

QUAKER ECO-BULLETIN

Information and Action Addressing Public Policy
for an Ecologically Sustainable World

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Quaker Eco-Witness for National Legislation: QNL (what's that?)

Ed Dreby

A New Name

Quaker Eco-Witness for National Legislation is the new name of Quaker Eco-Witness. QEW Coordinators welcomed the name change of Friends Committee on Unity with Nature to Quaker Earthcare Witness (a new QEW), and accordingly changed our name to Quaker Eco-Witness for National Legislation (QNL). The overlap in acronyms has caused a little confusion, but we believe these changes are already bearing good fruit.

A New Landscape

At its annual meeting in November, Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) approved new legislative priorities that include “promoting long-term protection of the environment” and “addressing structural economic violence.” These priorities are in a context of bringing “the religious experience of Friends to bear on public policy decisions.” Wow!

FCNL also approved a “Minute on Moral Values” that asks “all who are followers of Jesus and all people of faith to consider ways in which Christ’s total message of peace, forgiveness, justice, succor to the poor, the helpless, the scape-goated, and the outcast should be included in the definition of moral values.” Recognizing that “long-term protection of the earth” is a priority in this context is a huge step toward understanding that the peaceful prevention of deadly conflict, right-sharing of the earth’s bounty, and restoration of the earth’s ecological integrity are inter-related and inseparable religious concerns.

In addition to these developments, Quaker Earthcare Witness (the new QEW) is now a member organization of FCNL and appoints two members to the General Committee. This means that both in purpose and structure, the relationship between FCNL and QEW has been truly transformed. QNL is now fully committed, without reservation, to providing leadership within QEW for helping to strengthen Friends’ involvement with and support for FCNL’s witness in Washington.

An Emerging Structure

QNL is now becoming what we have wanted to be: a network of many Friends, with coordinators of multiple teams that can undertake specific projects and tasks to advance a common purpose. This is proving that geographically scattered Friends can work effectively and collaboratively via e-mail and conference phone calls. Friends who rarely, if ever, see each other in person can still bring their interests and skills to a project in which they truly work together.

Absent this kind of structure, the work needed to bring ideas to fruition often awaits the coming together of a larger group, and then tends to drift between face-to-face gatherings. With this design, QNL has been able to accomplish much with high hopes for the future. QNL’s coordinators link and provide broad oversight for five teams of Friends drawn from 18 monthly meetings and eight yearly meetings who are engaged in three major projects.

At the 2004 QEW Annual Meeting it was agreed that the expenses associated with nurturing the relationship between FCNL and QEW, and of publishing *Quaker Eco-Bulletin*, should become integrated with QEW—both organizationally and financially. As of January 1, 2005, the expenses associated with this work will be covered by a line item in QEW’s budget. This will save the cost of mailing for fundraising and eliminate an element of competition for contributions from the same folks.

FCNL Team

QNL’s “new landscape” with FCNL has come about through the commitment and hard work of many Friends associated both with QEW and with FCNL. In this context, QNL’s newly formed FCNL Team will focus on:

- **Supporting FCNL:** As a member organization of FCNL, QEW encourages all U.S. Friends to participate in setting FCNL’s policies and priorities, communicating with public officials, and providing financial support. Through the FCNL team, QNL provides leadership within QEW for these purposes and seeks other ways to help FCNL promote long-term environmental protection.
- **Collaborating with Canadian Friends:** How can communication between Canadian and U.S. Friends on national policy issues be strengthened to mutual benefit? The Canadian Friends Service Committee (CFSC) has a long history of involvement in national policy issues. CFSC is a committee of Canadian Yearly Meeting and issues of national policies affecting ecological and social integrity are regularly addressed by Yearly Meeting as a whole.

Many policy issues relating to ecologically sound stewardship are trans-national, in which Canadian civil society is providing leadership. With FCNL now committed to earthcare, QNL wants to put more emphasis on

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

QNL 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 God's creation.

QEB's purpose is to advance Friends' witness on government and corporate policy as it relates to the ecosystems that sustain 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 Coordinator: Keith Helmuth

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

To receive **QEB**:
email: QEW-NL@QuakerEarthcare.org
website: <QuakerEarthcare.org>
mail: write to address below

Projects of QNL, such as **QEB**, are funded by contributions to:

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

mutually beneficial networking on shared concerns between Canadian and U.S. Friends.

- **Regional and Local Issues:** How should QEW relate to regional and local issues? QEW is incapable of corporate discernment about the intricacies of most national legislation and relies on FCNL and CFSC to do this. Nor is QEW capable of corporate discernment about the details of most regional and local issues. QEW's mission is to imbue Friends everywhere with a concern for earthcare. QEW has agreed that except in unusual circumstances, regional and local policies should be addressed by Friends in relevant yearly meetings, and QEW will focus on nurturing yearly meeting committees for this purpose.

Quaker Eco-Bulletin Team

Quaker Eco-Bulletin was first published in 1998 by the Environmental Working Group under Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and continued under Quaker Eco-Witness beginning in 2001, to provide Friends a vehicle for communicating an ecological perspective on current issues and public policy to the larger Quaker community. Since 2001 *QEB* has tapped the knowledge, wisdom and analytical insights of 19 authors from the U.S., Canada and Belize. Each *QEB* is an article about a timely legislative or corporate policy issue affecting our relationship to the earth. The Bulletin is published bimonthly as an insert in *BeFriending Creation* and is archived on QEW's website <www.QuakerEarthCare.org>.

During 2004, *QEB* welcomed five new authors writing on a broad range of topics including air pollution, stewardship economics, eco-friendly persuasion, U.S. exceptionalism and population challenges of the 21st century. Some of the pieces written for *QEB* are included in the Friends Testimonies and Economics Project Guide (see below) and next year an article originally written for that course will be published in expanded form as a *QEB*. In this and other ways the *Bulletin* helps provide a common frame of reference among the growing community of Friends who seek an earth restored.

Friends Testimonies and Economics Teams

QNL's Guidance Statement states that we must shape our social and economic institutions to preserve the integrity of the earth's biological communities and natural cycles. The Friends Testimonies and Economics project (FTE) asks Friends to consider how economic policies and institutions must be changed if balance between natural and cultural systems is to be restored. FTE has three teams working on separate components.

FTE Education Team:

A project guide, "Exploring Economics and Friends Testimonies in an Ecological Context" is being assembled that includes

- seven short core readings about the human-earth relationship;
- outlines of basic concepts, theoretical orientations, key points, and a glossary;
- activities for corporate reflection and discussion that can be used separately or in sequence;
- articles that explain basic concepts and theoretical orientations;
- articles that present a particular point of view;
- articles that offer possibilities for moving toward a different human-earth relationship; and
- resources for further exploration.

The FTE Education Team that is developing this guide has been challenged by questions about how to present issues relating to money, banking, and finance in the guide, which has taken more time to come to clearness than anticipated. While

not yet published for general distribution, a working draft is available to Friends wanting to test it in their monthly meetings or other gatherings of Friends.

FTE Consultation Team:

Because there are diverse views on economics among Friends and economists, it is essential to help Friends understand one another to find unity in advocacy for economic policies that advance the values we share. "Addressing structural economic violence" is now a legislative priority, so FCNL will also be asking Friends to come to unity on what structural economic violence entails and what policy changes are needed to address it.

The FTE Consultation Team is developing formats for two levels of constructive consultation: 1) with policy professionals, and 2) with Friends in a monthly meeting or similar setting. A pilot consultation for policy professionals is planned for mid-June, 2005, in conjunction with the Friends Association for Higher Education's Annual Meeting at Haverford College. Several pilot monthly meeting threshing sessions are planned between now and June. Both formats will be incorporated into the FTE Guide as way opens.

FTE Advocacy Team:

Coming to agreement on needed policy changes does not require unanimity on economic theory. A number of prominent policy professionals have recommended policies that would incorporate social and environmental costs into prices, and shift the incentives created by governments so that more damaging activities are discouraged and less damaging activities are encouraged. We believe Friends with very differing views on economics will be able to strongly unite with some of these recommendations.

FCNL's witness for "an earth restored" would be significantly strengthened if the statement of legislative policy could be more specific about economics incentives and disincentives, particularly for the purpose of reducing consumption. Since the statement of legislative policy reflects the views and priorities of Friends in monthly meetings, being more specific about economic policies means "laboring in the vineyards" of monthly meetings and communicating with the FCNL policy committee about the fruitful outcomes. The FTE Advocacy Team is working to begin the process of communicating with the FCNL Policy Committee and with interested monthly meetings about these possibilities.

Gratitude and Requests

We are tremendously grateful to the many monthly and yearly meetings and individual Friends that have supported QNL since its inception in the year 2000. So much has been accomplished in a very short time. Due to your generosity, we have never been lacking for funds. In the fall of 2002, funds were raised for an intern project that did not go forward as planned, but those funds were used to help initiate FCNL's work on an energy policy that no one expected to go forward as soon as it did. We were able to convene a gathering of 30 Friends with a concern for Economics and Friends Testimonies in June, 2003, to send a Letter of Concern from that gathering to meetings and churches throughout the U. S. and Canada, and to sustain the many activities emerging from the Gathering.

Please be a QEW contributor: To continue strengthening the witness for a spiritually based ecological orientation in public policy, we ask all those who have supported QNL's work in the past to increase your contribution to QEW. Or, if you are not already a QEW contributor, become one (and receive *BeFriending Creation*). This will also enhance QEW's plans for

Quaker Eco-Witness for National Legislation (QNL)

QNL Coordinators: Ed Dreby*, Elaine Emmi, Keith Helmuth, Lynne Heritage

Friends Testimonies and Economics

Ed Dreby*, overall project leader

FTE Education Team:

- Jack Bradin
- Kim Carlyle
- David Ciscel
- Steve Davison
- Ed Dreby
- Walter Haines
- Keith Helmuth
- Gary Lapreziosa
- Judy Lumb
- Margaret Mansfield
- David Ross

FTE Consultation Team:

- John Brady
- Therese Miller
- David Ross

FTE Advocacy Team:

- John Brady
- Kim Carlyle
- David Ciscel
- Elaine Emmi
- Margaret Mansfield
- David Ross

QEB Team:

- Barbara Day
- Keith Helmuth*
- Sandra Lewis
- Judy Lumb

QEW Representatives on FCNL General Committee:

- Elaine Emmi
- Lynne Heritage

FCNL Team:

- Kim Carlyle
- Elaine Emmi*
- Lynne Heritage
- Hollister Knowlton
- John Payton

*Team Leader

a program of intensified outreach about earthcare to monthly and yearly meetings.

Please be an FCNL activist: We also urge you to be an activist on behalf of FCNL by promoting the participation of your monthly and yearly meetings in setting legislative policy and priorities, lobbying members of Congress, and providing financial support. As FCNL Executive Secretary Joe Volk reported at the recent annual meeting, FCNL is being asked by a much larger constituency than just the Society of Friends to be a voice for faith and reason in national affairs. If Friends are willing to make this possible in the near term by increasing FCNL's financial resources, FCNL has an opportunity to greatly enhance Friends' witness in Washington and Friends' outreach to like-minded people, drawing them into our witness and earning their continuing support.

Would you like to be an FTE "angel?" Friends Testimonies and Economics, unlike QNL's other projects, will continue to be an independently funded joint project of QEW and the Earthcare Working Group of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. FTE will not engage in any general fundraising and will not receive any direct support from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Nor will we ask for any support from QEW until the financial resources are in place to support QNL's work with FCNL and *Quaker Eco-Bulletin*, and to sustain QEW's new outreach program.

We believe FTE can be sustained with grants and contributions by those who use FTE resources. However, FTE hopes to identify a list of potential "angels," willing to be contacted on an occasional basis, to provide financial support for an opportunity that we would not otherwise be able to undertake.

What Friends Can Do

- 1) **Be a QEW contributor:** Contact QEW at <QuakerEarthcare.org> or send a contribution to QEW at 173-B N Prospect Street Burlington VT 05401.
- 2) **Be an FCNL activist:** Contact FCNL at <www.fcnl.org> to receive FCNL email action alerts and the *FCNL Washington Newsletter*, and learn how you can work with FCNL in your monthly and yearly meetings.
- 3) **Be an FTE angel:** Contact Ed Dreby at <drebymans@igc.org>, (609) 261-8190, or 14 New Jersey Av, Hainesport NJ, 08036. Make checks payable to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Other News

The American Friends Service Committee has recently released a new book, an in-depth report from a working party on global economics, *Putting Dignity and Rights at the Heart of the Global Economy: A Quaker Perspective*. Copies are available at \$7 plus shipping from <www.afsc.org> or by mail at AFSC, 1501 Cherry St, Phila PA 19102.

Friends Association for Higher Education is tentatively planning an interactive internet program in February on the topic of economics and Friends testimonies. Participants will include representatives of AFSC, FCNL, QIF and the FTE project who will discuss the relationships among their organizations in general and their presentations at the FAHE conference in particular. Check <www.fahe.org> for an announcement of this program.

Quaker Institute for the Future

Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF) is another outcome of the Pendle Hill Gathering on Economics and Friends Testimonies. In the course of that Gathering, a group of participants became convinced that Friends witness could be greatly strengthened by the development of a Quaker "think tank." Quaker Institute for the Future seeks to understand and articulate the foundations of a moral economic order. The Institute is designed to communicate the research findings, analysis and experiences of Quakers, and others, who are studying and working on the reconciliation of economics, ecology and social justice.

QIF is incorporated as a non-profit scientific and educational organization. The Board of Trustees held its inaugural meeting in Philadelphia in August 2004 and a second meeting in Toronto in December. QNL has no formal linkage with QIF, but its supporters and coordinators can take satisfaction in having helped bring the Institute into being. Pacific Yearly Meeting has taken an oversight relationship for QIF under advisement.

QIF will give two presentations at the Annual Meeting of Friends Association for Higher Education in June at

Haverford College, and will host an experimental Summer Research Seminar from July 1st through July 31st at College of the Atlantic, Bar Harbor, Maine. In addition, a major conference on the moral economy and corporate governance is being planned for 2006. This conference will be preceded by a series of preparatory workshops hosted by Friends meetings.

QIF aims to enhance Friends' understanding on issues of critical importance for the future of Earth's life communities and strengthen support for Quaker organizations that are working on public policy and human betterment. In addition, it aims to engage in the larger public dialogue on national policy and the common good.

Executive Committee, QIF Board of Trustees: Leonard Joy, President (Strawberry Creek MM, PacYM), Keith Helmuth, Secretary, Central Phila MM, sojourning), Tom Head, Treasurer (Bridge City MM, North Pacific YM). For information on QIF and the Summer Research Seminar, contact Keith Helmuth at <ekhelmuth@mindspring.com> or 2038 Spruce Street, Philadelphia PA 19103, phone 215-545-3417.