

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)