



Philadelphia Yearly Meeting *of the Religious Society of Friends*

TO FRIENDS EVERYWHERE

Greetings from the Summer Sessions of the 330th Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, gathered on the campus of DeSales University, Center Valley, Pennsylvania, July 28 through August 1, 2010.

We gathered on the theme, "We Make the Road by Walking: How Are We Called to be Prophetic in Our Witness?," starting with a multigenerational opening session. Adults and children together, inspired by images of planets, stars, and constellations, learned the steps our children use to discern God's Big Idea for us. We were moved by calls of prophets ranging from the Old Testament to youngsters in our midst, to guest speaker Shane Claiborne's presentation on the "Economics of Rebirth." He called us to renew our dedication to simplicity, stewardship, and responsibility beyond ourselves.

Friends of all ages threaded their trails through an Exercise Course in Prophetic Witness: ten locations around the campus inviting us to engage in prayer, action, creativity, and testimony to enrich our ongoing walk with God. The associated Prophetic Witness School provided coaching in tools for speaking and acting from truth.

The Young Adult Friends Delegation to Israel/Palestine, sponsored by our Middle East Working Group, spoke of their own journey, observing that, if peace could break out in Palestine and Israel, imagine the implications for the rest of the world!

Our business was notably marked by renewed commitment to support the witness of employees who resist war taxes, as well as our decision to hold our annual sessions in a residential campus setting next year and in Center City Philadelphia in 2012, hoping to increase both attendance and spiritual community. In this work, we have been graced by the centered, patient, and faithful teamwork of our clerk, alternate clerks, and recording clerks.

The most significant instance of making the road by walking may be our journey from last year's resolve to become more engaged with climate change to our Eco-Justice Working Group presentation at these sessions. They offered a prophetic vision of living in right relationship: people infused with Spirit viewing economics and ecosystems as expressions of integrity, resilience, and beauty. They challenged us to experiment actively with new ways to witness and live into this vision. This commitment was expressed most clearly in a draft set of goals, still a work in progress, setting the direction for the group's work:

Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting will build unity around a powerful vision in which part of our identity is conscientious objection to the war against the Earth and the people of the Earth.

Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting will become ministers and capacity builders for eco-justice, sharing training, education, pastoral care. As we do so, Friends will amplify our witness, stories, and tools through effective communications.

Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting will work effectively for structural change – seeking the synergy of inside (lobby/advocacy) and outside (grassroots, active nonviolence) strategies. In so doing, we will seek to work in partnership with vulnerable communities.

Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting will bring our financial and other resources into right relationship: this will include our investments, our buildings, our time, and our energy.

Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting will move to bring our households and meetings into right relationship and to examine all of our practices in this Light.

These are goals to be reached by our walking – by ones and twos, by households and meetings - not necessarily on the same path but in the same direction. We find ourselves yearning to be more committed. We are humbly mindful of our need to collaborate with the many others who have already been walking this road and the many yet to come.

Guest speaker Noah Baker Merrill, in his ministry entitled “Where Resurrection Meets the Road,” prayed that we might make space in our hearts for God to find us, offering hope in the space beyond despair. In his prophetic witness, he encouraged us to accept the transformation of baptism in the living waters in order to be a sign of God in the world.

Signed in and on behalf of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Swain". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'T'.

Thomas Swain, clerk