



## Practicing Earth Activism

by Ruah Swennerfelt

To become more active on behalf of Earth, start by making yourself aware of the issues. Learn from sources in addition to the conventional news reports.

Begin examining ways you can reduce your purchases, buy local, rather than transported, goods, walk or carpool or use public transportation more. Buy second-hand clothing. Challenge your family to reduce energy consumption by installing compact fluorescent bulbs, turning the thermostat down, and replacing old appliances with "Energy Star" rated appliances. Be willing to talk about what you are doing. This is one of the most important steps. It will encourage others to take first steps so together we can really make a difference.

Try writing letters to your state and federal representatives. Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) provides content for letters. Read Quaker Eco Bulletin to explore a variety of issues from a deeper perspective. Work with members in your Church or Meeting to provide education classes on the issues of the day, including steps for action. (A good resource for such a class is the Quaker Earthcare Witness pamphlet, *Walking Gently on the Earth*, an Earthcare Checklist.)

Write letters to the editor of your local newspapers. Write articles for *Quaker Life*, *Friends Journal*, *BeFriending Creation*, or *EarthLight Magazine*.

Then, if after you have made some personal changes, written some letters, made some phone calls, engaged others into action, and you still feel you are not doing enough, maybe you are being led to more actively demonstrate your concerns. Encourage others in your meeting or church to join together and participate in a vigil or march or other advocacy action for which you feel a leading. Search out neighborhood activities, like a plan to clean up a stream or lake, preserve some land for a wildlife habitat, create bicycle paths, clean up a park or roads, or some other worthwhile project. Working with others to make change can be an incredibly inspiring experience.

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### Questions for Reflection

- What do I do daily to remind myself of my connections with people, other creatures, and all that sustains life? How does this bring joy, thankfulness, and nourishment into my spiritual life?
- Do I treasure as sacred the whole of Creation?
- Do I honor the Life of all living things, the order of nature, the wildness of wilderness, the richness of the world?
- Do I seek the holiness which God has placed in these things, and the measure of Light which God has lent them?
- What actions am I taking to reverse the destruction of the earth's ecosystems, and to promote the earth's healing?
- Do I contribute ideas, effort, and resources to help heal and stabilize our ecosystem?
- As a member of my Friends' community, as well as of my work and home communities, do I seek guidance in the Light for ways that I may lead and participate in actions which both heal the earth and inspire others regarding the urgency of this healing?

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.





Matthew 5:14-16

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