



April 24, 2011

To Friends everywhere we send greetings from the Methodist Life Enrichment Center in Leesburg, Florida.

We gathered April 20-24 for our 2011 Yearly Meeting around the theme, "Continuing the Work of John Woolman & Lucretia Mott: Healing, Racism, & Testimonies." Unity and healing were a thread that ran throughout our journey. We were offered an opportunity to reflect on our role, for good or bad, in the national shame of racism. The co authors of *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans and the Myth of Racial Justice*, Vanessa Julye and Donna Mc Daniel, led us through lecture, worship and workshops as we explored our individual participation in both the problem and the solution. We were moved when a Friend rose to share Valerie Barlow's poem, "*We Owe You an Apology*".

In the sharing of a visiting friend from Cuba, about her struggle to have unprogrammed worship accepted, we saw ourselves. We know well the experience of being misunderstood by Friends and are seeking way forward on how to help care for that unprogrammed worship group.

We have committed to supporting the spirit of family and extending periods of intergenerational activities. We rejoiced in our revitalized youth program and were enriched when older Friends shared their experiences of living Florida history as part of Wednesday night's Walton Lecture. Many joined young Friends in a trip to the world's largest carriage museum where one of the group explained the role of horse and carriage in the lives of Quakers. The extra time we spent blending reignited the fun of Yearly Meeting offering us many opportunities for laughter.

There was time for worship, in the morning by the lake, around the plenary sessions and in daily worship-sharing on our theme. We spent worshipful threshing on what is next for Southeastern Yearly Meeting. From the silence, Friends spoke of what they liked about Yearly Meeting and what they felt would make the experience richer, how we might "serve as an instrument of God's grace". The sharing was rich and heartfelt.

So many of our Meeting gathered with hope for a spirit of healing. With the approval of the final section of our Faith and Practice, with the renewal of the Young Adult Quaker Program within our body, we go forth from this place feeling that with laughter, love and worship, the healing has begun.

With love and hope for future growth and healing,

The Epistle Committee: Cheryl Demers-Holton, Mimi McAdoo and Elizabeth Croce

Susan Taylor, outgoing Clerk  
for Southeastern Yearly Meeting