



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness

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Look, this is really very simple ...

by Louis Cox

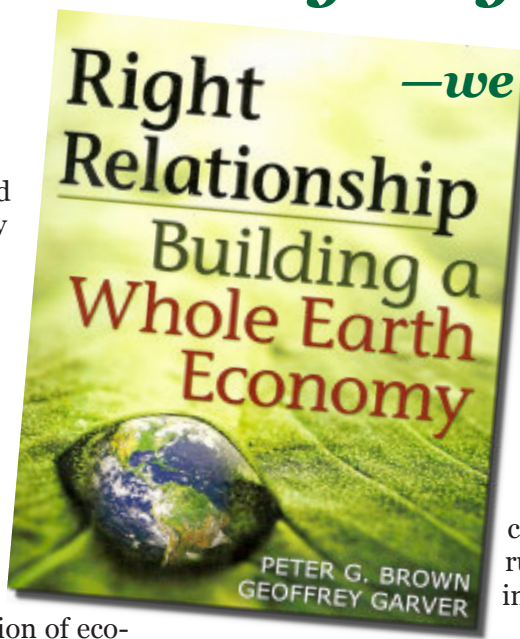
FOR thousands of years most everyone assumed the earth was the center of the universe and the sun and all the other heavenly bodies revolved around it. That view was “true” enough if you lived in an agrarian society and only needed a practical system for keeping track of the seasons.

But new understandings of how the universe works emerged as new problems and new scientific questions arose that previous models couldn’t handle.

Those same thousands of years have seen a similar succession of economic models, from traditional village markets to today’s globalized free-market capitalism. But now the stakes are much higher: Pressure to change the current economic model is mounting *because it is making us do stupid, crazy, destructive things to the earth, to each other, and to future generations*, and thus threatens our survival.

According to Quakers Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver, co-authors of *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy* (Berrett-Kohler, 2009), today’s global economy is based on the false assumption that everything on earth revolves around humans. It needs to be replaced with a radically new, ethically-based accord—one that recognizes that the human economy is ultimately a subset of the larger Earth economy and subject to its laws.

But remember there were die-hard astronomers who clung to an Earth-centered cosmology (often for philosophical or religious reasons) long after it was clear that it had outlived its usefulness. Rather than admit that they had wound up in a blind alley, many continued tinkering with the model in a futile quest to make it conform to observed reality. The result was a



—we didn’t say easy—

**once we
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cumbersome and confusing tangle of rules and theorems that were almost impossible to understand.

Similarly, there are many economists today who are still wedded to old “neoclassic” concepts that value maximum material production and consumption above all else, despite growing evidence that these practices are incompatible with social justice and ecological limits. Some economists are working to soften the social and environmental downside, but their answer is more adjustments to market mechanisms and policies. As their rules and formulas grow ever more complex, the inequalities and costs of their system continue to rise.

ECONOMICS has an important role to play in society, but *our mistake has been allowing it to become a fundamentalism of endless growth and gratification of artificially created appetites.*

Brown and Garver say the path to sanity and survival goes beyond the formulas and jargon of economics. We humans must rejoin the commonwealth of life. There we will find its basic principle of *right relationship* to be refreshingly simple and accessible, like the Golden Rule that undergirds the great religious traditions or the mutual care and respect that characterizes

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>> **Beyond economics**, from page 1

healthy interpersonal relationships.

IN a whole earth economy, wealth is defined, with elegant simplicity, not as monetary accumulation but as “having a share of the earth’s productive life and what supports it and keeps it going.” Under that definition, such “economic” activities as mountaintop removal, conversion of rainforests to biofuel plantations, and industrial agriculture are seen for what they are—destroyers of wealth. Similarly, the excess consumption and waste generation by affluent sectors of society are seen as systematic assaults on the rights of other people and other species.

We are at a crucial moment in Earth’s history when “we humans can exercise power to either advance or degrade the integrity, resilience, and beauty of the commonwealth of life....People can gain a sense of co-creation—of playing out, along with the whole community of life, a significant engagement in the unfolding of the earth’s story.”

Brown and Garver make it clear that they see no alternative to *full planetary governance*—a legitimate federation at all levels of democratic government, united by the fact of everyone’s ultimate interdependence.

Their proposal may alarm those who fear having a “New World Order” imposed on the rest of humanity. But government is not an “other” to be opposed and vilified, the authors explain, but rather “a representation of collective wisdom, spirit, and discipline.” The social and ecological crises of the modern world have soared beyond what can be addressed through the best cooperative efforts of isolated “sovereign” nations. 1) Many failed or failing states are incapable of international cooperation. 2) Some economically and politically powerful states are creating grave social and environmental problems beyond their own borders. 3) Many transnational corporations are able to escape responsibility for the damage they cause.

Although there have been extensive international negotiations on many vital issues over the past 65 years, Brown and Garver note that “*awareness of urgent, global ecological threats has not triggered the voluntary agreement of nations necessary to make progress toward an economy in right relationship with life’s commonwealth. Even the most dire ecological scenarios, like those in this increasingly foreboding reports of the In-*

Steering Committee will get special training April 23–26

THIS SPRING’s Steering Committee meeting, April 23–26 in Chicago, will feature two special trainings. One is for Friends who want to represent QEW at Friends’ gatherings and community events, led by Steering Committee member Susan Swannstrom and General Secretary Ruah Swennerfelt. The other one is for Yearly Meeting Representatives to the QEW Steering Committee, led by Hollister Knowlton, the Steering Committee clerk and representative of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. These should be lively and informative trainings.

The April meeting is primarily a time for committees to meet and do some important face-to-face work. They will have met by conference call between meetings to prepare them for the April meeting. All Friends are invited to attend and learn more about the workings of the Steering Committee, and how it serves and supports Friends to live lives that are rich, just, and sustainable.

As has become our custom, we will meet at the Cenacle Retreat Center in Chicago. This location was chosen a number of years ago because it is easily reached by train and bus, which are the modes of travel encouraged, due to lower carbon emissions than flying. (*It is understood that some people’s time constraints limit them to air travel, and no one is shamed into any behavior.*)

Won’t you join us? Learn how you can become more active with QEW’s work. Registration forms are available on the QEW website and by snail mail from the QEW office. See you there! —Ruah

tergovernmental Panel on Climate Change are insufficient to place effective checks on growth.”

If we survive the next few decades, it will be through global institutions that have the power, authority, credibility, accountability, and transparency to take needed action—systems to monitor pressures on the health and resilience of the environment, guardians of specific bioregions and ecosystems, agencies with the means to protect ecosystem integrity through regulation and enforcement, and judicial bodies to deal with abuses of common assets and human/species’ rights.

Building that kind of governance is, of course, an enormous challenge. But the first step is to envision such a positive future. The Earth Charter is a hopeful vision of what these institutions could accomplish. ❖

Is it population or consumption that is killing the planet?

Hollister Knowlton
QEW Steering Committee Clerk

QEW has some strong advocates for reducing global population among its supporters and on its Steering Committee. Certainly, anyone who looks at a graph of human population growth can see immediately that we are reproducing at an exponential rate, which is simply not sustainable on a finite planet.

But I have long worried that if we are going to call Friends to work toward reducing population, we must, at the same time and with just as loud and clear a voice, call to reduce our own/their own material consumption.

In November, on the bus ride to Denver, I re-read Jim Merkel's book *Radical Simplicity* and found a statistic that struck me to the core:

The world's wealthiest one billion people use 100 percent of the earth's biocapacity to sustain their lifestyles. The remaining 5 billion (the statistic was from 1999) use 20 percent.

Read that again. And think about what it is saying.

Merkel got the statistic from *The Living Planet Report* published by the World Wide Fund for Nature in 2002. At that time, the most recent data were from 1999; hence the assumption of a total population of 6 billion. It is now 6.7 billion. And now, instead of being in ecological overshoot by 20 percent, we are at 30 percent. We are living far beyond our means!

As I let that sink in, it became clear to me that if the one billion wealthiest humans were to suddenly disappear (and that is all of us living in the world's industrial nations) the remaining human population would be using only 30 percent of the earth's biocapacity—leaving plenty for an “earth restored.”

And what that said to me is that it is not so much our numbers, but our consumption that is the immediate problem.

According to conservation biologists, if we want to maintain some semblance of wildlife, some level close to current biodiversity, humans must leave up to 70 percent of the earth as wild. Yet we, that top one billion, are currently consuming more than 100 percent of that biocapacity, leaving zero percent for wildlife and biodiversity.

No wonder the soil is disappearing, the fisheries collapsing, species disappearing at 100 to 1,000 times the normal rate! Friends, this certainly speaks to the need to encourage the affluent to have fewer children! And certainly, it makes total sense to educate women

in developing countries so that they have a choice about their family size.

But I would suggest that, if we are serious about living in right relationship with all creation...if we are serious about making room for more of God's creation than just humans and the animals we consume, we look at the log in our own eye.

I am so inspired by Jim Merkel's message of radical simplicity. I am called also to join the leading growing among some Friends to take a serious look at our current unsustainable economic system and find another way..

It is time for radical simplicity, radical spirituality, radical community, radical sharing, and a steady state economy that permits this without collapsing. It is time for Friends to take this seriously and model a new way of living. If your ecological footprint is more than 4.4 acres and your carbon footprint more than 3 tons per year, you have got some work to do! And if we band together to do that work in community, I believe it is possible.

E-mail me at <H.knowlton@comcast.net> if you'd like a copy of QEW's “Ecological Footprint Quiz” or its Household Carbon Calculator (or sign up for QEW's new e-mail announcement list and get them both as well as other invitations and resources.) ❖



Oops! I made a BIG math error in my last column. I wrote that my 3,666-mile round-trip bus journey to Denver was responsible for the emission of **3.2 tons of CO₂**. Turns out, to my relief, I was off by a factor of 10! When I went to Native Energy's website <www.nativeenergy.com> to purchase offsets after that trip, I used their easy “travel calculator.” It told me that my travel was responsible for emitting **0.32 tons of CO₂**. Whew!

Because the minimum purchase is for 1 ton at \$14.00, I happily charged that amount to my credit card. That money will go toward either the building of a wind turbine on native lands or for biodigesters on a small Pennsylvania farm. And for that price, now my bus trip to Florida to give the *Awakening the Dreamer, Changing the Dream* symposium at Sarasota and Orlando meetings is also “offset.” Of course, this doesn't actually remove the CO₂ emissions I add, so it doesn't permit me to be unconcerned about my travel plans, but it does ensure that some future emissions will be prevented, and allows me to travel for QEW with a somewhat lighter conscience. —HK

Guides to eco-friendly cleaning products available from NCC's Eco-Justice Program

Dear Friends,

When I first moved to D.C., I used information from the NCC Eco-Justice website to find safe alternative cleaning products for my new home. These tried and true methods worked very well, and have been incorporated into my latest projects, *Cleanliness and Godliness: a Green Cleaning Toolkit* and *Cleanliness and Godliness: A Guide for Planning a Green Cleaning Fellowship Event*.

I use these tips and cleaning recipes in my own home to protect my health and the health of guests. It has been fun to experiment and to discover that the recommended alternatives—vinegar, washing soda, pure soap, baking soda, and borax—are inexpensive, effective, and safer than their commercial counterparts. Next week I will have a family with small children staying with me, who are particularly vulnerable to health effects from cleaning products, such as skin, eye, and respiratory irritations, in addition to asthma, dizziness, reproductive damage, and cancer. I feel that my green cleaning is essential to having a child-safe home.



To find out about safe and effective cleaning supplies, download your own free copy of the *Toolkit* from the Resources page of the NCC Eco-Justice Programs

website <<http://www.ncccojustice.org/resources.html#environmentalhealthresources>>.

I'd like to enlist your help in getting the word out about toxic cleaning products, which threaten everyone. For an adult education curriculum, download *Cleanliness and Godliness: A Guide for Planning a Green Cleaning Fellowship Event*. This step-by-step guide walks you through the process of putting together a guest list, arranging the meeting space, and offering an informative, hands-on, one-time session on green cleaning to a church or community group.

Because cleaning with toxic chemicals endangers our health, rather than protecting it, it is the opposite of taking good care of vulnerable populations (Matthew 24:40) and practicing hospitality (Romans



12:13, 1 Timothy 5:10, and 1 Peter 4:9). For cleanliness to be next to godliness, it has to be safe. Please spread the word about the availability of this new resource on your website or list serve.

—Carl Magruder

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Global warming by the numbers*

- 260–280 ppm**—The average concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere before industrial emissions.
- 388 ppm**—The average concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere, in May 2008, a record high.**
- 541–970 ppm**—The projected concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere by 2100 under a “business as usual” scenario where we don’t dramatically reduce global warming emissions.
- 35%**—The increase in the global carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels since the Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1992.
- 50–200 years**—The length of time carbon dioxide stays in the earth’s atmosphere before it is absorbed into carbon sinks.
- 1.7 days**—The number of days earlier that seasons are coming compared to 50 years ago.
- 34%**—The percentage that 2008’s Arctic seasonal sea ice melt outpaced normal levels.
- 70%**—The increase in the rate of Greenland’s ice melt over the last five years.
- 1.5 million**—The number of acres of forest in Colorado destroyed by the pine beetle, which is better able to survive warmer winters and is wreaking havoc in America’s western forests.
- \$427 million**—The amount spent by the oil and coal industries in the first six months of 2008 to oppose climate action, in political contributions, lobbying expenditures, and advertising.
- 0**—The number of global warming bills passed by the U.S. Congress, 1988–2008.

* See <www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=35792>.

** 350 ppm is the level that leading scientists say we need to *get back to* as soon as possible to avoid runaway climate change. See <www.350.org>.

NEYM's '4-Fold Path' of sustainable travel to Yearly Mtg.

THE Earthcare Ministry Committee of New England Yearly Meeting has been working to reduce the Yearly Meeting's carbon footprint. This year it is encouraging Friends traveling to annual sessions to *1) go in full cars, 2) take public transportation, or—if they can make the time and are hale and hardy enough—3) get there by bicycle or 4) walk at least part of the way.* The Four-Fold Path!

This path may seem like a tall order for many of us who are accustomed to the convenience of motoring alone or who have geared our lives to high-speed travel. But the handwriting is on the wall: Human-induced climate change is about to alter forever the way we are living on this planet, whether we find it convenient or not. And if we want to continue having Yearly Meeting sessions for all the Quaker meetings and churches in the region and a sustainable future for all of life, we will need to begin now to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases we produce in order to get there. The first step will be changing our *thinking and habits.*

Our big, fat carbon footprints. If we are typical U.S. residents, each of us is currently responsible for the annual emission of about 22 metric tons of CO₂ into Earth's thin, fragile atmosphere. With only 4 percent of the world population, we are together producing about 25 percent of the 27 billion metric tons of CO₂ emitted worldwide every year.

The world's climate scientists now agree that the amount of CO₂ being pumped into the atmosphere must be rapidly scaled back *by 80 percent* by the year 2050 if we are to have any chance of averting catastrophic runaway global warming. Transportation accounts for a major portion of the emissions in the U.S., which is more dependent on the private automobile than most other countries.

1. Full cars. One way to take a big bite out of our emissions is to make the single-occupant vehicle a relic of the past. Let's say that those who attending New England Yearly Meeting annual sessions on average come from 75 miles away, or 150 miles round trip. A motor vehicle getting 27 miles a gallon therefore will emit about 75 pounds of CO₂ per person during that round trip if it has only one occupant, but will emit only 20 or so pounds of CO₂ per person if it has *four* occupants.

Friends are also reminded that a typical car gets *21 percent more miles to the gallon* at 55 miles an

hour than it does at 70 miles an hour. Gradual acceleration and braking are important factors in getting the best gas mileage. Don't forget to remove excess weight from your car's trunk, and reduce air drag by removing any luggage pods, ski racks, or bicycle racks that aren't needed.

The bottom line: The collective carbon footprint for the number of Friends likely to attend NEYM sessions this year could be reduced *20 tons or more* if we put our minds and hearts to it.



2. Public transportation. A 150-mile train trip will emit about 32 pounds of CO₂ per rider, while a 150-mile bus trip will emit only about 15 pounds of CO₂ per rider. Rail and bus connections in the Northeast and many other regions are more convenient than many Friends might guess. Earthcare Ministry Committee members and other volunteers will be coordinating shuttles from rail and bus stations with the help of local Friends and Yearly Meeting staff.

3. and 4. Bicycling or walking. The direct CO₂ emissions from walking or bicycling will be negligible. But there will be some ecological impact from any motorized transportation to and from the site where the bikers and walkers will be gathering.

To raise awareness of the feasibility and benefits of muscle-powered transportation, as well as to provide quality time for fellowship, Earthcare Ministry will be organizing groups of bicyclists and walkers, to rendezvous in locations one or more days' travel from the annual sessions meeting site. Support vehicles may accompany these groups to carry supplies and gear and provide rest, recuperation, first aid, etc. Suggested daily distances are 35 to 40 miles for bicyclists and 12 to 15 miles for walkers. Overnight hospitality at Friends' homes will be explored.

Using public transportation, bicycling, and walking require of course a greater time commitment. But for those who can afford that time this will be a wonderful opportunity to show their love and commitment to our beautiful and sacred home planet.

To step back and experience the world at a slower pace can be a life-changing experience. Slower travel also can help us appreciate how our comforts and habits may be limiting our spiritual growth, keeping us from being part of the change we wish to see in the world.

For more information, e-mail Earthcare Ministry clerk Bonner McAlister <bmca@berkshire.net>. ❖

Living in right relationship: carbon and growth

THE recent financial crisis has helped us re-shape our message to Friends about care of the earth. We have long believed that our aspirations for justice and peace require us to live in right relationship with all creation. We are now clear that we must ask Friends to undertake two urgent and essential tasks: 1) reducing our carbon footprint and 2) confronting the growth dilemma.



1. Measuring and reducing our carbon footprint is an increasingly familiar way of responding to the intersection between energy use and climate change. It touches many aspects of our lives - the food we eat, the lighting and heating of our homes, the distances and means by which we travel, as well as the appliances, tools, and toys that we buy.

Comparing our carbon footprint with that of others in the U.S. and other nations reveals gross economic inequities and points to the cause of conflict and war. The carbon footprint of our military establishment is huge, and that of the average U.S. citizen is more than seven times the level that will enable us to avoid the worst of catastrophic climate change. Clearly, we must reduce our carbon footprint, and to do so we must reduce our levels of consumption.

2. Confronting the growth dilemma, on the other hand, is something none of us talk about and only a few of us recognize. Most of us know our society is using resources at a rate that cannot be sustained. Yet, given current economic policies, the only way to restore employment, and thus prosperity, is by steadily increasing consumption. Our entire economic structure is based on perpetual growth. Therefore, were we to convince a large portion of the population to dramatically reduce consumption, the result would be the same kind of job loss we are now experiencing. This is what we mean by the growth dilemma.

Many are familiar with President Eisenhower's warning about the Military-Industrial Complex. We are not told, however, that he was also disturbed that "the more successful we are in effecting disarmament, the more disastrous the effect will be in ... the economy."

The disturbing truth is that, if we reduce consumption significantly—whether to end war and the threat of war, to live simply so others may simply live, or to seek an earth restored—*until our nation changes its fundamental economic policies*, this will create economic havoc.

In the short run, policies to restore economic growth—if they are directed to green jobs and development of clean, renewable energy—can help our nation begin to reduce its carbon footprint and address climate change.

But to simply seek to restore our country to its old patterns of economic growth ignores the basic realities of biology and physics.

This is why we are led to ask Friends to begin now to reduce our collective carbon footprint and to promote awareness of the growth dilemma. Until we communicate with our leaders about the growth dilemma, they will be powerless to deal with it, and reducing our consumption and our use of energy will be hostage to the need for more growth.

We believe that it is only people of faith who can speak this truth to power.

—Ed Dreby and Hollister Knowlton
PYM Earthcare Working Group

Confronting the Growth Dilemma—a new FTE witness
FRIENDS TESTIMONIES & ECONOMICS (FTE), a joint project of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Earthcare Working Group and Quaker Earthcare Witness, is beginning a new witness, **Confronting the Growth Dilemma**. **An announcement in the attached Quaker Eco-Bulletin explains the essence of the growth dilemma as FTE members understand it.**

The plan is to recruit an activist network to undertake three integrated tasks:

- 1)** Ask that Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) call attention to this dilemma in its Legislative Policy Statement.
- 2)** Call attention to the Growth Dilemma within the Society of Friends and with other communities of concern.
- 3)** Develop a plan for communicating with Congressional staff in order to plant seeds of understanding in the hearts and minds of those with access to the thinking of our political leaders.

David Ciscel <ciscel@bellsouth.net>, Ed Dreby <eddreby@verizon.net>, and Donn Kesselheim <ouzel@wyoming.com> are initiating this witness and are eager to hear from anyone who would like to be a part of it. ❖

Quaker Earthcare in Kenya

by Mary Gilbert
QEW Steering Committee

RURAL SERVICE PROGRAMME (RSP), operated by Kenyan Quakers, is something that Friends in North America should know about. I am here in Kaimosi, where RSP is based, for a two-week work program in January 2009 before I attend a series of meetings at the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi.

RSP was founded in 1962 by East Africa Yearly Meeting to raise money communally for church buildings. Since then its range of services has been expanded, first to include family planning and maternal-and-child care and, more recently, to address environmental concerns. Projects are simple and use local materials, so results are easily replicated with minimal cost. The RSP vision exemplifies the interdependence of the human community and the natural world. There are 16 field officers who teach and supervise the programs.

Water development—To provide clean water, RSP develops springs and protects them by planting indigenous trees around the water source. Spring water is piped away from the source to a hole that is dug deep enough to put a pail under the pipe's drip. People can fetch water without tramping around the spring itself. RSP also promotes rooftop rainwater harvesting.

Tree nursery—RSP has started nurseries for indigenous trees, sited along rivers. When the young trees are ready, RSP buys them from the growers, who thus get income from this important work. About 83,000 trees have been planted so far, and they receive the temporary care they need to insure that they live. RSP is conscious that this will affect local rainfall.

Environmental conservation project in Agro-forestry—This separate program has been funded by Quakers from the Netherlands for planting trees around church compounds. Vegetables will be raised among the trees. RSP is asking churches to train non-church members as well, to spread the benefits widely.

Agriculture—RSP runs a horticulture program to help people feed themselves. This has been successful, and RSP has received some additional money from the Kenyan government to carry out the government's food security program.

Micro-credit—The goal is to make as many people as self-sustaining as possible. Funding enables groups to carry out projects they choose. Any funding to individuals is done through the group, which ensures accountability. There are quite a few widows' groups—I have already visited eight—carrying out projects like sewing, knitting, raising poultry, growing crops for family use and for sale, raising goats and sheep, and making soap. I am told that men too form groups and get micro-credit to start small enterprises.

Dairy—This began with a gift of two cows from a New England Friend, and two from Friends in Iowa who were in Kaimosi and could get the project started. Now there are 20 milkers, plus about a half-dozen calves with two more expected this week.

Friends Bringing Hope (FBH)—This program is run by a Friend from Iowa, who provides her own funding but operates through RSP. FBH covers the needs of several widows' groups and builds simple mud houses for widows identified by RSP staff as in direst need. Twenty-one have been completed so far, and we will be building four more this coming week.

Student support—RSP supports 56 orphans in residential secondary schools.



Kenyan children gather water from a protected spring.

Youth Program—In response to the post-election clashes in Kenya in 2008, fueled by lack of employment among other causes, US AID has also funded a new youth program (up to age 35). Many of these young people were led to participate in the violence last year. Now they form groups and are assisted in doing things to help the community. One youth group I met helped build a widow's house and has started a nursery.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, the reality of life in Kenya and the work of RSP are not at all what I had expected. I wish I had time and space to tell you about the new "jiko" (stove) made of mud, designed to use minimal wood and direct the smoke outside, with space underneath for the chickens when they come in at night. Or about the jackets that one widows group makes for sale in the U.S. Or about my networking efforts to find a good way to introduce solar cookers and what I've found out that makes me hopeful.

By the time you read this, RSP's website will be up and running. You can find out much more about the program, as well as what to do with your used laptop, by going to: <www.rspkaimosi.org>. ❖

World Made by Hand

Reviewed by Adrian Fisher,
Oak Park (IL) Friends Meeting

WORLD MADE BY HAND, James Howard Kunstler's entertaining, and at times comic, new novel plays the ancient, familiar game of "what if." In it Kunstler dramatizes the post-Peak Oil, globally warmed scenario of his last book, *The Long Emergency*. As such, it is engaging, hopeful, and well worth reading.

The story, set in an old, small town in New York's Hudson River valley, narrates the events of one summer about a decade after American society has collapsed. Robert, the narrator, migrated here with his family from an upper-middle class suburb of Boston early on in the troubles; luckily he has practical skills (carpentry) useful in this new age. At the novel's beginning he has lost his family, and like others in town is functioning on a somewhat depressed level.

Then, strangers come to town, someone gets killed, a trading boat goes missing, which requires a journey of discovery, and several violent events have unlooked for consequences. By the end of the book, the community has taken several definitive steps toward a more coherent social framework that promises a hard but satisfactory way of life in a regenerating natural setting.

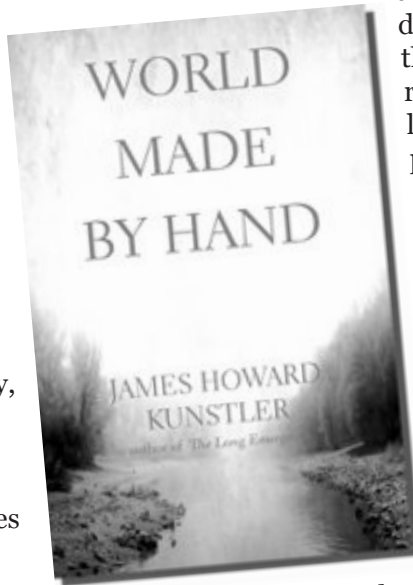
World Made by Hand reads like a combination of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* books, with a dash of Thoreau. The story is simply told, and the characters move through a clearly imagined, lovingly detailed world in a realistic way. Editorializing doesn't overwhelm the plot, yet the book successfully nudges the reader towards reflection.

One of the novel's particular strengths is its specificity of locale. Landscape and extrapolated cultural patterns seem appropriate to upstate New York. It's easy to imagine rebounding native plant and wildlife populations, a return to multi-purpose, horse and man-powered farms, limited hydroelectric power, and the use of the Hudson River as a trading route. It could happen.

But depictions of gender, class and race seem somewhat stereotypic. Robert states that, "we reverted to social divisions we'd thought were obsolete." Perhaps, but one wonders at women wearing long

skirts and staying home while the men meet to elect a new mayor. The bad guys in town are blue-collar trailer trash, while the good guys seem to have been mostly white-collar professionals. A religious sect arrives from the South wearing quasi nineteenth-century garb, and there are no persons of color—which, it is implied, is one reason their little corner of what used to be the USA is fairly peaceful.

This social analysis puts Kunstler within the American pastoral tradition, white conservative version, in which true virtue and good values dwell outside the polyglot cities. Thus the novel feels oddly nostalgic or even reactionary. Someone living, as I do, in a large, diverse urban area where many people are already working to create a sustainable, local way of life (as in Bill McKibben's *Deep Economy*) might disagree with some of Kunstler's assumptions. Post-collapse, city dwellers might turn to urban agriculture and trade and might work with their diverse neighbors to create order and a socially beneficial culture. One would like to see that novel. Alternatively, Ursula LeGuin's fine *Always Coming Home*, specific to the West Coast, explores many of Kunstler's themes to vastly different effect. ❖



Good news & bad from Washington

❖ The economic stimulus legislation that Congress passed in February 2009 was stripped of further subsidies for nuclear power, while major support was aimed at green jobs and energy efficiency.

—*However: So-called "clean coal" research was funded. And stimulating a human economy that depends on unending growth, which ultimately destroys the Earth economy, isn't the answer.*

❖ A federal panel turned down a proposal to expand industrial fishing north of the Bering Strait.

—*However: All the world's oceans are in critical danger, and scores of fisheries are collapsing.*

❖ The Obama daughters are attending a Quaker-run school in D.C. that boasts several LEED-certified buildings and other green programs.

—*However: Many public schools are floundering and not preparing students to deal with ecological and other realities of the 21st century.*

***Walk With Earth* update: Guatemala Quakers face uncertain energy future**

WE HAVE BEEN WALKING in the semi-arid parts of southeastern Guatemala, and have been getting a Quaker fix. There are only about 300,000 Quakers in the world, and the largest groups are in central Africa and Bolivia. But in the 1880s, a Guatemalan president got fed up with the Catholic church and invited four protestant groups to send missionaries. The Quakers were invited to the southeastern part....

We have been staying with Noemi and Walter Calderon and their son Oscar. Walter is the clerk of the Zacapa Central Friends Church. They have a trucking company and a hardware store and are very busy. Walter installs solar panels, and they have solar panels on their roof.... A system costs about \$1,200, and would repay itself after 6 years, but it is hard for people to come up with that much money down. He's going to the U.S. in April to buy another big rig truck. I suggested he look for an electric truck, not to buy one now but within eight years, when he might find some used ones. That's because in another 15 years cheap oil is going to disappear, and there will be lots of cars abandoned on the side of the road. I told him to consider getting an electric car down here, because whoever does will make lots of money.

Darcy and I have talked to nine different classrooms here in three cities. Schools didn't start until last week, so it had been difficult to find classes in the northwest. I have become more forceful in talking about getting rid of gasoline cars, and the students are more responsive. It is funny how it seems so clear to me that these countries should be prohibiting the import of gasoline cars now to avoid huge problems 20 years from now. But in the southern part of Mexico I could see truck after truck hauling Toyota pickups to Guatemala.

Yesterday we walked with Vivien Morales (Walter's cousin) and Lynn and Marilyn, missionaries from the States. It made for some interesting theological discussions. One of the towns we went to, *Pie de la Cuesta*, has a new evangelical church, even though there are no paved roads, no town water supply, and no sewer system. There is a rutted dirt road into town, and a pathway up to the highway bus stop. It's a beautiful and peaceful little place.

—Rolene Walker

Donations to Walk With Earth can be made with a check or on-line with a credit card. Please go to www.walkwithearth.org.

Australia Yearly Meeting seeks to 'transform this culture of domination'

The produce of the Earth is a gift from our gracious Creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the Earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury to the succeeding age.

—John Woolman (1720–1772)

WE FIND DELIGHT in the grace of creation, and are humbled by the richness of its gifts.

Our very existence depends upon sustaining our intimate relationships within nature. Yet much has been harmed or lost forever through our lack of reverence, our ignorance, denial, waste and ill-considered action. We have set ourselves against the Spirit. We have ignored our interconnectedness with all other living things, weakened our own well-being, and we have diminished the opportunity for fair livelihood.

Once our lack of care caused limited damage. Now our thoughtlessness endangers whole ecosystems, and even the entire biosphere, through global warming, pollution, destruction of habitats, and accelerated extinction of species. We also acknowledge that wars, poverty, and overconsumption are part of this spiral of destruction.

We seek to transform this culture of domination and exploitation, of false witness and idolatry, and instead develop a culture of caring for the planet, preparing for future generations of living things and honouring God's gifts. Each of us must now strive to live a just life which values the air, the waters, the soil, living things and the processes sustaining all life.

Given the extent of the crisis and the need for transformative change, despair and fear are likely to arise in us all at some stage. We can be set free in the Spirit to live our lives in radically different ways.

We are called to consider the world as an enspirited whole, to accept no boundary to repairing and sustaining the earth for the future, and to appreciate more deeply the creative energy in all living things and life processes. We seek to mend what has been hurt, and to strengthen our courage to discern and bear witness to this spiritual care for the earth.

Friends are not alone on this journey. We must listen to the call of creation, recognise and respect the profound knowledge and wisdom of Indigenous peoples and learn from scientific understanding. We will work with those many others already deeply engaged, who make the links between religious belief, lifestyle, social justice, and peace.

We commit to the demanding, costly implications of radically changed ways of living. Let us do so out of joy, celebration, reverence and a deep love of life.

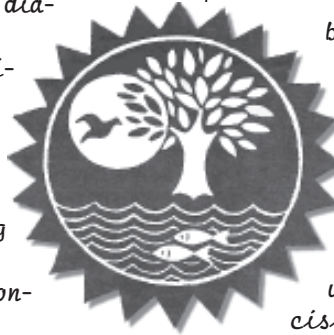
—Adopted at Yearly Meeting 2008, Melbourne

Reflecting back on mid-21st century Quakerism

THIS IS ONE of the visions that came out of a group exercise during the 2008 QEW Annual Gathering. Friends were asked to imagine the kind of “earth restored” that Quaker Earthcare Witness is working for.

☉ There is now, in 2050, a rich diversity within Quakerism, as there was in the previous industrial era. But there are many more Friends meetings around the world.

☉ There is still a diversity among world and indigenous religions, but with more dialogue among them than before. These religions, in ways that are appropriate to local regions, are often integrated within village life, in village-centered cultures. Each village is fully integrated into the local natural community, having shaped an economy in harmony with the cycles and beings (human and non-human) of the watershed region.



☉ Many monthly meetings are also settlement communities or villages, as in the early American colonies and England. Citizens regularly pause from whatever they are busy with for deep listening to the elements, the places, and the cosmic cycles that support and permeate their lives. All these are sensed to be in various ways aware, creatively alive, and manifesting divine Light.

☉ Out of such deep attunement, in village council meetings as well as in worship, people regularly speak for and represent the interests of non-human beings, places, and even Earth as a whole, when those interests and rights may be affected by human activity. Of course, as has been traditional, they have the same empathy for fellow humans when they are in need.

☉ People generally live more simply than in the previous industrial era. Since their lives are more harmonious with the cycles and beings which sustain their cultures, and thus with their own human nature, they feel much less of a hunger to materially consume and accumulate.

☉ There are more experiences of communion with the Divine, of resonance with everyday wonders. There is more leisure for artistic creation, enjoyment of each others' company, regional travel, contemplation of nature, celebration of seasonal and other cosmic cycles, and multi-generational participation in education for children and adults of all ages.

☉ Villages around the world, many of which are Quaker, sometimes exist in clusters, which form decentralized cities. Settlements generally form economies that are regionally centered, use renewable and regional sources of energy and materials, and withdraw materials from nature in a manner which allows natural sources to renew themselves. Quantitative growth is no longer sought, since growth in spiritual richness and quality of life are fulfilling now for so many.

☉ Governance and group self-regulation begin at the village level, which for Friends is the monthly meeting. Confederations of villages or cities send representatives to gather at times to internally govern themselves or to responsibly negotiate exchanges or conflicts with other confederations (nations as such no longer existing). They use consensus or sense-of-the meeting decision-making for self-governance.

☉ Friends still recall and celebrate the historic contribution of Quaker Earthcare Witness, which helped bring about the cultural evolution of this way of life. QEW was laid down in 2030, since by then most of its vision had been realized.

—Bill Cahalan
Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

Eco-Quakers launched in Ireland

AN INTERIM COMMITTEE, made up of Friends from both [Irish] jurisdictions and with different insights and experience, will be working on ecological matters over the next few months. During this period we shall communicate with each other electronically, but we hope to meet again in the early autumn. For recreation, enlightenment and encouragement, we are considering the possibility of an outing—for ourselves and others—to *An Tairseach* (in English, “The Threshold”), an organic/biodynamic farm and centre for ecology and spirituality in County Wicklow, and we shall be encouraging Friends in other Meetings to be aware of our work and to contribute where possible.

Our working title is Eco-Quakers Ireland, and our e-mail address is <ecoq@phonecoop.coop>.

—Tony Weekes, convenor
Eco-Quakers Interim Committee

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Canadians may contribute through Canadian Yearly Meeting for a tax receipt, starting at \$45/Can. Please send check to Canadian Yearly Meeting, 91-A Fourth Ave., Ottawa, ON K1S 2L1. CYM needs to know that the money is for QEW support. Forward this form to QEW to let us know that you have chosen to contribute through CYM.

BeFriending Creation

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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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2009 Eco-Workcamp at William Penn House

June 28–July 5 in Washington, D.C.

A week of activities, learning and fun for individuals (especially youth and young adults) and families

CELEBRATE OUR NATION'S HERITAGE while seeing our nation's capital as few people see it—a region of environmental diversity and urban challenges. At the same time, learn first-hand how to apply solutions to your own community.

Included among the learning and participatory activities:

- ❖ Learning about the history of, recognizing, and removing invasive plants.
- ❖ Assessing biodiversity in creeks and streams.
- ❖ Urban and suburban landscaping for watershed cleanliness.
- ❖ Making eco-friendly natural home and body products.
- ❖ Tours of sustainable/renewable energy.
- ❖ Recycling during the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.



The week is capped off with the July 4th fireworks display.

Dates: June 28 to July 5, 2009.

Cost: \$300/week per person.

Family rate: \$1,000 for family of 4.

For more information or to sign up, contact Brad Ogilvie at brad@williampennhouse.org or 301/257-5348.

William Penn House is at 515 East Capitol St. SE, Washington DC 20003, www.williampennhouse.org.

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Honoring one of the 'grandfathers' of Earthcare

ARNE NAESS, a Norwegian philosopher who pioneered the concept of “deep ecology,” died in February 2009 at age 96. Whether or not they knew him by name, many of the Friends who founded Quaker Earthcare Witness more than 20 years ago probably were influenced by his worldview.

Although current QEW supporters reflect a wide range of interests and viewpoints, by and large we agree that a human-centered “environmentalism” that is limited to reforms of laws, policies, education, technology, etc. cannot motivate or guide the profound transformation of the human-Earth relationship that the Quaker vision of peace, justice, and the integrity of Creation require.

The deep ecology movement has been criticized as divisive because it is said to portray humans as a negative presence on the planet. This may be the view some extremists, but Naess taught that the natural order has intrinsic value and that we are part of it. Therefore we reach our highest potential when we work to ensure that all species and ecosystems flourish.

Inspired by Rachel Carson’s 1962 book, *Silent Spring*, Naess became an eco-activist and sometimes took part in nonviolent resistance to protect fragile ecosystems. He was the first chairman of Greenpeace Norway when it was founded in 1988 and was also a Green party candidate. But his most deeply felt conviction—learned perhaps from Gandhi, Schweitzer, and others—was that *significant and lasting political and social changes come only from a change of heart, a shift in consciousness.*

Many ecologically concerned Friends came to know Naess through his essay, “Self-Realization: An

Ecological Approach to Being in the World,” in a well-loved little book called *Thinking Like a Mountain—Towards a Council of All Beings* (1986, New Society Publishers) that he co-authored with John Seed, Joanna Macy, and Pat Fleming.

The phrase, “Thinking Like a Mountain,” came from an essay by Aldo Leopold, an early 20th-century American ecologist who shifted from a human-centered view of resource conservation to a deep respect for the integrity and dynamic self-regulation of complete ecosystems. A “Council of All Beings” is a ritual gathering that gives voice to the needs and rights of all species. It promotes a “gut level” transformation in self-identity that people like Leopold and Naess have undergone. —LC



Arne Naess, 1917–2009

In “Self-Realization,” Naess wrote,

Unhappily, the extreme moralizing within the ecological movement has given the public the false impression that they are primarily asked to sacrifice, to show more responsibility, more concern, and better morals. As I see it, we need the immense variety of sources of joy opened through increased sensitivity toward the richness and diversity of life, through the profound cherishing of free natural landscapes....

What humankind is capable of loving from mere duty or more generally from moral exhortation is, unfortunately, very limited....

Now is the time to share with all life on our maltreated earth by deepening our identification with all life-forms, with ecosystems, and with Gaia, this fabulous, old planet of ours. ❖