

Eulogy for Dorothy Fay Brown November 2011

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Dear Friends,

We are here today to celebrate the life of a most remarkable woman, Dorothy Brown. Dorothy had a very profound affect on everyone who knew her or were taught by her. She was a forceful person whose presence always created positive waves. It says something about Dorothy that it is taking three priests and a Bishop to preside at her funeral! I hear Dorothy now telling me from her coffin that I should make this speech short, make it simple and ask for a donation for the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago which is her last legacy to Aotearoa New Zealand and which I have the privilege of leading.

I was privileged to be able to visit Dorothy last Sunday while she was still conscious. I sat beside her bed and she gave me her final check list for the Centre. Dorothy has been giving me such check lists for the last 7 years!!!. It always amazes me how enthusiastically I have complied with these requests. In fact I have been astonished at how many grown up adults have willingly accepted such lists from Dorothy over the years and gone away and worked their way through them.

This widespread obedience to Dorothy's authority is a mark of the woman she was. She was quite simply one of the most intelligent women I have known; an excellent judge of character, determined, driven, passionate about her causes and the most formidable networker I have ever met. When we returned to New Zealand in 2008 she asked us to stay at her house for a few days so that we could have a quiet transition to Godzone... This quiet transition had Valerie and me meeting something like 59 people in two days at breakfasts, morning teas, lunches, afternoon teas and dinner!!! She made sure that politicians, academics, activists, church leaders, NGO leaders all came to meet me...While it was exhausting it was absolutely the right

thing to do. Most of the people she introduced me to were key players in the peace and justice field and were important for me to get to know if I did not know them already and important to reconnect with when I did know them.

Dorothy understood the importance of hospitality. Having a cup of tea with her, however, was normally a precursor to a life time's commitment to one of Dorothy's causes! When she was forming the Aotearoa –New Zealand Peace and Conflict Studies Trust she invited its current members to tea or lunch and the rest as they say is history. Each was given a role, each was invited back to meeting after meeting as Dorothy and the Trust gave shape to her dream for a New Zealand Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies.

In her last conversation, she wanted me to persuade the University of Otago to develop an undergraduate programme before some other University did? She wanted to make sure that our emerging Peace Education programme was expanded and deepened and she wanted to let me know how impressed she was by all the important research that our students were doing in the peace and justice field.

It says something about Dorothy that some of her last moments were spent worrying about the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. It was typical of her, however, that not only did she get an idea that could become a concrete reality she also put her own material resources into the Centre. She was not able to speak easily last Sunday but when she could she told me that Andrew Carnegie had said "It was a sin to die rich". Dorothy took this injunction to heart and gave generously to the Centre and to many other causes that she believed in. On Sunday, those Trust Members who were at her side were able to thank her for her vision, philanthropy and dedication and reassure her that the Trust and Centre were in different but good hands. We were her last project, her last gift to this country.

For seven years the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies has been Dorothy's primary project. If you want a recipe for living with a life threatening disease like cancer then get a big project like world peace or social justice and

dedicate many of your waking hours to it!. This is what Dorothy did. She visited us in Brisbane about 8 years ago and asked me whether she should fund some New Zealand scholarships to The School of Peace Studies at Bradford. I said that instead of doing that it would be much better if she promoted the development of such a Centre here in New Zealand. She thought this was a good idea and started gathering people around her to help her realise this vision.

Her reason for making this Centre her final project, however, was because of a life long concern about violence and violent behaviour. She considered violence of any kind (direct, indirect, cultural, religious) to be one of the most important problems facing the world. In order to deal with this problem, she wanted to understand its origins and dynamics but more importantly how to ensure that the future was non violent and peaceful. She brought together her concern for education and learning with this concern for peace and justice and wanted to combine both. She believed in the transformative power of education and of the central importance of peace education in the early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary curricula. Her life long Christian faith which she honed in endless discussions in the Student Christian Movement as a student and in different Anglican churches around the world, generated her lifelong commitment to justice and peace and provided the motivation for this project. As you can tell from all the hymns and prayers and reflections she chose for this service, peace, justice, compassion and love are the themes and they have been the themes of Dorothy's life forever.

Dorothy was not content, however, just to be a peace and justice advocate. She applied her formidable intelligence to learning as much as she could about the sources of violent conflict; and the cultures and structures of violence and peace. As a former botanist she understood the value of hard evidence and wanted me to get her books, papers and readings on all these questions. She in turn kept me supplied with paper clippings, articles and books that she had found helpful. These were always useful to me.

She, and the group that coalesced around her, in the Aotearoa-New Zealand Peace and Conflict Studies Trust, knew that peace and justice would not come about just

because people were advocating it [They have been doing this for years]. She also knew that it was not enough just to be members of advocacy groups like Amnesty International or local Peace and Justice Groups. Dorothy understood that passion without reason would not change the world. So she set about developing a Centre where passion could be combined with the best intelligence in the world in order to diagnose and understand the sources of violence and the short, medium and long term prescriptions for a non violent future. She wanted our Centre to bring together the best teachers, researchers and students in Aotearoa-New Zealand, to focus on tikanga Maori, the Treaty and all the things that make this country such a peaceful place. But she also wanted to ensure that the centre was firmly cosmopolitan as well linking New Zealand peace researchers with scholars and activists from all over the world. Although a firm and convinced Kiwi – Dorothy wanted New Zealanders to be firmly committed to the world outside. Our Centre is testimony to many of her core values.

What can I say about such a woman? The National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies would not exist without her vision, philanthropy and the formidable team that she gathered around her to help her will us into existence.

She was a woman of extraordinary intelligence, wisdom, humour, passion, compassion and enthusiasm.

She was a mover and a shaker. Once she had an idea she breathed life into it and mobilised exactly the right people around it. She promoted her causes assiduously and sometimes subliminally. I always left conversations with Dorothy, enlightened, enthused and challenged to think more deeply about my own taken for granted world views, preoccupations and assumptions.

I valued her judgement and (as I have said already) I cannot think of anyone with as wide a range of networks and friendships as Dorothy.

The hundreds of you who have turned up at this service is testimony to that.

I am going to miss her nocturnal phone calls.

I am going to miss sharing a glass or three of whisky or more latterly ginger wine in the middle of the night as the world was put to right.

I am going to miss her expansionist aspirations for the Centre.

I am going to miss her spirit and commitment to a more just and peaceful world. I am going to miss the letters enclosing the latest findings on peace, justice, human rights the environment or new theology.

I am going to miss all her notebooks with action points for everyone who shared a cup of tea.

I am quite simply going to miss someone whom I love and loved a very great deal. I love her not just for what she did for the Centre –although that is achievement enough . I am going to miss her for the person she was. She was an extra ordinary woman. Her heart was large. She was loving, compassionate and caring. She was a great role model for students, Faculty and friends alike. She was someone who loved life and lived it abundantly until the very last day. She lived by the questions she posed us at the end of the order sheet and reminded me of them whenever it looked as though I was forgetting one or other of them. Her questions of behaviour were simple but important guides to positive relationships. “Is it true, is it kind, is it necessary?”

She will be missed by all of us but especially by her family and friends so my heart goes out to her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. She will be missed by all who had the privilege of calling her friend.

I would like to finish with an old Moriori karakii tangi for Dorothy from the co Chair of the Aotearoa New Zealand Peace and Conflict Studies Trust Maui Solomon

E tahi koe I runga

Ta ihi o t era

Te werowero I te ata

Te mokopu o Rongo

Moe mai I te rangimarie e kui

Iarohahu me rongo

Ascend direct above

To the beams of the sun

To the rays of the morning
You are a grandchild of Peace
Rest now respected elder
In love and peace