

## The spiritual dimensions of climate change 15 Quaker Views

Albie Burgers

The spiritual dimensions of climate change – a personal view.

There are a number of threads intertwined here, and I find it a challenge to unravel them in any coherent way.

There's the controversy, endlessly debated in the media, about whether Climate Change exists, and to what extent human activity is to blame for this.

My view is: Even though there isn't absolute proof one way or the other, I feel I must go along with the considered opinion of scientists and organisations I trust. Therefore I believe that Climate Change is real, that it poses huge dangers for our planet, and that we are at least partly responsible.

If I am partly responsible for something, then I share a moral obligation to do something about it. I can't help noting that the word "responsible" comes from "response", hence my obligation to act in some way. The greatest threat posed by climate change is the effect of increasing CO<sub>2</sub> in our atmosphere. This is compounded by the fact that there are more and more humans on the planet every year. Even if we all produce no more than two children per couple from now on, our population will inevitably rise from 7 billion to 11 billion by the year 2100. (Because of the children already born who will have children in the future). This fact certainly gives me pause for thought.

How then, do I respond?

I can't do anything about population growth itself, but I can encourage the government to deal with the effects of that growth, e.g. resource depletion, poverty, and the widening gap between rich and poor. We need to find ways to share rapidly dwindling resources with 11 billion people, without destroying our planet.

I can, however, do something about CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, by reducing my own emissions, living more simply and encouraging others to do so too. I know that my small actions won't change things significantly, but if all of us do what we can, perhaps it will eventually be enough. Our young people at Generation Zero and 350.org are showing us the way.

I'm optimistic.

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Jimmy Green

The relationship between climate change and spirituality for me occurs on two distinct levels of thinking. Firstly, there is the question of the motivation behind the material expansion of human society. There is a belief alive today, as there has been for a long time, that satisfaction and fulfilment in life can be found in the acquisition of material wealth, success, fame, power, etc. This belief appears to underpin the material growth of society, while simultaneously hindering the generous and equitable sharing of resources through the coupled idea of scarcity.

Secondly, but not less significant, is the nature of power and agency itself. The dominant material underpinning of our worldview is grounded in the same revelation that spurred the Renaissance - Newton's laws of motion, and the clockwork mechanism view of the universe which followed. This view leaves little space for the role of our consciousness (spirit), in the creation of reality and the unfoldment of history. Spiritual or religious thought as well as quantum physics, on the contrary, gives consciousness (spirit) a partial to full role in determining the unfoldment of reality. I myself consider the biblical idea that God (good, spirit, consciousness) is all-in-all, including all power, to be true. Thus, any challenge we face is a spiritual one, no less climate change. When we are faced with the apparent limitations of material reality, we should be reassured that the spiritual reality of good is more real and we are fully capable of overcoming apparent material limitations.

In silent Quaker worship we can discern spiritual reality, feeling its reassurance of the hidden wholeness of life. We should trust our spiritual intuition and turn to spirit for guidance on environmental challenges just as we would for challenges of conflict or personal difficulties.

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Marvin Hubbard

My poor poetry, even though deficient, speaks more deeply of my spirituality and experience of the Divine than a rational essay could, so therefore I will include some of my poems as I feel they relate to the love of life on Earth as it relates to our responsibility for the environmental disaster and climate change.

My faltering commitment to climate change mitigation, is in response to, and is based on my experience of God that through Divine love, continuing creation and the evolution of the universe, no person is an island onto themselves. We are all interconnected with each other, all life and the universe through Divine love.

### **The Universe**

The Universe feels cold. The Universe appears dark. A bleak hole.

The Universe deceives.

The Universe throbs with energy.

From the beginning

fire, heat, warmth

flows out from that still point. Husbander, sower.

Sowing star stuff, life stuff

Out beyond beyond.

Purpose?

Or throw of the dice?

Life.

Life flowing out.

Out in abundance.

To know the heart of God of the Universe.

Feel.

Feel fellow pain, fellow grief.

Feel joy, joy in abundance. Know.

Know that love

which restores the Universe.

The direct experience of God while aware of God' reality also helps us realize Meister Eckhart the 13th century mystic said the God that you can name and fully describe is incomplete and an Idol. However I'm a person and experience God's interconnectedness upholding and what felt like upholding love in a personal way. So therefore I can only speak about certain aspects of God in a personal way as though God was personal.

"Up the mountain" expresses my feeling that somehow Jesus the Messiah speaks to me of God suffering with us.

### **Up the Mountain**

Up the mountain,

over the saddle.

Between the red and white peaks.

Springs bubble up from within.

Letting go of possessing.

Letting go of the need to use other people.

Letting go.

Down from the mountain.

Down in the subways.

Down in the gutter.

The least of these I see

I feel the face of God.

God sleeping in the streets.

The Messiah is crucified by greed.

When will the blind see God in the face of the poor?  
The deaf hear God in the cry of the oppressed

“A Soul”, back to when I was around 6 years old and saw in the room where was speaking at night, pictures of horror concentration camp victims forever made me aware of the need to take responsibility and accountability for our society and its actions.

### **A Soul**

It first became aware,  
when my eyes saw the picture  
of six million holy people burning.  
My Soul burns with them.  
My Soul it burns brightly.  
It burns hot and cold.  
It lights with the light of light.  
My Soul dances with, is held in the love  
which upholds the universe in eternal love.  
My Soul hungers with the hungry.  
My Soul is homeless with the homeless.  
My Soul reflects human experience.  
My Soul grows cold with the exposed, the exploited.  
My Soul burns with the just at injustice.  
My Soul is worthless with the worthless, the workless.  
My Soul knows that love is crucified, yet is resurrected. The gladness of people gladdens my Soul.  
My Soul feels the universe groan in labour.  
My Soul knows that God upholds the universe,  
upholds love eternal.

“God, the Light of Life” speaks of the mystery of life and that place where we can only scream and our lack of acceptance and understanding of God and history.

### **God, the Light of Life**

You light up the hidden place.  
Your light is a beacon on the ocean of darkness. God of light,  
you show us shadows, as well as light. God of light,  
when your Hasidic Tsaddiks prayed to you in their “Long Night” Where were you?  
Do you wear their ashes on your sack cloth?

“Home Place” of gratitude and love of the beauty and responsibility of life speaks for itself.

### **Home Place**

Snow glistens on the tops, watering summer grass.  
I stand in awful quiet  
between white peaks towering over green valleys, surrounded by grey and brown hills.  
Rocky footsteps to Paradise, so like my home.  
Here’s my home, my place a blessing.  
My place of love on Earth.  
My place is a part of this grace, this beautiful blue sphere.  
My home cannot rest in peace and health if the world is not whole and healthy.  
No man is an island.

No lovely place is an island set apart. Will not the Arctic melting,  
Moscow burning, Pakistan flooding, touch our place?  
Who is my neighbour?  
Is not the Pakistan peasant my true neighbour? Do I not drive cars and fly?  
Do I not burn electricity? Burn coal in Huntly?  
I can no longer say not in my backyard or my backyard too will be lost.  
Many of us if we take these issues seriously may become fatigued even though the time is short we're still  
on a long journey we need to take care of ourselves and each other. So did not believe in upholding  
purpose and loving presence which I can only call God I don't know how I could carry on. Sometimes we  
need to take a break and rest in the love of our friends and God. We need to be good to ourselves and each  
other.

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Helen Kingston

### Quaker Spirituality and Climate Change

I thoroughly empathise with the Old Sailor in the poem of that name by A A Milne\*. The marooned sailor is overwhelmed by his situation—he can't move himself to start on any solution, because something else always needs to be done first. Climate change can induce similarly overwhelming feelings. What can we do in the face of such huge events?

Fear and guilt are not good spiritual motivators. Neither is it a valid solution to ignore the problem. The Old Sailor “did nothing but basking until he was saved”, but we do not have that luxury now.

The Quaker religious testimony that all of life is sacramental is for me a good place to start. Everything has its own inherent value. Humans are privileged to have consciousness and memory; we can sense, imagine, appreciate and communicate what has gone before and what might be to come. We name, and measure, and ask “why?”—that seems to be our condition. Maybe we are the only beings to have this special knowledge, and with that knowledge comes responsibility to care: kaitiakitanga. Now that we know we are messing up the planet, we are to do something about it.

I hear two other beliefs expounded which are at opposite poles but which have the same result. One is that all-powerful God will fix everything, while the other is that clever humans have the ingenuity and capacity for a technical fix to get out of the hole we are in. In both cases we could “bask until we are saved”, and I don't hold with either of them. Rather, I would trust in another facet of the Quaker religious Testimony: that we all have access to the Light within but that we each have it in a certain measure. If we live up to that measure we will be shown which are the good choices. This is often hard. We can meet together in worship, discern and then work actively, but we cannot judge one another. “Wear it as long as you can” said George Fox to William Penn when asked about the sword. The problem for the earth and for ourselves is that “as long as you can” is now not very long. We can't wait for years for the push of the Inward Light to be strong in us.

Dilemmas abound. I want to be compassionate but I am not a Jain; for instance I trap rats, stoats and possums. I want to reduce my CO2 emissions but at the time of writing I have travelled across the world to see my mother who does not have long to live. But even if anthropogenic climate change was not a reality—and I fully believe that it is—I would still want to respect the earth and honour all of life, to live more simply and to work for justice and for peaceful relationships. There always have been and will be overwhelming situations when everything seems to be falling down around us and when it is difficult to discern the right thing to do. I need to hold on to my faith in that Inward Light for which I have no adequate words, and I can only do it with others.

*\*The Old Sailor by A A Milne, in Now We Are Six*

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Rick Kooperberg

“Describe the spiritual aspects of your responses to Climate Change.”

The Question is about the ways in which my spiritual life supports and informs my responses to Climate Change. As I consider how to address this notion I realise that the nature of my spiritual understanding (such that it is) is more like a resource, a foundation or a recourse to which I turn in every trying situation. There is nothing I would describe as a guiding influence except that I reference this understanding as a source of meaning.

I see my spiritual understanding as the groundmass that affirms, comforts, and sustains hope.

When I face (to the extent that I do) difficulties in life, its:

disappointments, frustrations, irritations, risks and challenges, I see a natural response arise, by reference to this spiritual understanding I recognise how grace gives me options and challenges.

I find myself thankful for the blessings, the privileges and the freedoms I enjoy. For example the freedom to spend time in spiritual enquiry, the freedom to assist others.

Then there is a sense of duty which comes with that thankfulness. An awareness that my inherently conservative nature is incompatible with true faithfulness and that there are many opportunities for far more daring expressions of (my understanding of) grace.

I am therefore often conflicted about how to respond to opportunities. Often prone to focus on the possibility of negative outcomes and susceptible to inertia and despair.

I have not noticed anything I would describe as a wonderful, convincing inspiration in the Society of Friends. I do however see flickers of possibility in the principles (as I understand them) and in some moments of silence.

There seems to be such a strong emphasis on the individual's relationship with the divine (or spirituality) that the body (church) can often appear to me to be unavoidably amorphous.

We all value freedoms and autonomy, I try to enjoy all the diversity attracted to Friends, but when the resulting individualism appears to be divisive and selfish I can't help wondering what has gone wrong and what I might do to address it.

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Don Mead

Climate change and spiritually

I am well aware that climate change is happening and is a major concern for humanity. However, I view it as one of several major potential catastrophes facing our world. These would also include threats to biodiversity, land and freshwater degradation, oceanic problems, overpopulation, war etc. For me the overarching concept is that we need to think in terms of STRONG sustainability which looks at sustainability in the context of the whole world and it's diverse ecosystems.

I believe you are asking how this world-view would link to spiritually. I find this is difficult to express, except to say that I see focusing on strong sustainability gives meaning to what I do. In recent years I have given my energy to freshwater issues as they impact our area. It is not that I am not interested, concerned etc in other issues such as climate change, but that I think I can make the biggest impact by putting my energies to a special, local issue. In a broader context, I also view focusing on strong sustainability links me, as a human, to other lifeforms and the complex web of life on our planet.

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Viola Palmer

SPIRITUAL BASIS OF MY CLIMATE CHANGE CONCERN

My concern about climate change is twofold. Both arise from love.

Firstly I am aware of God (or the Divine, Spirit etc) in the world of Nature which I adore. It is not only the beauty of Nature which shouts to me of God, but the intricacy and delicacy of natural processes. The force and power of storms, volcanoes and earthquakes are awe inspiring. Kenneth Boulding in his Naylor sonnets calls it "the burning oneness binding everything".

I am distressed by the destructiveness of much human endeavour. We humans are egocentric and seem to be blind to the effects of our way of life on the natural world. Most of us have lost sight of the fact that we are part of the ecosystem. I am not worried about planet Earth. She will survive. It is the living systems on her which may not. This includes us.

Which brings me to my second concern. It is for future generations including my grandchildren. I find it painful to think of the suffering they are likely to meet because of climate change. It is not what I understand as God's kingdom on Earth.

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Anne Potaka

### A Spiritual Perspective on Climate Change

The connection that climate change has with our social testimonies is readily apparent. While the change is in the environment, the effects are on people and communities. Disruption on many levels is inevitable. So our testimonies to peace and equality are involved, as are the wide-ranging social justice issues we as Quakers have long, individually and collectively, acted upon. We share concerns and work with others of different faiths – and of none, on this issue so our attitudes to climate change on one hand could generally be seen as humanitarian.

However, we are still the Religious Society of Friends so it is appropriate to also address this issue from the angle of our specific spiritual convictions.

Quakers, even those of us in this liberal, universalist branch of the Society, have diverse beliefs. But if there is one spiritual concept we can agree upon, it is that there is 'that of God in every person'. Our diversity is in how we define that word God. Some feel that God is a symbolic term referring to our highest values and aspirations, something that theistic religion has unnecessarily projected out onto a supernatural entity. So for those ones of us, Meeting for Worship is a time for an interior dialogue with one's own deeper, wiser self – 'that of God' within. Others feel, in addition to that, a definite connection with something outside and beyond themselves, naming it variously as the Light, the Spirit, Love, or a number of other terms.

That is 'that of God' as it affects us as people, but what about 'that of God' in the world, specifically in this case, in the natural environment? And more specifically, what bearing does that have on our attitude to the issue of climate change?

To a large degree environmental degradation can be traced back to a religious cause; monotheism taught that mankind was entitled to master and use nature. And the attitudes to the natural world that monotheism legitimised, fact-based science in later centuries confirmed. Nature became thoroughly secularised in people's minds. Mankind benefited but nature bore the cost.

From the inception of the Society of Friends, the Quaker view has been that God is present in the world without as well as within us. George Fox, in his mystical experience or 'opening', saw 'that of God' outside himself, in nature, saying, "All of creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond what words can utter". This type of experience has also been reported by other early and later Quakers. They express a sense of unity with the world, a feeling that the world beyond humans is "shot through with the sacred". They experienced God immanently, within them, and transcendentally, beyond them. This was also reflected in the Quaker conviction that all places and times are sacramental. So 'steeple houses' and times set apart as particularly holy were seen as unnecessary because the Light was everywhere, always.

Because of the urgency, approaching the problem of climate change in a purely secular manner can become overwhelming. But by retaining a Quakerly reverence for the mystery in the world, the sacredness of nature, as well as having an attitude of humility, we are more able to move forward with a sense of peaceful deliberation as we play our part in addressing the issue.

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Murray Short

## Spirituality and climate change

The spirit is life (breath) to me and spirituality is living in ways that sustain all life.

The evolutionary history of earth has seen extremes of climate and temperature that have caused mass extinctions of life. Humans occupy a tiny part of this history and may simply join the succession of extinctions in due course.

However, humans have unique (as far as we are aware) intellectual, emotional and spiritual capacities which enable us to observe, understand and care about the path of evolution. The Judaeo-Christian narrative that describes humans as being made in the image of a supreme deity is one way to explain the origin of these unique capacities.

Whatever narrative, imagery or metaphors are used, the essential point is that these capacities enable humans to be conscious participants in the evolutionary process. One example is that we can consciously choose to exacerbate or mitigate the natural cycles of climate extremes.

Climate change threatens most life on earth. As spirituality to me is living in ways that sustain life, I am driven to address climate change by my spirituality.

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### Gray Southon

#### Spirituality of Climate Change?

Urgency.

We have been told for around 50 years that our lifestyles were screwing up the planet, and climate change as a major issue has been on the agenda for over 30 years. But we still seem to be so far from doing what is needed to really address the issue.

Our lifestyles seem so good – our technology is solving so many of our problems, and giving us so many options in what we do with our lives. We can't go backwards. Sustainability sounds like putting the brakes on – stopping progress.

And we given stories about what will happen if we keep going – species extinction (why do we need so many species anyway), sea level rise (surely there are solutions to that), ice melting (tourists will get by without them). We don't want to listen – who gives them the authority to predict the future. It is easy to believe the rumours of flaws in the scientific work.

Then you start realising that there must to something to this – how come all these international agencies and governments are following along. It is not in their interests to push these lines – there are enough troubles in the world without global warming. 2005 is the year that I start taking it seriously.

But how do you talk to others about this? You have a sense that they don't want to know. You don't want to make yourself unpopular, because then no-one will listen to you. Besides you need friends. You need to avoid a 'reputation'. Why don't they want to know? Do they not understand, or is it all too disturbing? How do you find out, when it is so difficult to raise the issue? When you make statements in groups – in meeting for worship - in presentations – people don't want to talk to you about it afterwards. You feel like a pariah. You must avoid the issue if you are going to have any sort of exchange with the people around you.

Time passes, each year there are more severe warnings about environmental degeneration, time is running out, they say, we much act NOW. There must be global agreements. Negotiations go on year after year, painfully slow. Yes, there is progress, but painfully slow. You can see enormous gaps between what is needed and what people are likely to respond to. And then there are the fossil fuel corporate who are desperately opposing effective action. Copenhagen is a 'Train Wreck'. Hope becomes a rare commodity. Is there any point in trying?

But giving up is death – or moral suicide. You have no value on this planet if you are not looking for some ways of making a difference. But you are operating in a bubble – your concerns and nightmares you have to

keep to yourself. Control your emotions, they make you intolerable. You might go insane, and then you are no good to anyone. You find groups that you can work with – get some sense of doing something – people that you can share something with.

You look for ways of introducing the issue gently, linking it to something ordinary, the moving gently to what can be done, not embarrassing anyone, avoiding moralisms, letting people make their own decisions. But then few people respond – it seems that even the easy bits are too difficult, or disturbing, or whatever. Who knows? Who cares? We are just sleep-walking to oblivion – the whole of humanity!!

But wait – the miracle of the Paris agreement occurs – how can that be? A cacophony of over 190 degenerate, bureaucratic governments, many not even democracies, have agreed to work together, even challenge each other to extend their commitments, to control greenhouse gas emissions. It seems quite surreal – like some grotesque painting – nations just don't work like that! What can this all mean?

It does not mean much to those at home. The pervasive sense of cynicism which attends these stratospheric events is as strong as ever. Let see what happens, they say. The retort that if everyone sits around waiting to see what happens then nothing will, doesn't cut much ice. However, there is movement at the bureaucratic levels, there is interest in what Paris means for us. But things move slowly, there is no sense of excitement, of urgency, of compulsion. It is as if forty years of slow motion response has squeezed the life out of the movement. The fact that the Arctic ice sheet has almost disappeared, the coral reefs have bleached, the Antarctic ice sheets have started possibly irreversible movement, large groups of people in NZ and around the world are threatened, and we are likely to be faced with large scale migration does not move people to rapid action. There is still a life to be lived, families to be enjoyed, an economy to be maintained.

The prospect that our children and grandchildren are likely to be faced with a very different, degenerate world than we have, seldom is mentioned.

Still we have meetings, discussions, parliamentarians now get together, people are now more prepared to discuss things, so there is definitely progress. But don't get excited, things take a while, we can't push things too much. Need to get the issues into the long term plan so they will be incorporated into action over the next ten years – perhaps.

What are the young people think? They seem to be invisible. Are they worried that their future is being stolen, or do they just not want to think about it?

Who knows!

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Jack Woodward

#### CLIMATE CHANGE AND SPIRITUALITY

What for me are the spiritual dimensions of involvement in the climate change campaign? Is there anything different in this compared with other causes that I have supported? The threat posed by nuclear weapons, the plight of the Palestinian people, improving living conditions in third world villages, closer to home the poverty of so many of our children and the destruction of our environment, or involvement in left wing politics? I can't respond without first commenting on the meaning of the word "spiritual" for me?

What are the roots of my own spirituality as far I can discern? I feel at home with the Quaker values of simplicity, integrity, community, peace, and personal responsibility, and feel at one with those who share those values. My own 'spiritual journey' has not involved dramatic moments of enlightenment or similar, or close membership of a church group as my family had no religious ties and formal religion made no sense to me. It is rather as though together with a sense of compassion and fairness these are attitudes that I 'have grown up with'. There were times I confess when as a young person I did feel I might be a 'moral free-loader' riding on the shoulders of established faiths. I came however to look on the human species as a unique product of evolutionary processes, essentially alone in the universe, a remarkable and precious development, utterly dependent on the biological systems which supported that development and which it

seems we are hell-bent on destroying. Conflicting altruistic and selfish impulses are in a sense 'hard-wired' into us. Eminent evolutionary biologist Edward O Wilson develops this interpretation in his recent book "The Meaning of Human Existence", Liveright Publishing, 2014.

Climate change and nuclear weapons are comparable in that both are direct threats to the continuance of the human civilisation that we know and treasure. The welfare of our nearest and dearest is directly threatened.

The nuclear threat has not greatly diminished but at least its dimensions and potential immediate impact are widely understood by public and politicians and we are in a management phase.

The challenge posed by climate change is newly identified, so much more diffuse, its major potential impacts are in the medium and longer term, getting a basic understanding of the underlying scientific arguments is more challenging, action at the individual level is called for, and there is widespread public disinterest. The prospect is daunting.

Survival of human society is at issue – a substantial spiritual concern!

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Mary Woodward (Bobbie)

Our present world culture as well as the many historical cultures that have preceded it have added up to a story that is rich in both positive and negative aspects, but with an unsteady but definitely upward move towards positive development for all life on earth through growing knowledge and the understandings that can follow it. That that story itself is in danger of being utterly swept away, never to be recognised or valued again, is to me part of the tragedy that climate change may well bring to the actual survival of life as we know it on this earth; a double tragedy of loss of the past as well as loss of present existence in bodily form.

Perhaps an example would help to clarify my thoughts. There will be no-one to play and listen to a great work of music; that music will have ceased to exist forever - an unimaginable loss. All art, all philosophical truths, the memories of all generous actions, all acts of love, as well as all acts of violence and hatred, will cease to exist.

This adds a great deal to my discomfort that my life may become intolerable for me personally and for my grandchild even more difficult, in a growing escalation of tragic events, until human and animal life itself becomes utterly untenable on earth.

I cannot believe in a Creator and a Plan for the universe, but the wonder I experience at the way nature works in its cycle of life and death demonstrates to me that there must be an intelligence at work, and if I have any hope at all it is in the continuation of that intelligence into a future that is utterly obscure to me.

Can I play any part? Only to keep that slither of hope alive, that the future scenario may be reversed by the efforts of human beings, and meanwhile work with my family and my social contacts to encourage those efforts.

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Richard Milne

I did consider this but did not have time to respond. So thank you for a second opportunity.

My contribution fits more with an Anglican perspective:

1. 'Care of creation' and 'Social justice' are in the 5-fold mission statement of the worldwide Anglican communion. Responding to climate change embraces both of these.
2. Martin Luther said something like: 'if we are not addressing the issues of today, we are not preaching the gospel'

I realise that these traditional Christian statements might not fit well with some NZ Friends, so I shall leave you to decide whether (and how) to include them.

At a personal level, climate change threatens human and animal life, exacerbates social injustice, and changes the character of the NZ landscape which is dear to me, and which nurtures my children and my grandchildren. Life, beauty, justice and landscape are part of my spirituality.

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Mary Rose

#### WHAT DO I HAVE TO SAY ABOUT SPIRITUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE?

This is such a great question!

When I first heard it, I welcomed the opportunity to think about what it means to me.

This is what happened as I thought

I began at the beginning.

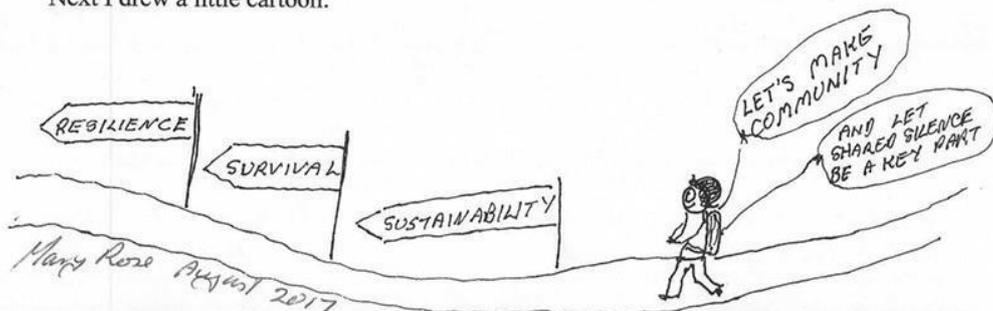
My sense of spirituality, of the divine, of God, is inextricably linked with community in its many forms and aspects.

So, beginning there, I'm remembering my experiences within the Quaker community in relation to Climate Change.

First, I wrote a list.

- \* there was listening to those Friends among us who had the skill and wisdom to understand the implications of the unheeded signs that, globally, the climate is changing and this change is affected by the way we live on the planet. They spoke out again and again, trying to get Friends to understand, inviting us to act: Robert Howell, Llyn Richards, Tony Maturin come to mind. Were these men the modern day equivalent of Old Testament prophets? I think so! I think back to the courage and persistence they showed and the varied responses there were to those prophets: the old ones and the recent ones.
- \* learning how to hold the possibility of both hope and catastrophe.
- \* knowing the hands of God (ultimate good) are yours, mine and all the others. When these 'hands' are in tune with each other, great good can happen and the spirit work wonders.
- \* watching the slow, gradual growth of awareness and willingness to respond to Climate Change in myself and others.
- \* seeing the growth of the global community around the issue.
- \* learning how to ask difficult questions in places of power.
- \* reviving my longing to live in close community.
- \* recognizing the treasure that is Quaker process and seeking ways of making this process widely known and available.
- \* being called to ACT.
- \* valuing time in my life for silence and stillness.
- \* being a tiny part of the search within the Quaker community to find a way forward that would make a difference as the people of Planet Earth face Climate Change

Next I drew a little cartoon:



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Liz Remmerswaal

“What, for you, is spiritual about climate change, in terms of your own concepts of spirituality and understanding of climate change, for instance as it relates to your morals and action.”

I have a deep sense that everything in creation is connected and for the good.

Although we as a people have strayed from that idea and have shown disrespect for our beautiful earthly home, and each other.

Nonetheless we are created in the image of God, or as Quakers say, There is of God in everyone, and we have a huge power to do good and act in love.

For me my faith drives me to take action and gives me the courage to do so.

For years I was an environmental activist, and then a politician espousing sustainability and climate change action against a background of resistance.

After I left politics, I became involved in the global peace movement.

It was taking this one step further by focusing on resourcing.

How can we live in a sustainable manner, dealing with climate change effectively, when we are wasting so many of the work's resources on preparing for war?

In the United States in particular it is a horrifying picture, with 57% of their Federal taxes going to the military, while many people struggle to get health care, provide and education for their family, and even retire.

The military is the number one user of fossil fuels, number one producer of air, land and water pollution, and number one contributor to global warming that creating extreme weather and harmful effects.

In New Zealand our government is increasing military spending and supporting America's wars on the other side of the world, instead of focussing on playing our part in reducing emissions.

My focus now is making others aware of the links between these issues and how to work to redress the balance.

In particular the global divestment campaign has already begun by groups such as World Beyond War and Code Pink, and is supported by Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and others.

While governments buy weapons, market weapons to other governments, donate weapons to other governments, and bestow tax breaks on weapons dealers, there is another less-visible way in which public money sustains weapons dealing.

Public pension and retirement funds are invested, directly and indirectly, in weapons companies. Last year it was revealed that half a million KiwiSaver members in government-appointed default schemes may be unknowingly investing in companies making cluster bombs and anti-personnel mines.

It would be hard to find anyone who would support these activities, and yet more action is needed to ensure that public investment excludes companies making these deadly weapons.

That's something I intend to pursue vigorously in the near future, in partnership with others. Come join me!

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