

The Australian Friend

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‘This we have said’



Editorial

George Fox asked the question ‘What canst thou say?’ In this issue we look at what the Religious Society of Friends in Australia can say today.


This year we have made some important corporate statements, and we have included three of them in this issue, with some reflections upon them. The first issue is that of same-sex marriage. Guided by our belief in that of God in all people, and our commitment to equality, Quakers have been able to speak with one voice in support of this change in legislation. The debate has raised many issues which we would like to explore more fully in future issues. Is there anything special about ‘religious’ marriage? How far is the ‘traditional marriage’ an institution which needs saving, and are there marriages which should not be saved? How can we best encourage and support good long-term relationships – and to what extent are such relationships the responsibility of the couple solely, and to what extent are they dependent on society providing the necessary support in the form of acceptance and material support such as secure housing and employment?

This was the year in which we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum on the recognition of Aboriginal people in our constitution. We produced a statement looking at what has been achieved, and what still needs to be done. We include this challenging statement, with a reflection upon it.

Most of the articles we received this time were on the theme of Peace, a concern which is as urgent today as it ever has been. We have included part of a submission made to a senate enquiry on climate change and national security which we feel needs to be more widely read. We also hear many pleas from the heart for a kinder and more generous world. And we hear of some of the things which Friends are doing to bring that world about.

Please note that the correct email address for the *Australian Friend* is austfriend@quakers.org.au Apologies for any confusion.

THE AUSTRALIAN FRIEND EDITORIAL TEAM



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia Inc. will be held at 9.30am on Sunday, 21 January 2018, at Victorian Friends Centre, 484 William Street, Melbourne VIC 3003.

Details:

- 9.30am AGM
- 11.00am Meeting for Worship
- 12.30pm Shared lunch and fellowship, followed by departures for airport.

NOTE: This schedule allows for Friends travelling to other parts of Australia to leave in a timely manner.

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Metaphors for grief*
By Su-Rose McIntyre



Cover photo: Taisoo Kim Watson at the UNESCO Peace Conference in Paris, 'This we have said'



Marriage equality

VIDYA | CANBERRA REGIONAL MEETING

I had the privilege of being in the Australian Senate for the last few hours of debate when they passed the Marriage Equality bill. Watching from the public galleries and the VIP bench were many people who had been active for years, working to bring about this change. This included progressives from many Christian denominations, Jewish people and a family of Sikhs.

Senators drew strength from the 62% vote of the Australian people in support of marriage equality in the postal survey, and the months of work by a group of Liberal backbenchers to develop a carefully written compromise bill based on a Senate Committee report in February 2017.

In the last hours, it was clear that most Senators voted against any amendments in order to keep intact the careful balance of introducing equality for LGBTIQ people, allowing freedom of choice for religious marriage celebrants, and protecting our existing anti-discrimination laws.

Dean Smith, the Liberal Senator who worked so hard for this bill to become a reality, gave the last speech before the Senate voted. He spoke of the Lindt café siege and the brave man Tori Johnson who died and that he had a partner Thomas Zinn. He said it was during a flight that he thought about these men and realised it was time that relationships like theirs were recognised.

Dean described himself as a conservative and said it is not a role to resist change, but to weigh the evidence.

Following their conscience, 43 Senators voted 'Yes' and 12 voted 'No'. Some Senators abstained and some were absent.

The bill has now been passed in the House of Representatives, again with no amendments and strongly supported by a conscience vote.

After the vote in the Senate, I spoke to two women from the Uniting Church. Still with tears in their eyes from the last speeches and the passage of the bill, they are preparing to seek change so that LGBTIQ couples in their church can have a religious wedding. When I mentioned that I am a Quaker, one said 'You are so far ahead of us!' I said that the conversation among Australian Quakers started 35 years ago.

What can Quakers do now to support LGBTIQ people in Australia? We can support marriage equality in our Meetings, and work to encourage other faith groups to do the same.

Now that the bill has passed in both Houses of Parliament, I hope our Presiding Clerk will sign another open letter expressing our joy at the introduction of marriage equality. This letter could also declare publicly that, in accordance with our Testimony to Equality, there is nothing in the 'doctrines, tenets or beliefs' of the Religious Society of Friends that would lead us to make use of religious exemptions to deny equal treatment to LGBTIQ couples.

I hope Quakers across Australia will engage with people of other faiths to support their gentle consideration

of solemnising LGBTIQ marriages. I hope many faith communities will allow their celebrants to follow their conscience^{1,2}, and anticipate that this will lead to the joyful religious celebration of the marriage of many LGBTIQ couples over the coming years.

I am concerned that the bill allows 'bodies established for religious purposes' to be granted an exemption from the *Sex Discrimination Act* to allow them to refuse to provide other services related to marriage ceremonies where the marriage does not accord with their religious beliefs. Could this affect Quakers and other faith groups that support marriage equality?

Smaller Quaker Meetings and other faith groups often meet on the premises of another faith. In these venues, we could be prevented from holding wedding ceremonies for LGBTIQ couples in the place that we usually meet for worship.

It seems possible that religious hospitals could also refuse LGBTIQ couples wanting to marry on the premises. This could cause not only distress but also hardship if the couple includes a person who is terminally ill. Could Quakers begin the conversation to ensure hospitals allow LGBTIQ marriages on their premises?

I encourage Friends to be active in the coming months and years to welcome and support the joyful introduction of marriage equality for LGBTIQ people across Australia.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



The Religious Society of Friends, commonly known as Quakers, supports the right of adult couples in loving and committed relationships to marry, regardless of gender. We also support the right of such couples to have their marriages accorded equal recognition and respect under the law of Australia. Our faith prompts us to recognise the divine in all people. It is a basic Quaker principle that all people are equal in the Spirit. As part of the journey to live our faith, we have worked to support the equal treatment of all persons regardless of sex, race or religion. The way has been hard at times, and we recognise that true equality will always remain a direction to be travelled rather than a destination to be reached.

In 2010 Australian Quakers came together and agreed to celebrate marriages within our Meetings

regardless of the sexual orientation or gender of the partners. Quakers have long held that marriage 'is the Lord's work and we are but witnesses'. The question before us was simply whether to open our hearts to these marriages that already existed among us. The law currently prevents Quakers from facilitating the same legal recognition for same-sex marriages that we do for other marriages. This legal prohibition is fundamentally inconsistent with Quaker faith and practice. Religious freedom would encompass the freedom to include, celebrate and recognise the commitments of LGBTIQ couples, as both spiritual and legal marriages.

We recognise that everyone will be at a different point in the journey. Some have purported to speak on behalf of all Christians in opposing marriage equality. Such people do not speak for us. We invite them to continue to follow

their path with integrity, while asking that they recognize that their way is not for all people of faith. Quakers consider that a majority vote in a voluntary public poll is an inappropriate way to decide the legal rights of minorities who are subject to discrimination. We are also concerned about the impacts on LGBTIQ people, their children and families. We encourage everyone to open their hearts, to choose love over fear, and to support marriage equality in Australia.

ON BEHALF OF FRIENDS,
JO JORDAN,

Presiding Clerk, Religious Society of Friends, Quakers in Australia

AF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

1 Marriage celebrants in 'recognised denominations' (such as Quakers), already have discretion about whose marriages they solemnise. Ministers in smaller religions that are not from a 'recognised denomination' are currently considered to be civil celebrants. Once the bill is passed, the first action for many civil celebrants will be to decide whether or not to register in the new category of 'religious marriage celebrants', so that they may refuse to solemnise marriages that don't accord with their religious beliefs. Any existing

civil celebrant will be able to register as a religious marriage celebrant within 90 days of the law coming into effect. After this, only ministers of religion will be able to register as a religious marriage celebrant. 2 The new category of 'religious marriage celebrants' will be permitted under the law to celebrate marriages using a ceremony different from that required by their religion. This will allow modified religious marriages for LGBTIQ couples where the faith group as a whole does not yet permit LGBTIQ marriages.

HELPFUL LINKS

The full text of Dean Smith's introductory speech to the Senate on 16 November 2017: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-11-16/full-text-dean-smith-same-sex-marriage-bill-speech/9157270>

The full text of Dean Smith's second reading speech to the Senate on 16 November 2017: <http://www.deansmithwa.com.au/in-parliament/2017/november/bills-marriage-amendment-definition-and-religious-freedoms-bill-2017-second-reading/>

AF

A Quaker statement

50 years after the 1967 referendum

We acknowledge the First Nations Peoples of Australia who have sustained this land for tens of thousands of years.

Our Quaker testimonies call us to be in right relationship with all peoples. As Quakers we are learning how to uphold First Nations Peoples and their descendants in Australia, in our joint ongoing journey towards justice.

We long for and are working towards a reconciled Australia, believing that the coming into right relationship between First Peoples, the original custodians of the land, and other Australians is fundamental to an inclusive non-violent, Australian society.

The 1967 referendum, enabling the Australian Commonwealth Government to pass laws in relation to First Nations and to include them in the Australian census, raised hopes that have not been fulfilled. First Nations Peoples tell us that, despite some improvements, they still see themselves

at the 'bottom of the pile' in health, education and wellbeing.

We are mindful that the life we enjoy today is the result of the invasion and dispossession of their land, which led to the destruction of their culture and way of life. The continuing trauma from colonisation damages us all.

The European perspective shaping much of the history of Australia has prevented us from valuing and embracing the wisdom and knowledge of the world's oldest continuing cultures. We are and can all be enriched by their wisdom and knowledge.

We deplore the continuing devastation of culture, for example the overreaching of the Northern Territory Intervention, the continuing struggle of First Peoples to control their lands and resources, their over-representation in the prison system, the removing of children, substance abuse and suicide.

To create the peaceful co-existence we seek, we need to acknowledge the past in all its complexities, provide reparation for past and current

injustices, and recognise the wisdom in all our cultures, perhaps through a truth and reconciliation process.

Therefore, we commit to 'Come Right Way' and 'Care Right Way' and seek in our daily lives to:

- educate ourselves about the history and present reality of the First Peoples of the lands we reside on, and uphold their right to self-determination;
- understand the issues surrounding recognition and sovereignty;
- learn from the history of the complex relationship between First Nations and other peoples, spanning massacres to cooperation;
- foster respect for sacred places and newer sites of significance e.g., Tent Embassies and city parks;
- discern the racism within ourselves, and work towards justice, peace and healing for us all.

AUSTRALIA YEARLY MEETING
JULY 2017, ON KAURNA COUNTRY

AF

Thoughts during Yearly Meeting 2017

RAY BRINDLE | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING

'You seemed to be a bit emotional, and I couldn't understand why,' said the Friend next to me at the end of a session at YM17 during which I had been prompted to speak.

Those Friends who remember Susannah Brindle would have had no such puzzlement. Seventeen years after her prophetic Backhouse Lecture and more than four years after her passing, we were hearing Friends still expressing the same hesitations that fired her into word and action. I felt her nudging me: 'Speak, now is the time'. Not so much The Spirit moving me, perhaps, but

certainly a strong spirit that I live with daily.

My experience of YM17 was full of such reminders of my remarkable, challenging and loving Friend. Impatient as she always was, she would have been frustrated by our fumbblings as we discussed the statement from the First Nations Peoples Concerns committee. And I would have again reminded her, recalling John Woolman, that it takes time for Truth to take hold and for doubts and fears to be overcome. This is sometimes a hard lesson for those who are driven to achieve and to see 'things put right' today. Friends

at YM17 gave me a quiet confidence that we continue purposefully and faithfully in the right direction. I just wish more of us had read and reflected on the 2000 Backhouse Lecture (To Learn a New Song) and the challenging booklet 'Coming Right Way'. Both are available on the AYM web site.

'We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.' (TS Eliot, Little Gidding)



AF

Children: Our hope and our future

TAISOO KIM WATSON | QUEENSLAND REGIONAL MEETING

This is a shortened version of the talk I delivered at the UNESCO Peace Conference in Paris, on 2-9 October 2017



I was one of many thousands children who went through very cold winters with very little food in Korea during the war. I am a lucky one who has survived. War is not kind to children and all other living things.

I started my first year primary school, not in a school building, but sitting on ground in a tent with very little protection from rain, wind and snow, as the school buildings were occupied by army.

We were so happy receiving beautiful text books provided by UNESCO. We all thought Mr UNESCO was a kind person and loved Korean children. I still remember our teacher said we must look after them, as next year students would need them to study. My mother covered the books with newspapers to keep them clean.

We are responsible to nurture our children by providing clean water, food and safe place, also education for their knowledge to understand other people, hope they will improve the world.

I am very proud of being a member of the Toowoomba community where over 100 languages spoken, many

different kinds of delicious foods available and we are free to practice our faiths according to our choice.

A few years ago, six primary schools students created art works under the title *We can all be friends*. There were many delightful works and I was glad to be able to show one of them to the conference.

We judges had a wonderful time going through the works, and we presented the awards to the schools and students. We have learned so much through their eyes of what friendship means, and some suggestions for peace and harmony were very creative.

Recently we invited 50 school students and teachers to participate in a Harmony Tour visiting places of Worship, starting with Pure Land Learning College in Toowoomba, a Synagogue, a Sikh Temple and a Bosnian Islamic mosque in Brisbane. Learning how to appreciate and respect different faiths from young age is a beginning for world peace.

We are hoping to start a program for parents and children to experience the practices of different faiths and to

share the joy of new discovery. This can be done by inviting friends and parents to their churches or mosques or other worshipping places. This is a natural way for children to learn, accept and respect different faiths. They will become the citizens of the world in every sense.

I took my grandson who was about 7 years old, to a celebration of Ramadan. It was held at the Catholic Church hall. He and a few children about same age had a great time playing together. He said it was the best party. And he said a girl with a head scarf ran faster than the boys.

We hope to provide more occasions for children and parents get together and to share food and start to build new friendships.

Children are our hope for world peace.

Young people are the future citizens of the World.

AF

Transitioning to a World Beyond War

DAWN JOYCE, | QUEENSLAND REGIONAL MEETING



As part of a submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Inquiry on climate change and national security, Quakers reflected on listening deeply as an approach to climate change. They observe that a ‘business as usual’ approach — about climate change and political processes — fails to ignite public imagination or engender confidence in Australian politicians. The submission is #27 on the government website https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade/Nationalsecurity/Submissions. It provides nine practical actions for Australia to take now, including strengthening of diplomatic resources to anticipate potential security problems and offering mediated support to prevent conflict.

The fate of many species, including humans, depends on addressing an addiction to war. It is a sad fact that the current numbers of persons displaced by war are the highest in the history of the world. Constructive efforts to attend to this world crisis would surely include steps to avoid further conflict. Some of us are led to use our privilege to engage in civil disobedience. Meanwhile there is a growing chorus of voices in the community asking for all of us to ‘Move the Money’. This can mean shifting superannuation funds to a deep-green ethical fund or changing our bank accounts to an ethical bank. We can also speak out about moving the military budget to useful purposes only; as well as transitioning the ‘war’ department to a Ministry for Peace. We know that nonviolent campaigns have a better success rate than violent campaigns,

and their long term outcomes are also beneficial. We can be examples of lives lived in simplicity and abundance, daily supporting a ‘war’ against waste.

When lives are disrupted by war or other disasters, victims do not need just food, shelter, schools and meaningful work: they need healing and they need hope. Throughout the world, the work of Musicians Without Borders and clown therapy is expanding to address an avalanche of psychological damage. Post-traumatic stress disorder is rampant in both refugee and military settings. In WW1 it was called ‘shell shock’, in WW2 it was labeled ‘LMF’ (low moral fibre); but whatever name it goes by, it is a consequence of men and women being conditioned to do acts that are, simply, unconscionable. Sometimes in the first weeks of retraining, new recruits experience nightmares. For others, the adrenaline rush is enough to survive this brutal reprogramming; but the psychological damage becomes starkly evident when adrenal burnout occurs, or when violent-conditioning responses emerge in domestic and community settings. War is the ultimate Faustian pact, fraught with unintended consequences.

Much of the damage caused by the military is not recorded or studied. The biennial war rehearsals held at Shoalwater Bay cause unknown levels of distress to whales and dolphins. Promoters actively seek to ‘normalise’ war weaponry via community Open Days. The alternative message is to point out that war is, simply, an admission of failure. We do know that a drought in Syria was one factor leading to civil unrest, but a military response has exacerbated the situation, with

millions of people displaced and untold damage caused to the natural and built environments. Through its spy base at Pine Gap, Australia remains complicit in drone strikes, an example of state-sanctioned barbarism that is unworthy of a species with higher-order capacity. It is heartening that numbers of military personnel have resigned, citing a refusal to employ this technology.

The military industrial complex is the biggest environmental vandal imaginable, with a capacity for nuclear annihilation, by accident or design. The impact of the military on carbon emissions is massive, but this is generally ignored. Conversely, investment in and sharing of sustainable technologies is providing building blocks for world peace. Demilitarisation would be a huge step towards easing climate chaos; and the colossal military budget could support life-affirming projects instead.

In the past, human survival depended on cooperation. It still does. Nations have already shown an ability to work together in response to natural disasters. Miracles can happen. Nations actually can work together. Sustainable technologies, including cell phones, have been manufactured on a large scale in China for the benefit of all. We know that everyone is happier, healthier and better connected when our resources are shared fairly. Our real security lies in creating alternatives to violence, in a context of greater simplicity and equality.

Climate change and national security

The submission of the Quaker Peace and Legislation Committee to the Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade Inquiry on climate change and national security concluded with the following thoughts:

Listening deeply: a Quaker approach

Since the early 1990s climate change has been an issue of serious concern to many scientists. These concerns, based on early but extensive evidence, were taken up at that time in a unified way by Australian environment groups, including the Australian Conservation Foundation, The Wilderness Society, Greenpeace Australia, World Wide Fund for Nature, as well as other groups. By 1993 there was general bipartite political consensus to act on climate change at that time.

It is important to consider why this early start to act on climate change failed. It has meant we have failed to take advantage of where we were a quarter of a century ago. It may not be a coincidence that in the intervening 25 years, public trust in political leaders has declined, and there has been an unease about the influence of powerful companies with a conflict of interest having too great an impact on political decisions. More and more, we are hearing that a 'business as usual' approach – about climate change, as well as the political processes – fails to ignite public imagination or engender confidence in Australia's politicians. This has the potential longer term to undermine social cohesion, creating an internal threat to harmony, further impeding clarity around decision-making.

The approach of the Religious Society of Friends is built on a way of being, a set of perspectives and right

relationships that seeks out the kindest and most truthful ways of finding ways forward. That way is one of reflection as well as action. One informs the other.

A statement made by the World Gathering of Friends, held under the auspices of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) in 2012, included the following words:

In past times God's Creation restored itself. Now humanity dominates, our growing population consuming more resources than nature can replace. We must change, we must become careful stewards of all life. Earthcare unites traditional Quaker testimonies: peace, equality, simplicity, love, integrity, and justice. We are called to work for the peaceable Kingdom of God on the whole earth, in right sharing with all peoples.

Another statement by several international Quaker organisations in 2015 included these words:

We seek to nurture a global human society that prioritises the well-being of people over profit, and lives in right relationships with our Earth; a peaceful world with fulfilling employment, clean air and water, renewable energy, and healthy thriving communities and ecosystems.

In Australia, Quakers have had an Earthcare testimony since 2008. It includes these words:

We must listen to the call of creation, recognise and respect the profound knowledge and wisdom of Indigenous peoples and learn from scientific understanding. We will work with those many others already deeply engaged, who make the links between religious belief, lifestyle, social justice and peace.

We consider that, as stewards of the earth that sustains us, we humans have a responsibility to respond to the

challenge of climate change in ways that enhance the prospects for peace among all people. We can only achieve this by going beyond the current 'business as usual' approach which currently denies the extent of the climatic problem; which is overly shy of addressing its root causes, including relentless and often inequitable consumption between and across generations; and which has fed a 'democratic deficit'. A rethinking will be necessary, to foster a realistic sense of prosperity based on 'enoughness' and respectful relationships with each other and the planet.

Our recommendation here is not about a specific act that needs doing, but an inward, honest and firm consideration of why we have lost a quarter of century to act on environmental evidence, and what we need to change about the way we make decisions as a country. We must go beyond blame as well as inaction. This might lead to reset our way of life, connecting with enduring values of respect, kindness, honesty and community.

To conclude, we respectfully but firmly expect our political representatives to give priority to measures that address global warming so as to minimise the danger of conflict and trauma to those most affected, in ways which will maximise intergenerational and intragenerational equity between humans, and which show (whatever the future for humanity) intrinsic respect for life processes.

In so doing, we expect there are opportunities for a renewal of trust in our current political system, and a bounty of thanks we can expect from future generations, and a 'coming up right way' in our relationships with the Earth itself.

AF

Shared Experience of the Light

ANDREW BRION | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING



In the new Victorian Friends' Centre (VFC) a group has started to meet each fortnight. The group is convened by David Parris and we meet for ninety minutes, being three half hours of: silent worship; contemplation and writing; and sharing and fellowship. The objective is to deepen our experiences of the Light and to be

open to the leading of the Spirit.

While anything can arise for each individual, e.g. world issues, experiences of the silence, problems with disturbances during meeting – and these can sometimes be quite varied – our latest meeting produced four reflections with remarkable commonality, one from each of the attenders, all on peace

and harmony – and some perhaps also pointing to a way in which we might use VFC. While the written pieces are usually for personal and, optionally, group reflection, we felt these said something about the gathered nature of that particular meeting and it felt right to share them more broadly.

AF

Owen Wilkes

On a kitchen cupboard door is a poster. It is of you, my friend. A younger you, younger than the last time we met, when you encouraged me to come back to Aotearoa -New Zealand for the annual peace hui. The poster speaks of the internationally renowned peace researcher, and your impending national tour. The images on the black and white poster are simple and evocative. Your face, younger and, I think, looking somewhat sad. A bike, a small backpack, and was it a camera?

The images remind the informed observer of your latest adventure/ misadventure. You had taken leave from SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. You were cycling around a small offshore island. You were travelling light, spartan as always.

While in Stockholm, in winter, people would observe your sandals, black bush singlet and grey shorts

with a degree of disbelief. But you, the beekeeper from New Zealand's west coast were used to the rugged winters, and to walking in all weathers. But I digress – your cycling holiday took you past military installations and you observed with your ever present analytical mind the nature and purpose of the electronic array laid out before you.

Your holiday over, you returned to your workplace and began to catch up on your reading of military journals, the literature of your daily work. A comment by, if I recall correctly, a Danish Colonel, stated that all of their military infrastructure was defensive ... your observations clearly demonstrated this remark to be untrue. And so you took to your typewriter and sent a countering missive to the journal.

And the Swedish Security service pounced, raiding you, confiscating papers and other literature like books of addresses and contacts. You went

to trial and described the conclusion in the judgement. You were convicted of the Orwellian crime of having 'unauthorised remembrances'. Meaning that you had remembered things you had observed that you should have forgotten because they were secret.

Being expelled, following your trial, you returned to New Zealand. We celebrated your return. The international campaign supporting you, standing in solidarity with you gave you heart and heightened our appreciation of your contribution.

Now, in 2017, looking at your face on the old photograph I am saddened by your subsequent, years later, suicide as you contemplated further surgery for a painful condition.

Thank you for your lived expression of peace activism and love lived in global terms.

DAVID BULLER

AF

Silence and Light

Silence and light

The tick of the clock
My Friends' breathing
Trucks in the street
As my mind centres on my core,
It expands outwards
Streets and houses
Rolling hills meeting rolling
waves.
So much pain
So much hope
Like fertile seeds in fertile soil
Waiting for the rain.
Is this the new Spring?
Is this the end of a long Winter?
Is now the start of a new
growth?
Is now the time for the fresh
green shoots of harmony?

David Parris

The Peacemakers

Someone once said 'Blessed are the Peacemakers', and
I don't really know if it was Jesus Christ or St Matthew
Or just some second century scribe – but what matters is it stuck.
It stuck. And people wrap themselves inside that peaceful banner
Calling for peace, peace, peace when what they really wish is
To see a world shaped like the one they want.
There are those who say that peace is just sustained by those
With mighty weapons – that those with soft and blissful
Tongues are weak, can never make the peace they yearn for.
But know that those who hold the peace, hold their peace –
Their peace, not the peace of others. One man's freedom is
Another man's prison. And what brings one a sense of peace is for
another
Something altogether else. Those blessed peacemakers perhaps
would like
To put away all weapons, perhaps remove all violence. But still they
have their politics,
Their views. They will not fail to speak their mind to challenge those
In power. And words will hurt despite the stick and stones adage.
I don't know if it's OK to call a person evil and whether that
Advances peace; if there are other ways to bring two minds to meet.
Oh, blessed peacemakers who sometimes get caught up with
physical peace
While the trauma wrought by words and deeds goes on – erodes the
very
Fabric of relationships and life. I am reminded of Mary Oliver
And her words about our one wild and precious life. Then
She does not call us to the ramparts but to know that we are
One with all life, the world. To take our time. To pray.
To walk one day in silence with the universe.

Andrew Brion

I'm Sad

I'm sad that people fight in wars
Because they can't agree
I'm sad for those who die so young
With sights they've never seen
I'm sad for those who are betrayed
Never to be fulfilled
I'm sad for those who give up hope
Of what they might achieve
No answers come
Tis not the time
Wait a while
Grieve a while
Pick up the pieces
And start again

David Evans

*South Australia and Northern Territory
Regional Meeting*

The peace incubator

How difficult to still. Thinking of what surrounds does not quiet me.
The voices around now silent demand answers. What is the way
forward?
With the gift of our new home comes responsibility. How will we
Friends breathe peace? How will we transcend life, take from you,
digest your will and act?
The surroundings beckon. Will we stop bickering about possessions?
Can we set aside worldly longings dressed up as Quakerly thought?
Can we wait in the light and listen?
Now light flashes against my eyes. Am I closer to the spirit? I stop and
words drop into my mind – become a 'Peace incubator'
Immediately my mind races. I must pee so I open my eyes dazzled
by the reflection from a car across the road, go to the loo, come back
and settle again into silence. The words are still with me and the
beginnings of feeling settled. I sigh and sit back but the alarm brings
me out.
I will share my reality

Jill Parris



Know Thy Friend

'A child of the British Empire'

ANN ZUBRICK | WEST AUSTRALIA REGIONAL MEETING

Recently, while I was visiting friends and colleagues in Hong Kong, I was described as 'one of the generation of children of the British Empire'. I'd not previously thought of myself in quite those terms although I understood why I might be described that way.

My New Zealand father and Australian mother were missionary doctors—a decision they made in their twenties. Between 1944 and 1958 they established and staffed Salvation Army hospitals—in southern Africa (Northern Rhodesia), southern India (Tamil Nadu) and Indonesia (east Java). In 1958, the military delivered notice to leave Indonesia within 48 hours. Just as I started secondary school, my parents came to Perth to live. Thereafter life was very different for all of us!

I went to Christian (mostly Methodist) boarding schools for almost all my primary years. School was safe place given the political and economic turmoil in both India and Indonesia. I remember very caring house mothers, good teachers, easy friendships, awful food, and being envied for the number of letters I received each week from home. My mother later passed on to me every letter I wrote home from the age of four. As a family we remained faithful, regular correspondents throughout my own and my parents' peripatetic lives.

After leaving school I went to Melbourne to study speech therapy. I loved this course which combined health science, linguistics, psychology and clinical practice. Most of all I enjoyed working with adults with acquired brain injury—an interest I retain to

this day. In 1972 I was fortunate to receive a scholarship to do postgraduate study in the USA while working as a therapist in a slow stream residential neuro-rehabilitation program. Several participants were young men recently returned from Vietnam with both brain and psychological trauma. Their stories left me with a lasting impression of the horror of war. I met my husband Stephen at university in America and he followed me back to Perth where we married in 1974.

On my return to Perth I was invited to set up the four-year university course for speech pathologists at the West Australian Institute of Technology (now Curtin University). In 1988 I was invited to set up the first program in the world to train speech pathologists in Chinese at the University of Hong Kong and, subsequently, to train physicians educated in traditional Chinese medicine to deliver community-based rehabilitation in China.

My connection with Quakers began in Hong Kong.

I was an active member of the Methodist and then the Uniting Church through my teenage years and twenties. I attended several protestant churches in Hong Kong but did not feel a 'fit' since the congregations and ministers were almost exclusively expatriates. One morning I saw a small notice in the Saturday South China Morning Post recording the time and location for Quaker Meeting. From then on I attended Meeting for Worship with a diverse group of 'locals' and visiting Friends from around the world. During my five years in Hong Kong I had the privilege of getting to know David and

Ruth Watson, and Barbara Bird and Donna Anderton (Backhouse lecturers 1995) while they were in Asia with American World Service.

I returned to Perth in 1994 when Fremantle Meeting was relatively new and became a WARM Member in 1998. Fremantle Friends remain my core spiritual community.

In some perhaps strange sense, my parents guided me to Quakers. My mother, in her words and actions, deeply respected people of all faiths and backgrounds. She explicitly taught me from a very young age how to dress, eat and act in synagogues, churches, mosques, temples, and at all manner of religious ceremonies. 'Ann, this is God's house and in/at this God's house or place you need to ...' I have thanked her often for that gift.

Both parents talked to me about the presence of God in every human experience, extending through to their deaths. While they used God and Christ language when we prayed together as a family—as we did every morning at breakfast—they used other words and culturally appropriate gestures when we hosted families from other faith traditions. At a very young age, my mother explicitly taught me to say a prayer at the end of the day giving gratitude for what had been and to hold the night and day to follow in God's keeping.

At the start of each term, when I left for boarding school, time was set aside to share loving blessings and leave one another in confidence for the future. I was encouraged to explore my own

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Noted

This is our regular feature in which we briefly record interesting publications and websites that have come to our attention. Inclusion of an item in this format does not preclude a possible longer review in a later issue. We welcome suggestions for inclusion.

Two new novels and a website

Two Quakers, both experienced authors, have recently published novels.

Barbara True of South Australia and Northern Territory Regional Meeting has published a new book *Always True*, the fourth in her Pilot Collins series. 'Twelve years have passed since Pilot's unexpected wake up call. All forces to the contrary, she has stayed faithful to her long term commitments to family and medicine without ignoring the startling relevance of falling in love with the face of an actor at age 43.

'Set in the context of home life, romance novels, senior school envy and her home branch of medical specialisation, Pilot wends her way through owning her own story and finally arriving at the beginning of telling it rather exactly in her own way, sharing the journey to help others find their own – befriended, loved, embraced as they are and less alone.'

The new book by **Sue Parritt** (Victoria RM) is *Chrysalis*. The 'swinging sixties' in the UK is the background for the early memories

of Jane Simmons, the teen heroine of the book. Jane is the child of birthright Friends of a fairly conservative mien and their quiet home is contrasted with that of a large family of five who join Jane's Meeting and contribute a welcome breath of informality and new life.

In this era, age-old mores were challenged and debated. Discussions on sex before marriage, homosexuality, divorce and abortion among Friends' Meetings in the UK resulted in the 1964 statement: Towards a Quaker View of Sex.

Jane's teen and early adult romantic experiences bring her face-to-face with many of these moral and ethical dilemmas.

As she moves from home to attend teacher's college, she becomes more aware of the societal pressures on young women in their choices of work, love, and family and wants to find her own path but struggles with the subtle ties that bind.

Jane's choices and their consequences are very much the heart of this story and her final choice is as unexpected as

it is 'just right' as a rebellion against a lifetime of conformity.

A Quaker anti-conscription activist

The Sydney Living Museums website (<https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/ww1/isabel-swann-womens-peace-army-free-speech>) brings us an article on Isabel Swann and her sisters. Isabel Frances Swann (1881–1961) was an ardent peace activist, an anti-conscription campaigner, defender of free speech and secretary of the NSW branch of the Women's Peace Army. She was the sixth of 11 children born to Quaker-bred schoolmaster William Swann and his wife, Elizabeth Devlin, and was brought up in a household influenced by the commitment of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) to oppose participation in war. Throughout World War I this household was centred on Elizabeth Farm at Parramatta, originally owned by John Macarthur, but owned and occupied by the Swann family from 1904 until 1968.

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spiritual understanding in my own way and at my own pace.

A decade ago I completed the Masters in Ageing and Pastoral Studies at Charles Sturt University and the Clinical Pastoral Education course at Royal Perth Hospital focussing on the spiritual care of older persons living with dementia and mental illness.

I love this work. Every Wednesday I volunteer in a day centre program

for 14-16 men living with dementia. I return home holding intensely introspective experiences and sensations of something powerful in what we have shared that day in our gathering together. Often the sharing is in silence as many of the men are no longer able to talk.

People often ask me why I volunteer with persons with dementia: I find it is a space, like Meeting—with the

simple experience of shared presence—to grow spiritually; to honour that of God in every person at the Centre when honour is not what persons with dementia usually experience; and to grow as a member of a community of individuals who try to live in a manner representative of Friends.

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The Nancy Shelley Bequest Fund Journey

A reflection on our first three years

BEE BEEBY | NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL MEETING

Nancy Shelley was a long-time and treasured member of the Blue Mountains meeting. She died in 2011, and after a long and complex process of court determinations, a legacy bequeathed by her to the Quaker community was deemed to be the responsibility of the Blue Mountains local meeting. I wasn't part of the many threshing meetings which then took place over the next two years, during which time deep consideration was given to how best to employ this gift in a way that Nancy would have wanted. I know from other Friends who were involved in that process that at no stage was it hurried, and that it was a process which reflected deeply and listened for the voice of God to help them discern how best to make this generous bequest available for Friends.

Finally, in 2013 the Nancy Shelley Bequest Fund was set up, and guidelines were developed for individuals or organisations who intended to apply to the fund for financial assistance for their projects or activities. These guidelines were built around a knowledge of Nancy's concerns and passions, identified as matters relating to peace, indigenous concerns, matters relating to women's education and leadership particularly in relation to music and mathematics, and also concerns of the local Blue Mountains meeting and Yearly Meeting.

Along with Brett Trenergy and Sabine Erica, I was approached to become part of the working group to administer the trust. The Blue Mountains meeting had had to become a legally incorporated body in order to be able to auspice the

trust, and the meeting's treasurer at the time, Myra Hutton, was therefore also an *ex officio* member of the working group. An early task for the group was to consider how best to invest the money available. Blue Mountains local meeting had determined that the fund would not need to preserve the capital indefinitely by relying only on interest for grants, as this would have limited how much money could be made available for projects and activities and possibly limited the group's ability to fund any large-scale projects should they be presented for consideration.

The working group informed regional and local meetings that the fund was now open for applications, and developed an application form – something we wanted to keep as simple as possible. An early decision of the working group was to send \$10,000 to each of the regional meetings for them to be able to assist their members with either travel or study funds as they saw fit. I think however that we also expected to be inundated with applications when we announce that the fund was 'open for business' but in fact, for a while, nothing happened. Then the first application was received in mid-2014, requesting funding for a music program for young people at a local school, and slowly the applications began to arrive.

Our job was to consider each application and discern whether or not they fitted the guidelines and reflected Nancy's concerns. We then made a recommendation which was taken back to Blue Mountains local meeting for a final decision.

The applications which have been received over the last three years have fallen into three broad categories – requests from individuals for assistance with study projects relating, usually, to peace or spiritual development; requests for money for larger-scale projects such as the production of the *People Power Manual*; and requests for capital investment. Most of these applications have been approved.

One particularly successful project was a Peace Prize – a venture where students from high schools within the Blue Mountains were invited to submit either an art work or written work which addressed peace in some way. The committee received submissions from a wide range of students from all the schools, mostly of art works, and the quality and imagination of some of the submitted works was outstanding and very inspiring. Judging of the art works was conducted by Jacque Schultz, and in October 2016 a prize night was held at the Wentworth Falls School of Arts. It is hoped that the Peace Prize may be offered again in 2018.

Approvals are easy. Not approving an application is, not surprisingly, less so. Occasionally an application hasn't been seen to fit the guidelines or to adequately explain its purpose. We made a couple of difficult decisions which involved lengthy discussion and careful consideration and, ultimately, a decision to either request more information or decline the application. In the process, we have learned a lot. For example, we developed a checklist of things for applicants to consider; we became clearer that we would utilise



Growth, by Eloise Bertinat, Blue Mountains Grammar School, winner of the inaugural Nancy Shelley Peace Prize held in 2016

the option to request more information and clarify specifically what we needed to know; we developed a protocol for requesting a report back to the working group and local meeting about how the funds were utilised.

We have also asked ourselves whether the NSBF should make funds available for capital works, and in conjunction with the Blue Mountains local meeting have considered that this is not a viable option, as the original intent of the fund was to focus on projects and activities which had outcomes relating to Nancy's interests. This in turn, however, has also led us to frequently wonder 'would Nancy have wanted us to approve this particular application?' This has been a deeper issue, leading us to recognise that we don't have to treat Nancy's interests as a constraint, but rather as a guiding spirit. Following Nancy's passions does not need to limit our capacity for discernment about what is valuable and relates to Quaker concerns. In relation to this, the guidelines have now also been widened to include matters relating to the environment, one of our Quaker testimonies.

Recently, the working group revisited the application form and guidelines, and Jennifer Burrell (now our *ex officio* treasurer) and Jackie

Perkins, the Clerk of Blue Mountains local meeting, recently talked about the fund at every opportunity at this year's Yearly Meeting. The working group membership is about to change, and new members will bring new insights and discernment. The Nancy Shelley Fund is a living, evolving fund which it is hoped will allow Friends and friends to gain assistance to develop projects which contribute to the society in which we live.

The process of being involved in the Nancy Shelley Bequest Fund has been a valuable one for me. As a newcomer to the Quaker community, I've learned a lot about Quaker processes. I've appreciated the care and time each person in the working group has taken to consider the applications and tried to contribute to a final recommendation thoughtfully and honestly and listening for guidance. And I have learned something about Nancy Shelley, a woman of vision, passion and generosity.

About Nancy Shelley

Nancy Shelley was born in Victoria in 1926. She studied at Melbourne University attaining a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Mathematics, which was a lifelong passion of hers.

In 1952 Nancy went to the United Kingdom teaching mathematics at the

High School for Girls in Northampton. At this time Nancy also developed her singing voice, and gave a number of recitals in the UK, including at Wigmore Hall, a prime recital room in London. Music continued to be significant to her and she regularly played the piano, violin and a range of recorders.

When back in Australia she became Headmistress at Woodstock Presbyterian Girls School in Albury (which no longer exists). Her approach was to assist the teaching staff to create an atmosphere of trust which enabled the students to affirm their own experience and remove obstacles to their learning – an approach which many former students appreciated and remember fondly years later. She wanted everyone to enjoy and understand mathematics. Nancy also introduced Quaker practices such as silent worship and group decision making to the school.

When Nancy returned to Melbourne she was employed at La Trobe University as a Senior Tutor, Lecturer and Research Fellow, and she helped form the International Organisation of Women in Mathematics Education. So she was a good organiser, and motivated many people to achieve far

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QSA Notes

The impact on QSA of membership of ACFID

JACKIE PERKINS | QSA ADMINISTRATOR



ACFID Conference speakers Anjana Regani (left) and Lily Thapa (right). Photo: ACFID

One of the key dates in the Australian Council For International Development (ACFID) year is the Annual General Meeting. This is part of a two-day conference in November, held this year in Melbourne. It is a wonderful opportunity to network, catch up with colleagues, learn some new ideas and ways of working as well as hearing some unusual stories from member agencies' program partners from around the region.

The conference began with the AGM. This included the audited financial statement and reports from the various committees. ACFID now has 123 members and 17 affiliate members. During the AGM we welcomed into membership three interim members and four affiliates. This past year has seen the

Code of Conduct committee finalise and launch the revised Code of Conduct to which all member agencies must adhere, and this requires QSA to make some changes and additions to its suite of policies. The current process of redrafting policies will also address these additional requirements. Some policy implications will apply to our project partners, and this will form a key part of discussions during the upcoming monitoring visits so that a common understanding is established with key project partner staff. Rather than simply handing over a policy written to comply with Australian standards to well-intentioned people for whom English is their second or third language, a face to face discussion will help to ensure that the essence of the policy is fully explained and understood.

At the end of the reports of the AGM, there were some resolutions to consider, which were accepted unanimously. They were then made into press releases to gain a wider audience. These I think would also be acceptable to Friends, and it was on that basis that I accepted them on behalf of QSA.

- A resolution that the people seeking asylum, and those already found to be refugees detained on Manus and Nauru are the legal and moral responsibility of the Australian Government; and that ACFID and its members request urgent humanitarian action to bring a cessation to the suffering of the people due to Australia's offshore detention practice; and that the refugees and asylum seekers be brought to

Australia while determinations are made about durable solutions for each of them.

- In support of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, ACFID and its member agencies resolve to stand in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people for *Makarrata* (the coming together after a struggle), and to support their aims and aspirations for substantive constitutional reform, by leveraging our networks and influence.

We also welcomed the new president of ACFID, who is Susan Pascoe, formerly the Commissioner of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). Susan has the potential to bring her extensive political knowledge and networks to support ACFID and the sector during her initial term of two years.

Around 250 people representing the member agencies and some university students attended the conference, which had as the theme 'Transformational Change and Development: Engage. Create. Lead.' After a welcome to country by a local Aboriginal Elder, the audience was enthralled by the work of Lily Thapa, Founder of Women for Human Rights, a pioneer organisation working for the rights of widows in Nepal. Lily explained that culturally,

widows in Nepal face a difficult situation. They must remain separate from their own family for a year and not attend social occasions, associate with any men, and remain within their husband's family, but are unable to claim her husband's property unless she is over the age of 35 years. Lily found herself as a widow with two small children at the age of 29 years. I could not imagine how she managed to survive the first year, being told by family members that she 'did not need' to attend a family wedding, was unable to visit her family when her need for their support both emotionally and financially would have been at its greatest, and having to deal with in-laws who were trying to claim the house with the law supporting their actions. She channelled her outrage into making a difference for other women by creating an NGO which has helped hundreds of young widows and has succeeded in bringing about national political policy changes, making it possible for widows not to be ostracised, and to have immediate and full access rights to property.

We also heard from Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, Minister for International Development and the Pacific; Senator Richard Di Natale, Leader of the Australian Greens; and Senator Penny Wong, Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. Panels of energised speakers addressed action and

advocacy for change with participation from Stop Adani Campaign; Love Makes a Way; Climate Action Network; transformational organisations for change; and Campaign for Australian Aid. There were also three sessions giving a choice of options to discuss particular topics in more detail. Each option addressed various forms of actions and advocacy for change – a packed agenda of which this report is only a snippet. For those wanting to know more, please contact me in the QSA office.

Living Gifts catalogues

Printed copies of the latest catalogue have been sent to the members of the QSA Linkages Sub-Committee in your Regional Meeting, but you can also download them from the QSA website: www.qsa.org.au. Inside the catalogue you will find a variety of gifts to support the QSA projects, ranging in cost from \$30 to \$100, and some with open amounts. Projects in Cambodia, India, Uganda and Australia will benefit from your alternative gift by supporting community groups to achieve food and water security as well as the means to increase their income for the family, increase their health and wellbeing and take care of their local environment. We welcome and encourage your support Friends

QSA is a member of the Australian Council for International Development and is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The purpose of QSA is to express in a practical way the concern of Australian Quakers for the building of a more peaceful, equitable, just and compassionate world. To this end QSA works with communities in need to improve their quality of life with projects which are culturally sensitive, as well as being economically and environmentally appropriate and sustainable.

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‘Walk Cheerfully’ songs

At Jordans and Hertford, U.K.

PETER WEBB | SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND NORTHERN TERRITORY REGIONAL MEETING



Peter (centre) with Richard Simpson and Lottie Greenhow

Some Friends may remember that I was commissioned by SANTRM to write some music for the 2010 AYM, which was held in Adelaide in January of that year.

As things turned out, I produced two sets of songs. One, called *Kumangka ngadlu kumanendi* (Together we become one) was a reflection on the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians, and the second was called *Walk Cheerfully*, a set of six songs for soprano voice, oboe, and string quartet, reflecting on the Quaker Testimonies of Simplicity, Justice, Truth, Equality, and Peace, preceded by the ‘Walk Cheerfully’ introduction.

These two sets of songs were duly performed at the 2010 YM, recorded a month later, and CDs were made available to interested Friends.

After some years, one of these CDs found its way to Richard Simpson, a regular attendee at High Wycombe meeting in England. Richard is the Principal Oboe of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. He took a liking to these songs, and, along with Val McFarlane, Chilterns Area Clerk, a performance of *Walk Cheerfully* was arranged for the

evening of March 9th, 2016, in the Jordans Meeting House (built in 1688), which is part of the Chilterns Area meeting.

The performers were Lottie Greenhow, professional opera and oratorio soloist, Richard Simpson on oboe, and the Aylwin String Quartet, all of whom were colleagues of Richard from the BBC SO.

The rain poured down outside, but over sixty people filled the Jordans Meeting House, and *Walk Cheerfully* was duly performed, after Richard and the quartet had done an enthralling performance of the Oboe Quintet by Sir Arthur Bliss.

Julie and I attended that performance. At the end, the audience, mostly but not exclusively Quakers, gave it a most gratifying reception. Then, in the manner of Friends (I suppose one could say), they stayed in their places, and various people stood and gave their impressions – all of them favourable, I’m glad to say – about the work and the performance. We all then retired for supper, and eventually headed home.

Julie and I had been invited to stay with Val and her husband, Ian, at their

home in nearby Beaconsfield. As is the way of Quakers, they treated us with great hospitality and loving care, and we consider them to be close friends.

That, however, is not the end of the story. Unbeknown to us, Val had been advocating the *Walk Cheerfully* songs to various meetings in England; and, earlier this year (2017), we received another email from Val, telling us that the songs were to be performed again, this time on Sunday afternoon, October 8th, in the Hertford Meeting House. (Built in 1670, this is the oldest purpose-built Meeting House in Britain which has remained in continuous use.) Julie and I were invited to be present again, and, of course, to stay with Val and Ian. So, at short notice, we booked flights, arrived two days before the concert, and, on the due date, were driven by Ian and Val to Hertford, where we attended the morning Meeting for Worship, were taken out to lunch in Hertford, and then went to the concert.

Once again, it was Lottie, Richard, and the Aylwin Quartet; but, this time, we heard various combinations of those players performing works by Purcell, Vivaldi, Bax, Webern, and Vaughan Williams. I was invited then to introduce the *Walk Cheerfully* songs before they were performed. It was a wonderful event, with the playing and singing of some of England’s foremost professional musicians enhanced by the truly lovely acoustic of the Meeting House. The whole concert was a joy and a privilege for me, while remembering

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The Future of Friendship

JO JORDAN | SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND NORTHERN TERRITORY REGIONAL MEETING



On Thursday 5th October I took part in a panel presentation followed by audience participation on 'The Future of Friendship' organised by Moira Deslandes at The Jade, a small entertainment venue in Adelaide. It was one of the events in the the Adelaide Open State Festival, 'a festival of collaboration, innovation, ideas and enterprise' from 28th September to 8th October 2017. There were about 40 people in the audience. Miranda, a musician, performed a piece of music on the guzheng, a Chinese Zither, at the conclusion of the evening.

The three panelists, Lauren, Nicholas and I, were asked open questions about friendship by Kate Simpson, a local social worker. Each of us spoke from our own experience, as a teacher, a zoo worker and a Quaker. Respect, openness and trust emerged as central values to the formation of good connections and friendships with others, whether they were children, animals or people.

Digital technology has brought an additional dimension to friendships. Online friends may be no more than acquaintances, however these may deepen and strengthen with face to face meetings. I was reminded of the statement quoted in Quaker Faith and Practice about the purpose of Yearly Meeting; 'to see one another's faces and open our hearts one to another in the Truth of God once a year.' There is no doubt that deep and loving friendships

are formed and maintained at each Yearly Meeting.

As a civil celebrant I discovered that most couples who plan to marry met for the first time online. When couples later choose to spend time on the phone and share conversation face to face the friendship may develop and grow into a strong, loving partnership and marriage.

There was agreement among panel members and audience that strong friendships are important to our physical and emotional wellbeing, particularly during times of crisis and the absence of family members. True friends share openly about things that matter to them, they feel safe about opening their hearts, minds and their imaginations to each other. A friend is able to listen attentively to what is said as well as what is not said. We gain strength from our friendships and also learn about ourselves in the process. Each friendship contributes to who we are.

From *Advices and Queries*: Do you cherish your friendships so that they grow in depth and understanding and mutual respect? In close relationships we may risk pain as well as finding joy. When experiencing great happiness or great hurt we may be more open to the working of the Spirit.'

We discussed how friendships may take place in future. How might they be different? If the casual work

environments and long working hours continue, friendships between co-workers may be harder to form and to maintain. There may be fewer opportunities for joining interest groups or working together as volunteers on projects. Nevertheless, we have seen the recent success of community gardens which bring together people from different cultures and generations where supportive friendships are formed.

Quakers, on the whole are a fairly undemonstrative and introverted lot. They may call themselves Friends, but are they really very friendly? Visiting Friends sometimes say that they don't often experience a warm welcome on arrival at a new meeting. However, over the past 40 years, I have learnt that, despite the understated welcome, there is a genuine, heartfelt interest and acceptance of each person who takes part in meeting for worship.

The panelists were each asked what they had gained from the organisations they represented. I spoke about the courage I have gained from my involvement with Quakers. The experiences which come from raising a family and professional work have contributed too. But I believe that the openness, trust and respect that I found among Friends has given me the courage to be open to leadings of the Spirit, and to follow them, expecting the best.

AF



Quaker Processes

DUNCAN FREWIN, | QUEENSLAND REGIONAL MEETING

*A new Commandment I give you:
Love one another. As I have loved
you, then you must love one another.*
(John 13:34).

I hear a lot of talk about Quaker process and right ordering. Perhaps you have heard it too: 'Friends this not in right ordering. We have not received a recommendation from the committee.' Or 'I hope we will follow Quaker processes and defer this decision.'

Unfortunately, it seems that we do not always understand the same things when we use these words. Recent events in my meeting have led me to ponder on these words. I offer these thoughts as a contribution to the ongoing conversation about where the Religious Society of Friends is going. Books can be (and have been) written about it. This is my understanding, my glint of light, and I invite others to share their light.

I want to start by distinguishing processes from procedures. Procedures are prescribed ways of operating – rules. An example would be the requirement that before a concern is brought to Yearly Meeting, it should be adopted by a regional meeting or a YM committee. Procedures are relatively easy to write down and set out in a manual such as our *Handbook of Practice and Procedure*. Often when people talk about Quaker processes, they really mean Quaker procedures – rules in fact.

Processes on the other hand are ways of thinking – principles or attitudes – that mould our interactions with each other or with outside groups or individuals. They are based on the values we cherish.

An example might be our fundamental attitude of attempting to find peaceful ways of resolving differences, based on the value that peaceful resolution is better than striving for victory. That seeking for peaceful resolutions is the process that underlies the traditional procedures of resolving conflict in a meeting (one-to-one meeting, meeting with support persons, meeting with a mediator, and so on). Processes underlie procedures. That is, procedures are just the visible, concrete expression of the processes.

Procedures are relatively easy to codify. In former times, Quakers passed on much of their procedures in tradition – ways of doing business that, in their experience, demonstrated the spiritual processes they followed. In our own times, when few of us have grown up in Quaker families, the traditions have become weak and we have depended more on written descriptions of these ways – the *Handbook*. And each year the *Handbook* is becoming more and more prescriptive and detailed. I fear that we have come to depend on prescriptive procedures, interpreting them as if they were rules, because we are no longer sure about the underlying values-based processes.

Processes on the other hand are not so easy to grasp or codify. They are ways of thinking, attitudes, approaches, rather than rules, patterns of thinking that we bring to life. They flow from the values we cherish. Processes work at a deep level of our spiritual life, while procedures operate at the surface/visible level. So for instance our procedures in the *Handbook* tell us that a committee is accountable to the whole meeting,

but the process is our attempt to be accountable to each other and through each other to God (however you understand that word) for how we live our life. Procedures can be easily modified to suit new circumstances, but processes are enduring because they flow from timeless, spirit-based values.

To understand Quakers processes, we need to consider the values that undergird them. We try to live our lives so that our lives testify to our values, demonstrate them to the world. These are the values of faith, hope, trust, integrity, respect, justice, mercy, humility and more. They are grounded in our understanding of God or the Spirit and in our relation to God. Quakers developed into a distinct group in Christianity because of our ways of living out these values in our church affairs as well as our daily life.

I would like to explore how values and processes relate, and how they are expressed in our procedures. To do that, I will look at two examples, one short, one long, to try to draw a picture of values, processes and procedures. The first example is our tradition of silent worship and how we regulate spoken ministry in that worship. Our understanding is that the Spirit of God can speak directly to our soul, without intercession through a sacrament or priest. That is the value that undergirds our spiritual process. So we wait in expectant stillness, listening for the voice of the Spirit, perhaps in our own mind, perhaps through the words of another person. Listening to the Spirit is the process. The silence is the procedure – a way of encouraging stillness of heart. The physical silence

of itself has no value. That is not the aim in worship; the aim is to still the mind in order to listen for the Spirit. It is an expectant living stillness, not inert silence. So there is room for the babbling of babies, for the giggling of children, even the snoring of adults. So, even though we speak of silent worship, it need not be silent. The Quaker process is to seek stillness of mind not mere physical silence.

A more complex example is how we conduct our business. In our meetings for business, we meet to seek God's will in our corporate life and to look after the necessary business of running our community. We are not looking for human agreement (consensus); we are seeking to know what Spirit wills. That is the theological value that undergirds our whole spiritual approach to church affairs. So we meet in hope, trusting that we will find light for the path ahead. It truly is meeting for *worship* for business. The processes of expectant waiting (for light to know the will of God) are based on values of equality, integrity, respect, humility, and so on. They require that we all search in our own hearts for any glimmers of light that we can offer, that we listen for any light that others may offer, and that we acknowledge that no one of us has all the light we need. That way of gathering is our process. These spiritual processes are the basis for our procedures for speaking in business meetings. And from them we derive the traditional procedural rules. So anyone can speak, as long as each one speaks from a base of prayer. We stand to

be helpful. We modify a procedure, or even drop it, and adopt a new procedure, because the spiritual process of seeking God's will *as a community* is more important.

be helpful. We modify a procedure, or even drop it, and adopt a new procedure, because the spiritual process of seeking God's will *as a community* is more important. These procedures are important as a concrete way of living out the processes that flow from our spiritual values. But when we stick obstinately to procedures because 'Quakers have always done it that way' we are setting up a false god. When we frown at the noises of children in worship we are worshipping the physical silence. When we dismiss the offering of an inexperienced Friend in a business meeting because it is given in a 'non-Quakerly' way, we are worshipping tradition rather than listening for the Spirit. That was the criticism made of the Pharisees in Jesus' time. In fact, every religious group is capable of mistaking the rule for the spirit. We must always question our own ways – are we acting from the Spirit, or are we just enforcing human rules?

We try not to argue or debate or to convince others of our opinion. And it follows that we do not answer back or speak more than once. We do not rush to speak immediately after another Friend but allow time to absorb their contribution. And if we believe that a person has given useful light, we say no more – our not speaking shows that we believe the Spirit has been opened. All of these 'rules' (most unwritten) flow from our understanding that we seek God's will rather than human solutions, that everyone is equal before God and that we need the light that each one can offer. But these procedures are not graven in stone. We try not to be rigid, especially with a Friend who is inexperienced in our ways. We do not demand that someone who has difficulty standing should always stand to speak. In routine items we relax the standards. We forgive human weakness in each other when Friends get chatty. We may welcome several contributions from a Friend with valuable knowledge. We accept further contributions from someone whose mind is changing. And a clerk may refuse to acknowledge a person whose contribution would not

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Let us then search for how to listen for the Spirit and seek God's will. Let us come together with respect for each other, with integrity, with humility – in the end, with compassion for one another. Let us not use 'Quaker processes' to judge each other, but let us try to follow the spiritual processes as best we can. Let us deal tenderly with each other, especially when we are not in unity. For in the end, the only rule is Jesus' commandment – 'Love one another'

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

that the songs are intended to be less an up-front concert work, and more a creative ministry.

Again, the reception from the audience was gratifying, and we returned to the McFarlane home to warmth and companionship in the best Quaker way.

We spent a short time in the U.K.

afterwards, catching up with rarely-seen family, and then flew home by way of Vienna, where we met our newest grandchild – five-week-old Mika, first son of the oldest of our four children, Jonathan, and his Austrian wife, Julia. Three days there were not enough.

From SARM's 2010 commission to Jordans and Hertford – who would

have thought? A life in music has given us great joy around Australia, in our Adelaide home, amongst the community of musicians and audiences, and taken us to many places around the world. We have been privileged indeed to lead such a life.

AF

THE GRIEF KALEIDOSCOPE

*Metaphors for Grief*

BY SU-ROSE MCINTYRE

The Grief Kaleidoscope

Metaphors for grief

BY SU-ROSE MCINTYRE

Published by Morning Star Publishing. ISBN: 9780648030560. \$14.95

I am the wild silver brumby you may only have caught glimpses of in the past, or perhaps heard of through tales of dread, whispered by others summoned before.

You have no idea of the strain I am under clamping this balloon between my knees while attempting to swim, or even just tread water.

I am hollowed out. A cavity, dark and deep, has formed within, carved by the whittling knife of grief.

These, and twenty-five other images, stories, metaphors, poems, are the shining glass fragments that comprise 'The Grief Kaleidoscope'. Su-Rose McIntyre's book is not a psychological examination of grief, nor is it a grief memoir – though it is very personal, and the reader may identify in her stories the generally recognised elements, themes or stages of grief. The book is a collection of metaphors for the ever-changing, complex, challenging, wondrous and ultimately transforming nature of grief. Like our experience of Spirit or the Divine, our experience of grief is often beyond words, and best approached through metaphor. Like the metaphors and stories Jesus used concerning the spiritual life, these metaphors may contain deep truths. Su-Rose McIntyre has written

this book from her own profound experience of loss and grief, drawing also from her work as a grief counsellor, in the hope that 'this book will assist in some way to dispel the many fears and stigma surrounding death and grief, and replace them with the respect and dignity deserved.' I brought my professional and, more vividly, my personal experiences of loss and grief to my reading of her book.

I loved the cover illustration by Su-Rose, which so aptly and beautifully shows kaleidoscopic, coloured shapes or fragments – arising out of darkness to form a unified organic whole, each small shape framed by darkness and lit by light.

In an introductory letter to her 'fellow traveller', the author recommends that a chapter be chosen almost 'randomly' as seems appropriate – perhaps 'intuitively' would be a better word. Referring to her Appendix of Metaphor Themes could be a helpful place to start. She suggests reading the chapter in isolation, allowing time to reflect and respond to the metaphor/story. Each chapter contains a task – not compulsory – where Su-Rose reframes the metaphor. For example, the Task for 'In the Garden Pond' is 'to understand that there are different styles of grieving'. This is followed by a Gentle Tip, which may be further elaboration of the grief task, or advice or suggestions, practical, creative, and nurturing. These are always gentle and always supportive of the uniqueness and unpredictability of each person's grieving. Throughout, an emphasis is placed on the importance of self-care and self-nurturing.

One of the metaphors that spoke to me was of being caught in a rip, of nearly drowning, as this was how I experienced my father's dying months. At the time I painted an image of me drowning with one hand trying to touch my father, who was just out of reach. Stevie Smith's well-known poem, 'Not Waving but Drowning' also captures that desperate powerlessness and isolation that can be part of grief.

Another metaphor I responded to was 'The Grotto Within', where the huge emptiness, the hidden, gaping wound finally becomes a sacred grotto, with a candle at its centre. In Su-Rose's metaphor, the inner Light gives warmth, guides, provides purpose and strength and enables the return of wholeness.

As well as recognising my grieving-self in some of the metaphors, I imagined how metaphor might help me understand other people's grief. 'The Cloak of Feathers' is about carrying guilt in grief. In this metaphor Su-Rose deals with the 'if only' questions that may haunt you for years. My sister-in-law, whose eldest son committed suicide 17 years ago, still carries around such a cloak. I can see her stitching each feather in place – she added to it just last year – and though some feathers have been shed and she doesn't wear the cloak every day now, it still goes everywhere with her.

There are metaphors that focus on emotional triggers, or on the smell and taste of grief, its overpowering presence. Contained within the metaphor-stories, or in the gentle tips, are ways to express your feelings and honour or mark your loss. I find it valuable that

grief is not seen as negative, but as fuel, as power, as energy. Grief can help us reassess our values ('The Personal Pyramid'); and grief can transform us ('Metamorphosis').

These metaphors, or metaphor generally, may not speak to all people. They require of the reader a creative or poetic imagination. I suggest you receive each metaphor or story as you would vocal ministry, pausing and staying with a word, a phrase or image that resonates with you, and allowing time to reflect on its meaning for you. Perhaps also notice your body's response to these stories – goose-bumps, tears, tightness or nausea – for the body holds memories

and feelings that our conscious mind is often not aware of.

I wonder if grief metaphors 'work' when what is lost is a homeland, or trees or bird species or 'the wild' or democracy, equality, justice, or faith or values? My sense is that we need art and poetry and creative imagination to help us find our way through the grief of all these losses. This little book of stories/reflections has immersed me once again in the absorbing, confusing, multi-faceted, powerful language and landscape of grief. Loss and grief have been important defining features of my 'spiritual journey' – and that of Su-Rose. Taking time to reflect on grief may

indeed lead to 'way opening', to clarity, purpose, healing and wholeness.

In her epigraph, Su-Rose McIntyre speaks of grieverers as 'fragmented', and 'impelled' as if by an uncontrollable force, '– and yet, the Light shines through'.

May this book help the Light shine through, and bring readers 'a thread of hope', and the courage to explore and create their own personal metaphors of grief.

LYN DUNDAS

New South Wales Regional Meeting

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19 - ABOUT NANCY SHELLEY



more than they expected. She was also a lover of art, and her home in Canberra contained many paintings, drawings, wood carvings and ceramics sent to her from former students.

Being a Quaker was important to Nancy, with a life of simplicity, integrity in all of her dealings and a clear sense of equality, respecting that of God in everyone, and advocating for women's equality and Aboriginal rights. Quakers have a history of writing

to people in power, since the Peace Declaration written in 1660 to King Charles II. Following this tradition, Nancy wrote many letters to politicians, explaining her ideas, offering advice and encouragement, and congratulations when she felt they deserved it. It was however the lack of global peace which greatly exercised her.

The 1980s was a time of demonstrations and rallies to raise awareness and to try to bring about nuclear disarmament. Nancy became a tireless volunteer worker for peace, recognising that peace requires action, not passivity and that the concept of peace is the overcoming of all forms of violence, not simply the absence of war. In 1982 Nancy attended the second United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in New York. She also

attended and spoke at many public meetings and rallies, spent time at the Women's Peace Camp at Pine Gap, and did not shy away from talking to politicians, management and military officers to reach a better understanding. She was deeply concerned about the matter of child soldiers, and she was active in the campaigns to raise awareness of this here in Australia and overseas. Her work in peace making was recognised with the awarding of the Order of Australia Medal in 1989.

To sum up her life, Nancy was a peace activist and longtime campaigner for the rights of indigenous people and children. She had a lively wit, a keen mind, and a genuine desire to help people achieve their potential, an amazing woman.

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- 1 August for the September edition
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