

“Do you endeavor to live ‘in virtue of that life and power which takes away the occasion of all wars?’”

As Quakers, we believe that how we live our lives is critically important. We use Testimonies as models of behavior. **The 5 generally agreed Testimonies are Simplicity, Truth, Community, Equality which lead to Peace.**

We ask ourselves: How do I personally work for peace?

First, the Testimonies are not regional but universal; we are part of a world community. International borders are the arbitrary creation of men. When we look at the difference of poverty and privilege, they are not restricted to the US or our own state. If we consume more than our fair share, who receives less; when we lie that affects our relations with others and when resources are unevenly distributed based upon racial, ethnic or religious reasons the seeds of anger and stress are planted.

Because of overpopulation, mass consumption, misuse, and water pollution, the availability of drinking water per capita is inadequate and shrinking. For this reason, water is a strategic resource in the world and an important element in many political conflicts. Some have predicted that clean water will become the "next oil", making Canada, with this resource in abundance, possibly the richest country in the world. There is a long history of conflict over water, including efforts to gain access to water which has led to wars or has created tensions over shortages and control. Source UNESCO

Throughout history, water, not oil has been the source of much conflict. When we realize that 85% of the Arab world is arid and that they must import 55% of their water we can have a broader understanding of key issues. In the western US, after the Colorado River fills the fountains of Las Vegas, waters the grass and fills the swimming pools of Phoenix, it is but a trickle when it crosses the border into Mexico and what is left is not the rich delta of the past but is a salty residue. After the Rio Grande and Pecos Rivers leave the dams of New Mexico and enter Texas and Mexico, they become dry streams for many miles until after they merge and rivers from Mexico replenish them. The wall that is currently planned will not only slice communities in half but will block access to the river for many on both sides.

So how can you live your lives with others in mind? How many of you drink bottled water on a regular basis? Did you know that 24% of that bottled water is reprocessed local tap water? Did you know that the reprocessing of that water uses the same technology that arid lands use to desalinate water? Did you know that the tap water in most communities is safe and clean and basically free, yet we pay more for bottled water than we pay for gasoline? Source Charles Fishman, fastCompany.com

Bottled water is an indulgence, with a high environmental cost. 1 billion bottles of water are transported a week in ships, trains, and trucks in the United States alone. That's equivalent to 37,800 18-wheelers delivering water. Since water is so heavy an 18-wheeler

with bottled water is partly empty. It takes 1.5 million barrels of oil a year to just make the plastic bottles for US consumption. That is the same amount of oil needed to operate 100,000 US cars in a year. Meanwhile, one out of six or 1 billion people in the world have no dependable, safe drinking water.

A chilled plastic bottle of water in the convenience-store cooler is the perfect symbol of today's American commerce and culture. It is about our demand for instant gratification and our token concern for health. Its packaging and transport depend entirely on cheap fossil fuel. We have the Hummer as the poster child of unfettered consumption, yet very few drive a Hummer and most of us spend \$1 - \$2 a bottle for the convenience of bottled water. And many of those bottles come from Fiji, Italy and France, to a country with overall very clean tap water.

Fiji Water produces more than a million bottles a day, while more than half the people in Fiji do not have reliable drinking water. The label on a bottle of Fiji Water says "from the islands of Fiji. Fiji is near Australia half way around the world.

Every bottle of Fiji Water is shipped by truck and ship. The plastic for the bottles is shipped to Fiji from the US. Half the wholesale cost of Fiji Water is transportation, it costs as much to ship Fiji Water across the oceans and truck it to warehouses in the United States as it does to extract the water and bottle it.

That is not the only environmental cost of each bottle. The Fiji Water plant is a state-of-the-art facility that operates 24/7 and requires three big diesel fueled generators for consistent power. The water may come from "one of the last pristine ecosystems on earth," but out back of the bottling plant is an ecosystem polluted by a diesel haze.

San Pellegrino's 1-liter glass bottles weigh five times what plastic bottles weigh, which greatly increase freight costs and energy consumption. The one liter bottles are washed and rinsed, with 2 liters of water, before being filled with Pellegrino.

If the water we use at home cost what even cheap bottled water costs, our monthly water bills would run \$9,000. Americans spend \$15 billion a year on bottles of water or 167 bottles per capita. That \$15 billion includes over \$1 billion for the 38 billion bottles that are not recycled and end up in our landfills.

The 24% of the bottled water that we buy is tap water repackaged by Coke and Pepsi so that the water can be advertised as pure, and consistent. The local water is put through an energy-intensive reverse-osmosis filtration process similar to that used to turn seawater into drinking water. The water they are purifying is already clean tap water. A bottle of water can cost up to 10,000 times more than tap water and has not been shown to have any health benefits.

We take our level of affluence for granted. So what could we do? Each of us could donate the money that we spend on bottled water to an NGO and help someone who has real needs.

Worldwide, 1 billion people have no reliable source of drinking water; 3,000 children a day die from diseases caught from tainted water. Water problems are most acute in Africa, where it is estimated that 300 million people are affected by water shortages. Adequate management of its water resources is crucial for the future of the African continent.

The World Vision organization serves 100,000,000 people world wide with an annual budget of \$900,000,000. They will install a well in a Malian village for under \$6,000. According to the Earth Policy Institute, \$15 billion is spent annually world wide to improve water supply and sanitation. How many lives could be affected if we spent the additional \$15 billion on helping others instead of re-selling clean water?

This is one simple area where each of us can make a difference and even better at no additional cost, in fact by drinking your own filtered tap water, you will be saving money, decreasing your ecological footprint and if you follow through by donating \$167 a year, you can help make the world a bit safer.