

LIVING WITNESS PROJECT
EXPLORING FRIENDS' WITNESS TO SUSTAINABLE
LIVING

Phase One Report

Laurie Michaelis

Witney Monthly Meeting

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SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

In 2000, Britain Yearly Meeting (BYM) began to reconsider our corporate witness to the Earth, prompted partly by the work of Rowntree Fellow, Suzanne Finch. To help carry the process forward, Quaker Peace and Social Witness set up the “Earth: Our Creative Responsibility” (EOCR) Group. At BYM in 2001, supported by a background paper from this group, Friends were asked whether we should have a Testimony to the Earth. Many felt that we should, but that it should emerge from our witness, in action and words. Friends were not sure that our current witness in this area was sufficient to constitute a Testimony. They suspected that others, including Christian and other religious organisations, had done more and had more to say on the subject.

BYM in 2001 issued a “Call to Action”, expressing with clarity and passion our sense of the urgent need to address the ecological impacts of our lifestyles and production systems. But Yearly Meeting was not clear on the nature of the action; nor did it devote any new resources to developing our corporate witness to the Earth.

The environmental policies of governments, businesses and NGOs are focused on developing cleaner production systems. No group, nationally or internationally, has found a widely applicable approach to thinking about and encouraging sustainable consumption and lifestyles. Mainstream environmental NGOs do not campaign on this issue, for fear of being marginalised. But there is a growing recognition that faith communities have a role to play. Friends in particular should have something to offer, partly because of our existing Testimonies. Our spiritual and business practices may also be relevant in the search for sustainable lifestyles, which demands creativity, experimentation and conflict resolution. And Quaker meetings are uniquely suited to an exploration of the tensions between individuality and community, liberty and equality, wealth creation and welfare, which underlie the consumption debate.

The Living Witness Project (LWP) responds to BYM’s Call to Action, aiming to support the development of Friends’ corporate witness to sustainable living and explore ways of taking it to the wider community in Britain and elsewhere. Its work is supported by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust until March 2005. The project is guided by a support group including members of EOCR, Quaker Green Action (QGA), and Young Friends General Meeting (YFGM). It is proceeding in four phases:

1. *April 2002 to December 2002* A review of British Friends’ current individual and corporate witness to sustainable living.
2. *January 2003 to December 2004.* Engagement of a network of meetings in exploring and developing their witness, with a particular focus on the corporate dimension, and experimenting with different approaches and tools.
3. *Sept. 2004 to March 2005.* An evaluation of the experience to identify what works.
4. *from January 2005.* Dissemination of our findings, maintaining and expanding the network and sharing our experience more widely in BYM and beyond.

The first phase of the project is complete and the second phase is underway. The current report describes some of the initial findings and experiences.

The report starts with a review of developments in sustainable development responses in the wider world. It notes the efforts that have been made to get to grips with “sustainable consumption” and the inability of the establishment to ask questions that seriously challenge the values of the consumer society.

It goes on to describe the emergence of environmental concerns within BYM, and the findings from the initial review of Friends witness in this project. A great deal is already happening. The subject of sustainable living is of great interest to Friends. Quakers are very much aware of environmental issues and seek to develop lifestyles consistent with a wide range of values. Friends’ deeply held values include simplicity, responsibility, community, individuality, honesty, compassion, love, integrity, and many more. On the whole these values are shared although we differ in the emphasis we place on them. Some of them seem to conflict. We also have diverse visions for a sustainable future, reflecting our values. There is a widespread desire for support in making positive changes in our lives, for example in the form of better information and help in wrestling with conflicting priorities.

The report then summarises some of the initial experiences within LWP. The project has engaged a network of 17 meetings from around Britain, including YFGM. Some of them have been involved in corporate action for sustainability for several years. Others are just beginning to explore what they can do. There is scope for additional meetings to join the network. We would especially welcome the involvement of a Scottish meeting.

So far, representatives of the participating meetings have met for two residential weekends in a Link Group. These gatherings have provided an opportunity to develop a shared understanding of what the group is trying to achieve, and to reflect on experiences of working on a corporate witness to sustainability in Friends meetings. The weekends have been fun and the group has developed a strong sense of community. Some of the meetings have identified initiatives that will be their contribution to LWP. Others are still developing their own sense of their interests and priorities. Initiatives range from holding study groups to setting up businesses, and from public information campaigns to practical action for the local environment. Several are involving the children in thinking about sustainability.

The report concludes by identifying some of the challenges that we face, both in LWP and in BYM more generally, as we seek to respond to the current needs in our society. A transition to a sustainable world will need all kinds of action. We will need to make changes in our own lives, in our immediate communities and neighbourhoods, at the level of towns, counties and nation states, and internationally. If we acknowledge the importance of multiple, simultaneous courses of action, we can begin to relax our concern about getting our focus “right”. We can welcome the contribution of each member of our community and understand it as a contribution to our corporate witness.

A GROWING NEED

Increasing environmental concern

A number of publications in the 1960s and early 1970s helped to shape public awareness of the environmental agenda. Two of the best known were *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson in 1962 and *Limits to Growth* by the Club of Rome in 1972 (Meadows *et al.*, 1972). *Silent Spring* is widely credited with having initiated public debate about the environment. It explained how the unregulated use of insecticides was devastating wildlife, poisoning the human food chain, and generating resistant strains of insects. *Limits to Growth* showed how continuing exponential growth in population and consumption could lead to the rapid depletion of the Earth's resources.

In the 1970s, most industrialised countries established environment ministries. DDT was banned in the United States and elsewhere. International standards were established to limit emissions from motor vehicles, and regional agreements were developed reducing acid gas emissions from power stations.

Oil price rises in 1973/74 and 1979/80 led Western governments and businesses to implement energy efficiency and renewable energy programmes. By the late 1980s, oil demand in the west was falling, and "limits to growth" appeared unnecessary.

Through the 1990s, the environmental agenda became increasingly accepted as part of normal politics and business. Environmental campaigning organisations had previously been dismissed by the government and business establishment as a lunatic fringe. They were now invited to take part in the development of government policy, and they were engaged by corporations such as British Petroleum to help develop their environmental strategies. In the process, environmentalism was converted into a form that was acceptable to governments and the business community (see box).

Mainstreaming the Environment

In recent years, environmentalists have learned to speak the language of government and business, winning them a place at the negotiating table and in the boardroom. There is now a broad environmental policy consensus – a received wisdom, which is closely circumscribed by economic "logic". Two kinds of measure are justified:

- those that encourage the development of new technology and hence stimulate economic activity; and
- those that bring environmental problems within the realm of the market – for example, imposing government charges for pollution, or privatising water supply.

The received wisdom does not question the basic assumptions of the establishment, in particular the principles of the consumer society. The freedom of the individual to consume, and of the firm to pursue profit and market share, are taken as given. The material vision of the good life is taken for granted. Any effort to change human behaviour and culture is seen as immoral and fruitless.

Emergence of the sustainable development agenda

A central part of the mainstreaming of the environment has been the emergence of the idea of sustainable development, following on the 1987 report of the Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987). The UN Earth Summit at Rio in 1992 generated numerous new directions of debate and action for sustainability. They include:

- The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. This is perhaps the most visible forum for international debate, negotiation and action to address a major environmental crisis.
- The Commission on Sustainable Development. This is the UN body charged with carrying forward the policy commitments made at Rio, in particular *Agenda 21* – a lengthy document setting out principles and priorities for action.
- Local Agenda 21. The greatest success story emerging from Rio lies in the initiatives taken at a local level. Most LA21 initiatives come from local government, especially in Britain, but local communities, NGOs and even Quaker meetings have started up LA21 projects. It is at the local level that some of the most ambitious and innovative projects have been developed.

In these different forums, sustainability is discussed in vastly different languages. The climate negotiations have centred on seeking the most cost-effective and politically expedient way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. At CSD, there is much more talk of fundamental principles, and there are often side meetings on spiritual dimensions of sustainability. It is at CSD that north-south tensions remain most visible, even among the NGO participants. In LA21 the focus is understandably more pragmatic and practical.

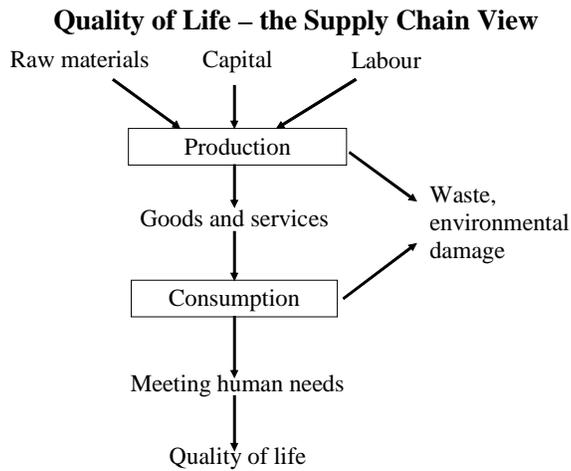
Questioning consumption

Agenda 21 contains a chapter on “Changing Consumption Patterns”. It calls for “new concepts of wealth and prosperity which allow higher standards of living through changed lifestyles and are less dependent on the Earth’s finite resources”. Following the Rio Summit, the Norwegian government sponsored a series of international meetings on sustainable consumption. There was an initial emphasis on the distinction between the economic standard of living and the quality of life, which may be only weakly linked to material consumption. But this distinction has been lost in the emerging consensus from the international process, which is aptly summed up by a former director from the UN Environment Programme: “Sustainable consumption is not about consuming less, it is about consuming differently, consuming efficiently, and promoting an improved quality of life to the benefit of all”.

Most discussion of policies for sustainability then, at least in the industrialised world, appears to be based on a supply chain view of human quality of life. Sustainability is supposed to be about meeting human needs, now and in the future, and this is equated with improving quality of life. Human needs are assumed to be met by increasing material consumption. The sustainability challenge is reduced to maximising consumption (and hence production) while minimising waste and environmental damage.

Governments and businesses have engaged with sustainability largely as a technological challenge. Those in power are not ready to come to terms with the deeper social, cultural and economic changes implied by the goal of sustainable development. But there are several basic shortcomings in their supply-chain perspective:

First, it overestimates the potential of technology. Environmental experts have argued that a ten-fold increase in resource efficiency is needed over the next 30-50 years in industrialised countries. While economic output is expected to double, energy and material use must be reduced by a factor of five. An analysis of historical patterns of resource efficiency increase shows that this is probably not feasible, even if there were a substantial increase in the commitment of governments and businesses to finding new technology and limiting resource use.



Second, it assumes that the supply chain can be influenced separately from consumer behaviour. It is not possible to make large changes in technology and production processes without also changing human behaviour. Technology does not exist in a social vacuum. Policies that would bring about massive improvements in resource efficiency would also affect consumption. Measures such as higher fuel taxes have been ruled out in Britain and the United States precisely because of business and consumer protests.

Third, it assumes that technology improvements in the industrialised countries have benefits that “trickle down” to the third world. But the evidence from history is that resource efficiency improvements in the industrialised world are unlikely to do anything to improve international equity. On the whole, technology has historically enabled the rich countries to get richer while the poor get poorer. Addressing poverty demands a rethinking of the whole economic and political system. The solutions are likely to involve a shift in the cultural assumptions and institutions that underpin consumerism.

Fourth, it assumes that increasing consumption leads to improved quality of life. Again, the evidence is that rising levels of consumption are not improving our quality of life. Surveys in many industrialised countries show that people do not feel any more happy or satisfied as average income grows beyond the level required to meet basic physical needs. Community breakdown, linked to individualism and materialism, is a widely recognised problem, in Britain and elsewhere, detracting from quality of life.

QUAKER RESPONSES

A Quaker Testimony to the Earth?

Friends have a long history of concern for non-human life and for the earth, which has been reviewed by Anne Adams in *The Creation was Opened to Me* (1996). This concern was expressed in the writings of George Fox (whose *Journal* Anne's book title quotes) and exemplified in the witness of John Woolman in the 18th century. London Yearly Meeting minuted its concerns for the care of other species in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Friends Vegetarian Society was formed in 1902.

Expressions of concern about the environment as we would now understand it began to emerge in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A committee on Sharing World Resources was set up in 1968. A special interest group, Quaker Green Concern, was formed in 1986. In 1988 London Yearly Meeting took up the concern for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), initiated by the World Council of Churches.

In the early 1990s, interest in the environment seemed to wane among Quakers, as it did elsewhere following the Rio Earth Summit. JPIC was laid down in 1994 for financial reasons. But that year also saw the approval of a new "book of discipline". The 1995 edition of Quaker Faith and Practice incorporated a new chapter on "Unity of Creation". It also included a new set of "Advices and Queries". Among the additions were numbers 41 and 42:

41. *Try to live simply. A simple lifestyle freely chosen is a source of strength. Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need or cannot afford. Do you keep yourself informed about the effects your style of living is having on the global economy and environment?*
42. *We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures, and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God's continuing creation.*

Another initiative in 1994 was the new project on Rediscovering Our Social Testimony (QHS, 2000). The aim of this group was to help Yearly Meeting to focus on the key elements of Quaker social testimony. Local meetings and individual Friends were invited to respond to the project with their own stories about their values and action. In 1997 Yearly Meeting agreed *An expression in words of Britain Yearly Meeting's corporate social testimony drawn from its experience and understanding at this time*, including sections on equality and community, simplicity, stewardship, integrity and truth, and peace.

Also in 1997, the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust awarded a fellowship to Suzanne Finch to travel around Britain, interviewing Friends and speaking to local meetings about environmental issues.

Suzanne Finch's work led to the publication of a book, *A Quaker Testimony to the Earth?* (Finch, 2000) and to a discussion at Yearly Meeting in 2000 which was inconclusive about the need for any corporate action on environmental issues – despite minuting terms of reference for the newly created QPSW which mentioned "Our testimony to equality, justice, peace, simplicity, sustainability and truth." The luke-warm response led the under-19 participants to express their disappointment formally in their minute at the conclusion of Yearly Meeting. The protest from younger Friends led to the issue being tabled again the following year, with more

time for discussion. Meanwhile, a small working group was set up, entitled “Earth: Our Creative Responsibility” (EOCR), to explore what might be done.

A call to action

When BYM returned to the issue in 2001, many Friends were surprised and delighted by the strong sense of shared concern about our relationship with the Earth. Yearly Meeting developed a “statement for the use of Friends” -- the “Call to Action” mentioned in the introduction to this paper, and included in Annex 1. It conveys the urgent need for changed lives and other forms of action. But doubts were expressed at YM about the role that Friends can play, especially bearing in mind that other groups such as Friends of the Earth have been campaigning on these issues for many decades. The YM minute looked forward to hearing what local meetings were doing.

Later in 2001, the EOCR Group carried out a survey of local meetings asking about the initiatives being taken both corporately in the meetings and by individuals in their own lives. The responses showed that a great deal is happening (QPSW, 2002). Of 550 local Friends’ meetings in Britain, 178 responded to the questionnaire.

The survey asked meetings whether they had adopted green practices such as energy conservation measures, ethical banking, recycling waste, composting and car-sharing. It did not ask any specific questions of individuals but simply provided space for them to list their activities for the environment. Responses were quite encouraging – for example, over 60% of responding meetings had energy saving light bulbs, 40% separated waste from compost, and 70% practised some system of car sharing or lifts for travel to meetings. Ten meetings mentioned that they had carried out environmental audits or were in the process of doing so, and many were switching to renewable electricity supplies.

There were also about 950 responses from households representing around 1300 individuals. Of these individual responses, 69% mentioned recycling, 37% composting, and 36% minimising car use. Friends were also active in the Green Party and in environmental campaigning organisations.

In a further initiative, the EOCR Group has published a collection of contributions from individual Friends on their personal witness to our relationship with the Earth (EOCR, 2003).

An emerging corporate witness

Despite all of the local action, many Quakers active on environmental issues say that they feel isolated as “green Friends” in their meetings. There is a tremendous amount of corporate activity around peace issues, support for asylum seekers, and other social activities. Many meetings buy fair trade tea and coffee. Friends generally are careful to avoid wasting paper and envelopes. But environmental action has mostly been seen as something for individuals to do. There are some signs that this is beginning to change, as the table overleaf shows.

Our corporate witness as Friends has tended to focus mainly on our premises and grounds, and on purchasing decisions related to meetings and events such as those identified in the EOCR questionnaire. Many local meetings have incorporated environmental concerns into their housekeeping choices because of the personal concerns of the individuals responsible for purchasing, of their wardens, or of individual members of premises and finance committees. Some offer a public witness to the Earth through their buildings.

Corporate Statements and Actions on the Environment

Corporate Statements	Environmental Choices and Policies
<p>West Scotland MM sent a minute to Meeting for Sufferings in 2000, saying it was time for the Society to develop a more positive testimony on the environment.</p> <p>Norwich and Lynn MM, preparing for BYM 2001, developed a document saying that individual action is not enough, and asking whether we can act as a "community of faith", sharing our Concern for the planet.</p> <p>South Wales MM sent a minute to Meeting for Sufferings saying that "a Testimony to the Earth is as important as our Peace Testimony, and that the two are inseparable."</p> <p>Bridport PM sent a minute to the EOCR group saying that "we must wake up to our responsibilities".</p> <p>High Wycombe PM sent a minute to the EOCR Group with a statement on a testimony to the earth, saying that we should "let our lives speak".</p> <p>In 2001, BYM 2001 did not reach agreement on a "Testimony to the Earth" but issued a "Call to Action" (see Annex 1).</p> <p>Following BYM 2001, Staffordshire MM sent a minute to the EOCR group, saying that it would be helpful to have a testimony to the earth, which records the way Friends have been led to act.</p> <p>In 2002, Bristol and Frenchay MM sent a minute to Meeting for Sufferings supporting a Friend's concern for the Society to support "Contraction and Convergence" as an international framework to address climate change.</p>	<p>Many meetings around Britain have carried out environmental audits, or have plans to do so. Some of these have led to quite substantial changes in practices within the meetings.</p> <p>In 2000, Chesterfield PM surveyed its members and attenders on their attitudes on Quaker witness to the environment. The PM has now set up a transport sharing system. It has switched to Fair Trade tea, coffee and sugar, ecological cleaning products, recycled toilet paper and green electricity. It now has only vegetarian food in the meeting house. Action is also being taken in the meeting house grounds. New planting is planned to encourage wildlife. The children have made nest boxes for the garden.</p> <p>Following two years' work on an environmental audit of the meeting house, Dorking PM is the first Quaker meeting to be given the Eco-congregation award (see box on page 13).</p> <p>Hardshaw East MM has set up a Social and Environmental Advisory Group (SEAG), which assists the MM in its corporate social and environmental witness. A policy statement on transport (to minimise car use for MM) was adopted by MM. MM also accepted a recommendation to plant trees as a symbolic gesture to recognise the CO₂ emissions associated with MM activities. SEAG has also developed policy statements on meeting house furnishings, equipment and decoration, and on "open spaces" such as gardens and burial grounds.</p> <p>Young Friends General Meeting does not have its own meeting house, but maintains an office at Woodbrooke and holds three residential meetings a year hosted by meetings around the country. The catering for YFGM is organic, vegetarian and, as far as possible, based on local produce. Car travel to YFGM is avoided. The office re-uses paper and envelopes, and waste at meetings is recycled or composted.</p>

Several preparative and monthly meetings have developed statements about their shared concern for environmental issues (see table opposite). Many of these followed visits by Suzanne Finch during her fellowship. In a few cases monthly meeting minutes have been forwarded to Meeting for Sufferings.

Several meetings have also set up regular discussion groups and weekend retreats to explore green issues. One group, at Manchester Mount Street Meeting, addressed a range of issues around the lifestyles of participants, looking particularly at their use of money and also at a range of environmental issues (QHS, 2000). The experiences of this group led to the establishment of the Hardshaw East MM Social and Environmental Action Group.

In Leicester Meeting, the PM "Quaker Testimony to the Earth Group" met several times, leading in March 2000 to a minute that was included in Suzanne Finch's book *A Quaker Testimony to the Earth?* The "Leicester Friends Green Living Group" met a few times subsequently, and developed an information sheet with resources and suggestions for sustainable living.

Huddersfield Friends also held a series of meetings on living more sustainably, and developed a sheet of ideas for Quaker environmental action.

Some small groups of Friends have gone further, establishing substantial new initiatives that witness to a more sustainable way of living, often involving the wider community. For example:

Llanidloes Energy Solutions (LLES). Llanidloes is a small town, population about 2000, in mid-Wales. Many of those living in the area have moved there to find a simpler lifestyle. Machynlleth and the Centre for Alternative Technology are nearby. Llanidloes Meeting is small, does not have its own meeting house, and has only recently moved from fortnightly to weekly meetings for worship. Following ministry in Meeting for Worship one Sunday, some Llanidloes Friends joined with others from the town to start LLES, originally called Llanidloes Energy Savers. They organised meetings to raise public awareness of climate change and the action that individuals can take to save energy. Their interests later broadened to include renewable energy – many LLES members are part of a solar club, purchasing and installing solar water heaters.

Some members of Llanidloes Meeting have recently been involved in setting up a community shop selling organic fruit, vegetables and cheese. Products are labelled as involving low, medium or high food miles. Friends are providing voluntary help and funding, as well as being loyal customers.

Llanidloes has now been chosen to be a pilot sustainable community with EC funding.

Bamford Quaker Community. The community at Bamford, near Sheffield, has now been in existence for about 15 years. Originally established by a group of Friends from around Britain, the community hosts the weekly meeting for worship of Hope Valley Recognised Meeting. The community maintains a meeting for worship every morning and evening, and is organised on Quaker principles, including the use of the business method for decision making. Environmental and social values are central to the community. It has about 11 acres of land managed primarily for wildlife and native trees and other plants, as well as four organic gardens. Members are seeking to establish a life based in simplicity and sharing, growing some of their own food. They eat together two or three times a week, and work together on the land two weekends each month, inviting visitors for one of those weekends. Household tools and appliances such as a washing machine, vacuum cleaner and freezer, are shared. The community buys green electricity from Unit(e) and generates some solar power for the main house, and to light sheds which are used for educational purposes.

Growing with Grace. This co-operative in Clapham, North Yorkshire, grows organic produce and sells it through its own shop (which carries a wide range of organic and fair trade products) and a local bag scheme. It was set up in 2001 by local people, most of them Friends from Settle Meeting who were partly inspired by the first meeting of the Quakers and Business group at Woodbrooke. Growing with Grace is drawing in support from both Settle Meeting and the local community: volunteers help in the greenhouses and the shop, and a community composting scheme is being set up to help improve the soil and maintain a steady supply of nutrients.

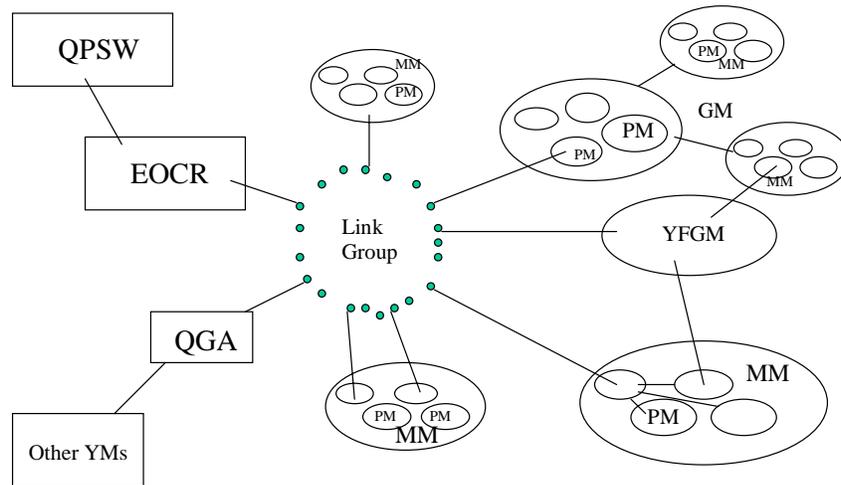
Treesponsibility. Set up in 1998 by Penny Eastwood from Hebden Bridge Meeting in Yorkshire, Treesponsibility plants trees to restore the health of a landscape ravaged by mining. Although run by a Quaker with seed funding from a Quaker trust, and upheld by the local meeting, Treesponsibility is a Local Agenda 21 project owned by the local community. The largest source of funding has been through the Landfill Tax scheme. By 2002, 40,000 trees had been planted. The project also has an important role in public education on climate change, through the involvement of the community and visitors in tree planting, through its web site, and through printed materials. One distinctively Quaker product is a resource pack on climate change for children's classes.

In many cases the Friends involved in these initiatives are supported in their leadings by their local meetings, but none of the projects is a corporate initiative wholly in the care of a preparative or monthly meeting.

EXPLORING OUR CORPORATE WITNESS: THE LIVING WITNESS PROJECT

We have reached a point where Friends feel that sustainability is a shared concern, and that action is urgent. But Friends’ corporate testimony to sustainability has yet to take full form. There are many diverse ideas about positions we should adopt and action we should take, but we have not yet found the “sense of the meeting” in BYM.

The Living Witness Project seeks to respond to BYM’s Call to Action, by nurturing the development of corporate Quaker witness to sustainable living. The project involves a network of meetings, listed in Annex 2.



The Living Witness Project: A Learning Network

Each of the meetings has agreed to undertake some kind of process, which might include study groups, children’s classes, environmental audits of their premises, practical projects, or developing some kind of corporate statement or policy. They are being encouraged to explore and be creative, to learn from their experiments, and to share their experience as much as possible with each other, and with Friends and others beyond the network. We are asking:

- how Friends’ lives currently reflect their values, including Quaker Testimonies to the Earth, to simplicity, equality and justice
- how sustainable living links to spirituality and to Friends’ peace and social witness
- how Friends can best witness to sustainable living in their own lives, their homes, their meetings and communities, and in society at large.

As the project proceeds, we will seek to digest the experience of the network and to develop guidelines and support materials that can be used by local meetings in starting up their own initiatives. An easy-to-use guide will soon be available for Friends and others to calculate their own ecological footprints and greenhouse gas emissions, and to identify priorities for change.

Each meeting participating in the project is represented on the project Link Group which has now held two weekend meetings and will hold several more gatherings in the course of the project. These gatherings provide an opportunity to share experiences, ideas, tools and resources, and for participants to explore ways in which they can address each other's needs. The Link Group is building a strong sense of community and companionship, enjoying our time together while feeling our way towards a shared story about our contribution to sustainability. The gatherings are an opportunity both for morale-boosting and to work on our own capabilities and self-confidence. At the second meeting we welcomed two "resource people" from Turning the Tide, who worked with us on facilitation skills.

Getting started

The LWP participant meetings have begun to identify projects and activities they want to undertake. Some are very practical. For example, several meetings, including Dorking and Manchester Mount Street, are organising plastic recycling for Friends. The Huddersfield group has provided Friends with energy efficient light bulbs. Hereford Friends are setting up schemes to share books and tools. Nailsworth Friends have dug a wildlife pond in the meeting house garden and are switching to a renewable electricity supply.

Eco-Congregation Award for Dorking Friends

Dorking Meeting had been engaged in its environmental audit before joining LWP. The Friend most active in the audit process became the Link person with LWP. She had found it a struggle to rouse the Meeting's enthusiasm for the audit, which was being carried out by a small group. However, to introduce a collective element to the process in line with the emphasis in LWP, she suggested a recycling project, with members of the Meeting bringing in their plastic bottles and used batteries. This was readily taken up. Being able to take an active part greatly increased Friends' enthusiasm for the rest of process and although previously they had not wanted to enter for the eco-congregation award -- they now decided they would.

Achieving the award (from the Eco-congregations programme of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland) brought very good publicity in the local press and the Meeting was delighted at the outreach. Dorking Friends are now talking about the need to share cars, as they see this as a prime area for action.

Dorking Friends' green choices include draught-proofing, switching to green electricity from Unit[e], using environmentally-friendly cleaning materials, composting all organic waste and planning a redesign of the heating system to reduce energy consumption. When the Eco-congregation Award was made, the meeting was particularly commended for its efforts to engage the many users of the Meeting House, by including an environmental policy statement in the booking form for lettings.

Other projects are educational and many of the groups are planning activities involving children in their meetings. Cardiff and Penarth Meetings have put a chart on the wall of Cardiff Friends Meeting House, recording Friends' ecologically sound behaviours. Growing with Grace (the organic co-op set up by Friends from Settle Meeting) is developing its long-term plan, including a focus on education about issues around sustainable food production and consumption.

Machynlleth Friends are using the Green Advices and Queries, produced by the QPSW Earth Our Creative Responsibility Group, as a basis for discussion.

Several groups are having fun and sharing food as well as creating opportunities for learning. Hereford Friends enjoyed a shared meal with organic, local food, and they are planning to hold more similar events. The children in Huddersfield Meeting are working out public transport timetables and making posters for a Green Transport Sunday: Friends will be encouraged to get to meeting by foot, bike or public transport. A picnic lunch afterwards will highlight the issue of food miles with an emphasis on local food, including cress grown by the children.

Experiences to date

At this stage, most of the Link Group members are just getting started in their meetings' processes and projects. Nevertheless, some initial observations are possible from preliminary discussions in the participating meetings, and from the experiences of meetings that have been exploring their lifestyle witness for some time.

Most Friends (and others) are very interested in talking and learning about the relationship between our lifestyles and major issues that concern us. Meetings to discuss LWP have generally been much better-attended than the organisers expected. They have also tended to attract younger members and attenders who are seldom seen at study groups or other events. The groups have provided some attenders with a way in to the meeting community.

While Friends may be uncertain of our corporate involvement in the green movement, we are

Oxford's GOSLings

In early 2001 a small group of Oxford Friends organised an evening meeting on "How We Live". 23 people came and talked about their values and the way they expressed them in their lives. They agreed to meet again a month later and the meetings have kept going. Initially, they struggled with the gap between their visions of a sustainable world and the reality of their lives. It was hard to avoid talking about what they "should" be doing, but this just led to guilt and excuses. Eventually, they found an approach that seems to have worked. They stopped talking about "shoulds" and "oughts", and concentrated instead on what they were going to do. A brainstorm threw up about 30 ideas for action, from setting up a green corner in the meeting house library to starting a car-sharing scheme. They asked who would take responsibility for making something happen, and 12 of the ideas were adopted.

The group, now called the Group on Sustainable Living or "GOSLings", has now been meeting for two years. Conviviality is a key element of their gathering, with shared meals, often cooked together in the meeting house kitchen, and a lot of informal discussion. Participants say that their lives are changing. They are also making gradual changes in the meeting house – there is a green notice board, the meeting has switched to renewable electricity, and the group carried out a more general environmental audit for the meeting. One Friend has started up an environmental group with her neighbours, who have now decided to become Oxford's first "solar street" and have been offered a grant to be an environmental action group.

GOSLings recent meetings have addressed issues including trade justice and ethical shopping, sustainable gardening, the spiritual roots of sustainability, and planning a project to plant about 350-500 trees on the outskirts of Oxford.

unusually aware of environmental issues and many have given a great deal of thought to developing a lifestyle coherent with our values. We are well represented in the Green Party and Friends of the Earth local groups.

Despite Friends' willingness to think critically about our own lifestyles, the topic is a sensitive one for many of us. Care is needed to obtain permission before inviting people to talk about their lifestyles and the way they feel about them. Perhaps the majority of participants in discussions about lifestyle come expecting to be told that they are not doing well enough. But if groups are to have a fruitful dialogue, great care is needed to avoid passing judgement on particular lifestyles.

There is a widespread desire among Friends for better information about the practical action we can take to reduce the environmental impacts of our lifestyles. Group discussions often gravitate towards concerns about conspicuous consumption, visible waste such as plastic carrier bags, and recycling. It is harder to get to grips with the most environmentally significant areas of consumption: consuming meat and dairy products; car use and air travel; and home energy use.

When we begin to address the most environmentally significant areas, we often come up against conflicting priorities. Living in a rural area (and so closer to nature and able to produce their own food) tends to make people dependent on a car. Air travel is widely considered socially and culturally beneficial, despite its major contribution to climate change. Many people would like to live more simply or frugally, but feel constrained by their work, family and social obligations, or their own needs.

Once we meet with such conflict, continuing to talk about "shoulds" and "oughts" is usually unproductive. This may be where Quakers have most to contribute to the cause of sustainability, by making use of our traditions of silent listening and discernment.

Quaker values and sustainability

At gatherings to discuss the project, the first question we ask most groups is about their personal values and the ways they express them in their lives. The list below is drawn from the responses of individuals in several different meetings. Some values (e.g. love, equality, simplicity) are often mentioned. Friends often find slightly different words to express a similar principle, such as the Golden Rule ("do unto others as you would have them do unto you").

Values that Friends seek to express in their lives

Simplicity	Harmony in relationships	Respect for others' values, opinions, space, for animals, the environment.
Responsibility for others and the planet	Service Non-violence	Sharing
Being in community and being an individual: respecting everyone else	Courtesy See others as unique, precious children of God	Being with people and being in the moment
Act as you would have everyone else act	Thoughtful use of resources	Love
Answering that of God in every one	Community	Peace
Treating double-glazing salesmen as human beings	Not being contentious Faithfulness	Spontaneity Generosity
Finding a balance	Helping those in need Honesty	Being tenacious Abundance – feeling I <u>can</u> throw things away
Being a good internationalist	A sense of wonder at the natural world, about everything	The Golden Rule – do as you would be done by, including to those in other countries
Being able to learn	Compassion – empathy with suffering	Friendship: hope to give as much as I get
Mindfulness– being present in where you are and what you're doing	Making things last	Communication – sharing hopes, fears etc.
Equality	Creativity	Appreciating real beauty
Try to combine friendship and laughter	Personal responsibility	Integrity
Open-mindedness about others and their beliefs		Stewardship

It is apparent from the list that there are many potential tensions between different values. Mostly, Friends feel that they are expressing their social values in their lives. To some degree, they are also expressing values relating to environmental stewardship, but they have less confidence on these issues. They often find it hard to reconcile social and environmental priorities. Concerns for community and generosity may, for example, require us to own a car to offer lifts or visit those in need. We may consume convenience products and services to save time for important activities, such as building strong family relationships. But often, choices made in pursuit of our highest values become habits that we maintain even when there is little benefit. For example, once we own a car, we are likely to use it for all of our trips, even where walking, cycling or taking the bus might be better for our health and stress levels.

Some of the tensions arise in our own individual choices. Others arise among people. Friends in several meetings mentioned the difficulty of agreeing on a thermostat setting for the meeting house that meets the needs of all Friends while conserving energy resources.

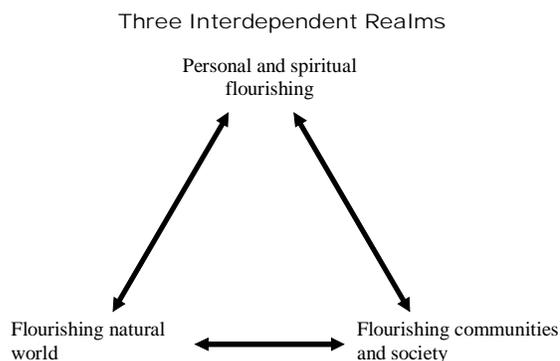
In some gatherings, we have explored our visions for a sustainable world, expressing them through a variety of different media such as poetry and painting and through worship sharing. The following table summarises responses in a gathering of Young Friends in the summer of 2002.

Snatches from Young Quakers' Visions for an Ideal or Sustainable World

Being in a community	No nations or boundaries	Meeting needs in a sustainable way
In contact with the earth	Fitting in	Living in beautiful places
Practising crafts and trades	Doing true work (craftsmanship)	Shifting care from artefacts to people, nature and planet
Cities with more green spaces	Beauty Schumacher and Gandhi	"I thought I wanted choice but I don't: I want everything to be organic, fairly traded, all systems respecting people and earth."
Less rules and regulations – we would dance all night	Fair exchange of values, services and labours	Easier to talk to people in the neighbourhood
Streets where people know and love each other and strangers	Resolving conflict	Less need to go to work
No car – living close to friends and family – living in a community	Security, trust, safe in our own homes	Be in the garden on sunny days
Free education	Fulfilment Respecting each other Complement rather than contradict	

Again, the diversity of language used by Friends is remarkable. Some concentrate on the emotional tenor of their ideal world. Others have rationally-argued political agendas or social visions. Many are more focused on what they do not like about the world as it is now. But despite the diversity our visions are, on the whole, compatible. The tensions between them are constructive and necessary. To a large extent our values can be related to Quaker Testimonies to peace, equality, justice, simplicity, sustainability and community. Rebuilding community, in particular, is a frequently recurring theme both among Friends and in non-Quaker groups.

Environmental sustainability is closely connected to other aspects of our Quaker witness. Sustainable development is not just about the environment: it is also about social justice, community and quality of life. We cannot separate the realms of personal well-being and spiritual development, interpersonal relationships and social justice, and our relationship with the natural world. Neglect one and the others suffer.



At present no group, Quaker or not, has found a definitive way to integrate these values and visions. Some, such as the Hardshaw East MM Social and Environmental Advisory Group, and the Oxford Group on Sustainable Living (see box on page 14), have found their own ways to be with the tensions. On the whole, their emphasis has been on celebrating what we are already doing; taking small, practical steps; and having

fun along the way. The last two points were also emphasised by the Leicester PM "Quaker Testimony to the Earth" Group.

Next steps

For the moment, members of the LWP Link Group are feeling our way, sharing our experience as much as possible with each other, and with others in BYM. The Living Witness Project is closely connected to both the EOCR Group (with two EOCR members on the project support group and one on the Link Group) and Quaker Green Action (again, with organisers and other QGA members on the Link Group). However, the EOCR Group is to be laid down in June 2003, raising questions about the best way for the project to support the development of Quaker corporate witness to sustainability, in local meetings and in BYM. In particular:

- How should the relationship with QGA develop? LWP and QGA activities are closely intertwined but at present QGA is a special interest group based on subscription membership, whereas LWP is seeking to work with the corporate structure in BYM.
- Should the project have a direct communication link with the Central Committees (whether QPSW or Quaker Life), or should it work primarily through preparative and monthly meetings? Would it be helpful for the project to be formally acknowledged as corporate "Quaker Work"? This might just be some kind of stamp of approval from the central committees, but the project would also benefit from being able to use Friends House communication channels such as Quaker News and PM mailings.
- What would be the appropriate means of funding and running the project in the longer term if the work were felt to be of continuing value?

The answers to these questions depend to some extent on the outcome of the strategic review currently being undertaken by QPSW. Experiences from the project may also be able to inform that review – in particular, by demonstrating an alternative way of organising Quaker corporate witness, and by drawing attention to the links among the social, environmental and peace dimensions of QPSW's work.

Meanwhile, we are seeking to reach out to Friends in Britain through workshops and other events, working with some of the approaches and materials developed by Link Group meetings. Link Group members are also very much in demand to provide talks at Quaker events around the country, including Junior Yearly Meeting, various monthly meeting special sessions, other regional gatherings, and Summer Gathering. The European Churches Environmental Network has expressed a strong interest in learning from the project and replicating the approach in its member churches.

We hope to expand the network, and would especially welcome a Scottish meeting. Several meetings are currently considering becoming involved.

TOWARDS A POWERFUL QUAKER MINISTRY

When Friends talked in the late 1990s about “developing a Testimony to the Earth”, many probably had in mind a written declaration. This might be along the lines of the “expression in words of Britain Yearly Meeting’s corporate social testimony”, adopted by BYM in 1997 (Minute 24 and part of Minute 37). But a Quaker Testimony is not just a form of words, as the EOCR Group made clear in its briefing to Meeting for Sufferings in 2001 (EOCR, 2001). Jonathan Dale (2000) sets out the many dimensions of Quaker Testimony: it is “a way of living, not a creed”; it is both individual and corporate; it involves demonstration and political action; it often includes dissent; and it evolves. In Marion McNaughton’s Woodbrooke courses on testimonies, she sets out three essential aspects of our witness: changed lives, action in the world, and proclamation.

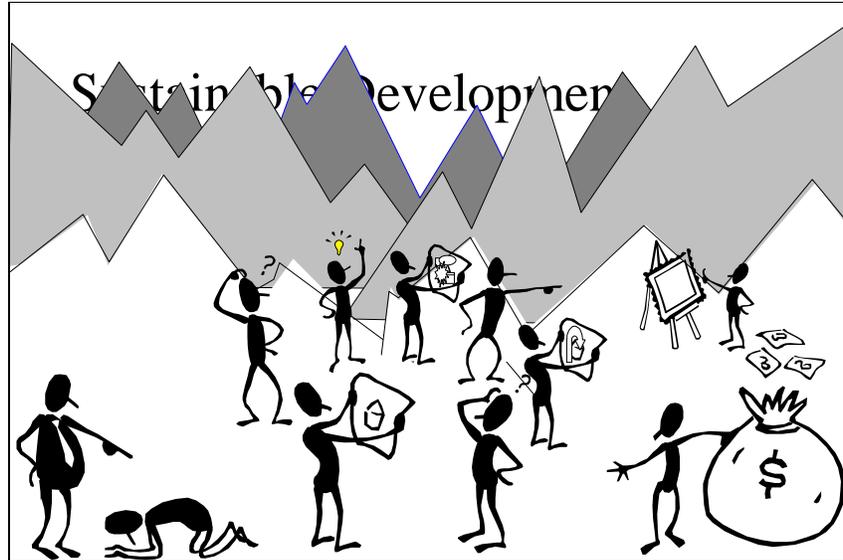
With this in mind, we face a series of questions if we are to move towards a corporate witness to sustainable living:

1. Can we achieve corporate ownership of values and visions?
2. What are the pathways towards attaining our visions – what needs to happen in wider society, in our communities, and in our own lives?
3. What role can we as individuals and as communities play in bringing about change?

Corporate values and visions

We have already gone a long way towards a corporate expression of values and visions. In our Advices and Queries, in Quaker Faith and Practice, in the BYM 1997 statement of our social testimony, and in the BYM 2001 Call to Action, British Friends have clearly set out, in forms of words, our concern for our relationship with the Earth and its peoples.

We should not try to over-define our corporate vision. One of the strengths of sustainable development as a political theme is that it is ill-defined, evoking different images for each of us. The poor definition allows it to act as a rallying point for people and organisations with widely differing agendas. Friends are used to this co-existence of perspectives in our spiritual lives and may have something to offer the rest of the world in coming to terms with diverse visions for sustainability.



Finding the path to the holy mountain

The figure above illustrates the situation, with Sustainable Development as an idealised spot, hidden in the mountains – perhaps a kind of Shambala or Holy Mountain. All we know is that some of us want to get there, although most people are more concerned with their usual pursuits, whether of power, money or self-expression. We are a bit like an expedition party in which a few people have maps, but they are different maps; others have a bright idea or a conviction about the way to go; still others know simply that they want to be anywhere but here, and many just haven't got a clue.

Finding pathways

Whereas we find it relatively easy to acknowledge that multiple values and ideals can coexist in a community, it is much harder to agree what needs to be done. Some pathways seem to exclude others. In Friends' discussions over the last few years, a tremendous variety of proposals have emerged. While most Friends do feel that our lifestyles need to change, there are often voices at any meeting saying that:

- it is the system that is the problem: we should focus our energy on political action;
- people will not be willing to change their lives: we should focus our energy on bringing new technology such as solar power and electric cars into widespread use;
- we should throw our weight behind existing political initiatives, such as the Earth Charter campaign to promote a set of international principles for sustainability.

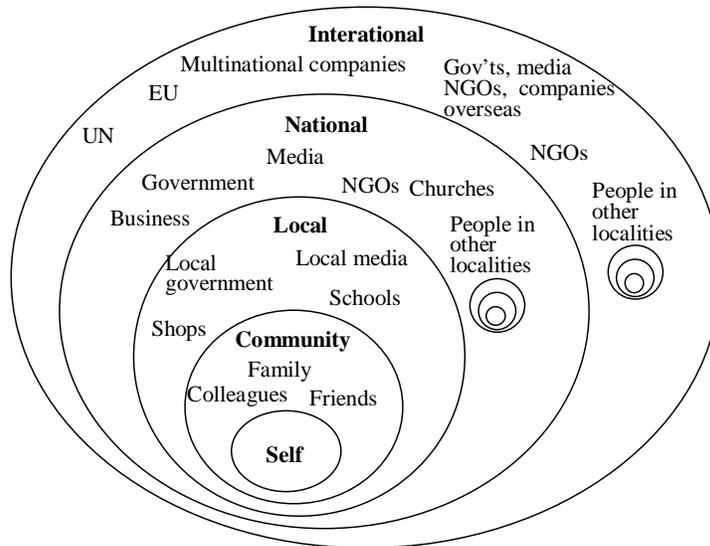
We spend quite a lot of our energy trying to convert each other – persuade each other of the rightness of our positions. This is reminiscent of Scott Peck’s description of the process of community development (see box below). In his framework, we seem to be at the chaos stage of the emergence of a Quaker community of witness to sustainability.

Fortunately for us, Scott Peck’s recipe for getting beyond the chaos stage is a process familiar to

<p style="text-align: center;">Scott Peck’s four stages of community development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Pseudocommunity. People with different worldviews are able to coexist by refraining from expressing anything controversial. Such a society is not able to achieve much. Its assumptions are implicit and unexpressed. It is an unconscious community.2. Chaos. Conflicting views, opinions, needs and judgements are expressed but not heard. Participants attempt to heal or convert each other. This phase is very painful and usually results in retreat to pseudocommunity.3. Emptiness. Participants let go of their own preconceptions. This is a phase of silent listening.4. Community. Differing views are expressed, listened to and valued. Conflict occurs but a collective effort is made to find creative ways through. The sense of community is expressed through a shared story or “myth”. <p style="text-align: right;">(Peck, 1987)</p>
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Friends, at least in principle. It is essentially a matter of silent listening. Patricia Loring (1999) suggests that Friends’ corporate practices should allow us to bypass the chaos stage in community development.

There is a great deal of potential for Friends to make progress in developing a corporate witness to sustainable living through the application of the Business Method and our other traditions of corporate discernment. If we do so, it is unlikely that we will arrive at a single “right” course of action. The Oxford Group on Sustainable Living found it helpful to bear in mind that action is needed in several spheres at once. These include our own lives, our meetings, our neighbourhoods, towns, regions, our country, and the international sphere (see figure). We may also need to find ways of acting in concert with other local groups in other regions and countries.



Taking Action: Multiple Spheres

Understanding our role

If we acknowledge the importance of multiple, simultaneous courses of action, we can begin to relax our concern about getting our focus “right”. We can welcome the contribution of each member of our community and understand it as a contribution to our corporate witness. We can seek to discern where “way is opening”, rather than trying to open up a way where we think it ought to be. Some of us are led to live lifestyles that minimise our impact on the Earth. Others are led to devote themselves to the community. We should celebrate their contributions rather than comparing ourselves with them and feeling guilty. We each need to find our own contribution. In practice, if we are able to talk openly about our lifestyle and other choices, we are more likely to find that our choices rub off on each other.

Some Friends are led to prophetic witness. John Woolman is perhaps our archetype. Prophecy has many dimensions, including uncovering the flaws in the “spirit of the age”, proclaiming the truth to the public, highly visible symbolic acts, and painting visionary pictures of the way the world should be. Prophecy can be a difficult role because of its critical dimension. Prophets are often led to make others feel uncomfortable. It is crucial that we nurture our prophets and learn from our discomfort, without necessarily agreeing with everything they say!

Developing the spiritual dimension

Our modern Quaker prophets have drawn our attention to the spiritual dimension of sustainability. Suzanne Finch (2000), Susannah Brindle (2000) and Alastair McIntosh (2001) have called on us to renew our relationship with the earth and with indigenous people. Jonathan Dale (1996) calls us to reject the spirit of the consumer age and re-establish ourselves as a spiritual community. Again, we are confronted with a diversity of perspectives and approaches. In particular, there seems to be a division between those who start from our spiritual relationship with the land and other life, and those who start from our relationship with other people; do we seek to answer that of God in all creation, or that of God in every one?

Can we discern paths that respect these different starting points? Strengthening our sense of spiritual community must indeed be a central part of our search for corporate witness. This is

partly a matter of finding myths, stories or narratives that convey our shared identity, value and visions. It does not necessarily mean agreeing on theology.

In their workshops with Friends on the tension between our Christian roots and new light, Alex Wildwood and Timothy Peat have found that there is a possibility of resolution. It lies in the acknowledgement that we as Friends have a common spiritual practice, and that we rely on spiritual experience rather than the written word. This does not mean that we need to have the same experience.

Advices and Queries point us in the directions we must take:

- taking heed to the promptings of both love and truth in our hearts; being aware of the inspiration to be found all around us; rejoicing in the splendour of God's continuing creation;
- being honest with ourselves; informing ourselves about the effects of our style of living on the global economy and the environment;
- taking time to learn about others' experiences of the light; respecting that of God in everyone, listening patiently and thinking it possible that we may be mistaken; seeking to make the meeting a community in which each person is accepted and nurtured;
- working to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly; living adventurously and simply; and being patterns, examples in all countries, places, islands, nations.

And finally, from John Woolman:

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, the furniture of our houses, and our garment, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions.

A word of remembrance and a caution to the rich, 1793.

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ANNEX 1. WITNESSING TO GOD IN ALL CREATION: A CALL TO ACTION

Britain Yearly Meeting 28 July - 4 August 2001

Led by the Spirit we encounter God in the fragile web of life; in our human relationships and in the beauty and joy of the earth, our home planet. We rejoice and celebrate our oneness with God in creation. Such an encounter leads to a deep respect and humility as we acknowledge we are but one part of this complex web.

We humans do not own the planet but have a responsibility towards present and future generations and towards the earth and all its riches. It is a gift to be treasured and passed on with care. We are shamed by the damage we do to that gift.

We are faced with the choice of abundant life or the systematic destruction of our environment, making it uninhabitable. Creation 'groans and travails' under the burden of human exploitation and the idolatry of consumerism, which is sacrificing our future on the altar of greed. We are called to urgent action.

Despair and fear are natural human responses in the face of overwhelming destruction, nevertheless we can be set free in the Spirit to live our lives in radically different ways that challenge consumer culture.

For many this is hard, and can only involve small steps, but even small steps lead to other steps, and to empowerment, overcoming despair.

Friends are not alone on this journey and we wish to join our efforts with the many others already deeply engaged making the links between religious belief, lifestyle, social justice and peace.

There is much vital learning and listening to be done, in order that our actions be well informed.

We are called to engage with political and economic powers challenging those which perpetrate structural violence or corporate greed. We need to use all the channels and resources available to witness truth to power. This may lead us to difficult and testing places, and we must pray for courage and discernment.

Let us commit ourselves to the demanding, costly implications of radically changed lives. Let us do so out of joy, celebration, reverence and a deep love of the God of life. Let us do so with hope.

ANNEX 2. LIVING WITNESS PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

The Link Group

Peter Estall, Bournemouth and Poole MM
Stuart Randall, Chesterfield PM
Anne Brewer, Dorking PM
RoseMary Rimmer-Clay, Exeter PM
Martin Quick/Peter Warm, Gloucester and Nailsworth MM
Robert Milne, Hereford PM
Chayley Collis, Huddersfield PM
Gwen Prince, Llanidloes PM
Jenny Mattingly, Leicester PM
Liz Butler, Machynlleth RM
Alison Daniels, Manchester Mount Street PM
Sue Debbage/John Myhill, Norwich and Lynn MM
Alan Allport, Oxford PM
Rachel Phillips, Settle PM
Erica Hailstone, South Wales MM
David Bossano, Wythenshaw PM
Linda Batten/Rowan Burrough, Young Friends General Meeting

Project Support Group

Anne Brewer
Emily Dale
Dafydd Harries
Alice Lynch
Barney Smith
Alex Wildwood

Project co-ordinator

Laurie Michaelis

ANNEX 3. RESOURCES FOR MEETINGS

Resources available for Friends meetings from the **Living Witness Project** (contact Laurie Michaelis at laurie.michaelis@eci.ox.ac.uk or telephone 01865 302907):

- **Support** with setting up and running local workshops on sustainable living
- **Speakers** for events, including members of the LWP Link Group
- **Self-evaluation** sheets to work out your environmental footprint
- **LWP Newsletter** with updates on the project and activities in the participating meetings – approximately bi-monthly.

Resources available from **Quaker Green Action** (contact Anne Brewer at anne.brewer@fish.co.uk or telephone 01372 456 421):

- **EarthQuaker:** quarterly newsletter of Quaker Green Action, keeps you up to date on events and initiatives. Subscribe by joining QGA, £3 per year.
- **Living lightly:** Quaker Green Action's booklet of 100 things you can do in your life to improve your witness to sustainable living. It also includes a list of contact details for green organisations and services. (50p per copy including p&p or downloadable free from the QGA Web site www.quakergreenaction.org.uk).
- **Environmental audits:** Quaker Green Action produces a series of papers entitled "Witness of our Buildings", providing detailed guidance on carrying out an environmental audit of your meeting house. (£1 per pack or downloadable from the QGA Web site)

Sue Baker at **Friends House** has compiled a list of Friends available to speak. Contact her at susanb@quaker.org.uk.

Friends of the Earth: Campaign Express Six mailings a year providing support with letter-writing and other approaches to campaigning. Tel 0207 490 1555 or go to www.foe.co.uk.

Ethical Consumer Magazine: bimonthly magazine evaluating environmental and social aspects of products and companies. Web site at www.ethicalconsumer.org

ANNEX 4. GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

BYM: Britain Yearly Meeting. The ultimate decision-making body of Friends in Britain.

EOCR: The Earth: Our Creative Responsibility: a working group set up by QPSW.

LWP: The Living Witness Project

MM: monthly meeting. A regional grouping of preparative meetings, or the regular business meeting of that grouping.

PM: Preparative Meeting. A local Quaker meeting, or its regular business meeting.

RM: Recognised Meeting. A local Quaker meeting without a formal business meeting.

QGA: Quaker Green Action. A special interest group of British Quakers concerned with environmental issues.

QPSW: Quaker Peace and Social Witness. One of two committees set up by BYM (the other being Quaker Life) to carry out and support Quaker work. The work of QPSW includes conflict resolution in various parts of the world, peace education, support for asylum seekers and refugees, prison ministry, justice, and work on economic affairs and the role of economic institutions.

YFGM: Young Friends General Meeting. The business meeting of Young Friends (aged roughly 19-30), which meets three times a year.