

Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends Minutes concerning the Earth Charter

August 17, 2004

27. **Endorsement of the Earth Charter:** Carol Bradley, on behalf of Wolfville Monthly Meeting, asked Canadian Yearly Meeting to endorse the Earth Charter. Friends felt that although this document is not perfect, it is a document that deserves our support because it arises from many groups which have a deep concern for the protection of God's earth. We agree to endorse the principles of the Earth Charter, recognizing that this will require us to make changes and sacrifices in the way we live. We ask Friends in Canada to begin a discernment process with respect to this document and with how we might begin to implement these principles in our lives and in our Meetings. We ask our Quaker Ecology Action Network to help our Clerks develop a process for follow-up with Monthly Meetings, the Government of Canada, First Nations associations, and the United Nations.

August 19, 2005

55. The Earth Charter: The clerk read CYM 2004 Minute #27, endorsing the Earth Charter. Bill Curry spoke on behalf of Quaker Ecology Action Network (QEAN). He reminded us of the history of our work on environmental issues. He referred us to section 25.14 in *Quaker Faith and Practice* 1995, written by Keith Helmuth in 1990, and to minute 52 of Canadian Yearly Meeting 2001, on sustainability. The clerk of Yonge Street Monthly Meeting spoke about a minute distributed to Canadian Friends by her Meeting. Yonge Street Meeting is concerned that some statements in the Earth Charter could be seen as in conflict with our Quaker peace testimony, and questions whether this might cause future problems with conscientious objector status. Yonge Street is asking us to consider whether our unqualified endorsement of the Earth Charter may put conscientious objectors in a compromised position. A Friend spoke on behalf of Victoria Monthly Meeting in support of our endorsement of the Earth Charter. They ask us to take part in the review process for the Earth Charter. It was noted that Ottawa Monthly Meeting supports continued endorsement of the Earth Charter and work with non-Quakers on this concern. Wolfville Monthly Meeting has discussed Yonge Street Monthly Meeting's concern and does not see any conflict between the Earth Charter and our peace testimony. Pelham Executive Meeting suggests that one of the parts of section 16 in the Earth Charter, other parts of which are being questioned, was viewed by them as being strongly in support of Quaker testimonies.

We have given prayerful consideration to our 2004 endorsement of the Earth Charter. We have heard both support for and concerns about the principles of the Earth Charter and its implications for our life as a spiritual body. We are left with the pressing question of how to actualize those portions of the Earth Charter that we support without reservation. We will continue to consider this in 2006. We ask that Monthly Meetings and the Quaker Ecology Action Network continue to engage with the evolving Earth Charter review process, expressing our deeply held commitment to our testimonies and engaging in dialogue with the Earth Charter initiative. We note that there will be a review of the Earth Charter in Amsterdam, November 7-9, 2005.

A Friend left us with this prayer: "Dear God, help us to consider this planetary garden in which you have placed us, whose sustenance you have made available to our use, in light of its holiness, not just for our sake, but for its own - and for thine. Amen."