

Awakening to the Wider World of Quakers: a report on the FWCC World Plenary in Peru for Pacific Yearly Meeting

The purpose of the Friends World Committee for Consultation is to encourage fellowship among all the branches of the Religious Society of Friends”

Dear Pacific Yearly Meeting Friends:

Greetings from FWCC and from fellow Friends across the Americas and around the World. THANK YOU for your support!

This January, three members of Pacific Yearly Meeting (Jan Turner, Anthony Manousos, and Hulda Muaka) attended the FWCC World Plenary meeting in Pisac, Peru, as your representatives from Pacific Yearly Meeting. (Jill Shook, Sharon Shen and Janet Leslie attended as open delegates.) During the plenary, 320 Friends from 37 countries and 77 Yearly Meetings (plus independent Meetings and worship groups) met together for a week in the sacred valley of the Incas. Another 60 Peruvian and Bolivian friends joined us for the weekend. Being among the world fellowship of Friends is an experience of profound unity in the midst of a perplexing diversity of linguistic, cultural, and religious expressions. If you think you know who Friends are, what they think and how they worship, you might want to attend an FWCC event and think again!

Our theme at the plenary was “Living the Transformation.” We were challenged to sense the deep spiritual connection that animates us all and act out Spirit’s leadings both individually and collectively. There were many opportunities for us to get to know one another in small groups as well as to worship together as a body. Not all the worship was silent – some of it was quite loud – with singing in several languages and simultaneous translation of spoken messages into English, Spanish, French, and Aymara (an indigenous language). In working sessions, the plenary consultations focused on four topics: developing leadership, creating vital Quaker communities, sustaining life on earth, and equipping FWCC to serve the worldwide community of Friends. Young Adult Friends (90 of them!) took a vital role in the plenary, and, at its end, reminded us all that they are not just our future leaders – they intend to lead now.

One outcome of the plenary is the acknowledgement that FWCC world plenaries will happen less often in the future. What was the “Triennial” became a four year interval after 2012 and will now be even more years between world gatherings. The trend of donations is down, particularly from North America. Unless we have more funding, it could be as long as eight years until the next world gathering. However, other concerns also motivate the change, including conservation of the Earth’s limited resources (less plane travel) and conservation of our energy for growing other activities like inter-visitation through traveling ministry. (To find more about this program, go

to http://fwccamericas.org/about_us/programs/images/FWCC_app_Traveling_MinistryCorps.pdf

In the meantime, our more local FWCC Section of the Americas continues to plan consultations every other year (next year in Pittsburgh), with local events in between. As we encourage younger Friends to represent us, we need to remember to budget for their travel in the Americas and beyond!

Environmental concerns increasingly concern Friends globally. Following the 2012 *Kabarak Call for Peace and Ecojustice*, this world plenary approved a minute on “*Living Sustainably and Sustaining Life on Earth*,” which calls for action at the FWCC level, at our yearly meetings, and as individuals. At the world level, the minute asks FWCC to invest its funds ethically, share Quaker experiences with other faith groups, seek ways of connecting Friends worldwide that are sustainable, and facilitate dissemination of training materials on sustainability issues. At the yearly meeting level, the minute asks us here at PYM to (1) initiate at least two concrete actions on sustainability, (2) support individuals and groups in Meetings who feel called to take action on sustainability, and (3) support the work done on by Quaker organizations such as the Quaker United Nations Office to support sustainability. Finally, the minute asks individual Friends to share their experiences of living sustainably on the “sustainability webpage” of the Quakers in the World Website (<http://www.quakersintheworld.org/>). The full text of the minute is available at <http://fwcc.world/fwcc-news/living-sustainably-and-sustaining-life-on-earth-the-minute-from-the-plenary> and contains an addendum with suggested individual, monthly meeting, and yearly meeting actions.

The world plenary epistle ends with these words: “We are one. We are one in the spirit of God which does not wash away or hide our differences, but allows us to celebrate them and enables us to move beyond the spiritual boundaries that may separate us. ... Through listening deeply and tenderly to each other and to God we reached a place where we can hear and sense where the words come from even when we may not understand the tongue they are spoken in.” Amen to that! At one moment during worship, we all listened with rapt attention to impassioned words spoken in Aymara, the native language of Peruvian and Bolivian Friends.

The epistle ends: “The work of FWCC depends on us all. In order to continue it, we encourage Friends, meetings ... and Yearly Meetings to contribute financially to and participate in building connections between Friends.” This year’s plenary faced a challenge when visa issues threatened to block participation by East African Friends. Immediate action by the world community enabled our East African Friends to arrive, but at an \$29,000 unexpected expense. FWCC asks Friends to help replenish this deficit. See details at: <http://fwcc.world/fwcc-news/special-fwcc-pisac-travel-appeal>.

- ***Would you like to learn more about FWCC?*** Please contact Anthony Manousos at interfaithquaker@aol.com. We are offering two interest groups during the PYM annual session about FWCC and the world

plenary, one focusing on the Sustainability Minute (co-sponsored by QEW and PSO) and one focusing mainly on the spiritual aspects of our FWCC gathering. Please come, share your experience, and learn more about what's going on in the world-wide Quaker community. There's a Power point about the Peru gathering at <http://laquaker.blogspot.com/2016/04/the-world-gathering-of-quakers-in-peru.html>. There's also a video about the world plenary at <https://vimeo.com/153757538>. Please also take a look at the FWCC website (<http://www.fwccamericas.org/>), and, if so moved, consider making a donation to help fund FWCC's work bringing Friends together across all boundaries.

In friendship, Anthony Manousos, Jan Turner and Hulda Muaka

(With appreciation to Rob Pierson of Intermountain YM, who wrote much of this report and serves on the FWCC Communications Committee, which Anthony Manousos clerks)