

Earthcare Working Group Implementation Plan: NYYM 2014 Priorities

Introduction

The six priorities identified by the NYYM Priorities Working Group (PWG) and adopted by NYYM at Summer Sessions 2014 are intended to strengthen the Yearly Meeting and its constituent meetings.

The Earthcare Working Group (EWG) has discerned ways in which Friends can minister to the Earth as they support the Yearly Meeting's priorities. EWG proposes to model witness to our unity with, and concern for the protection of the Earth through the implementation of the six priorities. In so doing, our intent is to motivate and inspire spiritual deepening within the corporate body of NYYM through the expansion of its concern to encompass all of Creation.

Priority #1: We Envision A Yearly Meeting Deeply Grounded In The Practice Of Our Faith

Spiritual Deepening

- **Worship Sharing:** Include Earthcare queries that give Friends an opportunity to clarify their convictions and beliefs, reflect on their personal relationship to the natural world, and on how they are called to protect the environment.
- **Claremont Dialogue:** Clarify why Friends hesitate or do not engage with Earthcare, e.g.:
 - Prioritization of health issues or economic hardship,
 - Overwhelm or despair over the enormity and complexity of environmental concerns,
 - Belief that the solutions are primarily political or technological, and that Earthcare is not a spiritual concern.
- Extend the phrase: "Responding to that of God in each person," to all species and all of Creation including the air, soil, and water; ecosystems which host living creatures and organisms,
- Apply the Quaker testimony of Integrity to our relationship to the natural world and to future generations of all species,
- Encourage Friends to consider that the natural world is a place where God's presence may be found.

Vocal Ministry: Share our concern for the Earth in our vocal ministry with discernment; speak of Earthcare as a sacred trust, using plain language and as a calling that comes from the Spirit.

Practicing Pastoral Care: Educate those responsible for pastoral care in meetings about:

First Day School:

- Invite Friends, First Day educators, and meetings to strengthen children and youth's connection to nature by building upon, and interweaving developmentally appropriate nature education into first day curriculums such as: *Earthcare for Children: a First Day School Curriculum* and, *Let There Be Stuff? Curriculum for Teens*.
- Emphasize the spiritual basis of environmental awareness in First Day programs so that the sacredness of the Earth is deeply understood and Earthcare becomes an enriching and fully integrated part of young Friends' daily lives.

Adult Religious Education

Highlight:

Faith and Practice references to “concern for the Creation,” in Adult Education

1. section under Witness: “Responding to that of God in the Creation.”
2. the new advice and query.

The Testimonies, in relation to Earthcare, e.g. How does climate change relate to Friends’ testimony on Equality? How does the impact of consumerism on the degradation of our environment correspond with Friends’ testimony on Simplicity? How can our testimonies on Community and Stewardship be broadened to include all life-forms and ecosystems.

Priority #2: We Envision A Yearly Meeting Made Up Of Strong, Vital Monthly Meetings

- Affirm and compile environmentally conscious practices implemented by Monthly Meetings (e.g. energy conservation, use of green building practices in physical facilities, green burials as part of cemetery maintenance, environmentally sound use of resources, [e.g.: water, fuel, electricity, paper, green cleaning], waste disposal and recycling.)
- Encourage Monthly Meetings to develop a Statement of their Eco-spirit Vision, Mission and Implementation Goals. Invite meetings to infuse these messages throughout materials that present the Meeting to potential new Friends and the public.
- Compose for dissemination to Monthly Meetings, (with corresponding online resources), an *Eco-spirit Best Practices Guide* for dissemination to Monthly Meetings, *Earthcare Resources List*, and *Eco-spirit Mindful Living Suggestions*.
- Invite Meetings to form an Eco-spirit Working Group and/or a designate a liaison to EWG.
- Support Monthly Meetings initiation of environmental projects such as solar installations, and other renewable energy solutions, Friends’ community gardens etc. through the EWG network’s Resource Persons and best practices sharing
- Encourage Meetings to display environmental literature such as educational materials, QEW pamphlets, and issues of *BeFriending Creation* on Meeting house information tables.
- Suggest key environmental books and films for Meeting libraries

Priority #3: We Envision A Yearly Meeting Gathered Together Into One Body

- Six Earthcare Ministry “Connector Friends” will travel to Monthly Meetings and appropriate Quaker convocations under the weight of the Earthcare concern to listen deeply and engage Friends, Monthly Meetings, and others in conversations about the environment.
- Design and implement “green travel services,” to ensure Friends’ economical, low carbon travel to Yearly and Quarterly/Regional Meetings.
- Continue Earthcare worship sharing, interest groups and Eco-spiritual activities at Yearly Meeting sessions.
- Conduct an annual Earthcare workshop at Powell House. Allocate funds for workshop facilitator honoraria, and offer financial assistance to participants.

Priority #4: We Envision A Yearly Meeting That Nurtures Our Children, Youth, And Young Adults

- Work with the Young Adult Field Secretary, Junior Yearly Meeting Committee, and Powell House Youth Director to incorporate Earthcare content, and activities in the natural world into programs facilitated by those groups.
- Encourage Quarterly/Regional Meeting initiation of youth activities with content that emphasizes Earthcare and its relationship to the Quaker Testimonies. Suggest that Quarters/Regions enlist adult Youth Adult Field Secretary volunteers to facilitate/lead these activities.
- Urge Friends schools to incorporate information about accelerated climate change and resource depletion in academic curricula and extracurricular activities.
- Work with young Friends to infuse Earthcare curricula used in First Day School and youth programs with their ideas and perspectives.

Priority #5: We Envision A Yearly Meeting That Supports and Amplifies Our Witness

- Present The Earthcare Working Group EWG response to the climate crisis as stated herein as the theme for winter Meeting for Discernment.
- Share EWG Friends' environmental work and their spiritual witness to Earthcare activism during the Friday evening gathering of fall sessions 2014.
- Discuss divestment of Friends' investments in fossil fuel extraction and distribution industries and the shifting of funds to sustainable energy sources with Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meeting.
- Support and/or participate as appropriate with Friends' local and regional environmental advocacy and social action organizations in their projects and non-violent direct actions, including but not limited to: vigils, petitions, demonstrations, protests, public forums, lobbying, to raise awareness of Friends' stands on environmental responsibility and social justice issues, including but not limited to: hydraulic fracking, harmful industrial wastes, GMO labeling, irresponsible transportation of fossil fuels and energy.

Priority #6: We Envision a Yearly Meeting that is Accountable and Transparent

- Earthcare Working Group will report verbally and in writing on the status, experience, and recommendations that proceed from their environmental work at monthly, quarterly, and yearly meeting, as appropriate, and/or for publication in the communications of these groups.
- The EWG will share its annual budgeting process with all EWG members, and be held accountable for all requests for funding by the end of each fiscal year.