

CANADIAN YEARLY MEETING

of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

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Dear Friends

We are moved to endorse Minute 32 of Britain Yearly Meeting's Meeting for Sufferings, approved on 6th June 2009 (attached). We add our voices to those of Europe and Middle East Section of Friends World Committee for Consultation, Britain Junior Yearly Meeting and its Under 16 Programme and Canadian Young Friends Yearly Meeting.

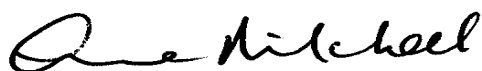
We affirm that the climate crisis is one of the greatest challenges humanity has ever faced, involving resource shortages, political upheaval, and certain violence. We share the concerns raised about overconsumption in wealthy countries, and know that this is not only a problem in rich European countries (as the Minute states), but in all affluent nations. We share concerns about the problems inherent in our economic and social systems, which exacerbate environmental degradation and maintain cycles of poverty. We see humanitarian and ecological crises as inherently interlinked, and call on Friends and Canadians to address these issues together in good faith.

We deplore the Government of Canada's obstruction of progress towards meaningful, science-based international climate policy and call on Friends to add their voices, repeatedly, insistently, and to all levels of decision-making, to the call for progress on these issues. We ask Friends to share this endorsed minute, along with their personal leadings, with their Monthly Meetings, members of other faith groups, and the broader community. We ask Friends to advocate to their Prime Minister, provincial and federal Ministers of Environment, and municipal, provincial, and federal representatives.

We acknowledge our personal responsibilities to change our practices, and we continually seek, with changes both gradual and radical, to live in a truly sustainable manner. We exhort Friends to draw on Friends' service such as Quaker Earthcare Witness, Quaker Ecology Action Network, and the Moral Economy Project's recently published Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy, and to join with their fellow citizens beyond the community of Friends in collective actions for progressive change on climate policy, such as KAIROS' Week of Action (October 17th-22nd), 350.org's International Day of Climate Action (October 24th), Anti-Poverty Month (October), and Power Shift Canada (Oct 23rd-26th). We uphold the work of Friends in following individual leadings, and look forward to hearing about their inspiring and creative actions.

We move forward in our Society of Friends with a feeling of urgency, hope, and communal concern. We join together with Friends around the world and with generations past, present, and future.

In Friendship



Anne Mitchell
Clerk, Canadian Yearly Meeting in Session

Meeting for Sufferings, Britain Yearly Meeting, Minute 32, 6 June 2009

The crisis of global climate change represents a supreme test of humanity's collective wisdom and courage. Our immoderate use of the Earth's resources violates the entire biosphere, threatening the lives of millions of people and the habitats of thousands of species. Many of the poorest people are already suffering a changed climate; they are asking us all to act.

How has humanity produced this crisis? Our faith response is that prevailing social values have obscured what it means to live authentically on this Earth. In rich European countries we consume more than we need within an economic system that divides us as a society; in much that we do, we cause harm to the planet and each other without enriching our lives.

The Earth is God's work and not ours to do with as we please. We recall Gandhi's saying, often quoted by Quakers: 'Live simply that others may simply live.' As a Quaker community, we do try to live what we believe, guided by the values of simplicity, truth, equality and peace. Too often we fall short of honouring them. Climate change is challenging us to ask anew what our faith leads us to do.

As individuals and as a community, we are now making the difficult decisions and plans necessary to limit our ecological impact to a sustainable level. With encouragement from one another, we are progressively reducing our reliance on non-renewable resources while stepping up our campaign for wider social change. As a small religious society, we take heart in belonging to a community of faith groups and others working towards the same goals in a hopeful spirit.

We gladly take up our responsibility and call for unprecedented international cooperation to enable the large cuts in global emissions which are required. This will be a difficult road to travel but we are prepared to support decision-makers in taking the radical steps necessary. We appreciate progress made and uphold decision-makers as they navigate conflicting priorities, yet we challenge them to hold faith with the goal and not bend to short-term expediency.

An inequitable global agreement on climate change could lead to forced migrations and serious conflict. Any agreement must put the world's poorest first; it falls to richer countries to bear the greater burden of responsibility for change. The goal is achievable but priorities will need to change: currently, the majority of states commit more resources to warfare than to tackling climate change.

Where we see crisis, we also see opportunity to remake society as a communion of people living sustainably as part of the natural world. By leading the simpler lives of a low-carbon society, we draw nearer to the abundance of peace, freedom and true community. Our faith in common humanity gives hope; love, rather than fear, can still lead us through this crisis.

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