

***Report on
Friends' consultation on our future
educational and spiritual needs***

This is the full report of the activities undertaken since Yearly Meeting 2010 around Friends educational and spiritual needs till Yearly Meeting 2013. An abbreviated report was provided to *Documents in Advance* for consideration prior to Yearly Meeting. This report provides more detail on the planning, organisation and follow-up to the workshops held throughout Aotearoa New Zealand in 2012, and the Minute agreed at Yearly Meeting 2013.

The report provides a description of recommended priority areas for development for Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand and specific topics and strategies that may be used to aid the Society's growth and sustenance. Such development aims to ensure that Friends in 2035 are in good heart to cope with life in the future however it turns out.

The background

A session was held on Friends' educational and spiritual needs at Yearly Meeting 2010 in Dunedin. Minute 13 recorded: *Friends' Educational and Spiritual Needs*

Linda Wilson and Catherine Spencer introduced us to a consideration of our educational and spiritual needs by asking us to consider three questions in small groups of two or three, a different group for each question. The questions were:

- 1. What do you need, as a Quaker, to nourish you and develop you spiritually and socially so that you can make a contribution to your Meeting and to all of the communities to which you belong?*
- 2. What has changed about how you live and learn in the last twenty years? What do you think will change about how you and others live and learn over the next twenty years?*
- 3. What opportunities exist for us as a Society – corporately, together or collegially rather than individually – to make a real contribution to the issues of the 21st century?*

When asked to consider how we might develop this conversation to articulate, clarify and colour our corporate vision, Friends offered many suggestions, including things they have valued. We were reminded of the centrality of Meeting for Worship and its importance in this noisy, busy world.

We ask Dunedin Monthly Meeting to find a group Friends to develop suggestions for meeting our corporate educational and spiritual needs, including using suggestions from our session. Hopefully this will enhance our Quaker witness in the world.

Dunedin MM appointed Catherine and Linda, with the support of Marvin Hubbard and Elizabeth Duke, to do this work. We came up with a proposal to have a series of workshops run throughout the country, to give space to think differently about how we follow through and develop our corporate witness and how we might make it happen whilst still meeting our diverse interests.

The planning

Catherine Spencer and Linda Wilson from Dunedin Meeting then undertook to develop a process of consultation with Friends around the country focussing on Friends' future spiritual and educational needs. The nature and type of consultation was developed in association with an advisory group of diverse Friends across ages and the country, and a home support group in Dunedin.

We established an oversight group that was deliberately diverse in its age, birthright & conviction, length of involvement with Friends, involvement in Summer Gathering and with Quaker organisations, geography, professional experience sexual orientation and creativity. We consulted and discussed with them elements of possible processes, including strategies that would increase the likelihood that we had a very diverse group of participants, and risky aspects that we might need to take into account.

We drew heavily on the work of Elise Boulding and Warren Ziegler who used a process for visioning a future community, where weapons were no longer needed and in which the participants would like to live in 30 years time and then working backwards to identify what had happened to lead to that desirable future. We

also drew on work from other future studies and corporate strategic planning processes that frequently involve the development of alternate future scenarios, thinking backwards, thinking forwards, and thinking about implications.

The intention was to provide guidance or priorities for the work of the Quaker Education Fund, and possibly the Testimonies Fund, that would guide our priority setting related to our energies and our money over the next few years. Through the workshop, set in the future, people would identify what enabled them to cope and manage life well in a changed world/environment. By identifying what helped them, they would be helping us identify what we need to concentrate on now for our future community and collective wellbeing.

We considered, drew on and modified workshops designed for corporate organisations, adult education and creative exploration. We looked at sessions of varying lengths and acknowledged common Quaker ways of doing things. We decided we needed to plan a consultative workshop that would be short enough to enable as many Friends as possible to attend, structured enough to ensure that everyone could participate despite different experiences and familiarity with Friends ways, and different enough to ensure that we did not revert primarily to silent reflective personal experiences. Our understandings of creativity and futures planning shaped our considerations. We were clear that if Friends did what we have always done we would keep getting what we have always had: the same.

We identified a small group of Friends to help us with a pilot workshop. They were based in Christchurch, which post-earthquake was very future focused. We approached people we knew and who would have the dual capacity to participate in the pilot workshop and to critique the facilitation process and the design of the workshop. We invited individuals with a spectrum of involvement in Quaker activities from the fairly peripheral to the fairly central. These Friends provided us robust feedback on the pilot workshop. As a direct result of their feedback we simplified the workshop process, and changed a number of the warmup activities. We experimented with single components of the revised workshop, with our Dunedin oversight group, of Marvin Hubbard and Elizabeth Duke, who also provided insight into the clarity or lack of clarity in the process. A second pilot was run in Dunedin, and only minor modifications made thereafter.

We prepared a funding proposal to the Quaker Education Fund, which with some modification was accepted. (Linda Wilson was not involved in the decision making). We recruited potential facilitators for workshops throughout Aotearoa New Zealand in the *New Zealand Friends' Newsletter*, in order to be consistent with the vision of reduced travel and to ensure that people could choose to attend a workshop run by different facilitators.

The advertisement was explicit:

We would like to see a diversity of Friends coming forward as facilitators (diverse in terms of age, geography, duration of involvement with Friends, and has many other diverse personal and social characteristics that we can think of!) And:

The workshop is designed to lead participants into a different head/heart/spirit space from which we can become clearer about our own needs in a changed world, and how our meetings (Monthly and

Yearly) can nurture, support, and sustain Quakers and enable us in our social witness. We need to consider how we might do even more things, possibly differently, in a post peak oil and changing climate future. The intention is to create a consultation within which the Spirit can lead as many of us as possible in ways we have previously not considered. The workshop will use a range of techniques, some of which may be familiar to Friends through other Quaker activities or workshops, and some of which come from other approaches to consultation, and planning for the future.

We called for *facilitators who could expect to:*

- *have experience in working in groups*
- *be familiar with Friends ways*
- *make a commitment to attend the preparatory meeting in Whanganui, July 13-15, 2012*
- *participate in a consultation session during that weekend,*
- *identify particular aspects of facilitating consultations sessions with Quakers*
- *organise and run a consultation session or sessions in their own meetings/region,*
- *document the results of those consultation session to share with other facilitators*
- *have access to and preparedness to work through teleconferencing and or Skype to report back on the consultation they undertake.*

We want to involve in the workshop sessions as many Friends throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand as possible: Those currently actively involved in Meetings; those who never go to business meetings; younger Friends who will be part of making the future happen; older Friends who have the wisdom of hindsight; those who are well connected and involved in Friends' activities; and those who are isolated geographically or spiritually; and those who have some qualms that the Society is not really in a position to meet its potential contributions.

A training workshop was held at the Whanganui Quaker settlement in July 2012 to prepare facilitators to run the workshop in pairs throughout the country. Facilitators were provided with workbooks and key resources needed to run the developed and agreed format sessions. During the training workshop people both participated in the whole workshop as it was then planned, were walked through the reasons for the activities and again critiqued the intended process. Based on their feedback we developed an additional scenario and modified the facilitators' handbook. Facilitators were provided with a goodie box that included the materials needed for the workshop including the facilitators handbook, background papers, questions cards, and a floor chart. As not all Monthly Meetings were represented, together we identified regions of New Zealand and who could travel to which area and when to run workshops in as diverse range of Quaker communities as possible.

Alan Harvey, Alistair Hall, Anne Hall, Celia Short, Eileen Gundersen, Michael Searle, Peter Watson, Rachel Raphael, and Ronis Chapman undertook the training, ran workshops and later contributed to the harvesting sessions. They organised the accommodation necessary, made arrangements with local Meetings about when to visit, motivated Friends of diverse backgrounds ages and familiarity with friends ways to participate, arranged to printout and photocopy the particular scenario and all resources they would use in that community and shared their experiences with each other. Their energy and commitment has been

outstanding. We appreciate the support of all others who have helped in diverse ways, participated in workshops, or helped with the process.

The workshops

18 workshops have been held around the country, in which over 170 Friends explored specific topics and strategies that may be used to aid the Society's growth and sustenance, so that Friends in 2035 can be in good heart to cope with a very different world.

The workshops were basically the same format but with minor variations (depending on the size and energy of the group participating and the style of the facilitating Friends). Interestingly the largest Meetings had the lowest participation rates: Friends in Christchurch understandably felt they had enough else to address within their city and Meeting and chose not to participate; and Friends in Auckland were heavily involved in the meetings around reorganisation of the upper North Island Monthly Meeting boundaries and structure.

Northland	Auckland	Tauranga	Hamilton
Palmerston North	Whanganui	New Plymouth	Settlement (Training)
Hawkes Bay	Kapiti	Wairarapa	Wellington
Golden Bay	Nelson	Christchurch (pilot)	Dunedin (2, 1 a pilot)
Summer Gathering			

Friends participated with much energy and worked hard to consider the skills and knowledge that they would need to address the complex issues that we expect to emerge over the next 25 years. Through the workshop, set in an imagined future of 2035, people identified what would enable them to cope and manage life well in a changed world and altered environment. Participants thought about the workshops, programs and support that NZ Friends may need. Many creative and visionary ideas came from each group. There was a great deal of hope that we could make a positive contribution both individually, and as a Society - Monthly Meetings and YM, if we change the way we offer education and spiritual support now.

The workshops used a range of techniques: the following description summarises in one paragraph a 3 hour session so clearly a lot of nuances and details are missing. We started with some poetry and some group building activities designed to identify both commonalities and differences in our Quaker experiences. We read a story based in 2035 that started an exploration of the lives and issues Quakers might be facing at that time. Participants read a scenario (selected by the facilitator from the 3 developed) designed to provide a possibly plausible scene for a Quaker Threshing Meeting. We reviewed that Meeting so people could identify things that individuals and the Meeting as a whole were doing well and what could have been done even better. We used those descriptors of the positives to explore possible planning for the future by asking how could Friends, *as a Meeting, develop those positive attributes*. This was **the key** part of the consultation; earlier components had been about preparing Friends for the mind leap into the future, to be creative, and to think beyond their own individual experiences. From some workshops individual post-its were forwarded to the overall coordinators, and some returned to participants.

The harvesting

Facilitators of each workshop forwarded the results of each final session to Dunedin and these were entered into a spread sheet for analysis. The results of the consultations were discussed in an online harvesting session, conducted by Skype. Facilitators were additionally asked to identify their impressions of the most

important aspects of the workshops which included all of the surrounding comments, the feelings, the appreciations and the challenges. After the harvesting session five key themes were initially separately generated, and compared and agreement negotiated about their definitions (see below page x) before use. Coding of samples of over 600 specific items from the workshops was also compared until we reached agreement on interpretation. Each item was then coded, and the number of items in each theme identified as an indication of how often that aspect of how the future had been achieved was identified.

A sample of the sheet that identifies items and their coding is included.

Key theme 1	connecting and community building
2	technology
3	skills /knowledge for Quaker life and action
4	spiritual deepening
5	challenging ourselves and our ways

Example of Items	coding
Pendle Hill pamphlets	4
open educational resources	2
support and fund leaders/ scholarships	5
Travelling Ministry	1
Early adapters into new technology	2
bring in others	1
Time/employment trade-offs for Quaker energy	5
Retain the old and the new	5
we can make a difference	3
doing things together	1
initially individually and then collectively	1
knowledge of Quaker responses (gene Sharp)	3
seminars are only one way - books and computers	2
working together in social action	3
what is the Quaker contribution	5
clear values purposes and strategies	5

The combination of the harvesting session and the coding of items permitted us to write the report for Yearly Meeting which identifies the types of activities that, if they are funded, will enable the Society of Friends in 2035 to cope well with the future. Thus the topic areas and key issues identified below are intended to be a framework that provides guidance for decisions by Quakers individually, by Meetings, and by Quaker committees, that will always be spirit led. We do not see these guidelines as rules to be laid upon a committee; the intention was to capture what might be needed in the future and had a focus on what we needed corporately, as a community, because that was what the Minute 13 made at YM2010 asked. Individuals will always be led along their own pathways and may well still be funded by the Society.

The themes

Five key aspects are evident. These should be seen as important principles that guide our decision making, particularly around our use of the Society's time and energy and how we use our financial resources. For each aspect we name it, describe or define it, and then include some of the contributions from workshops to give people an idea of the types of items included to this aspect. Friends will recognise and we acknowledge that many of these are closely interwoven and interconnected.

The 5 key aspects are (in order of how often they were identified):

Connecting and community building: a strong community within Quakers involves us knowing each other, living alongside and looking after each other, promoting the value/s of being Quaker, encouraging others to join us. It means being actively involved in the other communities that we live in, witnessing, and contributing to positive social change.

"Sharing after meeting for worship"

"Working together in social action"

"Include everybody - including those of difference, e.g. new refugees"

"Don't get cliquey"

"Finding ways to integrate new people"

"Outreach well-developed- stop being shy"

Skills/knowledge for Quaker life and action: to do this we have to understand what being a Quaker means, our history, processes, and testimonies. It means knowing how to put those understandings into action in our own family and Quaker community lives, and in the active contributions we make to the social good of the communities we are part of.

"Quaker processes are a gift we have to offer to the world"

"Develop core resources – use UK publications, e.g. on clerking"

"Experiences from "weighty F/friends" – passing on knowledge"

"Leadership – how to develop/ learn leadership skills?"

Challenging ourselves and our ways: To contribute to positive social change and to cope with changes ahead Friends need to challenge our own ways of doing things, and learn new ways of being with each other and in the world, and to be open to new leadings.

"Name the elephants in the room"

"Overcome own "tall poppy" syndrome"

"Employ young people to look at new media models we could be using"

"Develop new type of Quaker "govt" to be able to respond to current issues in timely ways"

"Refine Quaker terminology - rephrase/update"

"Pay young prophets"

Spiritual deepening: being part of community, understanding Quaker insights, and participating in Quaker activities, informs and develops the spiritual practices that help deepen our individual and community spirituality.

“Offering spiritual nurture beyond our own boundaries”

“Share the spirit through writing”

“Light groups”

“Be part of a spiritual group friendship”

Technology: We need to come to grips with the technology of today and tomorrow and discern its contribution in to enhancing our personal spiritual lives, our ways of learning, our communication and decision making processes within Quakers, and as a tool for outreach and social action.

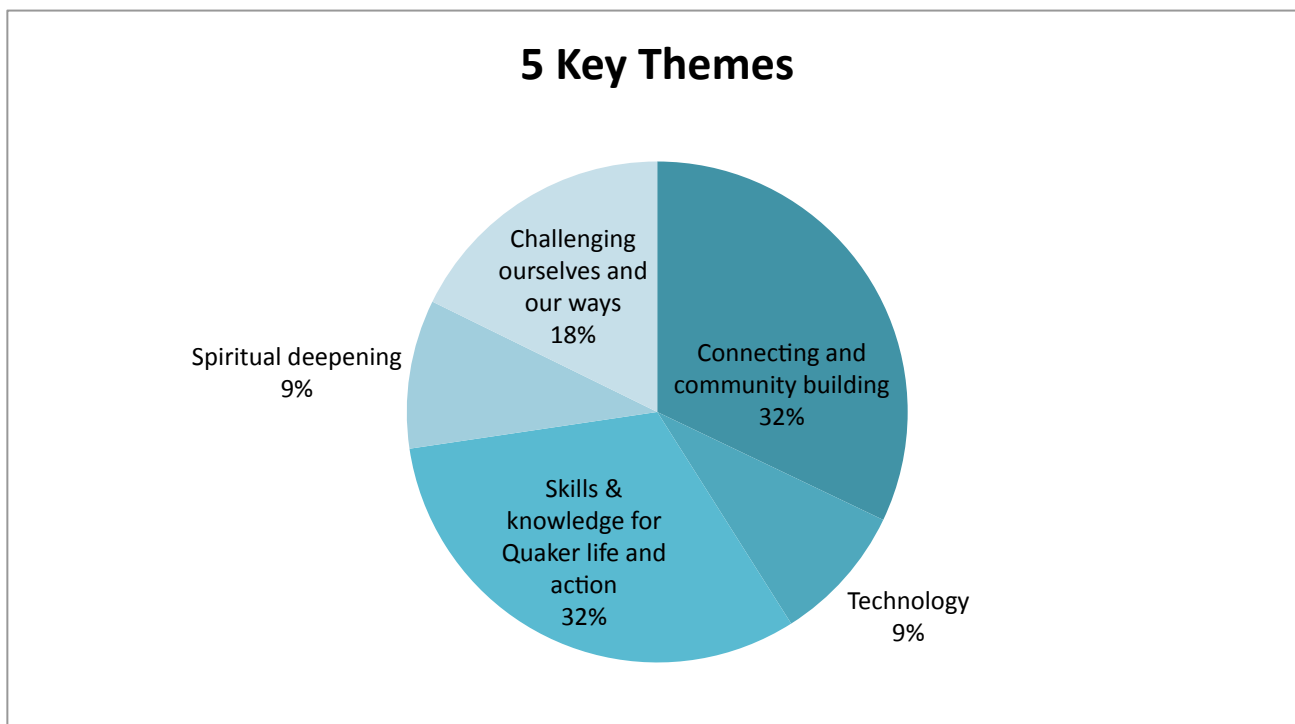
“Use Skype for mentoring”

“E-courses from variety of places (e.g. spirituality and practice.com)”

“More interaction online - Online talks, meetings”

“Pendle Hill online”

“E-courses from Woodbrooke”



We suggest we need to develop or access resources that attend to these themes collectively, rather than putting our energies into individual Friends, who identify an individual opportunity for themselves. This does not mean we cannot respond at an individual level, but that we should think at a corporate, community or Society level and put our priorities into educational developments that can be accessed by many throughout the country. This will strengthen how we work as a Society or as a Meeting to enable our witness in the world and achieve best use of our gifts and visions in the wider world. By doing that, we will also strengthen ourselves at a personal level too. We have done this successfully for many years through the programmes at

the Settlement; we need now to broaden the range of educational and development activities we undertake to take advantage of the technologies now available and be consistent with our Testimonies. From the many suggestions and comments made it is possible to suggest particular sorts of programs, activities or opportunities that the Society may wish to initiate, and as well as responding to individual requests.

Friends indicated that the focus is needed on *people* (who), *topics* (what) and *modes* (how) of education are needed among Friends, which would be supported by suggested *changes*. We provide Friends with examples of the particular items suggested by Friends within the workshops and or some of the types of initiatives we might choose to sponsor. Some of these are based on specific suggestions from the workshops, from comments Friends made over coffee and some from the harvesting sessions.

People (who): We need to focus on our young friends, who are not only technologically literate but are our future. We need to focus on our prophets, resident friends, and those who can travel to meet with Friends in outlying or smaller communities providing support, development and education face-to-face. We need to focus on those new to Friends, both through outreach and through the development of a clear pathway of support into understanding Quaker beliefs processes and actions. *For example: We could develop a better online presence for outreach, scaffolding or graduated support for those new to Friends, and support and mentoring for young friends.*

Topics (what): We have identified 8 groups of topics, many of which are interlinked and some of which surprised us (these are listed alphabetically!).

- **Action:** we need to develop our knowledge and skills around converting our testimonies into social and political and community action, whether it's working to challenge child poverty or climate change, or in the creation of a community garden.

“Becoming more involved and visible in the community”

“A school for Quaker action.”

We could explore workshops on social action, or fund Quakers in specific social action projects.

- **Community building:** we need to develop our understanding and skills in building the communities, both Quaker and non-Quaker, of which we are part, including valuing time spent together, going on picnics , having fun and making music, being intentional, and just being together.

“Provide time for sharing “

“This is your Friend sessions”

“Learning from older colleagues”

“Creating events”

“Meeting Friends from other countries”

We could explore developing resources on community building, support travelling in the Ministry, have Resident Friends spend time in other communities, develop a ‘things to do together that take minimal time to organise and ‘no money to run’ resources on the Quaker website.

- **Life skills:** we also need to understand how to be with people we do not agree with, who are different from us, how to be tolerant and respect other people, and how to communicate agreement and

disagreement clearly but respectfully, and how to look after ourselves alongside others, managing our time and energies.

“Respect each other/ be tolerant of diversity”

“Valuing the little things that folks do”

“Opportunities to try things out in a safe environment”

“Low criticism learning environments”

We could run seminars on dealing with difficult people, a distance based course on Quaker communications skills 101, an online discussion session, or a session at Yearly Meeting on Quaker elephants.

- **Quaker history:** we need an understanding of the facts, and stories, of early Quaker history, the social contexts and their contribution to international Quaker development and differences. We need to understand Quaker faith and practice across time, and how Friends addressed diverse social and theological issues.

“Reiterating and modernising the old stories”

“Narrating new stories of current Quaker experiences”

“Collections from NZF newsletter”

“Learn about early Quaker history,

”Learn from other Quaker styles e.g. Africa, evangelical”.

We could arrange for e.g. Hearts and minds prepared or Quaker quest to be run online, or at a summer gathering. We could circulate such resources through the Settlement library. We could develop a set of graduated readings for those new to Quakers.

- **Quaker processes:** we need to be explicit about our Quaker processes discussing them with, and supporting, newcomers and those new to specific Quaker roles and responsibilities about the why and how of Quaker processes.

“Quaker processes are important-learning from others”

“Participation on committees where there are others who know more,”

“Pairing / Linking up / Mentoring”

We could develop mentoring or supervision supports for people going new onto committees. We could provide extracts from the handbook or produce You-Tube clips on coping with Quaker processes.

- **Quaker spirituality:** we need to help people understand the connectedness between Quakers’ spiritual experiences, and beliefs and values, and the testimonies, and personal and social actions.

“Encourage our heroes to actively share with us”

“Pay young prophets”

“Travelling ministry – to share experiences, new ideas”

“House meetings”.

We could fund people (our heroes, those who have been to Woodbrooke or Pendle Hill, or been called to action) to travel in the Ministry afterwards and share their experiences. We could develop resources and discussion questions for home groups, we could establish something like the George Lakey visiting fellow.

- **Quaker spiritual practices:** people need opportunities to learn, and keep learning and engaging in diverse Quaker spiritual practices, from Meetings for Worship, to light groups, prayer, spiritual writing, journaling and so forth.

“Spiritual development”

“Committing time for spiritual nurture/ attending spiritual nurture groups”

“Encouragement for more inclusive ministry, greater confidence to minister.”

We could fund people to travel in the Ministry, the people who have been to courses to travel afterwards, people who have a particular skill or gift who already live here, or we could bring people from overseas to run workshops at the Settlement and then travel in the Ministry, or take the seminar on the road.

- **Technology:** we need to learn about, feel confident with and be able to benefit from the opportunities of using diverse new technologies to access Friends’ knowledge, expertise, experiences and spirituality across town and across the world.

“Seminars are only one way - books and computers”

“Train people for IT and library support”

“Use modern technology to increase speed of response to current issues”

“More interaction online - Quaker histories online”.

We could fund (Young) Friends to develop resources for Quakers online, we can run seminars for Quakers in how to use IT using existing online resources, and we could develop a Quaker guide to values and social media.

Modes (how) of education: People learn in different ways: individual reading, structured discussions, stories about and from other Quakers, retreats, seminars especially at the Settlement, workshops, book groups, study sessions, individual and group workbooks will all work for some people in some situations some times. There are online possibilities for most of these that can help us given our geography and population, however face-to-face personal connected learning within a safe community remains highly valued. There are significant resources available nationally and internationally and people, places and products that could be utilised to help Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Settlement can be the basis for the resource development, the environment for the conceptual work and or the later distribution. Seminars could have allocated pre-reading and online discussions afterwards. Currently our distribution patterns are relatively ad hoc, that is it takes one Quaker somewhere to have had an experience to suggest it to others. We could adopt strategies used by other organisations and develop an annual project scheme wherein each year a topic and mode is promoted and resources develop it; over time many topics and many strategies are used.

Changes to consider: Friends are clear that we need to be prepared to change our processes and use of resources, and our decision making, in order to maintain our energy, to address both Quaker and social issues, and to offer our value-based creativity to the world.

“ Some issues need very fast responses, and Quaker processes can be too slow”

“Time/employment trade-offs for Quaker energy”

”Employ young people to look at new media models”

“Fellowship systems - time off or voluntary or paid”

“Employ Friends on short term contracts or 2 days a week for 6 months”

“Employing people to be lobbyists”.

We could decide to do what other Yearly Meetings do and fund Friends for project services, and fund those with specific expertise to complete that which we agree needs to be done.

Summary

This report has pulled together the process and the results of the consultation undertaken with Friends about ways in which we might meet our spiritual and educational needs into the future. We particularly identified 5 key issues that could underpin all educational activities funded by the Society of Friends in Aotearoa New Zealand. We identified 8 topic areas which we believe could be useful to guide those who are planning educational or development activities for New Zealand Friends.

Many of these activities could be undertaken in association with the Settlement - dialogue will prevent duplication, and discussions with the Settlement about its possible involvement in activities, will create opportunities for good use of our existing resources. We do not have any expectations that the Settlement would initiate or be the focus of activities beyond that which the Settlement is already involved in or committed to.

There are suggestions inherent within this report that go beyond the initial intentions of the group to help identify work that might focus on Quaker Spiritual and Educational Needs. There are however strategies, used by many Yearly Meetings which are not yet common in Aotearoa New Zealand and which could well be considered. Some of the recommendations to Monthly and Yearly Meetings have been made because the frequent references to *how we use our money* came up in all sorts of guises throughout the consultations. We encourage Yearly Meeting to plan a way of discussing issues of funding Friends for service as our consultation identified that we currently adhere to patterns of organising our work that no longer serve us well and increasingly may not serve us into the future.

The process of developing running and making sense of this consultation process with Friends throughout the country has been a delight. We have made contact with people who do not often come for example to Yearly Meeting, or to Meetings for Business, or even to Summer Gatherings. We have heard here from people who are very new to Friends and those who have many years of service in diverse activities within Friends and within their own communities. This consultation, like any process that attempts to pull together peoples understandings, aspirations and values, has not resulted in anything measurable, and does not pretend to speak for all Friends or even any particular percentage of Friends. We believe however that it

does give a good sense of possible new ways to ensure that we continue to support and develop Friends spiritual community and organisational lives of witness into the future.

An earlier abbreviated report was circulated in Documents in Advance, and Meetings minuted their responses to both, disseminated through White and Gold pages. A presentation (appended) was made at Yearly meeting 2013 and, following discussion, comment and ministry in this and other sessions, Friends subsequently recorded the following:

Minute 14 Friends' Educational and Spiritual Needs

- a) *Presentation by the working group* Catherine Spencer and Linda Wilson, who have served as a working group, have summarised for us the process of workshops and reporting since Yearly Meeting 2010. The process has focused on how we anticipate the state of our Yearly Meeting in the future, using the year 2035 as a guide. Numbers of Friends have contributed to the different workshops, as participants and as facilitators. Friends were asked what skills and attributes we need to enable us to reach our desired goals for the future. What do we need to do differently? We are invited to take a different perspective and a wider view.

Linda and Catherine have pointed to considerations and possible directions which arise from their report. We are reminded that, for Friends, education need not be formal and individualistic. We value the informal and experiential, and recognise many ways of learning, some of which - especially technologies - are relatively new to us, and which keep changing and developing. Different educational experiences meet different needs.

Strong vibrant Meetings can act as magnets, as attractive communities.

How can Yearly Meeting develop structures and guidance for us to implement our visions? We need to put out a range of possibilities and opportunities. Some of these need changes to what we are used to doing. Worship is the community that supports our activities. We need many ways to support the worshipping community.

The workshops have identified five key issues and eight topic areas on which our spiritual and educational development can be focused. The issues are: connecting and community, skills and knowledge for Quaker life and action, challenging ourselves and our ways, spiritual deepening, and technology. The topic areas are: action, community building, life skills, Quaker history, Quaker processes, Quaker spirituality, Quaker spiritual practices, and technology.

- b) *Consideration by Yearly Meeting.*

Our consideration of the report has flowed in two intermingling streams. The first is the nurturing of our communal and spiritual life, our worship and friendship. Our spiritual life and our people are our real capital. We recognise the need to nurture our children and our Junior Young Friends; both groups are currently small. Young Friends are emerging into a challenging society, in which it is hard to do what is right or what the world needs, to act according to Friends' testimonies, and yet to earn enough to meet their needs. We recognise, too, that we need to encourage and enthuse 'Middle Friends' (under 60 or so) to take an active part in the work of Yearly Meeting.

The second stream is the urgent call to act in the context of climate change and threats to sustainability. Many Young Friends feel a particular leading to take action in response to these. As well as co-operating with newer groups who are taking vigorous action, we can take a stand from our centuries-old stable

tradition of testimony. If younger Friends are involved in action with Quaker support, this helps to convey our message to the wider world. Internships of some form are one possible way of support. There are many other possible means.

c) *How do we go forward?*

We recognise the gift of our Quaker Settlement and its seminar programme, and agree with the report's recommendation that future work is undertaken in collaboration with the Settlement. We also long to strengthen our worship and life locally, "in our own place with our own people", and wish to develop and encourage travel in the ministry, with appropriate funding as needed. Such ministry is a gift to wider groups of Friends. We are open to the use of our funds to release Friends, by payment, to enable them to serve us more effectively in various capacities, as way opens. We are aware that care is needed on legal aspects. Prepared study packages and social media are other ways of fostering learning.

The five key aspects, eight topics and suggestions for future action in the working group's report offer helpful guidelines for ways forward. The action proposals are:

- a. that we develop an annual or biennial scheme of financially supporting Friends to travel in the Ministry to multiple meetings and worship groups throughout Aotearoa New Zealand
- b. that we regularly fund Friends for the development of resources that can be used more than once and throughout New Zealand (such as Quaker community development, outreach, education, spiritual nurture).
- c. That each of these are developed in association with the Settlement and its existing resources, and programs.
- d. that we consciously explore:
 - i. funding Friends for a diverse range of activities associated with their callings or expertise to complete work done for Yearly Meeting.
 - ii. funding Friends for a diverse range of activities associated with social action or Quaker witness.

We recognise that we are not limited to these: we remain open to the guidance of the Spirit. We hope the report, and Friends' ongoing responses to it, can be made more widely available by circulation in Meetings, via the Yearly Meeting website, and via some form of blog or online forum, as far as this can be arranged.

Support is needed for Friends considering applications to our funds, so that their requests are shaped to work within the criteria of the fund. If we encourage Friends to take up internships, they need well-organised guides and mentors.

- d) *We recognise* that to enable us to implement these visions, and other leadings as they arise, we need some form of organising structure. We have not yet identified what this should be. We ask our Yearly Meeting Clerks, in collaboration with our Nominations Committee, the Quaker Education Fund Committee, and other Friends, to bring forward through Yearly Meeting Clerks' letter proposals for forwarding this work.
- e) *We now lay down* the working group consisting of Catherine Spencer, Linda Wilson and their support group.

This record is shared with loving greetings by

Your Friends,

Linda Wilson & Catherine Spencer