



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

Volume 26, Number 3 • May-June 2013

Placing Concern for Earth Center-Stage

Recently a Friend brought to our attention Sarah Moon's original play, *Tauris*, which invites audiences to consider contemporary environmental concerns in the context of Greek drama. *Tauris* will soon have its world premiere as part of the 5th Annual Planet Connections Theatre Festivity in June 2013. Following is a Q&A interview with the playwright, along with information about where you can see *Tauris* and how you can help support the play.

BFC: First, how did you get started writing plays in general, and writing about environmental themes in particular?

Sarah: I started writing plays in college. My friend Hallie Beaune started a playwriting group the spring semester of my sophomore year. Having always written poetry, I was excited at the new challenge. I started writing a drama loosely based on the experiences of my friends and I called it *Inside Inside*. My theatre friends liked it and we decided to work on it as a summer project. I found a director and we double cast it and worked with two casts all summer long. We presented a one-hour version in our college's theatre as part of Orientation Week.

I spent the next year mostly acting and the following year directing, but when I got out of school, I realized it was playwriting that tapped the deepest into my desires and creativity. With a play called *Art Deco for Emotional Cripples*, I applied to eight MFA playwriting programs. A lesser known program gave me a full ride and a well-known program gave me no funding. I chose the middle ground and attended Brandeis University where



A reading of Act I at Cape Cod Community College in February 2011.

my play *Losing the Game* was produced in the spring of 2004 and won the Harold and Mimi Steinberg Award for Best Original Play.

My earlier plays tended to be psychological dramas exploring the complexity of romantic and family relationships from a women's perspective. I would say some of these plays held social commentary, but none of it was really pointed. I became interested in plays with an environmental message when my theatre company in New York, New Mummies, was asked to put together a street theatre performance outside the U.N., drawing attention to the environmental crisis of

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BeFriending Creation

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We publish **BeFriending Creation** to promote the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness, stimulate discussion and action, share insights, practical ideas, and news of our actions, and encourage among Friends a sense of community and spiritual connection with all Creation. Opinions expressed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of Quaker Earthcare Witness, or of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). The editor is responsible for unsigned items. Submission deadlines are February 10, April 10, June 10, August 10, October 10, and December 10.

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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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Earthcare Calendar

June 10, 2013. Deadline for article submissions for July-August 2013 **BeFriending Creation**.

Letters from Our Readers

"WHAT CANST THOU SAY" ABOUT SPIRIT-LED EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF EARTH, about your own stirrings toward care for the planet, in relation to the vision and thoughtful action of Quaker Earthcare Witness as a whole? We'd like to hear from you. Send your letters to Katherine at katherine@quakerearthcare.org, and share your thoughts and leadings with Friends and caring others throughout North America.

Dear QEW Friends,

I discovered your website today. It speaks to me.

First some personal background: I am a member of Central and Southern Africa Yearly Meeting and within it I am a member of Johannesburg Monthly Meeting. I am in my mid-seventies and have been interested in humankind's relationship with nature all my life. I was born in Johannesburg but my parents bought a dairy farm in Drakensberg when I was 10 years old and as a consequence that is where I grew up. My working life, however, was spent working in the development of information systems, not farming.

My interest in Nature and our relationship with it has evolved and deepened over the years. Like many people I have become more and more preoccupied with it as the destructive effects of humankind's collective behaviour on the biosphere has become more and more visible. I have also always been intrigued by money—what it is and what role it plays both in the individual's life and the life of the community. Now these two interests have come together because as I see it the quest for more and more money by a small and wealthy segment of society is playing a major role in the destruction of the biosphere.

What is money, exactly? At base it is just an external representation of the intrinsic value to be found in exchangeable goods and services. This value exists only in people's heads and that is why money was invented: to provide an external record and thus to facilitate the voluntary exchange of goods and services.

The problem with money is that as a representation of intrinsic value, its actual value is not linked to any real goods or services. Such money is fraudulent, or, in other words, completely dishonest. It is, however, unrecognisable as such. Consequently it has to steal its stated "intrinsic" value from the currency that is already in circulation and as there is only a finite volume of goods and services in an economy, this fraudulent money debases the currency as a whole. *Inflation* is the term that is commonly used for this debasement.

In modern economies the production of money without any backing in goods and services is regarded as a perfectly acceptable component of financial policy, both at a national level and at the level of the individual banking institutions. Through what is known as "Fractional Reserve Banking" these institutions are allowed to issue the national currency without any backing in goods and services, provided only that the amount they issue is within limits defined by the size of their reserves.

Whether it is authorised or not, the issuing of money without the goods and services to provide the intrinsic value to back the value of the stated value of the money is completely and utterly dishonest. The consequence of this authorised practice is that we have an authorised worm in the very foundations of money systems worldwide. These systems provide the life blood of our societies and yet the blood is unhealthy.

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mountaintop removal. My theatre company partner and I became so involved in the issue and the activism that we formed a volunteer group called New York Loves Mountains to raise awareness about mountaintop removal and sever New York's connection to it (New York state burns mountaintop removal coal).

With that group, I started working on a full-length play that would address the issue. We presented the play, *Current Changes in Empire*, at the downtown experimental theatre hub Dixon Place in 2008. However, it wasn't all that I wanted it to be and decided to take a different tack on the issue. Taking elements from that play, I wrote another play in a more realistic style called *Light Comes*. I presented an excerpt of *Light Comes* at Boston Greenfest in 2010. I submitted it to a few theatres, but it didn't find a home for a full production. So, I decided I would try a third tack. Inspired by a call for proposals to a conference at York University in Toronto called Staging Sustainability, I proposed a paper on using Greek drama to discuss contemporary environmental issues. I started working on an adaptation of Euripides' *Iphigenia at Tauris* that would do that and the parallels just flowed.

BFC: How does your Friends' tradition connect with or inform/inspire your efforts?

Sarah: My great-grandparents were Quakers and my father took us to a Friends meeting in Milwaukee for a year when I was 11. Though I wasn't forcefully drawn to Friends at that young age, I remembered my experi-



A rehearsal outdoors in Cape Cod for the Boston Greenfest presentation.

ence when I was older and seeking to reincorporate a faith practice into my life.

While living in Brooklyn after graduate school, I decided to go to Brooklyn Friends Meeting. My very first visit was an intense one. Apparently, there had been a problem in the meeting that one woman chose to address publicly. While at first I wanted to run and avoid the conflict, listening to the way the community responded and worked through the problem in the context of meeting gave me absolute confidence that this was the faith community in which I belonged.

In that one meeting, the qualities exhibited included patience, thoughtfulness, honoring of complexity, moral accountability, "sitting-withness," and forgiveness. When I decided to go seeking for a faith practice, See **Concern for Earth**, page 4

Tauris: Living Our Testimonies

An adaptation of Euripides' *Iphigenia at Tauris*, this epic musical adventure engages its audience in questions both personal and social: cultural attitudes toward environmental change, the complicated relationship between personal drive and public usefulness, and the conflict that arises when ideology gets in the way of love. Incorporating contemporary environmental concerns like mountaintop-removal coal mining and the tension between fossil fuel companies and the EPA, *Tauris* asks audiences to consider how we transcend old enmities to find a way forward for society as a whole.

The June production of *Tauris* will be the play's world premiere. The production will be a part of the 5th Annual Planet Connections Festivity which presents eco-themed and socially minded theatre pieces linked to non-profits to promote "theatre for a cause."

Tauris partners with New York Loves Mountains, an organization sponsored by Appalachian Voices, co-founded by Sarah Moon and Stephanie Pistello in 2008. New York Loves Mountains' (<http://www.newyorkloves-mountains.org/>) mission is "to support the movement to end mountaintop removal and lead and inspire a state-wide transition to renewable energy. We raise awareness among New Yorkers about the practice of mountaintop removal through various means including arts, education and innovation and by partnering with other organizations who share this mission. We work toward a ban on the importation of mountaintop removal coal in New York State and are a state-wide voice for New York's leadership in the national energy debate. Our mission is rooted in the belief that no group of Americans should be, nor need be, harmed, poisoned, or sacrificed to power America's electric grid." You can make a Kickstarter donation to help the production effort here (through May 27): <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1310353082/tauris-in-planet-connections-theatre-festivity>.

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I wasn't looking for pabulum or uplift. I was looking for acknowledgement of the pain and difficulty of living, alongside guidance from spirit. I found that among Friends and it made me feel less lonely amidst the goal-oriented culture of New York City.

I don't think I could have begun to confront the immensity of mountaintop removal, resource extraction, and climate change without the strength I received from a community of like-minded Friends and the guidance of Spirit. Though he's not a Quaker, early on I was really inspired by a speech by Bobby Kennedy Jr. and something he said: "To me, the environmental work is spiritual work -- we have a biological drive to consume the planet, to compete, and ultimately to destroy what God has created, and that can only be overcome with a spiritual fire. I don't think nature is God, or that we ought to be worshiping it as God, but I do believe it's the way that God communicates to us most forcefully." I agree with that. I left New York City in 2009 because I wanted a stronger relationship with nature and, for me, that also means a stronger relationship with God. ☞



The Wild Project reading in New York in March 2013

Editor's note: You can read more of our interview with Sarah Moon in the online version of BeFriending Creation, posted on our website, www.quakerearth-care.org.



An Accidental Activist

by Katherine Murray

My daughter and I drove through a dramatic April rainstorm to hear the gentle stories and powerful inspiration shared by Dr. Jane Goodall on April 17. Of the many beautiful and poignant ideas in Dr. Goodall's talk, one in particular has stayed with me over the passing weeks.



As a child, Goodall yearned for two things: to work with animals and go to Africa. (In fact she had early hopes she might marry Tarzan, but as Goodall said,

"He married the wrong Jane.") She didn't plan to become a worldwide voice for animal conservation and understanding. She shared that she was "tapped on the shoulder" when she went to share her research at a conference, intending when it was all over to return to her idyllic life at Gombe. But while at the conference, she learned of needs and issues far beyond her research focus. She said, "I walked into that conference a researcher and walked out an activist. I haven't spent more than three weeks in any one place since."

May we also be open to new paths that reveal themselves as we continue to love our planet. ☞

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With Friends commitment to honesty and integrity, surely this matter is something that not only we as Quakers but the whole of society should be addressing.

At our most recent C&SAYM gathering, I ran a special interest group [SIG] on money. I also ran a similar one at our previous YM gathering. My hope was that we would be able to come to a common mind on this issue and as result be able to submit a minute for action to be considered by the YM as a whole. This was a forlorn hope. Both SIGs ended up on a fractious note and were quite unable to come to a common mind.

From these experiences I have realised that most people are so thoroughly immersed in the current money systems and the myriad of problems they naturally engender that they are quite unable to see below these problems to the much deeper problem of the fundamental dishonesty inherent in the issuing of currency that is fraudulent yet legally sanctioned.

Consequently I see a need for Friends and ultimately the general public to be enlightened on the "dishonest worm" in the functioning of the current money systems.

Blessings,

Rory Short

Johannesburg Monthly Meeting



Circles of Discernment and Leadings and Concern Groups give Friends the opportunity to deepen and share

By Judy Lumb

Circles of Discernment (CoD) were created by the Quaker Institute for the Future (QIF), as a way to facilitate Spirit-led research and action in the manner of Friends using worship sharing and group discernment on topics of critical importance for the future of life on Earth. Some CoDs have met in person, but most have met via conference call and by email. The results of the first CoDs have been published as QIF pamphlets. Now the CoD process has been suggested as a vehicle for QEWS to form action groups around specific topics.

The QIF pamphlet series that developed has been oriented toward advancing further study and consultation among Friends on various issues affecting life on Earth. The intent is to make a Quaker contribution to the larger public dialogue on how human communities can live in right relationship with Earth's commonwealth of life.

The first QIF pamphlet published from a CoD was *Fueling our Future: A Dialogue about Technology, Ethics, Public Policy, and Remedial Action*. In preparation, Friends gathered for two symposia to hear professionals speak on various aspects of future energy production. Then a small group of five Friends gathered at Pendle Hill for a long weekend of worship-sharing. We developed framing principles that were not to be violated and, with some editing, the task of creating a pamphlet was completed.

The second CoD and QIF pamphlet arose among the editorial team of *Quaker Eco-Bulletin*. While editing an article on natural capital by David Ciscel,

questions arose that were beyond the capacity of that four-page article to address. So, the editorial team clerked by Sandra Lewis, along with David Ciscel, convened a CoD to consider the dichotomy between two world views: one represented by natural capital and the other by deep ecology. We met via conference call over a period of more than two years, even paying for Quaker silence at international phone rates. Each one of those calls put us forward in a way than none of us would have anticipated, leading to a discussion of the commons. We wrote several *Quaker Eco-Bulletins* as we progressed in our discernment. Then the final piece of the puzzle arose and we knew we were finished. It was time to share our findings. The resulting QIF pamphlet is called, *How on Earth Do We Live Now? Natural Capital, Deep Ecology and the Commons*.

The two QIF pamphlets published recently on

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CoD Facts

- **Average size:** six persons
- **How often do CoDs meet?** Every month or two
- **Who starts a CoD?** Those CoDs functioning under the QIF umbrella have been started by QIF Board members or research associates.
- **How long do CoDs meet?** Until it is clear that the task has been completed.
- **What is the outcome of a CoD?** CoDs conducted under the QIF umbrella have resulted in the publishing of QIF pamphlets

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the growth dilemma (*It's the Economy, Friends Understanding the Growth Dilemma* and *Beyond the Growth Dilemma: Toward an Ecologically Integrated Economy*) were the result of a study group commissioned by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Although the group wasn't called a CoD, the process was based on group discernment.

While QIF-sponsored CoDs have been focused on the preparation of QIF pamphlets as an end point, the CoD process can also be used for other Spirit-led action.

CoDs and QEW

On the QEW discussion listserv, David Millar asked Friends to indicate their interests in topics around which Spirit-led action might be developed. He has suggested that the CoD process be used for Friends to participate in the World We Want 2015 Project, which is a follow-up to Rio + 20. Global discussions are underway on the following topics:

1. Environmental sustainability
2. Conflict and resilience
3. Inequalities
4. Education
5. Growth and employment
6. Food security and nutrition
7. Population
8. Health
9. Governance
10. Water
11. Energy
12. Creativity, arts & crafts

Leadings and Concerns on the QEW Business Site

Another way Friends can have ongoing conversations about Earth issues they care about is to participate in a Leadings and Concerns group on the QEW Business site. If you have signed up for the QEW Business site, you can join these public discussions. Three groups have been created thus far: Energy Interest Group, Gathering for Deeper Relationship with Earth, and Intersection of Economics and Ecology.

Begin by logging in to the QEW Business site (you can access the site by clicking Business Site in the upper right corner of the QEW home page at www.quakerearthcare.org). You can then join a group, start a discussion, respond to others' postings. You can easily post articles you've found that you want to share with the group and upload documents as needed for others to view and use. Discussions are organized by their titles and responses and subsequent comments appear in a threaded format so they are easy to find, follow, and review.

If you have a leading or a concern you think would make a good discussion group, contact Roy-Taylor at wrlpeas@mindspring.com. ☞



Keep in Touch!

We'd love to hear from you. Contact us through our Contact Us page on the website (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/contact>) and ask questions, suggest stories, or send letters for future issues of BFC.

We also welcome your notes, Facebook posts, emails, and contributions to the QEW Discussion board. You'll find the QEW Discussion board at <http://lists.quakerearthcare.org/mailman/listinfo/qewdiscussions>, or visit us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Quaker-Earthcare-Witness>. We're on Twitter now, too! Search for @quakerearthcare and follow us! ☞



A Note of Thanks

April was a good month for fundraising: we have raised the funds to be able to send another \$2,000 to support the YAF gathering at Pendle Hill in June and we have another supporter for the three-year resilience fund. Thanks, Friends!

You can donate to QEW by going to our website (www.quakerearthcare.org) and clicking the Donate button on the right side of the page. This will take you to a secure site where you can make an online contribution. We appreciate all you do! ☞





QEW & Long-Range Planning

By Anne Mitchell

QEW is moving into an exciting period of its existence. At the October 2012 gathering, we reminisced about the first 25 years of the organization from its founding in 1987. Those at that first meeting in 1987 concluded, "There is a need for Friends to give forceful witness to the holiness of creation and to demonstrate in their lives the meaning of this testimony." The epistle from that gathering went on to say, "We believe right relationship with our natural environment is basic to the achievement of peace and a just social order, and the equitable distribution of the world's resources, both today and through generations to come."

At our October 2012 gathering, we asked ourselves whether QEW had fulfilled its mandate. We concluded that we still have work to do but we need to figure out what QEW uniquely offers alongside other Quaker environmental and non-governmental organizations. We also talked about the need for long-range planning to help us figure out QEW's future.

In January 2013 this was discussed again and in March 2013 we set up an ad hoc long-range planning committee (AHLRPC). The AHLRPC has a mandate of one year to work with the various standing committees and projects of QEW to develop a statement of where QEW wants to be in three to five years, along with the resources and skills needed to help us get there.

QEW wants to remain relevant to Quakers and others who are concerned with living in right relationship with Earth; yet there are many organizations with similar goals. What is unique about QEW?

Here are some of the answers we've heard so far: We want to engage and connect with Quakers, other

faith groups, and secular organizations who share our concerns. We want to deepen spiritually. We want to live our testimonies, change what we do and how we do it, and get in right relationship with Earth. We want to speak out. We want to be more relevant to young people. We want to use our website and social media more effectively.

We want to turn to our roots, pose the right queries and questions, and develop a Quaker response plan that gives us hope. We have already started. At the beginning of April, we submitted a 500-word statement on science, technology, and innovation to the Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC), which included three queries for government leaders to consider.

The Quaker Peace and Earthcare Committees of Australia have engaged in a similar quest. They have produced, "Towards a Vision of a Peaceful and Sustainable Australia: Quaker Voices," available now at www.quakers.org.au. Additionally, we know that FWCC has put out the Kabarak Call on Peace and Social Justice, which is available at www.saltandlight.org.

QEW first needs to figure out a vision for itself and then we can work with others to see how we can connect the dots for a peaceful and sustainable future.

If you have thoughts on what this vision for QEW should be or what you think is unique about QEW, please get in touch. You can contact me at anne@quakerearthcare.org or contact the clerk of the ad hoc Long Range Planning Committee, Roy Taylor at wrlldpeas@mindspring.com.

Thanks,

Anne Mitchell, General Secretary

Here are some of the answers we've heard so far: We want to engage and connect with Quakers, other faith groups, and secular organizations who share our concerns. We want to deepen spiritually. We want to live our testimonies, change what we do and how we do it, and get in right relationship with Earth. We want to speak out. We want to be more relevant to young people. We want to use our website and social media more effectively.

Welcome to QEW's Earthcare Center!

By Shelley Tanenbaum, Clerk

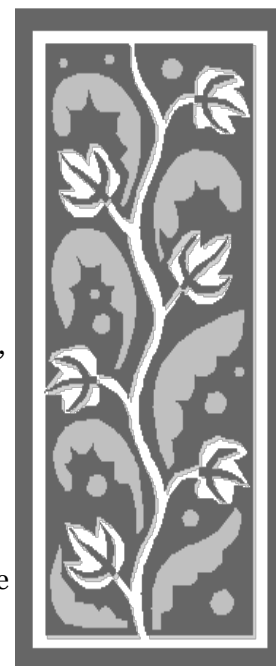
QEW Friends are invited to visit our Earthcare Center at Friends General Conference this summer, July 1-5, 2013. We are planning an interesting range of presentations every afternoon (except Wednesday, the FGC day of rest, when we'll show films). You'll find a schedule posted on our website when the presentation list is finalized, and at the Gathering you'll be able to get a schedule at the FGC information table.

Earth Center presentations feature Friends from across North America who are working in various ways to deepen our connections with the natural world. Each presentation will include time for questions and discussion. Come and meet Friends who are on the front lines doing direction action (EQAT), working with indigenous cultures (Boulder Friends), developing environmental and economic policies based on Quaker values (QIF), empowering young Friends (Pendle Hill YAF conferences), deepening our eco-spirituality (QEW), and teaching about solar power, permaculture, and sustainable agriculture.

On Wednesday, the FGC day of rest, we open our Earthcare Center to show inspiring films about nature, enjoy locavore snacks, and have a place to connect with Friends.

As a special project this year, we will also be hosting a series of morning sessions on Gathering for Deeper Relationship with Earth. Our ad-hoc committee on Friends Centering on Unity with Nature and our Spiritual Nurturance committee have prepared a series of worship-sharing sessions designed to help us explore and grow in our relationship with the natural world (see the box below for details). These sessions are open to all QEW Friends, and you can contact Eric Joy and Roy Taylor to find out more.

In addition to the afternoon presentations and the morning sessions, we also have a display room with information about environmental concerns and our work with Quaker Earthcare Witness. The display room will be open every afternoon from 1:30 – 5:00 pm. Come to learn what we have to offer and to meet fellow Friends who share your interests, leadings, and concerns. You'll meet a number of QEW Friends at the Earth Center, and we look forward to being with you!



Gathering for Deeper Relationship with Earth at FGC Gathering

"Our concern for the Earth is a spiritual one. We feel the need to examine our faith and practice in the context of this concern. We invite and celebrate the Light that each meeting has to shed on this." – Ben Lomond minute

"You cannot solve a problem from the same consciousness that created it. You must learn to see the world anew." – Albert Einstein

Purpose: Our intention is to create space at the FGC Gathering (the Gathering) for a time of visioning and worship. We will meet in the manner of Friends to invite and explore what it means to deepen our relationship and peace with ourselves, each other, nature, Earth, universe, all life spirit.

Description: We will meet daily during the morning workshop time at the Gathering, holding the time with a sense of structure (opening, sharing, queries and topics, discussion of possible actions, and closing, all within a sense of worship and nurture), and allowing ultimately for movement of spirit during our time together, in the manner of Friends. We intend to stay present to the paradox of creating enough structure to support meaningful work while allowing enough space for emerging joy and creativity to take form. We will sit in connective silent seeking together, listening for the guidance of the Light. Supported by our faith in what we collectively bring forth in the Light, we will invite a sense of unity as a gathered community during our shared time. Our processes may include extended silence indoors and outdoors, worship, worship sharing, threshing, creating queries, mini-sharings from experience and expertise, and structured talks and discussions to facilitate search for

See *Relationship*, page 11

Statement on Unity with Diversity



Dear Friends,

As both Friends and environmentalists we on the Spiritual Nurturance Committee of Quaker Earthcare Witness hold a variety of personal views, beliefs and approaches based in the variety of our backgrounds, traditions and experiences. We see it as good for QEW to endeavor to work with all who share our basic goals, both QEW participants and others.

For their own personal reasons Friends choose different language as they support and share in the work of QEW. Here are some examples: "In caring for nature we come closer to the Great Mystery." "The creative, beautiful earth is permeated with the sacred Ground of Being, the same Ground within which we dwell." "We are kin to the eagle and the oak and the rain and the sun; in this family we are loved and are called to love in return." "Jesus said the essence of faith is to love the Lord God and to love your neighbor; caring for all of the creation that God has so lovingly given us is an important way to express our love for God and others." "The ecosystem is our home, our body; we seek a life that affirms our unity with nature." Building with the forms of religious expression that speak to us, we unite in seeking a spiritual response to Earth's needs.

Within the Spiritual Nurturance Committee we have collectively lived out the experience of acknowledging diversity while seeking and remaining in unity. We value inclusivity in our relations with each other. We commit ourselves to trying to focus on the spirit rather than the letter, listening and speaking from the heart, and seeking and sharing from the heart, in the manner of Friends. We recommend this model to QEW for our work with one another and with other organizations. We offer the seeming paradox of diversity within the supportive and inclusive structure of our unity.

Even as we differ in how we characterize these issues, we are in unity on our support of each other individually and collectively and of the purposes expressed in the following words:

Purpose of the organization from the Articles of Incorporation of FCUN, now QEW:

1. To search and to help others to search for that life which affirms the unity of all creation.
2. To apply and to help others to apply Friends' practice to live in deep communion with all life spirit.
3. To be guided by and to help others to be guided by the light within us to participate in the healing of the earth.
4. To provide resources, networking, and support to yearly and monthly meetings of the Religious Society of Friends, and to others of whatever persuasion; to help them in their search for effective ways to achieve the above objectives.
5. To provide a reflective and energetic forum that will strengthen and deepen that spiritual unity with nature which values the integrity, diversity, and continuity of life on earth.

Vision & Witness of QEW from the amended Articles of Incorporation:

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 with the Earth.

In peace,

The Spiritual Nurturance Committee
of Quaker Earthcare Witness
December 11, 2012



Bridging Gaps and Proposing Next Steps

A book review by Mary Gilbert

Crisis of Global Sustainability, by Tapio Kanninen
#74 in the Routledge Global Institutions Series
Routledge, New York, NY, 10017, 2013

Maybe you're like me; you've heard of the book *Limits to Growth* and its warning that we can't have endless economic growth on a finite planet, but you haven't read it. Perhaps you also wonder why nobody seems to have paid attention to the book's caution that "business as usual" would lead to financial collapse in the first decades of the 21st century.

Tapio Kanninen's new book, *Crisis of Sustainability*, explains exactly how the side-lining of the idea of planetary limits came about and goes beyond that to suggest ways to stop it. Indeed, that side-lining is still going on and is responsible for much of the planetary pickle in which we now find ourselves. The decision-makers who should have been taking this warning seriously for the last 40 years are continuing to let us down.

Crisis of Sustainability is a sophisticated cautionary tale. The Club of Rome¹ published *Limits to Growth* in 1972, arousing both wide acclaim and wide criticism, as well as flat-out denial. Resistance came mainly from two groups: economic players who would undergo financial loss if they took it seriously; and professionals wedded to the mainstream paradigm in economics, who criticized the report's methodology. *Crisis of Sustainability* shows that we are facing today the worst-case scenarios presented in *Limits to Growth* back in 1972.

Three Examples of How the Crisis Happened

Crisis of Sustainability tells how vested interests have been protecting their profits for a long time. I had understood the Stockholm conference in 1972² to be a clear breakthrough for the Earth. However, Kanninen says, "The Declaration (on the Human Environment) was passed in spite of ...opposition from key states...which succeeded in taming the document's tone and ambition so that it conformed better to their national interests" (p. 60).

I thought the report of the Brundtland Commission in 1987³, which provided the definition of sustainable development now in use and spelled out the "Three Pillars of Sustainability" (economic, societal, and environmental) now much discussed at the UN, was another triumph. Kanninen says the reason the report was so widely accepted is that it "accepted the idea of environmental limits, but only because these limits were not seen in the report as a brake on economic development or growth" (p. 50).

I have also been told that the original Rio Earth Summit in 1992 was a cause for rejoicing, when the United States, under President George Bush, led the world in setting goals for protecting Earth. But again, the ambitious platform intended at the beginning of the conference was watered down. The strongly worded Earth Charter was not adopted. Kanninen quotes Simon Dresner⁴, saying that what the conference approved was "a lengthy and uninspiring piece of diplomatic jargon" (p. 63).



What Can be Done Now?

Kanninen says, "Understanding is the first step; the second is action" (p. 144). He has explained the delay in acceptance of the concept of limits to economic growth; now we can plan around the factors that have been proven not to work. The UN is bogged down with negotiations in which narrow national interest consistently trumps actions for the common good.

The idea of a Green Economy, which was central to but not endorsed at the June 2012 Rio+20 conference, encourages businesses to continue to grow but to do so in an environmentally friendly way. Kanninen quotes Elizabeth DeSombre,⁵ stating that "... the Rio Conference fully institutionalized the shift from seeing industry and wealth as the cause of environmental degradation to viewing them as solutions to environmental problems" (p. 64).

We are stuck with business and its best friend—finance—as dominating forces, however. One thing we can do is influence business design so that waste becomes the basis for new cash flow. In nature there is no waste, and nature should be our model.

We need to build a strong civil society, and that work is happening. Kanninen notes (p. 20) that at the World Social Forums, run by and for civil society, everyone understands the interconnections among what the business world still largely sees as separate issues. We need to open channels to hear what the world's people are saying. Some groups are creating "space" for civil society to function and platforms on which a united civil society can stand.

Evaluation and Recommendations

Crisis of Sustainability consists of 144 dense but readable pages. It is thoroughly footnoted and has a selected bibliography of a dozen especially recommended titles. Kanninen's presentation is level and factual and thorough, without passionate rhetoric, so you don't feel manipulated, just very well informed. I was challenged by the book's overlapping timelines. Kanninen keeps jumping back to the 1970s to fold in another ingredient, which is what happens when you are discussing a complex system where everything has a simultaneous effect on everything else. An appendix with an inclusive timeline might have been helpful.

Frankly, I loved this book! It was very alive to me because it addresses an area of my deep concern and fills a lot of mental gaps with an organized context

for what I already knew. Facts that were scattered now hang together for me. Conclusions I had been drawing about the inability of the UN to direct us out of the quagmire we have dug for ourselves are validated. Nation states are not capable of setting aside narrow frameworks based on their own perceived best interest and taking constructive action for the whole of society, to say nothing of the whole of the planet.

This book explains what went wrong and makes constructive suggestions for next steps. I would like to make *Crisis of Sustainability* required reading in all schools of business, and for the entire U.S. State Department as well as equivalent agencies in other countries.

About the Author: Tapio Kanninen

Tapio Kanninen is Senior Research Fellow at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at the Graduate Center (RBIIS) of The City University of New York and a Co-Director of the Project on Sustainable Global Governance at RBIIS. A long-time UN staff member Dr. Kanninen was Chief of the Policy Planning Unit in the Department of Political Affairs (1998–2005), Head of the Secretariat of Kofi Annan's five Summits with Regional Organizations and worked in a UNEP-funded project at the UN Statistical Office on establishing global framework for environmental statistics. ❧

¹The Club of Rome states that its mission is "to act as a global catalyst for change through the identification and analysis of the crucial problems facing humanity and the communication of such problems to the most important public and private decision makers as well as to the general public." <http://www.clubofrome.org/>.

²UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) Stockholm, 1972.

³Definition of Sustainable Development given in the Brundtland Commission report: "...development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations to meet their own needs." World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁴Simon Dresner, *The Principles of Sustainability* (London, Earthscan, 2008) 43-44.

⁵Elizabeth R. DeSombre, *Global Environmental Institutions* (London: Routledge, 2006) 27-28.

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understanding, leadings and effective actions. We are also open to walks and worship outdoors, small groups, singing, movement, dancing, and artistic work—all as we are led.

We experience a deep resonance with the theme for this year's FGC Gathering, "At the Growing Edges of Our Faith," and feel it challenges, encourages, and invites us to explore as a diverse and rich community our leadings—jointly and individually—around our care for Earth, our deepening spiritual relationships, and the ongoing work of QEW.

Who is welcome? We welcome all Friends. It is helpful to have some active experience in exploring unity with nature. As we come together in circles, we invite Friends to listen for inner stirrings and leadings, shining Light on the parts we—individually and collectively—can bring to the awakening call for spiritual concerns blossoming in loving actions for our planet.

Outcomes: We envision our gathering as a reflective and energetic forum that will strengthen and deepen our sense of continuing revelation, spiritual unity, peace, and effective deep action that values the integrity, diversity, and continuity of life on our planet. We hope our gathering will help plant the seeds of new and deepened relationship at many levels that will help to sustain us in our vision and practice when we return to our local meetings and continue our spiritual work for Earth.

For more information: Visit our website www.quakerearthcare.org/event/gathering-deeper-relationship-earth-fgc-gathering or contact eric maya joy, project coordinator, gfs@oro.net 530.477.1277. ❧

Visioning the future in a full earth

By David Millar

For some years it has been clear that environmental doom-saying, because it is a poor motivator, is a dead end. However true the predictions of global overheating, climate chaos, resource wars, pollution, and disease (with consequent mass death or displacement) may be, they lead most people to despair and denial rather than hope and resilience. Only a spiritual and emotional grounding (a transformation) gives us the power to change our ways. This not only moral teaching, but sound neuroscience.

A “full Earth” invalidates all previous human experience. No longer can we migrate or innovate our way out of the dilemma posed by infinite economic growth on a finite planet. A number of planetary boundaries have already been breached. The “developed” world of our generation is eating its way through the equivalent of 3.5 earths. This is something we need to address now. If pond scum doubles every hour, at the last hour when we could intervene, the pond still seems half clear. Apparently, not a problem.

A peculiar limit of the human mind makes it harder to develop an overall vision of future than to recall an (often imaginary) past Eden. Some of the world’s best scientists, eco-activists, ethical thinkers, and artists have been working on that vision. This article offers a rough guide to their work.

Starting with Language

The slogan “sustainable development” should be discarded, even though it is still a staple of the United Nations and business thinking. But viewed in the light of “full Earth,” its elements are self-contradictory. Although sustainable development was a necessary compromise in the UN’s Our Common Future, the 1992 Rio and subsequent Kyoto treaty, it is now outdated. Infinite growth is not sustainable. Quality of life, climate justice, and right sharing are sustainable. The much-touted “green economy” of Rio+20 failed because it proposed building the future by commodifying Earth’s commons; in fact it would finance climate action and better life for the world’s poor by selling licenses to pollute.

The new watchword is “resilience,” the ability of biodiversity to repair the web of life. In time the term may become overused and shopworn, but at this point it is a helpful guide.



Eco-Economics and Eco-Justice

Eco-economics was invented by Herman Daly (and others) emphasizing that production should serve social need and human society within the planet. On my blog, I have reported the astonishing variety of eco-economic thought (tagged EE) that has developed in recent decades. Much was simply a critique of standard economics—a critique from which Adbusters and Occupy have now made a protest movement. But some contributions in eco-economics have been positive and transformational.

Among these positive contributions are David Korten’s “great turning,” Vandana Shiva’s “earth democracy,” Via Campesina’s fight for food sovereignty, Blue Planet Project’s concept of water as a human right, the knowledge (and rights) of indigenous peoples partially recognized in UNDRIP, and World Future Council’s call for an Ombudsman for future generations. All of these efforts show a significant move toward human inclusiveness—or eco-justice, to use the current term. Desirable, but still incomplete. In the long view, planetary eco-justice involves a spiritual, “cosmic” relationship that is also scientific and natural: the commonwealth of all life.

Visions for Our Shared Future

Key overall visions have begun to emerge in the last decade. Almost all include not only a set of proposals but a human process as well:

- Earth Charter Initiative, earliest and most abstract;
- Peoples Sustainability Treaties, a bottom-up coalition emerging from the wreckage of Rio+20;
- Climate Justice Now! network of NGOs
- the Convention on Biodiversity Alliance—see its 2010 Declaration;
- the Transition Town movement;
- international Degrowth conferences;
- the World Social Forum’s creation of altermondial, or eco-justice, networks;

- the World Council of Churches June 2012 Bogor Call based on the six-year AGAPE Consultation (Alternative to Economic Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth).
- other ecumenical and interfaith bodies; Confucian, Hindu, Islamic, and Sikh green movements;
- Joanna Macy's Buddhist-inspired Work That Reconnects and her book with co-author Chris Johnston, *Active Hope*;
- collaborative publications such as New Economics Foundation's Other Worlds are Possible, Yes! Magazine, Orion's Thirty Year Plan, and the Post-Carbon Institute's Post Carbon Reader.

Get Involved

Friends respond to Earth's call for care in a variety of deep and rich ways. The Kabarak Call for Peace and Eco-Justice was approved by Friends World Congress in 2013, dedicating our efforts to peace and the repair of the world. The FWCC Living Waters gatherings seek to be "a practical expression for the ecological concerns of Friends worldwide, recognizing water as a precious and increasingly scarce resource." And the ongoing Circles of Discernment (CoDs) give Friends a voice and community in which they can follow the leadings toward effective and sustainable solutions. ☞

Editor's note: Read David's full article, with citations and notes, in the online version of BFC at www.quakerearthcare.org. This article was originally published on David's blog at <http://mecteam.blogspot.com/2012/08/visioning-future-in-full-earth.html>

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Baruch Spinoza in Holland was also uniting God and nature: "I could not separate God from Nature, as all of whom I have any knowledge have done." In his *Ethics* he mentioned "God or Nature" four times. Here is an example: "Nature does not act with an end in view; that eternal and infinite being we call God, or Nature, acts from the same necessity from which he exists." It is said Spinoza knew Quakers in Amsterdam and translated one of Margaret Fell's pamphlets from English to Hebrew. His friend and colleague, Peter Balling, wrote *Light on the Candlestick* in 1662 which represented Quaker views so well that they adopted it as their own. On July 24, 1678, the scientist Robert Hooke wrote in his diary, "Much discourse about Spinoza quakers."

As Friends were first gathering, experimental scientists were also gathering. In 1660 they started meeting as The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge. Founding members included relatives of Quakers Thomas Lower (Fox's son-in-law) and Anne Conway (a noted philosopher and friend of Fox). William Penn was a member and called on Friends to study nature: "The world is certainly a great and stately volume of natural things; and may be not improperly styled the hieroglyphics of a better: but alas! How very few leaves of it do we seriously turn over! This ought to be the subject of the education of our youth... It were happy if we studied Nature more in natural things; and acted according to Nature; whose rules are few, plain and most reasonable. Let us begin where she begins, go her pace, and close always where she ends, and we cannot miss of being good Naturalists."

Penn gave his views on science in a letter in 1683: "I value my selfe much upon ye good opinion of those ingenuous Gentlemen I know of ye Royall Society,

and their kind wishes for me and my poor Province: all I can say is that I and It are votarys to ye prosperity of their harmless and usefull Inquierys. It is even one step to Heaven to returne to nature, and though I love that proportion should be observed in all things, yett a naturall Knowledge, or ye Science of things from Sense and a carefull observation and argumentation thereon, reinstates men, and gives them some possession of themselves again; a thing they have long wanted by an ill tradition, too closely followed and ye foolish Credulity so Incident to men. I am a Greshamist throughout;" (The Royal Society met in Gresham College).

In QEW there are many Friends for whom science, religion and nature come together in a splendid package. Their vision is probably as old as humans. As Daniel A. Seeger, past director of Pendle Hill, recently wrote, "Both science and religion rest ultimately on our contemplation of the natural world.... To survey any beautiful scene without distraction is to become aware of an incredible creative process that has raised all things up from the formless dust, that infuses everything with vitality and energy, that maintains balance and lawfulness, and that illuminates each order of living things with a degree of wisdom suitable to its estate. We become aware that human existence is a part of this great web, we are humbled, and we ask what response is called for from us so that we might play our role properly in this great unfolding drama. Some religionists disparage what they call nature mysticism as a counterfeit spirituality. In truth, it is not a counterfeit spirituality but the foundation, the essence, and the core of the religious sensibility."

QEW is on a path that started with the birth of our Society. It is a broad path open to Friends of all varieties: scientists and nonscientists, theists and nontheists, Christians and nonChristians, and so on. Let us all join in loving each other and loving the rest of nature. ☞

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QEW: A Nature Walk for All Friends

by Os Cresson

One day in 1652 George Fox was concerned to demonstrate his unity with all creation. As he later described it in his journal, “[T]here came John Story to me, and lighted his pipe of tobacco, and, said he, ‘Will you take a pipe of tobacco,’ saying, ‘Come, all is ours’; and I looked upon him to be a forward, bold lad. Tobacco I did not take, but it came into my mind that the lad might think I had not unity with the creation, for I saw he had a flashy, empty notion of religion; so I took his pipe and put it to my mouth and gave it to him again to stop him lest his rude tongue should say I had not unity with the creation.” They may have been referring to a well-known Ranter saying, “If God be all things,... then he is this Dog, this Tobacco-pipe, he is me and I am him.”

Nature mysticism is a broad path that was taken by many in the time of Fox. Rufus Jones had a life-long interest in this phenomenon. He wrote, “There was... a strong wave of pantheistical sentiment abroad, both on the Continent and in England.... The widespread pantheistic-mystical sects of the fourteenth century were never exterminated; they were rather driven down out of sight and became a submerged stream of influence. There were pretty plain up-wellings of this stream during the Reformation period in Europe in the sixteenth century, and... it revived in England a century later.”



In 1650 Jacob Bauthumley (pronounced Bottomley) published a pamphlet containing this passage: “I see that God is in all Creatures, Man and Beast, Fish and Fowle, and every green thing, from the highest Cedar to the Ivey on the wall; and that God is the life and being of them all, and that God doth really dwell, and if you will personally; if he may admit so low an expression in them all, and hath his Being no where else out of the Creatures.” Bauthumley was severely punished for his vision of the unity of God, humankind and the rest of creation. George Fox visited him in jail in 1650 and, in return, Bauthumley visited Fox in jail in 1655. Later in life Bauthumley was described as a Quaker librarian in Leicester.

Gerrard Winstanley, leader of the Digger community who became a Quaker, wrote in 1652, “To know the secrets of nature is to know the works of God; and to know the works of God within the creation is to know God himself, for God dwells in every visible work or body.” This recalls a line by Jacob Boehme, “(W)e show you the Manifestation of the Deity through Nature.” In the next century Quaker botanist John Bartram wrote, “My head runs all upon the works of God in nature. It is through that telescope I see God in his glory.”

See Nature Walk, page 13