



BeFriending Creation

Newsletter of Quaker Earthcare Witness
Affirming our essential unity with nature

Volume 28, Number 4 • July-August 2015

Praise Be!

By Rachel Findley and Shelley Tanenbaum

*In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home. [3]*¹

LAUDATO SI', the letter Pope Francis wrote to us all, surprises us with its overarching emphasis on how “everything is connected,” including justice in human societies, the rest of the natural world, and the deep relationship with the sacred.

Members of the media have been calling it “the climate encyclical” but it goes far beyond that to a nuanced discussion of human responsibility for, and response to, climate change. Francis seeks to get “to the roots of the present situation, so as to consider not only its symptoms but also its deepest causes.” [15] The encyclical is a prophetic call for justice in human society, which is always enfolded in the natural world.

We did not just resonate with Francis’ words but were moved to the point of tears by their clarity and harmony with our own relationships with nature and humanity. With very few exceptions, his words were like a symphony for our hearts. We have chosen to highlight and share passages that rang true for us, and mostly, we have let Francis provide the message with his own words.²

Francis regards the degradation of the environment as a symptom of disordered relationship.

Because all creatures are connected, each must be cherished with love and respect, for all of us as living creatures are dependent on one another. [42]

Human beings too are creatures of this world, enjoying a right to life and happiness, and endowed with unique dignity. So we cannot fail to consider the effects on people’s lives of environmental deterioration, current models of development and the throwaway culture. [43]



He sees the exclusion of the poor and the exclusion of the environment as deeply connected.

The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. [48]

To heal our relationships, Francis encourages us to savor and restore the mystical connection that joins humans, the creation, and the divine.

The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person’s face. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the

See **Praise Be**, page 3

IN THIS ISSUE:

<i>Praise Be!</i> by Rachel Findley and Shelley Tanenbaum ...	1
<i>Letting Your Life Speak</i> , by Anthony Manousos and Jill Shook	4
<i>Divesting from Fossil Fuels in Cincinnati and Beyond</i> , by Marjorie McKelvey Isaacs.....	7
<i>Being a Player</i> , by Mary Gilbert	9
<i>Book Review: Community-Scale Permaculture</i>	10
<i>Northern Yearly Meeting Lights Up!</i>	12

BeFriending Creation

BeFriending Creation, Vol. 28, No. 4, July-August 2015. Newsletter of **Quaker Earthcare Witness**. ISSN 1050-0332. Published bi-monthly.

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.

Contents of *BeFriending Creation* copyright ©201 Quaker Earthcare Witness, except as noted. Permission to reprint material herein must be requested in advance from the editor.

Membership is open to all who demonstrate commitment to support the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness and who support its work at the Monthly or Yearly Meeting levels, or through other Friends organizations. Quaker Earthcare Witness is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation; contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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.

Steering Committee Clerk Roy Taylor: worldpeas@mindspring.com.

General Secretary Shelley Tanenbaum, P.O. Box 6787, Albany, CA 94706 510/542-9606; shelley@quakerearthcare.org.

BFC Editor Katherine Murray, 6658 Meadowgreen Dr., Indianapolis, IN 46236, 317/970-5988; katherine@quakerearthcare.org.

Website: www.quakerearthcare.org

Follow us on Twitter: @quakerearthcare

Like us on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Quaker-Earthcare-Witness/143510792334460>

Earthcare Calendar

August 10, 2015. Deadline for article submissions for September-October 2015 *BeFriending Creation*.

Snapshots from the Gathering

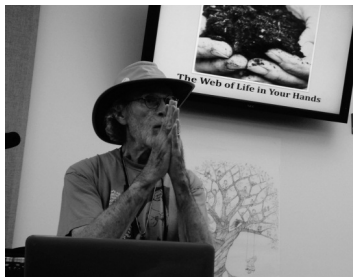
QEW WAS WELL-REPRESENTED at the FGC Gathering this year! Thanks to all who participated. Here are a few pictures from various events. ☞



Shelley signing the QIF book, *Climate, Food and Violence*, for Karen Skelley of Atlanta Friends Meeting.



Simon James singing "I Wish She'd Treat Me Like Dirt" after our session on *Soil as the web of life* at FGC.



"The Web of Life is in Your Hands," presented by Tom Small at the *Sustainability Spectrum Workshop*.



Learning about permaculture and transition towns with Carol Barta.



Find Out More: Quakers and Climate Change

A list of religious statements on climate change can be found on the Interfaith Power and Light website: <http://www.interfaithpowerand-light.org/resources/religious-statements-on-climate-change/>.

The Quaker statement on climate change has now been endorsed by more than 45 Meetings and organizations worldwide: <http://www.quakerearthcare.org/article/june-2015-facing-challenge-climate-change-shared-statement-quaker-groups.> ☞



Praise Be, from page 1

action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things. [233]

Our relationships are systemically eroded. A throw-away culture discards both the excluded of society and things that have no immediate use. Extreme poverty appears along with overconsumption by the richer sectors in a dysfunctional system that does not promote well-being for all.

Developing countries, where the most important reserves of the biosphere are found, continue to fuel the development of richer countries at the cost of their own present and future. ...access to ownership of goods and resources for meeting vital needs is inhibited by a system of commercial relations and ownership which is structurally perverse. [52]

It is not possible to sustain the present level of consumption in developed countries and wealthier sectors of society, where the habit of wasting and discarding has reached unprecedented levels. The exploitation of the planet has already exceeded acceptable limits and we still have not solved the problem of poverty. [27]

For those in the stream of consumer culture, distraction feeds frantic attempts to fill a void with meaningless activity and needless stuff.

A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment. [222]

Since the market tends to promote extreme consumerism in an effort to sell its products, people can easily get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending... Amid this confusion, postmodern humanity has not yet achieved a new self-awareness capable of offering guidance and direction. [203]

The current global situation engenders a feeling of instability and uncertainty, which in turn becomes "a seedbed for collective selfishness." When people become self-centered and self-enclosed, their greed increases. The emptier a person's heart is, the more he or she needs things to buy, own and consume. [204]

A false paradigm of progress misguides the creative power of technology.

A certain way of understanding human life and activity has gone awry. [101]

We have the freedom needed to limit and direct technology; we can put it at the service of another type of progress, one which is healthier, more

human, more social, more integral.... An authentic humanity, calling for a new synthesis, seems to dwell in the midst of our technological culture, almost unnoticed, like a mist seeping gently beneath a closed door. Will the promise last, in spite of everything, with all that is authentic rising up in stubborn resistance? [112]

Crisis calls us to turn again.

The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. [217]

We are called to a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption. [222]

Those who enjoy more and live better each moment are those who have given up dipping here and there, always on the look-out for what they do not have. They experience what it means to appreciate each person and each thing, learning familiarity with the simplest things and how to enjoy them. [223]

Francis' call is like the Quaker understanding of the Light that, when it reveals the filth that has been hidden, also gives the wisdom and courage to transform our ways. When the systems of power entangle us, a greater power can untie the knots.

All is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start... We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom. No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts. I appeal to everyone throughout the world not to forget this dignity which is ours. No one has the right to take it from us. [205]

The Dalai Lama, endorsing Francis' encyclical, called us to "Say more. We have to make more of an effort." Let our lives speak. Speak Truth to Power. ✞



¹ Numbers refer to the specific paragraph in *Laudato Si'* (http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html).

² Although the paragraphs on population, gendered language for God, and the trinity will represent significant points of disagreement for many Friends, we note that these paragraphs are not the primary message of the encyclical.

Letting Your Life Speak: Quaker Earthcare Begins at Home!



By Anthony Manousos and Jill Shook

IN 2014 WE DECIDED TO ADOPT some major new green initiatives in our home that would inspire our friends and neighbors to do likewise. In doing so, we followed the injunction of George Fox:

Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.

In his essay “Plea for the Poor,” the 18th century Quaker prophet John Woolman noted that the seeds of war are sown in our lifestyles:

Oh! that we who declare against wars, and acknowledge our trust to be in God only, may walk in the light, and therein examine our foundation and motives in holding great estates! May we look upon our treasures, and the furniture of our houses, and the garments in which we array ourselves, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions, or not. Holding treasures in the self-pleasing spirit is a strong plant, the fruit whereof ripens fast.

A day of outward distress is coming, and Divine love calls to prepare against it. Harken then, O ye children who have known the light, and come forth. Leave every thing which Jesus Christ does not own. Think not his pattern too plain, too coarse for you. Think not a small portion in this life too little. But let us live in his spirit, and walk as he walked: so shall we be preserved in the greatest troubles.

Woolman was calling on his fellow Quakers, and fellow Christians, to simplify their lifestyles and not use products made by slave labor. He refused to wear clothes dyed with indigo harvested by slave labor; he wore conspicuous bleached white garments instead. He foresaw the bloody consequences of slavery.

Today we see the violent consequences of living in a society dependent on cheap oil and cheap, underpaid labor. Many of the products in our home are petroleum-based. Over-consumption of fossil fuels degrades the planet and heightens the risk of war. Our dependence on underpaid labor creates misery for millions of workers both here in the U.S. and around the world. To show our concern for these workers, and for the planet, we need to live more sustainably, in harmony with Divine Love. We can already see how petroleum addiction is creating dire consequences for life on this planet. The Congress may be in denial about climate change, but the military is realistic. The Pentagon is already making plans for wars they feel will be caused by shortages of water, oil, and other basic resources, calling climate change a “threat multiplier.”¹

Divine Love Calling

While we need to remain committed to lowering our military budget and work with FCNL and other organizations to reduce the threat of war, at the same time we need to look for the seeds of war in our own homes. To do this, we felt led to make our home an example of how to lower our carbon footprint and water use as much as possible. We decided to invest a good portion of our savings in making our home and lifestyle Earth-friendly. Some have called our investment a “sacrifice.” It has in fact taken a big financial commitment but we have not felt it has been a burden: most of our investments will be paid back in 10 years or less.

We did not make this “sacrifice” for financial reasons, however; we felt a leading of the Spirit. Sacrifice means “to make holy.” We see our home as a “holy experiment” (to use William Penn’s phrase for the colony of Pennsylvania)—a way to demonstrate our Quaker (and Christian) values in a joyful, life-affirming, God-honoring way.

By investing in smart technology, we have been able to reduce our carbon footprint significantly, perhaps as much as 80 percent. We installed solar panels that

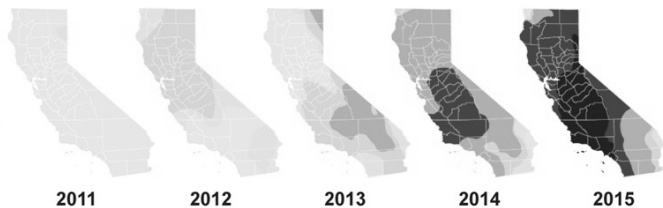
produce nearly 5500 KW hour per year, more than enough electricity for our home. And it's more cost effective than you may think! We use the surplus watts to help run our Chevy Volt, which we bought used at nearly half price. It's a plug-in hybrid that goes 40 miles on a charge, and then runs on an efficient engine that averages 85 miles per gallon! It drives beautifully and quietly, like a golf cart (or a Quaker meeting). Its state-of-the-art technology is made in Detroit, a struggling U.S. city, which is another reason we love it. It reduces our gas consumption by 75 percent. Instead of fracking and the Keystone XL Pipeline, we feel renewable energy is the best way to reduce dependence on foreign oil—one of the root causes of war today.

Blossoming in New Ways

Another source of conflict locally and globally is lack of water. Due to our concern for the historic drought here in California—which some say is the worst in 1,200 years—we have taken numerous measures to reduce our water use.

California's drought level at first week of January

Abnormally Dry Moderate Drought Severe Drought Extreme Drought Exceptional Drought



Source: U.S. Drought Monitor

@latimesgraphics

We have taken advantage of the city's turf removal program and replaced our grass with mulch, decomposed granite, and some drought-tolerant native and some Mediterranean plants. (Our permeable decomposed granite allows more water to percolate into the water table.)

The city paid us \$2 per square foot to remove our lawn because (as the city website explains): "Turf grass is one of the most water-intensive plants in your landscape. Its high water use and frequent maintenance make it a time-consuming and expensive yard option. In fact, the average residential customer spends about 60 percent of their water on outdoor irrigation. By changing turf to a California Friendly™ yard of drought tolerant plants you can save water and money."

We also save water and money through our gray-water system. Thanks to our Latvian plumber, a former Olympian who thinks outside the box, we have installed a graywater system that recycles around



10,000-20,000 gallons of water per year from our bath tub and sinks to water our fruit trees. Because my wife has a keen sense of smell, we added pipes to vent the odor in this holy experiment.

We make our own environmentally and plant-friendly cleaning products using recipes with ingredients our grandparents would have used: vinegar, hydrogen peroxide, and Dr. Bonner's soap that is free from salt. Our house cleaners can now advertise themselves as eco-friendly.

Over All the Earth

One of the most joyful ways to reduce our carbon footprint is through gardening. We've enjoyed experimenting with various ways to make our garden productive and beautiful. We produce several hundred pounds of fruit and vegetables each year, but within a mile of our home an "urban homesteading" organization called Path to Freedom produces 6 tons of food on a plot not much bigger than ours! (See <http://urbanhomestead.org/>.) So we have a long way to go. We grow vegetables all year round in our raised bed organic garden. It has an underground self-cleaning drip system called Netaphim that saves water: no evaporation and few weeds!

We also have 19 fruit trees—several citrus, avocados, apple, kumquats, loquats, peaches, plums, persimmons, figs, passion fruit—and raspberry, blackberry, and concord grapes vines. The motto of our home is "Everyone 'neath their vine and fig tree / shall live in peace and unafraid. / And into ploughshares turn their swords/ Nations shall learn war no more" (a song based on the prophet Micah, which we love to sing together).

Being Examples

Neighborhood kids love to come to our home to see our interesting critters. In addition to ordinary composting, we practice vermiculture (our African red

Continued on next page

Life Speak, from page 5

wrigglies produce excellent fertilizer on the par with Miracle Gro, and they delight the kids). Children also enjoy running after and cuddling our pampered chickens (up to 10 are allowed in the city of Pasadena). We use our chicken droppings to add a rich dose of nitrogen to the compost. And we celebrate Easter all year long, with pale pink, green, and blue eggs, natural colors of the Arucana/Amerucana breed.

Our yard has become a small plot of paradise and a joy for us as well as our neighbors. Our bird bath fountain recycles water and welcomes birds, and our milk weed attracts monarch butterflies. For my afternoon siesta/meditation, I love to lie on our hammock (made in Guatemala and purchased through Ten Thousand Villages) and contemplate the beauty of God's miraculous creation. I feel as if I am in heaven! And I hope I'm setting a good example for our neighbors.

We have given many neighbors and friends tours of our home. We not only show them what we've done, we also tell them about government subsidies that have helped us transform our home and garden. Rebates for solar, electric cars, turf removal, etc. help make green living more affordable. We need to expand these subsidies and programs in order to transition to a sustainable economy. As FCNL demonstrates with its green architecture and office, lobbying efforts are more effective if we practice what we advocate. An article about our home's green initiatives appeared in the *Pasadena Star News* with the title: "Looking out for others, being stewards of the planet."²



Anthony Manousos and Jill Shook.

Jill and I also love to share our holy experiment with the rising generation. In addition to neighborhood kids, I spoke about the green initiatives in our home to the kids at the First Day school at our meeting. I also invited my class from the Peace and Justice Academy to tour our home and learn about how to live sustainably. Kids love and get what we are doing. Fox told us to "walk cheerfully on the earth" and we are definitely cheerful about our green lifestyle. We love to tell our friends and neighbors. Come and visit: *Nuestra casa es su casa!* ♪

¹ See <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/oct/13/pentagon-global-warming-will-change-how-us-military-trains-and-goes-to-war>.

² See <http://www.pasadenastarnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?avis=LD&date=20141213&category=NEWS&lopenr=141219800&Ref=AR&profile=1029786>.

Upcoming Events: Mark Your Calendars Now!

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015
Join QEW in the **Moral
March for Climate
Action** in
Washington, DC

Join us at the Lincoln Memorial on the National Mall the day Pope Francis addresses Congress to urge action for our planet!

<http://moralactiononclimate.org>

OCTOBER 22-25, 2015
Come to the **QEW Fall
2015 Steering Committee**, Ben Lomond Quaker Center, CA

The Ben Lomond Quaker Center is a non-profit retreat center located on 80 acres of redwood forest, near Santa Cruz, California.

www.quakercenter.org

Resources to Share

On a recent visit to North Palm Beach Meeting, Mary Jo Klingel discovered that Palm Beach Friends are creating YouTube videos of their adult learning sessions. She discovered a wealth of video resources on a range of earthcare topics.

A few representative samples:

- Backyard Beekeeping 1 & 2
- Prisons and the Environment
- Stop Sugar Field Burning
- Spirituality and the Environment
- Religion and Social Justice
- FCNL and Climate Change

You'll find the whole list at www.palmbeach-quakers.org/#!youtube/c1wm. Enjoy and share!

Thanks for sharing this resource, Mary Jo!

Breaking a Vicious Cycle of Fear and Frustration: Divesting from Fossil Fuels in Cincinnati and Beyond

By Marjorie McKelvey Isaacs

Clerk, Earthcare (FUN) Committee of Community Friends, Cincinnati

Cincinnati...is always ten years behind the times.

—Mark Twain

WHEN OUR EARTHCARE COMMITTEE CLERK at the time, Bill Cahalan, first suggested that Community Friends in Cincinnati divest from coal, oil, and petroleum stocks, it sounded like a foolish waste of the Cannon Fund, our small, informal endowment. The idea of divesting seemed like impractical idealism because the Cannon Fund supports social justice and personal spiritual growth activities. If the fund lost value, there might not be money for trips to Pendle Hill or raised garden beds in the meetinghouse yard. In our monthly meeting's Earthcare committee, some members opposed divestment while others felt it was desperately urgent. The more some people objected to divesting, the more others, in a frustrated attempt to change their minds, expressed intense concern about the future of the planet. These arguments were so intense that two active members left the committee. Earthcare committee stopped meeting for four months. Negative interactions had paralyzed our committee.

There was an assumption that divested mutual funds would involve only green energy companies, and one divested fund does reflect that philosophy. Since green energy companies are all newer, smaller companies and confined to one economic sector, such investments would be very volatile. Then in 2013 and 2014, several socially responsible mutual funds with years of good performance became divested by selling off their small fossil fuel holdings. Reviewing their track records revealed good performance over many years. It seemed a real movement was building with divested mutual funds. Our Stewardship committee discussed divesting, and then brought a divestment minute forward. However, members of the committee itself were unfamiliar with the divested mutual funds, and two business owners opposed divesting. The two explained their reservations and then were emailed a reassuring reply, point by point. That action was met by silence, and not a spiritual one. They answered neither emails nor voicemails.

We had a meeting-wide threshing session on divestment from fossil fuels where no one voiced opposition. However, during private discussions, the two articulate business owners remained perplexingly reluctant, even when given information about the well-performing, ethical, divested mutual funds. They saw divestment as yet another Quaker attack on for-profit business, until emails expressing appreciation of their professional work finally re-opened communication.

In spring of 2014 Community Friends Earthcare committee wanted to move divestment forward. By late May there was only one remaining monthly meeting for business before yearly meeting. That would provide a crucial opportunity for encouraging divestment, if our monthly meeting could become an example of successfully adopting a divestment minute.

By keeping in close touch with the presiding clerk, repeatedly asking what was needed next in several areas, holding an emergency meeting of the Earthcare Committee to write and revise a minute, and persistently trying to keep things moving, the proposed divestment minute reached business meeting in June of 2014. If it passed, we could become the first monthly meeting west of Philadelphia to divest, and hoped to encourage others at yearly meeting the following month. If left to "season," the clerk of our threshing session had predicted, our divestment minute might lose momentum forever.

Finally, the proposed minute was read aloud. The threat of a fierce argument during business meeting frightening people into a demand for seasoning hung over the room. Postponing divestment discussion by deciding to season would bring a flood of instant relief to some. That calm could be experienced as reflecting the will of God, and they might be right, whether those of us in favor sensed it or not. A time-limited seasoning period could actually carry a welcome obligation to engage in constructive communication and worship to find unity.

Earthcare committee had provided information about divestment options and rationale for weeks. Would that be enough? There were a few questions,

Continued on next page

then silence. “Do Friends approve?” the presiding clerk asked. Brief silence. Then, in Cincinnati, Community Friends divestment minute was approved, one month before yearly meeting.

Earthcare committee quickly arranged a display table for Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting. Bright with bouquets of local native flowers in mason jars, the table displayed our newly approved minute and information about the issues and financial divestment options. Back home later at Community Friends’ fall Quakerfest party and variety show, we presented a skit to help people feel good about having passed the divestment minute. In the skit, Sarah Scattergood wailed, “Now that we divested, I’ll have to just eat beans forever.” But Letitia the Inner Light reassured Sarah, “We all can make green lifestyle changes one step at a time.”

That skit was useful again during our presentation at Miami Quarter the following February 2015. We needed humorous relief after our inevitably serious explanation of climate change over recent history. The mini-workshop finished with time for questions and comments. Faith Morgan, co-clerk of the Quarter, and a professional environmentalist, objected to divestment. Only lifestyle change would solve the major problems, she said. There in front of 30 people from monthly meetings throughout the quarter, I knew arguing about the importance of divesting would be bad strategy—Faith Morgan knew more than I did about environment, and she would “win.” But instead of frustration with people who want to slow divesting down, I suddenly felt a positive connection with Faith’s true statement. It was a peculiarly peaceful Quaker moment. She was right, I found myself calmly agreeing. Divesting is a only small step, easy and practical.

Two months later, having attended the mini-workshop, Lonny Burger had seen the ethical value and simplicity of divestment. After brief discussion with his meeting, Miami Monthly, he phoned Friends Fiduciary and changed their investments to the Quaker Green fund. “It was the right thing to do, so we did it,” Lonnie said.

In April 2015 a divestment minute was on Miami Quarterly Meeting’s agenda. We distributed a new

handout with the rationale, and a list of divestment options. The handout was clear and brief, making the decision simple and practical, so it did not provoke fear or argument. When our Miami Quarter co-clerk called for discussion, there was none. After what felt like a long silence, she asked, “Do Friends approve?” Miami Quarter of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting then approved a divestment minute, following Haverford Quarter of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to become the second quarterly meeting in the United States to divest.

We may repeat the divestment mini-workshop for people in Whitewater, OVYM’s other Quarter, this summer to gain support for a divestment minute at Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting this July. The Yearly Meeting clerk says it could happen. We are hoping that advocacy by Young Adult Friends would encourage everyone wanting to give the upcoming generation a better future. It would be fun to become the first yearly meeting in the U.S. to divest, but we would be even happier to be surprised and beaten to it by other yearly meetings.

If divesting from fossil fuels is really such a minor issue, why bother? The simplicity and convenience of divesting can obscure its importance. No other current significant strategy results in a concrete action from just a letter or phone call. With an issue as big as climate change, it is easy to become overwhelmed by the magnitude, and the risks involved for each person and the planet itself. We need to take smaller steps that contribute to a sense of empowerment. By affirming that divestment is only a small step, part of a bigger issue, the Earthcare committee interrupted a vicious cycle. There was less resistance to divestment when presented as the small practical action it truly is. Therefore there was less inclination to try to persuade resistant people with facts about imminent climate disaster, which lessened the fear that may provoke resistance or avoidance. When we stopped frightening people with climate change disaster facts, they stopped responding by postponing action, which calmed our need to provide more disquieting information. Together we broke a vicious cycle to find a peaceful way forward. ☞

Minute on Divestment

Community Friends is committing itself to divest our funds from fossil fuel energy companies’ stocks as soon as reasonably possible. This divestment effort must also keep our investment practices in line with all of our values. Community Friends needs to use this first step of divestment from fossil fuel stock to begin addressing the challenges of climate change, overconsumption, and overpopulation. The Meeting will work on developing programs and proposals for helping us live with a smaller ecological footprint, both as a Meeting and as individuals. We will also work toward developing relationships with others outside our Meeting who share our concerns. ☞

The Friends in Unity with Nature Committee, Stewardship Committee, and Cannon Fund Trustees were directed to implement this minute and regularly report on their progress. 7/13/2014



Being a Player

By Mary Gilbert, QEW Representative to the UN

I've been attending meetings at the UN for more than 15 years and have often been asked "Do you ever get to 'speak' at the UN? What do you say?" I've explained that representatives from organizations like QEW may at times collaborate with dozens of other CSOs (Civil Society Organizations) in putting together a statement not to exceed two minutes that will be read aloud, and thus "get into the record." This is not what I would call "speaking" at the UN. A recent week was slightly different.

The General Assembly is putting together a "Post-2015 Agenda" which will include the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) that I've been writing about for the last two years. This process will finish in July, with the outcome document to be formally adopted in September. There is stated agreement that ending poverty "in all its forms" is the most important challenge the world faces. The debate is about how to do that. Most weaker countries are saying that any transformation of the economy must be "rights-based." Stronger countries are saying that the answer is for thriving international commerce to create jobs.

At this point the countries are playing hardball, and many of the more subtle understandings that emerged and were shared in developing the SDGs are being forgotten. The document has no meaningful reference to the Earth as a dynamic set of systems that work together to enable life. In this heated discussion "the environment" is clearly an afterthought, whereas in reality it is the necessary underlying enabler both of human well-being and of prosperity.

Even among the CSO community where I hang out, organizations want to defend their own turf—quality education, access to justice, etc. They see having language in the final text that supports their life's work as

essential to any real solution. Even the environmental groups are focused on single issues, like halting climate change. Basically we all do support each other. You've heard of preaching to the choir? We *are* the choir, and we are singing different but harmonizing parts of the same piece of music. However no-one seems to be speaking for the Earth as a whole entity.

We CSOs spent Monday and Tuesday preparing for a Wednesday morning dialogue with the meeting's co-chairs—Ambassadors Macharia Kamau of Kenya and David Donoghue of Ireland—and some invited nations. This was very significant, as it would both get into the record and not be dominated by national delegates. Our spoken statements were not to exceed two minutes, but we could submit longer written statements which would also get into the record. We were strongly assured that our input was being seriously considered.

The time for explaining why our causes are important is over. We were told to study the language of the document and suggest specific wording for specific paragraphs. This official invitation for CSOs to suggest language is, I believe, unprecedented, and I attribute it to Kamau, who is emerging as a champion of civil society's voice.

I scanned the document and found places where the concept I cherish could easily be inserted. In the meeting on Wednesday, Kamau said that the phrase "planetary boundaries" was not well received by some countries that heard in it a wish to keep them from the economic development they need. I raised my hand and was called on, so I added a comment to what I had prepared. After I spoke, Kamau invited me to submit my suggestions in writing. This is what I wrote:

Continued on next page

Dear Ambassador Kamau,

I recall the general recognition in the Open Working Group on the SDGs on the interdependence of the natural systems that enable the Earth to support life. This dynamic interdependence leads me to think in terms of planetary health rather than just the planet, or planetary boundaries. I propose the following places in the text for consideration of this term:

- Para 3 "...lasting protection of the health of our planet..."
- Para 6 "...preservation of the health of the planet..."
- Para 7 "...secure our planet's health for future generations..."
- Para 12 "...and of the planet's ability to support life..."
- Para 13 "... (to replace "preserving") maintaining and enhancing the health of the planet.

I think it is possible that the concept of "planetary health" could replace the phrase "planetary boundaries." It would introduce a possible paradigm shift with great promise into the international discussion.

Thanks for considering this input, and thanks in general for your support of civil society's voice.

Most sincerely,
Mary Gilbert
Quaker Earthcare Witness



Macharia Kamau, Kenyan ambassador to the U.N

Afterward several colleagues thanked me. It's probably naïve to expect either inclusion of my suggestions in the next draft, to be finalized in July, or approval by the General Assembly in September. But I was stunned and humbled by having been able to take this opportunity, to know how to take this opportunity, to speak truth to power.

I thank QEW for sending me to the UN where this could happen. ☞

BOOK REVIEW

A Pattern for Permaculture Communities

By Katherine Murray

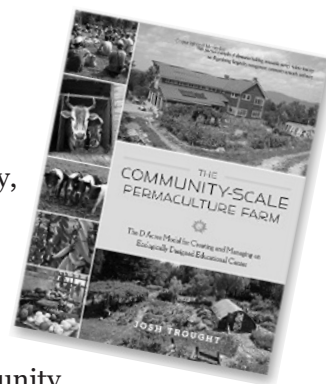
As I began to read *The Community-Scale Permaculture Farm: The D Acres Model for Creating and Managing an Ecologically Designed Educational Center*, by Josh Trought (Chelsea Green Publishing, March 2015), a favorite quote from George Fox rang in my head: "Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations wherever you come; that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them..."

In this book, packed full of practical examples and sustainability practices designed to grow a truly vibrant, flourishing local community, the author shares the model he and his colleagues have been living and developing at D Acres, a living farm and educational center in New Hampshire. He shows how the community-scale permaculture farm meets local needs of people, animals, and ecosystems in an ongoing, evolving,

and respectful and, ultimately, sustaining way.

Readers will discover not only practical how-tos for sustainability but expand those ideas into ways they can nourish a thriving community built on a localized economy, a shared land ethic, and the spiritual and ethical components needed to foster collaboration and productive and harmonious community life.

So even if you're considering starting small, if you tend to dream on a larger scale and have a desire to impact not only your own yard but the greater community around you, take a look at Trought's model and see what it stirs up as a possibility for you. ☞



NYM, from page 12

fund that screens for fossil fuels (both funds screen for tobacco, armaments, and coal). The ad-hoc committee also recommended that their remaining investments in Pax World Fund be shifted to Pax's World Global Environmental Fund, in order to screen out fossil fuels.

Northern Friends were very enthusiastic about divesting. Many expressed interest in reinvesting in sustainable agriculture and clean energy, and some expressed interest in leaving the stock market entirely and using their money in other ways. The yearly meeting came to unity to enthusiastically accept the committee's recommendation, to encourage other meetings to divest from fossil fuels, and to continue evaluating the best use of their money.

Having worked on divestment in my home meeting, my yearly meeting and my alma mater, I was heartened to see such enthusiasm and a clear understanding of the issues during these sessions. If your meeting is considering divesting from fossil fuels, QEW has a wealth of resources: check out the section of our website called Fossil Free Friends (www.quakerearthcare.org/article/fossil-free-friends). We have posted background information, sample minutes, and a list of meetings that have divested. Let us know if your meeting has approved a minute to divest and we will add you to the list!

In other news from Northern Friends, they enthusiastically endorsed a Quaker statement on climate change during Meeting for Business. QEW, Quaker

United Nations Office (QUNO), and Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) issued this statement first in September 2014 prior to the UN summit on climate change, and in a revised form in January 2015. I wrote the first draft of this statement (which was subsequently much improved by other editors), and I was deeply moved to hear a paragraph-by-paragraph reading of the statement by Northern Friends as they considered approval.

The statement is an important way to raise our collective Quaker voice in the lead up to the Paris climate change negotiations that will take place at the end of this year. Please take a look at the statement (www.quakerearthcare.org/article/shared-quaker-statement-facing-challenge-climate-change) and consider bringing it to your monthly and yearly meetings. Northern Friends expressed urgency for all of us to work together on this critical issue. ∞

Keep in Touch!

Thanks for sharing our posts on Facebook and following along on Twitter.



Follow us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Quaker-Earthcare-Witness/143510792334460>



Follow us on Twitter @quakerearthcare



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

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____

State/Province _____ ZIP/Postal Code _____

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

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

____ I'd prefer to pay by my credit card: MC____; Visa ____; Amount _____

Name on Card: _____ Security Code _____

Credit Card Number: _____ Expiry Date: _____

____ I would like to give monthly. Please charge my credit card \$ _____ each month.

Thank you, Friends!

Quaker Earthcare Witness
P.O. Box 6787
Albany, CA 94706 USA

Internal pages printed on 100% post-consumer
recycled paper, bleached without chlorine

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 9
McCordsville, In.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Northern Yearly Meeting Lights Up

by Shelley Tanenbaum, QEW General Secretary

Northern Yearly Meeting (Minnesota, Wisconsin, and a bit more) meets on a lake in central Wisconsin to deepen worship, conduct business, and nurture connections among Friends in the upper Great Lakes region. This year, they boldly chose the challenging theme: *Climate Change: Turning Awareness into Action*. Northern Friends asked themselves the following questions and workshops and interest groups were offered to explore answers:

- Confronting climate change needs both personal and systemic change. How do we turn intention into action in the face of barriers that make change difficult?
- How do we find the power to make changes beyond what we can do as individuals, and how do we change our collective hearts so we are compelled to do what needs to be done to change the system?
- Many Friends see the importance of climate change and the need to take action, with differing ideas about the urgency and what needs to be done. How do we get beyond the edges of the issue

and really confront core changes that affect basic aspects of our lives?

I greatly appreciated the opportunity to offer a workshop called “From Earthcare Despair to Earthcare Repair” (contact me at shelley@quakerearthcare.org if your yearly meeting would like me to visit and offer an interest group or workshop). In the workshop, we explored climate change as a moral issue and how we are called as people of faith to witness on this issue; the barriers many of us feel as a result of the enormity of the problem and our sense of despair; and how to move past that despair through our spiritual connection to the natural world. We reviewed the many exciting and transformative changes in technology and social and political actions, and explored how we Friends can best work on social change.

During Northern Yearly Meeting’s business sessions, an ad-hoc committee formed last year to review investments proposed divesting from companies in the business of extracting fossil fuels. The committee recommended removing funds that they currently have invested in Friends Fiduciary’s Balanced Fund and re-investing in Friends Fiduciary’s Green Fund, a mutual

See NYM on page 11