

Latin American Concerns Committee

Report to the March, 2012

Representative Committee of Pacific Yearly Meeting

The Latin American Concerns Committee (LACC) continues to work to accomplish our original mission of increasing awareness among members of Pacific Yearly Meeting, and the larger Quaker community, about our monthly meetings and worship groups in Latin America and about the projects in Latin America related to our meetings. In addition, we are concerned about the issues of migration and immigration, including conditions that lead to migration and the experiences of migrants along their journey and in the United States.

The committee met twice this year, by conference call in September and in person in December. We had an opportunity to hear full and encouraging updates on all of our related projects at the December meeting, which was attended by almost all our members including Jill Anderson from Mexico City and Margaret Bean from the Guatemala meeting. A question about how the participants in the service projects learn about Quaker values led to discussion of sharing the Spanish version of advices and queries (Consejos y Preguntas) and Faith and Practice (Fe y Práctica) that was translated by the Mexico City Meeting. (LACC and Ministry and Oversight Committee are considering options for financial support for the distribution of copies of these resources.)

Our web page at www.LatinAmerica.PacificYearlyMeeting.org carries information on these meetings and projects, as well as general information on Quakerism and contact information for other unprogrammed Friends in Latin America. We are in the process of establishing a blog to provide more current information on events and resources.

An e-mail was sent to PYM meetings in 2011 asking whether they were involved in any projects with immigrants; responses indicated that very few meetings had formal projects but a number had individual members who were involved in immigrant-related activities.

LACC will be supporting Miguel Angel, the director of the Guatemalan Scholarship Program (Progres), to attend the PYM Annual Gathering in August so that he can share information about the program. (Progres, under the care of the Guatemala Monthly Meeting with active involvement of the Redwood Forest Meeting, provides scholarships for secondary school and college for youth from poor, primarily indigenous Mayan families.) We have requested time for him to speak briefly at a plenary session, as well as at an interest group, and will try to arrange times with JYM and other groups. In addition, because of our concern about immigration issues, LACC has agreed to cosponsor, with the Peace and Social Order Committee, an Interest Group on Sacramento Meeting's Undocumented Student Program.

We encourage Friends to check out the web page, especially if you will be traveling and would like to visit any of the projects or meetings or worship groups in Latin America. We also invite your comments on how the committee can be helpful to your meeting.

- Dottie Vura-Weis, Clerk, Latin American Concerns Committee