**How do we live our faith in care of the Earth?**

(A replacement for existing Part 1, Section B, 21)

*The produce of the earth is a gift from our gracious creator to the inhabitants, and to impoverish the earth now to support outward greatness appears to be an injury* t*o the succeeding age.*

--- John Woolman (1772)

Early writings show that Friends treasured the beauty of our world, encouraged members to know its wonder, and urged caution in our use of its gifts. What then is the spiritual relationship to our Earth that sustains Friends now?

For some Friends, biblical accounts provide valuable insights for today about the beauty of God’s creation and our subsequent responsibility to care for it.  In Psalm 19:1 we read:

*The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.*(New Revised Standard Updated Edition)

Other Friends believe that we arose from nature and belong to nature, and nature reveals the Divine in us. Thus, as part of the natural world, we must treat the rest of creation with respect and be in partnership with it.

Whatever the understanding, it is clear that Friends have not adequately cared for what we have been given nor lived in complete harmony with the Earth. We are part of a social system that has overused resources, decreased biodiversity, polluted land, water, and air, created a climate crisis, and separated us from the beauty, diversity, and abundance of the natural world.

The Earth graciously and freely provides for us. If Friends restore right relationships - align ourselves with the Earth and all living beings with kindness, harmony, and care - we can connect more fully with the beauty of nature and the bounty it provides. Through nature we also can deepen our connection with the Divine, which provides healing, inspiration, and delight.

Quakers, along with many others, want to preserve and heal our Earth so that future generations can thrive. In our rapidly changing world, we must be creative and forward thinking in our actions for this to happen. If we are to succeed, governments, corporations, humanitarian organizations, scientists, and faith communities must work together.

As we consider the enormity of what we are led to do, and how it will change over time, we can prayerfully consider queries to help us stay true to our values as Quakers and live our faith in the world.

* How do we live simply using only what we need?
* How do we care for the Earth and all of life in ways that don’t burden marginalized communities?
* How do we live peacefully, respecting the dignity of each person and their communities, while we also work to alleviate environmental injustices and all that harms nature?
* How do we encourage our youngest Friends to continue our efforts to live peacefully with the Earth?

It is critical that Quakers live in harmony with the Earth, continue to cultivate love and respect for it, and teach our children to do the same. If we are attentive to the Spirit within and even the Earth itself, they can teach and guide us. They can offer us meaning in our existence and offer spiritual lessons that we can use to rebalance our relationship with our sacred home, the Earth.

(Updated 2025)