



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness

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The 'Great Awakening'—What canst thou do?

Friends at the QEW Annual Gathering practice some *hopeful visioning*

by Louis Cox

WHILE the world was in the throes of a great social, economic, and ecological unraveling, speakers at the 2008 QEW Annual Gathering near Atlanta were audaciously hopeful. Seeing signs of a simultaneous "Great Awakening," they queried Friends about what they and their faith tradition can contribute to that transformation.

Some of the speakers saw the answer in terms of an old story and its promise of restored harmony with Creation through obedience to divine wisdom and leadings. Others found enlightenment in a new story, based on recent revelations from physics and the life sciences. *Is there perhaps an underlying truth that integrates these different perspectives?*

Tapping into our Quaker heritage

MARSHALL MASSEY of Omaha, Neb., Friends Meeting, our keynote speaker, described QEW as a small group that has done some good things but has gained little traction in the outside world, largely because many of our ideas and methods seem to have been borrowed from secular environmental groups. We could be more effective if we tapped into the unique resources of our Quaker heritage, he said.

Early Friends like James Nayler and George Fox were able to attract a large following because they were moved by an inward, divine power that reached out and spoke to the condition of others. In other words, what reaches the heart is from the heart.

There was also something in their message that made a great deal of sense to people living in 17th



A RAIN GARDEN that reduces run-off into storm drains is explained by QEW Steering committee member Roy Taylor, right, during a tour of Southface, a green building resource center in Atlanta, at the end of QEW's Annual Meeting & Gathering.

century England because, in contrast to the Calvinists' fatalistic, otherworldly doctrine of predestination, their gospel proclaimed an inner power that works for good in the world, lifting up those who are obedient to its call.

Today we are under the sway of a worldview that, like 17th century Calvinism, places little moral restraint on greed and exploitation. Fears of scarcity drive our strivings for material consumption. But when people learn how to listen to the inner voice they know that destruction of the

planet is not God's will, and they are given the wisdom and power to live in right relationship.

An effective environmental witness for Friends today must be based on our own experience of that inner voice, stirring the consciences of our listeners, rather than appealing just to reason, Marshall said. People will trust our message when they know that it is grounded in divine leadings. They will find hope and joy in what we have to say, because they will see that the world is not predestined to disaster and that heaven on Earth is attainable.

Being participants in a New Story

MARY COELHO of Friends Meeting at Cambridge, Mass., said a shift in consciousness is taking place in the world in response to problems that conventional thinking seems powerless to solve. Many people are finding these problems rooted in the modern worldview, which has led us to forget our essential unity with the rest of Creation.

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Mary said she has found a compelling connection between the Western contemplative tradition in Christianity and the New Story of an evolving universe in which we are potentially creative participants. This has allowed her to transcend the narrow materialism of her scientific training, which for many years had been in conflict with much of her theological training.

The New Story is not so much a science lesson as it is a revelation that we ourselves are part of a process of creative unfolding. Physical science, in its quest to discover the ultimate building blocks of the material universe, has arrived instead at the edge of a paradoxical "all-nourishing abyss." In the apparent emptiness beneath the subatomic world we encounter a vast fountain of differentiated energy. Some theologians have linked this mystery to the Johannean understanding of Christ as *logos*, the source of order and wisdom in Creation.

The ecological implications of the New Story are clear: When we enter into communion with all of creation, it becomes sacred for us. We must love and care for it as part of loving and caring for ourselves.

At the end her presentation, Mary assigned a query about what tools or methods might help us acquire the higher ecological/cosmic consciousness that the New Story and the Western contemplative tradition have shown to be our birthright.

Protecting our holy ground

STEVEN DAVISON of Yardley, Pa., Friends Meeting described a biblically based spiritual ecology that can inform today's witness for care of Creation. The ancient Hebrews, for example, learned during their long trial period in the desert many eco-strategies for thriving in an arid climate that worked in concert with Yahweh's instructions for their religious practice. It was the same inherited ecological wisdom that enabled Jesus to endure long periods of praying and fasting alone in the wilderness.

Steven explained that Jesus's words about the meek inheriting the earth can be correctly understood only in terms of the biblical concept of radical land reform that would restore people and land to right relationship. He also showed how the account of Jesus's baptism in the Jordan River contains many references to God's presence in the forces of nature.



KEYNOTE speaker Marshall Massey and workshop presenter Angela Manno exchange views about the Gathering's Great Awakening theme.



WORKSHOP presenter Mary Coelho and Gathering attendee Micheal Jokinen discuss her book, which relates the New Story to the Western contemplative tradition.

Steven said a spiritual ecology for today would involve a similar intimate knowledge of, and identification with, the land we inhabit, such that we are willing to defend it as holy ground. We need to preserve wilderness as a place where God's voice is often heard more clearly than in cities. Even as we rally to stop global climate change, we need to be adopting local watersheds and aquifers as holy places and advocating for them at zoning hearings.

Toward a new consciousness

ANGELA MANNO of 15th Street Friends Meeting in Manhattan, said Friends have long demonstrated power for social change when they come together. But we have only begun to tap the creative energies that are available to help bring about the healing of the earth. Modern science has revealed that our universe is one creative event, and the Western contemplative tradition has the power to connect us with our deepest self, to put us in touch with the highest and best of ourselves.

The Great Awakening is redirecting our activities toward helping the world enter a new state of creative consciousness, which Thomas Berry has called the ecozoic era, Angela said. Rather than being passive observers of nature, we are literally Earth becoming conscious of itself. This consciousness allows us to imagine new ways of being on Earth and to move toward their realization.

"The important thing," she said, "is to be grounded in that great ocean of love and wisdom through conscious use of the imagination. Otherwise we tend to be in a reactive mode, which is a place of disempowerment. Change comes when you are in

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service to what you care most deeply about and not when you're trying to solve life. It is important to know what you want regardless of whether you think it's possible. So why not go for big dreams?"

Angela concluded by leading us in an exercise in which we envisioned a leading role for Quakers in bringing about a mutually enhancing relationship between humans and the natural world. This was followed by worship sharing, in which a number of Friends shared what they had written during the envisioning exercise.

Participating in Earth's creative unfolding

BILL CAHALAN of Community Friends Meeting in Cincinnati, reviewed a number of scientific revelations that are awakening humanity to a new understanding of its place in the universe. These revelations include the discovery that our 13.7-billion-year-old universe with its billions of galaxies is rapidly expanding. None of this could have taken place outside of an extremely small range of values for the physical forces involved. Thus there seems to be something inherent and inevitable to the evolution of life. Earth is more than a *place* where life emerged; it is an organic, creative process of self-organizing systems and subsystems, Bill said.

These revelations have made obsolete the old mechanistic science that assumed the universe is composed only of dead matter and has no inherent meaning. A new worldview is forming around the understanding that the dynamic, relational aspect of the universe, which seems to overlap with what many religious traditions have meant by "spirit," particularly the Greek concept of *logos*, the primordial wisdom that gives shape and direction to all of reality. In such a worldview we can no longer think of the environment as something "out there." Rather, we and the other members of the community of life are members of Earth's body, Bill said.

At the end of his presentation, Bill introduced us to a practice that he said could help us shed our "cultural armoring" and bring us into a mode of deep awareness of the natural world. Gathering quietly outdoors, we centered down and gave ourselves an opportunity to enter fully into the present moment. Then we began to wander through the landscape, in a slow, almost stalking mode, guided only by our core sensations, moving beyond perception to empathy for what other beings are experiencing. This practice made us more aware of the ecological unraveling that is occurring all around us while giving us hope that we can do something about it.

New Steering Committee member organizes community gardens in N.C.

ROB JONES, a new QEW Steering Committee member from Chapel Hill, N.C., spent ten years in Baltimore Yearly Meeting's summer camp program both as a camper and as a counselor. He has a bachelor of science degree in biology and recently received a master's degree in environmental education.



Rob Jones

Rob is currently working as a food activist, organizing community gardens and local food systems in the Research Triangle region of North Carolina.

He decided to become active in QEW because he is very excited about what QEW is working toward. "My Quaker camping experience taught me how much Quakerism is entwined with the natural world. I think this is a community where I can continue that work and expand beyond the BYM camping program. I am also looking forward to engaging more young adult Friends in Earth-care by serving on QEW's Outreach Committee."

Friends process as a path to spiritual unity

ERIC MAYA JOY of Port Townsend, Wash., shared experiences he has had with native peoples, especially the Hopi of the American Southwest, who believe that their spiritual practices will lead toward unification of all humans, in terms of the "heart energy" that pulsates throughout the world.

"Humanity is in a time of great awakening, great turning, spiritual unification, transformation. Friends, with our process of meeting in circles, as equals, to discover the path of spirit and unity, have a significant part to play, a gift to offer. Our process brings forth needed growth! It nurtures the awakening! It awakens what it truly means to be a human being and sets the direction for what we are entering! This is a challenge for each and every one of us as Friends as well as each and every meeting, to practice our faith, to discover that which will see us all through these challenging, and exciting times." ❖

Right Relationship: Learning to live within the Earth's means

by Grace Seybold

A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, resilience, and beauty of the commonwealth of life. It is wrong when it tends otherwise.

AFTER nearly two years of development, the Moral Economy Project is gearing up to launch its new book, *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*. The book is now available for pre-order from Berrett-Koehler Publishers, and will be published in February 2009.

"We have a good project, a good team, and good energy," says Geoff Garver, attender of Montreal

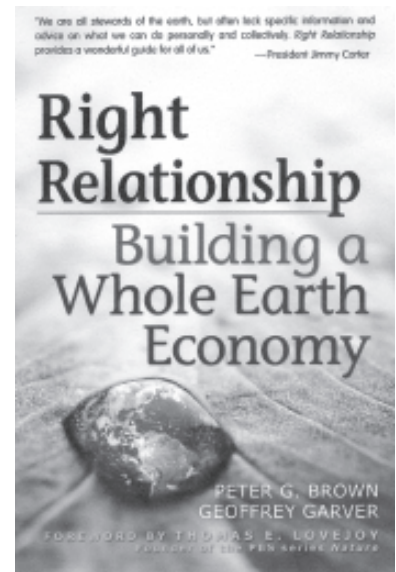
Monthly Meeting and one of the co-authors of *Right Relationship*. "We're offering the book as the beginning of a dialogue and to embrace collaboration, not as a be-all-end-all solution."

The Moral Economy Project first began in 2005 when a group of Quakers got together at Pendle Hill and decided to try and come up with some answers to the ecological crisis facing our planet. With the financial support and oversight of the Quaker Institute for the Future and the assistance of many extraordinarily dedicated people, this book was the result.

Right Relationship argues that the current economic system is flawed and needs drastic reform in order to address the inseparable needs of both humanity and the earth's biosphere. As the recent disasters in the American financial market have shown, an economy based on unrestrained and perpetual growth is unstable and inevitably self-destructive. What is needed is a scaling of the economy to a level more in line with the ability of the earth to regenerate its capacity to support a diverse and flourishing commonwealth of life. *Right Relationship* offers an array of concrete ideas for integrating ecological balance into a worldwide economic system, including more thorough analysis of the ecological crisis, an expanded world court, and a strong global federalism, similar to the European Union model, to replace the unelected network of corporations that currently governs world finance.

Right Relationship has already garnered praise from such notables as Herman Daly, Elizabeth Dowdeswell, and Peter Barnes. According to former U.S. President Jimmy Carter, "We are all stewards of the earth, but often lack specific information and advice on what we can do personally and collectively. *Right Relationship* provides a wonderful guide for all of us."

A symposium on the issues raised in the book is planned for May 2009 in Montreal. For more information on *Right Relationship* and the future activities of the Moral Economy Project, please visit our website at <http://www.moraleconomy.org>. ❖



More and bigger QEW mini-grants coming in 2009!

AT ITS RECENT ANNUAL MEETING Quaker Earthcare Witness approved raising the limit of its individual matching funds to \$250, following a very successful mini-grant program in 2008 (see the July-August 2008 *BeFriending Creation*). QEW mini-grants provide assistance through environmental matching grants for Meetings and special Quaker-related projects. Everyone participating in the 2008 program reported satisfaction with the project and expressed appreciation to QEW.

"In addition to the \$1,000 budgeted in the QEW general fund for fiscal 2009, we've received contributions from two Monthly Meetings and from several individuals. This will allow us to allocate 9 or 10 grants next spring," said Ruth Hamilton, QEW mini-grant clerk. "This idea of giving a boost to Friends Meetings to make a difference where they worship has really inspired Friends to respond with creative ideas and projects."

You can contribute to the mini-grant fund with a fund raiser or by adding a targeted amount to your regular QEW donation. You can also help by getting word out about the mini-grant program and by encouraging Quaker Meetings, schools, or retreat centers to apply for mini-grants.

The mini-grant application deadline is May 1, 2009. Contact Ruth Hamilton, QEW Mini-grant clerk, at Ruth@ArtsCanHeal.com. The grant application form is available on the QEW website www.quakerearthcare.org/index2.htm.

Iowa Yearly Meeting (Cons.) minutes its concern for right relationship with God's creation

The following minute is a statement of concern and suggestion for action about a set of issues that are affecting us now and will increasingly affect all of us in the future. Friends are encouraged to prayerfully consider how they will each respond as individuals, families, and meetings.

Right Relationship with God's creation

HUMANITY is no longer in a right relationship with God's creation. Because of our numbers and the way many of us live, we are using resources and impacting the environment in ways that cannot be sustained, the primary example being our dependence upon fossil fuels. Society's consciousness of this has recently been heightened by rapidly increasing oil prices. People are becoming aware that the way of living that we have become accustomed to cannot continue. If we don't make changes voluntarily, they will be forced upon us.

There has been an unspoken assumption that it is acceptable for developed countries to use a disproportionate amount of resources compared to underdeveloped countries. As oil supplies dwindle and prices soar, there is a growing potential for conflict to arise world-wide over remaining oil supplies. Vast resources are required, not only to produce personal automobiles, but for the infrastructure to support them, including highway systems, parking, car washes, supply stores, repair shops, auto insurance, licenses, sales lots, highway patrol, and gas stations. Exhaust from all types of vehicles contributes to greenhouse gases and global warming.

Our communities are built on the assumption that we all have the means to travel great distances to get food, go to school, work, and meeting. This has an enormous impact on oil supplies.

Friends could help provide leadership by redesigning our communities and lifestyles in such a way that we can forego automobiles. Improved systems of inter- and intra-city mass transportation will be one key to this. There are organizations working to expand and improve rail passenger transportation. Creating more bicycle trails and encouraging the use of bicycles is important.

The challenge of giving up automobiles is much greater in rural than urban areas but the factors at work are the same. If those who do have alternatives to personal automobiles would use them, it would help those who need more time and resources to develop their own alternatives.

The ease and relatively low cost of long distance travel by air has led to a sense that rapid travel over long distances is normal and acceptable. This has made the air travel industry a major contributor to global climate change. Friends are encouraged to avoid air travel and to work to reduce the need for long distance travel. We need to explore ways to do business remotely. This is a new area that will require trial and error to see what does and does not work for us.

Our eating habits also should be considered. It is estimated that the food for an average American meal travels 1500 miles from the farm to the consumer. Studies have shown that the livestock industry contributes more to greenhouse gas emissions than transportation does. We need to eat locally grown food whenever possible. Community garden plots, community supported agriculture, and re-learning how to preserve foods will help, as will reducing meat consumption.

Friends are encouraged to work with the Friends Committee on National Legislation, and their local, state, and national representatives to help pass environmentally responsible legislation, including government support for improved mass transportation, and blocking construction of new coal and nuclear fission power plants. We have seen the unintended side effects of legislation promoting the increased use of ethanol.

We encourage Friends to be examples as we explore creative ways to promote renewable energy, reduce energy consumption, recycle, and facilitate the use of local foods and products. There is an urgent need to curb oil consumption and greenhouse gas emissions dramatically, right now. Until some of these physical and social changes occur, it may be difficult for some Friends to give up their cars. Doing so as soon as possible is our goal, and could be a catalyst for change of the magnitude needed to reduce the current rate of environmental damage.

—Approved at Iowa Yearly Meeting
(Conservative) Annual Sessions
Eighth Month, 2, 2008

France YM urges Friends to be 'living witnesses'

by Mary Gilbert
QEW Steering Committee

I THINK it is time for Quakers around the world to work together toward a *Living Witness* that speaks with one, strong voice about how we can live on Earth in sync with the processes of nature, and conduct our lives in accordance with our deeply felt beliefs. Participating in France Yearly Meeting was a good step in that direction for me and David Millar of Canadian Yearly Meeting.

This was the first of two events that drew us to France in late August and early September 2008 as part of our work for Quaker Earthcare Witness of North America. (We also participated as accredited representatives in a meeting in Paris on Human Rights run by the UN's Department of Public Information—see report next page.)

France Yearly Meeting, held August 25–29 in the tiny town of Pontmain, near Normandy, had an attendance of about 40, half of whom were British expatriots now living in France. The gathering also included Friends from the Yearly Meetings of Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Britain, and Sweden. They had just opened a *Centre Quaker de Congenies* that they hope will grow to be a "little Woodbrooke," an inn with a beautiful garden that offers a varied program. Friends visiting France might like to check it out. [*Woodbrooke is a Quaker conference and study center in Birmingham, England.*]

One full day of France Yearly Meeting was given to the 2008 theme, "Living Witnesses: Toward a Deep Ecology and a Sustainable Way of Life" (*Temoins Vivants: Vers une ecologie profonde et une Mode de Vie Durable*) In the morning, Alan Allport from the Living Witness Project of Friends in the United Kingdom gave the deeply moving keynote address. A deep silence followed his speaking. The Living Witness Project, which seems to be the UK's version of our Quaker Earthcare Witness of North America, is raising up questions of how we live on our planet and how we might be living if we were truly rooted in our faith, and in tune with the ways the planet works.

The afternoon was spent doing mostly non-verbal experiential exercises that led us from a sense of individual purpose (like the one we often carry through the day) through discovering each other, experiencing

our love for the other and for one's self, to knowing how this love includes all beings. I believe some of the exercises we did originated with Joanna Macy.

My main discovery at France Yearly Meeting was of the vital and active, organized network among Friends in Europe. Some international Quaker organizations are: FWCC's Europe and Middle Eastern Section (EMES), which includes Palestine & Israel; Quaker Volunteer Action (QVA); and Quaker Council on European Affairs (QCEA), headquartered in Brussels.

There is interest in Quakerism from all over Europe. People have asked for international Quaker membership, and EMES has an International Membership Committee to respond to this interest. They maintain a website full of information, and support lots of visiting, both visits of seasoned Friends to newcomers, and general

intervisitation.

A new Quaker Meeting in the Republic of Georgia, under the care of EMES, was recognized October 2007. (Julia Ryberg, a Swedish Friend working at Woodbrooke, was one of the team who visited and determined the recognition.) Georgian Friends have arranged to be officially listed as an NGO with the Georgian government, and they are in contact with the Ministry of Public Defense. A dedicated core of members are part of a very active international on-line community that is working hard on relief for those with loss and suffering in the recent fighting. (At the time of France Yearly Meeting, some Russian Friends were still in Georgia, feeling that it was not safe to leave.)

There is also a very exciting on-line Quaker project co-run by Woodbrooke and EMES, with Julia Ryberg carrying out much of the work from Woodbrooke. A ten-week, on-line curriculum that introduces Quakerism has been developed, and it will be translated into 17 languages, to satisfy inquirers from all over Europe. Translation, which will be done by teams of native speakers working with Julia and others, has just begun, and funding has been found for the project to continue.

Visiting France Yearly Meeting felt to me like being welcomed into a warm family, where people know each other well and accept each other with love. We are speaking the same message about love for and care of this intricately balanced planet. ❖



Ecological awareness felt at UN meeting in Paris

by Mary Gilbert

QEW representative to the United Nations

THERE was a general awareness of the ecological context of the struggle for human rights at the 61st annual meeting of the UN's Department of Public Information and its associated NGOs, which David Millar of Canadian Yearly Meeting and I attended with 1,300 other representatives September 3–5, 2008 at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. It was also easy to find Earth-related presentations. Earthcare workers and human rights workers look through different portholes, but we are looking with love at the same realities.

The Human Rights workers we met radiated an air of equality and self-respect. The message was "I am your equal," without anyone projecting "I am better than others." There were also no diplomats. No "outcome document" was in the works. There was no sense that deals and betrayals were going on behind the next wall—a circumstance I feel keenly at meetings when negotiations are taking place.

Some highlights from various speakers were:

Water

The UN system and the corporate multinational community have announced that they do not recognize access to water as a human right. Their fight is not against poverty but against the poor. Today society does not want to create conditions that will guarantee rights. Starting here we must ask the UN to state publicly what the reasons are that they oppose the guarantee of water/life and we must expose the finances behind this position. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, the new President of the General Assembly, promised to bring the issue of the human right to water to the first session.

Local Economies, Land, and Food

Among NGOs there is wide agreement about promoting local and family economies. With market production most agriculture will be commercial. People are becoming landless consumers, victims of agribusiness. As population increases and local farms are given up, the urban demand for food increases.

Many governments are not interested in local economies and poor people. They are allied with the global north in seeing the global south as a northern breadbasket, where people are irrelevant. The role of the state has to be redirected. Governments must be involved in developing the set-up of small, local businesses. This allows women to feed their families. It's

all about dignity and self-sufficiency.

Small farming too needs assistance. The population needs to switch from monocropping to diversity, and they need to know how to manage so as to lead to increased food security and the protection of the environment.

The Earth Charter

The Earth Charter was launched at The Hague in 2000, with remarkable participation from around the globe, and now we are moving from individual rights to interdependence. Humans are not only intellectual. We are now experiencing our sense of self as part of a vast, expanding universe; we are de-centering humans and re-centering in the Earth Community. Human Rights include the right to healthy environment and the right to ecological justice. The right to information has also been internationally recognized, although not by the full UN. We are ready to work on integrated solutions to our problems. The oil wars have begun and water wars are on the horizon.

Health, Environmental Damage, and Human Rights

Climate change will be the Fifth Horseman, empowering the other four. Here is some of what we can expect: Heat waves; brush fires; mosquitoes; Dengue Fever; drought; respiratory diseases; and mental illness. High rates of prolonged psychological stress will underlie political instabilities.

Extreme weather events will cause the rise of infectious diseases. Victims are likely to be the elderly, children, rural people, regional indigenous people, and coastal communities. Climate change will increase war, and massive refugee problems.

The health sector needs to be alert to these coming problems and prepare in advance for working in collaboration with other sectors, providing direct aid and participating now in planning for healthful local environments as a mitigating factor (e.g., doctors should agitate for green spaces in cities).

Conclusion

The whole meeting felt familiar, like being among hundreds of committed Quakers—few in numbers, and dedicated to doing a colossal task. Some came asking for help—like the woman from Nigeria who cried out, "My people are starving!" The answer was that we can give moral support and share "best practices," but we're all in for long, hard work.

One speaker said, "Go forth and change the world." I would add, "God has no other hands but ours." ❖



Delaware Friends building LEED-Gold Meeting annex

CAMDEN (Del.) Friends are “going for the gold”—LEED Gold certification, that is—in the design and construction of their new Meeting House annex. (LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a widely used green building rating system. See <<http://www.usgbc.org>>).

Sima Robbins, representative of Boss Enterprises, Camden Friends Meeting’s contractor, says their firm uses green building technology whenever they can, to save energy, preserve water, get as close to carbon neutral (leave no footprint) as possible. “Respect is the cornerstone upon which we build our reputation. respect for our clients, our craft, our associates, and the environment. Our approach aligns perfectly with Re:Vision, the architects with whom we’re working on the Camden project.

“On this project, Boss is building a structure that is designed to last at least a century.”

Here are just a few of the things Boss is doing for LEED certification at the Gold Level:



Camden Friends Meeting Annex

Recycling and reuse of materials

In tearing down the old annex (built in 1959) to build the new one, the contractor took 130-plus tons of materials, sorted it into metal/glass, wood, concrete/stone, plastics, and cardboard and made sure all was either salvaged, recycled, donated, or reused. As a result, almost nothing went to a landfill. In addition:

- ❖ Brick from the tear-down was used in sidewalks.
- ❖ Stone from the tear down was used in mix for concrete floors.
- ❖ Wood trusses were donated for further use.
- ❖ Cypress beams from the old building were milled for siding, giving them a whole new life.
- ❖ Metal roofing and steel rebar contained a high level of recycled materials.

Water conservation

The building was designed to use 60 percent less water than other buildings this size.

- ❖ Gutter downspouts divert water to a rain garden with native plants that need no further watering.
- ❖ Low flow fixtures use only a half gallon of water per minute versus 2 gallons for older styles.)
- ❖ A cistern holds rainwater collected from the roof

to be used to flush toilets, so that less municipal water is needed.

Energy conservation

The new annex is designed to use 60 percent less than other buildings its size. Features include:

- ❖ Geothermal heating and cooling system (needs less power because the earth’s stable temperature does most of the work). The system uses twelve 300-foot wells.
- ❖ Photovoltaic solar panels will provide more renewable electricity than the Meeting needs, while producing zero greenhouse gas emissions.
- ❖ Compact fluorescent lighting reduces energy consumption, and they last longer while giving just as much light.

❖ Most light will come from natural sunlight through the windows.

❖ Locally made pre-fabricated structural insulated panels are energy efficient and faster to install than stud walls with fiberglass batts. In one structure, you get

sheathing, insulation, and structure.

Other green features

The LEED rating system is based on points earned through a variety of strategy options. Included in this project are:

- ❖ The paints used are low in volatile organic compounds. That means they emit no toxic fumes, improving the quality of indoor environment.
- ❖ Forest Stewardship Council-certified materials are used for windows and doors.
- ❖ Also, 40 percent of the materials used are being bought within 500-mile radius. Using regional materials saves on transportation costs and emissions related to that. These include concrete and stone from local suppliers. ❖

QEW is working on a “Green Meeting” certification program for Friends Meetings and churches that own or rent property. It will be similar to LEED certification, but it will also include other environmentally conscious management decisions. We hope to have it ready by late winter or early spring. Contact the QEW office if you have ideas.

'Harmony with Life on Earth' testimony drafted at PYM

A DRAFT TESTIMONY on *Harmony with Life on Earth* is one of two ways that interest groups of the Unity with Nature Committee of Pacific Yearly Meeting responded to concerns over environmental degradation that have been raised many times within PYM. (The other response was a *Climate Change Minute* that was approved at PYM sessions in 2007—see *BeFriending Creation*, Sept.-Oct. 2007)

Both Southern California Quarter and College Park Quarter (Northern California, Nevada, and Hawaii) discussed the draft at their October meetings. From there,

we expect Monthly Meetings to continue discussions and bring back responses to PYM in 2009.

Most Monthly Meetings have engaged in some kind of activities, including spiritual shifts in awareness on these topics, over the past few years. However, we recognize that work on a Testimony on *Harmony with Nature* will take time—time that will be well-spent in discerning whether this statement speaks to us in these times.

—Shelley Tanenbaum
Strawberry Creek (Calif.) Friends Meeting

...In today's interconnected world, human survival depends more than ever on discerning and actualizing the truth of our corporate experience, on mutual regard and support, on nurturing our relationship with one another, with society, and with the environment as a whole....

—PYM Faith & Practice 2001

Harmony with Life on Earth

We are a part, a dependent part, of a living whole. There can be no true health (or "wholeness"—the two words mean the same) in humanity unless, at the same time, we look to the health of the whole Earth family of living creatures.

—Marjory Sykes, 1970

WE CELEBRATE THE MYSTERY OF CREATION and rejoice in the beauty, diversity, and complexity of life on Earth. As the planetary crisis unfolds, we acknowledge the harm humans are doing to Earth and the consequent threats to civilization and to life itself.

We embrace the truth that we are but one species among many whose fate is irrevocably linked with all others and with Earth's cycles and processes. We cannot thrive unless the whole web of life thrives. In addition to acknowledging that of God in all people, we hold all life as sacred and extend the circle of our love and kinship beyond the human community to include the whole.

We face the dilemma of living in a society that benefits many, yet causes the environmental destruction we abhor. We acknowledge that the viability of our modern economic system is based on unlimited growth, while Earth itself—the ultimate source of all our wealth—has natural and non-negotiable limits. Much like a household that overspends its budget, humans are overspending Earth's resources with excess consumption and ever increasing population.

Failure to curb our recklessness—whether from ignorance, hubris, or greed—not only undermines

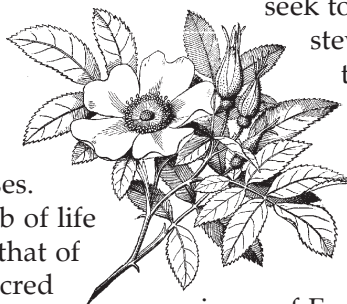
peace and the health of human civilization but jeopardizes the very existence of the web of life on Earth. While life lives on other life, right human relationship requires us not to take more from nature than it can give without leaving enough for the whole and its parts to thrive. When we do otherwise, we damage our spirit and deny our humanity.

As we examine our lives, we strive to demonstrate in our daily choices and actions a less destructive, more harmonious way for humans to live. We seek to learn right relationship, moving from stewardship to kinship. We strive to practice simplicity anew, abandoning wasteful habits and destructive technologies, while modeling alternatives.

We seek to understand the complexities of the issues involved. We labor with those who shape public policy to protect the health and resilience of Earth's life support systems. We advocate for collaboration at all levels of global society, and witness for equitable sharing of the burdens that transformation will create. We acknowledge our responsibility to be actively concerned for the greater good. Spirit calls us to use our knowledge and power to enhance rather than destroy the web of life.

Friends seek discernment in these endeavors and to be guided by empathy, generosity and wisdom. We turn to the Light and the wisdom of our tradition to guide us through the profound challenges we face.

—draft last updated August 2008



NW Arkansas launches Earthcare Witness

FAYETTEVILLE (Ark.) Monthly Meeting established an Earthcare Witness Committee in early 2008, and we have been busy ever since. Fayetteville is nationally known for its efforts at sustainability, so it is a good place for us to be.

Our first effort was to reduce each of our carbon footprints. We used an online calculator for ourselves, and now we are asking members and attenders to calculate their own individual footprints, to see where they can reduce them. We are thinking of a Quakerly way to have a contest to see who can reduce his or her footprint the most!

When we investigated our carbon footprints, we discovered that the major offender is the long-distance travel we do. Many of us make trips to various parts of the country, even the world, for business or personal reasons. Since it seems impossible to avoid most of those trips, we have explored the most sustainable ways to travel, such as bus and train. Our Meeting clerk took the bus from Arkansas to Pendle Hill, and then to New York City and back. That is real dedication! Unfortunately, carbon-friendly means of travel from our area are nearly nonexistent.

We have started buying free-range, organic eggs from a friend of a member, who brings them to the Meeting House and leaves them in the fridge. Friends bring produce from their gardens to meeting to share. We are compiling a series of Green Tips, short papers that tell how to make our lives more sustainable. When we have a collection of them, we will distribute them to the larger community. We are organizing to buy bulk supplies of organic household paper from a local supply. We con-

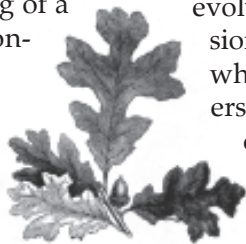
ducted a scrap metal recycling drive that resulted in cleaning up a lot of metal junk and brought us some money. Our teen group, Q-Life, even waded through muck to pull rusted metal from a stream bed.

One of our more exciting efforts is creating a Gifts & Needs list. This grew out of a desire to create a local currency. We decided that first we would start small, by establishing a sort of bartering system among ourselves. This evolved into two study sessions when Friends shared what they have to offer others, and what they need that other Friends might supply. This has developed into an enjoyable and helpful way to know each other better, and to know what we all do that can be helpful to the rest of us. The gifts are offered freely, rather than using a system of equal exchange. Eventually this may turn into a more organized system.

The City of Fayetteville last year hired a Sustainability Coordinator. At our July meeting, he talked to us about what he and his staff have been able to do over the past year. Their efforts have resulted in a saving of at least \$300,000, mostly from reduced utility use. We learned of efforts going on in the city that we may want to join.

WE ARE JUST GETTING started. For a small Meeting, and an even smaller committee, we have enormous enthusiasm and commitment to sustainability. As has been pointed out, we must save the Earth—it's the only planet with chocolate!

—Maya Porter, clerk
Fayetteville Earthcare Witness
Committee



Walking in the Light and *New Story* booklets now on QEW website

WEB versions of two new booklets are available for free downloading from the QEW website, <www.quakerearthcare.org/Publications/>.

Walking in the Light—Rediscovering John Woolman's Message for the 21st century, was created by Louis Cox and Ruah Swennerfelt in 2007 as a study guide for Friends meetings and churches that they planned to visit during their 2007–2008 Peace for Earth Walk from Vancouver, B.C. to San Diego, Calif. In addition to information about the traveling ministry of 18th-century Quaker John Woolman, the booklet contains their reflections on Woolman's message in relation to current social and ecological issues. It can be used as a resource for adult discussion groups.

Quakers and the New Story: Essays on Science and Spirituality, was published in 2007 by Philip Clayton and Mary Coelho in collaboration with the New Story Study Group of Friends Meeting at Cambridge (Mass.).

This booklet describes "some of the revolutionary changes that have taken place within the sciences in recent years. Indeed, a variety of interpreters of science are suggesting that the 'new story' that science is telling actually supports something very much like traditional Quaker ways of conceiving reality." Its goal is "to introduce readers to these changes in the world view of science, which seem to bring it closer to the spirit of Quaker belief and practice."

The web version is illustrated with color paintings by Mary Coelho and Angela Manno.

Canadian YM affirms its Earthcare concern

THERE HAS BEEN a concerted effort to ground our Meetings in Earthcare. Canadian Yearly Meeting (CYM) is attempting to do this by example: transportation to the site, “green arrangements” in preparations by our Program Committee, the food co-op, and conscious oversight of operations during Yearly Meeting.

The Clerks had scheduled the Tuesday evening to provide opportunity for those with special Earthcare concerns an opportunity to make a presentation, and this was followed by a time of worshipful sharing. The following groups made presentations: Quaker Ecology Action Network (a committee of CYM), Quaker Earthcare Witness, the Moral Economy Project, Quaker International Affairs Program, the Quaker Institute for the Future, the Canadian Council of Churches (Biotech Reference Group), and the Canadian Friends Service Committee.

Gleanings from these include: the ethics of biofuel; fair trade; right relations with the commons; a healthy spirituality balancing joys and tears and fears; and corporate responsibility for the economy. Reports of ongoing activity of CFSC in such areas as Rights of Indigenous Peoples and working with the KAIROS Ecumenical Justice Initiatives of Canadian Churches, an ecology-focused justice camp, a uranium working group—to mention a few. QEAN provides a network for sharing and focusing concerns and has provided input to the development of a CYM Faith & Practice.

We are pleased to have the overarching support of a Minute from the 2007 FWCC Triennial. It was heartening to have Donn Kesselheim as QEAN visitor to the Yearly Meeting. We appreciated

his words and presentation on the Tuesday evening, and the display of QEAN literature. Copies of *Walking Gently on the Earth, an Earthcare Checklist*, by Jack Phillips were available for sale. We are encouraged in Canada by the growth of “Faith & the Common Good,” an interfaith network.

QEAN sponsored a well-attended special interest group, that considered the question, “What are We Called to Do as Friends in Canada?”

Gleanings from this group and the Tuesday evening session were presented in the closing sessions.

Other interest groups focused on development of the Tar Sands in northern Alberta, Uranium Mining, and the Nuclear Chain. CYM approved participation in the delegation of 12 church leaders, being formed by KAIROS to visit the Tar Sands in May 2009. A report will be made in *The Canadian Friend*.

During the Tuesday evening sharing session, the analogy of the Titanic was used—that we are in an ice field and have struck the iceberg; we are concerned for the future, but also for those on the lower decks who are already going under due to environmental degradation. Our “Quaker lifeboat” must include prophetic witness for the earth.

—Arnold Ranneris
Victoria (B.C.) Friends Meeting
and co-clerk of QEAN

Tar sands video available from QEAN
For more information about ecological and social impacts of the Canadian tar sands industry, a 47-minute DVD, *When Is Enough Enough?—The Appetite for Oil*, is available from the QEAN video lending library. Order through the QEAN office or website.

BeFriending Creation

BeFriending Creation, Vol. 21, No. 6, November–December 2008. Newsletter of **Quaker Earthcare Witness**. ISSN 1050-0332. Published bi-monthly.

We publish **BeFriending Creation** to promote the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness, stimulate discussion and action, share insights, practical ideas, and news of our actions, and encourage among Friends a sense of community and spiritual connection with all Creation. Opinions expressed are the authors’ own and do not necessarily reflect those of Quaker Earthcare Witness, or of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The editor is responsible for unsigned items. Submission deadlines are February 7, April 7, June 7, August 7, October 7, and December 7.

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VISION AND WITNESS

WE ARE CALLED to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God. WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God’s Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right, and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the earth’s ecological integrity. WE PROMOTE these truths by being patterns and examples, by communicating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship to the earth.

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Help us continue working for peace, justice, and an Earth restored!

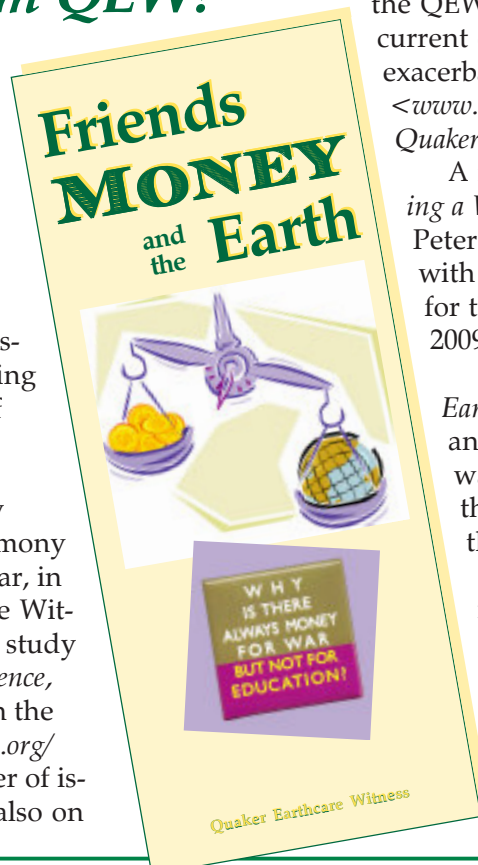
ON THE HEELS of your receiving this newsletter there will come an envelope with our regular year-end appeal. We appreciate the many ways that you support Quaker Earthcare Witness, including your work in your Monthly Meetings, Yearly Meetings, and communities. We hope that in turn you have felt that QEW has supported, inspired, and informed you in these efforts. The mission of QEW—the only Quaker organization dedicated to Earthcare—can only be carried out by all of you, working where you live.

NOW WE ASK you for financial support as well. Small organizations like QEW are being hurt by the current economic crisis, just as many families are. We hope you will be able give QEW the priority it needs to continue helping the Religious Society of Friends witness for peace, justice, and an Earth restored. In appreciation for your generous support of QEW we are including in the appeal letter a copy of our latest pamphlet, *Friends, Money, and the Earth* (see below), which we hope will inspire discussions within your Meeting. ❖

New pamphlet from QEW!

A NEW QUAD-FOLD pamphlet from Quaker Earthcare Witness has arisen out of growing concern among Friends that money is often a critical but neglected factor in their relationships with people and the natural world. Accelerated unraveling of global ecosystems over the past half century has raised questions about whether sustainable living is possible within the framework of modern economics.

Several years ago the Earthcare Working Group of Baltimore Yearly Meeting launched the Friends Testimony on Economics (FTE) project. Last year, in collaboration with Quaker Earthcare Witness, FTE published a three-volume study of eco-economics called *Seeds of Violence, Seeds of Peace*, which can be found on the QEW website, <www.quakerearthcare.org/Projects/FTE/>. In addition, a number of issues of QEW's *Quaker Eco-Bulletin*, also on



the QEW website, have examined features of current economic systems that seem to be exacerbating environmental problems. Go to <www.quakerearthcare.org/Publications/QuakerEco-bulletin/QEB_Archive/index.htm>

A new book, *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, co-authored by Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver with support from the Quaker Institute for the Future, will be out in February 2009 (see page 4).

The new *Friends, Money, and the Earth* pamphlet explores the origins and functions of money and discusses ways that Friends might better align their personal use of money with their Quaker values.

It is hoped that Friends will be inspired to continue learning about eco-economics, starting with the resources listed at the end of the pamphlet. Copies can be ordered from the QEW office. A web version soon will be on the QEW website. ❖