

# The Australian Friend

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## Quakers and refugees



Victorian Friends on Palm Sunday 2021 outside the Park Hotel in Carlton where refugees were held

# Editorial

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Recently I attended the funeral of Jean Talbot, for many years the anonymous poetry editor of *The Australian Friend*. Towards the end of the service we sang a hymn which I was familiar with, but had never heard at a funeral. The first verse is:

*Eternal Father, strong to save,  
Whose arm does bind the restless wave,  
Who bids the mighty ocean deep  
Its own appointed limits keep,  
O hear us when we cry to Thee  
For those in peril on the sea. \**

I was surprised at this choice of a hymn, and asked who had chosen it and why. I was told that Jean had chosen it, because of her concern for the safety of refugees fleeing by boat. I thought it wonderful that in planning her funeral Jean was not concerned for her own legacy, but for the welfare of people she had never met.

Jean is not alone. For this issue we have received a number of articles about the plight of refugees and asylum seekers, particularly those who have made it to Australia and found themselves unwelcome. This was not our intended theme for the magazine, we had expected articles arising from our Yearly Meeting. But the plight of refugees is a concern which has taken a hold of many of our members and spurred them to action. Quakers are not alone in bearing this concern, and so they find themselves working with like-minded people of different faiths and ethnicities, finding That of God in everyone.

Every concern calls upon us to return to our spiritual roots, and David Johnson's article calls us to 'practice a New Covenant Life'. The organisers of our recent Yearly Meeting continued the struggle to combine technology and community, faith and action. Maxine Cooper's article describes the experiment with 'pods' where people could gather to participate in zoom meetings while also sharing conversation and cups of tea.

At every yearly meeting we lament that we are few in number, and that we keep getting older. But reading the articles in this issue, I feel that the Spirit still has plenty of work for us to do!

**RAE LITTING  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN FRIEND EDITORIAL COMMITTEE**

\*Words: William Whiting 1825–1878 / Music: John Bacchus Dykes (1823–1876)

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Cover: Victorian Friends on Palm Sunday 2021 outside the Park Hotel in Carlton where refugees were held



# Hope for Asylum Seekers

JILL PARRIS | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING

About four years ago I had a nudge to do something about refugees with Quakers, so called a meeting to hold the issue in the light. Only David, my husband, came, and I was so distraught that after crying through the discernment time I left the Quaker Centre to walk home and gather myself.

Still crying I walked across the road against the lights and was stopped by someone who said 'You are Jill Parris from Facebook, aren't you? Are you OK?' When I said 'Yes, I was Jill and No, I was not OK' she invited me to coffee where we talked.

Sally Morgan was a teacher from St Josephs and worked with a class of asylum seekers who had been released from detention without the rights to work or study. She taught English and prepared students for school leaving. When she found that they had no prospects beyond school she set up pathways to work and university.

As I got to know Sally, I learned that her class was no longer a priority for St Jo's, and she asked if it was possible to start a once a week homework club at

the Victorian Quaker Centre (VQC). This did not flourish but Sally's students became familiar with VQC. When St Jo's decided to relinquish her class, it was suggested by Colin, a member of Sally's external support team, that a cooperative be explored. He led a series of workshops and within a few weeks the asylum seeker students were called to a meeting at VQC where we sat down and discussed the pros and cons of forming a cooperative, chose this path, selected a board, signed up as the first members and settled on the name Hope Co-Op.

## What is Hope?

Over the next year we on the Hope board worked at consolidating our purpose and ethos, designing a logo, and building infrastructure. Sally decided to do a PhD on Hope so that she could continue supporting her students and begin growing and consolidating Hope's membership.

At the centre of Hope's ethos is humanity, equality, agency, and participation. A founding principle of all Hope activity is that it is Asylum Seeker run. This means that any board decision always needs to have a majority of full members (Asylum Seekers).

In the second year Covid hit and our activities which had been face to face were forced online. Our major activities of fund raising and social gatherings stopped, and as a board we had to face the fact that several of our members and their families had lost work and had no government support.

At a board meeting held to address these issues I raised the concern that I

did not want Hope to become a charity. I will never forget the response 'You may see it as charity. We simply see it as looking after our own.'

We decided that we needed to step in and begin providing food and some living allowances to people who were otherwise destitute. We were offered a space in which to pack groceries, and quickly gained support from community and religious institutions. The program used some volunteer members to pack, employed a member manager and paid some others to distribute food. This was very successful as it meant that our members could do welfare checks while delivering food. Quakers happily supported the work with funds for living allowances.

The father of a member is a tailor, and he began making masks which Hope advertised and sold.

When it became clear that Covid safe messaging to some migrant communities was inadequate a few Hope members approached Community Services Victoria and worked to provide accurate and user-friendly translations on Covid safety.

More recently, when Afghanistan fell to the Taliban, we were approached by a person at Monash University to begin a joint fund to support people stranded because of the war. We have done this and supported people known to our students, usually family members, who have found themselves destitute or needing to flee the Taliban. Recently we have closed this fund because we have members with relatives struggling in other countries and did not want to focus on one community alone.





Sally with our new book hot off the press



Food for Hope.



A book launch

## Writing a book

Some Hope members had spoken of a desire to tell their stories, not only of survival but also about how they have successfully navigated a system which offers them no pathways to meaningful participation in Australia. I had time on my hands and a Zoom account and so began the engagement with these young people I now knew and admired in recording their tales.

In most cases they didn't want to focus on what and why they escaped but chose to talk about living in Australia as people without rights and how they have learned to make the most of every day. They also chose to address issues such as racism and exploitation. Most wanted to hero aspects of their culture. Every storyteller found a way to share the exhaustion and stress associated with endless waiting for acceptance. Life is on hold until the right visa grants one permanence. And what is success without a home? Woven through these stories are snippets about us, the Australians who walk alongside them,

and how our lives have intersected. The story of how we became Hope Co-Op is woven throughout the book.

QSA provided funds to assist with printing the first run of the book.

As part of the Pathways Project a fund had been set up to support St. Josephs students who gained admission to university. Throughout the life of Hope Co-Op we have prioritised fundraising to provide 'living support' scholarships for members who could not otherwise attend university. All profits from our book 'The Shape of Hope' go towards this purpose. We have also sought additional donations of \$6,000 a year from individual or organisational donors. Each donation provides \$100 per week towards living expenses and an annual Myki (public transport card), and so supports one extra student to attend university for a year.

We are working with a number of teachers and educators to get the book accepted as part of school curriculums.

## Business award

Hope Co-Op won the 2022 Victorian Multicultural Business award for the work we have done over the past few years. We are thrilled with this recognition.

## Funding

Recently we applied for and won a contract from the Jan de Voogd trust to extend the work Hope does with family members of our student membership. Family support is extremely valuable to university students, but Asylum Seeker students are often put in the position of having to care for their families while they work and study. We are excited about the possibilities this offers, and intend to research our work.

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# Refugee Support

## *Keeping Connected, Sustaining Hope*

DOROTHY SCOTT | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING

**A**ustralian Friends are involved in refugee advocacy and support in many ways and through many organisations. One example is the small, Canberra-based, multi-faith organisation, Manus Lives Matter (MLM), which receives ongoing support from Canberra Friends.

Founded by the activist Brigidine nun, Sister Jane Keogh, MLM has campaigned for an end to offshore and onshore detention of refugees and asylum seekers and provided material assistance and one-to-one friendship to those who reached Australia by boat, and who were denied settlement in this country. MLM is also committed, in partnership with others, to assisting those eligible for Canadian sponsorship to resettle in that country. MLM has no paid staff – all its work is done by dedicated volunteers.

In December 2020 the Victorian Quaker Fund provided \$10,000 to MLM for the first year of the *Keeping Connected, Sustaining Hope* project. This

was used to support 23 offshore refugees (at an average of \$435 per person in 2021), with other donations by Friends used to support onshore refugees. Alan Clayton and Dorothy Scott are members of the inter-faith project steering committee. The following list gives an idea of the type of material support provided throughout 2021. In January 2022 the Thanksgiving Fund Committee approved a grant of \$20,000 for the *Keeping Connected, Sustaining Hope* project for the second 12 months of the project.

- monthly phone top-ups for men in PNG and Nauru
- phones and phone credits to others as required
- supporting living expenses of those still in PNG
- financial support to the families of some of the men in PNG
- paying for medical treatment and medication
- contributing to legal expenses
- supplementary food to men relocated to Nauru
- driving lessons to secure employment
- subsidising rent

It is harder to list specifically the emotional and social support given to refugees through their one-to-one relationships with volunteers, but offering the hand of genuine friendship is no less important than practical assistance. It can save the lives of desperate people at high risk of self-harm.

### **Canadian Sponsorship for Refugees**

Manus Lives Matter has assisted offshore refugees to resettle in Canada via sponsorship by the Canadian NGO, MOSAIC, which partnered with the Refugee Council of Australia to create *Operation not Forgotten*. The Canberra *Operation Not Forgotten* Volunteer Group, which grew out of MLM, consists of 20 volunteers co-ordinated by Robyn Fetter, again on a purely voluntary basis.

By May 2022 this group had completed and submitted to MOSAIC 133 applications, of which 105 have been accepted by the Canadian government to date. Thirteen men have arrived in Canada and are now beginning their new lives. Ongoing contact with over 100 refugees is maintained by the volunteers as deep bonds are forged through the long and stressful application process.

### **Plight of Afghan Families**

Providing support for the families in Afghanistan of refugees in PNG and Nauru is now an urgent priority. Many of the families are in dire need due to their refugee relative's absence and opposition to the fundamentalist rule of the Taliban, and/or their Hazara ethnicity. These families are now in hiding and in fear for their lives, their plight compounded by the famine and economic collapse affecting the entire country. To provide direct assistance to these families, Jan Trehwella, a MLM



Artwork by one of the daughters of the Afghan families being supported

volunteer, established *Our Afghan Families* (OAF), and two families have been assisted to escape Afghanistan, a perilous process.

Jan Trehwella describes the Afghan refugees in offshore detention as *physically and mentally damaged and broken men ... they have lost all hope of a future for themselves and their families and with that, some have also lost their sanity and their will to live. Meanwhile their families, continue to be at serious risk of persecution, torture and death with the return of the Taliban to power.*

At the first steering committee meeting of the *Keeping Connected, Sustaining Hope* project this year, \$2,000 of the Thanksgiving Fund grant to MLM was allocated to supporting these Afghan families. To date, individual Friends have matched that amount, but it remains a major struggle to secure the \$3,400 in total required each month to sustain eight families in Afghanistan. I pray for the day when these families can be reunited in Canada.

### Observations and Reflections

As a retired social worker, my involvement with Manus Lives Matter leads me to offer three observations.

1. The organic process by which Manus Lives Matter arose from an individual's 'leading' into an inter-faith network, and gave rise to new groups, is

inspiring yet being outside the formal charitable sector (without 'deductible gift recipient status' etc) leaves its vital work badly underfunded.

2. Small groups of committed volunteers can adapt and individualise responses to refugees and offer the precious gift of friendship, so different from a 'service provider-service user' relationship.

3. Large NGOs (e.g. RCOA, MOSAIC) are essential to developing and 'scaling up' game-changing initiatives such as Canadian sponsorship, but these NGOs need the 'natural helping networks' that only small groups of committed volunteers can provide to individual refugees.

As a Quaker, my involvement with Manus Lives Matter leads me to offer three reflections which I believe have implications for Quaker grant making and Quaker service more generally.

1. We can be most effective when we are part of a larger inter-faith network, thus harnessing a diverse set of skills and resources.

2. Our notions of 'concern' (*a weighty matter that disturbs the conscience and impels the concerned person or Meeting towards action*) and 'leading' (*acting on a concern*) are profoundly important.

3. Concerns and leadings of Friends, after being 'tested' by discernment in Local and Regional Meetings, need to be prioritised and supported by Quaker funding bodies.

**Friends wishing to support the Afghan families of refugees awaiting resettlement in Canada can make donations (not tax deductible) to:**

**Brigidine Sisters BSB 062904  
Account Number 1060 2969**

**Please add the words 'Quaker' and 'Afghan' to your banking reference.**

**If Friends would like more information, please contact Dorothy Scott ([dorothy@avonsfield.com.au](mailto:dorothy@avonsfield.com.au)) or Alan Clayton ([alan@avonsfield.com.au](mailto:alan@avonsfield.com.au))**



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# Direct recruitment from refugee camps

## *Global workforce an addition to humanitarian aid*

DAVID EVANS | SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND NORTHERN TERRITORY REGIONAL MEETING



Ukrainian Refugees Picture FRESHJobs

In 2019 a little-known visa project brought highly skilled refugees to Australia. Five refugees and their families have arrived in Australia thanks to a humanitarian pilot project helping businesses fill skill shortages.\*

In August 2020, an approach was made to the Australian and New Zealand governments asking whether, given the direct recruitment of Syrian refugees to work in Australia – see example above – New Zealand employers could recruit straight from Australian detention centres. The New Zealand minister for immigration did not respond directly to this question, however the minister reaffirmed the 2014 offer to award placements to refugees in the Australian government’s care. Finally, just prior to the 2022 federal election, New Zealand’s offer to take 150 refugees each year for three years was accepted by the Australian government.

### Ukrainian refugees

In May 2022 FRESHJobs reported that a South Australian Pub Group would offer employment to Ukrainian Refugees.

*The owners of the Duxton Pub Group in Adelaide want to provide more to help Ukrainian refugees aiming to employ upwards of 40 refugees from the war-torn nation to turn their lives around and enable a safe, financially stable livelihood in South Australia. ‘Everybody is so desperate to do something right now, but they feel like they are too small’, says Peter ‘we are not too small...if we can do something good in this area, we will’. The idea seems to have resonated with other members of staff, with an overwhelmingly positive ‘yes, please, let’s do it’ from the group’s chefs and other employees. The wider Duxton Group has regional assets, including accommodation, to help provide homes for people in need. Meanwhile the Federal Government has stated that Australia is welcoming displaced people from Ukraine with Australian connections, having granted 7000 visas to Ukrainian nationals since the Russian invasion in February.\*\**

It is an important observation that new workers from different cultures need to be welcomed by co-workers in the employment situation.

### Long term refugee camps

#### Cisarua learning

In 2014 refugees arrived as boat people from Afghanistan. Indonesia collaborated with UNHCR, and since then an active community has developed focusing on education for children and adults using primarily their own skills and determination. The refugees are allowed to mix with locals but are not permitted to work. Education, sporting and skill development are high on the agenda.

Afghani refugee Muzafar Ali received a UNHCR resettlement to Australia. He teamed up with film director Jolyon Hoff and they took a leading role in the establishment of Cisarua Learning with an office based in Adelaide. They returned frequently to make the film Staging Post.\*\*\*

#### Kenya

The Dadaab and Kakuma camps in Kenya are long term refugee camps with communities that have become functional countries. Some of the original South Sudanese refugee families now have grandchildren graduating with IT degrees. After



20-30 years of development, these refugee families regard the camp as their home.

Somali-American, Halima Aden, an international fashion model, was born in Kakuma refugee camp and lived there for seven years. Aden, now aged 20, said that despite sometimes not having enough food to eat and being sick with malaria, she enjoyed a happy childhood.

There has been significant international support for these self-governing and self-supporting camps in Kenya. Along with survival and health issues, the concept of Friendly Societies has developed. Yo Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble took a Music School to camps in Kenya. Adelaide enabled a Barefoot to Boots Program with football boots and uniforms and leading to intercamp football competitions. \*\*\*\*

## Immigration and resettlements

It is a great privilege to be associated with those who have received resettlements from UNHCR. At Eastern Suburbs in Adelaide, we have an Australian-Burundi extended family. Jean-Paul fled to Zimbabwe and Marie-Gorette followed with two daughters. A third daughter was born in a refugee camp and their son in Adelaide. After establishing a home in Adelaide, they organised immigration for two nieces and two nephews. They are pleased to be Australian and no longer refugees.

## Conclusion

Becoming involved with refugee groups is a positive step forward. Making a modest donation to Cisarua Learning is also a good way to see what is happening in our region. In Indonesia and Borneo there are 11 other camps where help is



Kakuma Refugee Camp Kenya (Google image) Picture Reuters

needed. By looking at the long term, a sustainable process might emerge:

- First, with UNHCR registration each individual would receive a UN identity and a UN passport giving the possibility of obtaining a work visa somewhere in the world.
- Second, an educational focus improves eligibility for employment.
- Third, self-government with local 'Council and Mayor' aids community development
- Fourth, economic development in two forms, that of local enterprise, and remittances from family overseas.
- Fifth, Friendship Societies with volunteer contributions from around the world.

## The vision - Leasing land for a new country

The inspiring long-term refugee camps in Kenya (Dadaab and Kakuma - 30 years) and Indonesia (Cisarua - 10 years) suggest that 'New Countries' will emerge and become part of the world community with self-government. These functional countries would come into being under International Law and under the auspices of the United Nations. The land in question is where UNHCR has acted under their mandate to provide emergency shelter and provisions for a refugee populous. A 25-year lease would be enacted between the Hosting Country and the

United Nations. The new functional country would be appropriately named with preservation of culture being an important aspect.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mandate is to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its main purpose is to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of refugees.

Current options include return to homeland, being recruited for employment from a third country, accepting resettlement in a third country, and immigration to the hosting country or a third country.

In time the New Country might become an independent state or territory within the hosting country.

\* <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/the-little-known-visa-project-bringing-highly-skilled-refugees-to-australia/67qkd4y8a>

\*\* <<https://freshjobs.com.au/news/south-australian-pub-barons-offer-jobs-to-ukrainian-refugees>>

\*\*\* <https://www.cisarualearning.com/news>

\*\*\*\*<<https://www.one.org/international/blog/tedx-broadcast-kenyan-refugee-camp>>



# Quaker Values Committee of The Friends' School

QUAKER VALUES COMMITTEE '1

The Quaker Values Committee (QVC) is comprised of Friends representing the various Regional Meetings in Australia and the Yearly Meeting Clerk. The committee reports to The Friends' School Board of Governors to support the implementation of Quaker values, encourage and facilitate connections between the School and the broader Quaker community, and to promote and disseminate practices which might benefit the wider community. Each year the QVC visits The Friends' School in Hobart to observe a teaching day, meet with students, teachers and others associated with the school and attend the AGM of the school Association. The Association is the entity which owns the school and is composed of Quakers who are current or former Board members plus current and former members of the Quaker Values Committee.

In 2022, the QVC visited from 12-15 May 2022 to observe ways in which the Arts curriculum engaged with the School's Purpose and Concerns statement; a foundation document that informs the spiritual and teaching activities within the School. The incoming YM Presiding Clerk (Bruce Henry) and a previous Presiding Member of the Board (Julian Robertson) also joined the committee as observers. The visit included a presentation by the Arts faculty, observation of drama, music, visual art

classes and performances across the School, attendance at Gatherings in Morris (Kinder through Year 6), the High School and Clemes (Years 11 & 12), attendance at Board meetings and shared worship with Tasmanian Friends on Sunday morning. Staff members also reported to the committee on the Social and Emotional Learning program, the Reconciliation Action Plan, and the manner in which Gatherings are held for children of various ages across the school.

## Observations

Gatherings are rich experiences for students and staff. Each Quaker Advisor (Jess Dundas, Lou Giudici, Maddy Walker) has brought their experience as Friends and as educators to the organisation of Gatherings so that the students are able to engage as fully as possible with a structured meeting for worship in a way that fits with their developmental needs.

Staff spoke about the impacts that COVID restrictions have placed on face-to-face Gatherings including moving to an outside space in warmer weather and to the Farrall Centre as it got colder. These adaptations appear to have had some unexpected benefits for high school students who have felt able to sit more deeply in silence at the Farrall Centre because they haven't been distracted by eye contact from peers across the circle.

Students reported that they feel

supported and respected by their teachers. QVC witnessed numerous instances where teachers modelled equity, empathy and trust in their classrooms allowing students to feel safe enough to open up with each other in respectful and appropriate ways.

Students demonstrated independent learning practices while also encouraging their peers to try new things and move beyond their 'comfort zones'. We heard the ways that The Friends' School is responding with sensitivity to the wellbeing and mental health needs of young people. We note that this has been exacerbated by COVID and that some age groups have been especially impacted.

We also heard about the range of ways that the School supports students who are experiencing a change in their gender identity and/or sexuality. We understand that each person and situation is unique requiring great sensitivity from the school when working with students and their families.

The Friends' School Board is well into their recruitment process for a new principal, and it has become clear that restrictive rules set by the Federal Education and Immigration departments may prevent a suitable Quaker educator from applying. The Board is considering structures and support for a non-Quaker principal if this eventuates. The QVC recognises that The Friends' School has done a



Friends' Primary School students in a Gathering in the Hobart Meeting House

## The Friends' School Purpose and Concerns

The Friends' School is a coeducational Quaker school based on fundamental values such as the intrinsic worth of each person, the recognition of 'that of God' in everyone, the desirability of simplicity and the need to establish peace and justice.

As a learning community, we are concerned for the academic, cultural, physical, social, emotional and spiritual development of each person in our care.

We seek to help our students develop as people who will think clearly, act with integrity, make decisions for themselves, be sensitive to the needs of others and the environment, be strong in service and hold a global perspective. We believe that these aims can best be achieved with the active support of all members of our School community.

1. Quaker Values Committee of the Friends' School  
 Mary Beadle (TRM)  
 Tracy Bourne (CRM) - convenor  
 Tom Dundas (TRM)  
 David Edmiston (TRM)  
 Bruce Henry (Presiding Clerk AYM – incoming)  
 Liz Field (NSWRM)  
 Nelson File (Principal)  
 Oliver Lovell (VRM)  
 Christine Venner-Westerway (QRM) - replacing John Beattie  
 Karen Wilson (TRM)  
 Ann Zubrick (Presiding Clerk AYM - outgoing)

lot of work over the past few years to embed Quaker values into the policies and processes of the School, and that this provides a good foundation for any incoming Principal. The QVC recognises that we have a role in supporting the Board as they work through the logistical challenges of appointing the next principal. In particular, we can assist with communication between AYM and The Friends' School and also in the discernment of ways that a Quaker presence might be sustained in the leadership group without a Quaker in the role as Principal.

### Commendations

We acknowledge the high-quality teaching practices across the school that demonstrate respect and care for each child and recognise 'that of God' in each person. We are grateful for the ongoing process of aligning the curriculum with the Purpose and Concerns statement. This document expresses our Quaker Values in a practical way and clearly guides the work that teachers and administrators

are doing. We were moved to witness Gatherings that were carefully planned to fit with the developmental and spiritual needs of each year group. We thank the Quaker Advisors for their diligence and sensitivity in planning these events, especially during the past two years of COVID restrictions.

### Recommendations

We ask that the Quaker Advisors share information and resources about planning Gatherings for children and young people with Regional Meetings around Australia. We feel that families and Children's Meetings would benefit from access to these resources and ideas, especially at this time when there are so few young people engaged with Meetings. We suggest that QVC members consider visiting the School for longer periods of time as Friends in Residence. We propose that the QVC meet quarterly for at least the next 12 months to maintain a sense of energy in the committee and to more actively support the school at this time of leadership transition.

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# Equality

## *Practising a New Covenant Life in an Old Covenant World*

DAVID JOHNSON | QUEENSLAND REGIONAL MEETING

**G**eorge Fox and the first Friends had a vivid appreciation of the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, not as theological constructs, but as markedly different paths for the soul and in ways of living in the world.<sup>1</sup>

### In the Old Covenant:

- Violence was acceptable to maintain wealth, acquire worldly possession and power, to protect these assets and to ensure personal safety. The Hebrew history books of the Old Testament in the Bible recount many stories of conquest, killing, and slavery as justifiable in the sight of God.
- Priests were external and distinguished by special clothing, with worldly status, and often with the roles of judge and punisher. The priests, especially the Chief Priests of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem had great social status and power.
- The law was written on tablets of stone or scrolls of parchment. The Torah contained Ten Commandments as a framework for living together in community. There was also a complex set of social disciplines, with specified payments for personal and community trans-

gressions of the law, and stoning to death for sins including murder, adultery or violating the Sabbath. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth was the prescribed revenge (Exodus 21:24), which limited community restitution; it was ignored at a national level where massacres, burning of cities and looting were the norm.

- Community worship was primarily external with approved rituals and words, responding to the priest's instructions, and in ancient times included animal sacrifices. This did not preclude heartfelt personal prayers, as recorded in the Psalms and in the individual prophetic writings, such as David, Hezekiah and Daniel.<sup>2</sup>
- Prophets who responded to an inward calling to reprove the people for evil behaviours were typically hounded, imprisoned and even murdered to silence them

### In the New Covenant:

- Violence is unacceptable. Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that persecute you. The last words Jesus spoke to his disciples before his arrest, trial and crucifixion were 'put up your sword in its scabbard', no violence.<sup>3</sup>
- The priestly office is internal, is spiritual, and with no worldly trappings. It is easily overlooked, for the voice is typically low, small and humble.
- Worship is inward, in Spirit and in Truth, responding only to the Divine spirit moving within.

- The law is written on our hearts, available moment by moment, and manifested by the Light in the conscience.

- Equality of all people before God, regardless of gender, social class, ethnicity or tribe.

It is true that there were voices of the New Covenant in Old Testament times, which called people to account, such as the prophet Micah 6:8 who put the matter so plainly: *to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

Two prophets in particular knew the inward guidance of God, and foretold the coming of a new Way.

Moses who had led the Israelites out of captivity and slavery in Egypt, is credited with leaving the Tablets of Ten Commandments, and the detailed laws of religious practice and community enforcement. Yet he also knew the true guide within himself, as recorded in Deuteronomy 30:11-14.

*11 For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.*

*12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?*

*13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?*

*14 But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.*



Jeremiah was the first to predict the coming of a new covenant between God and people (Jeremiah 31:31,33,34).

*Behold the days are coming, says YHWH, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah ... I will put my law in their minds and on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. No longer will they need to teach one another or remind one another to listen to YHWH. All of them, high and low alike, will listen to me, says YHWH, for I will forgive their misdeeds, and will remember their sins no more.*

Early Christians recognised this ancient witness (Hebrews 10:16), and it was a text of deep succour to the first Quakers who often quoted it. For example, Richard Farnsworth wrote:

*God did fulfil his promises given forth by Jeremiah the Prophet of the Lord in the new Covenant, when it is said he would teach them himself ... Christ was the Covenant and they found him revealed and manifested in them.*<sup>4</sup>

George Fox regarded the established Churches of his time, and much of the culture around him as in apostasy, in darkness, and spoke out repeatedly with a strong prophetic voice. He could see the continuation of Old Covenant behaviours in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Christian churches. Priests were distinguished by special clothing according to rank. Parish communities were taxed and tithed to maintain worldly buildings and possessions, often a burden for poor people, which was regarded by Quakers as an extension of ancient Hebrew behaviours. Payment of tithes and

worship at church was mandatory and could be enforced though both judicial and ecclesiastical courts, with fines and gaol terms.

Violence was widespread, with the sanction of churches, for religious wars at both local and national level, a practice contrary to the teachings of the new Covenant. The Quaker response evolved gradually, with the final statements by Margaret Fell to the King, Governors and Parliament in mid 1660, and the Peace Declaration in early 1661. The words “All wars and strife we utterly deny, .... Never to fight... with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ nor for the kingdoms of this world” are plain and uncompromising.<sup>5</sup>

The Quakers were not the first or only religious groups to assert this nonviolence. It was the testimony of the first Christians in the 200 years after Jesus’ earthly ministry, and there had been several groups in medieval Europe.<sup>6</sup>

It was in the adherence to an inward worship, with the laying aside of all ‘man-made’ words and rituals which distinguished the early Quakers. It was their experience that sitting in contemplative silence, waiting patiently for the rising of the Spirit of God within them, was the most profitable way to feel God’s presence and guidance. Their own experiences were supported by the words of Jesus to the woman at the well in Samaria (John 4:23-24):

*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

John Bowater recorded their experience in 1694:

*God that commanded the Light to shine out of darkness, shined into our hearts, whereby a discovery was made of that which is good and of that which is evil. This the Lord discovered [uncovered] to us, by the shining of His Divine Light and Grace in our inward parts, so that we need not look abroad. We retired inward. We saw that we had business enough at home. We saw that when we had grieved the good Spirit of God, we had trouble for it and when we had breathings of the Spirit, we had peace within us – so we must distinguish between that which gave acceptance with God and that whereby the Spirit of God was grieved from day to day.*<sup>7</sup>

For practising true worship, for refusing to swear in court, for refusing to pay tithes, in declining to mimic the fashions of the day and class inequalities – that is by entering spiritually and practically into the New Covenant – the first Quakers were harshly treated by the prevailing English Old Covenant culture, being a despised people, fined, imprisoned and in some cases executed. They practised an unwavering and uncompromising dependence on the guidance of the Spirit of God within them, and found a continuing inner fountain of love and life and energy to do so.

The prevailing modern global cultures, and in many cases within ourselves, are still in the Old Covenant. The great witness and gift of the first Quakers is that only by steadfastly practising the New Covenant, so

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# On ‘Holding the Meeting in the Light’

RAE LITTING | NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL MEETING

I am grateful to have been part of the eldering team at Yearly Meeting. The dedication of the eldering team impressed me greatly. They put enormous mental effort into ‘holding the Meeting’; they felt an enormous responsibility for the quality of the Meeting, and they were often exhausted at the end of a session. I say ‘they’ because I feel that my understanding of the job was somewhat different.

In the first place, I think that every participant in our Meetings for Worship and business has a responsibility for the spiritual quality of the meeting. I don’t think we can expect a couple of people to take this responsibility. Elders should not feel a sense of failure if a Meeting does not go well.

In the second place, I believe that no mental effort on my part could be capable of ‘holding the Meeting in the Light’. Rather I pray that God will hold the Meeting, and that I will be able to sense the divine presence.

There is something very abstract about the way in which elders feel obliged to act. They feel the need to stay mentally detached from Meeting, not to get involved. They feel forbidden to speak, or even to listen too closely.

Their role is like that of a guardian angel hovering over the Meeting, not a participant in the Meeting.

I am not sure that this has always been the case. In my early days among Friends (I am going back more than 50 years!) our elders often ministered in my local meeting if they felt this was needed. They certainly listened carefully, and offered encouragement (or rarely discouragement!) to those who had ministered. I understood that the role of an elder was to help people on their spiritual journeys. I confess that this is much harder to do by Zoom.

Behind all these changes, I think there is a deeper issue. We have cast off our childish concepts of God, and have not found any replacement. Hence people do not so much talk of ‘holding in the Light’, but only of ‘holding the Meeting’, as though it was to be held by their unaided mental effort. This is a heavy burden.

No-one has ever been able to get their mind around God of course. No one has ever comprehended the whole ocean of Light; we see only the odd spark. Some of the great passages of the Bible express this mystery.

In the book of Exodus Moses asks

for God’s name, and is told ‘I am who I am’. In the book of Revelation God says ‘I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end’. But because it is very difficult to relate to Alpha and Omega, or even to an ocean of Light, people have used idols, icons, and saints as intermediaries. This may be harmless.

The person praying in front of a statue of the Virgin Mary probably knows that God is nothing like the statue, but may feel closer to the divine in that place.

But at other times people have convinced themselves that God really is like a capricious and demanding monarch, or like an angry judge.

Over time these mental images have failed us, as our universe has grown and our understanding of the divine has not. As a result we are left with ‘That of God’ without any God for That to be part of. We are trying to make our little spark of God do the work of the mind which gave forth the universe. It is too much for us.

It is good that the role of elders has become less that of a disciplinarian and more that of carer. But we must not ask our elders to be miracle workers.

AF



# Know thy Friend

## *Adrian Glamorgan*

PETER JONES | TASMANIA REGIONAL MEETING

Adrian was born in South Wales: his first years were on the Gower Peninsula, near Abertawe (Swansea). This ancient, rural, and officially designated 'Area of Outstanding Beauty' gave him a lifelong closeness to the wild natural world. He says he also felt the mystery of Celtic Christianity around him. A few paces away from his family's emergency post-war accommodation (a bus with lean-to shack) nestled a neolithic 'fairy mound,' and a few steps further was a ruined castle with its own fairy story. At the other end of the long beach was a church built over a 6th century monastic cell. This setting gave him an instinct for Celtic Christianity and its mystic feel, a love of nature and strong egalitarianism.

While his father was an atheist, his mother regularly read the Bible to him. His father was a strong trade unionist with a passion for justice; his mother had felt the grace of the spirit, so between the both of them, Adrian feels that his spiritual life 'has been a long recurring spiral' between inner and outer work.

Moving to Australia, he grew up in the Riverina and studied law and history at the ANU in Canberra. Though not a Catholic, Adrian became involved with the St Vincent de Paul Society Social Justice group on the campus. By 'chance' he met the Anglican Bishop of Carpentaria, and spent the summer of 1979 on a mission on Cape York. It was a time of structural racism, unrest, and police aggression against the traditional owners: he 'learned a lot'. Disillusioned with hierarchical religion, he put his energy into trade union

organising, including putting together study tours to the Philippines. The Franklin Dam campaign consolidated his commitment to nonviolent direct action. Later he worked with Phillip Toyne as a lobbyist for the Australian Conservation Foundation, and has worked in international aid and with refugees, and taught sustainability and creativity at universities.

For 15 years as a student and union organiser, Adrian had passed by the Canberra Friends' Meeting House on his bicycle, with no idea what went on inside. He'd come across Quakers, though, reading of Friends' assistance to Welsh valleys in the 1926 Miners' Strike, their earlier opposition to the slave trade, and by meeting then-Senator Jo Vallentine. During an ecumenical meeting in the leadup to the 1991 Iraq War he bumped into Hector Kinloch – a well known Canberra Friend who taught him at university (and later became an MP in the new ACT House of Assembly)– and Adrian felt an inner prompting to go to his first meeting of Quakers. He felt immediately at home amongst Friends.

His involvement with the Society extended over time to include membership of the Backhouse Lecture Committee, taking part in the 1999 and 2021 QSA reviews, and the Earthcare Committee. It's important to him that meetings welcome newcomers, and support children, as well as build community. Adrian organised three Western Australian Quaker summer schools before COVID, more recently he has been part of Quaker wildflower bush camps, as in- and out-reach. While he lives a busy life, Adrian is

convinced that Faith in Action needs to be combined with quiet time for Faith itself.

His interest in international issues led him to help organise the Australian Friendship Study Tour to North Korea. Since July last year, he has served as part-time Secretary of the FWCC Asia-West Pacific region. In this role Adrian has been conscious of learning a little of one or two Asian languages, so is consolidating introductory Japanese. Key issues for him for Quakers in Asia Pacific are supporting remote Meetings, language inclusion, access to Worship and Quaker learning, and Friends' concern for Peace and Climate Justice. He's been impressed by the grassroots work of Friends Peace Teams in our region. Through FWCC Asia West Pacific, he seeks to promote Friends' collaboration through peacebuilding, climate action webinars, cultural exchange, as well as connecting with Quaker agencies. In the future, he hopes to travel more in the region, especially to Friends in Central India and East Asia.

Adrian supports himself by teaching Governance, Law and Ethics at a nation-wide university college. In his spare time he extends his concern for peace and the environment, with his beloved wife Elizabeth, through Mayors for Peace, community radio and nuclear abolition work. And just the other week, they became grandparents!

To subscribe to Quakers in Asia West Pacific Weekly Round, email to [adrian@fwccawps.org](mailto:adrian@fwccawps.org).

AF



# QSA Notes

## Evaluations: Essential to understanding the real impact of our projects

FLEUR BAYLEY | QSA PROJECT MANAGER, CAMBODIA

Evaluations are a crucial feature of QSA's project management, providing a window into whether, why and how our programs achieve their goals and ensuring our limited resources have the greatest possible impact. They pave the way for project improvements, helping inform decisions that maximise success for the most important people, the participants, benefiting the immediate project and future initiatives. Usually conducted at the close of a project, evaluations assess the extent to which project aims were achieved and identify circumstances that led to high and low success levels. They are part of a constant cycle of reflection, introspection, innovation and improvement in development practice.

While monitoring will measure the efficiency and effectiveness of project activities, evaluations focus more on assessing the impact of those activities on participants. For example, QSA funds a project to empower poor rural women with various activities, including permaculture training. Monitoring by the project partner will tell us if participants retain knowledge after project completion and if they successfully establish home gardens. In addition, QSA monitors the project with regular reporting and in-country visits to check if funds have been used as planned. But monitoring won't tell us if these activities had a medium-long term impact on the participants. We want to know if they changed these women's lives regarding their

economic power/independence, reduced domestic violence, improved family health, increased family decision-making, and even enhanced community participation.

This is where evaluation comes in, and it's often qualitative rather than quantitative data that we collect for this purpose.

As part of its contract with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Australian NGO Program, QSA commits to evaluating projects every three years. In addition, as a member of the Australian Council for International Development, QSA is bound by a Code of Conduct, committing to *...quality assessment of their work and to reflect, share and apply the results and lessons of their work with others*. But we mainly conduct evaluations because well-designed evaluations have tangible benefits for QSA and its development partners. Still, more importantly, they ensure our project participants achieve the outcomes they need and deserve.

### **Evaluation example: Department of Women's Affairs, Pursat (DWAP) – empowering women**

QSA works with DWAP in Cambodia to enhance women's economic empowerment and address the impact of climate change through permaculture agriculture. Training and equipment enable poor rural women to establish home gardens for year-round food and water security. In addition, education increases their awareness of human rights, equity and inclusiveness, environment and child protection.

An evaluation in June 2021 aimed to assess whether the program improved the empowerment of women participating in the DWAP permaculture training program. An independent consultant facilitated the focus groups via Zoom due to COVID-19 restrictions.

These discussions enabled us to gather qualitative data about how participants' lives had changed since the start of the project concerning decision-making within the family about spending, health, food and nutrition. They also discussed attitudes toward domestic violence and how their lives had changed since the start of the project.

Evidence gathered demonstrated that this program significantly impacts women's lives. They are more confident, have more skills, feel they are contributing and feel more valued. Importantly, children appear to be safer, and people with disabilities are more valued.

### **Quotes from focus group participants:**

*It changed as after this training, men started to take care of women and the household. Women are now more involved in decision-making and are braver in terms of their rights.*

*I am satisfied with life now as people in my family have the same equal rights, so they all get on better now – expect life to be better and better in the future.*





Women participating in an evaluation focus group in Pursat, 2021. SOURCE: DWAP



Chicken-raising by a participant in the permaculture training in Pursat. SOURCE: DWAPCentre SOURCE: QSA

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.

Find us on Facebook for more photos and stories: [facebook.com/quakerserviceaustralia](https://facebook.com/quakerserviceaustralia).

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MEMBER



Michael and Inga Tolley

# A story to tell

## *The kindness of strangers*

INGA TOLLEY | SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND NORTHERN TERRITORY REGIONAL MEETING

### **Topsy Evans has supplied this introduction to Inga's article.**

Inga and Michael Tolley were founding members (54 years ago!) of our Eastern Suburbs Local Meeting in Adelaide. They are both now well over 80. Michael is very frail and needs assistance to walk even if he has his walking frame. So, imagine our surprise when they announced at Meeting that they had decided to visit Inga's brother in Kenya! They have now returned, much to our relief, delighted with their trip. Inga has written this account of their return journey. **ESLM Friends think we need stories like this to remind us that care for strangers is not a monopoly of 'us', but of people everywhere, whatever their faith.**

**W**e spent the most wonderful three weeks holiday with my dear brother and his family by the coast in Kenya together with other members of our family with others (we were eleven in all) being so lovingly made welcome. We had the best experiences which included seeing so many wonderful animals in the Tsavo East National Park in spite of the drought at the time.

We departed from Mombasa to Nairobi and then on to Doha where we rested for two days before we were to catch our flight home to Adelaide on July 23 at 01:10. Just before we were due to take our taxi to the airport Michael had a tummy upset, and it was clear that he wouldn't be able to manage the long flight home, so we aborted this flight.

The next day I was able to contact the company we had insured with, and they were very helpful in recommending where to get medical help for Michael. Then it was a question of trying to get another flight home ASAP.

This proved to be anything but easy as not only were there very few flights available due to the large number of people now travelling, but then I found that my mobile phone was not working properly. Although I could receive emails and phone calls I could not make any calls, use the internet or send emails! Add to this it was weekend, and the large difference in time zones between countries I needed

to communicate with.

You will not be surprised that I didn't get any sleep that night trying to think of the best way forward and was very tired.

At about seven in the morning I got a call on my mobile, telling me that it was from the National Broadband Network saying that they had noticed that there were many people wanting to get into my system, and they wanted to make a time for them to come and fix it at home. Just as I had done that my brain started waking up and I realised I had been scammed! I immediately phoned the bank from the hotel phone, but you've guessed it I was too late, the bank then blocked our account, so now there was no chance of getting any money!

I decided that I would try and contact the Australian Embassy. I took dear Michael down to the front desk of the hotel we were staying in and got him comfortably settled, as I thought that it might take a little while to explain and try and sort things out. I noticed that there was another man so nicely dressed in his long white robe also sitting waiting. I then paid the little that we owed for our stay so far, and managed to book for another night as well, as I felt that we would certainly need that. I also explained my predicament and how I would appreciate it if they could help me by phoning the Australian Embassy in Doha, and make an appointment for us. One of the staff thought that

it would be possible for me to use my bankcard on their ATM, so I asked him if he would come with me and see, and you've guessed it, it was to no avail.

We then took the lift up to our room on the 21st floor, and this man who was also sitting in the lobby joined us in the lift and pressed the button to the 26th floor. He was very friendly and introduced himself as Rashid, I can't remember his surname, and said that he had heard a little of what I was saying, and if there was any way that he could help he would be glad to do so, saying that he worked nearby in Qatar. I gave him my mobile number and thought no more about it.

Imagine my surprise when I received a phone call from him about an hour later asking me if we would like to leave that evening the 25th, he was able to book us on a flight to Melbourne with a connecting flight to Adelaide, I said that I might have problems in getting the money right away, he said that there was nothing to pay! I did ask if it were possible to have a wheel chair for Michael. About half an hour later there was a knock on our door, and I let the receptionist in. She had an envelope for us, which she said was money for us from Rashid, and he had paid for all outstanding money we owed at the hotel, the money was for a taxi to the airport and some spending money! He would drop in the tickets for us a little

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# Intervisitation holds us together

## *A reflection for World Quaker Day*

TIM GEE | GENERAL SECRETARY, FRIENDS WORLD COMMITTEE FOR CONSULTATION

My understanding of a Quaker approach to life is that we seek to live in the spirit of the earliest followers of Christ, in obedience to the living Christ – who is returned already in every person’s heart – and in anticipation of the Kingdom of Heaven which is both here and yet to come.

Each of these alone is a huge concept, even before trying to hold them all together at once. Transformed into practice though a recognisable picture of Quaker faith in action shines through.

We live like the early church in our attempts to live in communion with God and as equally as we can with one another.

We follow the living Christ through prayerful discernment to inform our decisions, individually, in groups and globally. And we anticipate the Kingdom through our work for a more just and peaceful world.

None of this is easy. I gain strength from remembering that it never has been. Letters from James, Paul and Peter to the early Jesus followers begin with acknowledgements that times are

hard, but encouraging perseverance nevertheless.

There have also always been differences which the wider community has always tried to reconcile. In his first letter to the church in Corinth, Paul affirmed ‘you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it’ clarifying ‘Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.’

Our global Quaker community is part of that living body today, and the love and care we show through intervisitation is the connective tissue, as it always has been. At one time that involved long journeys by foot, horse and boat.

Now it is possible to share minutes, epistles and letters of greeting by email, and even join one-another virtually thanks to online and hybrid worship.

Access to the internet however is not equally distributed, neither in the world nor in world Quakerism, and sometimes we will be called to travel in person as well. This October, I plan to worship with Friends in Kenya, the country with the most Quakers in the world.

On 2 October – World Quaker Day – I hope you will join us with a livestream from Lang’ata Friends Church in Nairobi, or if the times don’t work well for you, one of a number of other Quaker gatherings around the globe also hoping for international online visitors. Likewise if you feel led to visit or welcome in person, do let us know, and we can help make introductions.

If the Kingdom of Heaven describes a time when all live in full communion with God, I see our gatherings for worship as being like rehearsals for that – moments when we live the Kingdom that is with each of us and feel it among us, ready to break out into the world, as it sometimes does through our social action. No-one knows exactly how the Kingdom will be, but we have some clues, including those offered by Luke:

*They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God.*

To take part in World Quaker Day, visit [www.worldquakerday.org](http://www.worldquakerday.org)

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### A STORY TO TELL – CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

later. Needless to say I thanked him so much and asked what I might be able to do for him, he said ‘Please think of yourself as a daughter of Qatar, we will always welcome you.’ The receptionist said that he had observed how lovingly I cared for Michael, and how respectful and thankful to those who I was seeking help from, he felt the least he could do was to help to us! I was reduced to tears.

When we arrived at the airport, image my surprise at finding that I was also allocated a wheelchair! Doha

airport is huge and I was very tired by then so I was actually very grateful. I did feel a bit of a fraud in Melbourne and Adelaide!

I am still overwhelmed by this kindness and incredible generosity! This is stuff you read about in fiction. Is it being the recipient of being ‘Paid Forward’?

So we arrived safely back in Adelaide, and were driven back by a kind young taxi driver who had come from India originally. Needless to say we were very

tired, and I got out first to open up the doors etc, and the driver got out the luggage and helped Michael. When I had unpacked everything, I realised that I had left a small bag with the books and items we had used in the plane, all items that were easily replaceable should we wish to do so. Imagine my surprise when the doorbell rang at about 10 am the next morning and there was this kind taxi driver with the bag!

AF

# Noted

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

## New permaculture book

Rowe Morrow (NSW Regional Meeting) had intended contributing to this issue of the *Australian Friend*, but she has been busy launching her latest book *Earth Restorer's Guide to Permaculture* a revised and enlarged version of *Earth User's Guide to Permaculture*. Anyone interested in permaculture will be familiar with Rowe's great work in this field. You can find a publisher's introduction at <https://melliodora.com/catalogue/earth-restorers-guide-to-permaculture/>

## Aotearoa New Zealand Quaker Lecture

The annual Quaker Lecture in Aotearoa New Zealand took place in July in Christchurch. The subject was *The Search for Truth: information, disinformation, and the algorithms of social media*.

This lecture was presented by Verica Rugar, Professor of Journalism at the School of Communication Studies,

Auckland University of Technology. She is Chair of the World Journalism Education Council. She has worked as a journalist and taught journalism in Serbia, Slovenia, Hungary, Australia, the UK, and Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is published as an A5 booklet, ISBN 978-0-473-63777-4, 36pp. Sales of the booklets are handled by [quakerbooks@quaker.org.nz](mailto:quakerbooks@quaker.org.nz)

We intend to publish a review of this lecture in the next issue of *The Australian Friend*.

## Well worth looking up

Our attention has been drawn to a couple of interesting and worthwhile organisations.

*Christians for an Ethical Society* is a Canberra based ecumenical forum which seeks to engage with the ethical challenges of the contemporary world, locally, nationally and internationally.

Members of the forum are from Christian communities and beyond and are committed to inclusiveness, justice,

and harmony in a sustainable world.

Their website (<http://ces.org.au/>) holds a treasury of past forums over many years with some top speakers.

*The Australian Living Peace Museum* (ALPM) was established as an on-line museum in 2015 by a group of volunteers who wanted to make Australia's peace heritage more accessible to the public, especially young people. This is a big and on-going task that the volunteers contribute to, as and when they can. This means that the website's contents are piecemeal rather than comprehensive, but it is planned that more content will be uploaded as resources permit.

Recently, the museum received a grant from the Nancy Shelley Bequest Fund to upgrade and re-design the ALPM website.

You can view the recently upgraded site at: <http://www.livingpeacemuseum.org.au>

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## EQUALITY – CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

clearly enunciated by Jesus' ministry, and which is available spiritually to all, are we individually changed and can we change the world around us.

## Notes

1 George Fox, *A clear Distinction between the Old Covenant, or Old Testament, and the New Covenant, or New Testament; and how that Christ hath abolished and taken away the First Covenant and Testament, and established the Second*. By G. F., in *Works*, Volume 6,

1831, p.38-73. See also James Nayler *A Discovery of the First Wisdom from Below and the Second Wisdom from Above*, 1660, in which he describes the political, economic and ecological implications.

2 1 Chronicles 29:10-20; 2 Kings 20:1-11; Daniel 9:4-19

3 Matthew 5:43-44; John 18:11.

4 Richard Farnsworth, *Moses Message to Pharaoh*, 1653.

5 *Journal of George Fox*, edited by John Nickalls, 1975, p.399,400.

6 Dale Hess, *A Brief Background to the Quaker Peace Testimony*. Victoria Regional Meeting, The Religious Society of Friends, 1992.

7 John Bowater, 1694, *He Is A Compleat Savior...*, in Burns, Patrick J., and T. H. S. Wallace, eds. *The Concurrence and Unanimity of The People Called Quakers As Evidenced By Some of Their Sermons* [1694]. Camp Hill, PA: Foundation Publications, 2010. See p.78-81, p.88-89.

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# Reflections

## *The VRM Pod set up for Yearly Meeting 2022*

MAXINE COOPER | VICTORIA REGIONAL MEETING

The F/friends who were interested and available to set up an AYM Victoria Regional Meeting Pod at 484 Williams St, West Melbourne, were initially pleased to be able to use the excellent IT equipment which made the Victoria Quaker Centre an ideal space for a pod.

Our kitchen and other facilities made it a welcome usable space. As a small group we undertook to be open from 10am each day of the YM.

On reflection we realise now this was a big commitment falling on a small group of Friends. The numbers of Friends attending the Pod varied from as few as 3 to about 16 for the Backhouse Lecture.

It was a positive experience for all of those taking part over the ten days. Shared meals, endless tea and coffee, and a variety of snacks and a delicious meal at a local African restaurant before the Backhouse Lecture were positive experiences for those involved.

There was a lot of teamwork, talk and laughter along with the occasional problem solving in a small, caring community. In trying to evaluate the experiences we now see that the practicalities of covering every day of YM from 10 am Meeting for Worship meant a lot of work for the small group volunteers.

There were times (Friendly School and Share & Tell sessions) where there was little interest in staying in front of the big screen. On other occasions the presence of children and the comings and goings of various Friends made us feel a real part of our Quaker community.

We had anticipated that individual Friends might wish to take part in different activities at the same time, so we provided extra computers downstairs, which were used only occasionally.

Issues that arose included one Friend who mentioned that they enjoyed the Pod experience however, because they were a pastoral carer, they were often very busy at online meetings and it would have been easier if the home groups were with those others already in the Pod who were meeting face to face.

Another Friend responded that initially they had hoped to be present at the Pod but the timetable for the home groups and the reports they had to give meant that they were not able to travel from their home to be present for the main sessions at the VRM Pod.

Therefore, they were able to join the VRM Pod for only one session. In considering some recommendations for future YM Zoom Pods it was suggested

that:

1. We use a Pod for the days when Formal Sessions are timetabled and on those days the Pod would start in time for the 10 am Meeting for Worship.

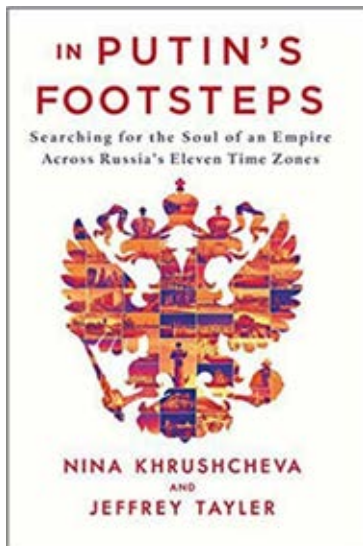
2. Neither Friendly School or Show and Tell lend themselves to a VRM Pod because we would have needed too many computers and more rooms to use all the necessary equipment.

3. We would publicise the Pod for the Backhouse Lecture preceded by a shared meal and for discussion afterwards according to the AYM timetable.

One friend suggested, a 'residential' pod, as was the case at Silver Wattle, would have been more manageable. Without the demands of the home groups so early in the morning and followed by travel to the Pod for the formal sessions, the day would be more relaxed.

In conclusion, we did enjoy the experience and we did learn a lot about what we would do next year if YM follows a similar timetable and structure of the program.

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## In Putin's Footsteps. Searching for the Soul of an Empire Across Russia's Eleven Time Zones

BY NINA KRUSHCHEVA AND JEFFREY TAYLER

Published by St. Martin's Press, New York. 2019. pp.308. \$20. ISBN 9781250163233 [hardcover]

Nina Krushcheva and Jeffrey Tayler write that the key to understanding Russia's geopolitics, its people and its leaders, are the nation's faith and giant territory.

With respect to the former, when the era of the Tatar-Mongolian rule over Russia ended in the 1470s, Moscow declared itself the Byzantine Empire's successor, the third Rome.

The Russian Orthodox Church generated what has become a major part of Russian mythology, that of Russia's superior soul, which comprises spiritual endurance, persevering patience, belief in miracles and material sacrifice.

Russia appropriated the double-headed eagle of Byzantium which looked to both Europe and Asia, which implies an imperial destiny.

Krushcheva and Tayler argue that Russia esteems despots over reformers,

the former seen as strong-willed for the good of the country, the latter as weak and self interested. The desire for a 'strong leader', which most Russians appear to have, transforms itself, in a country with a de facto absence of rule of law, into a search for the good czar.

Putin knows that Russians expect God-like status for their rulers, hence the glorified rituals in the Kremlin, though Putin, in deference to contemporary tastes, projects a James Bond image as well.

This is an excellent travel book.

The authors' journey begins on the Baltic at Kaliningrad, for seven hundred years the German city of Königsberg, and ends on the Pacific Ocean at Vladivostok, with its spectacular bridge like San Francisco's. The roads in the provinces are terrible, but there is a good rail service with competitive prices, comfortable carriages and well-appointed stations.

There is a great variety of locations, from islands in the White Sea where there have been monasteries and prisons, to a planned academic city east of the Ural Mountains, Novosibirsk, which has 37 research institutes.

Russia's political future broods over the book. It was published in 2019, before the invasion of the Ukraine, but the

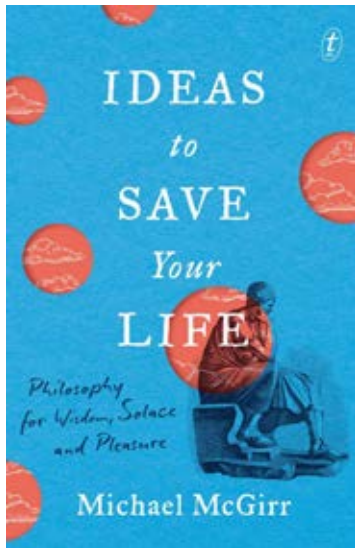
authors' conclusion that the majority of Russians continue to applaud Putin's imperial ambitions, still seems to hold. The war dishonours Russia, and is particularly sad in Russia's case because a strong sense of religious vocation is one of the strands in its culture, expressed in its literature.

Russians are a God-bearing people, declared Dostoyevsky. One of Russia's greatest novels, Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, has as its main theme the interplay of innocence and political power, a Quaker theme if ever there was one. Moreover, Tolstoy's work on non-violent resistance inspired Gandhi to show the world that de-colonisation did not have to be violent.

This book provides useful background and food for thought.

**REG NAULTY**

*Canberra and Region Quakers*



## Ideas to Save your Life: Philosophy for Wisdom, Solace and Pleasure

BY MICHAEL MCGIRR

Published by Text Publishing, Melbourne, Australia. 2021. pp.304. \$34.99 ISBN 9781922330871 [Hardback]

Many people think that philosophy is about a fixed subject matter like physics, but it is nothing like that. Michael McGirr, early in the book, writes that philosophy is a carnival of ideas, possibilities, suggestions, connections, history, and tricky questions, although he tends to overstate the last of these.

If one were to read this book and ask, 'What does it all add up to?' one would not get an answer. It would be like asking what chalk, cheese and railway sleepers are about. The nineteen chapters in the book are about different topics, which suggests that it is a book to dip into rather than read straight through.

McGirr wrote it when he was, as they say, 'between jobs,' and when he was writing his sixteenth job application he realised how hard it is for people over fifty to find a job. He in fact does an excellent job writing clear, homely introductions to those he is writing about, anchoring them in common

life. He writes that the mind is the safest passageway to the heart, and that untempered by thought, our emotions can turn into bullies, which McGirr may well have learned in the school of hard knocks.

With respect to contemporary philosophers, Martha Nussbaum in the United States writes about anger, where its relevance is obvious. McGirr disagrees with her about the need for a public ritual for forgiveness; he is there considering a wider field, the success of the truth and reconciliation commission in South Africa. About Michel Foucault, who writes on illness, McGirr brings to bear his own extensive experience with AIDS victims. He says that he never met a dying person who thought that their life was some kind of social construct. [p.261]

The book gives a useful introduction to people whose names may be familiar but whose work is not. Thus Iris Murdoch is well known as a novelist, but not as a philosopher and author of a heavyweight work *The Sovereignty of Good*.

Given such a large parade of thinkers, it is likely that some of them write about a field addressed by earlier philosophers, and this is the case in a field where we would least expect it – physics. The book has a chapter about matter which raises a problem which surfaced in the nineteen sixties and seventies

when physics enjoyed something of a triumphal period when it seemed that everything could be described in its own language.

But there were things which didn't fit in, the immediate objects of the senses, colour in the case of sight, sounds in the case of hearing, flavours in the case of taste, smells etc. Some physicists replied that, for example, the blueness of the sky just consists of electro-magnetic radiation of a given wavelength and frequency. However, people had seen colours for aeons without ever noticing them. That touched off a lengthy debate which had been beautifully recorded in the writings of Democritus. He introduces the intellect having a debate with the senses about what is real: 'Ostensibly there is colour, ostensibly sweetness ostensibly bitterness, actually only atoms and the void', to which the senses retort: 'Poor intellect, do you hope to defeat us while from us you borrow your evidence? Your victory is your defeat.' The objects of the senses appear not to fit into physical reality, the atoms and empty space, but they may be objects of another reality, the minds which apprehend them. That is the beginning of an argument about the separateness of mind and body.

The book should appeal to a wide readership.

**REG NAULTY**

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# The Australian Friend

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