

PLENARY VI

Plenary VI began with silent worship at 9:45AM.

Epistle

Reading Clerk Russell Swanagon (Central Coast) read excerpts from New York Yearly Meeting Annual Session, July 2011: They reflected on the fragility of human life and that of the planet and its gifts, as well as appreciating the gifts within the gathering of “irrational optimism” and their “blessed squabbles and luxuries”.

Salt and Light from Plenary V

The following notes regarding the Plenary V Salt and Light presentation were approved, with the additional note that Lane was absent this week and sorely missed.

Appointed Delegates Shayne Lightner (Santa Monica), Hulda Muaka (Palo Alto), and Sarah Rose House-Lightner (Orange Grove) and Lane Clark (Santa Barbara, absent this week) prepared a report on the 6th World Gathering of Friends held in Nakuru, Kenya, April 2012, the first gathering of its kind since 1967. The location allowed for the participation of Friends who more accurately reflect the diversity within the Religious Society of Friends.

The theme was “Being Salt and Light: Friends Living the Kingdom of God in a Broken World”. In an effort to share the experience with PYM, the appointed delegates made a film. The film has been requested for more general use by FWCC and gathering participants, is being shared widely and will soon be available at the FWCC website for all Friends worldwide.

The film beautifully captures the natural and cultural setting of the gathering as well as its faces, voices, activities and music. Small Home Groups allowed Friends to get to know each other more intimately and large plenaries attempted to weave together the multiplicity of concerns from Thread Groups. The film highlighted various concerns including Alternatives to Violence, Africa Great Lakes Initiative, Right Sharing of World Resources, Bio-Sand Filters, and the Rescue an Orphan Project.

Tension arose over the diversity of attitudes regarding issues about sexual orientation. This was handled in open dialogs and with tenderness. Quoting from the Gathering Epistle: “We are not united in all of our attitudes and beliefs, yet we choose to come together to listen, to share, and to hear things we may find uncomfortable and upsetting”.

After the film, Open Delegates Anthony Manousos (Santa Monica), Janet Leslie (Chico), Jim Anderson (Chico), and Donna Smith (Redwood Forest) joined the others and each delegate shared a brief reflection of their experience.

Nominating Report Update

Clerk David Barrows (San Diego) gave the update. The only change to the slate as presented is the addition of Bryan Runyan (Chico) to the Junior Yearly Meeting Committee, with a term ending in 2015.

Ben Lomond Quaker Center

Co-director Kathy Runyan (Chico) highlighted changes in the program, including the availability of childcare at programs and the Annual Pass program. Jim Anderson (Chico) talked about the first week-long program, a concept rising from last year’s visioning for Ben Lomond. He introduced the other presenters for the Sept workshop, “Quakers: In the Life”. *(see the web site for full details about the changes and all upcoming programs – [insert link](#)).*

First Reading of PYM Epistle

Committee Convener Steve Smith (Claremont) introduced the other members of the committee and read the preliminary draft. He explained that the purpose is not to recite a list of all activities but to communicate the inspirations deriving from the gathering. He reminded us of the traditional query for developing the epistle was “How is the Spirit moving among you?” The epistle, when complete, will be brought back for action.

Unity with Nature

Co-clerk Renie Wong Lindley (Honolulu) and incoming Co-clerk Muriel Strand (Sacramento) gave the report, which is appended in its entirety. Friends are encouraged to read the full report, found on the PYM website. The committee is holding deep concerns with climate change and how it is embedded in our economic and political systems. Like seeing a shark moving toward us, we are aware of the dangers and know we will feel the effects.

Friends are encouraged to attend to the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness, which has been on the forefront of the Earthcare movement, and to participate in that larger community. The committee upholds its work to green the Annual Session and continues the mini-grant program to Meetings.

The committee also holds a tender awareness of our spiritual connections with the Earth – indeed, we are Earth-Right Quakers! The Earth needs our voice. Discernment for what is true, what is right, is made at her feet.

Minutes of Plenary VI were approved.

Closing Worship

Julie Harlow and Amy Cooke, Co-Recording Clerks
Marilee Eusebio, Presiding Clerk