Quaker Earthcare: Timeline & Alliance Resources

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Earthcare organizational work is inseparable from ecojustice and personal transformation. This work may take the form of:

- **Education**: self-examination and conscience-raising, writing, workshops, exchanging information, interconnection, coalitions for common action, beloved community,
- **Agitation**: petitions, lobbying, non-violent protest, movement-building, voting drives and other forms of political action, divestment and reinvestment,
- **Construction of arks**: ecovillages and other intentional communities, native plantings, places of sanctuary, care for environmental refugees.

Each approach's inspiration, strategy and tactics differ. But far from being contradictory each part of the work is complementary and interdependent. Quakers have sometimes split “contemplation” from “action” as if the two were opposed, as if the only choices were quietism or worldly politicking. But two millennia of Quaker queries and 350 years of Friends’ testimony remind us that “faith and practice” are one.

That’s what I always tell Friends when we are talking about Earthcare issues. Don’t feel guilty. Don’t feel overwhelmed. Work on what you care about—your local peace/ecojustice committee, interfaith or community-based environmental group.

For instance, if peace is your main concern, a little thought will show you that peace without a planet is impossible, and vice versa. How can peace be built? What can we learn of conflict prevention, and reconciliation, from AVP, and from the work of African Peace Teams? This will become extremely important in a world where severe shortages of energy, food, water, and other resources are becoming extremely likely.

If your interest is gardening—can we develop local food sources, urban agriculture and permaculture? If quality of life must replace quantity of goods in a mass consumer society, then much of the joy of life must come from local artists: arts, crafts and community-building celebration—rather than mass media.

**Developments—Timeline**


2012: The Kabarak Call to Peace and Ecojustice, approved by all varieties of Friends at the World Conference in Kenya, asked us to:

- See what love can do: to love our neighbor as ourselves, to aid the widow and orphan, to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, to appeal to consciences and bind the wounds.
- Teach our children right relationship, to live in harmony with each other and all living beings in the earth, waters and sky of our Creator, who asks, “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world?” (Job 38.4)
- Do justice to all and walk humbly with our God, to cooperate lovingly with all who share our hopes for the future of the earth.
- Be patterns and examples, in a 21st century campaign for peace and ecojustice, as difficult
and decisive as the 19th century abolition of slavery

The Kabarak Call was followed by a number of Living Water Gatherings which were expressions of the ecological concerns of Friends worldwide, recognizing water as a precious and increasingly scarce resource. Local gatherings took place in 16 states across the U.S., Bolivia, Canada, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.

2016: The Pisac Sustainability Minute formulated at World Conference in Peru asks Friends to act on the Call, with each local Meeting setting itself two tasks for the coming year. How can our lives speak?

In response a number of Quaker bodies declared:

*We recognize the connections between climate change and global economic injustice as well as unprecedented levels of consumption, and question assumptions of unlimited material growth on a planet with limited natural resources...*

*We seek to nurture a global human society that prioritizes the well-being of people over profit, and lives in right relationship with our Earth; a peaceful world with fulfilling employment, clean air and water, renewable energy, and healthy thriving communities and ecosystems.*

**The United Nations Reality**

The UN has stated principles of respect for all humanity and the planet. In 2012, a number of organizations protested the “corporate capture” of UN climate action and Sustainable Development Goals. In implicit rebuke, Stakeholder Forum, BioRegions and Earth Charter’s Principles for the Green Economy(2012) recalled the UN to its own declarations, from which it was straying due to deliberate underfinance and pressure from the great powers. Since then the UN’s “Green Economy” program with its “market mechanisms” has been severely criticized for failing to protect human, women’s, local peasant-fisher communities, and aboriginal rights—rights that were formally declared as its basic mission.

**Interfaith and Alliance Opportunities**

At Quaker Earthcare Witness’ (QEW) urging, FCNL added to its mission of Quaker political action: “to seek a world free of war and the threat of war, a society with equity and justice for all, a community where every person’s potential may be fulfilled....we seek an earth restored.”

Similar principles are found in:

- World Council of Churches’ 2012 Economy of Life and Bogor declarations;
- A series of interfaith statements culminating in Together for a Common Future (2014)
- Francis’ papal encyclical Laudato Si, the Catholic Climate Covenant
- Creation Justice Ministries
- Northwest Earth Institute’s study circles
- Food First
- Indigenous Environmental Network
- Idle No More
- Tebtebba
- Via Campesina
- UN Women’s Major Group, ecofeminist WECAN, and Grassroots Global Justice Alliance of people of color (itself the inheritor of a forty-year environmental justice tradition with roots in the US civil rights movement and African-American church leadership) -- and many others.

We should inform ourselves and be ready to cooperate. They are people of faith, friends and allies in the great transformation. We are not alone.
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