

QUAKER ECO-BULLETIN

*Information and Action Addressing Public Policy
for an Ecologically Sustainable World*

Volume 3, Number 6

November-December 2003

Concerning Economic Policy and Friends Testimonies

Pendle Hill, Wallingford, PA, USA

Third First Day, Sixth Month, 2003

To Friends Everywhere,

We greet you as 29 individuals, belonging to 19 monthly and 11 yearly meetings. Many among us are or have been actively involved with organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee, Canadian Friends Service Committee, Friends Association for Higher Education, Friends Committee on Unity with Nature, Quaker Eco-Witness, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Friends General Conference, and Friends World Committee for Consultation.

We have gathered at Pendle Hill to explore a concern we all share about economic policies as they relate to issues of peace, justice, equality, and restoring the earth's ecological integrity. We believe the human-earth relationship in all its aspects is inseparable from our relationship with the Divine. We are convinced that the current economic system should be of urgent concern to the Religious Society of Friends. It is intensifying economic and social inequities throughout the world, causing structural and physical violence, driving many species to extinction, and leading our own species toward ecological self-destruction.

Through our worshipful deliberations, we have come to unity in urging all Friends, especially those in the United States and Canada, to make individual and corporate commitments to learning more about certain fundamental aspects of current economic policies and institutions as they relate to Friends' historic testimonies. Specifically, we encourage Friends to ask themselves the following:

In light of Friends' Testimonies, what is God calling us to do about the continuing and increasing marginalization of so much of the world's population, the extinction of species, and other environmental degradation? How do we integrate our human community within the natural world so as to provide for the physical and spiritual needs of future generations?

What changes in the institutions of economy and governance are needed to promote effective stewardship of the natural environment and caring for people and communities?

What is it in nature and human knowledge that we have the right to own?

How best can we promote the values expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Earth Charter? How can we promote understanding and awareness of the consequences of increasing global interconnectedness and the urgency of addressing the dangers and opportunities that these present?

As we earn, spend, and invest money, as individuals and as meeting communities, how can we live in the "virtue of that life and power" that leads us to treat all humans and the Earth as a manifestation of the Divine? Are we aware of the true cost of our consumption? Do we take into account our concerns for social justice as we earn, spend, and invest money?

What information, tools, and skills do we need to equip ourselves to work effectively for public policies that restore Earth's resilience, increase social equity, and strengthen community?

How can we engage with others in ways that help us discern God's will for us, at this critical stage in Earth's history, as we labor with these concerns?

Quaker Eco-Witness, a project of Friends Committee on Unity with Nature, and the Environmental Working Group of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting have collaborated in bringing us to Pendle Hill. They will also collaborate with us in preparing a collection of short articles, questions to help clarify Friends' understanding, and queries to encourage Friends' individual and corporate discernment about the concerns we raise. We have agreed to pursue a number of tasks designed to create and draw together existing material on economics and ecology as resources for our meetings and wider communities. We hope you will make use of these materials when they become available in the late fall or early winter.

In the Light,

Elaine C. Emmi, Recording Clerk

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

Quaker Eco-Witness (QEW) promotes government and corporate policies to help restore and protect Earth's biological integrity. It works within and through the Religious Society of Friends for policies that enable human communities to relate in mutually enhancing ways to the ecosystems of which they are a part. This witness seeks to be guided by the Spirit and grounded in reverence for Earth's communities of life as God's creation.

QEB's purpose is to inform the **QEW** network to advance Friends' witness on government and corporate policy as it relates to the ecosystems that sustains us. Each issue is an article about timely legislative or corporate policy issues affecting our society's relationship to the earth.

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

- Provide background information that reflects the complexity of the issue and is respectful toward other points of view.
- Explain why the issue is a Friends' concern.
- Describe the positions of other faith-based and secular environmental groups on the issue.
- Relate the issue to legislation or corporate policy.
- List what Friends can do.
- Provide sources for additional information.

QEB Editorial Committee:

Judy Lumb, Sandra Lewis

To receive *QEB*:

via email, write QEW@FCUN.org.

via the Internet, visit www.FCUN.org.

via mail, write to QEW c/o FCUN

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Quaker Eco-Witness

c/o Quaker Earthcare Witness,

173-B N Prospect Street

Burlington VT 05401

List of Participants:

Will Alexander, Redwood Forest MM, Pacific YM

Angela Berryman, Coordinator, AFSC Economic Justice Network

Peter G. Brown, Montreal MM, Canadian YM

Kim Carlyle, Swannanoa Valley MM, Southern Appalachian YMA

David Ciscel, Memphis MM, Southern Appalachian YMA

Alan Connor, Ann Arbor MM, Lake Erie YM

Gray Cox, Acadia MM, New England YM

David Damm-Luhr, Cambridge MM, New England YM

Steve Davison, Yardley MM, Philadelphia YM

Ed Dreby, Mt Holly MM, Philadelphia YM

Elaine Emmi, Salt Lake MM, Intermountain YM

Phil Emmi, Salt Lake MM, Intermountain YM

Rachel Findley, Strawberry Creek MM, Pacific YM

Walter Haines, Rockland MM, New York YM

Tom Head*, Multnomah MM, Northern Pacific YM

Maureen Heffern Ponicki, AFSC Democratizing the Global Economy Project

Ellen Helmuth, Central Philadelphia MM, Philadelphia YM (sojourning)

Keith Helmuth, Central Philadelphia MM, Philadelphia YM (sojourning)

Marya Hillesland, FCNL Legislative Intern

Leonard Joy, Strawberry Creek MM, Pacific YM

Christine Lewandoski, Yardley MM, Philadelphia YM

Margaret Mansfield, Mt Holly MM, Philadelphia YM

Stephen McNeil, Strawberry Creek MM, Pacific YM

Anne Mitchell, Toronto MM, Canadian YM

Susan Nelson, Cleveland MM, Lake Erie YM

Mary Lou Peck, Rockland MM, New York YM

David Ross, Nottingham MM, Baltimore YM

Ned Stowe, FCNL Legislative Secretary, Sandy Spring MM, Baltimore YM

Sarah Waring, Barton-Glover MM, New England YM

Marcy Wenzler, Bloomington MM, Western and Ohio Valley YMs

* member of planning group, unable to attend

The Way Forward: Follow-up to the Pendle Hill Gathering

Virtually all the Gathering participants are involving themselves in some way in the follow-up to the Gathering. This has led the coordinators to establish an organizational framework for our future activities:

- 1) The **Networking Team** will develop ways of increasing contacts with monthly meetings, specifically to lift up the concern for economic policy in an ecological context, but more generally to further the work of the QEW and Quaker Earthcare Witness (formerly FCUN).
- 2) The **Quaker Eco-Bulletin Team** will continue to publish *QEB* for distribution by the email network and through *BeFriending Creation*.
- 3) The **FCNL Team** will consist of the two Quaker Earthcare Witness representatives to Friends Committee on National Legislation, plus others within Quaker Earthcare Witness who want to join them in strengthening the Quaker Earthcare Witness/FCNL connection.
- 4) The **Friends Testimonies and Economics Team** will prepare an adult study curriculum, Quaker Eco-101, as a primary tool for promoting an on-going consultation on economics and ecology.
- 5) An exciting affiliated project is a yet-to-be-named **Quaker research institute** to develop well-researched policy options compatible with Friends testimonies for presentation to policy leaders on a national and global scale.
- 6) The **Coordinators** will consist of one member of each team, a liaison with the research institute, and a new position of Communications Coordinator that is being filled by Sue Nelson of Cleveland MM, Lake Erie YM.

Interested Friends can e-mail qew@fcun.org
or call Sue Nelson at 216/221-1126