



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

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Grab a Shovel, Find Some Dirt, & Join the Good Food Revolution

By Justin Mog, Ph.D.
Louisville Friends Meeting



"I am done with apologies. If contrariness is my inheritance and destiny, so be it." —Wendell Berry (from *Farming: A Hand Book*, 2011)

"Then I started hearing about other people who were even more independent than I dared to dream: people...turning ghettos into edenic gardens. ... Successful contrary farming depends crucially on reducing manual labor to a minimum by skill instead of expensive machines and making the hard work that remains more enjoyable. This is particularly important for those of us who must combine farm work with another job or career to make a living." —Gene Logsdon (from *The Contrary Farmer*, 1995)

Like my fellow Kentuckian, Wendell Berry, and my fellow Ohio native, Gene Logsdon, I consider myself a bit of a contrary farmer. I reject the notion that agriculture can occur only in the wide-open countryside on farms stretching for hundreds of acres. I question our insistence that our food must always be produced as a for-profit venture, reliant on considerable investments in acreage, heavy machinery, fossil fuels, genetically modified seeds, herbicides, pesticides, fungicides, and—quite literally as a result of all this—even suicides among heavily indebted, hopeless farmers. I'm convinced there's a much better way to produce the delicious, life-giving food we all need, and the solution isn't dependent on finding more money, better

technology, more land, improved genetics, or more energy. The solution is dependent upon us.

We need to change the way we think about food and our relationship to the land. We need to stop waiting for someone else to feed us. We need to take ownership of our food system and control of our common destiny. It is time for all of us to start playing a role in the good food revolution. We need to become food producers, and not just food consumers. We need to relearn the skills that our grandparents held as second nature. We need to start growing, gleanings, foraging, processing, preserving, preparing, and sharing food again.

See *Dirt*, page 3

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BeFriending Creation

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VISION AND WITNESS

WE ARE CALLED to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God. WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God's Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right, and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the earth's ecological integrity. WE PROMOTE these truths by being patterns and examples, by communicating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship to the earth.

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Earthcare Calendar

August 10, 2014. Deadline for article submissions for September-October 2014 *BeFriending Creation*.

Join the People's March for Climate Change!



Come join us September 21, 2014 as we participate in what is being billed as the largest climate rally ever. It is time to stand up and be counted. Quaker Earthcare Witness is one of the many sponsors of this event. The march is scheduled for the same week that many heads of state and their ministers are in New York for the United Nations Climate Summit. The expected large turnout will demonstrate to the politicians in this country and to the world leaders that we are serious about making the changes that are necessary to alter the course of climate change.

The march is scheduled as one of many events that are taking place in NYC in the lead up to the UN summit. One of the differences in this event is the number of faith communities that are joining in the effort to support, mobilize, and gather to send a message to the world leaders of the moral responsibility to act.

Find out more and sign up to participate at <http://peoplesclimate.org/march/>. Check the QEW website to find out where we will meet so we can march together.



Dirt, from page 1

When was the last time you enjoyed a meal that you not only had a hand in creating, but that you could create again without the unacknowledged luxuries of our destructive modern age? Without ingredients shipped in from hundreds and thousands of miles away? Without mega-stores offering any type of food imaginable any time of the year? Without a seemingly endless supply of fossil fuels, agrochemicals, water, and exploitable labor? The inconvenient truth, of course, is that none of these are limitless and that, ultimately, our success as a species will require us to one day treat all of these things as the luxuries they truly are. To get there, we must all learn the true value and meaning of work. We must get our hands dirty in the act of understanding how to once again sustain ourselves without convenience. We must build the relationships necessary to bind communities together in order to weather the impending storms of climate change, financial collapse, social disruption, and peak everything.

I write these words, not as a purely idealistic academic, but as man with dirt very much under his nails and hands roughened by working the soil, the orchard, and the apiary. I am proud to say that I am an urban homesteader and a subsistence farmer. I wish to reclaim the dignity inherent in subsistence (or “peasant”) farming. I have savored the incomparable pleasures of food that I have grown, foraged, preserved, and prepared by my own hands and in communion with like-minded urban growers. Nothing I have ever done has filled me with more satisfaction, security, empowerment, and conviction. Though my body grows weary, I have never felt more alive.

I have never learned more. This vocation is even more enriching than time in a classroom or a library because it allows me to learn with my entire being and not just my intellect. In the garden, orchard and apiary, I am only successful when I engage my entire body in the work, utilizing all five senses and losing myself in the act. My soul is equally nourished by reconnecting with the land, with the cycles of life, and with the biorhythms that truly sustain us. I’m sure I’ve learned more about sustainability by carefully observing my beehives than I could ever comprehend from the writings, artistic creations, and other works of the human mind. There is much to be learned about living in right relationship with the Earth if we are quiet and humble enough to listen carefully.

The great irony here is that, even in a world that we are actively destroying with our voracious appetite for too much of everything, there is one thing we truly do not have enough of. We do not have enough farmers. Our once proud nation has been hemorrhaging

farmers and farms for decades as we pursue a dangerously mythical future separated from toil, nature, and connection. Those left behind on the land are told to “get big or get out” and are sold a bill of goods when it comes to agricultural inputs that promise little more than debt servitude.

But times are changing and a new generation is rising. Young people’s interest in farming is swelling in proportion to disaffection with the shallow trappings of modern life and a hunger for genuine connection and real productivity. New ideas about how and where to grow food are taking root in our under-invested urban cores like right here in “Possibility City,” Louisville, Kentucky. Grassroots community organizations like Louisville Grows, 15 Thousand Farmers, and Sustainable Agriculture of Louisville are helping reacquaint citizens with the skills and creativity necessary to grow food. Projects like La Minga and the Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program are helping connect disadvantaged growers with land and tools. New Roots and the Food In Neighborhoods Community Coalition are striving to ensure that the benefits of this good food revolution are shared equitably and don’t just further privilege those who happen to live in the wealthier parts of town. Even students at the University of Louisville are taking time out from their academic studies and part-time jobs to manage vegetable gardens, fruit trees, greenhouses, rainwater catchment and composting systems.

The seeds have been sown. It is up to all of us to nurture them and share the bounty. It is time for us to turn off the television, shut down the computer, and put down our mobile distractions. Grab a shovel, find some dirt, and bring your friends. This is going to be the most vibrant, life-affirming, sustainable time in our lives. ∞

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A Meditation on Seed and Seedtime

By Tom Small

Transformation comes from within, and seeds have mastered the art. —Scott Chaskey

We are all gardeners: gardeners of the soul, of the soil, of the earth; gardeners of seeds and of words, the progenitors of growth and of story. We are good gardeners or poor gardeners, careful or careless of the soil and spirit from which we live. Some of us are closely engaged in our practice, others are more remote—gardeners only by proxy.

Virtually all of us, expelled from the garden that was our heritage and birthright, seek to recover, somehow, a seed that will germinate and flower, nourish and sustain us. In that seed is the genesis of contemplative action, its harbinger and its sign.

Scott Chaskey, like Wendell Berry a farmer, poet, and storyteller, offers us a path and a process in his new book, *Seedtime: On the History, Husbandry, Politics, and Promise of Seeds* (Rodale, 2014). Chaskey weaves together genetics, agriculture, myths, dreams, cosmology, and poetry, Joseph Campbell and Vandana Shiva, Hindu cosmology and Native American mythology, polemic and personal experience “gained on the ground.”

Something Wonderful Yet To Be

Chaskey begins his book with a poetic epigraph, “Fair seedtime had my soul,” the line which launches William Wordsworth into his personal epic on the “Growth of a Poet’s Mind.” Seedtime is the time of planting, germination, and new growth. Seeds are both progenitor and memory of life. Words are the memory of culture. In words and seeds, “nature yet remembers what was so fugitive” (Wordsworth, “Ode: Intimations of Immortality”).

For Jane Goodall, a seed is a time capsule—a compendium of information to be remembered. For Thoreau, it’s an expectation of something wonderful yet to be: “Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.” Indeed, he marvels, “The very earth itself is a granary and a seminary.”

“Seeds, like words,” writes Scott Chaskey, “behave like capricious and autonomous beings.” A word, like germ plasm, or like a stem cell, or like a seed, can give

rise, as conditions change over the course of time and evolution, to wondrous, unexpected variety and diversification. The stem word *smei*, remarks Lewis Thomas, metamorphoses into our words “smile” and “miracle”—an unexpected but significant relationship. The root word *pri*, marvels Rebecca Solnit, transforms into Sanskrit *priya*, meaning dear or precious, and Germanic *frijaz*, meaning beloved, as well as *fridu*, meaning peace, and *frithus*, with our modern variant, “free.” Also, into Old English *friond* and our modern variant, “friend.”

The Intelligence of Words and Seeds

Thomas Hardy invokes another wonderfully fertile word in his line, “the ancient pulse of germ and birth.” *Pulse*

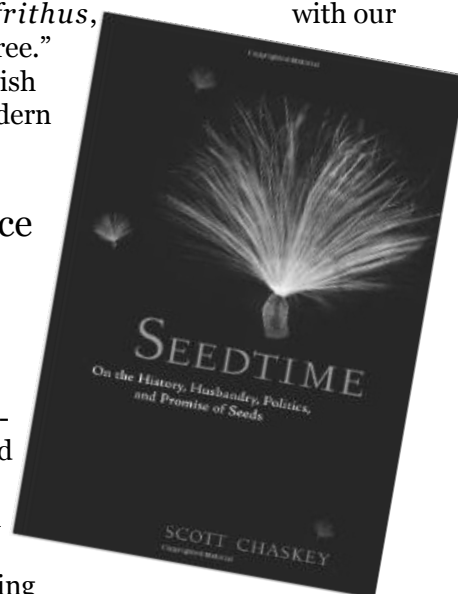
signifies the pulsating flow of lifeblood, and also the edible seeds of pod-bearing plants, such as beans and peas, miraculous nitrogen-fixers that nourish the soil, other plants, and countless creatures, including us.

“So, if we give words space to perform,” concludes Chaskey, “perhaps we stand a chance to inherit their intelligence. This seems like a wiser choice to me, rather than to force our intelligence upon them.”

Gary Snyder defines intelligence as “the information passed through the system.” A seed is a compendium of such information, the inheritor, genetically, of an entire history of life. “We are literally,” says Gary Paul Nabhan, “living off the fruits of other creatures’ labors—those of the birds, bugs, and beasts that loosely coevolved with seed plants over the last hundred million years.” Such fruits are the gift not only of nature herself but also careful stewardship, plant-breeding, and seed-saving by countless generations of indigenous peoples and farmers with an intuitive sense of natural processes.

We Are Sustained from Beneath

For Snyder, therefore, the ultimate “practice of the wild” is giving thanks for, among other foods, the “innumerable little seeds” that are “sacrifices to the food-chain.” Our meal and our sustenance are, in the grace



he offers at table, “The work of many people/ And the sharing of other forms of life.” *All* the generations of people, and *all* the forms of life. As the *Bhagavad Gita* tells us, everything sacrifices for everything else. We are *sustained* (literally held up from underneath) by the life beneath our feet, which comprises all that there is, all that has been, or will be. Seeds, insists Vandana Shiva, are the “repository of life’s future evolution.”

Following Vandana Shiva’s lead, Chaskey inveighs against Monsanto and the megacorporations that want global control of seed. “Freedom of Seed,” for both writers, involves the right to save seed, breed new varieties, exchange seed freely, and preserve vanishing diversity in the face of corporate monocultures both in the fields and of the mind. For Vandana Shiva, *bija*, seed, is the new *charka*, Gandhi’s spinning wheel, involving his practice for achieving *swaraj*, self-rule, freedom from empire and corporate hegemony. Like the spinning wheel, seed is what Wendell Berry calls a *complete* action, both a powerful symbol of self-regulation and an action for achieving it.

Nothing Wasted or Degraded

Vandana Shiva and Wendell Berry both invoke the “law of return”; we must return not only thanks but also sustenance to the soil and its creatures, wherefrom we receive our sustenance. In this time when, as Kenny Ausubel observes, we are burning books—seeds, species, whole ecosystems—we haven’t even read yet, our task is to observe this law. The “wheel of life” *must* be kept turning and returning, with nothing wasted or degraded. Life depends on continuous returning, the universal cycle of unfolding and enfolding.

Physicists, mathematicians, and cosmologists insist that the seeds of time and change involve and enfold everything else. “In a sense,” observes mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, “everything is everywhere at all times.”

Nothing and Yet Everything

Open the tiny seed of a banyan tree, Satish Kumar’s mother told him. What do you find there? Nothing. And yet everything. A marvelous tree of many trunks and many stories waits quietly, enfolded, in potential, for the right conditions to begin a unique unfoldment, its own expression of a hidden order that involves the entire universe. And so it is with any seed, including ours. “All the matter of our bodies, from the very first,” says physicist David Bohm, “enfolds the universe in some way” (*Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, 2002).

Although I do not fully comprehend his quantum-theory mathematics or the teachings of his spiritual mentor Krishnamurti, I love the cosmic vision of David Bohm, his sense of undivided wholeness in flowing movement. The true meaning of meditation, he offers, “implies an original and creative act of perception into all aspects of the mental and physical, both through the senses and through the mind.” In such a holistic contemplative act lies the whole secret of gardening.

Let Us Cultivate Our Garden

Like Goethe, let us seek, in the growth and *metamorphosis* of plants, a realization that “everything has equal rights to a common centre which manifests its hidden existence precisely through this harmonic



relationship between every part and itself.”

Like Thoreau, let us have “faith in a seed.” Like Chaskey and Wordsworth, let us cherish the “fair seed-time” which, from soil and silence, nourishes the soul, the garden, and the body. ♪

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music; there is a dark
Inscrutable workmanship that reconciles
Discordant elements, makes them cling together
In one society.

--Wordsworth, *The Prelude or, Growth of a Poet's Mind*, I, 340-344

Who alive can say
‘Thou art no poet; may'st not tell thy dreams’?
Since every man whose soul is not a clod
Hath visions, and would speak, if he had loved
And been well nurtured in his mother tongue.

--John Keats, *The Fall of Hyperion*, I, 11-15

Editor’s note: Get more information about the authors and sources mentioned in this article by reading it online at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/meditation-seed-and-seedtime>.





Kicking Over the Traces and Restoring Connections

By Ruth A. Small

“Indeed, it is when one approaches agriculture from any other issue than that of health that one may be said to be off the subject.” Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*

While reading *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, Daphne Miller, M.D. began underlining more and more passages from a chapter titled, “The Body and the Earth,” riddling its pages with a surfeit of pencil marks and notations (Miller, xii).

With Miller’s medical training and experience as a Professor of Medicine, two sentences particularly caught her attention: “Our bodies are moving particles of the earth, joined inextricably both to the soil and to the bodies of other living creatures. It is hardly surprising, then, that there should be some profound resemblances between our treatment of our bodies and our treatment of the earth” (Berry, 97). Miller felt moved by the author’s perspective and decided to make a pilgrimage to his Kentucky homestead to converse with the poet, storyteller, culture critic, activist, visionary, sixth-generation farmer, and famed author—Wendell Berry.

As a medical professional, Miller wanted to find the connections between farming, medicine, and health, and to incorporate “new paradigms for healing” into her practice (Miller, 2). She arranged to visit a number of innovative farms across the United States to converse with farmers and learn about their holistic practices. Her book *Farmacology: What Innovative Family Farming Can Teach Us About Health and Healing*, tells the story of her experiences, weaving together these conversations, research by biomedical scientists, and her own observations and insights.

Miller sought out farmers who are trying to make a difference in agriculture, recover agricultural meth-

ods from the past, replenish the soil, and live healthy lifestyles in harmony with the Earth. She visited farms like: 1) Jubilee Biodynamic Farm, near Seattle, Washington; 2) Rockin’ H organic, a pesticide-free ranch in the Missouri Ozarks; 3) two contrasting farms, Heartland Egg and Arkansas Egg, both part of the Arkansas egg production industry; 4) Scribe Winery in Sonoma County CA, that utilizes natural, or Integrated Pest Management (IPM); 5) *La Familia Verde*, an inner city gardening project in Bronx, NY; and, 6) Morning Myst herb farm near Fruitland, Washington, where natural aromatic “hydrosols” for skin health care are produced. Most farms gave Miller new appreciation and awareness of farming practices that fostered wholeness: renewed body-mind connections with earth and spirit; engendered connectivity and reversed isolation; and, favoring natural, earth-oriented health alternatives, loosened ties to the medical industry.

I share Miller’s interest in a healthy organic diet, natural health and healing, and sources of healthy food, so once I started reading *Farmacology*, it was difficult to set it aside. I’m also a fan of Wendell Berry’s writing. After reading Miller’s Introduction, “Kicking Over the Traces,” I searched for my copy of Berry’s *The Unsettling of America*, to read the chapter which had moved Miller so profoundly. Berry’s powerful prose—deep, insightful, and moving—has plenty of food for thought, whether you are a medical doctor, health advocate, or someone mindful of ecological challenges we face locally and globally.

Kicking Over the Traces

In *Farmacology* Miller mentions one of Berry’s remarks to her: “You doctors who kicked over the traces interest me a lot” (Miller, xiii). The unfamiliar phrase,

“kicked over the traces,” suggests numerous images and notions. In the context of Miller’s “Introduction,” which provides details of her life, “traces” could refer to the subtle impressions one acquires from education and enculturation. The meaning of this expression, however, actually derives from an agricultural context familiar to Berry. *The American Heritage Dictionary* and *The McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs* cite this 19th-century figure of speech as meaning, to “get rid of restraints,” in reference to the harnesses that attach an animal to a pulled vehicle. So, for example, the horse that kicks its legs over the leather harness straps has gone “out of control,” having cast “authority” aside. The “traces,” all restraints, have been kicked aside. Disencumbered, she’s free to kick up her heels.

Restoring Connections

Wendell Berry’s interest is in kicking over the traces of industrialized, corporatized society, which causes fragmentation and isolation. Miller’s work exemplifies the process of freeing herself and her clients from burdens of the industrialized, commercialized, profit-oriented medical system. When Berry discusses the “profound resemblances between our treatment of our bodies and our treatment of the earth,” he’s talking about how damaging and alien our medical and modern agricultural systems are to all of its inhabitants and to the earth itself, how fragmenting our competitive economic system is to individuals, to community, and to wholeness.

Consider these reflections on health, ecology, healing, agriculture and wholeness from Wendell Berry’s essay:

“The modern urban-industrial society is based on a series of radical disconnections between body and soul, husband and wife, marriage and community, community and the earth. At each of these points of disconnection the collaboration of corporation, government and expert sets up a profit-making enterprise that results in the further dismemberment and impoverishment of the Creation” (137).

Healing opens and restores the “connections among the various parts – in this way restoring the ultimate simplicity of their union. When all the parts of the body are working together, are under each other’s influence, we say that it is whole; it is healthy. The same is true of the world, of which our bodies

are parts. The parts are healthy insofar as they are joined harmoniously to the whole” (110).

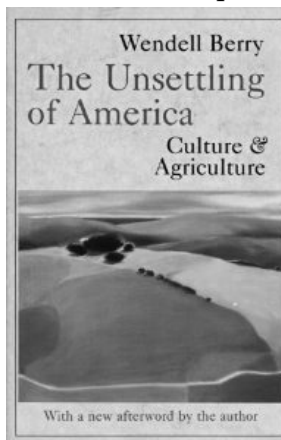
Our bodies are “not distinct from the bodies of plants and animals, which are involved in the cycles of feeding and in the intricate companionships of ecological systems and of the spirit. They are not distinct from the earth, the sun and moon, and the other heavenly bodies” (103).

“If the farmer fails to understand what health is, his farm becomes unhealthy; it produces unhealthy food which damages the health of the community.” The community “is a network, a spherical network, by which each part is connected to every other part . . . an error introduced anywhere in the network manifests beyond the scope of prediction; consequences occur all over the place and each consequence breeds further consequences” (110).

“Treatment . . . would logically consist in the restoration of these connections...” (111).

“It is impossible, ultimately, to preserve ourselves apart from our willingness to preserve other creatures, or to respect and care for ourselves except as we respect and care for other creatures; and, most to the point of this book, it is impossible to care for each other more or differently than we care for the earth” (123).

Having realized that everything is connected to everything else, Berry is committed to manifesting that practice in reality: restoring broken connections, regenerating and healing the earth, and reviving community and wholeness. Miller and most of the farmers whom she includes in her book are encouraging examples of those who have kicked over the traces. ♪



Take QEW to Your Yearly Meeting!

Visit our website for resources you can download and print for displays. And email Katherine [katherine@quakerearthcare.org] to receive copies of our latest trifolds to share with Friends.

Greetings from Friendly Mystics

Greetings to Friends everywhere from the participants in “Naming Our Spiritual Condition: The Second Annual Gathering of Friendly Mystics,” organized by What Canst Thou Say (WCTS) which is a Quaker journal, a meeting for worship in print.

During our first annual gathering in June of 2013, a leading arose to “Name the Spiritual Condition of the World.” Over the course of the year by blog and email, we discerned that before we could name the spiritual condition of the world, we had to name our own spiritual condition.

Just as at the first gathering, we met at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. We were housed in student housing and the College furnished meals and meeting rooms. It was a homecoming for some participants who had attended Earlham in earlier years. The first two days repeated the structure of the first gathering as we shared our stories. Each day included worship, small group worship-sharing, and an ongoing art exhibit. The gathering served us by providing a safe space to share our mystical experiences, which some felt was not always a comfortable thing to do in their home meetings.

There were no plenaries, committee meetings, or Meetings for Worship for Business. Instead we focused on sharing our stories. Meeting each other has enabled us to build relationships among mystics coast to coast and it has brought old friends together.

Participants were invited to create Interest Groups. Topics included: Meeting for Healing, Refiner’s Fire, Dreams and Such, Tai Chi and Qi Gong, and Why I



The Presence in the Midst, by J. Doyle Penrose, 1916

Live in Belize and Other Stories of Healing.

A highlight of the gathering was an Open Mic night that featured original poetry, stories, and singing. Toward the end of the evening, as a performer began her healing dance, music was spontaneously added, and everyone got up and danced.

We worshiped with Clear Creek Monthly Meeting at the Stout Memorial Meetinghouse on campus. Following lunch we said “good-bye” to the few participants who did not stay for the extended worship, and those remaining gathered to begin the work of naming our spiritual condition.

It was Pentacost Sunday afternoon and we met in the second floor Coate Library, which we christened the “Upper Room.” Over the next two days in extended worship and worship-sharing, one by one we spoke from the silence. As one participant summed it up, “I went to this meeting of mystics who don’t want to be called “mystics,” who want to do something, but they don’t know what that is, and they want to do it again next year.” ☞

You’re Invited! Join Us at the QEW Annual Gathering

We hope you’ll consider joining us this fall and help form the goals and projects that are ahead for QEW. What do you feel are the key issues for us to be engaged in, and how can we best witness in the world during 2015 and beyond? We work toward nothing less than a spiritual transformation within the Society of Friends, so that eco-justice and environmental integrity guide us.

This fall our Steering Committee, and greater QEW members and caring others, will meet at Pendle Hill for our annual gathering from October 2 –5. Join us for worship, connections, sharing stories, and generating ideas. Our time together includes presentations

that always inspire and inform. This year one presentation will be given by high school recipients of one of our mini-grants; they will share their experiences at an environmental work camp in Mexico. Other speakers are still under discussion, so check our website for updates.

All QEW Friends are welcome! To register, go to this secure page on our QEW site: <https://secure.quakerearthcare.org/civCRM/event/register?reset=1&id=7>

We look forward to seeing you at the QEW annual gathering! Contact Shelley (shelley@quakerearthcare.org) with questions or requests for scholarships. ☞

The Concerns of Global Indigenous Peoples Today



United Nations Permanent Forum
on Indigenous Issues

By Mary Gilbert, June 21, 2014

The bottom line for the indigenous peoples of the world is their sovereignty and the recognition of that sovereignty. Despite, as one man put it, “choosing or being forced to live” within the borders of nation-states, and in many cases holding citizenship there, indigenous peoples hold dear their languages, traditions, ways of living on the Earth and identity as peoples. They have in common the fact that their lands were invaded and claimed as territories by conquerors, mostly European, who considered themselves superior. The arguments behind these actions were justified by what is now referred to as the Doctrine of Discovery. (For more information on the Doctrine of Discovery see http://www.nyym.org/?q=doc_of_disc_factsheet.)

By means of many kinds of force the indigenous peoples of the world have been reduced in numbers, lost land that had sustained them for centuries, and endured denigration and poverty. The policies behind these forces have manifested in an ethnocide that involves general shame and despair.

In recent decades, because of increased possibilities of communication and the assistance of the United Nations, indigenous peoples (IPs) have found each other and formed sometimes difficult but quite strong alliances. When I began attending meetings at the UN in 2000, IPs had achieved recognition as one of nine Major Groups identified at Rio in 1992 as components of civil society. A year later I witnessed the excitement in the halls when the UN General Assembly (UNGA) announced its decision to host and support a Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (PFII) to begin the following year. The PFII has allowed IPs from all over to meet face to face for two weeks every year, articulate common ground, strengthen connections and consider strategies. Together they are engaged in an uphill climb against years of history.

UNDRIP

The most important global event in the Indigenous world was passage in 2007 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). (For text of UNDRIP go to http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf.) UNDRIP is an “aspirational document.” Like other UN Declarations on Rights it has no force of law but it can be referred to as a standard and be cited in judicial decisions. The Declaration is being translated into all indigenous languages, and widely disseminated and taught.

UNDRIP calls for the “free, prior and informed consent” of IPs before any action is taken that will affect them. In spite of this, land dispossession and rights violations are happening on all inhabited continents, as corporations try to implement extractive industries, bio-fuel plantations, large hydroelectric facilities, and even playgrounds for the rich.

A PFII study on how well UNDRIP is being implemented has shown discouraging results. Non-indigenous persons whose work impacts indigenous people and programs often don’t know about UNDRIP and how it applies to their work. Many indigenous people don’t yet know that UNDRIP exists, that it articulates their rights, and can potentially be of help. Education about UNDRIP is needed everywhere, among UN agencies and departments, governments, police forces, soldiers, and citizens in general.

It is crucially important to get laws on the books that incorporate basic rights and that clarify title to land. Written title was not an issue before colonialism came along with its rules about ownership. However, as one speaker asserted, “There is direct continuity with colonialism. The master/slave relationship is still there. The constitutions and laws may be in place but there is no way to have them enforced.”

Continued on next page

Current work

In 2010 the UNGA determined to hold a World Conference on Indigenous Peoples at its September 2014 meeting. This will be the first time the governments of the world will focus on how nations-states should implement UNDRIP. The IPs have been preparing. In addition to seven regional meetings, in June of 2013 600 indigenous representatives gathered in Alta, Norway for a Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. (To locate Alta see: <http://www.visitnorway.com/us/where-to-go-us/northern-norway/alta/>.) This meeting produced the Alta Outcome Document, intended as the foundational basis for the World Conference. The Alta Outcome document identifies four themes of paramount importance:

- indigenous peoples' lands, territories, resources, oceans and waters;
- implementation of the rights of indigenous peoples and UN action to support it;
- indigenous peoples' priorities for development with free, prior and informed consent;
- relationship between governments, indigenous peoples and extractive industries regarding participation, access to decision-making and distribution of income.

In September of 2013, the Alta Outcome Document was submitted as an attachment to a letter to the Secretary-General requesting that the document be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly. The letter was signed by the Permanent Representatives to the UN of nine nation-states. To read the letter and the very informative 8-page Alta Outcome Document, go to <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/6661056.28013611.html>.

In spite of this, UNGA's plans for the Conference were proceeding without the involvement of IPs. A major North American indigenous group has withdrawn from participation and asked that the Conference be cancelled. Those remaining involved are demanding "full, equal and effective participation," and a compromise is being worked out.

The President of UNGA is working on the Outcome Document for the World Conference now. (When you hang around the UN for any period of time, you discover that the Outcome Documents, which often take months of preparation, are actually negotiated in advance and only tweaked at the big meetings.) He has appointed two indigenous representatives and two representatives from nation-states to assist in creating a draft. Three open, interactive hearings are scheduled, along with additional informal meetings for easier dialogue. I just attended the first of these meetings.

IPs are united in stating that the Alta Outcome Document, which truly represents the heart of their concerns, should be the basis of the September meeting, and should be appended to whatever eventually gets approved at the World Conference.

Our role

As non-indigenous supporters of IPs we have a responsibility to become informed ourselves and to educate others, and then to act responsibly as we are able. I identify four areas to study:

1. The Doctrine of Discovery – The Global Indigenous Women's Caucus strongly urges that we teach all people the history of the Doctrine of Discovery, how the taking of land and genocidal practices against IPs were justified and now in many places underlie aspects of "the Law of the Land." We can work with any appropriate groups we belong to, encouraging joining with many other groups in public repudiation of the Doctrine.
2. UNDRIP – This Declaration is both aspirational and inspirational. It is the result of over 20 years of hard work and should be the ethical basis for human interaction in general.
3. The Alta Outcome Document – Here is the agreed prioritization of global indigenous concerns at present.
4. *Sumac Kawsay* / *Vivir bien* – *Sumak kawsay*, translated into Spanish as *Vivir Bien*, is an ancient Quechua phrase meaning "good living" or the "good life." It is a way of living in harmony within communities, ourselves, and most importantly, our living, breathing environment. *Sumak kawsay* promotes regeneration and re-growth. It embodies community and well-being, and a co-existence with nature. *Sumak kawsay* is embedded in the ethical values of indigenous cultures. I have found a form of this concept present in every indigenous culture about which I've learned.

I would like to end this essay with a quote from Mario Aredea, representative for three Indigenous Peoples in South America, who spoke of "... our own god, which is in all things and all places, in the four directions, the plants, the animals, in the air, the sun, the moon, in each grain of corn. Everything, absolutely everything is part of our god...." Aredea doesn't limit the realm of his god to living species; he sees that the distinction between living and non-living forms is blurry and unreal, and that the divine is inherent in all Creation. If our societies can learn this in time, we may survive. ♡

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towns, direct action, and young Friends.

QEW is lifting up climate change as a crucial issue of our times. In 2013, we dedicated our November issue of Befriending Creation to divestment from fossil fuels and we have added a section to our website to promote information exchange on this topic (<http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/fossil-free-friends>). Also, the QEB included in this issue focuses on the issue of climate change. Internationally, our United Nations Working Group is closely following the construction of a set of Sustainable Development Goals that will be part of the “Post-2015 Agenda.” We also support QUNO’s “quiet diplomacy” in spirit, as well as providing practical help attending climate negotiations through our UNFCCC accreditation.

QEW is a co-sponsor of the large People’s Climate March, September 21, in New York City, aimed at demonstrating an outpouring of public support for international action on climate change—read more at <http://peoplesclimate.org>. Check the QEW website and Facebook for information about where to meet so we can march together. This march precedes a UN summit that will be held on the 23rd. In addition, I will also be attending an interfaith forum at Union Theological Seminary during the march weekend, which will culminate in a statement from 200 faith leaders to the UN. We are coordinating our efforts with both FCNL and QUNO.

This fall our Steering Committee will be meeting at Pendle Hill, PA, October 2-5 (register here). You don’t have to be on the Steering Committee to be part of this gathering: come meet members of our network, hear presentations by featured speakers, and help us plan for next year.

Our activities are on the rise, but our income is not. Like most non-profit organizations, we are experiencing a plateau in donations this year, when we should be seeing a rise to keep up with our growing network. Please consider making a mid-year donation. Here are ways you can promote Earthcare:

- Distribute QEW information at your monthly and yearly Meetings: Spread the Word!
- Tell us what you are doing, so we can share your stories and inspire others
- Contribute to QEW—consider becoming a monthly donor
- Invite our Clerk or our General Secretary to visit your monthly or yearly Meeting, give a workshop, or speak at a plenary

Thank You! ♡



Donate online by going to www.quakerearthcare.org and clicking the Donate button.



YES, I’d like to show my support for QEW!

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____

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I want to contribute \$100____; \$200____; \$500____; Other _____

My check/cheque is enclosed. Payable to QEW, P.O. Box 6787, Albany, CA, 94706

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Thank you, Friends!

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What's Up With QEW – Mid-Year Report



By Shelley Tanenbaum, General Secretary

Our world is heating up, quite literally—and QEW is ramping up our activities and enlarging our network to address this challenge. More than ever, our network of Friends carrying concerns for Earthcare is needed to share information and stories, provide support, encourage spiritual growth and inspire action.

We are increasing QEW-sponsored visits to Meetings. All representatives are encouraged to bring QEW informational displays and publications to their Yearly Meetings. One of our representatives, Mary Jo Klingel, reported that her yearly Meeting, Southeastern, just completed a year-long process of seasoning a minute on climate change: “As it was approved we were challenged by our Clerk to begin the actions needed to support the minute. One action is discernment about a position of released Friend to work within the Yearly Meeting on climate issues. All of us who worked on the minute felt affirmed, proud and very grateful.” We’ve started posting information for QEW displays on our website at <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/take-qew-your-yearly-meeting>. Please send your stories to Katherine (katherine@quakerearthcare.org) so we can let folks know what is going on in your region.

Our clerk, Roy Taylor, and I, your General Secretary, have a busy schedule of visits this spring, summer and fall. Roy did a workshop on “Living our Values, Interconnections of Friends and Our Living Planet” at Durham Friends Meeting and he served as an elder at the June Young Adult Friends Pendle Hill conference. His new workshop, “Transformation & Healing Creation” was first presented at SAYMA and he is scheduled to present it again at Baltimore Yearly Meeting in August. I was well-received as the plenary speaker at SAYMA (Southern Appalachia Yearly Meeting and Association), with a probing and challenging exploration of eco-spirituality and the Society of Friends. I am currently assisting with planning for the Alaska Gathering and will facilitate workshops there and do an interest group on divestment at Pacific Yearly Meeting. I will also be visiting several monthly meetings this year. Both Roy and I are available to visit your monthly or yearly meeting. Please contact us to plan for next spring and summer (shelley@quakerearthcare.org).

Hundreds of Friends attended our presentations and viewed our displays at this summer’s Friends General Conference Gathering in California, PA. Our presentations showcased the range of Earthcare activities amongst Friends. Talks included divestment from fossil fuels, permaculture, indigenous rights, transition

*See **Mid-Year Report**, page 11*