

Reflections

By Barbara Childs, Okehampton Quakers (Religious Society of Friends)

Try to live simply.....Do not be persuaded into buying what you do not need or cannot afford. Do you keep yourself informed about the effect your style of living is having on the global economy and environment?

This is an extract from the Quakers' "Advices and Queries". Rather than being a set of rules, the Advices and Queries are intended to challenge and inspire us in our daily lives.

I certainly feel challenged by these words, especially as I am bringing up a young family in a world where we are frequently encouraged to spend far more than we can afford on what we do not always need.

As new things enter my house I could ask 'Did we really need this? Where was it produced? What scarce resources were used to make it? Was anybody exploited in its manufacture? How will we dispose of the object it replaced?'

If I tried to answer all these questions I would end up spending very little indeed, and would be very unpopular with my family!

But at least there are local opportunities to make a little difference. I can recycle goods, buy Fairtrade goods, use the farmers' market, the credit union, take holidays nearer home, use public transport where possible..... and keep asking myself difficult questions about how I live.

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