In Quaker Silence: Reflections on QEW's Recent Week in Washington DC

Russ Adams, North Columbus (Ohio) Monthly Meeting

In Quaker silence, do I hear our humanitarian ancestors, our abolitionist ancestors, our pacifist ancestors, crying out to us to pursue full sustainability for ourselves and our children and all folks yet to come...while there is time?

Perhaps an all-for-peace Manhattan project could be organized around a Full Sustainability Commission? Perhaps nothing less can bring together the scientists and other visionaries needed to very carefully, very sensitively usher in a new age?

In Ninth month, Fourth week, Pope Francis recognized environmental sustainability as among our highest golden-ruled goals. The former Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio invited all to "hear the cry of the poor" and "enter into dialogue with all people about our common home."

We can be thankful that an influential global religion-business has come out so powerfully for environmental sustainability. Yet, toward "dialogue," there is so much more to be done.

In Quaker silence I discern Fox’s "pure religion" as a way we strive to bring all our decisions and behaviors in line with golden rules. "Do unto others," including children yet to come, "as we would have others do unto us" (Matt. 7:12). "Love others," including tomorrow’s children, "as much as we love ourselves" (Mark 12:30). Different religions provide many such behavioral guides through many diverse forms of words. Perhaps Brother Bergoglio’s "dialogue" invites all people of all faiths to compete in imaginatively and dedicatedly bringing golden-ruled sustainability to life?

In Quaker silence, do we hear the poor cry out for food sustainability? In the November 1995 issue of Scientific American (pp. 46, 52), Carl Safina warns us in "The World’s Imperiled Fish," that fish production worldwide "contributes more to the world’s supply of protein than beef, poultry, or any other animal source," yet world fish catches have been falling since 1989.

World Watch adds that with 80 percent of the world’s calories coming from farmed grains, per person grain production has been falling since 1984. We now add a billion hungry mouths to the world’s population every 13 years.

In Quaker silence, do we hear the poor cry out for energy sustainability? Engineer Dave Rutledge at
Caltech estimates that we will exhaust 90 percent of all our conventional fuels by year 2060.

"Our world is facing a refugee crisis of a magnitude not seen since the Second World War," Bergoglio observed. In so many news stories we see third-world brothers and sisters savaged by poverty in lands where for far too long, babies have been born faster than jobs.

Do the poor cry out for inexpensive birth controls? Do their still small voices explain why 86 percent of our dear Catholic brothers and sisters who worked on the 1966 Papal Commission on Population and Birth Control identified contraceptives as mandated by golden rules? Are the poor crying out for population sustainability, everywhere?

Too often, genocide and war flow from failures of sustainability. Götz Ali's *Hitler’s Beneficiaries* shows that the Nazi Party bought loyalty of some Germans by re-distributing confiscated wealth from murdered minorities and foreign countries. Today, many American politicians buy loyalty through borrowing at rates projected to bankrupt Social Security and even the value of currency. In Quaker silence, are the poor crying out that we should pursue welfare-state sustainability and currency sustainability as keys to economic sustainability?

In the Jewish book of Genesis, Adam and Eve violated God-given golden rules for protecting Creation. God warned (Genesis 2:17), "[Y]ou must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," from that ancient symbol of sustainability. Adam and Eve ignored God’s guidance and lost both paradise and God’s favor (Genesis Ch. 2). Noah honored golden rules that protect creation for all folks yet to come. That’s how Noah earned high approvals (Genesis Ch. 6).

Are the poor crying out to us to revive ancient faiths’ golden rules; to build the first fully sustainable societies since Adam savaged Eden? In Quaker silence, do I hear our humanitarian ancestors, our abolitionist ancestors, our pacifist ancestors, crying out that we should pursue full sustainability for ourselves and our children and all folks yet to come...while there is still time?

Russ Adams worships with North Columbus Monthly Meeting (OH), where he clerks the Peace and Social Action Committee and represents the Lake Erie Yearly Meeting with QEW. He wrote a study of slavery and genocide called *A Letter to Dear Children: On Our Overpopulation-Violence Connection*. He and his wife Susan enjoy four grandchildren, two miniature Yorkies, and an uppity white parakeet named Coco.