

## Report of Share & Tell session on Outreach

<b>Name of Event:</b>	Share & Tell: Outreach
<b>Date/Time</b>	Tues 7 July 2020
<b>Facilitator</b>	Michael Searle

**Summary:** We observed that:

1. "Outreach" has often been an unacceptable word in Quaker culture
2. The word "product" (in the prompt) triggered some reflection and discussion.
  - a. Some were challenged by the use of the word "product", as demeaning the wonders of Quakerism
  - b. The word "offerings" was suggested in place of "product"
  - c. Some were challenged positively by considering how they might explain Quakerism to their friends, family, etc, noting that they had never really thought about how
3. Various approaches to how much we speak about and inform our friends and contacts of the fact of our being Quakers were reported. Some were challenged about whether they "hide their lights under a bushel".
4. Some would like better (printed and other) resources to be able to give to potential enquirers.
5. Do we know what we believe? Do we know what Quakers believe?
6. Sometimes (especially in small meetings, there is no education, no visible spiritual assistance.
7. Do we rely too much on "learning by osmosis"?
8. Planning the words that one might use to explain to personal enquirers was suggested as something each person might consider reflecting on. The web resources may be useful in formulating our explanatory "scripts". Yet we note that each person needs to develop their own, reflection their on
9. We noted the existence of the **QuakersAustralia.org.au** (aka **quakers.org.au**) website which is targeted to enquirers. This is one resource available.
10. QuakerSpeak is appreciated by many Friends.
11. For many, Advices and Queries is very powerful. Having small booklets to give away can be very useful.
12. How do we welcome people? Different ways work for different people.
  - a. Some meetings do not make any effort to welcome new people. Even if we get it wrong first time, trying an intentional approach is better than doing nothing. We can experiment, adjust, find what works.
  - b. A genuine interest in the person, good listening, not swamping them with information, listening for the questions they may have beyond the presenting question.
13. Sometimes Quaker ways are terribly opaque. Too often not explained; the newcomer having to play detective to work out what are the rules and the practices.
14. Language can be a barrier. We can easily throw around terms which have specific Quaker meaning, and leave a newcomer in the dark.

15. Quaker practices relating to Membership are really obscure, often not explained.
  16. For many people, joining with the heart follows intellectual explanation, and conviction.
  17. Not for all: some walk in and just feel at home.
  18. We could use internet and social media much more.
  19. Often Quakers are invisible. If we were intentional to be more visible, much might be different.
  20. Outreach for the sake of increasing numbers is seen by some (not all) as inappropriate. We should concentrate on the message we have for the world.
  21. What are people seeking?
    - a. Some seek community, friendship
    - b. Others are seeking spiritual depth, direction
  22. What about the young?
    - a. We should seek to be more visible and available to them
    - b. Whilst we hope to breed a new Quaker generation, it has low reliability.
    - c. Working with young people to make films can be very productive.
  23. "Quaker Quest" is well appreciated by some. Has the benefit of structure, and (loose) scripting. Can be a good "package" to use.
  24. Demonstrating our acceptance of diversity is valuable (eg LGBTIQ, previous religious experience)
    - a. Are we open to people who want to be multi-faith? Eg Jewish Quaker?
- The final question ("How do we measure our success?") was barely addressed. Some felt it is not a valid question to ask. Others disagree.

Here is the chat for the session (edited).

<p>Some years ago, there was a Quaker episode on Compass on the ABC TV. The Sunday afterwards, about 15 new people turned up at Devonshire Street. We had no plan for how to deal with that. I don't think any of them stayed long term."</p>
<p>ABC Radio National interviewed three Quakers last year and then put an article online: <a href="https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-05/from-eco-activists-to-anarchist-allies-meet-the-quakers/11078036">https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-05-05/from-eco-activists-to-anarchist-allies-meet-the-quakers/11078036</a>          My firm wish: That we deliberately and mindfully address this question once a year -          How do we measure our success? and we answer it firmly with the declaration          "Success" is not something we measure, because love is a journey, not a destination."</p>
<p>Are there designated people who manage our FaceBook presence? And am I right in thinking there is no Quakers in Aust twitter account?</p>
<p>The Facebook Quaker site is fantastic for me. reading and art. and no censorship so far. hope that doesn't change.</p>
<p>Jacque Schultze, the AYM Secretary, manages our FaceBook accounts - one 'public', one 'private'", and a Twitter account. Some individual meetings tweet, too.</p>