

## **Epistle of the Second Gathering of Unprogrammed Friends in Latin America**

Mexico City, Fifth Month 2–4, 2008

Dear Friends,

Loving greetings from the Second Meeting of Unprogrammed Quakers in Latin America. Approximately 30 Friends have met at the Casa de los Amigos, hosted by the Casa and the Mexico City Monthly Meeting. We gathered to continue the work and the exploration begun at the First Gathering of Unprogrammed Quakers in Latin America in Monteverde, Costa Rica in November 2006, to worship, get to know one another, strengthen our community, share experiences, and to meet our challenges together.

Exploring the theme “Our Quaker Identity,” we addressed the recurring issues of isolation and exclusivity that can form barriers to our growth, and the challenge of making ourselves known without falling into proselytism.

We asked ourselves what we can offer to our communities, societies, and countries, and how we may strengthen our Meetings. We explored our vision for the future of Quakerism and what problems, challenges, and opportunities exist for unprogrammed Friends in Latin America. We also discussed that which is shared by unprogrammed Friends on both sides of the Rio Bravo (Rio Grande) and in what ways we can cooperate with each other.

We have been reaffirmed in our conviction that our relation with God is central to our lives and practice, and that if we wish to grow and respond to the social realities that surround us, we must begin by strengthening our faith. We feel renewed in the knowledge of the treasure that is present in silent worship, in which we surrender to the presence of the Spirit and the teachings of the Light, with complete confidence in God’s love.

An Alternatives to Violence Project mini-workshop gave us a new perspective on Transforming Power, which brings peace. A subsequent conversation helped us to remember that Quakers in Latin America can do a great deal to build peace among us through bringing ourselves closer together and getting to know one another.

This gathering was a gift of friendship, closeness, and intimacy, which we have experienced at various times, especially during worship, meals, and worship sharing. We are grateful and joyful, with new energy to confront our tasks.

We missed many Latin American Quakers who could not attend, primarily for financial reasons, but we felt blessed by the love shared by those who had the opportunity to be here. We feel moved, knowing that so many friends wanted to attend, even though they were not able to be here. We responded with a commitment to develop ways, across national borders, to raise travel funds for those who in the future are called to participate in these Gatherings.

We also feel encouraged to strengthen communication among Friends in Latin America who worship in silent waiting, as well as with Friends in Latin America of other traditions and other regions. We wish to make good use of electronic communication, at the same time creating more opportunities for personal contact and meetings

We have formed a committee of four Quakers who will receive our suggestions for promoting relations among unprogrammed Friends in Latin America, working on them, and following up, with the help of God. We have authorized the committee to incorporate new members.

We adjourned with gratitude and joy, feeling that God’s presence fills us with hope to face our tasks and challenges, confident that by following God’s love, we will be faithful coworkers in the creation of God’s realm.

In fraternal embrace in the Light, on behalf of the Second Gathering of Unprogrammed Quakers in Latin America,

En paz y amistad,

*Epistle Committee of the Second Gathering of Unprogrammed Friends in Latin America*