



Quaker Earthcare Witness

Seeking emerging insights into right relationship
with Earth and unity with nature.

Film Review: Down to Earth Climate Justice Stories

Review by Mary Gilbert

HOW DO PEOPLE BECOME ACTIVISTS? Are they born that way? How does continuing revelation come into play?

Andy Burt, a Quaker from Maine, has made a sensitive, well-planned, and beautifully edited one-hour film, [Down to Earth: Climate Justice Stories](http://www.downtoearthstories.org/) (<http://www.downtoearthstories.org/>), in which she interviews a dozen or so earthcare activists about how they became involved in activism and what it means to them.

We see that it takes a certain type of courage to take on the role of “activist,” but the ordinary people in this movie have done it in a variety of ways and over their lifetimes. Some speak of important experiences of nature in childhood; their wish to protect the natural world has always been part of who they are. Some became activists later in life once they perceived the complexity of the world in a more informed way. For some, connections with others drew them in. Some simply had a feeling that “I must do this.” Once across the threshold, they all found an enhanced inner sense of meaning in their lives.

Down to Earth is honest about feelings of frustration and even despair that are part of the activists’ experience and those interviewed share about how they keep going. If the task is “personal and manageable,” one said, “I can stay with it.” Some express a built-in renewal as their cause evokes a sense of the sacred. Others don’t use that language, but the feeling can be heard in how they talk about their experience of what they are called to do.

Watching *Down to Earth* is a superb way to spend an hour, whether you are a long-term activist rethinking your leading or a newbie. We are living in a time when we are all called to do what we can on behalf of the Earth and of each other. The people you will meet in this film are doing both.

