

Peace and one planet living

By Gill Westcott, Exeter Quaker Meeting

In the Horn of Africa, famine owes as much to war as to drought. In Darfur, nomads swept in and took the land of settled people, because their own pastures have turned to dust, in droughts worsened by climate change. Natural resources like the atmosphere are limited, and shortages lead to conflict. Now we are at the end of cheap petroleum, and some think we have seen the first oil war, in Iraq.

With all its wonders, technology has not saved us from overspending earth's resources, and running a deficit with nature. To carry on as we are would take three planets. Governments need to act faster. But we all have some power and responsibility to move to one planet living. Quakers, like many others, look for the hidden choices about how we affect the earth and each other; when we go shopping, choose a bank, book a holiday, or do our houses.

Our needs are all different. Some Friends who travel by air to visit family abroad, are going less often. I no longer fly, but enjoy train travel in Europe. Some people hardly use a car, and go to a car club for those vital occasional journeys. We won't all make the same choices; but our decisions do influence others.

One planet living tends to be slower – but, like food, life can be savoured rather than devoured. Every time we save resources, we act in solidarity with the world's poor, and help to cut down the causes for war.

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