

**OUTGOING EPISTLE REPORT
EFC-ER YEARLY MEETING, 2011**

July 19, 2011

To: Our Friends Around the World

Re: Epistle of the 199th Yearly Meeting of the Evangelical Friends Church – Eastern Region (EFC-ER), Canton, Ohio,
United States of America

Dear Friends:

The 199th Yearly Meeting of the EFC-ER was held from July 16-19, 2011 on the campus of Malone University, Canton, Ohio. The annual gathering began on Saturday with preliminary board meetings on Saturday morning, and a Hispanic worship time on Saturday afternoon, attended by approximately 200 of our Hispanic brothers and sisters. Two banquets were held in the afternoon/evening celebrating God's faithfulness in Missions. Total attendance at the banquets was approximately 600.

Missionary Banquets: Featured guests at both banquets were Dave Thomas, Missionary in Rwanda, Africa, Antal Frei, Missionary in Hungary and the EFCI Europe Director and Dr. Chuck Mylander.

David Thomas has a passion for discerning God's will, and he's shared that drive with the Friends Church in Rwanda. Ending up in Rwanda is a result of his practical encounter with discernment as he and his wife, Debby, sought clearness on where they were called in mission - could they really be called to genocide-torn Rwanda? David has faced a major challenge, and success, to which God has him pursuing a leading to promote true ownership of the missionary-founded Friends Church by Rwandans. Dave Thomas shared how God has blessed their ministries, which include Ubuzima Moringa, a business aimed at providing nutritionally rich moringa powder at an affordable price, thus helping curb malnutrition and improving health throughout the country. They also work with a program called Discipling for Development, which encourages whole-life transformation in individuals, churches and in their communities, showing how the Good News of Jesus Christ to not only offer eternal life, but also to impact farming, health, and relationships—in effect, all areas of life.

Antal Frei and his wife, Agi, serve together in missions. Agi is the leader of the worship group and the children's Sunday school while Antal Frei serves as President of EFC Hungary and Europe in the first Evangelical Friends Church in Hungary, founded in 1997. It was officially registered together with some new churches in 1998 as an independent denomination under the name Evangelical Friends Church of Hungary. At present they have some church and mission stations in the country, but also work in Serbia and Croatia. Both the Hungarian and European Headquarters and located at the Tolna Mission Centre. As a result of huge unemployment, EFC Hungary is addressing people who are embittered and have marital unrest. A new mission station was started and they are preparing for their third baptism of the year. The 2nd EFCI-Europe conference will be held in Hungary, Tulna in October which will be the end of Antal Frei's term as President EFC-Europe. An EFC teenage youth conference was held in Hungary, Tulna. The political situation is very hard in Hungary. Parliament abolished 80% of the evangelical and charismatic churches. To become a legal church again, they have to apply for the ecclesiastical state with two thirds of parliament having to accept it.

Dr. Mylander updated those present on the work of EFM sponsored missions around the world, with which EFC-ER partners.

Concurrent to the adult sessions, Friends-Youth United (FY-United) and children's sessions of Yearly Meeting were attended by nearly 110 infants and children and over 150 teenagers and adult workers.

Sunday Evening Service: Held at Damascus Friends Church. Service included a dedication of their new sanctuary. The evening began with a pictorial narrative of the history of Damascus Friends Church and the history of EFC-ER's roots of Yearly Meeting found there. Our General Superintendent, Dr. John Williams, Jr., continued with the theme of the evening while setting the tone for the spirit of this year's sessions, "Deepening Our Roots, Focusing Our Dreams." Based on Genesis 50:15-26, he empowered us to "choose the right roots." He reminded us that God has roots for us in Christ Jesus demonstrating glory to God, which is our "Firstroots." He challenged us to continue to seek the Will of God while steering clear of the destructive roots of bitterness. Roots of bitterness can be very small, but do not go away easily and will grow over time. Dr. Williams struck a chord, God's desire is that we avoid taking up offenses in all areas of our lives; but instead, rely on the power given through our "Firstroots" found in our relationship with Christ.

Monday and Tuesday morning began with prayer breakfasts for the men and women, featuring Cindy and Dave Aufrance and Dr. Ed and Linda Zinn as speakers.

General Business Meeting: On Monday and Tuesday, after the seating of delegates, the following board reports were presented, discussed, accepted and approved: Malone University, Christian Education Board, Ministerial Accreditation Board, Historical, Finance and Stewardship, Proposed Budgets, Friends Action Board, Friends Disaster Service, Pension Board, Missionary Board, Evangelical Friends Missions (EFM), Camp Gideon, Communication Board, Evangelical, Pastoral, and Extension (EP&E) Board, Nominating Board, Faith and Practice Committee, Friends Youth Board, Finance and Stewardship Board, Epistle Committee, Minutes of the session, and Closing Minutes.

Monday morning began with a worship service that included music, Scripture reading, a puppet show and small group prayer.

During the Monday evening Service all of our missionaries along with the mission board members in attendance of Yearly Meeting were asked to come to the altar as Dr. Williams read from 1 Corinthians 9 and called on Pastor Denny Peters to lift our missionaries up in prayer.

General Superintendents Address: Dr. Williams shared his vision for the 200th year of EFC-ER. He presented us with a single Greek word “Kainos (Kahee-nos)” translated “New/Nuevo” in English/Spanish. Referencing Romans 15:20-21, Dr. Williams declared when facilitating Godly vision God gets the glory, the world gets the Gospel and the church gets a blessing. Utilizing Kainos, found throughout New Testament Scripture, he presented a vision for “God’s Call To Kainos Ministry (Y2C+).” Y2C+ involves each church initiating a fresh kainos ministry to (1) the local church body, (2) the surrounding community, (3) the region where we live and worship and (4) global ministries. Six focused dreams were given: #1 That every church will be both attactional and missional, #2 That every Believer in our churches will be a contagious, spiritually transformed witness, #3 That every church grow as a sending church—sending out pastors, missionaries and disciple-makers into the market place, #4 That our churches will multiply in people and ministry, engaging weekly 20,000 or more who love to worship, study and serve without complaint, #5 That every church will grow in outreach giving locally, regionally, globally—giving away a tithe or more of local church income and #6 That our EFC movement will be spiritually revived so that “the radical message of sin and grace and the cross will become more powerful and central as we baptize, strategize, synergize, and mobilize God’s Call To Kainos Ministry (Vision Y2C+).

Monday evening speaker: Dr. Tom Mullins is the founder and Senior Pastor of Christ Fellowship, in Palm Beach County Florida with four campuses and a full-time staff of more than 100 to accomplish God’s purposes in the community and around the world. Pastor Tom earned his undergraduate and master’s degrees from Georgetown College and a doctorate from Liberty University. Before starting Christ Fellowship, he played and coached football both on the high school and collegiate levels, and he remains a coach at heart. He is the author of The Leadership Game and The Confidence Factor: Discovering the Winning Edge for Life. Because of his dynamic teaching style, Pastor Tom is a highly sought speaker who travels internationally on behalf of world renowned organizations such as EQUIP, Campus Crusade for Christ and Athletes in Action. Tom and his wife, Donna, have been married for more than 40 years. They have two adult children and one grandson. Dr. Mullins’ challenge is for every believer, church and ministry of EFC-ER to look at who we are impacting with our lives. Utilizing Scripture from Revelation 4 and the glimpses of God from Numbers 2 he chronicled the power of God as Dr. Mullins beseeched us to hear the roar of the lion of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ as he pointed out the visual comparison of the two passages of Scripture: Numbers 2 reveals Judah (Lion), Ephraim (Ox), Ruben, (Face of Man) and Dan (Flying Eagle). Those closest to God reflect the Face of God. Revelation 5 reveals the Lion of Judah, the Lamb that was slain (Jesus Christ). Revelation 22:16, I Jesus, am the root and offspring of David. John the Revelator was looking into the Face of Jesus Christ. In a world that redefines itself with the philosophies of our Day concerning marriage, sexuality, and religion, as God’s people where is the roar of the lion today? Our challenge is to Roar with the Lion of Judah and lead our people and be genuine worshipers of God. Become sanctified, set apart, using and embracing the power of God in our lives and churches (1 Peter 3:5). We are the brand of Christ, we are his slave, we are not our own and take up our banner of Christ, fully equipped to fight the good fight. Be fully committed to Him. We must first regain our voice before the throne of Heaven before we can take up our banner. Following Christ takes integrity. As Pastors we must lead our churches into battle as we struggle for this nation and the nations of the world for the Heart of God. The crime rate drops when the youth are empowered to serve Christ (Young lives roaring). Rise up, oh people of God, we have done with lesser things, give heart mind soul and strength and serve the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Lion of Judah, the Lamb of God, Christ Jesus.

Memorial Service: During the service on Tuesday morning the delegation heard testimonies to the lives and influence of the following departed brothers and sisters in Christ who were pastors, pastors’ wives and/or missionaries: Dorothy Atchison, Dorothy Barratt, D.L. Hussey, Gladys Illene Johnson, Ruth Arlene Kelbaugh, Majorie A. Landwert, Paul R. Langdon, Ruth Mae Ludington, Norma Jean King Luellen, L. Edwin Mosher, Billie Myers, David B. Smith, O. Evangeline Stanley and Frances Tatsch.

Recording Service: Our Tuesday evening service, the recording service, recognized Mike Barnes (Providence, Virginia), Ed Dodson (Longview Friends, Danville, Virginia) and Paul Hoffman (Newport, Rhode Island Friends) as newly recorded pastors in EFC-ER. The featured speaker of the evening was Dr. Tom Mullins.

Business sessions were conducted in a spirit of unity, with ample time for fellowship and relationship building.

Bicentennial Plans: Our bicentennial plans for our 200th Yearly Meeting theme will be “Faithful Endeavors: Past and Future ‘Now remain in my love. (John 15:9b).’” This means...

Faithful -- Spiritual integrity,
Endeavor -- Active ministry in real life,
Past -- Present and Future-The scope of our journey
John 15:9b -- Jesus' call to continue His pursuits.

The Bicentennial experience began when in the Sunday evening service of this year's Yearly Meeting in the new facilities of our former yearly meeting home at Damascus Friends Church. That is the beginning. With this we hope to look back so we can look forward together.

Sincerely,
Dr. Ron Johnson
Presiding Clerk
Evangelical Friends Church-Eastern Region