

Aotearoa
New Zealand

Friends Newsletter

November 2021 Vol 103 No5



Trust

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New Zealand
**Friends
Newsletter**

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Editorial

The 2021 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Maria Ressa, said, “A world without facts means a world without truth and trust”.

How do we learn to discern facts so that truth and trust prevail? How do we teach each other that ‘I reckon’ is not enough; that an opinion is not enough, that research is more than consulting social media? How do we learn that trust, based as it is on fact and truth, works best when it is mutual?

We have to understand and hold in common what are facts, what is truth, and act accordingly. Trust is core in beating the Covid-19 virus. We trust the government and information from it, and in turn the government trusts us to act wisely on that advice.

One set of facts points us to inequalities in our society - in health, housing, income, education. These inequalities mean reaction to Covid-19 and the uptake of the vaccine differ throughout society.

Facing a common enemy for more than a year should have shown us our interdependence on each other, rich or poor, whatever suburb we live in, whatever our education, our religion, our state of health, or our regard for the law.

Will we see that inequity threatens us all and come to understand, and trust, that a fairer society is a safer society as well?

Brian McNamara

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‘Trust the Process’

AVP Mantra

BY THE BAY OF PLENTY AVP TEAM

All AVP workshops rely heavily on trust as participants are encouraged to share personal life stories and thus expose themselves to the group. AVP Bay of Plenty team would like to share their recent experiences of the strength of the AVP process in facilitating workshops in Samoa and Bay of Plenty, Aotearoa.

In 2018 Alternatives to Violence Bay of Plenty was invited to run the first AVP training workshops in Samoa. The invitation was sparked by a returnee from the USA for whom AVP had been transformative. Since then, many workshops have followed with young people, teachers, women, Matai (village chiefs) and professionals. This process was made easier through our relationships with people in Samoa who trusted us to deliver to their people; no easy feat when they were unfamiliar with AVP. Personal experience then convinced attendees of the AVP programme’s worth, fully engaging with its experiential methodology. The ‘coconut express’ or word of mouth is far stronger than any other medium of communication in the islands of Samoa.

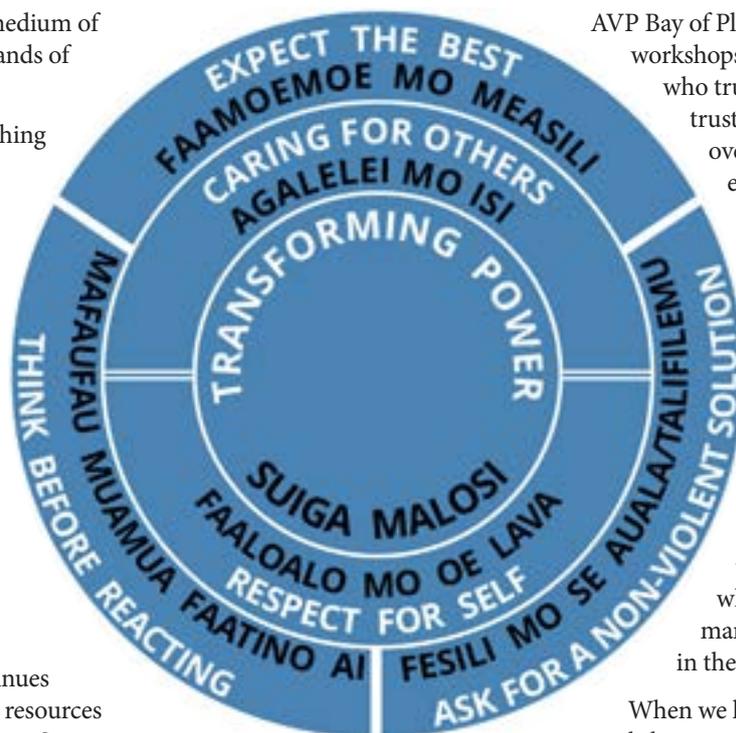
Most Samoans say ‘everything is about relationships’ with people and the environment. Respect and trust are significant qualities with Samoan culture. Our AVP teams have received many blessings from these ‘trusting relationships.’ Samoa now has many facilitators and two dynamic AVP leaders and are no longer reliant on their ‘Kiwi Cuzzies’ to conduct workshops. However, AVP BOP continues in an advisory role. Many resources including the mandala are in Samoan and more recently the AVP manual was also translated into Samoan. – thanks to funding by Quaker Peace and Service Committee Aotearoa.

In the Bay of Plenty several workshops have been held in Rotorua and Whakatāne with women’s groups, NGOs caring for the homeless in emergency housing, nurses, mental health, rural and early childhood education workers and one with student leaders from a local high school. Many participants have often been tāngata whenua. Four Māori facilitators

have been trained in the last year and twelve more will have completed their training in October. Unfortunately, we had to postpone one course in Ruatāhuna and another in Murupara due to COVID19.

In Aotearoa, we have also started the process of translating resources into te reo Māori. We have a bilingual mandala and can now sing our AVP song in English and Māori. The mandala wording was translated by an apprentice facilitator’s brother, a professional te reo Māori translator, and the song was translated overnight by the husband of a participant.

An attender, Ed Reid, from our Whakatāne worship group, made the mandala from one piece of wood, and a professional screen writer printed the English and Māori kupu onto the mandala. She has had a close relationship with us for many years, also printing our certificates, posters and brochures. We are translating some words of the AGENDA sessions into Māori and including local content.



AVP Bay of Plenty is busy running workshops and serving our communities who trust us to deliver; a mutual trust based on relationships built over many years. Our team of experienced facilitators give excellent service and mentor and support our apprentice facilitators. We are also never short of volunteers – as we back each other up. Our workshop meals are always beautifully prepared and shared at our workshops. We are indeed blessed to have great teams of people who we can trust to make it all happen, and who indeed ‘trust the process’- a mantra that we learn very early on in the basic workshop.

When we have a Gathering in AVP BOP workshops on trust, we often use the topic question ‘What qualities do you wish to see in a friend?’ Trust is always high on the list. The blindfold AVP exercise on trust is a firm favourite among participants. It feels OK for our team to show our own vulnerability alongside the ability to learn and address our mistakes.

We strive to be ‘mana enhancing’ and to empower rather than disempower, but above all we have each other’s backs, we trust each other and the AVP process.

Trust and Politics

Community decision making

BY MARIAN HOBBS

What is politics? Politics is community decision-making or plan-making from local board to Cabinet. Too often it is made into a celebrity game, far removed from the reality of our lives. It is often presented as a conflict between personalities, rather than the actual decisions or policies.

But in these last twenty months, the decisions made by our government facing a pandemic have been obviously concerned with the detailed reality of our lives, and they are decisions made by politicians, listening to the advice of experts (scientists in this case). The twenty month treadmill of decisions has been far removed from a celebrity game.

In my experience most government decisions are about how we live: are we living in peace or at war? Are the decisions just or unjust? How are we educated, housed, cared for? Are we sustaining or exploiting our environment?

Governing is about trying to govern with the agreement of most. This requires transparency, clarity of communication, knowledge of detail by the decision-makers and having a plan for the next steps and further out. But most of all governing must work with the goodness in everyone, rather than thinking that those for whom decisions are made are intrinsically bad. We must trust each other.

All the governing tasks are not just undertaken by twenty Cabinet Ministers, but by many hundreds of public servants and specialist advisors. There is need for teamwork, working to deadlines, and leadership that brings this together.

If politics is about communal decision-making, then what is trust? Trust is believing that everyone is working together for the good of all.

First, for trust to work it must work both ways. The governing group must trust that the citizens once clearly informed, can understand and accept the decisions, and implement them. The decision makers must leave wriggle room for the citizens to see that “X” is the best decision and give their assent.

The people must trust that the information is accurate, that the way forward is based on what is the best option for most of the population and that the politicians have clearly thought through the options and have a plan.

Trust is lost when we discover that some information has been withheld because the governors do not trust the people with all the information, e.g. risks in following one option rather than the other.

Trust is lost if politicians make decisions which advantaged “their group” over others.

The problem is how politics has evolved for some into the effort put into retaining power. There is a fine line here. If your party believes in social justice, which will mean that those with economic power may be constrained, then the other grouping/party will try to prove that social justice is unfair to them. Public debate is rarely of the standard that takes place within the public service, or between public service and Ministers. It is more a point scoring than a sober analysis of the options. If we want stronger trust in our communities, we need to practise arguing positively.

When you bring in the fourth estate, the element of a gameshow enters, rather than sober debate. Think of the style of questioning after the one pm briefing. With the mix of social media, the climate is right for distrust to explode and we have only to look at current politics in the USA to see how scary that is.

The contest of ideas, of policies and plans for Aotearoa/ New Zealand is essential, but if we are to trust the political process, the manner in which these arguments take place must be considered and respectful - a trustworthy process.

When a parliamentary select committee is working well, point scoring becomes less important than trying with others to make the legislation, the plan, be fit for purpose. Then all members begin to question the experts, the public servants, in a way that shows respect, even humility: the politician for the expert and the expert for the tightrope that the politician has to walk to get the trust of the people for the decision. This is real “walking in each other’s shoes”.

Trust breaks down when:

- governments keep secrets from the people.
- lies are spread about government decisions or even careless or deliberate misinterpretations of what has been announced are broadcast.
- governments do not trust partners, groups to make decisions for themselves - think of Māori health governance.
- issues are so simplified, that no-one can really understand how the decision was reached. If I cannot gain some understanding of the complex reasons for making a decision, then I will reduce the argument to simple meaningless assertions, that are open to misinterpretation. I must be trusted with the reasons for taking one direction over another, and then my trust that the right decision has been made, will grow.

If as a politician, I do not trust the people with the pros and cons of a decision, if I think that this decision is too difficult for them to understand, then trust is broken. That smacks of

superiority, when actually I, as a politician, am privileged, since I have been exposed to a whole range of arguments.

Good Ministers will always welcome argument around their policy table, especially at the beginning of the process. Those arguments may well differ from those held by the Minister but from such testing discussion, good policy is built.

Somehow, when that policy is introduced to the public, that same initial discussion must be repeated/explored, and maybe the policy will be modified. The more perspectives considered normally builds better decisions which is why there are lengthy consultation processes. However some who are consulted cannot understand why their point of view is not acted upon if they do not realise that there are other opposed viewpoints.

Good politics is about rigorous thinking, strong argument, modification etc. These require trust rather than playing games for publicity or power.

Games that sneer at public servants as faceless bureaucrats, show an unwillingness to trust, to walk in another's shoes, to understand the process of making decisions.

To make politics into a game of rank as to who is most popular, is again to ignore the different strengths of individuals and how they make decisions. Different ways of thinking and presenting arguments contribute to effective plans and a good Meeting! However the media in recent years has played this game of popularity. We can all reflect on good thinkers who did not survive that false heat.

To be effective, trust goes both ways. Politics is about how we make decisions. It should be transparent in order to build trust in the process and in each other.

A wee postscript: I so feel for our current leaders. There are so many consequent decisions over a whole range of issues and managing those decisions to sit well with each other and the consequences is a monumental task. There are many among the senior public servants who have not had a week off since March 2020. It was never so tough for me.

Marian is a Quaker who was a Labour Member of Parliament from 1996 to 2008. She was initially a list MP and then represented the Wellington Central electorate. She served as one of two Assistant Speakers of the House of Representatives.



Young Livi Saliu guiding her very trusting mum, Sark Munro, when taking turns to lead each other on a blindfold walk as part of the Intergenerational Nature Weekend at the Quaker Settlement in October 2020. As participants discovered, negotiating a variety of surfaces and obstacles requires clear communication and plenty of trust!

We Gently Wait

A Lockdown Poem 2021

BY VICTORIA SMITH

As I sat in Wellington taking part in the Christchurch Quaker Meeting Zoom call on Sunday 29 August, I listened to the birdsong and this poem came to me.

We are gently waiting
We wait for those who are ill to be tested
For those who are ill to become well
For those who do not know they are ill to be found.

We gently wait
Whilst thousands turn up to be tested,
For millions to be vaccinated
So we may once again live as we have for the past 15 months.

Whilst we wait,
The silence is deafening,
Birds become more prolific,
The air becomes cleaner.
We take the time to connect more with each other.
Whilst we, the people of New Zealand,
gently wait.

Reflections on Trust

From the Quaker Settlement

FROM SETTLEMENT RESIDENTS

- **Trust is feeling safe when one reaches the end of a journey and turns in at the gate of the Settlement. A feeling of aroha and that all is well.**
- Trust is evidence-based, unlike Faith. I trust out of experience. I trust a person because in the past they've done what they've said they'll do. They've come through, and that's a good indicator of future behaviour.
- I trust Quaker process because I've seen it work many times. Careful, heartfelt listening builds trust.
- Trust shows in many ways.
 - If I meet a new person, I can choose whether to greet them with trust and open my heart for them or I can be cautious and suspicious and keep my heart closed. The other person will no doubt pick up in whatever I am trying to show and react accordingly.
 - Trust can also mean to let go and go with whatever life presents to you and know that everything is exactly the way it should be.
 - If someone in the settlement is willing to pick up a job, we can trust them to do it the best way they can or we can think suspicious thoughts, maybe linking back to past experiences.
 - Trust is to be able to confide in someone and know they will not talk about it to others if asked.
 - When you are in a group of people you can trust you can open up and tell them the good, bad and ugly knowing that they have only the best for everyone in mind and you will not be judged.
 - One more thing: I haven't always lived up to my own expectations, but I trust I will be forgiven, even if it happens in the future.
- The concept of "trust" arises from the duality experience and the fear of otherness. If there is no other, then there is no separation, no need for judgement, simply one as US.
 - Tr-US-t - separate,
 - Or Tru-e-st - judgement,
 - Or Tru-th - universal,
 - Or simply US?
- Trust is associated with optimism of feelings and emotion about future outcomes that are unknown. Two areas that I have always trusted and firmly believed in are being part of this awe-inspiring Universe, and trust in Light and the Quaker process.

A way of building trust and understanding in a community is by communicating regularly and thoughtfully with respect for diversity, compassion, sincerity and openness.

- To trust is to believe in the reliability, truth, ability or strength of something.

Trust has always been an underpinning of Quaker practice

and personal testimony at both a group and individual level.

The shared experience of sitting together in silence, opening to Presence in a spirit of love and trust, has guided Quakers and their communities in their worship and decision making for over 300 years. Trust is the quality that enables this silence and stillness to be at the heart of group decision-making: "Let's sit for a moment in silence and give ourselves space to think about this, to reflect on the ways that can best benefit our community and the wider interests involved". The results of this practice are, almost always, beneficial for all involved.

The joys and challenges of living in community are also affirmed and put to the test at an individual level on a daily basis. The deep Quaker principle guiding human interaction - "Let's see each other in a spirit of light and love", has the same benevolent expectation - harmonious relationships usually result.

In both cases, individual and group experience, trust is the essence that keeps the practice intact, principally because experience shows that the spiritual principles and processes involved actually work.

Other spiritual traditions have similar insights about the experience of trust.

In meditation practice, trust can be seen as a doorway to the higher self, where the practice of stillness and being fully present in the moment can transform our perspectives to embrace the universal energy of abundance and love. Here, trust creates an attitude of hopefulness about life, a sense that the power of love is the greatest power, at least over the long haul, and that life will continue to have meaning and beauty even amidst darkness and suffering.

This trusting in life can allow feelings of gratitude to emerge. And if we stay open to grateful trust, these feelings will bud and grow. The beneficiaries of this attitude are ourselves and those around us. As Johann Wolfgang von Goethe noted: "As soon as you trust yourself, you will know how to live".

FROM HEATHER JAN

As times change and contracts and policies seem to proliferate at an alarming rate, I have been thinking about my unique experience of trust within the Quaker setting.

I have paid for the building of two houses at the Quaker Settlement, the first in 1985 in partnership with a friend who said he would repay my half if it didn't work out. The house was built, we moved in and after six months I decided to move on, and my friend repaid my contribution. At this stage there were no written agreements and no licence to occupy were issued although they must have been issued sometime after I left, as my friend continued to occupy the house until his death this year.

In 2000 I again paid for the building of a house at the

Settlement with nothing on paper. Where else would you build a house on land you didn't own with no legal agreement? And what architect and organisation would order building materials with no guarantee that the person the house was being built for would pay up when the bills came in? As far as I know every house was built this way.

This led me to think further of the trust Yearly Meeting showed

in enabling the pioneer settlers to establish an educational centre for N.Z. Quakers and the enormous commitment and trust those first settlers showed. They sold their homes in various parts of the country and built new homes in a paddock which at that point contained no community buildings other than the workshop which they paid to construct. Along with vision and dedicated hard work the Settlement could not have come into being without TRUST.

Kaitiaki of Peace

Becoming effective agents

BY MIKE O'HAGAN

To be effective kaitiaki of peace in our relationships, families, workplaces and groups we have to have peace within.

When we Quakers experience conflict it is very easy for us to become stressed because we so value peace. We need to understand what is going on inside us and to develop skills to calm ourselves because emotional states are contagious.

We are hard wired to freeze, fight or avoid if our brain interprets something as a threat and when we are in such a state, we cannot hear or learn. That is why it is so important to avoid saying or doing anything that the brain of the *other* person will interpret as an attack.

The father of analytical psychology, Carl Jung, suggests that when we have a very strong emotional response to another it has more to do with something inside us rather than something about the other person.

In the light of these facts, it is important that those who enter a conflict resolution dialogue get themselves into a calm state at the beginning. There are several things that can help you to become calm and remain so:

- **Remind yourself that people or events do not make you angry or afraid. We get ourselves angry, or afraid about what others are doing or saying.**
- **Own your thoughts and emotions. They are yours and no one else's. You can choose to change them.**
- **Simply observe, (without judgement) what you are feeling and thinking. (Observed thoughts and emotions lose their power.)**
- **Notice your breathing and make sure you are breathing deeply and slowly ... 6 seconds in and 6 seconds out. (There are resources online to help with this discipline.)**

Listening is the key

Talking and listening, when done well, avoids the development of unnecessary conflict and opens the way to satisfactory resolution of conflict.

When people use the skills of reflective listening to check they have understood what the other has said and to assure the other that they have been heard, both become calm or remain

calm. That means they are more able to hear each other. This makes it possible for them to say what they are thinking or feeling in the form of an "I Statement." Persevering in the dialogue, always using reflective listening before making "I Statements," opens the way to reach a satisfactory outcome. Sometimes the statements:

- **clear up a misunderstanding. One or other says something like "I did not realise that it was a problem for you, and I am quite happy to change."**
- **identify the needs each of them has. Then they can explore possible ways for each to have their needs met.**
- **identify that they have different values. This requires patient and persistent use of the key skills of reflectively listening and making I statements. I have routinely witnessed couples who have very strongly held values calmly talking and listening to each other. Sometimes they discover they have more common ground than they realised. They end up with a better understanding of the other's point of view and can live with their differences. Rarely do they decide to go their separate ways.**

Constantly using these skills is useful not just in conflict situations. It can be a way of life that enhances all relationships. In my experience, most people find it a real challenge to actually practise these skills even though they have an intellectual understanding of them and appreciate their value. Guided practice is the only way to acquire and develop them. Even if you are already proficient, it is wise to practise the skills.

Practice

Find someone else who is keen to practise their skills with you. For one minute one tells a story of something that has happened in their life. The other just listens without interrupting. After a minute the listener repeats back the story the other has told. Then swap roles. Give each other feedback on what you did well and what you could do even better.

Celebrate 'that of God in everyone' by truly listening and responding to others.

Mike O' Hagan is a certified Transforming Communication® Instructor and NLP Trainer.

Relational Trust

Conversations with young people

BY JUDITH GRAHAM

As a high school counsellor, I often have conversations with young people who are questioning their place in the world and the purpose of their lives. While I am careful not to impose my own beliefs, I work on the understanding that having an open heart and practicing compassion for self and others, nourishes our spiritual as well as mental health.

In some of these conversations trust, or more frequently lack of trust or broken trust, has become a source of pain. It may be that a friend has “told everyone” about something and “now the whole school knows”, a boyfriend has cheated on them, or that their parents “don’t trust me”. Often, young people are still very ‘black and white’ in their thinking, and the bruising or breaching of trust can have a devastating effect. Words like ‘always’, ‘never’, and ‘should’ limit the possibility of movement, change and growth in relationships. In these moments, it can be helpful to have a conversation that explores the notion of trust, not as an absolute entity - i.e. you either have it or you don’t - but as a multi-layered ongoing process.

Having and holding trust is foundational in the development of our sense of safety in the world. The Trust versus Mistrust stage is the first stage of psychologist Erik Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development. In Erikson’s theory, in the first 18 months of life a child answers the question – can I trust the people around me? As such, the presence (or absence) of trust shapes how we develop. Having enough trust that our needs will be met, means we can reach out, explore, and learn. Mistrust is not necessarily bad, it has its place alerting us to danger and the need to be wary, but too much mistrust and a fragile sense of safety makes the world a dangerous place and brings a number of problems with it.

When we think of interpersonal relationships, researcher and author Brené Brown describes trust as a slow-building, layered process that happens over time. She uses the metaphor of imagining a jar filled with marbles and each act of kindness, respect, remembering, listening, non-judgement, support, and other small and ordinary actions of care are like putting a marble in the jar. It is these moments of love that build relational trust. When betrayals and breaches of trust tip marbles out of the jar, there is always the possibility of rebuilding, layering, and re-growing trust in the relationship, marble by marble.

The conversations I have with young people explore the relationship between Trust⇌Mistrust: what is helpful, what is harmful, how we might hold both at the same time. Just as the beauty of marbles is in the colour, pattern and size differences between them, the presence of trust in a relationship is also nuanced. For example: as a parent I might actively hold the belief that my daughter is at her friend’s house where she said she’d be, and at the same time I might also make room for the (hopefully slim) possibility that she could in fact be in a car with her new boyfriend. Mistrust is not necessarily ‘bad’ but it needs to be held carefully as overblown mistrust can make

us unnecessarily anxious. Trust is not gullibility; we need to build our capacities for discernment and acknowledge when continual violations of trust are causing harm that it is wiser to limit or end a relationship. And, particularly with teens, the trick is to remember that building and rebuilding trust is an ongoing process.

I have found it helpful to have conversations about how do we ‘do’ trust? We inquire about the actions that fill the ‘marble jar’ in a relationship, and what might cause some marbles to be lost. We notice how extending or withholding trust effects a relationship. We think about trust’s friends and allies, those other qualities that strengthen and nurture trust – such as hope, care, belief, love, openness, honesty – and how they too show up in relationships and support the growth of trust.

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

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

Call for Contributions

EDITORIAL TEAM

As suggested by the organising committee of Summer Gathering, the editorial team encourage worship groups, monthly meetings or just groups of Friends to get together over the summer in lieu of Summer Gathering. We welcome accounts and photos of Friends’ activities over the summer as the cancellation of Summer Gathering will leave quite a hole in content for the first issue of Friends Newsletter for 2022!

Also, taking up a concern from the Young Friends Meeting for Worship for Business 5-7 April the theme for the first issue 2022 will be a *Quaker Response to Colonisation and Decolonisation*. For further information about this concern please refer to page 23 in September 2021 issue of the Aotearoa, New Zealand Friends Newsletter,

We look forward to receiving contributions on either topic or other items by 1 February 2022.

Naikan

A Japanese Method of Developing Gratefulness

BY JILLIAN YORKE

Japan is not a litigious society; in fact, most Japanese people rarely if ever have anything to do with a lawyer, and the lawyer-citizen ratio is low. Likewise, it is far less common in Japan to get face-to-face counselling or therapy than it is in other countries and there are relatively few psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists relative to the population. This can be problematic for non-Japanese living in the country who want to see one. Many Japanese people that I've discussed this with find the popularity of such activities in countries such as the United States downright puzzling. This doesn't mean that Japan does not have its fair share of mental health issues – of course, it does, such as the huge problem of *hikikomori* (extreme, long-term social withdrawal by “modern-day hermits” who may not leave their house for years at a time – estimated to number more than half a million people) and high suicide rates.

Japanese people are the second largest group of callers to *Tokyo English Lifeline (TELL)*, an English-language telephone counselling service that responds to calls and texts from the entire country. Some of these callers/texters have lived overseas and are fluent in English. On returning to Japan, they experience difficulties and may be teased for being “the nail that sticks out”. Others simply find it easier to talk about their feelings and problems in English rather than in Japanese, a language in which emotions tend to be simmering underneath, rather than specifically expressed in words.

Although Western-style therapy has never really taken root in the country, Japan has its own homegrown brands of training to develop greater self-awareness and understanding. One of these is *Naikan*, whose Japanese characters comprise *nai* 内 (meaning, inward) and *kan* 観 (meaning, to see), so the term can be literally translated as “looking within”. *Naikan* is a means of developing greater knowledge of our inter-connectedness with everything, and deepening our gratitude for all that links, sustains and supports us, especially for the people in our lives, and our relationships with them. The underlying philosophy ties in with the work of Vietnamese monk and activist Thich Nhat Hanh, whose books and teachings have made the fundamental Buddhist concept of “interbeing” better known in the West.

Naikan was developed by Yoshimoto Ishin (1916-1988), a businessman and devout Buddhist of the Jodo Shinshu sect who sought answers in Buddhist temples from the age of six, after his younger sister Chieko died of measles. As a young man, he engaged in strict ascetic practices called *mishirabe* involving severe sensory deprivation but, like Shakyamuni (Buddha), he came to believe that the path to enlightenment does not have to involve such extremes. He developed *Naikan* as a less difficult, more approachable method for developing greater self-awareness, using it first with juvenile offenders



Naikan: the Japanese characters comprise *nai* (meaning inward) and *kan* (meaning to see), so the term can be translated as “looking within”.

and then introducing it to the general public. Yoshimoto Ishin later served as a prison chaplain, taking the practice to inmates of all ages.

Naikan involves continuous self-reflection over a period of time, often at a one-week retreat. The practitioner meditates on three basic questions in relation to a particular person, usually starting with their mother:

- What have I received from X?
- What have I given to X?
- What troubles and difficulties have I caused X?

Note: The fourth logical question here: “What troubles and difficulties has X caused me?” is deliberately omitted, because it is felt that we tend to have ready answers to this question, and that an over-emphasis on it leads only to more suffering.

Practitioners are encouraged to go deeper and deeper into these questions, until they come to see just how much they have actually received from others, no matter what their background or childhood experiences. For instance, even if you had an abusive mother, you can still be grateful that she gave birth to you. You then painstakingly apply the three questions to each of your other important relationships, in turn. During the sessions, the practitioner is regularly visited by a guide, enabling them to voice the discoveries they have made. A friend who experienced a one-week *Naikan* retreat felt that it greatly deepened and enriched her daily life.

I believe that *Naikan* resonates with the Quaker values of the equality and interconnectedness of us all (in the sense of seeking that of God in everyone), respecting and honouring the other, and walking cheerfully through the world.

#gopeaceable movement

global grassroots project

BY JANE BANFIELD

Imagine a day, not too far off, when each encounter you have is met with empathetic understanding. The person who has mistakenly tail-ended your car, the phone company employee, the government official, the person whose view on vaccination differs from your own, each listen with care to what you have to say. What if, for the first time since the advent of farming led to the decline of collaboration as the social norm, we humans have the wherewithal within easy reach to transition to a collaborative, empathetic and peaceable world?

The serendipitous arrival of two widely accessible social tools, Social Media and the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) model changes the ballgame. As I see it, these two concepts open the way for a #gopeaceable movement to emerge and 'go viral', normalising nonviolent interactions between people across the globe, and I'm looking for two co-visionaries to explore this vision further.

If you feel weighed down by the judgemental labels flung across social media, family dinner tables, political forums, and woven into self-talk, you are not alone. Indeed, "It's no sign of good health to be well adjusted to a sick society," says Johann Hari. I sense the public are poised, ready for a transformational way to restore community and negotiate difference. When the ship is sinking, passengers search for lifebelts.

Normalising nonviolence could avoid the ship of humanity sinking. After all, the hierarchical model of power over others so entrenched in our society is not the only way. The forest dwelling Baaka people, hunter gatherers I worked alongside in Central African Republic, like Quakers, avoid hierarchy and base their social model around collaboration, not competition. We in the West could structure things differently: research shows our one year-olds are naturally collaborative until socialised to accept adversarial exchanges as normal during childhood. Imagine our common future once organisational design of government, school, and business creates the right conditions for empathy and collaboration to emerge.

A grassroots social movement with groundswell strong enough to open the way for the emergence of empathy as the norm for the 21st century may seem fanciful, yet it's surely worth exploring. Let's consider the 'seeds of war' in judgemental behaviour, the power of the Nonviolent Communication (NVC) model to transform human interactions, and how social media could role model nonviolence into the furthest reaches of the globe.

"When two people relate to each other authentically and humanly, God is the electricity that surges between them."

Martin Buber

Culture wars about 'who is right' and 'who is wrong' disconnect us from each other, yet judgemental language is currently normalised and accepted in all strata of society. Perhaps you yourself still view others through a lens of 'who is right' and 'who is wrong'?

In contrast, the NVC model provides a tool to create judgement-free interactions. The approach was developed by clinical psychologist, Marshall Rosenberg (1934 – 2015) out of research into the causes of violence, and how to reduce it. Rosenberg was curious why some people remained non-judgemental and open however those around them behaved; while others shifted into blame, judgement, and retribution. He encapsulated his findings into a practical tool. For the first time, the option of a nonviolent response is in easy reach of everyone for face-to-face, email, and social media encounters.

Nonviolence is not an absence of something. It's an affirmative way to show up, the 'Ahimsa' philosophy in Gandhi's movement. While 'non-violent' people simply avoid violent acts, those practising 'nonviolence' use their behaviour to build peace. That hyphen makes all the difference.

"All that has been integrated into NVC has been known for centuries about consciousness, language, communication skills, and use of power that enable us to maintain a perspective of empathy for ourselves and others, even under trying conditions." Marshall Rosenberg

The NVC model is simple. There is an understanding that all humans share the same array of 'universal basic needs' and this is what connects us. Practitioners learn to reframe dialogue in a non-judgemental way, following a four-step process: Observation - Feeling - Need - Request. With judgement removed, a person finds they honour the needs of 'the other' as well as their own, needs often hidden deep below the dialogue. For me, there's a huge relief at no longer getting embroiled in arguments, and now judgements from others (and self) no longer restrict my spirit, former bouts of depression have disappeared.

Take what happened to me last week for example. "Jane, you're disrespectful and uncaring," my neighbour, with whom I normally get on well, called out. Years ago, I would have reacted with self-justification, grovelling apology, or verbal counterattack, or perhaps all three. No longer! At the core of NVC is the understanding that in every action or behaviour, 'everyone is meeting their needs the best way they can at the time', and I recognised my neighbour was doing just that, albeit in a clunky way. For unrelated reasons

she'd had a difficult week, and my genuine mistake not noticing where a friend had parked had triggered her anger. Though her words were set to push us apart, NVC insight meant I guessed beneath the words, sensing her longing for empathetic connection. The potential 'seeds of war' germinated into deeper closeness.

After developing the NVC approach, Rosenberg initiated peace programs in war-torn nations, held workshops in 60 countries, and set up NVC schools. Today hundreds of NVC trainers across the globe teach this nonviolent approach, while many other initiatives such as AVP, Restorative Circles, and Alcoholics Anonymous similarly seed peaceable engagement into diverse communities. At the same time within western society, growing numbers seek to transition to lifestyles in flow with the earth and their peers. Eco-philosopher Joanna Macy calls this shift, "The Great Turning."

"While the initial activity might seem to exist only at the fringes, when their time comes, ideas and behaviours become contagious: the more people pass on inspiring perspectives, the more these perspectives catch on. At a certain point the balance tips and we reach critical mass. Viewpoints and practices that were once on the margins become the new mainstream." Joanna Macy

Nonviolence still hasn't mainstreamed though, despite these pockets of peaceable engagement. So that's where social media, often slammed for its destructive effects on community, could come in! Like fungal mycelia that spread unseen through the soil, social media has capacity to carry the countercultural message of nonviolence into the heart of every community in the world.

I've been spending an hour or two each week over the past two years on Facebook and Twitter, experimenting with NVC. I seek to engage with the angriest or most abusive person I can find. The outcomes are heart-warming: the angry, anti-government gun-toting Republican 'antivaxxer' turns out to be an anxious father wanting the best for his pre-schooler; the climate change denier is simply prioritising fears about mortgage payments on his family's home if he lost his job in the oil-industry. For me, there's still a sense of wonder every time the dialogue opens up as the other person realises there is no judgement, no 'being right' or 'wrong'.

There's a challenge with engaging peaceably on social media though – it's countercultural, so can feel lonely and it rapidly drains my capacity. In a world geared for people to hold power-over positions, at times when support is lacking, it's easy to feel like retreating to old adversarial ways. Other times, I find myself on the verge of giving up: pushback feels intense when a person swears, aims to diminish my value, or mocks my words. And while for me the words of Marshall Rosenberg hold true, "There's no information about the person being judged in a judgment," it's not something I'd want others to face alone.

I envisage people coming on board #gopeaceable as self-created three-person 'seedpods' to ensure no-one

attempts NVC without mutual support. If a person has others to mourn with when things don't go right, and to celebrate with when they do, they are much more likely to continue with the as-yet countercultural NVC approach. Apps could support the movement with online NVC training and access to experienced NVC trainers, underpinned with information crowd-sourced, Wikipedia-style.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

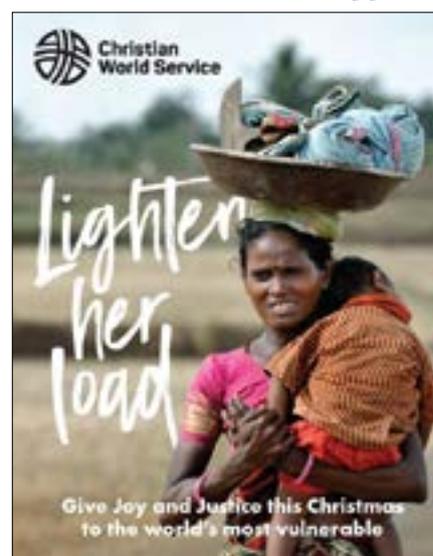
As I see it, a **#gopeaceable movement** with robust support would reclaim social media as a peaceable public space. (Remember when Facebook was just a way to connect with friends?) Encountering someone who has dropped judgement of others inspires curiosity and seems to be catching. Furthermore, social media provides a perfect practice space for learners of NVC because written dialogue leaves time to think. Imagine a culture of nonviolence reverberating throughout virtual spaces until it spills out across the real world.

And that's where you come in! Inspired by the famous injunction of Margaret Mead, I'm seeking two others to join me to meet as a 'seedpod' online over the next 8 weeks to co-vision how a **#gopeaceable movement** could take root and grow. Are you one of them?

Jane can be contacted at zerowastegranny@gmail.com

Joy and Justice

Christian World Service Christmas Appeal



"Seek justice,
rescue the
oppressed,
defend the
orphan, plead
for the widow."
Isaiah 1:17

Murray Overton, as the new director of Christian World Service (CWS), would like to acknowledge the annual QPS grant that Friends so generously contribute and asks that we support the annual Christmas appeal. This year the Appeal features five stories from CWS partners seeking justice and dignity in these troubled times.

More information is available at <http://christmasappeal.org.nz/>

Review of a Quaker Seminar

Building our community – what part do I play?

BY RACHEL RAPHAEL

Making the commitment to attend a seminar at the Settlement – having the time, money and feeling of space in my life is always such a special act. It brings a feeling of expansion - a feeling of nurturing and caring for my spiritual path, along with the obvious gain of time spent deepening community with like-minded people/Friends. I was nervous about attending the ‘Building Our Community’ workshop for all that. Fears of leaping in and committing to more than I could then deliver held me back at first, but - apart from foolishly volunteering to write a piece for the newsletter - I managed to escape relatively unscathed, with a great gain in knowledge and experience shared.

We met for a ‘get to know each other’ session after the obligatory, delicious meal on the Friday night. It was fascinating to note that of the twenty-one participants in the seminar seven had been clerks for Yearly Meeting at some stage, and another group of seven had attended Friends School. Then there were those of us still enjoying learning Quaker processes, which made for a very rich and varied series of discussions during the weekend.

On Saturday morning we had a wonderful session with Linley entitled ‘What is it that I want from the Quaker Community that I am part of?’ After we had broken into small groups and brainstormed our thoughts and ideas, Linley skilfully gathered these under four headings:

1. What we can gain from any community.
2. What we can gain from within any Faith Community.
3. What we can gain that is **unique to Quakers**: continuing revelation (searching for the light in our lives), testimonies in action, recognising when silent worship is needed = spontaneous, seeing that of god in all people, spiritual enrichment, valuing the security of Quaker processes, opportunity to learn about Quaker processes, living discernment, sensitive and/or supportive relationships arising from Quaker spirituality and worship, no hierarchy, diversity in faith and belief (theological diversity).
4. Finally, ‘Fruits of our endeavours’: help make the world a better place, sense of service, equality, respect for indigenous peoples, commitment to Treaty principles, action on Environment crises.

I found this way of listing our needs both inspiring and grounding. The third category allowed me to clearly see and appreciate the richness of the Quaker community that I am a part of. When I first joined the Quakers in my late 30’s, I fell in love with the quiet and the deepened sense of listening inherent within the space of gathering together in community. I was particularly impressed with the way the clerk would come up with a minute at Business Meetings. After seemingly very disparate viewpoints had been shared, there would be this miraculous melding of ideas into a few sentences, which would then be tempered by the people gathered until it resonated for the Meeting as a whole.

Whilst I loved the weekly Meeting, I was studying full time as well as working, so that at times on a Sunday even going to Meeting was too much for my desperate need to regenerate the inner introvert. It was at this time that a dear Quaker friend said to me: “So you realise that you don’t need to attend Meeting in order to be a Quaker?” These words allowed me to release some of the inner condemnation I always feel at not being capable of contributing enough in this too busy world, and gave me the space to slowly deepen my conviction of Quakerism over the coming years, despite not attending many meetings.

During the Seminar we met for a number of sessions, which offered me a deeper grasp and understanding of the many and varied roles needed within our Quaker community. At times everyone had differing points of view, some of which gave me pause to consider e.g. for those of us who may not regularly attend Meeting for Worship “How do they expect it will still even be running and there for them to attend?” This particularly resonates for me now, as I look around my local Meeting in Whanganui and realise I am, at fifty plus, the youngest Quaker attending! (Quick, better get to it and learn more of our wonderful Quaker processes, as well as encourage some of you lovely Quakers out there to move to this vibrant little town!)

Other quotes and thoughts I found worth pondering include:

- What do we need to make Meeting for Worship thrive?
- Do it together - Remember “Democracy doesn’t work unless we all do it”.
- Committees are not ‘on top’ – they are the safety net underneath.
- The primary responsibility rests with us all – ‘to see the holes and what needs doing’ = ‘Communication is key’!
- Find ways of being more inclusive, offer different types of communal gatherings, leave people be to form their own connections.
- Is there pastoral care for the Pastoral Care Committee?
- Change our meeting styles e.g. have a song session occasionally!

There was the deep recognition that it is very easy to leave the bulk of the ‘work’, of being on committees, or of setting up and running meetings, to those few who seem ultra-capable within our Quaker communities. This has the inherent danger, of course, of people experiencing burn-out, as well as failing to nurture and engage the fledgling leadership qualities within others in our community, who may blossom with some small added tasks to allow them to be of service.

My arms encircle the concept of each of us holding the gathered energy of community and fellowship, with fragments of togetherness actions, I can take in the smallest of ways – phoning another friend, arranging a small meal or get together to see a movie, play a board game, or simply chat for an hour or two, having a ‘shared task together-time’ like attacking the weeds and overgrown plants at the Meeting House, or attending Meeting for Worship!

Now is the Hour

To reach deeper into our un-shared Quaker heritage

BY SUE STOVER

We are halfway through our 'Reading Project' – the first stage of the revision of our Quaker Faith and Practice. By the middle of next year, we expect to compile and distribute new material to worship groups for discernment. We have over 100 contributions so far. As well as text, we're starting to gather in graphics – photos of paintings, drawings, and embroidery.

Some insightful, perhaps inspiring, material has become evident by trawling the internet. We discovered, for example, a Quaker collection amongst the Rare Books held at the Auckland City Library. It included minutes and newsletters up to 100 years old. It included a 1903 biography of Ann Fletcher Jackson, who travelled in colonial Aotearoa, building a community of faith amongst isolated Friends.

Some equally insightful material has appeared out of personal archives. Out of that box in the attic. Or on that bookshelf. Or that journal that has sat unopened for decades.

Interestingly, two recent examples illustrate the power of the invitation. The revision committee recognised that there are people who had inspired us yet were not evident in our current Faith and Practice. Did they leave a legacy that could be shared

through the next iteration of our Faith and Practice?

We contacted those who might be holders of that legacy – and Yes! They did leave writings that speak of the divine spark and the evidence of faith in practice. We are sure that there is more material out there. Under the bed. In the garage. In your local library. In your cousin's attic

If the way opens for you, please grasp this opportunity to bring those stories into the light. You can contact the Faith and Practice Revision Committee at

faith-practice@quaker.org.nz.

From the poetry of Ruby Dowsett. The eldest grand-daughter of Ann Fletcher Jackson, Ruby was deeply involved in Friends communities, locally, nationally and internationally. She initiated the 'Round the world Quaker letters' for children – continuing Ann's focus on drawing Friends' together.

This poem 'The choice is ours' was written in 1964, and according to her husband, Edward, it was Ruby's "last effort at verse". He saw it as a "picture of Ruby's way of life... a testament of faith. In suffering she chose life and expended herself to the limit of endurance. Ruby chose life and accepted the fact of death. In her last months here, she was 'in weakness made strong'.

The choice is ours

Every hour confronts us with new crossroads.

This way, that way, which way?

And life is held in delicate balance

As we decide our day.

The choice is ours. The choice is always ours,
And colours all we do

With weaknesses, or a strength of inflowing
Creating life anew.

Oft we are baffled by which choice to make,
Cluttered or unfulfilled.

Father, to Thee we turn! Give unto us
The insight and the will.

And a quietness with an inner calm,
A consciousness of Thee
That carries us beyond self-centredness
So that we truly see.

From the writings of Enid Bloomfield. Enid as a young woman fled Nazi Germany and returned to post-World War II as part of the Friends Service Council effort. The Council subsequently led to the awarding to Quakers of the 1947 Nobel Peace Prize. But Enid's first assignment was with Friends Relief Service (FRS).

My first assignment was at Chaigely Manor in rural Lancashire, which had been turned into a school/ hostel for bombed-out children from Liverpool. They were the toughest kids I had ever met – violent, swearing and all kinds of behaviour problems.

Fifteen FRS members were both teachers and homemakers for 40 children aged 8-14 years. I was their cooking teacher as well as the cook, and later became the matron! We spent hours discussing their problem and trying to find ways which would be more co-operative and less punitive. Gradually their behaviour improved. It was hard work, but also lots of fun, and a great joy to be working with a bunch of such enthusiastic and committed people.

The Gift that Keeps on Giving!

The Spiritual Nurture Programme 2022

When we gift ourselves the time to focus on our own spiritual lives, our relationships with ourselves, with others, and with that which we may call the divine, the light, maybe even God - quite remarkable things can happen. Those of you reading this who have been involved in one or more previous Spiritual Nurture Programmes will no doubt recall some highlights and insights that have stayed with you ever since. Some of these might even qualify as 'life-changing'.

The nine-month programme starts with a weekend at the Quaker Settlement in Whanganui. At this session there will be the invitation to begin a reflection on your 'spiritual journey' which will, over the following few weeks, provide a useful overview of your spiritual life and practice so far. This spiritual autobiography will give an idea of any 'growing edges', the points that may be beckoning us to further exploration!

At the second, week-long residential there will be encouragement and support to develop ideas arising from this careful examination of your own life and which may already be prompting you to adventures of a new kind! Or it may be something quiet and introspective, or a practical project - there is no way of knowing where the inward prompting will lead, or what form it will take.

Should you feel drawn to the Spiritual Nurture Programme you will be asked to contribute your unique presence to creating a prayerful, safe, and non-judgmental space where we can each explore freely. We shall come together not to change one another, but to be open to being changed ourselves by the presence of the Spirit. Support and encouragement are offered throughout, both by the facilitators and by a small support group of your own choosing, living locally, or easily accessible to you.

There will be a final shorter residential to round off the programme, to investigate and assess possible ways forward, if desired. Given the nature of the times, one or more of the residential may take place virtually.

Dates of the residential which form the beginning, mid-point and ending of the programme

18th-20th February, 7th-14th July, 11-13th November

Registration deadline: 31st January 2022

Facilitation team and resource people

Ann Banks	Email: annbanks101@gmail.com
Phone: 09 6306834	
Val Bone	Email: annievbone@gmail.com
Phone: 09 6306834	
Linley Gregory	Email: lcg@pl.net
Phone: 09 6388662	
Lesley Young	Email: lesley.nz@gmail.com
Phone: 09 8150558	

All the facilitators are members of Northern Monthly Meeting and usually attend Mount Eden worship group. We encourage you to contact any of us for more information or if you would like a conversation about any aspect of the programme.

Cost should not be a deter anyone from enrolment in the programme. Funding is available from:

- Your Monthly Meeting via your pastoral and spiritual care committee.
- Quaker Education Fund (QEF) via your pastoral and spiritual care committee.

The full cost is estimated to be between \$700 and \$900 depending on the level of accommodation required at the Settlement. All meals and common resources are included. Please note all meals will be vegetarian and additional dietary requirements can be accommodated.

Register online at:

quakers.nz/spiritual-nurture-programme or contact any of the facilitators.

QPSANZ News

We have just considered four local peace grant applications and we accepted them all. We ask recipients of local peace grants to send us reports when they have used the money, letting us know how the money was used, whether they achieved their objectives, whether they would do anything differently another time. These reports are very helpful.

Our next meeting is to decide our annual grants, and because we have joined the Council for International Development, those grants are set up with a *Letter of Understanding* which describes how the money can and cannot be used and requires an annual report as to how the grant was used. We have stopped funding at least one project because they did not send the annual report. Our written agreements for Loxley awards include details about use of funds, when reports will be given to us, when funds will be given.

So, while no system is perfect, I think Quakers can have considerable trust as to how our funding is used.

A reminder: Loxley award applications are due by 15th November.

Aroha Mai, Aroha Atu

Summer Gathering theme

BY JUDY LIGHTSTONE AND JOEL HILDEBRANT

Shortly after last year's Summer Gathering, we were walking around Lake Taupō when we saw what looked like sidewalk graffiti that read: "Aroha Mai, Aroha Atu". Everyone in Aotearoa knows the word *Aroha*, and the two of us have studied enough te reo to know that *mai* means towards the speaker (like *haere mai* means come here) and *atu* means away from the speaker. So the "graffiti", roughly translated, said something like "Love in towards me, love out from me", evidently implying that the two concepts are related.

This felt like an echo of the Summer Gathering, where we had just seen Murray's presentation on *Care for the Planet* (now a best-selling Quaker pamphlet) where he spoke about "spirit" as "relationship," based on Martin Buber's philosophy, rather than as an externality. Love, or spirit, exists in-between and among rather than outside or above. It exists between and among various life forms; human, non-human animal, plant, landscape, sea, wind, etc. and is manifested by showing respect and reverence in these relationships. This is key to most indigenous world views, and Māori know this; it is essential to their culture.

In Martin Buber's "modes of existence," Murray showed a contrast in Buber's philosophy between his utilitarian "It World" and his reciprocal "World of Relation." In the latter, we become realised as full beings through our relationships with others. He extended this concept to include the natural world; to live in reciprocal relation with it rather than to simply exploit it. We must relearn to see both each other and our planet relationally, in I-Thou terms, if we are to survive together. One puts out Love and Compassion, one gets them back.

Eileen Flanagan, a Quaker activist working with the Anishinaabe who are fighting the pipeline in Minnesota, wrote something particularly relevant to this in her newsletter*:

"In Anishinaabe author Robin Wall Kimmerer's beautiful book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, she relates that she often asks her botany students how many love the Earth. Every hand goes up. Then she asks how many believe that the Earth loves us back. They squirm awkwardly. They were taught to think of the Earth as passive, just as I was, and that conditioning goes deep.... Kimmerer's account of the Anishinaabe prophesy for this time says that humanity will have to choose between the green path and the cinder path. Kimmerer asserts that beings from the more than human world will help us in this choice, since they want to live, too. I thought of myself as open to mysticism; I am a Quaker after all. But really my understanding of what's possible has been narrowed by a worldview that sees the rest of Creation as inanimate."

Both of us have always enjoyed the Māori components of our Summer Gatherings, from our first one at Te Aute Boys' School with its lovely Marae, powerfully moving *Powhiri*, and beautifully painted *whare kai* (cafeteria), through to te reo Māori lessons, *waiata* and *tikanga* at Taranaki Summer Gathering a few years ago, to our casual attempts at conversations in partial-Māori with Niwa at the last gathering.

So here on the sidewalk in Taupo was this little *whakataukī* – a Māori proverb, we later learned – that seemed to embody both Buber's concepts and our quest for bilingualism and biculturalism. We feel that "Aroha Mai/Aroha Atu" expresses Martin Buber's "I/Thou" in terms unique to Aotearoa. It caused us to imagine a Gathering premised on reciprocal loving-kindness for each other, and on reciprocity with Māori and with Papatūānuku, Mother Earth. We want to see our next Gathering celebrating the sacredness of relationship in a Māori-inspired cultural and linguistic context. That is what we hope we are heading into this summer, and what we hope our Summer Gathering theme will help us to co-create.

* <https://mailchi.mp/89910dd32f96/expanding-my-world-view-naming-the-lessons?e=3bdb54c974>



Cancellation of Summer Gathering 2021/22

Unfortunately, due to Covid 19, the Summer Gathering Committee for 2021/22 have decided to cancel the event. All those who have enrolled will be contacted and refunded if they have made a payment.

Book Review

Quakerism – the Basics: A book to open your eyes

REVIEWER: ELIZABETH DUKE

Quakerism – the Basics

**By Margery Post Abbott and Carl Abbott,
Routledge, London & New York, 2021
Available from Quaker Books NZ\$ 32.50**

We have all needed a book like this. Marge Post Abbott, whom a number of Friends may have met during her recent visit, is a scholar and writer on the big questions of being a Quaker in today's world, including encouragement to us to become 'everyday prophets'. *Quakerism – the Basics*, a collaboration between Marge and her husband Carl Abbott, is an introduction which takes a worldwide view. It is very readable - not a quick read, but an exciting exploration for both the newcomer and experienced Friend; I have learnt much.

Chapter 1 does not begin in 17th century England, but with the World Gathering of Young Friends in 1985, and a quotation from the Epistle of that Gathering, one of the most powerful reconciling expressions among Friends. The chapter is headed *Lives led by the Spirit: action grounded in faith*, and after a brief summary of origins takes us to mediation in Kenyan elections, peace-making in the Nigerian civil war, the origins of AVP in a prison in New York State, young Aymara women in Bolivia, the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Friends – and that's just a start.

Marge and Carl ground the life and service of Friends today in the religious experiences of early Friends, so they give us enough history. This includes a careful account of the growth and changes in Quaker communities in North America, which is important to help us make sense of the diversity of Friends worldwide today (I am writing shortly before World Quaker Day). Chapter 4 takes us to *A worldwide faith*, the perspective which permeates the book. We are reminded that some of the largest Quaker populations in the world are in East Africa and Latin America and are invited to learn from their experience. Chapters on *Worship and practice* and *Ministry, mission and theology* explore our life today, and how the underlying unity finds diverse expressions in practice. I recommend the simple diagram on p.107 of the *Quaker core* and what radiates from it.

The Abbotts have covered an amazing amount in a small book (195 pages), with generous quotations and information boxes, even including a couple of classic Quaker jokes. Women writers, witnesses and activists are given their full role as authorities. Naturally a reader is likely to call for more on particular topics. I would have liked more recognition of the multi-faceted work of the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), which is a testimony on a global scale, and something about the role of Friends in Cuba, and the stand taken by Quakers in Nazi Germany. The account of Friends in India could do with a reference to the two Yearly Meetings in

Mid-India, their Friends' Schools, and the agricultural training and development centre at Rasulia.

Quakerism – the Basics is one of a series of 'Basics' books on religious topics (including *Queer Theologies*) and deserves its title. I found it an exciting read, am about to order my own copy so that I can return to it, and I eagerly recommend the book to Friends in Aotearoa. It is full of riches.

Flatmates Wanted

*Intentional Christian Community,
Pōneke/Wellington*

BY PHOEBE BALLE

Phoebe Balle lived in the Quakers' George Fox House on Moncrieff St in Wellington from 2016-2020. Her time connected with the Quakers was an important gateway for her moving into collective ways of living.

She now lives at Stillwaters, a long-standing intentional Christian community in central Wellington that's based around values of hospitality and service to wider community. The group are currently looking for new flatmates and wondered if any Quakers would be interested in connecting with them.

Community service: Residents are expected to contribute 10 hours/week towards community activities including community dinners, church service and household meetings.

Rent: Rents are adjusted to reflect different income levels. Minimum rent is \$200/week including everything (rent, food, bills).

To find out more or have a chat, contact Phoebe at phoebemcballe@gmail.com or ph 021 1528294



TESTIMONY TO THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF

Betty Gilderdale

26 July 1923 - 9 July 2021

Betty Gilderdale cheerfully referred to herself as a 'QuAnglican'. Her Anglican faith sustained her in many periods of her life. At other times she was sustained by her Quaker community. Her commitment to her evolving family was a constant throughout her life.

In the aftermath of World War II while a student at University College London, Betty met and married a young student of fine arts. A pacifist, Alan Gilderdale had served during the war as part of the Friends Ambulance Unit in Italy while Betty had been conscripted into work for Cable and Wireless. She experienced the Battle of Britain, and evacuations from London because of the Blitz.

In the 1950s, she and Alan were devastated by the tragic death of their second child, Howard, who died aged two of leukaemia. Betty found that she looked on strangers more kindly, because she could not know if they too had suffered a great loss, such as she had. It was the possibility that Howard's death, and other children's deaths, were connected to atmospheric nuclear testing that drew Betty and Alan into direct involvement in the Aldermaston marches in the mid-1950s. She and Alan maintained a commitment to the peace movement throughout their lives. They also maintained a meeting for worship as part of their daily routine.

In 1967, Alan, Betty and their family of three children arrived in Whanganui where Alan and Betty were to teach at Friends School. Their time there was an immersion not only in the cultures of a new country but was also a time of learning about young children living away from home – some having been sent to Friends School because they had psychological problems. While corporal punishment was widely used in New Zealand schools, at Friends School Betty found that non-violent methods of teaching and discipline brought out more positive qualities in children. This insight stayed with her.

With the closure of Friends School impending, Betty was appointed to the teaching staff at North Shore Teachers Training College in Auckland. Her interest in children's literature grew and found expression not only in her lectures for future teachers, but also in community education.

Betty's interest in children's literature continued for the rest of her life. She was particularly keen that children were not 'talked down to' by authors and argued that fantasy was as important – if not more important – than factual stories. Within fantasy stories, Betty saw the eternal struggle between Good and Evil. In the 1990s, she led Children's Media Watch which took on the relatively thankless task of trying to counter commercialism in children's television.

Betty represented Friends on the National Council of Women, and with Alan, wrote and distributed the Wider



Quaker Fellowship's newsletter. She served on the Churches Education Commission and helped to update the syllabus for Bible in Schools. She said that as a parent, she had concerns that religion was not taught in a narrow or frightening way; religion should be 'caught, not taught'.

Even after half a century in New Zealand, Betty found herself never fully at home here. She wrote that as an adult immigrant, she did not have the social confidence that she recognised in, for example, friends who had lived all their lives on Auckland's North Shore.

In 2014 Betty was honoured with the *New Zealand Order of Merit for Services to Children's Literature*. She never knew who nominated her for the award. It was a bittersweet experience. Alan had recently died, and she would have liked to have shared with him this public affirmation of her work of which he was such a large part.

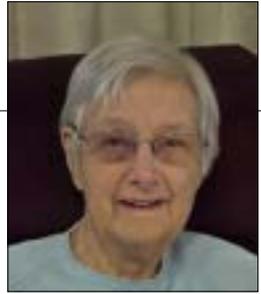
While Betty was described by a close friend as a 'true intellectual' and her academic writing included the biographies of authors Margaret Mahy and Lady Barker, she is well remembered for *The Little Yellow Digger* series of children's books which Alan illustrated. These were initially written as gifts for her grandchildren.

The story behind the books illustrates some major themes in her life: her willingness to take measured risks; her love of language and of communicating engagingly and purposefully with children; and her love of family.

TESTIMONY TO THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF

Florence Gwendoline (Gwen) Staynes (née Laycock)

1925 - 2020



“A Quaker to the end” is how Gwen Staynes presented herself to visiting clergy during her later years of retirement. Unable any longer to travel to Meeting in Dunedin, she valued religious discussions, and enjoyed time with Friends who came to see her. Gwen’s faith assurance was rooted in family commitment. Her great grandmother’s family had come to know Friends in Wakefield, Yorkshire, during World War I, in connection with the Quaker Adult School and in support of conscientious objectors. Two of her aunts saved objectors from a dangerous mob in 1918 by sheltering them in their home.

Gwen’s caring and supportive gifts were manifest early in life, when as a young teenage evacuee to New Zealand in 1939 (already a Quaker member) she comforted and entertained the younger children on the voyage. On her arrival in Auckland, she found her aunt suffering advanced cancer; the schoolgirl Gwen tended her and managed the home for the family until her aunt’s death. Auckland Meeting became a new family for her, and she maintained loving contact through her life with Friends whose parents had cared for her.

After the war Gwen’s interest in children led her to return to the UK to train as a teacher. At that time she came close to her cousin Kenneth, who followed her back to New Zealand; they married in Auckland Meeting House in 1949. Gwen’s warmth and tenderness led her into a long career teaching children with special needs, from her first job in a home for children with disabilities through years of responsibility for special classes.

Kenneth’s employment requirements led the family to move from Auckland to Dunedin in 1954. The couple’s sense of

attachment to Auckland was renewed when they served for a year as Resident Friends in Friends Centre there from late 1983. In Dunedin Meeting Gwen was a faithful pillar of the Meeting’s life, undertaking many of the quieter responsibilities which hold together Friends as a community, especially time with children and provision of books for them. She and Kenneth regularly took part in General Meeting, and subsequently Yearly Meeting. In 1973 Gwen attended the Friends World Committee for Consultation Triennial Meeting in Sydney, together with Kenneth, who was a Yearly Meeting representative, and Friends appreciated hearing their report. They also took part in Summer Gatherings with their family of four, who found this a great opportunity to spend time with others of their own age who shared their interests and values.

Gwen’s compassionate and caring nature was manifested in many ways, including friendly welcoming to newly arrived Friends. She gave generously to many causes, and quietly supported people experiencing need. From childhood she loved to care for animals and tended a succession of cats up to the time of her death. Gardening, singing and piano were among her other passions. Gwen died peacefully on 17 December 2020, aged 95.

We give thanks for the long life and service of our Friend Gwen Staynes, one of those people who do not feature in the history books, but who walk lovingly on the earth and help to hold up the sky.

TESTIMONY TO THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE LIFE OF

Elizabeth (‘Liz’) Carolyn Miller

Known by thousands as Miss Miller, Dreamweaver the Storyteller

6 August 1936 – 20 August 2020

Liz was born in Dunedin, the second child of Fred and Ngaire Miller. Her first 18 months were spent at Fruitlands on the Clutha River as her father tried to survive the Depression by gold mining. Her parents’ strong social conscience, her father’s ‘way with words’ (New Zealand’s longest-serving journalist) and her mother’s religious faith became hallmarks of Liz’s own life. By the age of three, she

was reading, and books were to become her anchor and inspiration.

She qualified as a teacher, a short-lived career where she found herself at odds with the then popular use of the strap for discipline. In 1962 she found her calling as Invercargill’s first Children’s Librarian, a position which she occupied for 28 years.

Generations of children were enraptured by the magic she created in her Children's Library and the wonderful power of stories. Uncharacteristically for the time, she brought laughter and theatricality to the library, wearing colourful clothes and wigs, ankle bracelets and sometimes rings on bare toes.

Liz was an activist on local issues and a staunch and active member of the Labour Party. She was a meticulous secretary of the Invercargill Labour Electoral Committee from 2005-2014.

Cathy Macfie recalls: "I met Liz soon after we arrived in Invercargill in 1983. Our girls loved the Children's Library, her big dolls' house and many engaging displays. Through her, in the late 1980s, I found I could bring to life my Department of Conservation education programmes in the library (and elsewhere) using puppetry and drama. Together we provided many innovative community programmes. Then we found ourselves meeting up at Peace Movement and other social justice initiatives, so I suppose it wasn't a surprise when she expressed interest in Quakers. I was a newly committed Quaker myself and Liz's declaration that Invercargill's small worship group was a 'homecoming' for her was quite special."

At that time, we were meeting above a camera shop in Don Street. In the early 1990s Liz became a Quaker and offered her own home as our meeting place when the Don Street room was no longer available. When Liz made a decision, it was whole-hearted. She set up a sign in her garden announcing meeting times and was happy to chat to passers-by about Quakers.

Liz had come home to be with her parents through their last years. After their deaths (and the heart-breaking early retirement she was forced to take as Children's Librarian), Liz found a new life as *Dreamweaver*. She became an internationally acclaimed storyteller and continued to entrance Southland children until days before her death. Liz was recognised for her services to children and community by an MBE in 1987. Other awards followed but what she treasured most was being greeted wherever she went by people whose lives she had touched. The frustration of her failing health was lightened by strangers who would stop in the street to help her on her mobility scooter. As she thanked them, they would reply "No! Thank you, Miss Miller! I remember ..." and recount some lasting memory.

For 20 years our small group met at Liz's home. Margaret Paton provides a personal insight: "In 2014, as a non-resident Brit regularly visiting family in Invercargill, I sought a Quaker meeting. I found Liz's house and a small, strong group. I was welcomed. As I got to know the other attenders, I felt my family had extended and our cares and joys were shared. Liz's strong Quaker international life was and is inspirational. She made people feel special and loved. Her house was a comfortable haven, one left feeling better." Gill Poplur also experienced this feeling, recalling how Liz shared her home with her when Gill was mentally taxed.



Liz brought a sense of ritual to our meeting. As we gathered in her living room, she would light the candle, then we tended not to speak. Her beloved papillon dogs were part of the silence, sitting on rugs or next to Liz. At the end of the hour, we clasped hands, then Liz blew out the candle. Even at our last meeting with Liz, she had supper prepared. We followed her instructions to select the correct china cups and plates; she had an impeccable sense of taste. We miss her but she remains with us.

Liz Miller, Friend

Each life has struggle enough
yet opens wide when wrought with grace.

Her candle lit, her invitation to silence
extended with a laugh and a smile,

the kind you imagine
an iris might give,

swirls of purple and gold
arranged in perfect acceptance,

a cuppa served with platefuls of stories
weaving a welcome to every soul.

Like magi bearing gifts
she seeks the one to whom the gifts belong,

She says she's died, and yet
her stories echo in our hearts

and tell of the magic that makes us one
for she is as near as the silence.

David Griffin

Book Review

An Exacting Mistress: The Friends Ambulance Unit in the Second World War

REVIEWER: RALPH JOHNSON

An Exacting Mistress

The Friends Ambulance Unit in the Second World War

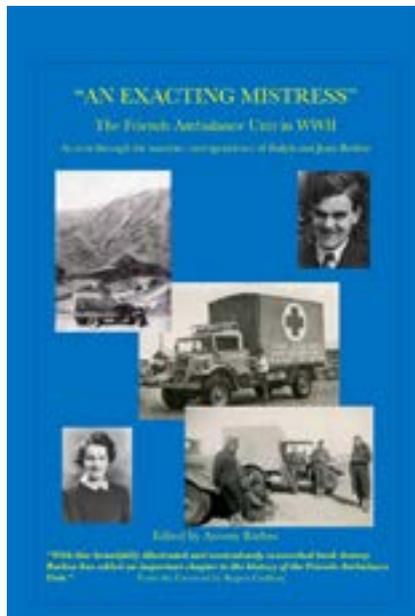
The wartime correspondence of Ralph and Joan Barlow

Edited by Antony Barlow

Published by Quacks Books

Available from Quaker Books

I took on the task of reviewing this book because my father Neil Johnson was in China with the Friends Ambulance Unit (FAU) at the end of WWII. I remember finding his uniform, complete with FAU insignia, which I proudly wore till it eventually fell to pieces. I unpicked the insignia with the intention of sewing them to another garment but I never did and I still have them.



There were a few things that I would have like changed. The book could be quite repetitive in parts and a more stringent edit would have been appreciated. I found myself skimming passages quite a bit. There are a lot of abbreviations used throughout, and although there is a glossary of them near the front of the book, not all of them are included. My third quibble is that Joan's letters are in a faint type to distinguish them from Ralph's, but if the light wasn't strong, it was just too faint to read.

On the other hand I cannot fault Barlow's meticulous research, and I loved reading the potted bios at the end, of what happened afterwards to the young men and women mentioned in the book who gave service to the FAU.

I wondered if I was going to be reviewing Catriona Cameron's 1996 book, *Go Anywhere Do Anything*, on the New Zealand FAU in China. When the book arrived, I confess my heart sank a bit, not because it was about the British FAU, but because of the size of it: just under A4 sized tome of 690 pages! Not a snuggle-down-in-bed read. However I did discover that I had things in common with the author/editor. The book's main focus is the correspondence between his parents, Ralph and Joan, with fill-ins to give context or extra information. I remember reading my parents' correspondence from Neil's time in the FAU. And my mother was also Joan.

The FAU was an initiative of British Quakers in WWI to give conscientious objectors a way to help relieve the suffering caused by war, and at the outbreak of WWII it was revived. It was not just confined to the medical side but also provided relief, such as housing for those bombed out of their homes, and famine relief.

In the book Ralph's work with the FAU takes him from the London Blitz to parts of Africa and Asia – including China though not at the time my father was there. Joan remains in Birmingham, living with another couple and bringing up two young boys.

The book works on several levels: ordinary people of pacifist conviction in a time of war, the social, cultural, historical context, two loving people coping with separation, and an insight into the Quaker world of that time. All of which I found fascinating, though more fascinating were Ralph's letters, which were better written and inevitably covered more interesting territory.

Quaker Beatitudes

BY VIOLA PALMER

Blessed are those who walk, cycle or scooter, for they understand global warming.

Blessed are those who lead a simple life for they tread lightly.

Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called the saviours of humanity.

Blessed are those who are truthful in all things, for they are the glue of society.

Blessed are those who struggle against racism, for they shall wear korowai.

Blessed are those who restore land and water, for the future is theirs.

Blessed are those who love all living things, for they shall inherit the Earth.

Blessed are those who yearn for justice, for they shall be heard.

Blessed are those who listen to and obey the still, small voice, for they shall see God.

October 2021

News of Friends

Dunedin

Brylin Highton

We are delighted to welcome Maria Barsema, Ashley Macmillan and Grant Galbreath into membership and are planning a celebratory lunch at the end of October.

Simonne and Graham Wood plan to move to the UK at the start of next year to be closer to family. They will be missed from our meeting and we wish them all the best for their time in the UK. Simonne and Graham have been active and significant contributors to the life of our meeting which has been greatly appreciated by Friends.

Merrall and Alex MacNeille have a new granddaughter, the daughter of Merrall (the younger) and Alida. Andrew and Cathy Highton welcomed Jack, their new baby boy, on 28 September.

At the Sunday 15 August shared lunch, we enjoyed a menu consisting of rice, lentils, flatbreads and roast chickpeas, provided by Elizabeth Thompson and Elizabeth Duke to fundraise for Operation Refugee, a project of Christian World Service to improve conditions for refugees in camps in Jordan and Lebanon.

In late October Marvin Hubbard plans to plant a long-lived indigenous 'tree of hope' in the Meeting House garden to represent hope in a time of environmental and social crisis. He was inspired to do this by the biblical story of Jeremiah.

The meeting acknowledged World Quaker Day on 3 October by having two Friends speak on the subject of *What Being a Quaker Means to Me*. It was attended by 14 Friends and two visitors.

Nelson

Jan Marsh

Nelson Friends have met by Zoom during Levels 4 and 3 and by a combi-

nation of home meetings and online since reaching Level 2. We look forward to being able to return to the Meeting House before too much longer but in the meantime, we have been able to stay in touch. A bonus has been having our friends Sandi and Sam Jensen join us from Maine, USA. Home discussion and *Becoming Friends* have also been able to continue in this way.

Elizabeth Dooley has been enjoying the increased birdlife during these quieter weeks, including hearing shining cuckoos recently returned from the Solomon Islands, seeing blackbirds building their nest and a busy grey warbler possibly providing for the cuckoo's extra egg. See www.nzbirdsonline.org.nz to find out more. She says "Now I can see what moved Mary Oliver and Walt Whitman."

Christine Gillespie welcomed the lockdown opportunity to catch up on reports and is now happy to be seeing clients face-to-face again.

Kristine Rose has been in Melbourne for some months, taking care of her mother and coping with the longest lockdown in the world. She too has been enjoying the birdlife and has her studies to occupy her, but she worries about the human rights implications of current policies.

James Chappell has had a period of time in hospital and was required to isolate on his return to Abbeyfield. He seems to be on the mend.

Otherwise, most of us are leading quiet lives with little to report.

Wellington

Gary Johnston

Alan and Shaun Greenslade-Hibbert arrived from England at Wellington Quaker Meeting on January 27 2019 and were soon accepted as whānau. Both independently became members of Wellington Monthly Meeting that year. They had been attenders for



Alan Greenslade-Hibbert and Roy Beeby

some twelve years at Banbury Meeting in North Oxfordshire. Alan had retired from his last job teaching at Sibford Quaker School when Shaun suggested moving to New Zealand where he could easily find work, being a palliative nurse specialist for nearly twenty-five years.

Alan is our Assistant and Reserve Clerk, Convenor of the Spiritual and Pastoral Care Committee, and is on the Quaker Education Fund committee and also volunteers at the local hospice as a therapeutic Biographer. Shaun, the lead Palliative Care Coordinator on the Wellington hospice community team, is a member of the Yearly Meeting Outreach committee. Their commitment to New Zealand and to Quakers is clear. Now, to our and their great delight, their application for residence in Aotearoa has been approved.

Early this year Roy Beeby agreed for a biography to be written about him. Many Friends know Roy with much affection, and will also lovingly remember his wife Deirdre, as stalwarts of Wellington Monthly Meeting where they married in 1982. This was when

Roy adopted Quakerism and he and Deirdre went on to be Resident Friends in Perth in Western Australia, then Billericay in Essex and later Kings Lynn in Norfolk, England. After a very happy, much travelled and adventurous life together, Deirdre Beeby died in 2015.

The biography of Roy's life, he is now 95, is written in his voice, with the added voices of relatives and friends in Australia and New Zealand. The recordings and transcription were made and put together by Alan Greenslade-Hibbert. He describes it as a great privilege to have met and got to know Roy and his life, and to meet some of his family.

Kāpiti

Brigit Howitt

We are all sad that having lost Tony Taylor only a month earlier, we are facing the loss of another long-standing, loved, and very much respected member of Kāpiti MM – Barbara Mountier. Her death on 21 August at Parkwood Village in Waikanae followed a short stay in the Lodge after moving there from her apartment. Nobody could have contributed more than Barbara to the health of our Meeting from its early beginnings, and to the wider Quaker community. She leaves a long legacy of experience and unstinting support in so many roles - a fountain of Quaker history and practice. It was fortuitous that many of us were able to be with her at the gathering for Worship held at Barbara's instigation, in the beautiful Quiet Room at the Lodge just several weeks earlier.

We have two other longstanding members of the Meeting, who are living in The Lodge and have been for some time – Anne Meuli who is still able to receive visitors on occasion and Ann Olsen in the hospital wing.

It was so good to meet face-to-face again after Level 3 Lockdown restrictions were lifted last month. The first Sunday of October we offered a combined Meeting, face-to-face and online. We had no Friends join us online but it gave us an appreciation regarding the amount of organisation required. We are indebted to our Clerk,

Graham Chapman, for his skill in this capacity and spending long hours setting up the system. However, it became clear that it is not practical to offer to meet online during a face-to-face Meeting especially in a rented Meeting Room as the equipment needs to be set up each time. Those unable to attend in person were encouraged to access other larger Meetings in Aotearoa New Zealand offered online from Quaker Meeting Rooms.

Palmerston North

Michael Short

We have adapted again to the new Covid restrictions by meeting online during level 4, including Monthly Meeting. At Level 3 we have been meeting with masks, social distancing and foregoing our cups of tea.

We followed a suggestion by a member to base an after Meeting for Worship discussion on the contents of the Newsletter when it comes out. This month this led to a very lively discussion on the subject of conscientious objectors. The topic touched the heart of quite a few of those present as we were connected to it in one way or another. Three of us in the room had the experience of facing a tribunal personally in the 1950s and 1960s and our parents were all involved in different ways.

One father had been a conscientious objector and spent time in a CO detention camp near Palmerston North in Shannon (site recorded by local History Society) and in Strathmore and Rangipo in the centre of the North Island and the effects that had on his future job. Another member's father was a prison officer at Strathmore. Another member's father had been in the Scots Guard and part of the force that fought in Italy. He told the story of his father being so distressed by the destruction he saw returning home from service through Europe to the UK that he became a peace activist after the war. He remarked how strange it was that so called 'forward thinking' NZ treated them so badly in WWI.



Inspired to make some public statement about the importance of COP26, some Whanganui Friends painted a banner to put on the street at the Meeting House.

Whanganui

Jillian Wychel

Friends spent a very hard working morning clearing the weeds and other growth from the front of our Meeting House. Gutters were cleaned out and trailer loads of green waste taken away. Morning tea with cheese scones was the reward!

Michael Payne has had surgery to remove a cancerous growth from his left ear and Jillian Wychel has had spinal surgery in Wellington. Both are on the mend. Already Jillian is able to walk more comfortably.

We have been in contact with our local branch of Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society to arrange the buying of Christmas presents for the children of prisoners and a small group met recently to make cards for prison inmates to send to family.

Our Meeting is in good heart and we are enjoying both our quiet worship and our lively conversations together.

Taranaki

Alex St George

Sadly, we convey the news of Fridtjof Hanson's passing. He battled for a while with cancer. He was a long term dedicated Quaker, medical surgeon, horse and dog lover and talented artist. Family held a funeral service with

Quaker accents. Some of us have been keeping his widow, Joanna, company during this difficult time. He will be very much missed by all of us.

Geoffrey Steedman has settled into his villa in Tainui Retirement facility.

For International Quaker Day celebration we have invited the general public and local Baha'i Community to a special introductory meeting facilitated by Margy-Jean Malcolm and Eileen Gundesen.

Alex St George is celebrating the birth of her grandson, Oscar, on 27 Sept in South Australia.

Mid North Island

Jillian Yorke

Thames/Hauraki

We had been planning the November residential weekend but decided to cancel it for practical reasons, and look forward to hosting it as soon as we can. The current restrictions have also meant that we have had fewer meetings and with lower attendance than usual. Nevertheless, we have enjoyed discussions on wide-ranging topics, including the meaning of 'holding someone in the Light'.

Emily Macleod has been busy organising *The Great Colville Re-Fashion Show*, a fundraiser to celebrate up-cycling and the non-consumerist ethos of her community (to be held once we are back in level one). The proceeds will support the building of a new health centre for *The Colville Project*. Adam Walter relocated to live with his daughter in Auckland, and to be closer to his palliative care and hospice providers. He is missed in Colville, and in our meeting, but it is good to know he was with loved ones as he faced his final journey, which ended on 9 October.

Whakatane

Our numbers appear to be increasing, with fairly high attendance at both in-person and online meetings. We explored the role women have played in scholarship, the arts and public life in past times. Loretta Westbrook has been in hospital and is now at home recovering. Esther and John Malcolm and Graeme Storer

ran an introductory AVP course in Rotorua with 15 participants and were delighted with the response from the all-female group of students. A follow-up course will be held to enable the group to go right through to the Training for Facilitators stage. Anne Wicks has been unwell; we hold her in the Light.

Hamilton/Kirikiroa

We enjoyed hosting the September Monthly Meeting for Business, and then being in our own small but steady group for worship. Since the lockdown, we have been ensconced in our bubbles, looking forward to being set free but also grateful for being in a safe and responsible country where we are encouraged to do our best to protect each other.

Saskia Schuitemaker has been busy with the Friends Peace Team's Peace-building en las Americas project, and attended the AVP international online gathering. She was amazed at how technology can help connect us across lands and languages.

We are grateful to be back in the chapel, watching and listening to spring as it blooms on our lovely campus.

Tauranga

We had strong attendances at several meetings before we were hit by the Covid lockdown. Meeting for Worship then moved to online, but attendance has been only about six. Seven members from Meeting for Worship joined Ian Clayton-Bray's family in saying farewell to Ian at a graveside ceremony at Tauranga Cemetery. Ian always attended Meeting for Worship when he could possibly be there, always sat in the same spot within meeting, and at the end of meeting took the flowers to brighten his home. Ian is deeply missed.

Northern

Mt Eden
Heather Denny

Our ongoing lockdown is stretching into its seventh week at time of writing. In our August Fifth Sunday Session online after

Meeting for Worship we shared experiences.

Some activities have gone online to keep us connected. A UFO (unfinished object) group meets weekly to chat while UFOs are addressed, the walking group meets online to catch up after walking, and some have practised te reo Māori. The group following the Woodbrooke study of the writings of early Quaker women moved online, and some joined in the online Meeting on World Quaker Day.

On the third Sunday in September, we heard back from those who had facilitated and attended the demilitarisation weekend. On 15 August, about a dozen Friends at Mt Eden Meeting House participated in an update on the revision of our 'Faith and Practice' led by Sue Stover. Through worship sharing, Friends offered readings from our current 'Faith and Practice' which continue to speak to them, and the process for revision was laid out.

Meanwhile some of us are facing greater challenges. Alastair Woodward, son of Jack, is making a good recovery from a recent stroke. Charlotte Gordon has finished her 6 weeks of radiation treatment and is gradually getting back her joie de vivre. Our thoughts are with Friends from the west of Auckland who were affected by the floods.

The good news: Bobbie Woodward has a new book which is soon to be launched. Meg Stuart has had her daughter, Ruth, visiting from London.





Ink-sketch of the Quaker Meeting House at Come-to-Good, Truro, Cornwall, UK built in 1710. Derek Carver went into this building in 1983, ducking under the very low doorway, aware of the very thick stone walling, and sat on the cool hard wooden benches, absorbing the silence of 273 years of Quaker worship - it was a profound experience for one new to Quakers.

3.1.1 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 seeking the Spirit, so, in meetings for worship for the conduct of business, we trust that the group seeking the guidance of the Spirit will find it.

Quaker Faith and Practice in Aotearoa New Zealand

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