

WIDER QUAKER FELLOWSHIP, AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

LETTER 161 May 2025

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WITNESS IN THESE TIMES OF WORLDWIDE DIFFICULTY

At the March residential weekend for Mid North Island Monthly Meeting one of the discussions had to do with 'Tolerance'. It included our acceptance or not, of language or actions on an individual level and also as a group, and what our reactions, as Quakers, might be.

As individuals Jesus taught us to render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's (Matthew 22:15-22), and to turn the other cheek when we are assaulted (Matthew 5: 38-42).

We can work on these concepts for ourselves, but how much of this applies when we see our fellow humans suffering from both verbal and physical assaults. What can we do as individuals, what can we as groups of like minded people, for example Quakers, do to either diminish or stop the assaults or ameliorate the effects of the assaults?

We are bombarded with information, even in Aotearoa. The media worldwide spews more ideas and actions than we can take in, too much information. This may possibly be true information but can just as likely be someone's fantasy. With all the problems in the world, wars and conflicts, climate disasters, ignorant people in charge of important facilities— having to disentangle false information can be a step too far.



Okay, I hate seeing the shambles the current federal government is making in the USA. and I'm shocked at the mess the our current government is making in Aotearoa. Here at least we know there will be another election in a few short years. We can't do much about the American problem except be supportive where we can.

I don't think the above quotes from Matthew readily apply to false information. I personally can start with not repeating it, and I can promote the truth when I recognize it according to my education and experience.

There is a place for fiction, that is in story books, not masquerading as truth.

It is not old fashioned or stupid to be honest and to tell the truth, to have integrity. Wikipedia says; 'Integrity is the quality of being honest and having a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values.' It may be considered to be the opposite to hypocrisy.

Here in Aotearoa, Quakers believe ‘integrity’ is one of our basic social testimonies along with simplicity, peace, community, equality and sustainability. Indeed, integrity is key to all these ideas for living life rightly.

While we individually strive in this noisy world to walk a life of honesty and truth, some are called to go further. This excerpt, 7.30 from our book of faith and practice *On these Islands*, describes some of the active work of Christina Gibb, a Friend whose life exemplified integrity and of standing witness to the wrongs of the world.

Yours in Friendship

Carril Karr

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In 2004, and by now in her mid-70s, Christina decided to join the Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT), living and working in Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, for a total of 13 months over four years. On returning from her first stint, she observed “Once you go there, there is absolutely no doubt about the one-sidedness of the situation.” Each time she returned to New Zealand she embarked on a countrywide tour of public meetings and speaking engagements and provided articles for various newspapers. She described a ‘school patrol’ that she and other CPT members ran every morning to make sure that the children at five different schools could get there safely. In 2004 Christina was arrested and detained by Israeli police for eight hours on suspicion of being a terrorist. Christina was a spirited woman with a strong belief in herself, and yet she questioned her thinking, and had doubts, which meant that along with the largeness of her life and activities, she also possessed a humility and was able to walk alongside people from all over the world. Christina lived adventurously and followed George Fox’s exhortation to: “be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them: then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone.”

Testimony to the Grace of God in the life of Christina Gibb (1930-2019)

The Wider Quaker Fellowship is an association of persons of diverse backgrounds who wish to have ties with the Religious Society of Friends without necessarily being in its membership, or who, through isolation, illness or some other circumstance are unable to attend Meeting for Worship. The purpose of the Fellowship is to reflect Quaker life and thought.

Any person who finds the fundamental Quaker testimonies and the Quaker way of life, with its emphasis on sincerity and simplicity, compatible with his or her philosophy of life is welcome to join the Fellowship.

If you wish to make a donation to the WQF—

To make a donation on line, the YM Kiwi bank account number is 38 9001 0669022 02

Be sure to put your name and that the donation is for Wider Quaker Fellowship in the reference spaces. For a tax donation certificate email: treasurer@ym.quakers.nz with the amount and date of the donation and your name and address.

Kiwi bank has stopped accepting cheques if you don't do internet banking you will need to deposit any donation directly into the YM account at a Kiwibank branch.

Seminars at the Quaker Settlement

Winter Work Weekend

From Friday 30 May 2025

To Monday 02 June 2025

Help us progress our care for this precious land and experience the delight of winter at the Settlement over the long holiday weekend. Enjoy chats around the log fire, star gaze in front of a bonfire, eat delicious food and laugh together at our community entertainment evening.

We welcome newcomers as well as familiar faces, families and tamariki to gather with us to work on the land, in the kitchen, enjoy each others company and play together at the settlement.

Walking cheerfully over the Earth

From Friday 27 June 2025

To Sunday 29 June 2025

A weekend with Tim Gee, General Secretary for the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC).

A follow up on the World Plenary Meeting and its outcomes.

Come and reflect on Quaker global priorities and how Aotearoa Friends engage and contribute.

A weekend of fun, fellowship, and singing at the Settlement.

Contact Marion Sanson: marionbsanson@gmail.com

This I know experimentally

From Friday 11 July 2025

To Sunday 13 July 2025

This is a wonderful opportunity to share our stories, reflect on the peak experiences of our lives and the events that have changed us into who we are today.

Facilitators: Christine Gillespie and Rachel Raphael

Women's Art and Spirituality

From Friday 29 August 2025

To Sunday 31 August 2025

Creativity and the experience of Spirit are deeply connected - each holds the heart and the kernel of the other.

During this weekend 'Spirit' will be considered and explored through the use of an interesting range of 'creative arts processes'.

This is an invitation to women of all paths to enter into an unrushed supportive space to find and deepen our experience of 'Spirit' of and within our lives and together.

Facilitators: Fliss Newton and Valerie Morey

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