



We've Endorsed the Earth Charter, Now What?

By John Scull

Since the first endorsement by Victoria MM in April, 2003, the Earth Charter has spread through the Canadian Quaker community with uncharacteristic speed. This ready acceptance by most Canadian Quakers is probably due to the way the Earth Charter ties some of the traditional Quaker testimonies to the emerging testimony on ecology and to our growing sense of the urgency of global challenges.

How does the Earth Charter build on our traditional testimonies? What does the Earth Charter add to Quaker traditions? Most importantly, what should Canadian Quakers be doing differently, now that we have endorsed the Earth Charter?

The language of the Earth Charter is beautifully crafted and eloquently summarises an ethics appropriate to the 21st century. The language also reflects the status of the Earth Charter as a grassroots document with roots in many cultures, faith traditions, and academic disciplines. Because of the quality of its language, the Earth Charter can be a powerful

and emotive communications tool when we advocate for peace, social justice, and ecological integrity, both within and beyond the Quaker community.

The Earth Charter provides a common basis for building partnerships and coalitions with like-minded people around the world. It is available in 32 languages and has been endorsed by more than 14,000 organisations globally. By declaring ourselves to be an Earth Charter organisation we become members of an international coalition for an ethical world. It is a call for us to participate in building a worldwide movement.

The Earth Charter embodies the principle that our many concerns cannot be separated. While recognising the need for trade-offs, the Earth Charter explicitly asserts the interconnected nature of its four themes. Endorsement should certainly lead us to re-evaluate our individual and corporate decisions with respect to the principles of the Earth Charter, but it should lead

to much more. We need to reach out and engage with others. The Earth Charter sees the interconnection among the peoples of the world and the interdependence of action at all levels of society – international, government, business, community, organisation, and individual. We need to move forward at all levels.

Endorsing the Earth Charter goes beyond merely reaffirming our traditional testimonies and a new testimony about ecological integrity. In endorsing the Earth Charter, we are committing ourselves to bearing witness by openly co-operating with others in a global partnership for a just, sustainable, and peaceful world. We are pledging ourselves to work in solidarity with all like-minded people and groups for the realisation of the values and principles of the Earth Charter. ☞

John Scull is a member of Duncan Worship Group of Victoria Monthly Meeting, and a Co-clerk of the Quaker Ecology Action Network.

How to Join the Quaker Ecology Action Network

The Quaker Ecology Action Network e-mail discussion list helps promote a national network of people with interests in the environment and in the relationship of faith and ecology.

To join this discussion list, go to: <http://lists.quaker.ca/cgi-bin/mailman/listinfo/cym-qean> and fill out the

registration form. This link is also found near the bottom of the QEAN web page at: <http://www.quaker.ca/qean>.

For assistance or more information, please contact QEAN Clerk, Bill Curry, at: mailliw@sasktel.net. ☞