

QUAKER ECO-BULLETIN

Information and Action Addressing Public Policy for an
Ecologically Sustainable World

Volume 11, Number 3

May-June 2011

Social Fairness and Ecological Integrity: Strategy and Action for a Moral Economy

Sandra Lewis, Keith Helmuth, Phil Emmi, Shelley Tanenbaum, and Judy Lumb

“True religion does not draw men out of the world, but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavors to mend it.” —William Penn (1682) *No Cross No Crown*

On March 4th, 2011, 44 participants gathered at the Quaker Center at Ben Lomond, California, for a weekend workshop, “Social Fairness and Ecological Integrity: Strategy and Action for a Moral Economy.” This workshop was organized to launch the second phase of the Moral Economy Project of Quaker Institute for the Future. The first phase produced the book *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*. The workshop was co-sponsored by the Ecoberries affinity group of Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting (Berkeley CA). George Lakey served as facilitator with Keith Helmuth, Phil Emmi, and Sandra Lewis as resource people and Shelley Tanenbaum as workshop coordinator. Advance materials sent to the registered participants—three background papers by Sandra Lewis, Phil Emmi, and Keith Helmuth—are included in this expanded version of this *QEB*.

The idea for a workshop with a dual focus of social fairness and ecological integrity grew out of a deep concern that growing societal inequities and deepening environmental crises are destabilizing societies, undermining democracy, and threatening the capacity of Earth to support life as we know it now and in the future. These problems are intertwined and can only be effectively addressed together.

Our political, economic, and financial systems fail to provide equitable access to the means of life for all people or to sustain the long-term health of Earth’s life support systems. The same political and economic systems that institutionalize inequality also institutionalize ecological destruction by insisting on unlimited and inequitable economic growth on a finite Earth (*See background papers by Sandra Lewis and Phil Emmi starting on p. 4*).

There is an increasing body of research showing that more equal societies do better by every measure: longevity, health, happiness, and economic gain. We cannot achieve equitable societies and maintain the ecological integrity of our planet without transforming the political and economic institutions that support business as usual.

Some of the questions that informed the content and format of the workshop included:

- What are the common roots of the environmental and socio-economic crises?
- What kind of strategic changes should we advocate?
- How can Quaker witness and action become more effective in addressing these challenges?

We believe the Quaker values of peace, integrity, equality and community can help us work toward the dramatic changes that are necessary.

Empowering and Inspiring Participants for Action

George Lakey skillfully led the 44 participants through a series of activities designed to inspire and facilitate spirit-led action directed toward the ecological and fairness issues of our time. We were each randomly assigned a buddy for the weekend for support and processing of the work. The workshop format alternated between large group and small group experiences followed by discussion and posting the highlights of our sharing for participants to consider throughout the weekend.

We opened on Friday evening with each of us participating in a small group of folks we didn’t know where we shared stories of when we first recognized that nature and environmental issues mattered to us. This helped us to get in touch with what brought us to the workshop and to begin learning what motivated other participants.

Keith Helmuth, Sandra Lewis and Phil Emmi briefly shared some of their concerns and motivations for participating in this workshop. Then we moved into a discussion in the whole group where we explored the question:

What ways have you found in your own life to maximize your chances to meet a challenge?

The attitudes and behaviors we found helpful were posted for reference throughout the weekend. We then turned to the question of ways we have undermined our chances to meet challenges successfully. Our responses to these two questions helped us recognize some individual and collective capacities, brought personal accountability into the room, and invited us to consider new behaviors during the weekend that could increase our power to bring about change.

We began Saturday morning with a revealing exercise where everyone was asked to stand in a line on a continuum at a point where they see themselves now between two poles that defined each of these dichotomies:

- “Current political and economic institutions can effectively address climate change.” versus “Fundamentally different institutions are needed.”
- “Micro-level behavior changes will add up to the change required.” versus “Macro-level policy changes are needed.”

Quaker Eco-Bulletin (QEB) is published bi-monthly by Quaker Earthcare Witness (formerly FCUN) as an insert in *BeFriending Creation*.

The vision of **Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW)** includes integrating into the beliefs and practices of the Society of Friends the Truths that God's Creation is to be held in reverence in its own right, and that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the Earth's ecological integrity. As a member organization of Friends Committee on National Legislation, QEW seeks to strengthen Friends' support for FCNL's witness in Washington DC for peace, justice, and an Earth restored.

QEB's purpose is to advance Friends' witness on public and institutional policies that affect the Earth's capacity to support life. QEB articles aim to inform Friends about public and corporate policies that have an impact on society's relationship to Earth, and to provide analysis and critique of societal trends and institutions that threaten the health of the planet.

Friends are invited to contact us about writing an article for **QEB**. Submissions are subject to editing and should:

- Explain why the issue is a Friends' concern.
- Provide accurate, documented background information that reflects the complexity of the issue and is respectful toward other points of view.
- Relate the issue to legislation or corporate policy.
- List what Friends can do.
- Provide references and sources for additional information.

QEB Coordinator: Keith Helmuth

QEB Editorial Team: Judy Lumb, Sandra Lewis, Barbara Day

To receive **QEB**:

Email: info@quakerearthcare.org

Website: QuakerEarthcare.org

Mail: write to address below

Projects of Quaker Earthcare Witness, such as **QEB**, are funded by contributions to:

Quaker Earthcare Witness
173-B N Prospect Street
Burlington VT 05401

- "Powerholders will respond to persuasion." versus "Coercion will be required to bring about change."
- "I'm doing what I can to bring about change." versus "I'd like to do more or be more effective in bringing about change."

This exercise asked participants to "take a stand" (an empowerment tool), honored differences among us and showed the possibility of changing our stance in the light of the discussion that followed the exercise. Having four dichotomies highlighted the complexities of thinking about the issues and working with others to develop strategies and actions on these issues.

Small groups then sought consensus on a vision of what attitudes, actions and institutions are needed to support the emergence of Right Relationship as a guiding principle within societies. Some of these visions included:

- Shift from "I-focus" to "We-focus"
- Reform corporate charters and financial structures to cooperatives
- Focus on education putting families and children at the center
- Identify Right Relationship Value Queries to guide all actions and institutions
- Minimum-maximum income guidelines
- Local community decisions that by-pass power structures
- Eliminate wars
- Develop systems that devalue competition and promote cooperation and community
- Love and care for all life
- Change the economy so that basic needs are met: income, health, shelter, education
- Redesign the monetary system as a public service institution
- Goal-based action from the community level instead of top-down

On Saturday afternoon a realistic scenario of an environmental conflict was used as the basis for a strategy game in which participants were divided into various interest groups (corporations,, environmentalists, labor unions, unemployed, commuters, faith groups, minorities, etc.) for a role play. In a succession of "rounds," the groups announced strategy "moves" to achieve the outcome they hoped for in the conflict and sought alliances with other groups to gain support for this outcome. The exercise allowed participants to explore the elements and dynamics of a campaign that are affected by actions and interactions of multiple stakeholders.

The debriefing of this exercise by the whole group led to a rich and lively discussion of the importance of forming coalitions across class lines if we want to be effective in bringing about deep structural changes in our political and economic institutions.

On Saturday evening the whole group explored how to build a sequence of tactics into a movement that offers a promise of social change. Participants wrote one change tactic they personally enjoyed engaging in on each of two pieces of paper and then placed each of the papers on the floor in the appropriate chronological order between:

Point A—identifying a goal for change and

Point B—successfully bringing about that change.

This enabled us to see the logic of how successful movements go from stage to stage and develop an overall strategy. We were surprised to see the similarity of sequencing we had done for our own tactics and the general pattern Lakey describes in a handout he gave to participants after the exercise. There is, indeed, a rationale and step by step process for creating successful social movements.

At the Sunday morning session the weekend ended with worship sharing and discussion of our Quaker heritage of non-violent direct action and the realization that we have a deep tradition to draw on to support our work for social fairness and ecological integrity (*See background paper by Keith Helmuth on p. 6*).

Excerpts from Open Dialogue

At the request of some participants, an additional session was offered late Saturday evening to allow interested folks to dialogue with workshop resource people and each other on themes evoked by the day's activities. The following are excerpts from that discussion:

Where are the leverage points, the opening wedges? Gregory Bateson wrote, "Look for the differences that make a difference." In talking about social change scenarios, he urged his students and others to look for the kinds of changes, that, when they happen, allow a whole cascade of other changes to follow.

In the 1970's when many farmers were in bankruptcy and losing their land, folks were saying that farms were failing. But the farms were not failing. The sun was still shining, the rain falling, the plants growing, and the animals mating. It was the financial system that was failing. That led to a study of the monetary system.

The monetary system is one of those hinge points of change. It is currently designed to work in a certain way. It could be redesigned to work differently. If certain key features of the monetary system were changed, a whole cascade of positive social and economic changes would follow.

Why should a sovereign government ever be in debt? There is a whole history of why that has happened, but it doesn't have to be that way. There have been places where the control of money has shifted from the banks to the government and it worked very well for the common good, but the experiments were closed down because it worked too well and threatened the interests of the two percent wealthy class.

The monetary system moves wealth from the working class into the wealthy class. It is a systematic feature of the system, a huge inequality factor built into the system that is self-perpetuating. The wealthy class doesn't want that to change.

George Washington should not have been persuaded to turn over the banking system to the private bankers. Dennis Kucinich has introduced a bill in the U.S. Congress, a fully developed alternative to the current monetary system. It won't go anywhere in this congress, but it puts back in the hands of the US Treasury the power to create money. Some people are worried because it gives lots of power to the government. There would have to be all kinds of controls and regulations to manage money for the common good. Adequate income for everyone comes into this, too, as a basic right.

There are limits to the financial system and when those limits are reached, we have financial collapse. When we have financial collapse, we have an opportunity to make changes. But in this recent financial collapse, the wealthy were winning before the collapse; they won during the collapse; and they are winning during the recovery. Main street paid for the recovery in the bailout, and will continue to pay interest on the money that was used for the bailout.

One strategy is to set up parallel financial systems, local currencies. In Japan the economy has been stagnant, but Japanese people have been living very well because they have a whole panorama of alternative credit and monetary systems that the government has encouraged instead of suppressing them. For example, there is a credit system where you work to take care of elderly people and that builds up a credit that can be used for your care, or it can be transferred. It gives a real resilience to an economy that looks like it is not doing very well, but the people are doing well when they have that support system.

Alternative and local currencies are one good solution. A coal company in Germany was going broke because no one had money to buy coal, so they told their employees that they would be paid in certificates for coal. They told the businesses in the town that they would have to accept the certificates. Because it cost money to store the coal, the certificates lost money over time. The speed at which money was circulated was increased. That worked really well, but the government closed it down because it was a threat to the banking system.

Lewes in the UK has its own currency that is accepted by everyone. Also the Swiss have a system that started in the 1930s and it is still going.

North Dakota didn't suffer from the recent recession because they have a state bank that is devoted to the economic welfare of the state. North Dakota has no deficit. This example is being looked at. Credit unions work that way. Money is invested within the community and doesn't go out of the community.

The first question that this workshop was to answer is "what are the common roots of the socio-economic and environmental crises today?" Right at the top is the financial system itself, the economic system that it supports, the media that nurtures and expresses it, the government systems at all levels, the self-interested persons of wealth that drive it, the public that accepts the acculturated view offered by the media, and the technology that is changing the way we relate to one another.

This is a substantial list, a fortress that seems impenetrable. But its capacity to hold together depends on a lot of contextual situations. We can discover how stable all of this is, what are the challenges that are emerging with the continued stability of this system? Then when action-oriented people take initiatives they will have a better understanding of how those initiatives will succeed.

For example, the machinery of empire depends on an abundance of natural resources, cheap energy, a passive population and stable climate. Which minerals are we running out of that are necessary to support this imperial machine? What are the implications of the transfers of wealth between social classes and the implications for the stability or instability of class relationships?

We are approaching really dangerous levels of climate change, an increasingly fragile situation. The earth speaks and the earth will continue to speak, to generate a wide variety of events of sufficient magnitude to make us question. Tipping points can initiate a spiraling of secondary and tertiary consequences. The stability that maintains this system is vulnerable to small pushes by people like you and me. Identifying the resistance in the system, the larger power forces that hold the system in place, is the basis of a strategic approach. That does not mean you have to address them directly, but you need to know.

In the Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT) action, the PNC Bank was vulnerable to exposure of their hypocrisy. PNC had pushed their Quaker connection of great integrity. The activists did their homework and found that PNC was a big funder of mountain-top removal. They had presented this public image that they were the greenest bank, so they were vulnerable to exposure. The top two percent is not exempt from hypocrisy. By doing your homework, you can find their hypocrisies (Lakey and Cantor, 2010).

One must be careful about using shaming as a strategy. In the case of an action to stop johns from using underage prostitutes, an activist found that shaming of the johns was not effective. It just destabilized them, but no change occurred.

But in the PNC case, EQAT was not attacking individuals. They were holding the institution accountable. PNC stated that they were starting to change their policy on mountain top removal coal because of public pressure. But that was not the most important outcome because the coal company will just find another bank. The most important outcome was that this group learned how to be effective in engagements with institutions like this bank.

EQAT started this and then Rainforest Action joined them in the attempt to get banks to withdraw from mountain-top removal. Several major banks have now stopped funding mountain-top removal. The banks have not withdrawn because they are wonderful people but because they understand that these investments come with risks, even climate risk. Political action might jeopardize the capacity of those companies to pay back their loans. In 2007 six major banks adopted a “carbon principle” that requires companies from this sector to demonstrate that they have gone through a series of steps to prove that the only way that they can proceed is to invest in fossil fuels. The banks understand where the risks are and what they have to do. There are risks in investing in a collapsing empire.

The oligarchs that have been in agreement about the need to redirect the wealth to the top are beginning to argue. The insurance industry suddenly discovers that the home-building industry is taking risks building on seashores, on flood plains. The transportation and manufacturing industries are arguing about who gets to use the carbon allocation in areas that are exceeding their standards. If the transportation sector makes an improvement, the manufacturing sector moves in and uses it. We don't get cleaner air, just a re-allocation of carbon. There is conflict and we can use that. If the oligarch system begins to fragment, we can use that.

It is not about finding perfect targets to go after. It is much more gray. Those who build buildings do some good things and some bad things. It is harder to find the leverage points. The green building movement has ignored social equity, so we could expose the hypocrisy. But affordable housing has allied itself with green building. There are now green building codes.

We are hearing about the disappearance of the 30-year home mortgage. Our changing demographic is that the supply of homes on large lots is sufficient until 2025. It would be bad business to extend 30-year mortgages to a home that will likely not maintain its value. It would be better to invest in condos.

The Wisconsin crisis provides largely faith-based communities an opportunity to make alliances with the labor unions. The Governor of Washington put forth a different model. She presented the issues to the labor unions and they agreed to make adjustments. She is the Chairman of the National Governor's Association and made a presentation on this recently.

How do we make taxes a good thing? Society doesn't allow us to do good things because we can't raise taxes. We have a Republican leadership that makes us think we cannot raise taxes.

The latest issue of Mother Jones is about the “Vampire Economy.” There are three charts, the actual distribution of wealth, what people think it is, and what people would like it to be. Those are three totally different charts because people don't know about the great inequity in the distribution of wealth and how socially destructive this is.

Is there a graphic about this distribution of wealth that would be as powerful as the one of the slave ships and how the slaves were

transported that led to the end of the slave trade? Many people have worked on this, but it is not graffiti on buildings. We have to get these graffiti artists involved. Which would be the graphic of choice? It is how to make things go viral on You-Tube.

In these examples we have had very clear objectives in what we want to achieve. We can pick up various misbehaviors and address them. What we do not have is a vision of the society we want, what it would look like in these various dimensions. We do not really have a picture that holds together. What we need is a serious visioning project.

A vision of a new future: locally based economies, food production, and energy production. Access to the means of life for people in the community is governed by a commons approach. Those are elements of a vision of a society that can work that is an alternative to the one we have now.

Alternative models could demystify where our money goes. There are alternative, responsible mutual funds. Quakers have quite a lot of experience in banking. Why don't Quakers develop one of these mutual funds?

To a degree we are moving against the current, but it isn't the only current. Listen closely and you will hear alternatives. Quakers have traditionally served as the seed-bearers, the Johnny Appleseeds, spinning things off and then they get into the larger community. So it is not so much what the Quakers are going to do, it is what we are going to seed. Greenpeace was founded and bankrolled by a couple of Quakers. Our fingerprints might not even be on it in the end and that's OK.

Background Papers

The following three background papers were prepared and sent in advance to workshop participants. The papers address the three main themes of the workshop: 1) social fairness, 2) ecological integrity and the economic growth dilemma, and 3) the Quaker heritage of social activism on economic reform.

Some Societal Effects of Inequality

Sandra Lewis

The slogan, which inspired **the French Revolution—Liberty, Fraternity, Equality**—highlights **the dimensions of social relations which matter most if we are to create a better society and make a difference in the real quality of our lives.** At the time of the Revolution, **Liberty**, meant not being subservient or beholden to the feudal nobility and landed aristocracy, essentially freedom from the shackles of feudal oppression. From the perspective of those of us seeking a relevant vision of freedom for our time, **Liberty** can be defined as being free from socioeconomic systems that allow and even encourage people to dominate and exploit other people and/or plunder Earth for their own benefit without regard to the costs to society and to the commonwealth of life on Earth.

Fraternity suggests social relations characterized by a concern for others as well as ourselves, a concern based on mutual respect, reciprocity and solidarity in our individual interactions with fellow humans and within society as a whole. This concern rests on our recognition that we humans are—first and foremost—social beings who depend on each other and on access to the gifts of nature to live and thrive. There is no such thing as a “self-made” man. **We are all in this life together and there is a moral and survival imperative to learn how to get along with each other, how to**

live in Right Relationship with other people and as responsible members of the whole community of Life on Earth.

In this time of socioeconomic and ecological crises, we are understanding in new ways how **Equality is a precondition for Liberty and Fraternity and an essential component of Right Relationship.** A sense of **Equality** and a preference for **Fairness** go hand in hand. Recent research in social psychology on the roots of morality shows that, among five or six inborn tendencies that shape our morality, there is a **preference for Fairness and Reciprocity** in our relationships with others. Quakers have long-cultivated this tendency within ourselves and our communities and, along with our practice of discerning that of God in everyone, this preference forms the basis for our **Witness for Equality and Social Justice** which has motivated Quaker activism from the earliest days of the Society of Friends.

One of the most disturbing trends in America is increasing inequality in the distribution of income and wealth across society—a trend that began in the 1970's and continues unabated today. The increasing concentration of wealth among moneyed elites and the growing gaps between the have mores and the rest of us poses a threat to our democracy. It also directly undermines our potential to live with others according to the principles of Right Relationship.

There is widespread belief that the negative consequences of the 2008 recession are being unfairly borne by the middle and working classes while the financial elites and big banks that played a key role in creating the conditions for the recession have been rescued by the taxpayers and continue to prosper. Corporate profits are up and CEOs, hedge fund managers and Wall St. traders continue to be paid enormous amounts in salary and bonuses while millions of Americans have lost their homes, their jobs and their savings.

The recession has revealed in stark terms the extent to which the rich and powerful influence the legislative process for their own benefit, ensuring that the ground rules that govern our financial and economic systems work in their financial favor regardless of the costs to society as a whole or of their impact on our sense of solidarity with other Americans. **The resulting anger, resentment, insecurity, divisiveness and alienation now so evident in our public and political discourse can be seen as a consequence of increasing inequality in our country.**

It has been known for some years that poor health and violence are more common in more unequal societies, but recent epidemiological research is now showing that a host of other social problems that are more common at the bottom of the social ladder are more common in more unequal societies. Researchers collected internationally comparable data on nine indicators of health and wellbeing in twenty of the world's wealthiest countries:

- level of trust
- mental illness (including drug and alcohol addiction)
- life expectancy and infant mortality
- obesity
- children's educational performance
- teenage births
- homicides
- imprisonment rates
- social mobility

They found societal problems associated with these indicators are consistently more common in countries with larger income inequalities and that the two axes—problems and income inequality—are very closely related. **Among the most unequal of the twenty developed countries studied are Singapore, USA, Portugal and the United Kingdom.** Despite our undeniable affluence and the benefits that have flowed to us from this affluence, should we be concerned that contemporary America is in many ways a social failure?

Wilkinson and Pickett believe that income inequality is measuring how hierarchical a society is. Where income differences are bigger, social distances are bigger and social stratification more important. They note that “only the health and social problems which have strong social class gradients—becoming more common further down the social hierarchy—are more common in more unequal societies.” Their findings suggest that if, for example, a country wants its children to have higher average levels of educational achievement, it must address the underlying inequality which creates a steeper social gradient in educational achievement.

Confronting and reversing the threats and trends discussed above is no easy task. The same socioeconomic systems that institutionalize inequality in America also institutionalize ecological destruction. The forces that benefit from doing business as usual are powerfully entrenched and their reach is pervasive. We cannot effectively address these issues with the same mindset that created them. A fundamental shift in consciousness is needed with a new and compelling vision of Right Relationship at the center of such a shift. What do Quakers bring to the work of facilitating this shift? How can we be most effective given the urgency and complexity of the situation?

Prosperity, Values Development and the Economic Growth Dilemma

Phil Emmi

The study of value systems recognizes a variety of human values. A comprehensive study by Brian Hall (2006) places 125 human values into a five-part cascade of conceptual categories. These include three foundational value clusters, four phases in values development, and eight developmental stages each of which have goal values and means values. He also correlates with the development of human values a progression of images from tyrant to liberator that represent approaches to human interaction within social and organizational contexts.

When a developmental succession of human value is compared against contemporary values in America, it becomes clear that we have succeeded in progressing through but half of the value stages. Higher values have yet to generally permeate American cultural life.

Shifts in human values take place through a three-stage process involving the recognition of value differences, the adoption of increasingly adaptive values, and the cultural reproduction of those that are most attuned to historical and geographical context. Yet keen interpreters of our socio-political scene argue that we are now either stuck in a developmental holding pattern or are regressing toward a more primitive stage of human values development (Lakoff, 2011). Misinformation, confusion, threat and fear seem to be key elements in keeping us from embracing the shift in human values that the next stage of development requires.

The Quaker Heritage, Economics and the Common Good

Keith Helmuth

Quakerism and the Economics of the Common Good

Tim Jackson (2009) argues that the contemporary failure of progress in values development is due to the ambivalence with which we regard generalized economic growth. We appear to be stuck on the horns of a dilemma with respect to growth. For reasons of ecology, we can't live with it; yet for reasons of stability, we can't live without it. An accumulation of evidence compels us to acknowledge that we are pressing dangerously against planetary limits and dare not hazard continued economic growth. Preserving the value of essential ecological services now outweighs the benefits of further economic growth. Yet, we rely upon growth to underpin employment, profits, public services, the maintenance of security and the kind of social order we now know.

The resolution of this dilemma lies in a reassessment of societal goals. Historically, before economic growth became a societal goal unto itself, it was simply regarded as a means to personal and societal prosperity. Now it is regarded as an essential element in the stabilizing dynamic of modern society—an element without which the center fails to hold. And yet, after attaining a modest level of income and wealth, further growth adds remarkably little to important elements of prosperity. Important elements of prosperity include, of course, security, order, vocation, belonging and economic sufficiency. But the elements of prosperity also includes health, trust, intimacy, education, beauty, dignity, justice, interdependence, participation, harmony, meaning, and hope.

Presently we regard investment as a means to sustain and expand economic growth. Alternatively, we could (and should) regard investment as a bridge between present and future generations designed to sustain our mutual prosperity. Were we to do so, we would undertake a different pattern of investing. This investment pattern would focus on *community*—schools, playgrounds, gymnasiums, trails, accounting standards, capital markets standards, trustworthy political forums, museums, libraries, farmers markets. It would focus on *nature*—air, water, soils, seeds, aquifers, forests, lakes, streams wetlands, habitats, corridors, renewable energy, and quiet. And it would focus on *culture*—the arts, the sciences, the humanities, communications, media, public health, debate, and open-source anything (Barnes, 2008).

In due course this pattern of investment will allow us to leap over the horns of our current dilemma regarding economic growth. This pattern will resolve the growth dilemma by promoting investment that supports societal prosperity. But it offers bigger benefits still.

Moving beyond the growth dilemma release us from seeing the world as a “mystery over which we have no control” and from seeing it as “a problem with which we must cope.” It allows us to move into a values perspective by which we see “the world as a creative project in which we want to participate.” The shift between the former and the latter is a shift that requires us to leave much of what we know behind. Yet relative to emerging possibilities, it is well worth the plunge. For moving ahead involves a shift from control to collaboration, from competition to complementarity, from work to service, from duty to empathy, from order to adaptability, from efficiency to resiliency and from uniformity to diversity. It is a shift that liberates us from the language of tyranny, from inequity and isolated individualism to a domain of values characterized by mutual interdependency, collaboration, honesty, trust, sincerity, equity, health and healing. How could this not be a phase of human values development that merits a quick and firm embrace?

English Quaker, John Bellers (1654-1725), was the first social thinker to advance universal health care as a public policy. He based his case on the enhanced level of wellbeing and economic efficiency that would result from an improved level of health across the entire society. Bellers was also the first social thinker to advance a comprehensive plan of vocational training and sustainable employment as a national solution to chronic poverty. This policy and investment proposal was, likewise, based on calculations of progressive improvement in the economic well being of those in poverty, and on the society-wide benefits of ameliorating social degradation and its accompanying violence.

These are but two of many social, economic, and political reforms that unfolded from the Quaker faith and moral vision of John Bellers. John Bellers' social and economic analysis and his visionary moral response comes to us from the beginning of Quakerism. His lucid and prescient approach to social and economic conditions was focused through the new light early Quakerism was bringing to the sense of “right relationship.” Bellers was just a generation younger than George Fox.

Bellers repeatedly petitioned the English Parliament to enact legislation that would implement the social policies and economic projects he proposed. He was not successful in convincing the national government of the time, or the holders of capital to whom he also appealed, that implementing his proposals would be beneficial across the entire economy and, thus, advance the common good. However, it was only a matter of time until the soundness of his proposals would be recognized and acted on in many progressive jurisdictions. One hundred and fifty years later, Robert Owen, England's greatest social reformer and the originator of the cooperative movement, said he had gotten all his best ideas from John Bellers.

Bellers published his last book when John Woolman was four years old. We know that Bellers' books were brought to Philadelphia. Woolman did not record his reading, but it seem likely he would have been familiar with Bellers' books. There is no doubt they occupied the same moral universe and worked from the same holistic vision of the way social and economic factors are related to spiritual and moral values.

All Woolman's discussions on spiritual disorders cross over into their social and economic consequences. And all his discussions of social and economic behavior lead back to their spiritual foundations. In his continual probing of these relationships he repeatedly returns to the recognition that minds possessed by the spirit of domination lead to social, economic, and spiritual disorder.

Woolman's holistic understanding also goes a step further and helps set the stage for ecological thinking. He clearly understood economic geography and ecological adaptation. He understood that unwise use of resources leads to ecosystem breakdown in the same way that unwise use of labor leads to societal breakdown.

Why is it that from the beginning of Quakerism the life of the spirit and economic affairs converge into a single focus? Why is it that both William Penn and John Woolman amplified this convergence into the larger context of the human-earth relation-

ship? Why is it that Quaker economist Kenneth Boulding was one of the first social scientists to recognize earth's ecological context as the primary reference for all progressive thinking, policy, and action with regard to the human future? The answer, I suggest, is found in the concept and experience of "right relationship."

The Spiritual Basis of Economics and Ecology

In a deeply profound sense, economics and ecology are domains of relationship. Economics is about access to the means of life. Ecology is about the mutual interdependence of life communities. There is a deep sense of right relationship within a fully rounded understanding of these domains.

For example, in the right relationship of human solidarity we see economic activity flowing from social relations that enhance the common good. In the right relationship of ecological integrity we see the human economy as a wholly owned subsidiary of earth's ecology.

When we bring these two perspectives together, the lens of human solidarity and the lens of ecological science pivot into a single focus. Through this focus we can see right relationship in a more fully rounded and deeply instructive way. Right relationship then becomes the central motif in both the social design of human well being, and in ecologically sound economic adaptation.

Our spiritual traditions teach us that in right relationship we touch the fullness of human meaning and the presence of the Divine. The Quaker peace testimony is about elevating all areas of human policy and practice into this zone of right relationship. Because economic behavior is so often excluded by policy from the zone of right relationship, it is a primary area of injustice, conflict, violence, and war. A peace testimony that does not address economics in a major and sustained way is not a fully developed or a spiritually accountable witness.

A Fully Developed Peace Testimony

Near the end of his short life Martin Luther King saw how certain kinds of economic arrangements were directly connected to oppression, conflict, violence, and war. He began to focus his analysis through a vision of right relationship that challenged inequity and structural violence in American economic behavior and its worldwide extensions. Within this enlarged context he asked the question: "What is the moral assignment?" This question of right relationship in economic policy and behavior is central to a fully developed Quaker peace testimony.

In this context we need to make a distinction between the economics of resource competition and the economics of the common good. The former is leading to resource wars, social disintegration and ecological degradation. The latter has the potential of creating cultures of peace, social cooperation, and ecological resilience. A fully developed peace testimony will offer critical intervention in the former and creative advancement of the latter.

If Friends can now move the peace testimony into this arena, we will help advance an already substantial faith witness that has boldly challenged economic violence and injustice. For example, when the American Conference of Catholic Bishops recently issued a document of social teachings strongly critical of the capital driven economy and its morally unacceptable inequities, economists, politicians, and corporate leaders told them to butt out. They argued

that the Bishops had no business making pronouncements on the economy and economic policy, and that they should just stick to religion. This naive reaction failed, of course, to understand that Catholic social teaching has a long history in these matters.

Heritage as a Resource for Renewal

Quakerism, likewise, has a long genealogy of concern, thought, and action with regard to economics. The peace testimony applied to economics is not breaking new ground. We need only update our heritage. In addition to the witness of Bellers and Woolman, the following more recent examples are worth noting.

In 1934 the **Industrial Relations Committee of Friends General Conference** prepared and published "A Statement of Economic Objectives" that addressed the disaster of the Great Depression. This document offered a comprehensive strategy for equity based economic reform. (A significant number of Quakers were deeply involved in creating The New Deal.)

Friends World College was established in 1965 by New York Yearly Meeting with the goal of creating a liberal arts program based on engagement with social, economic, environmental, and cultural issues through worldwide experiential learning. The College continued until 1991 when it became a program of Long Island University, where it continues to serve this goal.

In 1966 Friends in the Mid-Atlantic region created **A Quaker Action Group** (AQAG) to organize direct action against the Viet Nam war. The perspective of AQAG included social and economic justice issues that led members to take direct action on fair housing and racial integration as well. In the early 1970s AQAG evolved into Movement for a New Society (MNS). MNS became a Philadelphia-based cooperative community dedicated to a program societal transformation, including the founding of New Society Publishers, now one of the leading publishers of books on social change, community development, and environmental issues.

In 1969 **Friends Committee on National Legislation** issued a well crafted policy statement titled, "Goals for a Just Society: Jobs and Assured Income." This document makes the case for the elimination of poverty through a combination of measures addressing health, education, vocational training, employment and a universal basic income.

In 2004 **American Friends Service Committee** published the report of its **Working Party on Global Economics - Putting Dignity and Rights at the Heart of the Global Economy**. With an acute awareness that poverty is a peace issue, this document calls for a Global New Deal, and for the moral leadership of Friends in fostering such a transformation. The authors write: "Just as the charges of 'idealism' have never made the AFSC abandon the commitment to the peace testimony and the power of love, charges that 'the market doesn't work that way' should not distract us from our goal of a world of economic justice for all." Founded in 2004, **Quaker Institute for the Future** (QIF) initiated the Moral Economy Project (MEP) that produced the book, *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy* (2009). MEP continues with a focus on strategy and action for creating a moral economy.

In 2007 the **Friends Testimonies and Economics Project** published a three-part study guide, *Seeds of Violence, Seeds of Hope*. This publication is now available on the Quaker EarthCare Witness website.

Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT) was organized in 2010. Its first action campaign has been focused on stopping mountain top removal coal mining. Toward this end, EQAT has been successful in causing PNC Bank to start to change its policy.

In line with this heritage of witness and action, Quakerism has the continuing opportunity to advance the economics of the common good and ecosystem wellbeing that is now unfolding as the central moral issue of human adaptation.

Strengthening the Peace Testimony in Its Moral Vision

The peace testimony is strengthened in its address to economics when we remember that economics is primarily a *social* science. It is further strengthened when we realize that economics, in its origin, was a moral discipline. It still is. And being a moral discipline, economics is precisely the arena where religion enters most fully into the service of the world. It is in this arena of analysis and action that Friends can discover a more fully rounded expression of the peace testimony as it develops within the economics of the common good. On-going study and research will be needed to support and advance this witness. A certain fearlessness may be required. Those who benefit from human exploitation, resource domination, and the economics of war do not want the present financial architecture and economic arrangements altered.

In the time of spiritual crisis when Quakerism began, Friends decided they could not leave religion to the established church. In our time of mounting social and ecological crisis, Friends should be no more inclined to leave economic relationships to the current political-financial establishment. Economics and finance have become, in effect, the modern world's established religion and now need, for sake of the common good, the same wind of reform that Quakers brought to religion in the 17th century.

The Ethics of Human Solidarity & the Renewal of the Quaker Heritage

If the ethics of human solidarity and the economics of the common good are our "moral assignment", can we pose a straightforward and helpful guide to action? To answer this question we can paraphrase Aldo Leopold, a founding figure in conservation biology and the thinker who first formulated the "land ethic." He wrote; "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." With this simple admonition, Leopold coined an ethical formula that has entered into the foundation of the ecological worldview and environmental ethics. It is an expression of solidarity at the level of the human-earth relationship.

In a similar way, and with respect to human solidarity, we can say: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the human community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." In a time when human solidarity is a preeminent requirement for decent human survival, this is the moral template against which economic policy and behavior must be gauged and evaluated.

The renewal of the Quaker heritage is, in large part, a decision on how Friends respond to the economic, social and ecological mandate now placed before us by the converging crisis of our time. This is the question of the "moral assignment." As a matter of religious responsibility, we can answer this question by entering fully into the work of reshaping economic policy and economic behavior on behalf of the common good and the integrity of Creation.

Thus, will the visions of John Bellers and John Woolman, and many Friends since their times, be given new opportunities for realization. Thus, will the peace testimony be renewed, and thus will Quakerism be able to more effectively advance a moral vision of the common good.

References (websites accessed 3 April 2011)

- A Quaker Action Group <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Quaker_Action_Group>
Alperovitz, Gar, and Lew Daly, 2008. *Unjust Deserts: How the Rich are Taking Our Common Inheritance and Why We Should Take It Back*. New York: The New Press.
American Friends Service Committee Working Party on Global Economic, 2004. *Putting Dignity and Rights at the Heart of the Global Economy*. <afsc.org/story/afsc-analysis-global-economy>
Barnes, Peter (2008) *Capitalism 3.0: A Guide to Reclaiming the Commons*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler. <capitalism3.com>
Brown Peter, Geoff Garver, Keith Helmuth, Robert Howell and Steve Szeghi, 2009. *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
Dreby, Ed, Editor, 2006. *Seeds of Violence, Seeds of Hope*, Friends Testimonies and Economics, Earthcare Working Group of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and Quaker Earthcare Witness <quakerearthcare.org/Publications/Publications.html>.
Earth Quaker Action Team <eqat.wordpress.com>
Friends Committee on National Legislation <fcn1.org>
Friends World College <www2.brooklyn.liu.edu/globalcollege/about/history.htm>
Haidt, Jonathan, 2008. *The Moral Roots of Liberals & Conservatives*. <ted.com/talks/lang/eng/jonathan_haidt_on_the_moral_mind.html>
Hall, Brian P., 2006. *Values Shift: A Guide to Personal and Organizational Transformation*. San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, Inc.
Jackson, Tim (2009) *Prosperity Without Growth*. London: Earthscan.
Lakey, George, 2010. *Facilitating Group Learning: Strategies for Success with Diverse Adult Learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (John C. Wiley).
Lakey, George and Sharon Cantor, 2010. Earth Quaker Action Team. *Quaker Eco-Bulletin* 10:4.
Lakoff, George, 2011. *What conservatives really want*. <georgelakoff.com/2011/02/19/what-conservatives-really-want/>
Leondar-Wright, Betsy, 2005. *Class Matters: Cross-Class Alliance Building for Middle-Class Activists*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
McKibben, Bill, 2007. *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*.
Patel, Raj, 2009. *The Value of Nothing: How to Reshape Market Society and Redefine Democracy*. London: Picador (PanMacmillan) <rajpatel.org>
Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF) <quakerinstitute.org>
Reinsborough, Patrick and Doyle Canning, 2010. *Re:Imagining Change: How to Use Story-Based Strategy to Win Campaigns, Build Movements, and Change the World*. San Francisco: PM Press.
Rifkin, Jeremy and Jeremy P. Tarcher, 2009. *The Empathic Civilization: The Race to Global Consciousness in a World in Crisis*. New York: Penguin. <empathiccivilization.com>
Wilkinson, Richard and Kate Pickett, 2009. *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*. New York: Penguin.

This workshop has been developed as a new component of Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF)'s Moral Economy Project following the publication of *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*. QIF is now moving from analysis to strategy for action on the unified concern of social fairness and ecological economics. The Institute plans to hold this workshop in several locations over the next year. If you would like to help organize this workshop for your Meeting or other Friends' event contact Keith Helmuth <ekhelmuth@mindspring.com>.