

Materials for Quakerism 101, February 20, 2024

Stewardship of the Earth and its Resources

Evangelical Friends believe that God in the beginning gave people dominion over the earth and expected them to be wise stewards. Wasteful and destructive use of the earth's resources is contrary to God's purposes (Genesis 1:28-30).

From Faith and Practice of Evangelical Friends Church, Eastern Region

Humankind and the Environment

Population growth and technological abuses are threatening the planet. Millions of people are malnourished or starving, unable to obtain food, homeless. Our faith that there is that of God in every person calls us to concern over this tragic situation. Friends are advised to set the example in living simply so that others may have the wherewithal to live. We are called also to work for public policy aimed toward conserving the world's resources on one hand and sharing them fairly among all God's children on the other.

From Faith and Practice of Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Harmony with Nature

Friends' concern for the earth is a spirit-led extension of established Quaker testimonies in response to our persistent, and now global, overuse and disruption of Earth's ecological systems. This concern is rooted in a profound awareness of and love for the Divine indwelling within the material world.

Friends have long recognized that there is a relationship between human misery and habits of consumption and production. Through the work of early visionaries such as John Woolman and Elias Hicks, Friends came to understand that the way they lived had an impact on the lives of others, even if those who suffered were far away and unknown to them.

Today, more than ever, we are challenged to expand our understanding of the interconnection of all living things and the delicate balance required to sustain the community of life. Human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon earth's ecological integrity. When Friends are patterns and examples of sustainability we promote these aspirations. We thus support those engaged in transforming our treatment of the earth. All generations deserve to experience a sense of wonder, an intimate connection with the grand diversity of life and an appreciation of their interrelationship with all life processes.

SAYMA Friends respond in a variety of ways to the challenges of sustainable living. Many of us know we must reduce and work to eliminate the harmful consequences of our activities: use of energy, housing choices, modes and distances of travel, diet and other consumption habits. We are called to have courage and find more effective ways to live harmoniously as a part of the natural world.

From Faith and Practice of Southern Appalachian Yearly Meeting

Seeking Harmony with Creation (Excerpt—quotes from Psalm 24, William Penn and John Woolman omitted)

Quakers have a long and deep history of respect for the creation of which we are a part. Our wondrous world is a manifestation of the Divine with the power to nourish us physically and spiritually. The ongoing exploitation of the earth's resources threatens the delicate ecological balance that sustains the current web of life. Flowing from our testimonies, Friends' responses take various forms. In 2002, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Friends found unity around the principle of sustainability as a basic standard for responsible living.

God calls us, individually and corporately, to examine our lives and take action to walk more lightly on the earth, seeking harmony with creation. Friends are also called to promote systemic changes in government and industry that would heal and protect the earth. With divine assistance, our witness should offer a pattern that would inspire and inform the actions of others.

From Faith and Practice of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

Walking Gently on the Earth (Excerpt—quote from Mildred Binns Young and other text omitted)

Friends are indeed called to walk gently on the earth. Wasteful and extravagant consumption is a major cause of destruction of the environment. The right sharing of the world's remaining resources requires that developed nations reduce their present levels of consumption so that people in underdeveloped nations can have more and the earth's life-sustaining systems can be restored. The world cannot tolerate indefinitely the present rate of consumption by technologically developed nations.

Friends are called to become models and patterns of simple living and concern for the earth. Some may find it difficult to change their accustomed lifestyle; others recognize the need and have begun to adopt ways of life which put the least strain on the world's resources of energy, clean air, water, and soil.

From Faith and Practice of Southeastern Yearly Meeting