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God calls us to the right sharing of world resources, from the burdens of materialism and poverty into the abundance of God's love, to work for equity through partnership with our sisters and brothers throughout the world.

One of my great joys as General Secretary of Right Sharing is helping create opportunities for people in the developed and developing countries to connect with and learn from one another. Our education work among Friends in the United States uses what we learn in these opportunities to make specific challenges and provide specific guidelines for deepening our life as Friends. Our grant-making work in the developing world makes grants to do specific work in a particular place. However, when we are thousands of miles away from one another, it may be easy to lose a sense of connection. That is why visiting is important. A second reason for the importance of visits is so that those of us who talk about Right Sharing have a wealth of project-related experience, which instructs us as we talk about Right Sharing principles in the developing world and in the developed world.

This issue of the newsletter starts with two experiences of visiting and being with project partners. Lucretia Humphrey and George Kegode share their experience of traveling in Sierra Leone and Kenya. Lucretia traveled in Sierra Leone June 19 – July 2. As she notes, Lucretia was a Peace Corps volunteer teacher 30 years ago. She was returning to attend the Annual Meeting of the Friends of Sierra Leone, in Freetown (the first time their meeting had been held there). Lucretia is a teacher living in Great Falls, Montana and is a member of North Pacific Yearly Meeting. George Kegode, a RSWR Board member, traveled to Kenya during July. George is a professor of agriculture at North Dakota State University in Fargo, was born in Kenya, and is currently a member of Northern Yearly Meeting.

Cindi Goslee, RSWR's staff-person primarily responsible for managing the proposals we receive, has reviewed a book, written by a Friend, reflecting on our responsibility as Christians and Friends.

Finally, Donne Hayden, RSWR's Education Coordinator, has prepared a reflection piece and related resource list.

Roland Kreager

[From the left; Ahmed Sesay, Lucretia Humphrey, Harold Johnson]

Quakers have long been known for their help in healing the wounds of war. We have fed the hungry, healed the hurt, and supported efforts to build a more peaceful world. Right Sharing has again made this Quaker witness alive and visible in war-torn Sierra Leone.

People from Sierra Leone have a life expectancy of 34.5 years, an annual income of \$470 per person, and their country is rated as one of the poorest countries of the world by the United Nations Development Program. Even more devastating than these figures are the effects of a ten-year war, which ended in 2002. It was ten years of mutilation, rape, robbery, murder, terror, child soldiers, destroyed schools, homes, and businesses, with the basics of survival in question for most of the population. Fifty thousand people were killed and fifty thousand former combatants are trying to be re-integrated back into the society.

It was this world that I entered this past summer. It was not an easy decision to return to Sierra Leone after having been a Peace Corps teacher there thirty years earlier. Thirty years before I had lived in a southern Sierra Leone town of about 3,000 people. There I taught for three years at a girls' secondary school with other Peace Corps teachers as well as volunteers from Canada and England. About one half of our staff were Sierra Leonean teachers (a few of whom had even been trained in Europe). At that time the country was only ten years away from colonial rule under the British. Life was poor but not unbearable, and there was hope of a better life with education.

Sierra Leoneans are known for their hospitality and generous spirit to strangers. Thirty years ago as a white American woman stranger, I benefitted greatly from the kindnesses of many. I lived and traveled easily and safely throughout the country. However, even as I was enjoying the good life of this tropical country, corruption, power, and greed were taking their toll on Sierra Leone. As a Sierra Leonean woman, who ran in the recent election for President said, "things had been going bad for a very long time".

As I read about the destruction of the giving, peaceful people I had known thirty years earlier, I could not imagine returning to see people with amputated limbs, AIDS, and stories of terrible loss of property and life. What would be the reason to return? What could I do to justify my return? When Friends of Sierra Leone (FoSL), a group of supporters of Sierra Leone consisting mostly of former Peace Corps volunteers, decided that it was safe to return, I was very conflicted. I wanted to see the people I had known and loved, but I was afraid of the pain I would witness. However, as I became aware that RSWR had projects in Sierra Leone, I saw this as an opportunity to see a place I had loved and to share what I knew about this country with RSWR. What a privilege to have my Quaker world and my love of Sierra Leone come together. I feel totally blessed and fortunate to have had such a rich experience.

The way had opened and I would go. Harold Johnson, the Sierra Leonean who is RSWR's representative, was in contact with me by email before the trip and personally accompanied me throughout my stay. Harold is of Krio descent which means that his ancestors were returned slaves. These people do not identify with any tribal group; rather they have tried to copy some of the aspects of the British in speech, dress, education and mannerism. Many Krio people do not even leave Freetown to go into the interior of Sierra Leone, but Harold, an Anglican priest, seemed to really enjoy this contact with the village people.

After sharing four days of orientation and entertainment at FoSL's Annual Meeting, Harold and I traveled by car up country to visit RSWR projects. Our first stop was to visit a possible agriculture project that has not yet been funded. The people were waiting, the music and drumming began, and speeches were given. We received a tour of part of the farm, the pest-secure storage house for the seed grain, and the school which had been built by Nigerian United Nations soldiers. These people have established for themselves a way of working cooperatively with other villages to raise enough rice and food to feed themselves. They want to expand their work by expanding the farming cooperative to other villages.

Another project, Hungbo Community Development Project, is a village that RSWR has supported throughout the war. This area was a rebel stronghold and subject to continuous attack by the

helicopter gunship of the Sierra Leone Army. Much of what was achieved in the earlier days of the project was completely destroyed. Nonetheless, RSWR funds significantly aided the survival of this village's people, who are most grateful for our support.

Most of the five RSWR projects in Sierra Leone sustain and support the development of cooperative agricultural enterprises. I can think of nothing better to be done with our money. Sierra Leone's staple food is rice. Sierra Leoneans will say that they have not eaten that day if they have not had a bowl of rice with some kind of sauce covering it. But, only 35% of the rice that is eaten is grown in country. If a community can grow enough rice, then the saved money can go for the schooling of the children.

Sierra Leone appears to be over-run by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, few NGOs are doing work similar to RSWR. The low-keyed way that RSWR operates is refreshing in that most of its funds go directly to the intended beneficiaries. This is achieved through RSWR's careful allocation of funds to projects which empower people to help themselves towards producing the most important outcome, food.

As we zoomed along on a motorbike to one of our visits, Ahmed Sesay (Ishaak Muckson Integrated Rural Development Project) told me a story about the war. When the rebels came to his village, he was in another town about 4 miles away. On learning that his village had been attacked, he immediately returned home by way of bush path so as not to be detected by the rebels. He found his village empty of all people except for the bodies of those killed, one of whom was his father. He began preparing his father's body for burial, wrapping it in banana leaves and digging a grave, but it was a trap. The rebels came back and captured him, locked him up, and tortured him. After three days they released him but gave him two choices: die or join them. He joined them, hoping that in doing so he could at least protect his own village. For the next 8 months he worked his way up in rank until he was the rebel secretary general for his entire region. Because of his high rank he was then able to travel to Freetown, the capitol, which was only 90 miles away, where he turned himself over to the United Nations. Later he was able to return to his village whose people understood why he had done what he had done. Finally, peace talks were called for and someone had to meet with the rebels and he knew that he was the person for

these talks. His friends and family urged him not to go. He had deserted the rebels and they would kill him. He still went and where he talked to them there is a monument that I had seen earlier with his name on it. The monument reads, "This is where peace began..."

When I left Sierra Leone a friend offered me the use of his house if I ever could return to help. He also gave me two tapes of very positive cheerful Sierra Leonean music to share with my friends in America so that we would know that Sierra Leone has hope. We should take his message to heart. How can we not have hope when the Sierra Leoneans have hope?

[From left, John Muhanji, George Kegode, Samson Ababu, at Tuloi Yearly Meetinghouse]

I met John Muhanji and Samson Ababu at Chavakali, on Saturday, July 10. Because of the loss of a few heifers by some of the women groups, one of the tasks to be accomplished on this day was a fund raising drive that was organized by Tuloi Yearly Meeting, United Society of Friends Women (USFW) for the purpose of raising money to purchase replacement heifers.

At our first stop, we met Loice Arigi, who was the first within her group to receive a heifer in calf. The calf was raised by Loice and was to be presented to the next recipient within their group once the calf had been weaned. Unfortunately, the calf died. It is unclear what happened to cause the death of the calf. When the group undertook the project one of the members was/is a veterinarian and had assured the group that she would help them avoid such losses. However, she was not available when the calf became sick. The veterinary extension service, which is offered by the Kenyan government, was not approached in time and to some extent is presently not very reliable. This has left the group waiting for the heifer to be in calf. There were signs of frustration and strained relations among the group members and recognizing this John and

Samson took the opportunity to counsel the group. Samson asked the group to maintain their spirituality despite the problem and to use the local veterinary services as much as possible. John thanked Loice for her repayment of the loan so far and advised the group to use the funds towards other income-generating projects rather than merely waiting for the next calf.

[Officers of Tuloi Yearly Meeting, United Society of Friends Women]

The second stop was at the home of Priscilla Saisi, where we were able to see the healthy calf and heifer. The calf was ready to be given to the next member of the group. The only problem was that the heifer had been bred but was not in calf. The third stop was at the home of Hada Kihima, where we found the heifer in great health, having mothered a male calf, had been bred, and had been pregnant since April.

After the third site visit we made our way to Tindinya Monthly Meeting House, where the women's meeting and funds drive was to take place. The funds drive was intended to raise money to replace heifers for the three women groups whose heifers had died. The meeting was attended by the presiding clerk of Tuloi Yearly Meeting, Joseph Mulama, and was chaired by the USFW Executive Committee. At the meeting, Samson and John told the women to be spiritually strong and look towards finding alternatives to the situation. Based upon what they had learned from the heifer project, they advised the women to diversify their projects so they could utilize the revolving fund better. They offered to conduct capacity building seminars and the women responded positively to that suggestion. I was asked to say a few words on behalf of RSWR, and echoed what Samson and John stated while emphasizing the ideals of micro-credit. During the funds drive, which was conducted by Samson, 41,115 Kenyan shillings 41,115 (\$510) was raised. The meeting ended with blessings and a meal.

George Kegode

Tricia Gates Brown's book, "FREE PEOPLE: A Christian Response to Global Economics", is an ambitious undertaking in a small volume. Her primer on global economics (particularly neoliberalism), its severe impact on the poor, and her Biblical scan of Old and New Testament principles for economic justice are a call to examine our own lifestyles.

Interestingly for RSWR supporters, Tricia's critique of neoliberalism's devastation on developing countries was echoed in a proposal that RSWR received this summer from Tamil Nadu, India. The proposal states, "After India's signature in WTO, big industrialists from Madras, Bombay and Bangalore are coming into our target area and buying our ancestral property at cheap rates. [These] big industrialists are converting these lands into horticulture land in a mass level. As a result the agriculture labor community does not have adequate work to earn for their livelihood. And some of them resort to migrate in neighboring city, Madurai."

Tricia's Biblical overview leads us through centuries of land loss as economic systems became controlled by the elite few. She describes God's desires for justice as outlined in the Pentateuch with laws on gleaning, Sabbath years for the land to lay fallow, and Jubilee for debt forgiveness. Power increasingly lay in the hands of a few as laws were challenged and forgotten with the rise of kingdoms and elitism. Prophets called for repentance and Jesus "called them to order their lives around a new reality, the reality of God's kingdom present among them. They were called to turn their back on the value systems that oppressed and constrained them, and by which they oppressed others" (p.144).

As a final challenge, Tricia gives case studies of individuals, families and one organization (RSWR) attempting to live justly in our time. These small vignettes of day to day life are encouragements to live this new reality Jesus called for. Tricia states she "feature(s) Right Sharing of World Resources in part because it is an example of what Christians have done to further economic justice as a group"(p.187). She provides a very clear and concise synopsis of RSWR's work and describes a project partner in Tiruchirapalli District of Tamil Nadu, India.

I found Tricia's ambitious undertaking a very readable, informative overview that urges me to study further and especially to live more justly.

Cindi Goslee

HOW TO SUPPORT RIGHT SHARING FINANCIALLY

MAKE AN OUTRIGHT GIFT OF MAKE A GIFT WHICH PROVIDES AN INCOME TO YOU

Cash Charitable Remainder Trust

Publically traded stocks Charitable Gift Annuities

Publically traded bonds

Privately traded securities

Tangible personal property¹

Real estate¹

MAKE A DEFERRED GIFT MAKE AN INTEREST-FREE LOAN

Bequests (include RSWR in your will) Loans can be recalled within 30 days. Current interest-free

Designate RSWR has a beneficiary of your loans provide RSWR with income from interest of over \$4,000 life insurance per year.

Designate RSWR as a beneficiary of your retirement plan (annuity, pension, Keogh, 401(k), 403(b), or IRA)

¹ Upon acceptance by RSWR

SPECIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

SAVE STAMPS REMEMBER RSWR AT SPECIAL TIMES

Send them to Quaker Missions Project of In lieu of gifts at Christmas, birthdays, marriages, memorials or

Mattapoisett Monthly Meeting, PO Box 795, other special times, ask that a gift be made to RSWR.

Mattapoisett, MA 02739-0795. This project has provided over \$35,000 to RSWR and other Quaker organizations.

HAVE A SIMPLE MEAL HAVE A SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE GARAGE SALE

The Simple Meal is a wonderful way to have It's fund to do, raises money, and helps you, your family, and fun raising money and awareness at the same time. others learn about what is enough.

PERSONALLY

EVALUATE YOUR LIFESTYLE PRAY

Take steps in your family to use fewer resources – for Divine guidance in understanding how our focus on the and to reuse and recycle more of what you do use. material clouds our vision of God’s will for us as individuals, Encourage these practices in your meeting or church our families, and the Religious Society of Friends. and in your community. – that the extremes of poverty and wealth, which are genuine hindrances to right relationship with God and each other, may be reduced and that God can, therefore, be more present to all of us.

TO OUR DONORS: Approved project support for 2004 totals \$207,000 (a 20% increase over 2003!). We currently have 45 project partners, and welcome your gifts to meet the needs of all of these projects. There are 13 projects for which 100% of a contribution restricted to that project will go directly to the project. For a complete list of these projects, and a description of their work, go to the RSWR website, www.rswr.org. Meetings and churches which would like to be involved in any special way with any of the projects should contact:

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Right Sharing News is available via email. Contact the RSWR office to request an electronic version of the newsletter; available in PDF format.

Send contributions to RIGHT SHARING OF WORLD RESOURCES, 232 College Avenue, Richmond, Indiana 47374-5360.

Name
Address

City State Zip

Yearly Meeting
THANK YOU!

Right Sharing of World Resources is a program which is "owned" by many people. The Committee and staff have certain responsibilities but the program would not be successful if it were not for contributors, people who send in ideas and those who are critical or give encouragement. Your suggestions and comments are welcome.

(Right Sharing Education Banner)

Third Quarter, 2004

Editor: Donne Hayden

"Wrong Sharing" and Right Sharing: A Cultural Encounter
by Donne Hayden

Kenyan Friends – The Msamaria Mwema Women's Project Centre is a Right Sharing project partner. Three of these women attended the 2004 USFWI Triennial in Greensboro, N.C.

In July, at the United Society of Friends Women International (USFWI) Triennial in Greensboro, I gave a presentation about Right Sharing that reflected the focus of my job as Education Coordinator for Right Sharing: to help educate US Quakers to hear God's call to us to resist the consumer culture we live in and to change the way we live. To succeed, it helps if we apply to our own lives the same principles the Right Sharing board looks for in project proposals from those in developing countries: local self-reliance, sustainability and mutual responsibility and support.

I had in mind an audience of US Quakers--Friends experiencing the "burdens of materialism"-- when I prepared for the workshop at the Triennial. I was surprised (though in retrospect I shouldn't have been) when the room filled up with Kenyan women during the first workshop. Only four or five "Friends of abundance" were in the audience, and most of them were already concerned about true right sharing, which requires us to modify the way we live in the

world community, for the sake of our own souls as well as survival of the earth.

At the beginning of the first workshop, one of the Kenyan women told me she was there to hear about "Wrong Sharing," and I assured her that she would. I didn't change anything I had planned to say; I focused on how American Friends need to become conscious of the ramifications of our lifestyle choices, and the spiritual cost of the "unexamined life" of onsumption. I talked about having too much stuff, too much food, not enough time, not enough community. I watched the faces of my Kenyan sisters and I sensed they understood--in the midst of what we call their poverty, their lives have riches we can't imagine, while in the midst of our "filled-up" lives, we often experience emptiness and spiritual hunger. Later, a U.S. Friend told me that one of the Kenyan women who had been in the Right Sharing presentation said she felt sorry for Americans--they have so much to think about and worry about.

God At Work in Mysterious Ways

When I began researching for my presentation, I understood the concepts of local self-reliance, sustainability, and mutual responsibility, but mostly in terms of those like the Kenyan Friends who submit grant proposals to Right Sharing. Of course, I knew the Quaker testimony of simplicity and something about the more recent "voluntary simplicity" movement. But I discovered that for the past 30 years or more, while many Americans slept, prophets and visionaries--many of them Quakers--have gone before us laying the groundwork for what must happen if God's creation and human life is to survive. Much of what must happen involves the three principles of local self-reliance, sustainability, and mutual responsibility.

The good news, for those of us who still "labor under the burden of materialism" and who increasingly chafe at our enslavement to consumerism, a substantial substructure of alternative lifestyles already exists. The bad news is that not all "Friends of abundance" know about these alternatives to consumption, alternatives that can bring us closer to the spirit of Christ (inclusive love, compassion, equity) and, at the same time, preserve the bounty and beauty of Creation. What insight and guiding spirit led those early advocates of local self-reliance, sustainable development and personal / mutual responsibility, the ones who developed plans, strategies, and experimental communities while

the rest of us filled our plates and garages with unsatisfying superfluity? Pray, ask questions, and do some research on the three principles and their application in developed countries. What you will find is enough to convince me of a Divine Plan—for, when the rest of us wake up and realize we must change the way we live, a foundation has been laid for us to build on.

Wisdom from John Woolman

One of John Woolman's keenest insights was into the relationships among the traditional Quaker testimonies that nourish our activism. Failure to lead a simple life ultimately leads to oppression of others, and this in turn can lead to war. So simplicity, equality, and peace are inseparably interwoven. But since the outward and inward life are woven of a single fabric, he

does not stop with external analysis alone. The failure to lead a life of material simplicity has profound spiritual roots. Because we have not opened ourselves fully to the love of God, which is the only reality that ultimately satisfies the deepest desires of our souls, we seek to substitute

money, success, power, or reputation. Because we can't satisfy a thirst for the infinite with something finite, we end up wanting more money, more success, and no amount is ever enough.

--From *Mysticism and Activism: Learning from John Woolman* by Michael Birkel. Michener Quaker Lecture, 2002.

. . . where the heart was set on greatness, success in business did not satisfy the craving, but that in common with an increase of wealth the desire of wealth increased. (35)

In contrast to this insatiable desire for wealth, he writes of how opening ourselves to the guidance of Pure Wisdom (one of his favorite nicknames for God) we find our previously unbounded desires now bounded. They are fenced in. This is not so much a matter of heroic renunciation. Instead, as we experience the transforming power of God's love, we simply find that those other things are just not so interesting anymore. In the past we participated in the oppression of others because we wanted more than our fair share of earthly goods and were willing to enslave others to have them do our physical labor so that we could acquire these things. Now we find our lives centered in love; we are loved

by God and so we love others and dedicate ourselves to their welfare as well as our own. Again, the inward life and the outward life are inseparably united.

--From *Mysticism and Activism: Learning from John Woolman* by Michael Birkel. Michener Quaker Lecture, 2002.

SOME QUOTES & DEFINITIONS

"Local Self-Reliance"

"The Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) proposes a set of new rules that builds community by supporting humanly scaled politics and economics. The rules call for:

Decisions made by those who will feel the impact of those decisions.

Communities accepting responsibility for the welfare of their members and for the next generation.

(From New Rules Project website at www.newrules.org)

"Sustainability" "Sustainable Growth" "Sustainable Development"

"A sustainable community: nourishes, allowing all its members to flourish; is able to continue indefinitely; does not mean 'no change' or 'never changing' or 'status quo'; does not mean utopia."

(From the Sustainable Measures website)

"Growth" and "Development" do not have to mean "expansion."

"Sustainable global development requires that those who are more affluent adopt lifestyles within the planet's ecological means."

(From *Our Common Future*, a report by the World Commission on the Environment and Development)

"Mutual Responsibility and Support"

Members of a group are accountable to each other and can count on support from each other when needed.

Responsibility is one of the two "pillars" of a community. "Accepting responsibility is the second major pillar of community.

Without authority we cannot become responsible for ourselves.

Without responsibility, authority will indeed be exercised in

shortsighted and often intolerant ways." (From New Rules Project website)

BOOKS RECOMMENDED FOR ADULT FORUM / DISCUSSION GROUPS:

1) Climbing the Sycamore Tree: A Study on Choice and Simplicity by Ann Hagmann, 2001. A

"workbook" to be used by individuals or groups; activities, discussion questions, readings, and lessons closely tied to Scripture and Christian principles.

2) Simpler Living, Compassionate Life, edited by Michael Schut, 2001. Essays by Henri Nouwen, Richard Foster, Cecile Andrews, William Stringfellow, Wendell Berry and others. Includes a study guide for groups and individuals.

3) Radical Simplicity: Small Footprints on a Finite Earth by Jim Merkel, 2003. Offers clear and practical advice on how to manifest simplicity; a life-changer.

4) Your Money or Your Life by Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin, 1992. A classic; a study guide for groups is available in a companion workbook.