

Growth

By R. White, Okehampton Quaker Meeting

Alongside the Quaker annual business meeting (Britain Yearly Meeting) in August, was the Yearly Meeting Gathering, a themed week of discussion, discernment and activity entitled 'Growing in the Spirit: changing the way we live to sustain the world we live in'. A challenging theme considering the behaviour of businesses, governments and individuals, as we collectively wrestle with our impact on the planet.

The week included exploring the connection between climate change, economic activity, (individual and collective consumption), social justice, poverty and peace. It was noticeable that when considering the imperative to act, some spoke of being motivated to preserve the Earth's resources for future generations (our children's future). This idea was challenged by others on two fronts. Firstly the assumption that the Earth's extraordinary richness produces 'resources' – implicit in the word that these are there for human use. Secondly, that acting on behalf of future generations, whilst helping to push the imperative, the motivation remains that of human gain. This gave me much food for thought.

Despite how we may feel at times, humans are inextricably linked – how we act and the choices we make affect others, near and far. And this goes far beyond humanity. The week deepened my understanding of our interconnectedness with the Earth: that we live on and are part of a vast inter-dependent ecosystem; that knowing and experiencing this is a spiritual matter; that to act to change the way we live to sustain the world we live in is therefore an issue of spiritual health and integrity.

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