

1918-2018 Some reflections

Northern Friends Peace Board's trustees gathered in worship at the beginning of November 2018 and were led to share some reflections on the centenary of the armistice.

The peace testimony, today, is seen in what we do, severally and together, with our lives. We pray for the involvement of the Spirit with us, that we may work for a more just world. - London Yearly Meeting, 1993

The shadows of two world wars are long and have informed and shaped the lives of millions. The legacies and the causes of violent conflict are intertwined. Justice, equality, respect for human rights and care for the planet are all affected by war whilst the absence of each is sowing seeds of current and future conflicts. To build peace means addressing these issues, as well as developing and nurturing the skills of dealing with conflict nonviolently.

Out of the shock and agony of war can come a more positive vision, with people committing themselves to new ways of living together on this fragile planet, driven by such sentiments as those expressed in 1918 - 'Never Again!'. We are now in a time when visions and hopes of post-world war and post-cold war are being cast aside and trampled on. These visions were never perfect or fully realised, but they recognised our inter-dependence and our common humanity.

In these turbulent times, we take courage from the compassion and creativity that there is amongst many people in the world for tackling the roots and the results of violent conflict. We remain committed to a vision of humanity united in common concern for our planet and the health and welfare of all its inhabitants; committed to act to this end in the spirit of peace, respect and openness.

At the outbreak of war in 1914, Northern Friends Peace Board was preparing to face the challenges that lay ahead whilst still expecting a short, if bloody, period of conflict. Amidst the confusion and distress of today, we also look ahead with both profound concern and active hope, drawing inspiration from our faith community, from those who have gone before us and from those who will come after us.

Together, let us reject the clamour of fear and listen to the whisperings of hope. - From a statement of Quakers, Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/New Zealand, 1987
