

EPISTLES OF THE 190TH SESSION OF
OHIO VALLEY YEARLY MEETING OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS
Seventh Month 28 – Eighth Month 1, 2010

July 31, 2010

Dear Friends,

The Young Adult Friends (YAF) of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting (OVYM) send out warm greetings to other friends around the world.

Due to the heterogeneous nature of our program, it is difficult to summarize the experiences and messages of our time together. We are aware of the great diversity of ages and roles in the community within our group. During yearly meeting some YAFs worked as Friendly Adult Presences for the teen, middle youth and children's programs. We enjoyed an intergenerational bonfire and s'mores with the middle youth and teens as well as several multigenerational discussion opportunities presented at OVYM.

Max Carter gave a plenary talk about spiritual growth and God that deeply spoke to our condition. Max also sat in on one of our business meetings and gave suggestions regarding programming that could advance our spiritual growth. Max's challenge to young adult friends to step up to leadership roles in integrating spirituality into young friends lives speaks to a change of the role of young adult friends within our religious society. It is time for us to become more fully a part of our community.

Our group united around one goal. This year, in order to invite young adult friends from previous years to OVYM and develop our own spirituality, we created the framework for a YAF program at yearly meeting. This program will lay the foundation for a YAF community not as separate from the greater yearly meeting but as an integrated part of OVYM with both connections to the Teen program and integration with the greater adult community. We developed a simple and concrete plan for programming. We are working to develop the YAF program so that we can continue to celebrate friends as family.

Though the general focus of our discourse for the 2010 sessions of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting was pragmatic we believe that these practical discussions will lay the foundation for dynamic community and deep spiritual growth. The pragmatic is essential for the development of the profound.

With Love,

The Young Adult Friends of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

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This year in the Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting teen group, we experienced a turn-over of middle youth entering our community and older teens leaving it to enter the Young Adult Friends community. However, throughout our yearly meeting experience, we had many chances to interact with the multiple generations of our wider community, including the teens that had grown into the Young Adult Friends, and the Middle Youth.

We had discussions about communities and families during small groups and during our bike and service trip to Quaker Hill where we cleaned up the grounds and weeded the garden.

Our group participated in a work shop led by a Young Adult Friends who was recently a teen, and plenaries with Max Carter and Vonn New in which we learned and discussed ways of widening our community, worshipful sense, and perspectives on our own faith and world cultures.

We were visited by members of the American Friends Service Committee and were lead in conversations about human rights and how we wish to see them manifested in communities all over the world.

We also brought back the tradition of “Simply Speaking”, which the teens planned and enjoyed.

We included Young Adult Friends and Middle Youth in our end of week celebrations.

It is felt that the teens, while appreciating the efforts of adults in including all generations, desire more meaningful interactions with adult friends.

Instead of being expected to participate in the adult community, teens extend a sincere invitation to the adult friends to join our community in the future.

2010 Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Teens.

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Dear Friends,

In the last week of the seventh month, twenty-ten, five Middle Youth, age ten to thirteen met at Earlham College for the 190th annual session of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting to “Celebrate Friends as Family: Nurturing the Future”. In our time together, we had many enjoyable experiences and inspiring speakers.

We were joined first by Max Carter who spoke of his life experiences as a Friend and a peace activist. He also explained the importance of Quaker History. We later were joined by Erin Polley and Anna Crumbly Effinger of the American Friends Service Committee. They informed us of the trillion dollars the United States has spent on the wars in the Middle East, which we based our skit on. Our final guest was Vonn New, who introduced us to different means of worshipping and centering down, such as using rhythm and music. We thank those speakers for their inspiring messages.

We had many exciting activities including a canoe trip and a bike ride. Unlike previous years, the Whitewater River was crowded with other canoers and we had to be patient and practice our sharing skills. For our service trip we biked to the HELP animal shelter where we walked and washed impatient and excited dogs. Our hope for next year is that more Middle Youth from other monthly meetings will join in and share the fun! ☺

The Middle Youth Program
Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

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Eight school age children met at the 190th annual sessions of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana from July 28 through August 1, 2010 to consider the theme “Celebrating Friends as Family: Nurturing the Future.” The peaceful and beautiful campus of a historic Quaker college was the background for a time of fellowship, deep spiritual sharing, learning about Quakerism ourselves and each other and working on service projects.

Children and adults listened to lessons from the Bible and other inspired readings. We learned that when we listen to God, whether in the desert or in our neighborhood, we find new ways to create love and family. In our service project, Girls, Inc., where we made puppets together, created stories and shared songs. Throughout our session beautiful art was created. Often, children and adults alike could be found lost in their work, in the colored sand mandala, painted cards, unique puppets, and new versions of old songs and more.

Our hope is that not only Friends nurture the future, but see that our future, our children, can nurture us, so we can all together enter the kingdom of God as a “family under one sky.”

The Children’s Program
Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting

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Epistle from the 190th Annual Session of the Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, of the Religious Society of Friends, Seventh Month 28 to Eighth Month 1, in the year of our Lord 2010, meeting on the campus of Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana.

Greetings from our Yearly Meeting to all Friends/friends everywhere: We have shared appreciated the Epistles from you, our Friends around the world, and send you our greetings and love.

Maneuvering around highway construction and the annual Earlham Campus renovations, we have devoted our five days together to consideration of our theme: “Celebrating Friends as Family: Nurturing the Future,” and to the business which reports the progress of our Quakerly efforts, and nourishes our future.

Our days began with pre-breakfast worship opportunity, followed by nourishing good and fellowship. We then moved to age-appropriate activities for children, middle-youth teens and adult groups. Our children are a large, visible and important part of Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting sessions, provided to them cost-free. (Both Teens and Biddle Youth brought their bicycles to experience bike safety and bike trips.)

Adults participated in small-group worship-sharing on our theme, followed by Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting this year experimented with using a less formal setting for these important meetings. Our Friendly business sessions have needed more time than we had allotted.

Afternoon groups offered a choice of the following workshops:

- On Thursday - - Family, Home , and Hospitality in Scripture
 - Ecological Vision for a Sustainable Faith
 - Ramallah Friends Meeting Centennial
 - Money? Money! Money
- On Friday - - Providing Pastoral Care When There is No Pastor
 - HIV, Quakers, Women’s Issues, and Genocide in East Africa
 - Listening for Muses
 - Silent Worship

An exciting addition to this year’s session was an afternoon choice of three worship forms:

- Spirituality through Music and Sound
- Movement and Dance
- Worshipful Silence

Out F/friendly business sessions have needed more time than we have had, and our concerns have outweighed our ability to provide needed solutions. This year we experimented with a less formal setting for our business sessions. We received reports from our Lauramoore Home for Retirees in Richmond, Indiana and Quaker Heights Care Community in Waynesville, Ohio, as well as financial and Yearly Meeting activity reports.

A small group gathered for hymn singing before the evening Plenary Sessions. Young Friends conducted a lively “Get Acquainted” session for all ages on opening night. On Fifth Day evening, active Friend (and Guilford College professor) Max Carter, challenged and inspired us to “Nurture the Spiritual Journey of our Young, the Future and Present of Friends.” On Sixth Day evening Friend Vonn New led us in “Sounding the Divine” – participatory experiences of motion and sound in worship.

The annual “Living Witness” presentation by Wilhelmina and Byron Branson recounted stories of their separate growing-up experiences and influences, followed by those of their adult family and professional lives. A Memorial Meeting recalled contributions of Friends whose lives ended during the past year. The bookstore again provided good opportunity to examine and acquire a variety of Quaker and like-minded publications.

A wide variety of interest groups gathered after the evening sessions, for discussion and action plans.

Seventh Day lunch was once again an opportunity, which is becoming a tradition, to experience a simple meal. By arrangement with the Earlham College food service, this provides a substantial cost saving, which we donate to “Right Sharing of World Resources.” The afternoon ice cream social at Friends’ Lauramoore Retirement Home was held inside this

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lovely, historic home. Our traditional final evening “Talent Show,” was again an incredible offering of Quaker fellowship and fun. “Finish” on First Day included wrap-up reports from our various groups, worship at Stout Meeting House, and plans to convene again in 2011.

Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting Friends