



BeFriending Creation

A Publication of

QUAKER EARTHCARE WITNESS

Affirming our essential unity with nature

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Intergenerational Social Action

By Hayley Hathaway

GEORGE LAKEY, lifelong civil rights activist, and Friend, hosted “Young and Old for Climate Justice: A Dialog” at Quaker Center in Ben Lomond, CA this January. Forty Friends, ages ranging from 15 to 80, joined the weekend-long retreat in the redwoods. Shelley Tanenbaum, QEW’s General Secretary, and I participated in the workshop as our own “young/old” team. As a group, we engaged in important work of deeply listening across the generations, remaining active and engaged alongside grief, and learning how we can build a more just future.

During the workshop, George shared lessons learned from his decades of experience building movements for social justice. He’s turned this knowledge into a practical and timely new book, *How We Win: A Guide to Nonviolent Direct Action Campaigning*. I’d like to share with you what I took from the weekend, guidance that I hope will inform my work as an activist with my local Sunrise Movement group and as part of my Quaker meeting’s Climate Action Group.

1. George invites us to **embrace the volatility of current events and learn from the past**. He has a provocative take on our era of political upheaval and climate chaos.

“Aren’t we lucky?” he exclaims. While researching for his previous book, *Viking Economics*, he learned that polarization is correlated with economic inequality. We are living in such polarized times because the United States has exponentially concentrated wealth over the last few decades. So, what do we do?

George told us about a friend who creates metal sculptures. The artist heats up the metal to extreme temperatures to transform it into art. Without that heat, the metal can’t change, nothing transforms. “Progressives need polarization like blacksmiths and artists need heat to make cold hard metal flexible enough to change its shape,” says George.* We can’t be afraid of that heat. We are “so lucky” to be alive right now because we can harness that heat to make real change.

And it’s been done before. In *Viking Economics*, George documents how “in Sweden and Norway, democratic socialist movements pushed their economic elites off their pedestals and invented the egalitarian Nordic economic model” in the 1920s and 30s. In the US, we can learn lessons from the organizing of the New Deal and the Civil Rights Movement. This is also an opportunity to listen to the stories of our elders.

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Friends of many ages gathered at Quaker Center in January. Photo: Shelley Tanenbaum

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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. Please share our work widely and broadly, always attributing it to Quaker Earthcare Witness.

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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

March 15, 2020 Deadline for
articles for April-May-June issue



Photo by Kathy Barnhart, Strawberry Creek (CA) Meeting

From the Clerk's Table

Your Friends in Quaker Earthcare Witness are looking to 2020 with both concern and hope. Our concern is that we know that time is growing short to reverse the damage of the climate crisis for all life on Earth. Our hope is in you, and especially the many Friends and supporters who have donated to keep QEW moving forward. We have some big dreams for our work, and we know that your support is critical to the work that brings the dreams to life.

Would you consider a donation to help us keep our momentum going?

If you are not led to donate right now, there is so much more that you can do. If your Yearly Meeting has a Representative to our Steering Committee, contact that person and ask how you can help with their work. Ask if they would like to come to your Monthly Meeting and help with your discerning and planning for your meeting's earthcare work. Check your budgets to make sure your Yearly and Monthly meetings donate all that they can afford. Start the earthcare conversation, or join it.

However you pray, ask for guidance and strength for us in our work. As Friends say, please hold us in the Light.

Please consider an online donation or send a check to Quaker Earthcare Witness, P.O. Box 6787, Albany, CA 94706. Thank you.

Mary Jo Klingel, Clerk of Quaker Earthcare Witness

Planned Giving to QEW

Are you one of those fortunate people who is both over 70 and needs to donate part of your IRA each year? If so, we would be happy to be the recipient of your "required minimum distribution." We will put your donation to good use! We can accept your donation directly as stocks or you can ask your broker to send us a check based on the sale of the stock, to meet your Qualified Charitable Distribution.

Contact our General Secretary to arrange for a transfer at shelley@quakerearthcare.org or leave a message at 510-542-9606.

Our policy is to sell the stock as soon as feasible so that we can use the proceeds to immediately fund our work. Thank you!

Continued from front page

2. Strategic nonviolent direct action campaigns are the way forward. While one-time protests are critical for motivating and energizing a group of people, a long-term campaign that focuses on a single entity, like a bank or a company, can give us a better chance at making change because it puts pressure directly on a point of power. It's time to organize direct action that doesn't necessarily mean civil disobedience, but it does mean activities (think: boycotts, strikes, sit-ins) that challenge a power holder through noninstitutional means and disrupts "business as usual."

3. We must recognize our gifts and use them strategically. Activist and organizer Bill Moyer created a model to help us understand specific "roles of social activism." While many of us have a wide range of skills, there are particular areas in which we know we excel. He categorizes them into four areas: Helper, Advocate, Organizer, Rebel. Rebels are energized by working outside the system; advocates use their persuasive skills to make



Friends learning about power dynamics in organizing from George Lakey

their case to those in power using traditional means. Organizers work to get people to their events and make sure systems run smoothly; helper are the ones making sure everyone has what they need. Knowing what role makes you feel most comfortable can help you stay in the game (not get burnout), see where your movement thrives and needs support, and also provides a helpful framework to check your own biases toward certain types of change-makers. Which one are you? Are you being used well in your own community?

4. Tell visionary stories. To create a strong movement for social change, we must offer a vibrant picture of the future using heartfelt and relatable stories. For too long, we have been reacting to a narrative controlled by the economic elite that lets them create the agenda for change. When we do respond, we respond using moralistic language and reasoning that doesn't unite or inspire. We have an opportunity to imagine a different and better future. What does the world we want look like? Let's dream about it, then motivate each other with our beautiful and powerful vision.

5. Share across the generations. During our workshop, George organized a "Speak Out" where the young people shared our answers to the questions, "What's awesome about being a young person today? What's difficult? What do you want the older generations to know?"

It was a powerful moment. We all know what it's like to be young, yet we can also recognize that this is an especially difficult time to be growing up. Young Friends shared about their crushing anxiety around finances and climate change. This exercise could be used in other places to promote better understanding across generations. How does your meeting support working across the decades?

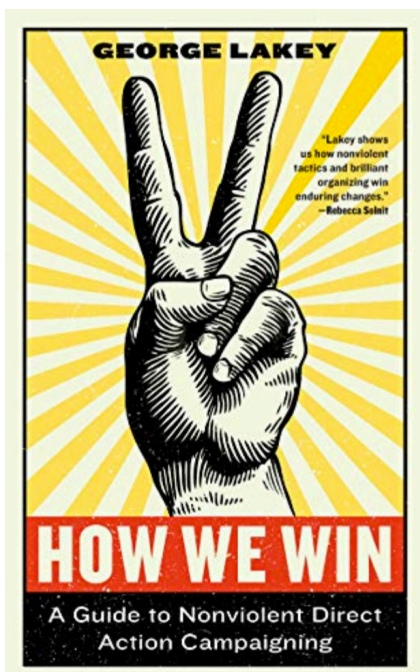


Young Friend Max Levien with George

The workshop, and George's new book, helped focus my perspective on what I can do as an individual activist and what we can do as a larger movement working in response to the climate crisis. Grounded in the strength of our faith and our traditions, I see the possibilities for intergenerational Quaker leadership. I left the workshop feeling energized and inspired.

*www.opendemocracy.net/en/transformation/how-to-build-progressive-movement-in-divided-country/

Hayley is QEW's Communications Coordinator and attendee of Santa Fe (NM) Monthly Meeting.



Interfaith Earthcare Touchstones

“A touchstone transcends any one religion, thought, or spiritual tradition and serves as a guide. These touchstones provide examples of specific prayers, passages or scripture, or inspirations from various sacred texts or philosophical writings associated with diverse traditions.” Last year I joined faith leaders at an interfaith Peace Breakfast hosted by Valencia College’s Peace and Justice Institute. We were each asked to share a touchstone from our faith traditions on how humans are accountable to the care and protection of our home, planet Earth. I’ve shared these touchstones below.

- Beverly Ward, Field Secretary for Earthcare, Southeastern Yearly Meeting

Buddhism, shared by Ruth Geniac

“Peace is the art of etiquette; talking softly is the mark of civilization; smiling is the sunshine of relationships; trust is the friend of success. This is the protocol for modern people.” —Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Christianity, shared by Father Frank Cooney

“Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.” —Genesis: Chapter 2, verses 1-3

Islam, shared by Imam Tariq Rasheed

“It is God who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape and made your shoes beautiful and has provided for sustenance.” —Qur’an 40:64

Judaism, shared by Rabbi Joshua Neely

“When the Blessed Holy One created the first human, God took Adam and Eve round all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said, ‘Look at My works, how beautiful and glorious they are! All that I have created, it was for you that I created it. Take the heart that you do not despoil and destroy My world: if you despoil it, there is no one to repair it after you.’”—Koehler Rabbiah, 7:13

Oglala Lakota, shared by Geronimo Redfeather (Cherokee First Nation)

“Some day the earth will weep, she will beg for her life, she will cry with tears of blood. You will make a choice, if you will help her or let her die, and when

she dies, you too will die.” —John Hollow Horn

Humanism, shared by David and Jocelyn Williamson

“As humanists, it is crucial that we recognize that the responsibility to create and maintain sustainable methods of living is a collective one. As humanists, we acknowledge the damage done to our environment has been caused by human action and constitutes an existential threat to humanity and many other species that have not already been wiped out. As humanists, we understand that only humans can save ourselves from the climate crises we have created.” —American Humanist Association

Paganism, shared by Paula Despang

“The earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth. All things are connected like the blood that unites one family. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. The earth is sacred and man and animals are but one part of it. Treat the earth with respect so that it lasts for centuries to come and is a place of wonder and beauty for our children.” —Chief Seattle

Quakerism, shared by Beverly G. Ward

“...Daily, we become more aware of the suffering of the planet and its people. We find an increasing call to do justice, to ‘let our lives speak’, individually and corporately. We are led, as Friends have been at other daunting moments in history, to overcome our own despair, to relieve suffering, and to unite with Spirit in ways never before imagined to bring new possibilities to Life. Living in Blessed Community in peace with each other and the natural world takes more than words, it requires action.” —Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 2019 Fourth Month





Is (the) Paris (Agreement) Burning?

By Shelley Tanenbaum

THE MOST RECENT Conference of the Parties (COP), held in Madrid, Spain in December, appeared to balance the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 on a knife's edge, a sharpened knife's edge. Lindsey Cook of Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) referred to this conference as "the COP25 of sharpened knives." If we were relying on these annual climate conferences to lead the way on the issue, this conference's outcome, with a few promising exceptions, would plunge any sane person into absolute despair.

The Conferences of the Parties, under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), are held each year in November or December. The 2019 conference, COP25, was the 25th conference of its kind. Perhaps as a harbinger of the 2019 outcome, the conference nearly didn't happen: it was supposed to be held in Brazil, but national politics changed that plan and the new Brazilian government dropped out as host; next it was supposed to be held in Santiago, Chile, but on-the-ground political protests over equity and human rights concerns forced Chile to drop out as host. Spain, with its relatively new ecologically-minded government, stepped in at nearly the last moment (November) to serve as location host, with Chile still serving as diplomatic host. Climate-denier politicians (Brazil) and protests over economic and human rights abuses (Chile) nearly put a stop to the conference.

These location challenges are indicative of the global political, economic and ecological crises we are facing, all challenges that could either doom the climate agreement, or strengthen resolve and serve to produce the next installment of the agreement on sounder footing. Specifically, the Paris Agreement was deliberately designed to be fuzzy on the details (no specific goals for country-by-country commitments, though each country is required to set their own goals), strong on aspirations (to keep global warming to well under 2 degrees C and to pursue efforts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C), and a ratcheting mechanism so that every five years country commitments will be increased. Commitments that were made just following the Paris Agreement would result in an improvement in limiting global warming compared to what would have happened without the agreement, but would still result in 3-5 degrees of global warming, and everyone involved in 2015 knew that. It wasn't politically feasible to get stronger commitments at the time. However, the plan all along was that COP25 in 2019 would create a diplomatic environment that would ensure much more ambitious country commitments at COP26, the fifth year after Paris.

Is the Paris Agreement burning? Just as the roof of Notre Dame burned in 2019, COP25 of 2019 burned a hole in the Paris Agreement where higher ambitions should have been, although the shell of the

framework is still intact. The high-emitter, low ambition countries (primarily Brazil, Saudi Arabia, India, Australia and the United States) led the way in blocking concerns for indigenous rights and financial support for developing countries.

Some of the events of 2019's COP, however, show a way forward for a more promising denouement to COP26. Towards the last days, high-ambition, high-emitter countries led by the European Union called for transparency and a human-rights approach to carbon pricing, and prevented a retro-version of carbon marketing from being established. A people's plenary rose up within the halls of the COP, with badge-holding civil society calling for radical shifts in policies, behavior and equity. Massive marches occurred in the streets, with 500,000 people demanding action. The global rising youth movement joined with the long-active indigenous community to confront stodgy diplomats and pugnacious government officials.

If anything good is to come out of COP26 in 2020, it will take all of us participating in an unprecedented level of public activism and advocacy, to force governments to replace their sharpened knives with a spirit of cooperation and creativity and commitments to rapid carbon reductions.

Shelley is the General Secretary of Quaker Earthcare Witness.

Roadmaps to a Better Future

Analyzing Climate Change Solutions

By Judy Lumb

HOW DO WE ensure a future on Earth for humans and other creatures? Three recent reports analyze solutions to climate change that meet the ambition of the Paris Agreement.

“The Climate Urgency: Setting Sail for a New Paradigm:” Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE) is a French Catholic organization, the name of which can be translated as “International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity.” Following the Papal Encyclical *Laudato SI*, CIDSE shows “how a paradigm shift in our food and energy systems – supported by structural lifestyle and societal changes – could greatly contribute to limit rise in average global temperature to 1.5°C without relying on risky and unproven Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs) or geoengineering”*

CIDSE is concerned that NETs will cause severe and irreversible impacts worldwide, especially to vulnerable communities and to the integrity of ecosystems. Hoping that technology will save us will allow countries to postpone real emissions reductions.

CIDSE focuses on two sectors, energy and agriculture. The energy sector must switch from fossil fuels to renewable sources, but that switch must be “just, inclusive, and transparent, and must not replicate the corporate structures that are currently governing the energy sector. Decentralization, diversification, human rights, and gender equality have to be considered when developing such renewable energy systems.”

For agriculture, CIDSE suggests that Agroecology would turn agriculture and the food system from problem to solution. They show five different levels of necessary simultaneous changes: 1) Increase the efficiency of industrial/conventional practices, 2) shift to organic agriculture, 3) re-design toward integrated and resilient agroecosystems, 4) establish alternative forms of economic exchange and market relationships, and 5) build food sovereignty worldwide by relocalizing food systems to reduce food loss and waste.

CIDSE acknowledges that these changes require a paradigm change, “new narratives, a different cultural approach – putting sufficiency at its heart – and of course, transforming our political and economic systems – away from the destructive growth imperative that lies at the heart of the current system.”

“Missing Pathways to 1.5C: The Role of the Land Sector in Ambitious Climate Action:” The Climate Land Ambition and Rights Alliance (CLARA) is a consortium of advocates, faith-based organizations, and scientists concerned with climate mitigation and adaptation. CLARA, too, is concerned that many reported solutions depend on untested carbon capture and storage methods and other NETs. This report focuses on land-based solutions: 1) Strengthening Indigenous and Community Land Rights, 2) Restoring Forests and Other Ecosystems, and 3) Transforming Agriculture. Mechanisms for transforming agriculture include: Agroecology and Agroforestry, reduction in synthetic nitrogen fertilization, less and better livestock production, healthy diets, reductions in food transport and waste.

“Achieving the Paris Climate Agreement Goals:” Subtitled “Global and Regional 100% Renewable Energy Scenarios with Non-energy GHG Pathways for +1.5oC and +2.oC”, this is an ambitious study by a team of experts supported by the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation to “develop a roadmap for how we can actually stay below this critical climate threshold.” This free 535-page book is relatively optimistic, while providing all the technical detail one could need. With a transition to 100% renewable energy by mid-century and a major land conservation and restoration effort, it is possible to stay below the 1.5C limit with technologies that are available right now” (Leonardo DiCaprio). The authors have compiled technical detail on the pathways to keep global warming under 1.5o and 2.oC, considering current renewable technology, metal resources needed, global transport, and energy generation in all areas of the world, development scenarios, and recommended policies for the energy, buildings, transport, industry sectors, and for a political framework.

From Section 13.2.1.1 General Energy Policies: “The most important interventions to accelerate the energy transition are: Renewable energy targets and incentives for their deployment and expansion; Internalization of external costs by carbon tax or surcharge; Phase-out of fossil fuel subsidies; Accelerated replacement of fossil and inefficient technologies.”

Judy is the co-clerk of QEW's Publications Committee and a member of Atlanta Friends Meeting but worships with Belize City Friends Meeting.

**Visit our website for links to each report.*



Photo by Kathy Barnhart

The Earth is Us

By Mary Ann Iyer

The cells of this earth
are our cells.
The wind that blows
across its surface is
the self same air that
we breathe.

Our life blood courses
through our veins
with no less certainty than
the rivers cascading to
the sea.

And what are we to make
of this?

Whether
we are of the earth
is not the question.
Rather, we should ask
what part we play.

Our capacity to choose
sets us apart from
the other beings here.

Choice implies
responsibility.

Not in the self
serving way
of subduing the earth,
Rather, we must make decisions
firmly based in
the sustenance of life.

Not just longevity
for our selves,
but for the ongoing life
of the planet, herself.

The fouling of her air
is the pollution of
our lungs.
Her filthy waters
will percolate through
the tributaries of
our veins
soon enough.

To fundamentally alter
the very DNA of her structures
is to mess with
our own.

How far will we go in
the name of "progress"
before we
stop
to appreciate what is
here?
Will we destroy
it All
with the "knowledge" we have
before we realize
that the earth
is us?

Mary Ann (MD) is a physician who leads workshops and provides individual counseling, facilitating individuals' choices for well-being within the rich contextual interplay of their lives.

gifts

By Cai Quirk

when the earth is in pain.
from so many
taking. taking. taking.
without a backward glance.
what can I give?

the caress of a fern leaf,
water to a parched garden,
joy at the sight of the moon.

food scraps to compost,
compost to earth,
renew, refresh, relive.

notice the dew,
give thanks to the stars,
jewels in the sky
bringing jewels to
the ground.

go to the garden
just to be with the plants,
in thanks for their gifts
yesterday and tomorrow.
reciprocity with the land;
give give give and a little take,
walking lightly on the earth.

what can we give
she who has so much?
humans have gifts of gratitude,
love, fixing past wrongs,
and so much more
if we only imagine.

Cai (Leo) is an artist from Ithaca, New York and is co-clerk of NY Yearly Meetings' Witness Coordinating Committee.

Collective Evolution in the Face of Climate Crisis

By Keith Runyan

FROM THE EMERGENT PATTERNS of a monarch butterfly's wing to the fractal branchings of a mycelial web, we find ourselves, as 21st-century Friends awash in a fundamentally beautiful world, unveiled. We find ourselves not in the universe, but of it, in a state of interbeing. Every day we uncover even more of the secrets of our lover, Gaia. Yet with each passing minute our species gets closer to the edge of a growing ecological collapse of our own making. A crisis of which we might not be spared.

Quakerism was founded on the vision of bringing Light into the world during a time of extreme instability, famine, strife, and war. George Fox saw a millenarian future, a coming end-of-days, in which all those who listened would bear the light of Christ into the world and bring the Kingdom of Heaven here to Earth.

Today, in another time of crisis, Fox's words still resonate. The message of collective evolution in the face of our civilization's crisis is more relevant than ever. This time, however, it is not only a prophetic vision, but a way in which our species might face these coming storms. Just as in any spiritual transformation, we see humanity's journey forward as a course from breakdown to breakthrough. In reflecting on Friends' tradition and practice on Unity, there is a simple truth: the only path forward is together.

The climate crisis is upon us. Just this year, we held our African brothers and sisters in the light as thousands passed from this world beneath the raging winds of Cyclones Idai and Belna. We watched the bright lights of species

unknown to us leave our world as fire lit the canopy of the Amazon and the Australian bush. We've witnessed the droughts in Chile, Central America, and East Africa destabilize the lives of the most vulnerable amongst us. We held our loved ones as fires raged through Paradise, Ventura, and Santa Rosa in California.

Many among us seek to change our lives and live our truth: to plant more trees, to restore our lands, to transform our societies, and reduce our impacts here on our Earth. And we've witnessed the youngest among us take a stand for the future of Life through creative organizing and action. One by one, our hearts spark others. One by one, we shift the world.

We aspire to give our lives to the promise of new life as a renewed covenant of Friends—to unshackle our hearts towards a love of all beings. Moving between us and through us, we sense a calling from which we can't turn away, one that seeks the transformation and restoration of this world. In listening, we sense that this path of personal and collective transformation is not only our solemn obedience and duty, but also, our highest aspiration.

The Anthropocene calls to all peoples in such diversity as is endemic to our species. To Quakers, we sense that this calling is to reawaken the message of Fox within ourselves, a Gathered Meeting caught alight upon the Earth. We take this leap not as a fleeting hope but as the deepest resolve, a faith on fire, the work we must do.

Keith is a naturalist, podcast host, and life-long Friend. He lives in Santa Cruz, California.



Photo by Kathy Barnhart

“Sing and rejoice ye children of the day and the light; for the Lord is at work in this thick night of darkness that may be felt: and the Truth doth flourish as the rose, and lilies do grow among the thorns and the plants atop the hills, and upon them the lambs doth skip and play.”

— George Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*



Photo by Kathy Barnhart

Considering Limits to Human Population Size

THE POPULATION WORKING GROUP of Quaker Earthcare Witness recently published a new booklet, “Considering Limits to Human Population Size.” The publication grew out of a concern raised almost a year ago when the Working Group was updating its general population trifold: “but you have not considered ecological limits to population.” Since that was too big a topic to include in that already full trifold, the Population Working Group undertook to write a separate trifold. A sub-committee began working on it, but soon realized the topic was too big for a trifold, so it is a 12-page booklet.

The “Considering Limits to Human Population Size” booklet cites growing evidence that the maximum sustainable human population size on Earth ranges between 1.5 and 3.5 billion persons, while the population of the Earth is already 7.7 billion today. The booklet then raises several questions. Does this mean that the human population is in overshoot already? What does historical research tell us about human behavior under overshoot conditions? What mechanisms can be used to bring the human population back to a sustainable size?

The booklet addresses how a population of closer to three billion worldwide can be reached through the widespread acceptance of a family norm below two children per family for several generations. This would avoid a population crash involving major increases in mortality due to famine, pestilence, and war. The booklet concludes that “[a]dapting to a world with average families having fewer than two children for several generations will be very difficult personally, communally, and spiritually, but no more difficult than living in a world with increased premature deaths of billions of people suffering famine, poverty, disease, and violence.”

The three main authors, Stan Becker, Roy Treadway, and Judy Lumb worked over eight months going through 48 versions to consider various angles and ramifications. We appreciate the suggestions provided by members of the Population Working Group and the Publications Committee of Quaker Earthcare Witness. Thanks to everyone, this booklet is now approved for distribution. You can download your copy at: <quakerearthcare.org/pamphlet/considering-limits-human-population-size> and visit <quakerearthcare.org/population> for more resources.

Clearness Committee on Kids?

The Population Working Group of QEW is aware that some young adults are considering not having children for the sake of the planet. We wonder how we can be supportive of whatever reproductive choices young adult Friends are making.

Chesapeake Quarterly Meeting approved a minute which includes the statement: “...Meetings should make known the availability of clearness committees for couples who are considering additions to their family and want support in making a responsible decision...” (6/1992).

I have served on one clearness committee for adoption and one for abortion, but it would be difficult to learn if/how this recommendation has been implemented in other Monthly Meetings. More generally, we wonder if Friends elsewhere are dealing with this concern.

If Friends have experiences or insights to share in this regard, could you please send them to the Population Working Group c/o Hayley Hathaway hayley@quakerearthcare.org.

Stan Becker,
Population Working Group

Nothing Lowly in the Universe:

An Integral Approach to the

Ecological Crisis by Jennie M. Ratcliffe

Book Review by Ruah Swennerfelt

MANY, MANY YEARS ago, after having a deep-felt conversation with my father, who wanted to blindly trust his government, I gave him *Cadillac Desert* by Marc Reisner. I chose that book because Dad lived in Southern California, a desert turned into a false oasis of millions of homes using stolen water to survive. The book changed his view of the world and his actions. Jennie Ratcliffe's book, *Nothing Lowly in the Universe: An Integral Approach to the Ecological Crisis*, could do the same thing for people who still are unaware of the emergency we face in our culture and on our planet, and for those who have not yet experienced the deep connection and interrelationship with all that is.

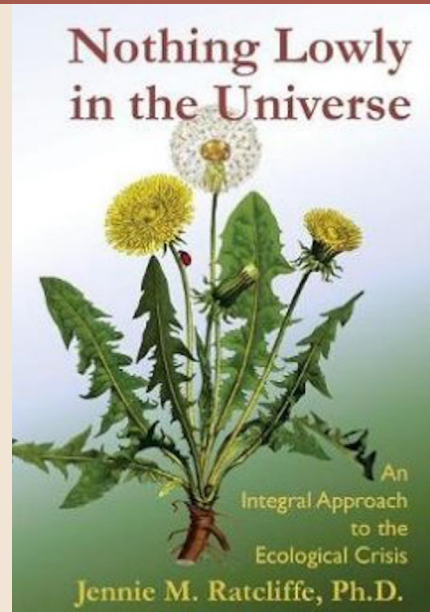
I'm so impressed with the breadth of this book. It's presented in three sections, the first helping explain how we got to this crisis, the second sharing the principles needed for deep change, and the third laying out the practices necessary for action. Although many who read *BeFriending Creation* probably know much of what Jennie shares in the book, it's rare to see it all so compactly expressed in about 300 pages.

Jennie helps us understand the science and history of the emerging crisis as integrated pieces. She examines the calculators, like the ecological footprint, to explain how our current cultural norms of over-consumption and our lack of

connection with the natural world have degraded the very planet that gives us life. She explains the scientific worldview that, for all its benefits, has also reduced nature to a machine. She explores the understanding that violence among humans also causes violence to Earth. Jennie so clearly summarizes, ending with the important question, "*...we clearly have the collective intelligence, knowledge, and technological capacity to live sustainably within the limits imposed by nature*, even at or close to our current and projected population levels. The question becomes, do we have the will and the wisdom to do so? And what will guide us?" (Emphasis the author's).

The spiritual ground of equality and community, like that of nonviolence and simplicity, is also rooted in integrity as the recognition of our fundamental interdependence and reverence for all things in the web of life.

After such a clear and thorough exploration of our predicament, Jennie explores the principles which create the building blocks of how we can change the current trajectory of human-caused environmental destruction. Jennie devotes a chapter to the Quaker understanding of living in right relationship,



beginning with the elements of our testimonies. Jennie so beautifully writes, "The spiritual ground of equality and community, like that of nonviolence and simplicity, is also rooted in integrity as the recognition of our fundamental interdependence and reverence for all things in the web of life." She also includes a thorough examination of other religious responses to the ecological emergency we face.

In Jennie's description of the principles of deep ecology, she aptly concludes that just understanding the principles is not enough. We need to experience the heart connection to Earth. And she explains that the experience does not belong just to mystics, but that this experience, "is emphatically something that can arise spontaneously in a flash of insight or after deep thought, in a laboratory or on a wild mountaintop, in a backyard or a city park, in the silence of a Quaker Meeting or a quiet walk in a forest." Just this fall I had one of those moments when I felt our deep connection to the place where we live. One afternoon in the midst of bottling apple cider, my husband, Louis, put his completed

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17 bottles of homemade black current wine on a shelf by a window. My heart and whole body felt the gratitude and love that comes from our deep relationship with the land and all of life in our little bit of paradise. I appreciate Jennie's understanding of the spiritual nature of this relationship and how she has emphasized the need to make change from deep within us and all around us.

In the concluding chapters, Jennie focuses on the practices of deep ecology, economy, and peace. The chapter exploring deep economy begins with the question, "What might a socially and environmentally just and long-term, ecologically sustainable economy, based on the principles of nonviolence, integrity, simplicity, and equality in community, look like?" After reading about the efforts in developing countries, Jennie shares ways the global north could practice nonviolent economics, leaning on the work of E.F. Schumacher. And exploring what the practice of deep peace might look like, Jennie writes, "...we cannot build a peaceable, just and sustainable life with Earth without seeking a more just, equitable and peaceful way of living with each other, and within ourselves."

I cannot do justice to the depth and breadth of this book in a short review. Jennie Ratcliffe's ability to bring together an amazing amount of research and give such a comprehensive look to where we are and what we must do, is awe inspiring. I appreciate that she has obviously been a practitioner of Quaker beliefs, deep ecology, and years as a research scientist and activist.

Ruah is a former General Secretary of Quaker Earthcare Witness and a member of Middlebury (VT) Friends Meeting.

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We ended by discussing a draft minute which asks all parts of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to take action on the climate crisis and make it a top priority and major corporate witness. The Eco-Justice Collaborative is asking monthly and quarterly meetings in our region to endorse this minute in preparation for its consideration at the Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting at the end of July.

For more information on the Thread Gathering and the Eco-Justice Collaborative, please contact Patricia Finley, finleyp2932@gmail.com. Find us on Facebook under "Eco-Justice Collaborative of PYM."

Minute to Address the Climate Crisis as One of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's Top Corporate Witnesses

In 2018, climate scientists told the United Nations that the effects of climate change were occurring much sooner than expected. They warned that, unless carbon emissions are cut by 50% in the next ten years, i.e., by 2030, and then to net-zero by 2050, humanity will probably experience a global climate catastrophe of incalculable severity before the end of this century.

We know that while all will suffer, the most vulnerable populations will face certain calamity. Institutional racism has already harmed communities of color, as manifested in part in environmental injustice. Continued exploitation of the earth's resources has already caused mass extinctions and put life as we know it at risk. Conflicts due to rising sea levels, food insecurity, water scarcity, and mass migrations are already causing horrific injustice and threatening world peace.

For these reasons, our historic testimonies for peace, justice, integrity, and stewardship call us to make climate justice a clear and urgent concern for corporate witness, and for all manifestations of our Yearly Meeting to take immediate and resolute action.

You're Invited QEW Spring Steering Committee Meeting

Join Quaker Earthcare Witness for our 2020 Spring Steering Committee Meeting at Durham Friends Meeting in North Carolina April 23 - 26, 2020.

All are welcome!

Visit www.quakerearthcare.org/upcoming for more information.

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Philadelphia Friends Confront Climate Crisis

By Patricia Finley, Ruth Darlington, Liz Robinson, and the Eco-Justice Collaborative of PYM

MORE THAN 50 FRIENDS gathered on a snowy morning at Germantown Monthly Meeting on January 18 to learn, share, and discern how to effectively address environmental injustice and the climate crisis. Over the course of the Thread Gathering, we discussed the urgency of cutting our carbon emissions in half in the next ten years and how to actually meet this challenge. Understanding that the most vulnerable among us are the least able to adapt to or withstand climate change, and recognizing the tragic history of environmental racism, we focused throughout the day on urgent economic reform and environmental justice.

Pennsylvania is the nation's third largest carbon-emitting state. At the meeting, Liz Robinson (Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting and the Philadelphia Solar Energy Association) stressed the importance of action to convince our state officials to clean up our state's act. Steve Olshevski (Radnor Meeting) and Ed Dreby (Providence Meeting) dove into the need for major economic reform, exploring divestment from fossil fuels and the creation of public banks as



How to cut our carbon emissions in half over the next ten years?

steps we need to take. O (from Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting) and Nathan Anderson from Serenity Soular helped us explore eco-justice and shared about successful solar training projects in Philadelphia that can be replicated elsewhere. Liz also shared about EnergyFIT Philly, a very successful home repair/energy efficiency program for low-income homes in poor condition that is being replicated statewide.

Together we sketched out a vision of a sustainable energy future for our region and developed a set of action steps we can take as individuals, meetings, and as Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. Diving deep into clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transportation, sustainable food production, a just economic system, resilience issues, health care, spiritual strength and community cohesion, we created a roadmap to the future we seek. We believe Quakers have much to contribute to the movement to transform our world and solve this crisis.

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