

6/16/02

To Friends Everywhere,

LEYM Friends gathered in Bluffton, Ohio, 6/13-16/02, to consider the theme, “Testimonies – where the Quaker rubber hits the road (Moving from talking the talk to walking the walk).” In the plenary Steve Morehouse of the Ann Arbor Meeting shared his own spiritual journey, an unusual one among Quakers, that began in a Quaker meeting during his youth, took him through the Viet Nam War as a fighter pilot, and to his present active role in Quakerism. Sharing with us some of his own remarkable and transforming experiences, he urged us, when we talk the talk, to make sure we are using our own words, and when we walk the walk, to be sure we are on our own path. Along his path he found that the taking of another life took part of his own. In one of many experiences of merging his own being with the earth, and with the spirit, he told of being visited in a dream by those whose lives he had taken. They came bearing neither condemnation nor forgiveness, but only because “we want you to know.” Steve stressed the importance of living our lives so as to take away the occasion for war. Each experience we encounter is preceded and colored by the attitude we bring to it. And we can shape our attitudes.

Workshops by each of the major Quaker organizations helped us consider ways to walk the walk. We are grateful for the ways in which these organizations help us respond to challenges posed by recent world events. LEYM will send two representatives to the FWCC sponsored conference, “Friends Responses to the Growing Danger of Wars and Terrorism,” to be held in January, 2003. Combined efforts of two committees, Peace and Ministry and Oversight, resulted in adoption of four queries exploring the peace testimony. The queries generated will be considered during the year by our monthly meetings. Recognizing that care of the earth is another way we walk the walk, LEYM established an Earthcare Committee to explore what the earth and its creator are asking of us at this time. A report from the Friends School in Detroit described not only the school’s witness in Detroit but also its connections with a school in Afghanistan established prior to 9-11. This kind of link will be expanded by AFSC through efforts to develop schools in Afghanistan. Consistent with the current FCNL concern regarding continued development of nuclear weapons, the high school group presented a play recounting the struggles of conscience of several individuals involved in the original development of the atomic bomb. The children raised more than \$500 for Friends School in Detroit by selling paper cranes, pretzels, and socks they had made or decorated. The children identified themselves with T-shirts they decorated with their own colorful footprints, reminding us of the theme “walking the walk.” An FWCC workshop helped us recognize what we hold in common with Friends everywhere.

We leave Bluffton feeling enriched by the depth of our sharing, better prepared to bring our testimonies to the places in which we live our daily lives.

On behalf of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting;

Peace and Blessing,

Don Nagler, presiding clerk