures outlined in this Handbook, except for legal requirements. Care needs to be taken not to claim legal status for the marriage or union.

When a couple and their Monthly Meeting agree to such a Meeting for Worship to recognise a spiritual marriage or commitment, the Monthly Meeting, Recognised Meeting and/or Worship Group should offer the same degree of pastoral and spiritual care as for legal marriages and civil unions.

### **4.11 FUNERALS**

The funerals of Friends should be held in a spirit of quiet peace and trust. As well as natural sorrow, there is often great thankfulness for lives which have borne witness to the power of the Spirit.

#### **4.11.1 Conduct of funerals**

There is no set pattern for the conduct of funerals. A Meeting for Worship to uphold those who grieve and to give thanks for the life of the Friend may be held in the Meeting House or other suitable location before or after committal or cremation. In some cases a Meeting for Worship at the graveside or crematorium is all that is desired. Presence of the coffin depends on the wishes of the bereaved or the deceased. Friends responsible for spiritual care can supply a leaflet containing suggestions for Friends' funerals. However, the family may prefer alternative arrangements. If so,

Friends may wish to hold a Memorial Meeting for Worship later.

#### **4.11.2 Preparations**

Spiritual and Pastoral Care Committee should ask one or two experienced and sympathetic Friends to meet with relatives, offering support and consulting on the holding of the Meeting for Worship, and on other matters in connection with the funeral.

In making the arrangements for the funeral and preparing the introduction, it is important that the family and/or close friends are fully involved. There may be instructions left by the person who has died, either in their will or separately, that also need to be considered. This ensures that the funeral is tailored to the particular circumstance and means that considerable variation in the nature and length of funerals can result.

#### **4.11.3 Explaining Quaker practice**

If many people without experience of Quaker worship are present, a suitable Friend can explain briefly the nature of the Meeting for Worship, the procedure to be followed and how the Meeting will end. A written explanation may be handed to people as they arrive.

The matters that are useful to cover in the introduction to a funeral include:

- a) welcome and thanks for attending the service for the person who has died, to all participants, on behalf of the family and the Meeting;
- b) health and safety information and a reminder to turn off mobile phones;



- c) the service is to remember the person who has died, celebrate their life and support the family;
- d) the service is in the manner of the Religious Society of Friends, often called Quakers, which is based on silent worship; in the silence, all participate in remembering the person who has died and the particular qualities they shared; out of the silence any-one may stand and speak, whether to offer a reading, a prayer or a song, or to recount a memory about the person in the recent or distant past; after someone has spoken, time to reflect on their contribution is needed and so it is important to leave several minutes of silence before another person speaks; there is no predetermined order for speaking (unless the family wish to contribute first);
- e) the service normally runs for about an hour (this can vary widely depending on the wishes of the family, the number present and other factors);
- (f) explanation of the use of any technology e.g. microphone;
- g) the meeting will close with the shaking of hands;
- h) explanation of what happens after the closing e.g. will the family carry the coffin out etc.;
- i) invitation to join the family for refreshments and the arrangements for that.

#### **4.11.4 The significance of a funeral**

Some bereaved Friends may wish (perhaps following instructions from the deceased) to minimise "fuss" and dispense with a funeral. However, there can be a sense of incompleteness when a funeral or Memorial Meeting for Worship is not held. Death affects many beyond the person's immediate circle, and the needs of this larger group should be considered.

#### **4.11.5 Speaking at funerals**

A feeling of hesitation about speaking at funerals is most natural.

Nevertheless, these gatherings give opportunities for a special type of vocal ministry. Specific tributes and reminiscences, together with some messages of a general character, arising from the gathered meeting, may enrich the worship. The presence of all in a loving and sympathetic spirit is a very real service. At the close of the meeting it may be helpful if an appointed Friend indicates what is to happen next.

#### **4.11.4 Needs of the bereaved**

Friends should be sensitive to the needs of the bereaved. These may continue long after the funeral.

### **4.12 TESTIMONIES TO THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE LIVES OF FRIENDS**

The Monthly Meeting arranges, where it seems appropriate, for the preparation of a testimony concerning the life and service of a deceased Friend. This differs from an obituary or a eulogy or a comprehensive biography. Its purpose is to be a record of the power of divine grace in human lives, and it should aim at being an inspiration to others. Because readers may not have met the deceased or may refer to the testimony after many years, the writers should strive for clarity. Since Friends are enjoined to "let our lives speak", it should include enough factual material to inform them about the person's life and activities, while concentrating on the

influence of the Spirit. It should not be filled with the grief of the moment.

Preparing a testimony is normally the responsibility of the Monthly Meeting with which the Friend was associated. Often there is consultation with Friends in other Monthly Meetings.

The main writer is not normally one of the close family or principal mourners but may seek their input. The main writer(s) will normally be named in the Monthly Meeting minute, but not as part of the testimony, which the Monthly Meeting has accepted as its own. A copy of the testimony is sent to the family, the *Aotearoa New Zealand Friends Newsletter*, the Yearly Meeting archivist and the Yearly Meeting website.

#### **4.13 SPECIAL MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP**

In addition to weddings, civil unions, funerals and memorial meetings, a special Meeting for Worship may be appointed on the request of any Friend(s).

Examples might be:

- to welcome a new infant into the worshipping community (6.3.3g);
- to celebrate a major anniversary;
- to focus on some special reason for grief or thanksgiving.

## **Section 5 – STRUCTURES AND ORGANISATION: YEARLY MEETING**

### **5.1 GENERAL**

The Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand usually meets as a body annually, at a time and place decided on from one such meeting to another.

At the gathering, Friends from all Meetings seek together, in worship and relying on the guidance of the Spirit, to arrive at decisions on concerns and reports which have already been considered locally. From time to time, members of the Society or others are invited to address the Meeting on a subject of particular concern. Some Friends may take the opportunity to join in worship and study together before or after the Yearly Meeting sessions.

### **5.2 APPOINTMENTS**

#### **5.2.1 Yearly Meeting appointments**

Appointments of the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand include:

- **Yearly Meeting Clerk**, whose appointment runs from as soon as convenient after one yearly meeting until a similar time three years later.
- A **Yearly Meeting Assistant Clerk** may be appointed to serve throughout the year, if the Yearly Meeting Clerk so wishes.
- **Yearly Meeting Treasurer**, whose appointment lasts for the succeeding three financial years

- **Members of continuing committees** as appropriate (5.7)
- **Representatives** on Friends' international organisations (5.9)
- **Representatives** on national organisations (5.10)

Appointments made at its first session for the duration of the yearly meeting:

- one or more **Assistant Clerks**
- an **Epistle Committee** to draft the epistle reflecting how the Spirit has moved during yearly meeting. When finally accepted by the Meeting, this epistle is sent, with greetings, to Friends worldwide
- a **minutes revision person**, to check the minutes for accuracy and grammatical correctness
- a **spiritual and pastoral care committee**, to support Friends during the gathering
- **any other** committees or appointments required to facilitate the business of that particular gathering.

For further information on the nature and duration of these appointments, see the Yearly Meeting job descriptions on the Quaker website.

### **5.2.2 Young Friends appointments**

The Yearly Meeting records appointments made by Young Friends, to further the activities of their group.

## **5.3 ATTENDANCE**

Each Member of the Religious Society of Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand has a right to attend the Yearly Meeting, and

each Monthly Meeting ensures that it is represented. Friends should encourage one another to accept the responsibility of preparing for and taking part in the Yearly Meeting.

Members of overseas bodies of the Religious Society of Friends may attend the sessions of the gathering on producing a minute or letter of introduction signed by the Clerk of their own Meeting, or by otherwise satisfying the Clerk of Yearly Meeting of their membership.

Non-Members wishing to be at Yearly Meeting obtain the recommendation of their Monthly Meeting. These recommendations are considered by Standing Committee, and the approved names minuted. Confidential discussions may be restricted to members of the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Yearly Meeting may make grants from its funds, up to a level determined from time to time by Yearly Meeting, to assist any Friend to attend. Friends with responsibility for pastoral care administer and allocate such grants.

Each Friend present at Yearly Meeting should exercise a watchful selfdiscipline in the matter of speaking at business sessions. If a lapse occurs, Friends with pastoral care responsibility need to be ready to help the Clerk and the meeting in offering guidance to the person concerned, who is encouraged to accept it with good grace as part of a learning process. The aim is that, in the time available, business moves forward as guided by the Spirit.

## 5.4 YEARLY MEETING DOCUMENTS

### 5.4.1 Preparation for Yearly Meeting

The preparatory papers for Yearly Meeting are known as ***Documents in Advance*** and consist of:

- a) Reports from: Monthly Meetings; Continuing Committees and role holders (see 5.7.); Friends who represent the Yearly Meeting on other organisations (see 5.9 and 5.10);
- b) The financial statements (see 5.6.2);
- c) A suggested timetable for the Yearly Meeting, drafted by the Clerk;
- d) Other matters for consideration.

The material listed in (a), (b), and (d) must be in the hands of the Yearly Meeting Clerk at a date specified by the Clerk so that the *Documents in Advance* can be produced in a timely manner. They are made available to Clerks of Meetings for consideration by Friends, and in Worship Groups, Recognised Meetings and Monthly Meetings.

### 5.4.2 Consideration of Documents

Minutes made by Monthly or Recognised Meetings in response to ***Documents in Advance*** are sent by the Yearly Meeting Clerk to the relevant committee or role holder for their consideration and response.

The minutes together with the responses are then circulated by the Yearly Meeting Clerk as ***White Papers***, for consideration by Meetings.

Minutes in response to these are embodied in ***Gold Papers***, which are circulated electronically and made available at the Yearly Meeting.

The purpose of this process is to clear the Yearly Meeting agenda of matters on which a decision can be reached in advance, and to assist Friends to come better prepared for those matters that are to be considered at Yearly Meeting.

#### **5.4.3 Agenda**

The Yearly Meeting Clerk, in consultation if desired, draws up an agenda for the business session. This is based on Meetings' consideration of *Documents in Advance* and *White Papers* and on other minutes from Meetings and Yearly Meeting committees. Only in exceptional circumstances will the agenda include consideration of any matter which has not previously been brought before Meetings.

#### **5.4.4 Minutes**

*The Minutes of Yearly Meeting* are sent to Meetings for distribution to Members and others as they see fit.

#### **5.4.5 Epistle**

The Yearly Meeting epistle is addressed to Friends everywhere and sent to Friends all over the world from the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is based on the experience and spiritual insights of the Yearly Meeting during its sessions. It is widely distributed as a separate document, as well as with the Yearly Meeting minutes.

At the start of each Yearly Meeting a committee of 3-4 Friends is appointed to draft the epistle. Other Friends may offer suggestions to the committee.



Their draft is submitted for consideration at a plenary session and Friends are invited to consider how it reflects on the movement of the Spirit during Yearly Meeting. After reconsideration the final text is read out during the final worship session. An epistle should not try to cover all the aspects of a yearly meeting; rather it should single out a small number of notable themes, and needs to offer some response to the challenging question: “How does truth prosper among you?” It should be reasonably comprehensible to Quakers in other countries.

#### **5.4.6 List of Meetings, Members and Attenders**

*The List of Meetings, Members and Attenders* of all Monthly Meetings, contains details of Meetings for Worship in Aotearoa New Zealand and a list of Members and Attenders; it is printed, if possible, at intervals of not more than two years. This is sent to Meetings for distribution to Members and Attenders who have their names recorded in the membership database on the website and have agreed to the privacy policy, and to others with the agreement of the YM privacy officer. The information about meetings is available on the public part of the website while information about members and attenders is on the area for logged in Friends.

### **5.5 DECISION-MAKING BETWEEN YEARLY MEETINGS**

#### **5.5.1 Yearly Meeting Clerk’s Letter**

*The Yearly Meeting Clerk’s Letter* is sent to Meetings in advance of the Monthly Meeting for Worship for Business meeting. It includes items of information and matters for

decision arising from Monthly Meetings, Yearly Meeting committees or from other bodies on which Meetings are invited to minute. If the minutes show that Friends have reached unity on a decision, this may be acted on as a decision of Yearly Meeting. Such decisions are recorded in the *Minutes of Yearly Meeting*.

### **5.5.2 Standing Committee**

The Standing Committee of Yearly Meeting is entrusted with the general care of matters affecting the Society as a whole during the intervals between yearly meetings, and is also empowered to take certain actions by the terms of various Friends' Trusts. It reports its proceedings annually to Yearly Meeting, and its decisions and minutes are included as part of the *Minutes of Yearly Meeting*.

The Standing Committee membership consists of:

- The Yearly Meeting Clerk, who is Clerk of the Committee;
- The previous Yearly Meeting Clerk, during the year after ending service;
- The incoming Yearly Meeting Clerk, during the year before service;
- The Yearly Meeting Assistant Clerk if there is one;
- The Yearly Meeting Treasurer;
- The Clerk of each Monthly Meeting;
- One other person appointed by each Monthly Meeting.

(Monthly Meetings may appoint substitutes for the two latter for any particular meeting.)

The Standing Committee meets once a year immediately before the Yearly Meeting sessions and at other times Standing Committee can be called upon by the Clerk to consider matters and make decisions using "online meeting" technology. If a meeting in person is considered necessary, the travel expenses of one member from each Monthly Meeting and of the Yearly Meeting Clerk and Treasurer may be paid from Yearly Meeting funds.

According to the nature and urgency of the business, members of the Standing Committee are free to decide whether to consult their own Monthly Meetings. They must ensure that Friends in Meetings throughout Aotearoa New Zealand are informed of the decisions taken on their behalf.

The Standing Committee has the power to summon a special meeting of the Yearly Meeting.

If for any reason the Yearly Meeting Clerk becomes unable to serve, Standing Committee appoints an acting Clerk. If appropriate it initiates the nomination process for a new Clerk.

## **5.6. FINANCE AND PROPERTY OF YEARLY MEETING**

### **5.6.1 Financial procedure**

The Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand prepares an annual budget for the administration of its own affairs, to pay the expenses of some Yearly Meeting Committees and other office holders, to assist Friends to attend the Yearly Meeting, to contribute to organisations with which the Yearly Meeting has associations, and for any other purpose authorised by the Yearly Meeting.

The Yearly Meeting Treasurer administers Yearly Meeting funds, keeps the accounts, and prepares financial statements for each twelve-monthly period. This is published in *Documents in Advance*. In addition, a consolidated performance report that incorporates Yearly Meeting, the Trust Board, Whanganui Educational Settlement Trust Board, and Quaker Peace and Service Trust is prepared annually in line with Charities Services requirements. This consolidated performance report is reviewed. These Trusts and the Quaker Peace and Service Aotearoa New Zealand and Quaker Education Fund committees are deemed to be part of the Yearly Meeting entity for the purposes of the consolidated performance report, although they are separate for budget purposes.

The treasurer submits to the Yearly Meeting a draft budget of estimated income and expenditure for the coming year. The money required for the budget, apart from investment income, comes from Monthly Meetings in proportion to each Meeting's membership. The income from Monthly Meetings, while agreed through the budget process, is in essence a voluntary donation. The draft budget is considered, amended if necessary, and then approved by Yearly Meeting.

Expenditure must not exceed the budget to any major degree, nor can new commitments be entered into, without the agreement of Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee. Money earmarked for special purposes (e.g. donations or bequests) is normally held by the Trust Board unless spent during the financial year in which it is received.

The Yearly Meeting bank account is in the name of 'Religious Society of Friends'. Payments are authorised by any one of two or three Friends including the treasurer who have been appointed by Yearly Meeting for this purpose.

Money may also be invested in approved investments.

### **5.6.2 Trust Boards and Committees who administer Funds**

The **Religious Society of Friends Aotearoa New Zealand Trust Board** was established when property in New Zealand that had been purchased in the name of London Yearly Meeting was handed over to New Zealand Friends to manage. In 1927 Meeting for Sufferings of London Yearly Meeting agreed that Friends in New Zealand should take over responsibility for the Auckland Meeting House, the Friends' Hostel in Wellington, the Friends School in Whanganui, and Friends' property in Nelson. Incorporation of the Trust Board took effect in 1930.

Meeting Houses and other associated properties are legally owned by the Trust Board. Meetings have the responsibility for day-to-day management of the properties.

The Board is responsible for holding a number of Yearly Meeting funds, including the Meeting House Building Fund, the Quaker Education Fund and the Testimonies Fund.

The Board offers to Yearly and Monthly Meetings an investment service for any funds that need to be held for the medium to long term.

The Trustees, who are required to be members within Yearly Meeting, are appointed by Yearly Meeting for up to 2 terms of 3 years each. Appointees are not representatives of a Monthly Meeting.

The **Friends Mutual Assistance Fund Committee** makes decisions in response to applications from Friends for general assistance when no local resource is available or appropriate. Monthly Meetings have the first responsibility for assisting their members and attenders but, when necessary, applications are made to the Mutual Assistance Fund through Monthly Meeting Friends responsible for Spiritual and Pastoral Care. The fund is held by Yearly Meeting and replenished from Yearly Meeting's funds.

The **Quaker Education Fund (QEF)** was established at Yearly Meeting 2010, Minute 20, with funds from School Trust Administration Committee and the Margaret Caverhill Bequest "for the general educational benefit of the members and attenders and their families of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in New Zealand". It was later added to with the Tessa Malcolm Bequest "to provide a supporting scholarship to assist a Young Friend who holds fast to Quaker values through university or other tertiary institution".

The fund distributes funds to support the education of Members, Attenders and their children with the purpose of fostering spiritual growth, contributing to community life, preparing for Quaker service or social action and for general learning and development.

The **Quaker Peace & Service Aotearoa New Zealand (QPSANZ)** committee offers financial support to both local and overseas groups in line with Quaker testimonies. It makes local Peace Grants to support the work of grassroots groups in NZ working for peace and cooperation and offers the Loxley Award for Quakers or non-Quakers who have a major project promoting peace, justice or environmental issues (see 5.7).

The **Quaker Peace and Service Trust (QPST)** is responsible for the financial management of bequests and donations made specifically to Quaker Peace and Service Aotearoa New Zealand (QPSANZ). As bequests are received, QPST invests funds in a sound and ethical manner in accordance with their Statement of Investment Policy and Objectives to ensure that ongoing funds are available for QPSANZ to disperse as appropriate.

The **Testimonies Fund** was established by Yearly Meeting in 2009 from legacies and other funds. The funds are distributed by the Committee to enable Friends to put the Quaker testimonies into action. Usually the applicants will be Friends, but requests may also be considered from groups which have at least one Quaker actively involved in the concern.

**Whanganui Educational Settlement Trust Board (WEST)** was formed to hold the land at 76 Virginia Road, Whanganui (formerly part of the New Zealand Friends School property) and buildings erected on the land for Yearly Meeting. The trust was incorporated on 17 December 1975 under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957. The purposes of the Trust are: to provide housing and other facilities for a community of

likeminded people who hold to Quaker values, to provide educational facilities for study and learning for Quakers in Aotearoa/New Zealand and to provide facilities for conferences of an educational or religious nature. WEST is made up of representatives of Monthly Meetings together with 3 representatives from the Quaker Settlement and a Clerk.

### **5.6.3 Funds associated with Yearly Meeting**

The **John Holdsworth Endowment Fund** was established by Charles J. Holdsworth and is independent of Yearly Meeting. The trustees apply both capital and income as they think best for the benefit and advancement of the Religious Society of Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand. The income is being used to make grants towards the education of Members and Attenders of the Religious Society of Friends.

There are three trustees, and replacements, when necessary, are appointed for an indefinite period by the Trustees, unless there has been a vacancy for more than six months, then by Yearly Meeting or Standing Committee.

## **5.7 CONTINUING COMMITTEES AND RESPONSIBILITIES HELD**

### **5.7.1 General**

In order to further the concerns and work of the Society, Yearly Meeting from time to time appoints continuing committees and other holders of responsibilities. A continuing committee may comprise Friends from only one area, or from all over Aotearoa New Zealand.



Some committees have locally appointed correspondents in Meetings whose role is to:

- keep their Meeting informed about the work of the committee;
- promote the committee's concerns;
- inform the committee of local developments which may affect its work.

Each continuing committee keeps in regular touch with the Yearly Meeting Clerk. It supplies the Clerk each year with a report of its activities and its accounts. These are included in *Documents in Advance*. Committees are responsible for estimating their funding requirements, which are approved through the YM budget process. The Yearly Meeting Treasurer prepares the budget for approval by YM in advance of each financial year.

Any public statements prepared by a continuing committee must appear over the name of that committee, except where the prior approval of the Yearly Meeting Clerk permits it to be issued in the name of the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand.

### **5.7.2 Appointment Procedure**

The procedure followed in making appointments to continuing committees is as follows:

- a) On request from Nominations Committee, the Yearly Meeting Clerk invites Monthly Meetings to suggest names for a particular appointment;
- b) Monthly Meetings wishing to suggest names for appointment record in a minute that they have a suggested

name, with or without mentioning the person by name in the minute, and that the person be identified (together with brief information about the person and the reasons why they are suitable) in a separate letter to the Clerk of Nominations Committee. The name is put forward only after the person concerned has been consulted, and has agreed. It is also made clear to the person that putting a name forward for consideration does not necessarily mean the appointment of that person to the position.

c) Nominations Committee consult together with the persons suggested and with others if necessary, and after consideration nominate a person. The Yearly Meeting Clerk is given their name and brief appropriate biographical details.

d) Nominations Committee inform all people suggested by Monthly Meetings of their decision.

e) Yearly Meeting Clerk includes the nomination in the Clerk's letter to Monthly Meetings (including any background material), inviting responses.

f) If all Monthly Meetings agree, the Yearly Meeting Clerk announces the appointment. If not all Meetings agree, Nominations Committee must reconsider. They may ask a Monthly Meeting not in agreement to give brief reasons (in confidence to Nominations Committee) for its decision.

### **5.7.3 Continuing Committees and Responsibilities held** (in alphabetical order apart from Nominations Committee)

**Nominations Committee** considers the whole body of Friends to find suitable persons for nomination. They seek

advice from Monthly Meetings, and nominate people for Yearly Meeting approval for the following appointments:

- (a) Yearly Meeting Clerk (this appointment needs to be made a year before the term of office commences);
- (b) Yearly Meeting Treasurer;
- (c) replacement or renewal for a further term of retiring members of Yearly Meeting continuing committees and holders of other roles;
- (d) replacement of any members retiring from Religious Society of Friends Aotearoa New Zealand Trust Board;
- (e) replacement of the retiring member on the Nominations Committee itself;
- (f) any other vacancies on any of the above;
- (g) any other office bearer at the request of the Yearly Meeting Clerk.

The Yearly Meeting, along with its own appointments, records appointments made by Young Friends, to further the activities of their group.

### **Aotearoa New Zealand Friends Newsletter Committee**

has responsibility for producing the *Aotearoa New Zealand Friends Newsletter*. This serves the widely scattered membership of the Society as an organ of news and information, and enables concerns and spiritual insights to be shared.

Yearly Meeting **Archivist** has the task of receiving, recording and caring for documents of permanent value relating to the nation-wide organisation and history of the Society. Records for which the committee is responsible include Minute Books and selected correspondence of Yearly Meeting continuing committees, and such other documents relating to the Yearly

Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand as may be needed for future reference.

Papers in these categories have been donated to the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, where they are professionally cared for and accessible to Friends. Transfers are made every ten years. Until they are due to be handed over, current records are stored in the strong-room at Auckland Friends Centre, 115 Mt Eden Road, Auckland.

Monthly Meetings are expected to make their own arrangements for the storage and recording of historical documents relating to their particular Meetings.

The **representative to Australia Yearly Meeting** has the task of representing our Yearly Meeting at the holding of Australia Yearly Meeting and reporting back on their experiences.

**Children and Young People's Support Committee** works to support children, young people and their families, and encourages Meetings to put them 'at the centre' of Friends' considerations and activities.

The **Climate Emergency Correspondent** is tasked with sifting and prioritising information to do with the climate emergency for distribution to Friends, as well as representing Friends at the Church Climate Network. The Correspondent liaises with Generation Zero and other organisations working on climate change matters, particularly those that receive grants from YM.

**Friends Mutual Assistance Fund Committee (5.6)**

Representatives to **Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)** and to the **Asia West Pacific Section (AWPS)** maintain the link between our Yearly Meeting and FWCC and AWPS. They have the opportunity to attend meetings of FWCC and AWPS in various locations on behalf of YM.

**Handbook Revision Committee** ensures that the *Quaker Handbook: the Handbook of Practice and Procedure of the Religious Society of Friends, Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri* is kept up to date.

**Junior Young Friends Co-ordinator** is responsible for making sure an annual national gathering for JYFs happens. Meetings may request help from the JYF Coordinator in guiding and supporting their JYF activities. (5.8.2)

**Oral Historians** are responsible for recording interviews with Friends and processing them to make them available to the interviewees, to the Quaker collection in the Oral History Archive in the Alexander Turnbull Library, and to any other repository named by the Friend concerned. The selection of the Friends to be interviewed is made by the oral historian, who seeks advice from Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups as appropriate.

**Outreach Committee** assists Yearly Meeting, Monthly Meetings, Recognised Meetings and Worship Groups to disseminate information to the public about Quakers – who we are, what we do and what we stand for.

**Penal Reform Committee** keeps in front of Friends concerns about Penal Reform and offers a regular seminar at the Settlement.

**Quaker Book Sales** sells books and some subscriptions to magazines, on topics related to Quaker faith and practice. Orders from Meetings and individuals are made by email. This enables Friends in Aotearoa to purchase Quaker books that they might not otherwise be able to as some of these books are not readily available in traditional bookshops. The catalogue is on the Quaker website. Quaker Books endeavours to make a selection of books available at Quaker gatherings whenever feasible.

#### **Quaker Education Fund Committee (5.6)**

**Quaker Learning and Spiritual Development Committee** promotes Quaker learning and spiritual development within the Yearly Meeting, especially by supporting Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups.

They plan, along with the Settlement's seminar committee, the annual programme of seminars at the Settlement. They also have a concern for the Spiritual Nurture Programme and those travelling in the Ministry.

**Quaker Lecture Committee** is involved with the planning and delivery of an annual public lecture, given usually at the time of Yearly Meeting. The lecture is a significant outreach initiative. The lecture may also be delivered around the regions depending upon the availability of the lecturer. The theme of the lecture will normally reflect one or more of the

Testimonies, both religious and social, which are of current importance (2.4.1 – 2.4.10).

**Quaker Peace and Service Aotearoa New Zealand (QPSANZ)**

has the following functions:

- (a) to give practical support to and to raise funds for the social concerns of Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas;
- (b) to assist groups struggling for justice and peace in order to promote fulfilling and creative relations between all people;
- (c) to respond to emergencies and to work for the relief of suffering everywhere;
- (d) to uphold the Society's peace testimony and facilitate reflections on ways in which Friends and others might give practical expression to the peace testimony;
- (e) to support individual objections to war, promote arms control and all moves towards general and complete disarmament; to work for trust, confidence and common security between all nations;
- (f) to have an openness to and to co-operate with other Aotearoa New Zealand groups working for peace and justice and to facilitate the closest possible co-operation with Quaker Peace and Service agencies overseas.

Work related to peace and to service may be undertaken by separate groups, and action groups may be formed for particular aspects of the work.

**Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) Correspondent**

liaises with and keeps informed of the work that is being done by QUNO and shares this information with Friends when appropriate.

The **Resource Centre and Library** is housed at the Quaker Settlement in Whanganui. The Librarian's role is to provide for Quakers in Aotearoa New Zealand a central resource of material by and about Quakers and Quakerism, especially items by or about New Zealand Quakers. They provide materials to support the Yearly Meeting Seminar programme as well as support for any research projects undertaken by or about Quakers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

**Respect and Safety Committee** works to raise awareness about respect and safety issues among Friends through workshops, training seminars at the Settlement for Contact Friends (refer 6.3.(q)) and the provision of resources. They support Contact Friends and Pastoral Care committees in dealing with complaints.

*Respect and Safety within the Society of Friends: A Guide and Resource Manual for New Zealand Quakers* is on the website.

The Yearly Meeting's framed photos of **Quaker tapestries** form an educational and outreach resource for Friends for display or at workshops or open days. The Quaker Tapestry, housed in England, consists of 77 panels which illustrate inspiring aspects of Quaker history, life and testimonies in action. Photographs of 64 of the tapestries are housed at the Settlement when not in use.

**Testimonies Fund Committee** (5.6)

**Treaty Relationships Group (TRG)**'s priorities are: identifying and disseminating information to Friends on Treaty related subjects, preparing statements and submissions for Monthly Meeting and Yearly Meeting consideration, undertaking



advocacy when appropriate, assisting local Meetings with information, requests and enquiries, and exchanging information about local activities. The TRG focusses on action, advocacy and education related to constitutional change, challenging institutional racism, and monitoring the action (or lack of it) taken by the Crown in relation to the Treaty.

The **Urgent Submissions** writer responds to urgent requests to prepare a submission or write a letter. This can also involve scanning the Parliamentary website for pending legislation and the media for issues that are important for Quakers. In conjunction with the Yearly Meeting Clerk, the writer then decides when Quaker input would be appropriate, and helps prepare draft select committee submissions, draft letters to be sent to relevant parliamentarians or media releases, for consideration by Yearly Meeting. These submissions and letters will be considered either by Monthly Meetings or by Standing Committee.

**Website Oversight Committee** cares for the integrity and vitality of the website, paying attention to both inreach and outreach. It consists of representatives from continuing committees (Outreach, Quaker Learning and Spiritual Development, Website Technical Services Team); an experienced but non-technical Friend; and others from time to time. It acts as a clearing house when issues are brought to its attention and can initiate action by page owners where it sees discrepancies.

**Website Technical Services Team** is responsible for developing and maintaining all the technical aspects of the website. They also maintain digital services such as the email

servers, provide training for those tasked with uploading information, etc and maintain the Help Desk.

**Wider Quaker Fellowship Letter** writer prepares and distributes a letter to an association of people of diverse backgrounds, Quaker and non-Quaker, who want a connection with the Religious Society of Friends. The letter which is sent quarterly, is also placed on the website, and includes, where appropriate, invitations to Friends' gatherings.

**Yearly Meeting and Summer Gathering Co-ordinating Committee** maintains the roster of Meetings due to host forthcoming Yearly Meetings and Summer Gatherings; receives and hands on records or arrangements, and advises the local arrangements group as necessary. Residential Summer Gatherings provide an opportunity for Friends and attenders, of all ages to get to know each other at a deeper level, in a relaxed atmosphere. Each is organised by a group set up for the occasion by one or more Meetings. Yearly Meeting is hosted each year by a Monthly Meeting.

#### **5.7.4 Other Yearly Meeting appointments**

**Ad hoc groups** Yearly Meeting from time to time sets up a working party or similar group for a specific task. Procedures for such appointments are decided at the time

#### **Trusts. (5.6)**

Quaker Peace and Service Trust

Religious Society of Friends Aotearoa New Zealand Trust Board

Whanganui Educational Settlement Trust (WEST).

## **5.8 OTHER GROUPS WITHIN YEARLY MEETING**

### **5.8.1 Young Friends (YFs) General Meeting**

YFs are young people, 16 years old and over, who are members of or associated with a Meeting or feel an association with Young Friends. They have a flexible organisation which enables them to meet from time to time, not only socially but in order to look at life from a Quaker perspective. These meetings often coincide with Summer Gathering and Yearly Meeting. Young Friends organise a Young Friends camp, normally once a year.

### **5.8.2 Junior Young Friends (JYFs)**

JYFs are usually identified as young people in Years 9, 10, and 11 (or aged 13-15 years), associated with a Meeting. Whenever possible, an annual gathering is organised for JYFs. Yearly Meeting sponsors the gathering, but the host Meeting is responsible for its planning and supervision. The purpose is to bring together Quaker children at a time with their connection with a Meeting can become less than when they were younger and attended children's activities. The intention of the JYF Gathering is to provide an opportunity for experiencing Quaker ways in action in a Quaker group, and get to know each other through enjoyable shared activities. Usually some Young Friends are invited to help run the gatherings.

*Note: The recommended ages for Junior Young Friends and Young Friends are under consideration at the time of publication; the online text of the Handbook will be updated if changes are agreed.*

## 5.9 ASSOCIATION WITH FRIENDS WORLDWIDE

Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand are members of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), through our Yearly Meeting's affiliation with that worldwide body. FWCC has four Sections; we are part of the Asia West Pacific Section (AWPS). FWCC's mission statement is: "Answering God's call to universal love, FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications, and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world."

Yearly Meeting contributes financially to FWCC centrally and to AWPS, and appoints two representatives, who with the Yearly Meeting Clerk maintain the link between the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand and FWCC.

Representatives normally serve for two three-year terms, the two appointments being staggered by three years.

Representatives are entitled to attend meetings of FWCC and AWPS in various locations; places are generally available for other Friends. Both FWCC and AWPS keep in touch with Friends through websites and newsletters (both electronic and paper), and other electronic links; AWPS has an online Meeting for Worship.

Friends hold general consultative status with the United Nations through FWCC, and are represented by the Quakers United Nations Office (QUNO), with offices in New York and Geneva. Yearly Meeting appoints a correspondent to QUNO. QUNO information and links are available electronically.

The Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia Yearly Meeting regularly send representatives to each other's

Yearly Meeting sessions; generally, there is also an exchange of Young Friends. Our Yearly Meeting also regularly invites to our sessions a guest from another Yearly Meeting or Friends' body within FWCC Asia West Pacific Section. Meeting to Meeting links are encouraged.

## **5.10 LINKS WITH OTHER BODIES**

### **5.10.1 General**

The Yearly Meeting appoints representatives to national organisations (5.2.1).

Monthly and Recognised Meetings, and where appropriate Worship Groups, appoint representative to local branches of these organisations or other local bodies.

Those appointed by Yearly Meeting report annually on their representation, in *Documents in Advance* (5.4.1). They keep the Yearly Meeting Clerk informed of significant developments.

### **5.10.2 National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (NCPACS)**

NCPACS is based at the Dunedin campus of the University of Otago, and Yearly Meeting has made regular financial contributions, which usually assist with research by postgraduate students. Yearly Meeting appoints a Friend to act as contact with the Centre and to promote mutual awareness.

### **5.10.3 National Church Leaders Aotearoa New Zealand**

The Yearly Meeting Clerk represents us on the group called National Church Leaders Aotearoa New Zealand. This group was formed after other ecumenical initiatives such as the National Council of Churches (1941-1989) and the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand (1989-2005) were disestablished. The group normally meets twice a year and the purpose is to provide a forum for cooperation amongst Christian churches.

### **5.10.4 National Dialogue for Christian Unity (NDCU)**

This group was formed in 2016 and Yearly Meeting joined in 2021. The objects of the NDCU are to deepen the relationship between churches and to search for ways to act together. As a member Yearly Meeting is entitled to have up to 5 representatives at its Annual Forum.

### **5.10.5 Peace Movement Aotearoa (PMA)**

PMA is the national networking peace organisation and is committed to peaceful resolution of conflict and social change through non-violent means.

PMA provides resources, updates and networking services on peace, disarmament, social justice and human rights topics. In addition to its core networking activities, PMA's work is focused on two main areas: a) challenging militarism, and building peace, and disarmament. This includes research and providing resources on militarism and militarisation on a range of disarmament topics through its national coordination of six international humanitarian disarmament campaigns (nuclear weapons, military spending, killer robots, explosive weapons, cluster munitions and landmines, the World War one Centenary Peace Project, White Poppies for

Peace and the White Poppies Peace Scholarships); and b) peace and human rights. This includes analysis and providing resources on peace, human rights and the Treaty of Waitangi. PMA also carries out regular reporting to several United Nations human rights bodies.

## **Section 6 – SPIRITUAL AND PASTORAL CARE**

### **6.1 GENERAL**

#### **6.1.1 Monthly Meeting appointments for spiritual and pastoral care**

In any community there is need to watch over the well-being of the group and the individuals within it. In a Quaker community there is also a need to nurture the spiritual growth of those associated with the Meeting. Meetings may choose to appoint a committee which will fill both roles or two separate committees. All Friends should know what responsibilities are covered by these roles. A Monthly Meeting may appoint Friends responsible for spiritual and pastoral care to serve within a particular Worship Group (4.2.1 b, 4.3).

Friends responsible for spiritual and pastoral care are usually appointed for a period of three years and a maximum of two terms. They are responsible to their Monthly Meeting. When specific spiritual and pastoral care tasks are allocated to others by Monthly Meeting, Friends responsible for spiritual and pastoral care need to ensure that the work is being carried out. While the appointed Friends are to focus on the spiritual and pastoral care of the Meeting, all in the Meeting have a responsibility for the care of one another.

#### **6.1.2 The nature of the task**

The work of Friends responsible for spiritual and pastoral care is often personal and may be confidential, to be discharged quietly in a loving manner, as the spirit may lead. Much of their work is advisory. It calls for wisdom and insight, and meticulous respect for its sensitive nature. It is



important that privacy and respect are maintained if any records are made. Remember that others may have access to these records in the future.

### **6.1.3 Cooperation**

Spiritual and pastoral care concerns the life of the Monthly Meeting, its Worship Groups, Recognised Meetings and individual Friends (6.2, 6.3). Since the tasks involved are closely linked, those carrying them out should co-operate on decisions as necessary. Where the functions are separated, the two groups will sometimes meet together, to consider wider needs.

As with all committees, no one Friend is expected to carry out every one of the tasks; it is up to the whole committee to ensure that all tasks are covered. Delegation to others in the Meeting is expected.

### **6.1.4 Gathering at the time of Yearly Meeting**

Friends from each Monthly Meeting responsible for spiritual and pastoral care usually meet together at the time of Yearly Meeting.

## **6.2 SPIRITUAL CARE**

Friends responsible for spiritual care are primarily concerned with nurturing the spiritual life of the group and of its individual members, so that all may become more responsive to the Light and therefore closer to one another.

Friends responsible for spiritual care will be concerned with:

- (a) the right holding of Meetings for Worship in Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings within the Monthly Meeting area. This includes practical matters such as attending to seating; encouraging punctuality; the quiet gathering of the meeting with order and reverence; and the closing of the meeting, usually with the shaking of hands. (Health considerations may affect this practice.) On occasion, a Friend responsible for spiritual care may take a disturbed or disruptive person aside for a quiet talk and perhaps referral to appropriate assistance.
- (b) encouraging and advising sympathetically those who may feel called to give spoken or other ministry within the Meeting for Worship, especially any who are hesitant, and guiding them to discern when the words and occasion are appropriate;
- (c) the right holding of Meeting for Worship for Business, including support for the Clerk at this time;
- (d) giving thought to the ministry for special occasions such as marriages or civil unions, funerals and memorial meetings (4.10, 4.11); and on these occasions guiding others so that they may participate more fully;
- (e) answering enquiries and ensuring that there is provision and encouragement for Friends to deepen their experience and knowledge of Quakerism and its roots, in the form of study groups, quiet days, seminars and other events;
- (f) caring for the spiritual needs of individual Friends, remembering those unable to attend our meetings through age, illness, isolation or other reasons and, where helpful, arranging Meetings for Worship in their homes (6.3 i);
- (g) taking special responsibility for ministry to the dying;
- (h) seeing that provision is made to help the children and young people of the Meeting to come to an

understanding of the Quaker message, and to enter into the experience of worship (Section 2);

(i) ensuring that provision is made for religious education and opportunities for spiritual growth, for all in the Meeting;

(j) organising Monthly Meeting weekends or days for worship, study and social activities, and sometimes regional gatherings (also a Pastoral Care responsibility (6.3 f);

(k) encouraging Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings to make regular use of *Advices and Queries*;

(l) providing assistance where there is a difficulty between people within the Meeting, or between a person and the Meeting (6.4); (also a Pastoral Care responsibility -6.3 m);

(m) giving advice and information about applying for membership and encouraging any who may be hesitant; encouraging Members to transfer or resign their membership when appropriate (6.3 n);

(n) giving advice and information to those wishing to have a Quaker wedding or civil union, and referring them to the Registering Officer of the Meeting (4.10 and App 2);

(o) responding sensitively to the needs of role-holders;

(p) helping to deepen the connection among Worship Groups and Recognised Meetings by, for example, encouraging intervisitation, joint events, and other means of communication;

(q) generally watching over the Meeting as a community founded on love.

### 6.3 PASTORAL CARE

The essence of pastoral caring is faithful concern and understanding love. Pastoral care is concerned with maintaining a community that is caring and supportive, in times of joy, of sorrow and of need.

Friends responsible for pastoral care foster a fellowship in which all find acceptance, loving care, and opportunity for service, so that all may grow in grace, and, liberated from pre-occupation with self, are enabled to serve others creatively.

Friends responsible for pastoral care, jointly or sometimes individually, will be concerned with:

- (a) sharing in the joys and sorrows of those associated with the Meeting;
- (b) creating a climate of acceptance and encouragement particularly of newcomers and new Attenders, so that all associated with the Meeting may feel part of the group, growing into the fellowship and being given the opportunity to make their contribution by joining in the worship and work of the Meeting;
- (c) encouraging support between individuals and small groups living near each other;
- (d) encouraging Friends to attend business meetings and to accept a share of responsibility for the work of the Meeting; encouraging regular Attenders to attend business meetings, to gain a deeper understanding of Quaker procedure and to begin to participate;
- (e) encouraging Friends, including children and young people, to go to Yearly Meetings, summer gatherings, seminars and other events; and advising on financial assistance available;

- (f) organising Monthly Meeting weekends or days for worship, study and social activities, and sometimes regional gatherings (also a Spiritual Care responsibility (6.2 j));
- (g) exercising a care over the children and young people; supporting parents; fostering activities which bring all Friends together, being mindful of the all-age nature of the Quaker community; ensuring that activities are arranged for children as well as all-age events; encouraging adults to respect and value children as individuals;
- (h) ensuring that Friends expecting babies are well supported, and offering them an occasion for the baby to be welcomed into the Quaker community (2.1.14);
- (i) keeping in touch with Friends who are unable to come to Meeting for Worship; arranging for them to be visited if they wish (6.2 f); helping Friends in need, bearing in mind the existence of funds and services within Meetings and beyond (5.6.2, 5.6.3);
- (j) keeping in touch with young people who are residing elsewhere for work or study, putting them in contact with the nearest Meeting;
- (k) welcoming newcomers and Friends who come into the Meeting Area;
- (l) seeking to re-establish communication with any Friend who appears to be out of fellowship or not finding spiritual help within the Society;
- (m) providing assistance where there is a difficulty between people within the Meeting, or between a person and the Meeting (6.4); (also a Spiritual Care responsibility - 6.2 l);
- (n) notifying other Monthly Meetings promptly when Friends move into their area, even for a few months, and maintaining contact with these Friends if they so wish;

- (o) notifying the Clerk of marriages, civil unions and deaths, so that these may be recorded in the Monthly Meeting minutes;
- (p) reading over the list of members and attenders at least once a year in order to consider the needs of each person associated with the Meeting; checking the list for accuracy of contact details and ensuring that the names of children in the Meeting are added to the list; considering whether to send recommendations to Monthly Meeting for termination of membership, after consultation with the Members concerned where possible (4.9.4 b, 6.2 m);
- (q) nominating and supporting the Respect and Safety Contact Friends for the Monthly Meeting (6.3 u);
- (r) being aware of and where appropriate offering support to Friends who are experiencing particular hardship or need e.g. financial issues, employment, relationship difficulties or breakdowns, ill health;
- (s) supporting Worship Groups and Recognised meetings in acknowledging important life passages (birth, death, marriage, divorce, illness, loss, etc), including the provision of an appropriate Quaker book to give to each 16-year-old and to new members;
- (t) maintaining a record of Friends' end-of-life and funeral wishes.
- (u) Friends responsible for pastoral care aim to ensure that the Meeting is a safe community in which people of all ages and genders respect one another. The procedures for dealing with complaints of sexual harassment and sexual abuse, and other forms of disrespectful behaviour, physical or verbal, are in the *Respect and Safety Manual*, available from Monthly Meetings, and from the Yearly Meeting website. A knowledge of resource people for advice, counselling and community services is desirable.

## **6.4 CLEARNESS MEETINGS**

### **6.4.1 Description**

In clearness meetings, a small number of Friends meet to discern the way forward on a particular matter. The idea springs from the Quaker understanding that the Meeting can provide individuals with a resource of wisdom and strength.

The proceedings are carried out in the spirit of worship. Clearness meetings provide, under the guidance of the Spirit, a loving respectful environment where non-judgmental listening and asking open questions offer an opportunity for exploring uncertainties, and contribute towards clarity of thinking. They may help to avoid the necessity of individuals making major decisions alone, in haste, in fear, or under pressure. The extent of confidentiality is to be agreed at the outset.

### **6.4.2. Personal discernment**

A clearness meeting to assist with an individual's personal decision-making is a small private one. Those invited to attend are normally selected by the person(s) seeking clearness. These will usually be trusted personal friends and Friends in the Meeting with appropriate experience.

### **6.4.3 Marriage and civil union**

It is often advisable that a clearness meeting be held prior to a spiritual marriage, with or without a legal marriage or civil union. Sometimes the Monthly Meeting, or the Friends responsible for spiritual care, will make a clearness meeting a necessary precondition for a Quaker wedding. In other cases it is the choice of the couple.

#### **6.4.4 Group discernment**

There are also clearness meetings of a more open kind, which may be called by a Meeting in response to a public crisis or an important situation involving the Meeting.

#### **6.4.5 Examples of possibilities**

The use of clearness meetings can also encompass a variety of situations when clarity is being sought.

Some possibilities are:

- (a) to test a concern or leading (2.3.2);
- (b) to consider new forms of service;
- (c) to seek guidance in difficult choices or turning points (for example changing employment or crises in relationships);
- (d) when there is a personal dispute between individual Friends;
- (e) when there is a conflict within the Meeting;
- (f) when some Friend has a concern about a public issue or crisis.

The above list of 'possibilities' is not meant to imply that a clearness meeting is always the way ahead; in some cases, skilled or professional help may be needed.



## **Appendix 1**

### **STATEMENTS MADE BY YEARLY MEETING OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND, TE HĀHI TŪHAUWIRI 1987 - 2020**

#### **A PEACE**

##### **1 Statement on peace Made by Yearly Meeting 1987**

We the Friends in Aotearoa-New Zealand send loving greetings to all the people in this country, and ask you to consider this statement, addressed to you, to which we all agree as one.

The time has come for us to take an unequivocal public stand on the question of violence.

We totally oppose all wars, all preparation for war, all use of weapons and coercion by force, and all military alliances; no end could ever justify such means.

We equally and actively oppose all that leads to violence among people and nations, and violence to other species and to our planet.

This has been our testimony to the whole world for over three centuries.

We are not naive or ignorant about the complexity of our modern world and the impact of sophisticated technologies — but we see no reason whatsoever to change or weaken

our vision of the peace that everyone needs in order to survive and flourish on a healthy, abundant earth.

The primary reason for this stand is our conviction that there is that of God in every one which makes each person too precious to damage or destroy.

While someone lives there is always the hope of reaching that of God within them: such hope motivates our search to find non-violent resolution of conflict.

Peacemakers are also empowered by that of God in them. Our individual human skills, courage, endurance, and wisdom are vastly augmented by the power of the loving Spirit that connects all people.

Refusal to fight with weapons is not surrender. We are not passive when threatened by the greedy, the cruel, the tyrant, the unjust.

We will struggle to remove the causes of impasse and confrontation by every means of nonviolent resistance available.

There is no guarantee that our resistance will be any more successful or any less risky than military tactics. At least our means will be suited to our end.

If we seemed to fail finally, we would still rather suffer and die than inflict evil in order to save ourselves and what we hold dear.

If we succeed, there is no loser or winner, for the problem that led to conflict will have been resolved in a spirit of justice and tolerance.

Such a resolution is the only guarantee that there will be no further outbreak of war when each side has regained strength.

The context in which we take this stand at this time is the increasing level of violence around us: child abuse; rape; wife battering; street assaults; riots; video and television sadism; silent economic and institutional violence; the prevalence of torture; the loss of freedoms; sexism; racism and colonialism; the terrorism of both guerrillas and government soldiers; and the diversion of vast resources of funds and labour from food and welfare to military purposes.

But above and beyond all this, is the insane stockpiling of nuclear weapons which could in a matter of hours destroy everyone and everything that we value on our planet. To contemplate such horror can leave us feeling despairing or apathetic, hardened or blasé.

We urge all New Zealanders to have the courage to face up to the mess humans are making of our world and to have the faith and diligence to cleanse it and restore the order intended by God.

We must start with our own hearts and minds. Wars will stop only when each of us is convinced that war is never the way.

The places to begin acquiring the skills and maturity and generosity to avoid or to resolve conflicts are in our own

homes, our personal relationships, our schools, our workplaces, and wherever decisions are made.

We must relinquish the desire to own other people, to have power over them, and to force our views on them. We must own up to our own negative side and not look for scapegoats to blame, punish, or exclude. We must resist the urge towards waste and the accumulation of possessions.

Conflicts are inevitable and must not be repressed or ignored but worked through painfully and carefully. We must develop the skills of being sensitive to oppression and grievances, sharing power in decision-making, creating consensus, and making reparation.

In speaking out, we acknowledge that we ourselves are as limited and as erring as anyone else. When put to the test, we each may fall short.

We do not have a blueprint for peace that spells out every stepping stone towards the goal that we share. In any particular situation, a variety of personal decisions could be made with integrity.

We may disagree with the views and actions of the politician or the soldier who opts for a military solution, but we still respect and cherish the person.

What we call for in this statement is a commitment to make the building of peace a priority and to make opposition to war absolute.

What we advocate is not uniquely Quaker but human and, we believe, the will of God. Our stand does not belong to Friends alone — it is yours by birthright.

We challenge New Zealanders to stand up and be counted on what is no less than the affirmation of life and the destiny of humankind.

Together, let us reject the clamour of fear and listen to the whisperings of hope.

## **2       Lest we forget           Made by Yearly Meeting 2014**

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 all 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 ten million dollars a day is being spent to maintain our armed forces in a state of 'combat readiness' (1).

We actively support alternative processes for resolving conflict and violence both within and between nations.

We reaffirm our words of 1987 (*from above*):

“We totally oppose all wars, all preparation for war, all use of weapons and coercion by force, and all military alliances; no end could ever justify such means.

We equally and actively oppose all that leads to violence among people and nations, and violence to other species and to our planet. This has been our testimony to the whole world for over three centuries.

The primary reason for this stand is our conviction that there is that of God in every one which makes each person too precious to damage or destroy.

Refusal to fight with weapons is not surrender. We are not passive when threatened by the greedy, the cruel, the tyrant, the unjust.

We may disagree with the views and actions of the politician or the soldier who opts for a military solution, but we still respect and cherish the person.

What we call for in this statement is a commitment to make the building of peace a priority and to make opposition to war absolute.

We challenge New Zealanders to stand up and be counted on what is no less than the affirmation of life and the destiny of humankind.”

(1) ‘Some comparative facts and figures from the 2014 budget’, Peace Movement Aotearoa, 16 May 2014.

## **B TREATY ISSUES**

### **1 Statement on Bicultural issues Made by Yearly Meeting, 1988-1989**

In considering our response as a religious body to Māori calls for justice, and to rethinking of the Pākehā place in this country, we reaffirm our commitment to social justice based on the belief that there is that of God in every one. This compels us to acknowledge the rights of the indigenous people, the Māori, as tāngata whenua.

We are conscious that it has taken us a considerable time to come to this understanding, but our traditions require us to be in unity before making statements in the name of the Religious Society of Friends as a whole. We are now satisfied, after discussions locally and in our Yearly Meeting, that we are ready to make this commitment.

(a) 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.

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

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

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

(e) We welcome the efforts that the Government is making to resolve disputes between Māori and the Crown on the basis of the Treaty.

We urge the Government to implement the recommendations of the Waitangi Tribunal. We call upon the Government to carry out in 1989 and 1990 a campaign to educate the community about the Treaty of Waitangi, and to broaden understanding of its implications.

We call upon local communities likewise to recognise the Treaty of Waitangi, and to address sources of Māori grievance in their area, using decision-making methods that include genuine partnership with the local Māori people. We hope these actions will assist in reaffirming the dignity and sense of identity of all New Zealanders.

(f) We agree to issue publicly and to circulate among other religious bodies in New Zealand and Friends worldwide, a statement embodying sections (a) to (e) of this minute.



(g) We agree to change the name of New Zealand Yearly Meeting to "Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa / New Zealand".

## **2 Statement on Māori-Pākehā issues Made by Yearly Meeting 1995**

As members of Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri, the Religious Society of Friends, meeting at its annual business meeting in Christchurch at this critical moment in Māori -Pākehā relationships, we affirm our commitment to the promise of a Treaty-based relationship between our peoples, and confidence in the future of our life together.

We recognise the historic wrong done to Māori by the Crown's failure to act in accordance with the Treaty. Pākehā New Zealanders are perhaps better able to begin to appreciate the effects of Māori dispossession after our more recent experience of government action to sell off public assets and restructure health and education. To some of these changes, Māori claims have been the only effective resistance.

In spite of the rejection by Māori of the Crown's recent unilateral proposals for settling Treaty of Waitangi claims, the process of discussion has had some positive results in the unified articulation of what Māori regard as the real issues, and in the opportunity for them to meet members of the Government face to face to voice their deeply-felt hurt and anger.

For many New Zealanders this has been a disquieting experience. We understand the apprehension. However we also recognise the extreme frustration experienced by Māori tribes and people, especially those of the younger generation, at the lack of real progress towards redressing historical grievances.

This has led some of them to assert dramatically, by their physical presence on disputed land, their claim to the rangatiratanga (uncontested authority) guaranteed by the Treaty which their ancestors signed.

We acknowledge that this guarantee has not yet been honoured in more than 150 years. We believe that now is a most opportune time to start working towards new constitutional arrangements to give effect to the Treaty. These would reflect the status of Māori as tāngata whenua in this country, with the same right to self-determination as other indigenous peoples of the world.

We are convinced that there is nothing to fear from the prospect of Māori being empowered to take control of their own affairs and manage them in their own ways. In the words of the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, "Indigenous peoples have the right of selfdetermination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

It is not surprising that there should be misunderstandings and breakdowns of communication. We are always heartened by evidence from around the country that these barriers can be surmounted, and satisfactory solutions found

to apparently intractable disagreements. We call on all people of goodwill to look for reconciliation beyond the confrontations, and on the Government to pursue with sensitivity and vigour its search for the justice in accordance with the Treaty without which there can be no peace.

### **3 Statement on Tāngata Whenua rights and the Constitution**

#### **Made by Yearly Meeting 2008**

We are committed to social justice based on our belief that there is that of God in all people. This leads us to approach all relationships in a spirit of goodwill, fairness and cooperation, which has been a hallmark of the Quaker approach to social, political, business and international affairs.

We believe that social justice is a necessary precondition for true peace between peoples and that this is at the heart of the Christian message.

Māori are tāngata whenua, the peoples indigenous to Aotearoa New Zealand.

Throughout this nation's history of colonisation their inherent rights as tāngata whenua have not been recognised despite their generosity in agreeing to peaceful settlement by signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.

That Treaty was designed to also protect their rights, but initially by force of arms and subsequently by weight of numbers and the legislative process, the interests of the

Pākehā majority have always prevailed. Māori have been marginalised in their own land.

The consequences for Māori over the years have been catastrophic and the continuing major disparities between Māori and the rest of the population with regard to education, health, employment and criminal justice outcomes are only some of the outward manifestations of this deep injustice.

We recognise that since 1975 some progress has been made in partially honouring the Treaty, by dealing with historic injustices and righting the wrongs of the past.

However, it concerns us that recently there has been evidence of the Government's continued preparedness to deny Māori rights. Examples include the foreshore and seabed legislation and the active opposition to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These actions of Government compromise the intent of the Treaty, and diminish recognition of the rights of Māori as the indigenous peoples of this land.

For nearly 170 years Māori have attempted to address their concerns by using the legal systems and processes of the nation with tenacity and patience. Our observation is that the majority of these systems have failed to safeguard the basic rights of Māori as tāngata whenua. Majority decisionmaking has continued to oppress and control.

We reaffirm our Statement on Bicultural Issues in 1989 (*above*) and in particular our acknowledgement that honouring the Treaty of Waitangi would involve “. . .giving up

by Pākehā of exclusive decision-making in the institutions of society". We are now clear that the way to achieve this is through constitutional provisions.

Constitutions are sets of rules about the exercise of public power in society, who can use it, when and how. They are also powerful symbols of a nation's identity and aspirations. Under our constitutional arrangements, the rights of Māori have been compromised in the name of the majority public interest.

There are constitutional models in other parts of the world that better protect the rights of indigenous peoples even when they are a numerical minority.

The constitutional changes we would wish to see would include power sharing arrangements with Māori both nationally and locally.

The task of achieving constitutional change will not be an easy one and requires careful and thorough negotiation. With a spirit of goodwill and a sense of fairness, an approach that fits the unique context of Aotearoa can and must be achieved.

Quakers in Aotearoa commit to advocating for a process of wide consultation and negotiation leading to change in our constitutional arrangements so that they give effect to the commitments made in the Treaty of Waitangi and provide for the sovereign rights of Māori as tāngata whenua in Aotearoa.

This document is prepared in good faith as an offering towards consultation and relationships with Treaty partners.

## **C        RELATIONSHIPS**

### **Statement of affirmation and reconciliation Made by Yearly Meeting 1992**

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.

Our lives are an expression of our individual selves and also of our common humanity. We each have different gifts and different needs. We need to discover, acknowledge and respond to our own and those of other people.

Each individual's journey through life is unique. Some will make this journey alone, others in loving relationships — maybe in marriage or other forms of commitment. We need to ponder our own choices and try to understand the choices of others. Love has many shapes and colours and is not finite. It cannot be measured or defined in terms of sexual orientation.

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.

We are now called: to welcome publicly and explicitly the participation and service of lesbian and gay Friends; to help one another develop loving and equal adult relationships and friendships; to explore ways in which we can, through worship and cherishing, mark the joys and sorrows of one another's relationships and life circumstances; to seek formal ways of recognising a variety of commitments, including gay and lesbian partnerships.

Aotearoa/New Zealand society, in which we all participate, still assumes heterosexual models of personal and family relationships. We need to understand the part we each play in continuing to weave this single-pattern fabric, and to look at ways in which other patterns can be interwoven in order to enrich the whole.

We realise that in making this present affirmation we oblige ourselves to face and deal with our own homophobia and unconscious prejudices, together with society's limitations and denials of human rights and justice.

We acknowledge that as individuals we are as fallible as anyone else. When put to the test, we may each fall short.

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: a

reconciliation which knows that the spiritual, the mental, the emotional and the physical are one before God. We ask for God's help.

## **D SOCIETY**

### **1 Statement of social concern Made by Yearly Meeting 1998**

Friends' belief in that of God in everyone leads us to work for a society in which everyone is valued and everyone is enabled to use their gifts to the full.

We are concerned that since 1984 New Zealand society has been moving in the opposite direction. We see policies pursued by successive governments as socially destructive. We realise that many among those who have initiated and who support these policies have done so in the belief that the ends they seek are good ones. Present conditions are evidence of failure to achieve desirable outcomes.

Indicators of social distress are high and have increased on former rates. This applies to unemployment, crime, depression and suicide, child abuse, domestic violence, broken families and homelessness. The gap between rich and poor has been increased. Those who are poorest find it almost impossible to climb out of the poverty trap.

Present policies erode the bonds of trust and respect on which our sense of community is based. They impoverish our spiritual lives through loss of compassion for others. They endanger the well-being of present and future generations.



At least as disturbing as the substance of these policies is their spirit. This spirit is implied in the public discussion document "Towards a Code of Social & Family Responsibility". It is a spirit of meanness and lack of imagination, which blames the poor for their poverty. It ignores the fact that economic policy since 1984 has created high unemployment and therefore results in more beneficiaries. Every policy decision needs to be made in the light of its human consequences.

We urge concerned people to speak and act now. We need to remind government that exercising fiscal responsibility does not imply measuring the success of a country or its government only by economic indicators. Many of the things we value most in society cannot be measured in that way.

We call for a response from all who see this time as an opportunity to transform an economic and social system based on exclusion into a society which recognises that social justice cannot be achieved at the expense of other people.

We also call on our own community to look within our hearts, for as Friends we believe that the seeds of the present policies have nourishment in our attachment to possessions, our collusion with consumerism, our complacency, and even in our unrecognised elitism and monoculturalism.

## **2 A call for action after Covid-19 Agreed by Yearly Meeting during 2020**

We Quakers find hope in the communal response to the Covid-19 crisis across our nation. The collective action of New Zealanders has demonstrated how much we can achieve together in a short time. We see the current pandemic as a warning which creates an unprecedented opportunity for systemic change and as a call to remodel our nation guided by the principles of sustainability, non-violence, simplicity and equity. This is a transformation that will require redistributive and regenerative economic, government and social policies that ensure all members of society benefit in an equitable manner.

Our vision is of a society that is inclusive and respectful of all people. We affirm the special constitutional position of Māori and a Treaty-based, bilateral system of government. We seek government which leads with integrity, shares information based on evidence, and engages with communities prior to decision-making. We oppose violence at every level and look to practices that bring peaceful dialogue and non-violent management of conflict.

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.

We see that society has been putting profit and consumption above other considerations despite clear evidence that earth's natural limits have been exceeded. Consumer lifestyles have been destroying the natural ecosystems required by future generations. Decades of neoliberal economic and social policies have allowed a few people to set the agenda and benefit disproportionately. This has condemned many to low wages, poverty and insecurity whilst also degrading the environment.

Quakers consider that the current pandemic offers the people of Aotearoa New Zealand a chance to reassess the situation and to create a new sense of community and purpose. The Light of the Spirit has inspired Quakers through the generations into social and environmental action. We see this experience with Covid-19 as the impetus to find a way forward based firmly on the Quaker values of peace, simplicity, and equity.

Quakers call on every person in Aotearoa New Zealand to bring about whatever changes they can to enable us to live in harmony with one another and with the planet.

## **E ENVIRONMENT**

### **Statement on environmental sustainability Made by Yearly Meeting in 2000**

Many Friends in Aotearoa / New Zealand have had a long and deeply-held understanding that the whole of creation is sacred. We have experienced personally the beauty and inter-connectedness of creation.

The time has come for our Yearly Meeting to affirm these leadings of the Spirit as a testimony. We need to recognise the spiritual nature of our responsibility to live with reverence for life. We want to extend our compassion for each other to compassion for all of life.

Each of us is part of the whole of life. All of life is in each of us. We grieve for the parts of our greater being that have been lost. We are driving thousands of species to extinction, causing deforestation, erosion and floods, polluting our rivers, soil, oceans and atmosphere.

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 selforganising, 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.

We affirm that we are able to make a difference. Now is the time to act together trusting that the inner Light will open our eyes to the Light within the whole of creation and will lead us to our right place.

To each person life has given a unique being. We call on everyone to use that uniqueness to serve the whole.

We encourage individual Friends of all ages and all meetings to consider and amend our life-styles and to support each other in making the changes necessary as our witness to this testimony.

## **F        ECUMENISM**

### **Statement on Ecumenism Made by Yearly Meeting 2003**

As a founder member, first of the National Council of Churches in 1941, and then of the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa / New Zealand (CCANZ) in 1987, the Religious Society of Friends, in response to the call of Jesus “that they may all be completely one . . .” (*John 17:21*), is ecumenically committed to collective church activities in pursuit of common goals.

Quakers have a deep respect for the truths of other religions, believing that “a rich variety of expression and of practice is to be expected as the Life streams through disciples of every race and clime and condition” (QFP 27.15). That vision extends beyond the Christian Church, for we believe that, through interfaith sharing and dialogue, we mutually enrich our understanding.

Our membership of the CCANZ is embedded in that vision. As an inclusive society, we celebrate diversity, but it is the teaching of Christ that binds us together in the CCANZ family. Furthermore, in concert with other Churches, we can speak more effectively with one voice on the issues that concern us and achieve more than if we acted separately.

For the sake of peace in the world, unity in diversity is needed, embracing all of creation, for our Statement on Peace states in part that we “actively oppose all that leads to violence among peoples and nations and violence to other species and to our planet”. Inextricably linked to our understanding of the word ‘peace’ is our concept of justice, which leads us to “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” .

As Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri, “the people who stand shaking in the wind of the spirit”, we draw upon the wisdom, knowledge and beliefs of other Christian Churches and other Faiths, so that together, in mutual understanding and respect, we can break down the barriers in our society and strive for a growing wholeness in our fellowship, which in turn may foster more harmonious relationships and enhance our common actions with deep convictions.

QFP = *Quaker Faith and Practice* (Britain Yearly Meeting)

## **Appendix 2 – QUAKER MARRIAGES AND CIVIL UNIONS**

This appendix is designed to be read in conjunction with 4.10. As requirements may change over time, it is prudent for registering officers and couples to check with the Department of Internal Affairs, locally or online .

### **2.1 Legal requirements (as at 15.12.2015)**

#### **MARRIAGES**

Requirements of the New Zealand Marriage Act, 1955, with its subsequent amendments, together with the Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013:

QM 1 No marriage may be solemnised which is not authorised by the laws of New Zealand. Section 32 of the Marriage Act 1955 and amendments, and section 55(2) of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act, specifically refer to marriages in accordance with Friends' usage. Any two people free to marry may do so legally, irrespective of gender or sexual orientation.

QM 2 The Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages is an official of the Department of Internal Affairs at the national level, and the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages at the local level.

QM 3 The couple shall give notice of their intended marriage in the prescribed form (BDM 60, Notice of Intended Marriage application form) to the local Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. They should not name any individual as celebrant, but write that they plan to marry "in accordance with the

marriage regulations of the Religious Society of Friends" under section 32 of the Marriage Act. On obtaining from the Registrar the licence and the accompanying forms (BDM 45 and BDM 45A), the couple should forward these promptly to the registering officer of the Monthly Meeting.

Since the licence is valid for only three months, couples are advised to check the timing of the Friends' process with the Meeting's registering officer before applying for a licence.

If the couple are already in a civil union together, they should use Form BDM 59, Notice of Intended Marriage change of relationship from civil union, rather than BDM 60. There is no requirement to dissolve their current civil union. Evidence of the current civil union needs to be produced when they apply for the form.

It is not necessary to be resident in the town in which the marriage is to take place and application may be made to any Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, provided at least three clear working days are given between the application and the completion of the licence.

QM 4 Legal forms: During or immediately after the meeting for worship for marriage, the forms BDM 45 and BDM 45A (having been previously prepared by the registering officer) shall be signed by the couple who have married, witnessed by two people present and signed by the registering officer. Where the form requires "[Signature of] Marriage Celebrant or Registrar of Marriages", the registering officer should cross these out and write, "Registering Officer, Religious Society of Friends".



Within 10 days after the ceremony the registering officer must return to the issuing Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages the form BDM 45, together with a covering letter clearly stating the registering officer's name and address. A photocopy of the form BDM 45 should be kept in the meeting's records. Form BDM 45A is given to the couple.

Many Meetings hold a "Marriage Register Book". It is no longer a legal requirement to keep this register.

## **CIVIL UNIONS**

QCU 1 The Religious Society of Friends in Aotearoa / New Zealand has been approved as a body exempt from the requirement for a celebrant, under the provisions of Schedule 1 of the Civil Union Act 2004.

QCU 2 The Registrar General of Civil Unions is an official of the Department of Internal Affairs at the national level, and the Registrar of Civil Unions at the local level.

QCU 3 The couple shall give notice of their intended civil union in the prescribed form (BDM 360) to the local Registrar of Civil Unions. They should not name any individual as celebrant, but write that they wish to join in civil union "in accordance with the civil union regulations of the Religious Society of Friends", an exempt body under schedule 1 of the Civil Union Act 2004. On obtaining from the Registrar the licence and the accompanying forms (BDM 345 and 345A), the couple should forward these promptly to the registering officer of the Monthly Meeting. Since the licence is valid for only three months, couples are advised to check the timing

of the Friends' process with the Meeting's registering officer before applying for a licence.

It is not necessary to be resident in the town in which the civil union is to take place and application may be made to any Registrar of Civil Unions, provided at least three clear working days are given between the application and the completion of the licence.

QCU 4 Legal forms: During or immediately after the meeting for worship for civil union, the Forms BDM 345 and BDM 345A (having been previously prepared by the registering officer) shall be signed by the couple who have joined in the civil union and witnessed by two people present and signed by the registering officer. Where the form requires “[Signature of] Civil Union Celebrant or Registrar of Civil Unions”, the registering officer should cross these out and write, “Registering Officer, Religious Society of Friends”.

Within 10 days after the ceremony the registering officer must return to the issuing Registrar of Civil Unions the form BDM 345, together with a covering letter clearly stating the registering officer’s name and address. A photocopy of the form BDM 345 should be kept in the meeting’s records.

Form BDM 345A is given to the couple.

Many Meetings hold a "Marriage Register Book", which may now become a “Marriage and Civil Union Register Book”. It is no longer a legal requirement to keep this register.

## 2.2 Quaker Procedure

(including responsibilities of Registering Officer and Clerk)

The Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa New Zealand, Quakers, Te Hāhi Tūhauwiri, makes no discrimination on the basis of gender or sexual orientation in its marriage and civil union procedures. Monthly meetings are the Quaker bodies with responsibility for marriages and civil unions. Each monthly meeting appoints a registering officer, by its usual processes.

The registering officer and clerk are responsible for completing the *Record of Procedure* (Form B) during the process. If the registering officer is unable to serve, the meeting appoints an acting registering officer.

The couple intending to marry or to contract a civil union applies to the registering officer of the monthly meeting for a copy of Form A, *Declaration of Intention to Marry or to Contract a Civil Union and Request for the Appointment of a Meeting for Worship*. The couple complete and sign the form and return it to the registering officer preferably three months before the date of the intended meeting for worship.

If necessary the date and time (but not the place) of the marriage or civil union may be omitted, provided that these particulars are given to the registering officer as soon as possible.

If the couple are already in a civil union, and wish to change their relationship to marriage, they complete a different legal form to request a licence (see Legal Requirements above). Then the Quaker procedure for marriage is followed.

Form A: The Declaration of Intention to Marry or to Contract a Civil Union and Request for the Appointment of a Meeting for Worship is printed below.

The registering officer receives Form A and informs the clerk of the intention of marriage or civil union. This intention is announced after Meeting for Worship in the place where or near where it is proposed to hold the marriage or civil union.

The registering officer or clerk brings to the next monthly meeting a request to appoint a meeting for worship to celebrate the marriage or civil union. If the details of date and time are not known at the time they are brought to a later monthly meeting. If the monthly meeting agrees to the request, it minutes to that effect, and the registering officer informs the couple. The minute includes details of the membership of the couple. The meeting may arrange for a Friend or Friends to meet with the couple for a clearness process in preparation for the meeting for worship. (See section 6.4 of this *Handbook*, and sections 16.19, 16.20 and 16.21 of Britain Yearly Meeting's *Quaker Faith and Practice*.)

If the monthly meeting believes it is not able to agree to the request, the registering officer (preferably with other Friends) discusses with the couple any difficulties raised. After clarification the couple may decide either to withdraw their request, or to ask for it to be repeated at a future monthly meeting.

In cases where serious inconvenience would be caused if the appointment of a meeting for worship were delayed until the next monthly meeting, if time allows a special monthly meeting may be appointed. Otherwise the clerk, in

consultation with the registering officer, may make the appointment on its behalf. Such action is to be minuted at the next monthly meeting.

If the monthly meeting has agreed to celebrate the marriage or civil union, Friends appointed by the monthly meeting work with the couple to ensure right ordering for the meeting for worship. This is often the role of elders or their equivalent, and/or the registering officer. If the meeting for worship is not to be held in the regular place of worship, these Friends should visit the proposed site to check its suitability for this meeting for worship.

On receiving the licence the couple show it to the registering officer. Before the day the registering officer prepares the appropriate forms (BDM 45 and BDM 45A for marriage or BDM 345 and BDM 345A for civil union).

Where the form requires “[Signature of] Marriage Celebrant or Registrar of Marriages”, the registering officer should cross these out and write, “Registering Officer, Religious Society of Friends”.

The registering officer or clerk arranges for notice of the appointed meeting for worship for the celebration of marriage or civil union to be given after a meeting for worship in the place where (or in the area of which) the meeting for worship is to take place.

The registering officer arranges for the Quaker certificate to be signed and witnessed during the meeting for worship. After the signing of the certificate or at the end of the

meeting for worship, it is read audibly by the registering officer or other suitable person.

The registering officer also arranges for the appropriate forms (BDM 45 and BDM 45A for marriage or BDM 345 and BDM 345A for civil union) to be signed and witnessed either during or at the close of the meeting for worship (see 4.10.8). The registering officer sends form BDM 45 or BDM 345 within 10 days to the local Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages or Registrar of Civil Unions, together with a covering letter clearly stating the registering officer's name and address.

The registering officer also informs the clerk of the accomplishment of the meeting for worship and gives:

- Form B to the clerk;
- Form BDM 45A or BDM 345A to the couple.
- A copy of BDM45 or BDM345 is kept with the meeting's records, together with a copy of Form B.

The clerk arranges for the accomplishment of the meeting for worship to be recorded in the minutes of the monthly meeting, with the date and place of the meeting.

In cases where either person being married or contracting a civil union is a member or attender of a monthly meeting other than the one where the meeting for worship has taken place, the registering officer reports it to the clerk of each such meeting, which similarly records the details of the occasion by minute.

## 2.3 Quaker forms

**The forms which follow can be printed most easily in A4 format, from the website text of this Handbook.**

QUAKER MARRIAGE / CIVIL UNION: FORM A  
DECLARATION OF INTENTION TO MARRY OR TO CONTRACT A  
CIVIL UNION and REQUEST FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF A  
MEETING FOR WORSHIP

*to be completed and signed by both parties in the presence of  
an adult witness*

To ..... Monthly Meeting of the  
Religious Society of Friends

I, .....  
*(one partner's name in full)*

Of.....  
.....*(address)*

age ..... *(years)*

.....*(occupation)*

and I, .....  
*(other partner's name in full)*

Of.....  
.....*(address)*

age ..... *(years)*

..... *(occupation)*

inform you that we intend to marry / contract a civil union /  
change our relationship from civil union to marriage *(delete  
those which do not apply)* and that we wish, if the Monthly  
Meeting agrees, to celebrate our marriage / civil union at a  
meeting for worship

at .....*(place)*

on ..... at .....(date and time). (If necessary the date and time (but not the place) may be left blank, to be completed by the registering officer as soon as possible.)

**I declare** that I am clear of any other marriage or civil union commitments,  
and that:

- EITHER I have attained legal age
- OR I have obtained the consent of my parents or guardians.

I am aware of Friends' understanding of the nature and character of marriage and civil union as a religious act, and I agree to comply with the marriage regulations of the Religious Society of Friends.

Signed ..... Date.....

Witnessed by

.....Date.....

.....

.....

*(Signature, name and address of adult witness)*

**I declare** that I am clear of any other marriage or civil union commitments,  
and that

- EITHER I have attained legal age
- OR I have obtained the consent of my parents or guardians.

I am aware of Friends' understanding of the nature and character of marriage and civil union as a religious act, and I agree to comply with the marriage regulations of the Religious Society of Friends.

Signed .....Date.....



Witnessed by .....Date .....

.....

.....

*(Signature, name and address of adult witness)*

QUAKER MARRIAGE / CIVIL UNION: FORM B

RECORD OF PROCEDURE

The Registering Officer of .....

Monthly Meeting has received on ..... *(date)*

a Declaration of Intention to Marry or to Contract a Civil Union and Request for the Appointment of a Meeting for Worship (Form A) signed

by.....

and .....

Notice of this intention was given at the close of Meeting for Worship

at ..... *(place)*

on .....*(date)*.

..... Monthly Meeting has received the above request for appointment of a meeting for worship for the celebration of marriage / civil union. It has appointed this meeting

for ..... *(date & time)*

at ..... *(place)*.

This decision is recorded in the Meeting's minutes dated ....., number .....

Notice has been given at the close of Meeting for Worship

at .....*(place)*

on ..... *(date)*

of this Meeting for Worship for celebration of marriage / civil union.

The marriage / civil union between  
.....  
and.....  
was celebrated at ..... on  
....., and has been recorded in the  
minutes of ..... Monthly Meeting  
dated ..... number  
.....  
*[If applicable]* Notice of the celebration of this marriage / civil  
union has been sent  
to.....  
Monthly Meeting(s).

Signed ..... *Clerk*  
Name .....  
Date .....  
Signed ..... *Registering  
officer*  
Name .....  
Date .....

*When this record is completed it is lodged in the files of the  
Monthly  
Meeting, with a copy held by the Registering Officer.*

QUAKER MARRIAGE / CIVIL UNION: FORM C  
Possible wording for a marriage or civil union certificate  
*The wording below is based on traditional language. It is  
normal for the wording, especially the promises, to be  
adapted by the couple in consultation with the registering  
officer. The certificate includes the full text of the agreed  
promises.*

.....  
and.....

*(full names)*

brought to .....

Monthly Meeting their intention of taking each other in marriage / civil union. The Monthly Meeting agreed that the marriage / civil union should be celebrated in the manner of Friends, and appointed a Meeting for Worship for this purpose. This is to certify that for the celebration of their marriage / civil union

..... and

.....  
were present at the Meeting for Worship so appointed at .....

on .....

Taking each other by the hand,

.....  
declared:

“Friends, I .....freely take this my Friend ..... to be my husband / wife / partner in marriage / civil union, promising to be with spiritual help a loving and faithful husband / wife / partner.”

and .....

declared:

“Friends, I ..... freely take this my Friend .....to be my husband / wife / partner in marriage / civil union, promising to be with spiritual help a loving and faithful husband / wife / partner.”

They have in this meeting signed this certificate of marriage / civil union.

Signed: .....

Signed: .....

**Witnesses:**

We were present at and witnessed the ceremony: *(followed by space for the signatures) of all present who wish to sign).*

## INDEX

*This index gives the significant Handbook references to the terms given and incorporates the most common acronyms. See also Notes on Language and Glossary, which are not covered in this index.*

*Principal references are given in **bold**. Use of the term within such a section or part of a section is so common that it should be consulted as a whole.*

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