

The Australian Friend

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Encouraging young voices



Editorial

In this issue we feature the voices of young people. The theme in every case is the state of our environment, and their fears for the future. How are we to respond to their fears, and our own? How do we maintain hope? What does faithful action look like at this time?

We learn from our peace activists that faithful action is not without cost, but it is also a source of inspiration. We hear from other Friends acting faithfully to raise peace, to serve others, and combine philanthropy with justice. Other writers confront again the problem of how to express our faith in modern language.

A Friend recently lent me a book of George Fox's epistles. Many are in language which is difficult for the modern reader to understand. But one very short epistle caught my eye. I do not know the context in which it was written, it is introduced merely as Epistle 84, To Friends in London:

There is something drawing towards you, see to it. Take heed of the earth, and keep atop of that which will cumber the mind; and dwell in love and peace with one another.

**RAE LITTING
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN FRIEND COMMITTEE**



The Annual General Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia,

will be held at 3 pm on Sunday 16 January 2022

in an online meeting, via Zoom.

For the meeting details please contact the Australia Yearly Meeting Secretary

at secretary@quakersaustralia.info

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Cover: Encouraging young voices, Ryan M meets his hero, Craig Reucassel



How far are you willing to go?

...to try to reduce climate change?

RYAN M* | CANBERRA AND REGION QUAKERS

In four of my school holiday breaks, when my friends were playing computer games, I was willing to spend time with my family contacting, and interviewing experts from NSW, Victoria, and all the way to the Great Barrier Reef, on 'what us everyday people can do to reduce climate change'.

I have to say it wasn't all tedious work, as I got to meet one of my heroes, Craig Reucassel, the ABC presenter for series such as the *War on Waste*, who I did an inspiring interview with for the finale of my climate change movie.

Then in two other holidays, I sat in front of YouTube, (which again wasn't too gruelling, as I love computers), learning how to make the interviews into a 53-minute movie, that I am selling to raise money for climate change groups.

My Dad then helped me to make

a website to sell it, (which I enjoyed learning, as I'm into tech stuff, <https://nowisthemovie.weebly.com>), and my mum helped me make the movie available for sale with local shopfronts and at markets.

This was a bit more challenging as I sometimes get nervous talking in front of strangers, but later I was willing to push myself even more...

Why did a 10-year-old spend 18 months making the movie 'NOW': Climate Change Emergency, What we CAN all DO about it?

The shocking reasons of 'why' I needed to make a climate change movie are in the first few minutes of my movie. From internet searches I stated that 'the *Guardian* newspaper reported that when I am about 90, (by 2100) we will have Earth's 6th mass extinction, and we have already seen great loss of life too'.

Also that the Union of Concerned Scientists undertook research, showing that '97% of the climate scientists surveyed, said that global warming (or climate change) is real, and largely caused by humans'.

This is why I wanted to do something, and it spurred me on, even though my knees were trembling, to

talk in front of 70 people at my 'booked out' movie release, at Bundanoon Hall last November. I said at the release, that:

I was inspired by stories on the ABC's kids show Behind the News, and initiatives like Bundy on Tap (establishing the world's first bottled-water-free town), that people could make a positive difference to the environment.

Also that I read some experts say 'it is important to teach kids that we can do things to reduce climate change', and I am showing by making the 'NOW' movie, that we can do things.

What can we do to reduce climate change?

The bulk of my 'NOW' movie focuses on giving us doable solutions. It is divided into five main sections of interviews, including interesting interviews asking questions like:

Reuse and Recycling: Bower Reuse & Repair: 'What furniture is better to buy?'. Also 'How can anyone start a Stuff Swap?'

Energy – Tim Buckley, Green energy analyst, 'If gas is not viable, what other energies should we use?'

Homes & Transport – Award winning greeny flat: 'What is passive solar design?' and 'Buying hybrid or electric cars?'



Selling the message



Promotion

Our Government – Cairns Environment Centre: ‘Easy ways to influence our Government.’

Food and Water – Moss Vale Community Garden: ‘Can growing plants capture carbon?’, and ‘Why wicking beds need little water’.

Now nobody, including myself, is perfect, so even after learning everything I did in making this movie, I don’t always ride my bike to school, and I still often leave the light on in my room. But now I do realise why it’s important to try to work at these things, and other crucial changes to our lives. Plus, I hope in making this climate change movie I will encourage other people to do helpful stuff now, that will make our future more hopeful.

What is the Future?

For me, my enthusiasm for making movies was re-ignited in March 2021, when I was awarded Finalist for my ‘NOW’ movie, at the Global Liftoff Film Festival.

So I am now saving up for a better camera, and want to film a screen play I have written, where in the dramatic finale, a disgruntled, handcuffed coal miner, is encouraged to work on a wind turbine instead!

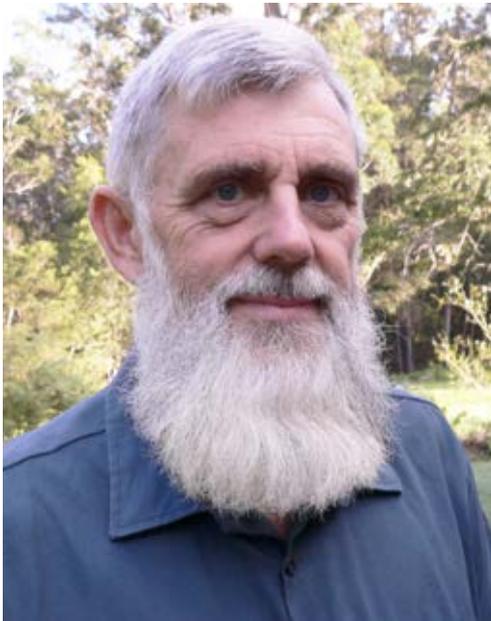
Plus every day, I try to remember how I ended my climate change movie release event, by stating that ‘as Craig Reucassel said in the ‘NOW’ movie, every little thing makes a difference... so...together we can actually make a BIG difference’.

So what are you willing to do, to make a positive difference to our future, to reduce climate change?

You can buy the ‘NOW’ movie online as either a DVD, USB or downloadable copy at <https://nowisthemovie.weebly.com> with all profits going to climate change groups.

*Ryan’s mum says: ‘When we were distributing the movie or writing any article that might end up on-line, we used his ‘screen name’ Ryan M. We didn’t know how far the movie would go, and as he was a child, for safety reasons, we didn’t put his surname in.’

AF



Protesters face court

DAVID JOHNSON AND JASON MACLEOD | REGIONAL MEETING

David Johnson and Jason MacLeod were arrested on 31 May 2021 during a silent witness outside of the global arms manufacturer Thales, against the use of Thales weapons in the genocide in West Papua.

Both David and Jason pleaded guilty on 13 September in the Brisbane Magistrates Court, Jason by phone link, David in court. In truth they did civilly disobey the police orders to move on. In such a situation, invoking an emergency defence was not a viable option.

The barrister representing them had asked if we would accept a good behaviour bond.

Jason replied: 'No, my good behaviour was telling Thales they were doing wrong!'

David replied: 'No, I could not promise to undertake a bond, knowing if I was called to another action I would break that promise.'

The barrister's submission rested on the low level, nonviolent nature of the offences, with no criminal damage

and no inconvenience to the public. He drew attention to a case in British law reviewing the suffragettes which confirmed the right of nonviolent civil disobedience, for in hindsight it may be clear the law at the time was wrong, and the protestors right.

The magistrate accepted that submission, and also read from the case, that any civil protestor must be prepared to pay the penalty.

They accepted that. Quakers have always accepted that. Civil disobedience rests on the protestor accepting that he or she will pay a cost in terms of bodily or financial pain. 'I accept this cost to resist and display the wrong.'

David says: 'In the action and in the court case, truth carried us and truth increased.'

At the Court sentencing the magistrate recognised the nonviolent nature of the witness, that no damage was done, with both acting from a deep religious conscience. The barrister representing them also drew attention to the witness and civil disobedience of the suffragettes who campaigned for changes in the justice system.

Both received modest fines (\$150 and \$250), with no conviction recorded (this time!)

David Johnson's personal statement

For my adult life I have been opposed

to violence and war, and since 1985 as a Quaker. With regard to the charges faced on 6/7/2021:

In the wisdom of the world, under the laws of Queensland, I refused a police officer's direction.

Yet I am called to a Life in which there is no occasion for war, no occasion for violence.

It is a Life to be lived as were the first followers of Jesus, known as the People of the Way.

Yet this is the Way to peace and happiness, and the way out of war and violence. In that Life I am innocent.

I was called to visit the Thales office on 31st of 5th month 2021, with the intent to speak peacefully with the manager, and anyone who might care to listen, about my concern for the company's activities in supporting violence and war. The company manufactures the means for violence and war, and is encouraged by profit motives to sell them.

When the company manager initially refused to engage I was moved to wait in worshipful silence there – for not uncommonly in my experience have people, realising there is no threat, been able to overcome their initial fears and talk freely. Before too long police were called and eventually ordered me to move. I was asked inwardly to remain in silent witness.



Why did I not move on? It is holy obedience.

It was to stand still as a witness and a sign that others might also come to stand still in the Inward Light which shows in the conscience of the heart what is righteous and what is evil.

The seeds of fear and greed are in us, the roots of violence and war are in our own culture.

- The desire for a major weapons export industry arises from an excessive and unholy desire for profit.
- Innocent lives pay the costs.
- The roots of the violence and genocide are in the workshops which make the weapons.

I feel no ill will in my heart towards either the company security guard, the company manager or the police and watch-house staff involved. We are all children of God.

Thales products are complicit in fostering the violent war in West Papua, a close neighbour of Australia. The West Papuans are suffering genocide as defined in three sections of the UN Geneva Convention on Genocide: innocent civilians, not combatants, are being killed; they are being removed from their ancestral lands or forced to flee; and their culture is being destroyed.

While I may be guilty of an offence of refusing a police officer's instruction to move on, and of standing peacefully, mainly silently, outside the Thales

office with no intent or move to enter their office or damage a gram of their property, the company Thales in West Papua is providing the means for contraventions of the UN Charter of Indigenous Rights, the UN Charter on Human Rights, and the 1949 UN Convention on Genocide.

Export is illegal in Australia because the Arms Trade Treaty Article 6 (ratified by Australia in December 2014), states that a State Party's obligations are violated if a State Party has knowledge at the time of authorisation that the arms or items would be used in the commission of genocide, or in attacks directed against civilians. While the Indonesian government has cut off internet communications to West Papua we have evidence that such contraventions of the ATT are happening.

My concern is

- for the West Papuan people,
- for the company workers – for such work is inherently damaging to the soul and one day each will feel deep remorse for it,
- for the people of Queensland and especially the political leaders and company proponents because worldly profit, electoral success and building a home-grown capability for violence and war has been chosen above morality and humanity.

Where are the espoused principles of the Queensland leaders for democracy and freedom? We know about the effects of genocide in this country – we are only now coming to terms with the English genocide of the Aboriginal peoples of this land.

The Australian and Queensland governments and companies are asked to agitate to:

1. Cease all export authorisations for Thales equipment, weaponry and munitions from Australia.
2. Stop the human rights abuses, violence and genocide in West Papua.
3. Remove and re-train the Indonesian military and police units involved in the genocide.
4. Agitate for the preservation of West Papuan culture within the tolerant principles of Indonesian Pancasila.

David Johnson 7th month 6, 2021

Jason MacLeod's statement

My name is Jason Graeme MacLeod. I work as a researcher, educator and organiser.

On 31 May 2021 I nonviolently blocked the doors of Thales, an arms company located at 17 Sugarmill Rd, Pinkenba. When asked to leave by a Thales manager and police, I politely refused to do so. When I was subsequently arrested by the police I

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



Gryff and Peter

Advices and Queries for nontheists

PETER WILLIAMS AND GRYFF JAMIESON-BALLARD, | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING

In the 378 responses to the 2014 Australian Quaker Survey, when asked 'Do you believe in God' 62% of Australian Quakers answered yes, 13% no, and 25% were unsure or unable to answer ¹.

Of those who answered yes, when asked which terms they used to describe God, only 17% said 'a being'; the most common descriptors chosen were 'the inward Light' (65%), 'Love' (62%), 'a life force' (55%), 'a spirit' (45%), or 'a creative spirit' (40%), and 18% described God as 'a human construct'.

Thus there is a great diversity of views and understanding of the word 'God' among Australian Quakers. In the same survey, 13% of Attenders who had not applied for Membership gave as one of the reasons that their beliefs were not congruent with Quaker beliefs, including that they were atheists ².

There has been a long tradition of non-theism within the Quaker community ^(3,4) and in Britain there is an active Non-theist Friends Network which holds regular conferences and posts articles online (<https://nontheist-quakers.org.uk/>). This has led to ongoing discussion about the language Quakers use ⁵. However there have also been critics of the term Nontheist Quakerism who warn that it can be a contradiction in terms ⁶.

When asked in the 2014 survey 'What do you read to nurture your spiritual life?', the source most frequently nominated by Australian

Quakers was our Advices and Queries (77%). In the Introduction to that document, which has evolved over many years from original British sources, it is noted that 'Some find traditional Christian language full of meaning; some do not', however the constant use of the word 'God' throughout the text (33 times in the 47 entries) may make it difficult to access for those Friends who espouse a nontheist approach to Quakerism. If the reader does not have a clear understanding of what the word is meant to convey the reader is left to create their own translation and interpretation, which is not a good model for clear communication, and may lead to feelings of exclusion. Other Christian writers have also called for more spiritually inclusive language in their church's life ⁷.

In Britain, Young Friends attempted a new take on Advices and Queries. In *Living our beliefs* young Friends made a book that 'tackles similar topics to Quaker Faith and Practice but .. (is) .. shorter, more accessible and more concise' ⁸.

One of the 17 or so chapters is 'Advices and queries as compiled by young Quakers' (pp.79–81) created at a junior yearly meeting in 2015. This version reduces 42 Advices and Queries (some 12 pages) to 42 simple statements (2 pages). One example is A&Q 4 which is reduced to just four words 'Remember our Christian heritage', compared with the original – 73 words

with five references to Jesus and two to God. These 42 contain one reference to the word 'God' compared to some 37 in the original. The one reference to God is in A&Q 17: 'Everyone thinks of God differently; don't be judgemental' ⁹.

As nontheists, we have found that while we treasure the Australian *Advices and Queries* for the wisdom they contain, we constantly have to overlook or translate much of its religious language that does not speak clearly to us, and we wonder if many other Australian Friends have the same experience.

Consequently, we have attempted to produce two revised versions that try to retain the essence and meaning of the text without the use of language that may be unfamiliar and offputting to some who find many religious terms either confusing and unhelpful or needing clearer definitions to be understood.

The first of these versions – *Advices and Queries for Nontheist Quakers* – keeps as closely as possible to the original wording, and retains much of the religious language although avoiding the term God throughout. The second version – *Advices and Queries for Humanist Quakers* – is a more significant revision that replaces words such as God, Spirit, Divine, prayer and worship with language that is likely to be more acceptable to and understood by Humanist Friends. These versions are interesting to compare:

Advices and Queries:

2. Bring the whole of your life under the ordering of the spirit of Christ. Are you open to the healing power of God's love? Cherish that of God within you, so that this love may grow in you and guide you. Let your worship and your daily life enrich each other. Treasure your experience of God, however it comes to you. Remember that Christianity is not a notion but a way.

Advices and Queries for Nontheist Quakers:

<https://www.keepandshare.com/doc24/113158/advices-and-queries-for-nontheist-quakers-pdf-162k?dn=y>

2. Let the teachings of Christ provide guidance for the whole of your life. Are you open to the healing power of love? Cherish the spirit of compassion within you so that it may grow in you and guide you. Let your worship and your daily life enrich each other. Remember that Christianity is not a notion but a way.

Advices and Queries for Humanist Quakers:

<https://www.keepandshare.com/doc24/113162/advices-and-queries-for-humanist-quakers-pdf-215k?da=y>

2. Let the teachings of the ancient

philosophers or the great religions provide guidance for the whole of your life. Are you open to the healing power of compassion? Cherish the compassion within you so that it may grow in you and guide you. Let your contemplations and your daily life enrich each other. Treasure life however you experience it. Remember that personal growth and doing what you can, is not a notion but a life-stance.

We do not propose these new versions as replacements for the current publication, but they could be alternatives that nontheist Friends would find easier to read and understand and they might be helpful in stimulating reconsideration and discussion of the wording and meaning of our current Advices and Queries by all Australian Friends.

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AF



‘Doing Good Well’

– *is there a Quaker Way?*

DOROTHY SCOTT | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING

In the year 2000 I was walking through the laneways of York, trying to find my way to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. On my return to Australia, I was to take up the leadership of a large national philanthropic foundation and I wanted to learn more about how the highly respected Joseph Rowntree Foundation ‘did philanthropy’.

Along the lanes I walked I came across a small cottage and was stopped in my tracks by a plaque on its wall.

JOHN WOOLMAN
AMERICAN QUAKER AND ANTI-SLAVERY
PIONEER
DIED HERE OCTOBER 1772

What was between the words on the plaque spoke to my condition. I could immediately see from the date of John Woolman’s death that he had not lived to see the abolition of slavery. What does it mean to commit yourself to a vision you are unlikely to see achieved in your lifetime? That question moved me deeply. I didn’t know who John Woolman was, but I did know a little about Quakers and I resolved to find out more on my return home. And I did, and that is how I became a Quaker.

I give thanks to Joseph Rowntree, not just for indirectly starting me on the path to the Meeting House door, but also for enriching my ideas about philanthropy. The foundation he established in 1904 had a most progressive vision – ‘to understand the root causes of poverty’. This was a radical idea indeed in an era in which philanthropy largely focussed on the amelioration, and not the prevention, of

social disadvantage, and often did so in ways that robbed poor people of their dignity.

I was impressed with how the staff of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation worked hard to maximise the potential for social research into poverty to be translated into action. Today this is called ‘strategic philanthropy’, but it was being practised by Quakers long before the term came into currency.

The year after I went to my first Meeting for Worship I was inspired by Mark Deasey’s 2002 *Backhouse Lecture, To do Justly, and to Love Mercy: learning from Quaker Service*, in which he described how Quakers had responded to the Irish famine. Unlike other Protestant denominations, they had not sought to convert Catholics in return for assisting them. Mark Deasey recounted how Irish fishermen, who could not afford to mend their nets and so could not go to sea, were assisted by Quakers to buy new nets.

What do they say about teaching a hungry man to fish rather than giving him a fish? Interestingly, the assistance was in the form of a loan to the fishermen, not a gift, thus creating what we would today call a ‘revolving fund’, allowing others to be supported in a similar way.

Another distinctive feature of Friends’ relief work in Ireland was the recognition of women as agents in their own right by focussing assistance specifically to them in both income-generating work and immediate relief.

Immediate relief has an important place in the history of Quaker service. Sometimes people need food, first and

foremost. At the end of the First World War, Quakers fed over a million hungry German children a day. There is even a German word for what they did – ‘Quakerspeisung’ (Quaker feeding). And it was the relationship based on dignity and respect which Quakers had established with the German people after the First World War that enabled British Quakers in 1939 to persuade the leaders of the Third Reich to allow ten thousand Jewish children to be evacuated on the Kindertransport.

These examples of Quaker philanthropy taught me four things: it is good to address the causes of suffering; it is good to give in a way that enables the recipient to become self-sufficient; there are times when it is necessary to give directly to stop suffering; and giving must always be done in ways that offer dignity and respect to the recipients.

It is always easy to idealise our Quaker forebears – they were truly inspirational in so many ways, but we also need to have sufficient humility to learn from Quaker and other faith-inspired endeavours that may be well-intentioned, but which are less than successful.

Robert Lupton, in his book, *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help (And How to Reverse It)* criticises projects that intervene by doing either what a community does not need or what it ought to be assisted in doing for itself. So, there is another lesson here – as they say in the disability sector, ‘nothing about us without us’. Those whom we are seeking to assist must be valued

as experts in their own lives, and we need to hear and heed their voices. In our nation it has taken many years for this lesson to be learned in relation to Indigenous Australians.

Recently I have been thinking about how, as a Quaker, I should discern the way in which to 'give well'. Since I was a university student I have tried to 'tithed' (to give away 10% of my income). At certain times in my life this was difficult to do, and I tried to compensate by giving in kind with my labour and skills. Now retired and having the unfair advantage of not paying tax on my superannuation, it is not financially hard to give away 10% of my income, but it is hard to discern how to do this.

Should I give money to environmental causes and if so, to whom and for what, or to refugees and if so, to whom and for what, or to the peace movement and if so, to whom and for what? You see the dilemma, and it is probably the same dilemma you have.

I try to take on board the lessons from Quaker philanthropy that I have outlined above. At times my donations will be oriented to actions which are preventive, like a landmark environmental legal case.

I also give ongoing support to peak bodies which can advocate for change, but there are plenty of times when the immediate needs of suffering human beings are so urgent that it is essential to give to people such as refugees money for food and medicines. I choose organisations that I believe will do this in ways that offer dignity and respect.

Another question that concerns me is how I should respond to the leadings of Friends. Once such leadings have been

'tested' I believe I have an obligation to support my fellow Friends in the pursuit of their leadings. This may take the form of emotional support or spiritual support, but there are many occasions when what they need is money for the cause to which they are committed, and I try to respond accordingly.

Last, but not least, I have been thinking about how collectively Quakers might discern the best way to use our resources to promote social justice and peace, reduce suffering and care for the earth. There is no 'right way' of course, but we have a moral obligation to bring to our discernment both our intellect and our compassion so we might have the most impact with the resources for which we are responsible.

Moral philosophers such as Peter Singer have been giving this serious consideration for some years. His book *The Life you can Save, Acting Now to End World Poverty* has been highly influential. Quakers such as American Friend Charles Schade, a retired epidemiologist, have also been thinking hard about these issues.

In his article 'Doing Good Well' in the *Friends Journal* in 2014, Charles Schade reflected on his own history of giving and discusses his concerns about 'rightly ordered charitable giving'. His analysis of a sample of Quaker charitable organisations is sobering, documenting how they were wanting in effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. He concludes by posing a series of questions.

Friends, do we really know what our contributions are accomplishing in the world? How do we know we have made the best investment of charity dollars?

How can we be sure we are doing good well?

Charles Schade rightly emphasises 'efficiency and effectiveness' as key criteria in 'doing good well', but 'rightly ordered charitable giving' must go further and ensure that what is done in the Quaker name is always based on Quaker values.

The question for us, Friends, is how does this speak to us collectively in relation to our entities such as Quaker Service Australia, the Thanksgiving Fund, various funds held by Regional Meetings and the way we honour Friends' bequests?

Sometimes when I am in doubt about how to 'do good well', I think of the time two decades ago when I came across that little cottage in the lane in York, and I ask myself 'what would John Woolman do?'

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AF



The kingdom of God is near?

RAE LITTING | NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL MEETING

There are many references in the Gospels to the Kingdom of God. In Matthew's gospel, the preaching about the Kingdom of God begins with John the Baptist, who calls people to 'turn away from your sins because the Kingdom of God is near'. Jesus picks up the theme, and 'went all over Galilee teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Good News about the Kingdom and healing people who had all kinds of disease.'

But what exactly did Jesus mean? Is this kingdom an earthly kingdom, or a paradise which the deserving will inherit after death? The evidence of the gospels is confusing, especially as the Kingdom is sometimes called 'the Kingdom of heaven'. The modern reader thinks of 'heaven' as somewhere very far away. Also, it is not easy to tell when one is hearing the original teaching of Jesus, and when one is hearing the teaching of the early church.

By the time the gospels reached their present form Jesus had been dead at least 30 years. The Jewish revolt against the Romans had taken place, and the temple had been destroyed. The church was waiting for Jesus to return 'coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory'. He was expected to reward the faithful and to punish the wicked. If there had ever been a hope of a Kingdom of God on this earth, that hope had died.

But some of the teachings of Jesus suggest something quite different. For example, there is this teaching from Matthew 13, 31: 'The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man takes a mustard seed and plants it in the ground. It is the smallest of all seeds,

but when it grows up, it is the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, so that birds come and make their nests in its branches.' Here there is nothing dramatic or sudden, and no punishment of the wicked.

The parable of the yeast is similar. 'The kingdom of heaven is like this. A woman takes some yeast and mixes it with a bag of flour until the whole batch of dough rises.'

One of my favourite stories of the Kingdom is the story of the Workers in the Vineyard:

'The Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a man who went out early in the morning to hire some men to work in his vineyard. He agreed to pay them the regular wage, a silver coin a day, and sent them to work in his vineyard. He went out again to the marketplace at nine o'clock and saw some men standing there doing nothing so he told them, 'You also go and work in the vineyard, and I will pay you a fair wage.' So they went. Then at twelve o'clock he did the same thing. It was nearly five o'clock when he went to the marketplace and saw some other men still standing there. 'Why are you wasting the whole day here doing nothing?' he asked them. 'No one has hired us,' they answered. 'Well, then, you go and work in the vineyard.' He told them.'

At the end of the day all the men receive the same wage. This seems to be a very earthly story. No-one thinks of heaven as a place where people stand around all day looking for work. The story seems to be saying that in the perfect society everyone would have enough to live on.

In the Lord's prayer, Christians throughout the world pray 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' This seems to be a prayer for the kingdom of God on earth, why would one pray for God's will to be done in the hereafter?

How do those who offer this prayer imagine the kingdom for which they are praying? I think one of the key features of the Kingdom in the teaching of Jesus was equality. This is seen in the parable of the workers in the vineyard. It is also seen in Jesus' attitude to children 'Whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.' And it is seen in Jesus' attitude to wealth. Jesus teaches in Luke 6.20 'How happy are you poor. The Kingdom of God is yours!' In Matthew's version this has become 'the poor in spirit', but it is likely that Luke gives us the original. There is much in the teaching of Jesus about the moral hazard of wealth. 'It is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.' There are many other aspects to this kingdom, but I think it is the equality which the powerful took exception to.

The apocalyptic passages come later in the gospels in Luke 17 and 21, and in Matthew 24. The passage in Luke is preceded by a verse which seems to contradict all that follows: 'Some Pharisees asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God would come. His answer was 'The Kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen. No-one will say, 'Look here it is!' or 'There it is!'; because the Kingdom of God is within you.' Jesus then talks

about sudden catastrophic events such as the flood of Noah and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. 'On the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulphur rained down from heaven and killed them all'. A later passage talks about the destruction of Jerusalem. 'Terrible distress will come upon this land, and God's punishment will fall on this people.....People will faint from fear as they wait for what is coming over the whole earth, for the powers in space will be driven from their courses. Then the Son of Man will appear, coming in a cloud with great power and glory.'

Similar accounts in Matthew are introduced by a story of Jesus visiting the temple. 'Jesus left and was going away from the Temple when his disciples came to him to call his attention to its buildings. 'Yes,' he said, 'you may well look at all these. I tell you this: not a single stone here will be left in its place; every one of them will be thrown down.'

Here perhaps is the origin of the predictions of the destruction of the temple. I don't think Jesus had much respect for the temple or for the sacrificial system. It is not part of his teaching. The only reference to it seems to be in the story of the man who was cured of a skin disease. Jesus tells him (Mark 1 44) 'Go straight to the priest and let him examine you; then in order to prove to everyone that you are cured offer the sacrifice that Moses ordered.' The sacrifice is to satisfy the people, not God.

Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple, and said the temple should be 'a house of prayer for the people of all nations', and not 'a hide-out for thieves!'. (Mark 11 15)

So when the temple was destroyed, I think his followers remembered this and said to themselves, 'Ah yes, this is what he was trying to tell us.' After all, they had come to believe that Jesus knew everything ahead of time. And they had the benefit of hind-sight in describing the horrors of the Roman assault on Jerusalem.

There seem to be parallels between Jesus' teaching of the Kingdom of God and George Fox's preaching about the 'day of the Lord.' In his *Journal*, Fox tells us that in Wensleydale

'I proclaimed the day of the Lord to the priest and people, warning them to turn from darkness to the Light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might come to know God and Christ aright, and to receive His teaching, who teacheth freely.'

Fox's language is very different from the language of Jesus, but 'the day of the Lord' like the Kingdom of God is 'near', because God is offering his free teaching now.

We have little insight into the mind of Jesus, so we cannot know what started him on his ministry. But we have some insight into the mind of Fox, who left us his *Journal*. His ministry starts with a profound religious experience, after which he never lost the sense of the divine presence, although he had moments of depression especially when in prison. I think that for those like Fox and Jesus who live as it were 'in the Spirit' it seems that almost anything is possible. Heaven is not a far-off place, but an eternal reality in which they believe all can participate.

It is significant that both George and Jesus saw the good in people. Fox

believed in the 'light which enlightens everyone who comes into the world'. He believed in that of God in everyone. Jesus, speaking to peasants on a hillside told them 'You are light to the world. You are the salt of the earth.' Both taught a radical equality.

It is unfortunate that those in power do not respond well to this message. Jesus was crucified, Fox spent years in prison. Another of Jesus parables of the Kingdom was the story of the buried treasure. (Matthew 13 44):

The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man happens to find a treasure hidden in the ground. He covers it up again, and is so happy that he goes and sells everything he has and then goes back and buys that piece of land.

The trouble with bringing in the Kingdom of God, is that people have to want it more than anything.

Has this teaching any relevance today? I think it does. You might want to change the language – 'the community of God' sounds better than 'the kingdom'. You might even substitute another word for 'God' if that word has been corrupted by teachings designed to terrify you into goodness, rather than to inspire you. But we live in a world where there is such focus on the individual. Many churches concentrate on individual salvation. There is a tendency to look to spirituality to provide good experiences for the individual. But Jesus calls us to look beyond ourselves to the community which needs to be healed. And he believed there was a power which could strengthen us to do that work.

AF



Reflection on the Raising Peace Festival

WIES SCHUIRINGA | NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL MEETING

Getting involved

Some things seem like a good idea at the time and then grow into a substantial enterprise. Early 2020, Quakers were invited to join a small group of peace organisations in Sydney to participate in an in-person exhibition by peace organisations in the week of 21 September to coincide with the UN Day of Peace.

The peace and justice committee in NSWRM had not been very active for a while and I was interested enough to find out what this invitation was about and if Quakers could raise its profile at such an exhibition. Covid19 had not entered our country or lives, remember those days, and I thought that our WW1 banners might get another airing at this exhibition.

Our witness for peace comes in many ways and is anchored in our Meeting for Worship. At our in-person Yearly Meetings we often had a local, public witness for peace, our Quaker grannies held several public demonstrations, Quakers are involved with other organisations such as Mayors for Peace or Religions for Peace, Quakers support ICAN and IPAN.

The Peace Testimony is a cornerstone of our Quaker faith and practice; it is important in our personal lives or

smaller circles and is also a witness to the wider community that this is a valid value and cause to pursue. As we become an ageing and smaller faith community, our working together with other organisations might become more important to be able to 'hold our banners high' for the cause of peace.

Due to Covid19, the 2020 event was reduced to one short afternoon with a restricted audience. There was no exhibition and several speakers addressed the more political angle of the world's inability to curb militarism. I attended hesitantly as Covid19 was about.

Early 2021, before the Delta variant hit, the plan was revived to have an in-person exhibition by peace organisations in September. I had started to organise the agendas for our Raising Peace Zoom meetings and chair the meetings to get a focus on what would be possible.

Word had started to spread and other organisations were showing an interest to join. A program developed for themed days with talks and films, speakers were approached, display areas measured up and divided between organisations. In July the Delta variant had come to Sydney and we pivoted to a Zoom only event that had become a 1-day festival by now.

Some highlights of sessions

It was decided to have the first full day organised by Indigenous organisations and four substantial sessions developed.

The keynote speaker was the ambassador of Costa Rica to Australia, Mr Armando Vargas Araya. In 1949 Costa Rica abolished its army and has not had a standing army since. The constitution enshrines the right to peace and neutrality. Costa Rica has been under threat of invasion by its neighbouring countries that was settled by negotiation and assistance by international mediators.

The ambassador strongly condemned the military expenditure around the world and called for civil society to speak up. Costa Rica is by far the most stable country in Central America. Education and health services are free.

Access was organised, for 48 hours, to watch the film *The Third Harmony* on a screen at home. This excellent film documents the global non-violence movement in-depth. The following day a panel discussion about the film was organized and the film's author, Michael Nagler, retired academic joined from the USA.

The discussion was also in-depth and moving as the author said that he had wanted to make the film for decades

and it is everything he has stood for in his life. I can highly recommend that we, Quakers, organise to see this film and be inspired to work for peace.

Reflection on organising the festival

I felt that the process to organise the festival became based on Quaker processes: a distributed model of decision making, all ideas respectfully heard, session organisers encouraged and supported to find their speakers and to develop their preferred session format as well as to ask for help if they needed it.

A trust developed that each session organiser and participating organisation would be working well. Few of the organisers had ever met in-person and it was surprising that such a cohesive subculture developed on Zoom.

Attendance at the meetings remained high, between 15 and 20 people right up to the last week before the festival. The mood at that meeting was 'bring it on, we are ready'.

It was agreed to have a website to support the Raising Peace festival to hold information from the participating organisations, some recordings of the talks, articles, list upcoming events and actions, etc. In this way, the website would extend the impact of the festival

as otherwise, apart from photos and personal memories, all would be gone.

The AYM peace and social justice fund made funding available to support the development and maintenance of the website. At this stage, the event was still going to be in-person.

As the event grew and more organisations joined, the website became essential for information about each of the 37 sessions and to provide the link for the Eventbrite session registrations for the 1055 people who registered to attend sessions. The website now also holds the Zoom recordings of each of the sessions.

The evaluation of the festival has been very positive and a need expressed for more events that show a diversity of working for peace: from developing personal and interpersonal peaceful attitudes and habits to local initiatives for more peaceful relationships to actions to curb militarism at national and international levels.

The subject areas covered a wide range: Indigenous relationships, the environment, education, faith, women's organisations, international relationships, the future of peace in Afghanistan, Pacific countries, UN peacekeepers.

There was no indication that one way of working for peace was regarded

as more relevant or important than other ways.

The festival started on the day of the AUKUS announcement and in the previous week Kabul had fallen to the Taliban. Militarism with its make-belief of glory and with its abject failures became part of the festival presentations.

There is a hunger for a different narrative, a different identity as to who we are as a nation and not being swept up in the magnificence of war technology, our export earnings from this, the forgetting of the utter misery of violence begetting more violence and the perceived irrelevance of working for peace.

What started as a mild interest to join several peace organisations and to show the WW1 banners at an in-person exhibition has become a significant movement that acknowledges working for peace in its many different ways.

Raising Peace in 2022

Raising Peace will be holding a three day event in Sydney around Anzac Day and another event around the 21st of September in 2022. These events will be in-person as well as on Zoom. Have a look at the raisingpeace.org.au website.

AF



QSA Notes

Partners deliver innovative activities to meet the specific needs of their local communities

FLEUR BAYLEY | QSA PROJECT MANAGER



Environmental training for teachers

Local organisations know what their local communities need and are best placed to provide services and support appropriate to the location and circumstances and which are culturally and technologically appropriate. QSA focuses on food and water security and sustainable livelihoods, working with communities for sustainable futures and a more peaceful, equitable, just and compassionate world. QSA's strength lies in long-term relationships with grassroots community groups who understand and can deliver for the specific needs of those most in need in their local communities. By partnering with these organisations, QSA not only achieves efficiencies but also ensures they are targeted at families and communities that most need support. We've selected some highlights from our project partners in Cambodia, India (Tamil Nadu) and Uganda to illustrate activities explicitly designed to meet the needs of local communities.

Innovative seed planter to help Ugandan farmers

A simple seed planting device developed by our project partner in Uganda, St

Jude Family Projects, makes a dramatic change to the efficiency of local farmers. The planter enables farmers to sow their seeds and seedlings in one movement while working in an upright position. The device drastically reduces the hours of (literally) back-breaking work required in the planting season. Female farmers are the mainstay of agriculture in these communities and the backbone of the rural economy. Women are usually responsible for the family farm and providing food for their families. This project supports rural women farmers – some of the poorest of the poor – to achieve food security through training in organic agriculture so that they can maintain and improve resilient small-scale farming. Our partner hopes to provide smallholder female farmers with this relatively cheap and simple yet innovative and highly effective device. This is a local solution that really can change the lives of these farmers.

Environmental training for teachers in rural India

Environmental education is a high priority for our partner Pitchandikulam



Fish farming.

Bio Resource Centre in Tamil Nadu, South India. School children attend environmental education classes and exposure visits to Pitchandikulam Forest, and take part in weekend activities through Eco-Clubs. Most school teachers in rural India have little or no training in environmental education. So how can they teach the next generation if they do not know it themselves?

Our partner offers one-year environmental training programs for school teachers, including a comprehensive handbook with activities and lesson plans for their classrooms. A key consideration is providing culturally appropriate training relevant to the environment and the circumstances of these communities. It fits QSA's ethos of supporting environmental protection and partnering with organisations in-country that can prepare and deliver training that is relevant to the local situation and that deals with local issues, rather than being imposed from outside. Staff turnover means there are always new teachers to learn and receive in-service training, and Pitchandikulam's

in-service teacher training is constantly in demand.

A vital element of permaculture projects in Cambodia, permaculture training for women in rural areas is the cornerstone of several Cambodian projects. Our partners work with disadvantaged women with little land, few skills and minimal options to earn an income to support their families. They receive training in permaculture techniques and basic materials to establish home food gardens. With gardens, they can achieve food security, improve family nutrition, reduce the impact of climate change and sell surplus produce to supplement household incomes.

Families in Pursat province receive permaculture training from our partner Department of Women's Affairs and learn about chicken raising. Chickens are a vital element of permaculture home gardens, eating kitchen and garden scraps, controlling insect pests, fertilising and turning the soil. Our partner would like to provide households with vaccinated chickens, feed and other set-up materials. With a modest flock of just ten vaccinated chickens, they can establish a small poultry operation to improve family nutrition and generate income from the sale of eggs.

New enterprises to support families during COVID

When markets and borders closed and many people lost jobs and incomes during the pandemic, our partner, Khmer Community Development (KCD) worked with target communities in Kandal Province, Cambodia, to identify options to supplement their incomes and improve nutrition. KCD's approach is to help families



A few chickens really can make a big difference!

identify new income generation opportunities, and during COVID-19, fish farming was a popular choice. KCD provides skills training and advice and would like to provide more families with materials and stock for small aquaculture operations, simple affairs, constructed using basic materials that are readily available locally. These small-scale family operations boost nutrition, improve food security, and produce fish to sell in local markets to supplement family incomes. As the saying goes, Give a person a fish and feed them for a day. Teach a person to fish and feed them for a lifetime.

QSA Living Gifts

These are just a few of the innovative activities offered by our partners to meet the needs of their local communities. A critical part of all QSA projects is an assessment (in conjunction with local authorities and representatives) to identify communities and households with the greatest need. They often prioritise female-headed households and families with low incomes, little or no

land and poor skills, many children and members living with disabilities. A primary aim is to empower these individuals and families with the skills and to support themselves sustainably. Thus, a key priority is poverty alleviation, along with improving nutrition and achieving food security. Due to location, dependence on agriculture and precarious financial situations, these households are increasingly impacted by climate change.

Choose a Living Gift

QSA publishes a Living Gifts catalogue so you can select specific activities to support with items to provide 'extras' to our project partners, which they may not offer with general funding. For more information about these and other projects, or to purchase a gift, starting at just \$30, go to the Living Gifts at the QSA website www.qsa.org.au/living-gifts. If you can't decide from the eleven gifts in the catalogue, you may choose a gift value and QSA will allocate it to the project in most need.

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.

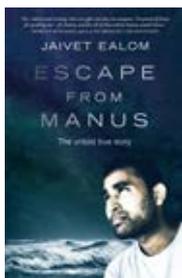
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ACFID
MEMBER



Escape From Manus. The Untold True Story

BY JAIVET EALOM

Published by Viking and Random House
Australia, 2021 ISBN 978 1 76104 021 4
347 pp. \$29.99

Jaivet Ealom, a member of the persecuted Rohingya minority in Myanmar, arrived as a boat person at Christmas Island in 2013, after fleeing from his native land. He was bewildered to find that the detention there was in a modern, all steel, prison. He, together with other passengers from the boat, were held there as prisoners for five months. As many of the boat people had suffered terrifying ordeals at sea, it was cruel to put them straight into jail. There was more cruelty to come.

Families were then sent to Nauru, and unattached men were sent to Manus Island, which, in some respects, was a tropical concentration camp: they lived in makeshift quarters, first tents, then shipping containers, there were armed guards, flood lights at night, and spot body searches. If a mobile phone or cash were found on anyone, they were put in solitary confinement. But Manus was unlike a concentration camp in that there were Salvation Army personnel for prisoner welfare, the contract for which was worth \$74 million to the Salvation Army, and prisoners were permitted use of a computer for 45 minutes per fortnight.

There were about 1300 men when Ealom arrived, and he was in an

unenviable position. Those found to be genuine refugees were offered freedom in Papua New Guinea. Ealom, as with other Rohingya, had been deprived of Myanmar citizenship by the ruling military Junta. Even worse, Ealom had no identification papers at all. Consequently, he was deemed stateless. He was informed by the authorities that he was not a refugee, and as the months passed, it became clear that he would spend his future in detention at Manus.

He thought that prospect was too bleak to be endured, and attempted suicide. While he was recovering from the attempt, someone who had worked for the Salvation Army (its contract had gone to another corporation) suggested that he read Viktor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*, which gave him a new lease of life.

Later, he met three people who were to help him achieve freedom. One was Tessa, who worked for the authorities as a migration agent, but who was a member of the Darwin Asylum Seeker Support and Advocacy Network. There were two other women, both Papua New Guineans, who worked for Playfair, a company contracted to help detainees through the legal and bureaucratic requirements of PNG immigration.

To his delighted surprise, one of the latter turned up in the camp to talk to him in person. (He only ever contacted Tessa electronically.) These three women related to him sympathetically

as a human being, which was a welcome change. They were sources of valuable advice, and put him in touch with indispensable contacts during his escape.

In April 2016 the PNG Supreme Court ruled that the detention of refugees on Manus Island was illegal and in breach of the country's constitution. In May 2016, Australia opened the gates of Manus detention centre. The prisoners stayed inside. It wasn't safe to go out. The Islanders were deeply suspicious of them. They had been guarded by armed men for years. They must have been dangerous. The main effect of the freedom was that prisoners could use their mobiles with impunity.

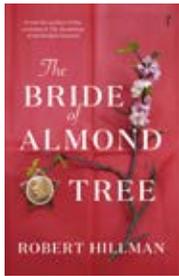
Ealom's escape took him through Port Moresby, Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, Fiji, Hong Kong, and finished in Toronto. It reads like a thriller. His reception by immigration in Toronto was nothing like Christmas Island. The immigration officer could see that he was hungry, and went out and bought him a Subway and Coke. Ealom walked out of the interview a free man.

Australia's Manus policy was badly wrong. It was inhumane and cost billions. If the right thing had been done by the refugees initially, and then the consequences managed, it would have been better for all.

The book is well written and easy to read.

REG NAULTY

Canberra and Region Quakers



The Bride of Almond Tree

BY ROBERT HILLMAN

Published by Text 2021 ISBN: 9781922330666

This novel by Robert Hillman was reviewed in the Sydney Morning Herald recently and mentioned that the protagonist is a young Quaker man who lives in regional Victoria, as did the author who now lives in Melbourne.

I am always interested to read about Quakers in a fictional setting and see how recognisable the story is for me.

The setting of the book is in the aftermath of WW2 and covers world and Australian politics in the late 1940s and 1950s.

In the book, three Quaker families have moved in the 1880s from Tasmania to settle in regional Victoria to grow fruit trees. The nearby township is called Almond Tree.

The families are good horticulturalists and also excellent carpenters, builders and all-round fixers of any hands-on machines. They have not built a Meeting House and conduct Meetings for Worship, weddings and funerals in their homes.

The Quaker values of simplicity, pacifism and being quiet pillars of society for social justice is woven through the development of the narrative that takes us into the aftermath of WW2, the devastation and radio-active illness in Hiroshima, and the rise of communism in Australia.

The Petrov affair gets a look in, the disappointment and cruelty of the Stalin regime, and the rise of militant trade unions, etc.

The young Quaker man's love interest is a young local woman who embraces communism and although she likes him, is not interested in marriage as she is devoting herself to the righteousness of the communist ideals.

The sister of the protagonist is a nurse and works in hospitals in Hiroshima where she feels called to face the inhumane aftermath of the nuclear bomb. She encounters Buddhism and feels supported by its mystical spirituality.

The narrative weaves its way as well through Pentridge jail in the 1950s, Moscow and its jails and MI5's influence in Australian politics.

The book is a pleasant read, although the content is confronting at times and is a good refresher of Australia in the 1940s and 50s.

And to spoil the end, the end is a happy one in *Almond Tree*.

WIES SCHUIRINGA

New South Wales Regional Meeting

Soul Strangled

To sit with a soul
 A soul rent apart
 A soul shattered
 A soul without hope
 To sit with such a soul
 And listen to torn
 Remembrance
 Of a spent flame
 Flickering angrily
 Until the splutter stops
 With will spent.
 The will
 To struggle, to search,
 To reach out
 Gone.
 This conversation with
 No promise of connection

This, dear leaders,
 Is your creation.
 Your torture so exquisite
 That it undoes the mind
 And steals the soul.
 A cringing, thrashing
 Final capitulation
 To your Stubborn need
 To win.

Jill Parris

Victoria Regional Meeting

Jill wrote this poem after a very difficult hour with her friend Vali at the Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation centre. Vali was convinced that all hope was spent and only suicide would save him. He had been in detention for 7 years on Nauru, and then medivacked to Melbourne after a botched operation. After much activism he was again operated on in Melbourne but because of conditions at MITA this operation also failed.

Also, he was assaulted and had his nose broken. Again the operation was unsuccessful and the perpetrators of the assault were not held to account despite video evidence.

The wonderful news is that Vali has finally been given a clear date for his departure to America on 22 September. He will face a very difficult start to his freedom because he will now have to pay to have his medical issues managed. He will be supported for 3 months in America but will then be expected to find work despite not having been able to work for the past 9 years.

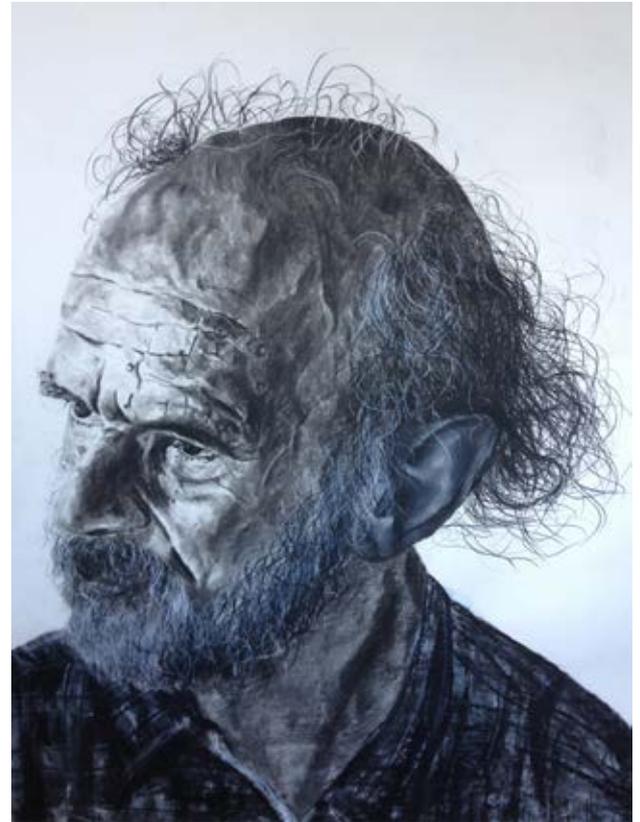
Jill is hoping to raise some money to give Vali a small start in his new life. If anyone would like to assist Vali they should contact Jill and David Parris on jill.parris@gmail.com



The Peter Jones Peace Prize

Peace its own prize

AYAH ANWER | THE FRIENDS' SCHOOL



Portrait of Peter Jones.
Conte and charcoal drawing.
Shannon Terry, Year 11 Art
Production Student, 2013.
Photo: Alice Bowman-Shaw

The Peter Jones Peace Prize is held annually at Friends' High School. It's a writing competition in which students submit poems, reflections, essays or speeches that reflect on what peace means to them. Each year, there is a different topic to inspire student writing.

This writing competition is in honour of Peter Jones because he was a long-serving English and Humanities teacher at Friends' and, as Karina Churchill, current head of English, says, 'He is a Quaker who actively 'lets his life speak' and naming the prize for him, 'honours his legacy' as a role model in these areas.

In 2017, Sarah Walker and Sarah Cupit, then co-heads of the English faculty, arranged this writing prize as a

way for Peter Jones' contribution to the school community to be remembered for years to come.

The phrase 'lets his life speak' gives a sense of all the contributions Peter Jones has made -- and continues to make -- such as protesting against war and violence. Every single action he takes shows to the people around him that peace is very important to him and to everyone.

This writing prize supports the culture of student writers outside of allocated class time, encouraging them to develop their voice in writing. It also enables students to more deeply reflect on what peace means to them, to reconnect with their inner self and to think about how they can contribute to making peace and to making a

difference. It follows the School values of Peace, Integrity, Community and to live Simply.

The Peter Jones Peace Prize is welcomed by teachers as well as students because it's aimed at honouring a respected former staff member and it celebrates, as well as encourages, writing at high school and that is what's really lovely about writing prizes like this: the sheer sense of community and inner peace.

This article was first published in The Friends' School student publication, *Focus*, Issue #109, October 2020. An edited version appears here. The writer, Ayah Anwer, was then in Year 9 at The Friends' School.

AF

The Peter Jones Peace Prize

The work that needs to be done

NADINE FRICK | THE FRIENDS' SCHOOL

The Peter Jones Peace Prize, run annually in the high school, is a chance for students to let their life speak through the words they create.

For this year's theme, Peter Jones chose this quotation from social activist and founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, Dorothy Day:

No one has the right to sit down and feel hopeless. There is too much work to do.

This year's adjudication panel highly commended Dihansa Udawatta's and commended Stella Petheram's entries for their content and style.

Virginia Jealous, Quaker and writer based in Minang country on the south coast of Western Australia, has entered into a long-term partnership with the School via the PJPP, in which she comments upon the prompt and short-listed entries in any given year.

Virginia identified this year's prompt as a clear call to action '...and calls to action can be as complicated to put down on paper as they are to

'live into', in the real world,' she said, and continued with: 'They involve a delicate balance of what I would call 'the wagging finger' and 'the beckoning finger'.

The wagging finger can be – often needs to be – forceful and fierce. It uses words like, 'must' and 'should' and 'right' and it can be quite direct and confrontational.

The beckoning finger is just as passionate but it's gentler; it kind of says, 'come with me', 'maybe we could do this', 'I wonder if this is possible'. It encourages rather than demands a response. Both ways of writing kind of need to be in balance.'

Virginia described the short-listed entries as examples of 'strong and persuasive and individualistic writing' and discussed the power of using and choosing titles (or, indeed, choosing no title) for written work and how this sets the reader up for expectations that are either fulfilled or turned as the writer takes you on a journey from beginning to end of their piece.

'From the very first words the skills of the writers that are in play at the very start of all these pieces is very evident to me,' Virginia said, 'How are they going to lead me through the rest of the words? How are the pieces going to end? I'll leave you to find that out for yourselves.'

Here are those journeys for you to take.

This article was published in The Friends' School student publication, *Focus*, Issue #111, November 2021. An edited version appears here. The writer, Nadine Frick, is a teacher of English and Creative Writing at The Friends' School.

AF

Hope

Darkness,
Speckled with embers,
And a crescent looming above.
Shivers creep in those
Who sleep,
Unsheltered.

Lifeline cut,
Through judgement,
Through scorn,
Through hate,
To isolate.
Elsewhere,
Through the inky blur,
A stagger around the circle of life.
A revolution which lingers,
Too long.
Grumbles roar in those
Who beg
For life.
Through the dusty haze,
Missiles scream,
Then collide with mustard sand.
The inability to reconcile,
To compromise,
Denies, divides, destroys.
The light dims
In those
Who survive.
Fight,
When the devil rages,
When the door closes,
When the world keeps spinning
And you want to crumble.

Fight,
The darkness
Of hatred,
The abyss
Of apathy.
Fight,
Be brave to hope,
Spread love to create change.

There is light
At the end.
We just have to see it,
To be it.

*Dihansa Udawatta
(Year 8, The Friends' School)*

Dear 2075

Dear 2075, I don't think we are going to survive

Our planet is burning because we lit the match,
And now that it is out of control we can't take it back
But it's too late, we can't undo what has already been done
Instead, we can fix the problems that have previously begun
Dear 2075, I don't think we are going to survive
Icebergs are melting causing sea levels to rise and countless animals to die
But nobody seems to care

Just picture a once happy and healthy, now sad and skinny polar bear
These bears homes have now disappeared making life incredibly hard
But nobody seems to care as these problems are just left in disregard
Our future is stolen are we are the thieves.
Building more factories newly cleared spaces
Just leaves us with more and more traces
Of fumes that destroy things that once brought us joy
If you want your future child to be able to experience the things we do today
We need to do something about climate change
I don't understand why this issue is such a debate
We must act now before it's too late
Dear 2075, I don't think we are going to survive

Emily Rawson (Year 9, The Friends' School)

The Treasury of Pandora's Pithos

No one has the right to sit down and feel hopeless.

The Earth Mother swirls in a ceaseless swift motion, a constant cycle of never ending, never pausing continuity for all of endless eternity.

She never stops moving, twirling, letting anything slow her down or feel the sorrowful emotion of mortals.

Humanity should emulate her lead.

Humanity should not have the right to sit down, wallow, and feel hopeless,
for there is too much work to do.

No one has the right to sit down and feel hopeless;
when Pandora opened her doomed jar, unleashing

disease

and distress

and death

amongst the mortals,

the spirit of hope remained,

with the intent of maybe, one day, humanity will be restored to the former paradise it once was.

No one should feel hopelessly despondent,
as humankind shall not rest,

for there is too much work to do.

No one has the right to sit down and feel hopeless,
for there is too much work to do.

Regine Chua



Dihansa Udawatta



Emily Rawson



Regine Chua



Rebekah Ismail-Arnold



Stella Petheram

Crossroads

We're all at crossroads at some point,
Deciding where to move.
Calculating choices on a chessboard,
Moving later not soon,

We have to choose,
'High or low?'
'Queen or rook?'
This choice is important,
It could move you forward,
Or make you dormant.

The high road seems narrow,
The low road seems harrowed
It's difficult to see right or wrong.
Is there even a choice?
Picking between two poisons of different colours?

'Bad things happen when good people do nothing.'
Are we really doing something?
Are we fighting or blinding ourselves from the gunfire?
The sound is not in our country,
But it's in our world.
Yet we choose not to hear,
We know the truth.
But we choose not to speak.

We can't keep giving into our fear of choices.
That if we choose wrong,
It could corner us.
Checkmate.

We can't just keep covering our eyes,
We have to fight.
We can't keep living in a technicolour lie.
We need to choose.
To see bitter, battered reality.
It isn't pretty,
But...
It's the truth.

Rebekah Ismail-Arnold (Year 9, The Friends' School)

The Cry of the Currawongs

The moss sinks underfoot
Two footprints sound
Overhead the tops of the trees sway and dip like a kite in the wind
The great expanse of sky, clouds running across it like skittish skinks
The stream gurgles through a gap between two mossy boulders
The lichen rough

The ripples of currawong cry linger
Upon the untouched air

Massive old eucalyptuses stand
Wiser than any philosophers in history books
Their scarred trunks tell of hard times
Of success

The ripples of currawong cry linger
Upon the untouched air

Years pass, the forest changed
People everywhere
Travelling from faraway lands
Drinking from plastic straws, eating from gold plates
Not caring about the sound of the wind through trees
The taste of rainforest on skin

The currawong no longer cries
Old trees are ash on the ground

Unable to share their wisdom ever again

The concrete is hard underfoot
Two footprints sound

Overhead the great buildings are cold against the sky
A concrete path rushes through a gap between two mossy boulders
Plastic art smooth

Memories fade with the cry of the currawongs

Stella Petheram (Year 9, The Friends' School)



We live in an age of wonder

ISABEL ADAMS | THE FRIENDS' SCHOOL

We live in an age of wonder, fascination and newness. This is a world where anything is possible, particularly with collaboration. A world where humanity can prevail. And yet, all around us, we see unrest, disruptions and sorrow. 356 million children live in extreme poverty.

More than 1 in 10 people across the world have a registered mental illness. We are constantly pressured to be more than we are, told we must be rich, popular, smart, athletic, funny and beautiful. It is impossible to live in the world we want. The world is falling apart around us.

We must make change. It is the responsibility of everyone to ensure that every person has the opportunity to thrive.

And how do we respond to the challenges our world is facing? We blame others. We take to the streets or write social media posts that criticise others for the poor world we live in. Racism is only present in the police force and royal family. Climate change is an issue for major businesses. COVID-19 is all governments' fault. Food wastage is down to supermarkets. Educational issues are the responsibility of African governments. Nothing is my fault.

That is the attitude that so many of us will take. But blaming others helps no one. If everyone believes that it is someone else's responsibility, no one will ever take action.

We need to take matters into our own hands and act to make meaningful change. If we don't take responsibility, who will? It is time that each of us steps up to do what is right. So often we see people bragging about what they are doing. But kindness should be

more than a bragging point. People, real people, are struggling or having their lives torn apart.

This is not about the helpers, but about the help. The Religious Society of Friends recommends that you 'let your life speak'. So few people do this. But this is how we can bring about meaningful change. Letting who we are guide our actions and our actions guide how people see us. Prioritising a culture of community, trust, charity and help will make our world a better place.

Helping others should not be seen as a great deed. It should be seen as a common action, one that shows our true values and is an indispensable part of society.

We need to learn to open our eyes and see the world in front of us for what it truly is. So often, we only see the outer layer, what we are shown. We see what we are told to see. And this means that we never truly feel others' pain, that we do not learn to think about others, and, when things go wrong in our own lives, we feel alone.

We learn about issues only when the media makes them a front-page story. And then we never stop to think about how this applies to our backyard.

When the Black Lives Matter protests spread across the USA, many Australians sympathised with their cause. We fought for the people of colour living in America. We considered the tragic deaths in custody of Aboriginal Australians. But we forget to think about how we can play a part. We forgot to think about the disadvantaged Indigenous children struggling to afford school, the many young adults who faced discrimination when searching for a job. We took to

the streets to campaign for those whose stories are highlighted in the media.

And we continued about our daily lives as though this change could not be made in our backyard.

Change is necessary. And many changes can only be made in Parliament, or inside a big business, or in another country. But there are so many positive changes that we can make, in our households, schools, workplaces, communities and our own lives, that can have a profound impact on someone's life.

We need to stop pushing the responsibility onto others and work to make meaningful change ourselves. If we cannot change, how can we expect others to? Change is like a tightrope. It is uncertain, scary and always in the spotlight. If no one small is willing to take even the first step, how can someone more powerful ever be brave enough to walk across?

There are ways to have a positive impact on someone's life. But one of the best things that we can do to support others is to create a community that supports them.

Many people underestimate the power of a positive culture. But sometimes someone does need to step up and fight for change larger than themselves. They cannot do this without support.

We need to support people to make change and be the best people they can. Currently, we place so much pressure on people to be perfect, to fit in, to not make waves. We need to create a different culture, one of kindness, love, trust, hope and belonging.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Debating the fate of the world with a six-year-old

KAYE WRIGHT | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING

I had just arrived at my first client's house. Her name is Susan* and she is a beautiful, elderly lady with dementia and various physical problems but with a gorgeous spirit. Susan also has a spirited six-year-old great-grandson named George.

The three of us sat down on the couch together in the family's lounge room. This is always a bit tricky as my primary duty is to socially connect with Susan, not babysit other members of the family. Do I gently discourage George or do I see how things go and let Spirit decide...?

We begin by singing songs together. We sing *Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head* as this is one of Susan's favourite songs. Susan sings along with joy. The little boy stays mute and stares... I begin a song I think he might know: *Row, row, row your boat*. He starts to sing and soon enough we are all singing it. Susan's eyes light up with joy. She is delighted to share an activity with her beloved little boy. I know that it was the right decision to include him.

I next bring out a book about baby animals (I know that Susan loves animals). All three of us look at the book together with Susan turning the pages. I ask Susan and George the names of the animals we are looking at and read out some of the text.

We turn to a page featuring a mother and baby koala. Abruptly, George says that in twenty years all the koalas will be dead! We all pause, shocked. Then I turn to George and say that although this may be true it doesn't have to be. If we stop cutting down our forests and assist the koalas then we can both share our environment. George stated again (adamantly) that koalas will die out.

I realised that George was almost certainly repeating something he had heard said often, perhaps someone in his own family who he trusts implicitly. I had to be careful here. I didn't want to be disrespectful to his point of view or to him.

But to have a six-year-old express such fatalism caused my heart to ache!

I said let's agree to disagree and on we went with the book...

We came to a picture of a baby fairy or little penguin and again George announced (with such confidence!) that we will only be able to save one species of penguin out of seven species currently in the world. Why is that, I asked. He wasn't sure but was absolutely certain this was the case. I said that we can save all seven species of penguin but we have to live our lives differently by making different choices. We are the ones who need to change.

Again, we agreed to disagree.

Later, the three of us played balloon tennis, generating lots of fun and laughter. George decided then to blow up his own balloon and try to hit our balloon, making a sort of missile out of his balloon. It flashed through my mind that this is our world's greatest threat... Man's needing to hit, control things, shoot something down...

However, George was actually a lovely little boy and I liked him. I hope that I may have planted a new seed in him. It is a seed that will need to be nourished by others.

Just as I was leaving George asked for help with his shoes. He wasn't sure which shoe went on which foot. I assisted him but left him to do up the Velcro fasteners. I touched him lightly on the shoulder and then left after saying a warm farewell to Susan.

Just as I was walking up the street to my car, I heard a loud 'Kaaaaaayee!!!'. I turned around and there was George waving madly.

I waved back with a huge smile.

In my spirit, I blessed this family and wished them well, especially George.

*Names have been changed to protect the innocent.

AF

WE LIVE IN AN AGE OF WONDER – CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

To change the way that our world works, we first need to change the way our communities work. No one can create change if they are too scared of the changes in the way people see them. If we imply that we don't care about each other, how can anyone stand up for someone that they don't even know?

We regularly ask for change or consider what needs to be done. However, we are usually too afraid to make change. But we cannot keep sitting around, doing nothing. There are many things that need to change. And most of these changes are in our attitudes. It is time that we change the

way that we interact and send out a more positive message to those around us.

If we cannot change the way we look at others, how can we expect anything to change?

AF

acted in a nonviolent and respectful manner to all parties, including Thales, the police, and other members of the public assembled outside Thales. This statement briefly explains why I did what I did. I ask that the Magistrate take this into consideration when sentencing me.

I decided to block the doors at Thales and refused to leave because Thales sells weapons, vehicles, and munitions to Indonesia. These arms are used against civilians in West Papua. I took nonviolent action because there are no viable conventional political mechanisms available to ordinary people to solve this problem.

I first went to West Papua in 1991. I have been travelling back and forth ever since. Before COVID I was visiting West Papua and Indonesia as many as five times a year. I have been invited by West Papuans to form a number of different organisations designed to strengthen the capacity of the nonviolent movement for human rights and democracy.

One of those organisations is Make West Papua Safe which has been campaigning against Thales. Together with a West Papuan colleague I am a co-founder of that organisation.

I hold a doctorate in International Studies and have taught politics, civil resistance, and community development, at universities in Australia and overseas. In 2015 The University of Queensland Press published my book *Merdeka and the Morning Star: civil resistance in West Papua*, based on my PhD thesis about the nonviolent struggle for freedom and against the Indonesian state's occupation of West Papua. As a result of being in relationship, and daily contact, with West Papuan human rights defenders, I am acutely aware of the political and human rights situation in West Papua.

Last year, in January 2020 I received distressing messages and photographs from human rights defenders in the Highlands of West Papua. My

informants told me that several rockets had been fired from an Indonesian helicopter at civilians residing in a remote village in the Highlands. Witnesses reported houses and crops being destroyed. Incredibly one of these rockets failed to explode. I have seen the evidence of this rocket attack, including the unexploded ordnance.

The attack is also consistent with ongoing and credible reports by Amnesty International Indonesia, Human Rights Watch Indonesia, TAPOL, International Coalition for Papua, and human rights organisations inside West Papua, including ELSHAM and PAHAM, of the ongoing war in Nduga, Intan Jaya and Puncak districts, in the West Papuan highlands.

In the weeks before I blocked the doors of Thales, my colleagues and I traced the rockets back to a Thales factory in Belgium. In the weeks after my arrest we have since discovered that in 2014 the Indonesian government purchased 12 Airbus/Eurocopeter Fennec helicopters, fitted with what I believe are rocket launchers equipped to launch Thales /FZ68 rockets, the same rockets that exploded in Ugimba village in January 2020.

We also discovered that Bushmaster combat vehicles sold to Pindad, a state-owned arms company in Indonesia, are rebranded as Sanca but made under licence by Thales. The Bushmaster vehicles are manufactured in Bendigo, Victoria, Australia. Dozens of these vehicles were visible at the factory in Pinkenba on 31 May 2021.

We have tried talking to Thales but dialogue has, so far, failed. Despite this we will continue to try to talk to Thales.

Our nonviolent action, this court case and the media around the court case, are a continuation of our attempts at, and commitment to, dialogue. For more than twenty years we have also been meeting with politicians, diplomats, and senior public servants. In fact, on 5 July 2021, Make West

Papua Safe briefed Federal Members of Parliament about the human rights situation in West Papua.

I am acutely aware of the failure of conventional politics to address this problem. The Australian government, for instance, is a signatory to the Arms Trade Treaty. Under the terms of the ATT, states are not meant to sell or transfer weapons where there is a chance these could be used to facilitate crimes and human rights abuses.

Article Six of the Treaty specifies when a state should deny permission for an arms sale, including when a state has knowledge of 'crimes against humanity' and 'attacks directed against civilians'. These are all situations which have routinely occurred in West Papua for decades.

The West Papua Council of Churches even goes as far as saying genocide is occurring against the Nduga people and others indigenous peoples in the Highlands. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) suggests that such weapons sales violate both the Geneva Conventions and international human rights laws:

Under the Geneva Conventions and customary IHL (International Humanitarian Law), all States have an obligation to ensure respect for IHL. The ICRC takes the view that this entails a responsibility to make every effort to ensure that the arms and ammunition they transfer do not end up in the hands of persons who are likely to use them to violate IHL.

The ATT reflects this responsibility in two ways.

First, it prohibits a State from transferring conventional arms, as well as parts, components and ammunition for them, if it knows that they would be used to commit genocide, crimes against humanity, or certain war crimes.

Second, even where a State does not have such knowledge, the ATT requires it to a) assess the potential that a serious violation of IHL or international

Update: AUKUS Opposition

MARGARET CLARK | CANBERRA AND REGION QUAKERS

On 16 September 2021, the Australia-UK-US trilateral security pact (AUKUS) was jointly announced by the leaders of the three countries. Although the public focus of the pact has been primarily on nuclear powered submarines, there are many other aspects of the pact which are concerning. <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/australia-pursue-nuclear-powered-submarines-through-new-trilateral-enhanced-security>

As part of this media statement, Scott Morrison indicated there would be some form of 'consultations through AUKUS over the next 18 months'. As part of this process, a short submission process and public hearing on the US-UK Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement took place in early December.

Since the announcement, opposition to the Pact is being raised by many

sectors of civil society including: union movements, climate change, women's empowerment, social justice, peace, anti-militarisation, public health and education funding, and a nuclear-free Pacific.

Friends may remember that the Quaker Peace and Legislation Committee (QPLC) was one of the like-minded organisations which signed a letter endorsing a national meeting to discuss the possible formation of a broad-based national coalition/movement campaigning against AUKUS, nuclear submarines and the march to war.

A well-attended national online meeting of organisations and individuals, including several Friends, was held on 7 November 2021. One decision that was enthusiastically endorsed was a weekend of nation-wide actions on

10–12 December 2021. This weekend also marked the 19th anniversary of the national rallies opposing the war on Iraq.

An interim decision making group from this meeting is sifting through the notes of small group discussions on a range of topics. The group is planning another national meeting in January 2022, to decide the name of the national coalition and identify potential actions throughout 2022. Already, some plans are being considered for a February weekend of national actions.

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network website includes information and links to articles and some events across Australia at <https://ipan.org.au/no-nuclear-submarines/>. QPLC will continue to monitor this topic and share information with Friends.

AF

PROTESTERS— CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

human rights law could be facilitated or committed with the arms or items to be exported, and b) not authorise the export of the items in question when there is an overriding risk of these violations happening.

At the time of my arrest I was requesting the police investigate the role of Thales acting in possible breach of Australia's obligations under the ATT in relation to the sale of arms to Indonesia which have been used against West Papuan citizens. Unfortunately, the Australian government, has made no move to ban weapons sales to Indonesia. Moreover, there is no indication or expectation that they will do so.

Since 2006, the Australian government, and the opposition, have been silent when it comes to finding nonviolent solutions to addressing the

root political causes of conflict in West Papua. Liberal National Party and the Australian Labor Party politicians routinely cite the Lombok Treaty, which has become the Indonesian government's gag order for Australian politicians concerned about the plight of West Papuans, as the reason why they won't comment about Indonesian state violence in West Papua.

West Papuans are my neighbours. They are friends, they are family, and they are colleagues. I have worked alongside West Papuans for more than thirty years.

The simple and inescapable fact is that when Thales' weapons and vehicles arrive in West Papua they are used to harm, and in some instances, kill West Papuans. Given the failure of dialogue and given the failure of conventional political processes to protect our

neighbours, I have no other choice but to engage in determined, disciplined, and strategic nonviolent action to prevent further violence by people using weapons, vehicles and munitions made by Thales. It is vital we stand up for West Papua like we did for East Timor.

Your Honour, the courts and community take a dim view of those who perpetrate violence. I share that view. I suggest that the violent actions, or actions that condone or enable violence by public and private institutions also need to be countered, condemned and constrained. I willingly submit to the court's decision on sentencing because I believe that civil institutions and legal processes can serve the common good.

Jason MacLeod, 29 June 2021

AF

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