

Plenary for Discernment

Epistle. Reading Clerk Sue Torrey read from Illinois Yearly Meeting Epistle 2015, their 141st gathering, taking place on a Midwest plain. Children finding fallen eggs and desiring to restore them to nests, offer the image of “remudding” our monthly meetings, recalling them to health and renewal. The Meeting is considering creating a youth ministry position, called to this need in part in response to the widespread prejudice and conflict in the surrounding world and the need for acceptance of diversity. God’s love yet is with us and will triumph; using Francis Howgill’s words--the kingdom of heaven did gather us and catch us all, as in a net—the community voiced its yearning.

Presiding Clerk Diego Navarro introduced our plenary for discernment. Our theme of lifting the veil is exercised in various sessions as we explore how the Spirit is moving us and alive for us. Yesterday’s listening session did not give rise to any critical issues that are among us; perhaps we learn from this that Spirit is moving in other ways among us now. We will continue this experiment in next year’s annual session, learning from what we have experienced this year.

What is the lifting of the veil? Why might we resist it? Coming here to a different world of community we find the joy of old Friends, but also the challenge of new awareness and inner movement. We need to learn to be open to this, though it may be hard. Among us there are those with mental illness and tender lives; be kind and gentle with one another even as we seek the veil to be lifted.

Diego reviewed the agenda for the session.

Travel minutes. We have emissaries or missionaries sent from our community to others as we participate in the larger community of Friends. Diego read a travel minute for our member Thistle West addressed to Australia Yearly Meeting. We **approved** this minute with a minor change in the traveling minute text. The minute is attached. [Attachment IX] [We note that Thistle West desires to use the pronouns they, them, and their]:

AS Minute 2016-02

We ask our Presiding Clerk to sign the travel minute for Thistle West, sending them with our love and joy into their time of ministry among Friends in Australia.

Diego read as well a travel minute approved at Representative Committee 2016, for Alyssa Nelson, our Youth Programs Coordinator, who is invited by Australia Yearly Meeting to travel among them in ministry. [Attachment X]

Nominating Committee. Co-clerks Stephen Matchett and Nora Cooke brought some corrections to their report of nominations, and additional names for our consideration. These new names will be brought for a second reading at a later plenary.

Friends World Committee for Consultation report. Representatives to FWCC Anthony Manousos (Orange Grove), Jan Turner (Humboldt), Hulda Muaka (Palo Alto), and gathering attender Sharon Shen (Berkeley), reported to us on their attendance at a World Representatives Gathering in Pisac, Peru in January 2016. This event gave witness to the work of FWCC in bringing Friends from all over the world into connection and community. The experience of transformation was powerful for many attending the meeting, as the gathering invited Friends to learn of one another’s differing ways of worship and faith. It

was energized by the activity of youth, as young Friends attending sensed their role not only as leaders of tomorrow, but of today. Stories of violence and suffering revealed occasions of powerful witness to peace and courage. Friends learned to listen to one another beyond their differences in practice and theology. One Friend who struggled with poverty asked “Why do people who have plenty let other people starve?” The issues of global inequity were powerfully and personally present there. A minute from the gathering asks all Friends to take two concrete actions to address environmental issues. In these and other ways, the gathering called on us all to live our faith. The report is attached. [Attachment XI]

Latin American Concerns Committee. Donna Smith (Redwood Forest), Co-clerk of LAC, reminded us of our consideration last year of the problem of child refugees. We formed a subcommittee at that time to help us address this issue. We also have existing programs in Latin America that work with youth there, and she introduced two speakers involved in this work. Robert Broz, director of the El Salvador Project of Palo Alto Meeting, spoke of the program there that provides loans allowing students in El Salvador to pursue degrees. Conditions are difficult but there are small victories and personal successes. He believes it is education that will bring about the economic development needed to improve the society. For Robert, the Quaker basis of the work is essential to its continuation, and the creation of a sense of community among those studying. He is grateful for the continuing support of Friends here. The second speaker, Marco Antonio Lopez, the new director at Casa De Los Amigos in Mexico City, described some of the work of the Casa. The Casa employs the Quaker testimonies in orienting itself to its work, and is presently strengthening the organization and its contacts with those in Mexico and the US. Financial sustainability is an important goal. Those working at the Casa desire to provide a rich resource for the Quaker community and for Latin American life. The report is attached. [Attachment XII]

Ministry and Oversight Committee. Bronwen Hillman (Mexico City), Clerk, reported for the committee. She spoke of some of the projects being worked on in the committee, particularly their concern with the spiritual basis for some of the practices we have been following for years. How are our present structures and practices an expression of our faith? What is the meaning and purpose of a “minute of concern?” Should we affiliate with Friends General Conference? The committee recognizes the importance of our Monthly Meeting Representatives and seeks to find ways to strengthen their role, clarify their charge, and support careful selection and support in home meetings. It is considering also the Visiting Friends program, its purpose and the prospect of its continuation. In these various ways and others, the committee seeks to serve our community. The report is attached. [Attachment XIII]

We closed our session with worship, followed by announcements.

Presiding Clerk: Diego Navarro

Recording Clerks: Jim Anderson, Leslie Zondervan-Droz

Attachments

Attachment IX: Travel Minute for Thistle West

Dear Friends in Australia Yearly Meeting,

We are delighted to introduce you to Thistle West (pronouns: they/them/their) and to affirm their gifts for spiritual accompaniment and building connections among people. Last summer, Thistle accompanied our now-

Presiding Clerk, Diego Navarro, to Intermountain Yearly Meeting where he presented the keynote talk. Now Thistle will be accompanying our PYM Youth Programs Coordinator, Alyssa Nelson, and fellow elder Cathy Walling of Alaska Friends Conference for the first portion of Alyssa's travels among you this June/July 2016, including your Yearly Meeting in Tasmania, Silver Wattle Quaker Centre, and Canberra Regional Meeting, as well the Young Friends pre-YM camp. We expect that Thistle may also be moved into spoken ministry around their own spiritual journey as a Friend and young adult, which we hope enriches the exchange between our Yearly Meetings.

Thistle, age 18, grew up in the PYM community as the child of families who have been part of PYM and local meetings for three generations. Thistle started regularly participating in Meeting for Worship at age 7 and has attended Friends General

Conference, "an association of regional Quaker communities in the U.S. and Canada working together to nurture a vital Quaker faith." These experiences have been significant parts of their conviction and choice to join the Society as a member of Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting (Berkeley, California, USA).

As a younger teen, Thistle served on our PYM Youth Programs Coordinating Committee and as co-clerk of Quarterly and Yearly Meeting teen programs. Thistle has followed a leading to promote gender and sexuality justice, once bringing Alyssa in to help put together a Quarterly Meeting interest group for teens and adults about trans*

and non-binary gender identity; this coincided with Thistle and other teens advocating for change in Quarterly Meeting policy on binary-gender-segregated sleeping in the teen program and promoting non-binary language in the teen program handbook revision.

Thistle earned high school credit in Fall 2014 by attending the Woolman Semester, a Quaker educational community in Northern California focused on peace, justice, and sustainability. Thistle published an article about that experience, "237 Acres of God" in *Western Friend Magazine* (May/June 2015): "At Woolman, I often felt like a baby bird: thoroughly safe, but uncomfortably vulnerable, which I see as the ideal state for growth."

Thistle passionately finds The Sacred in different places and encounters, which frames how they see the world and shows them how they might help create positive change. They would like to come to better understand globalization, modern colonialism, and post-colonial discourse. To this end, Thistle has just finished their first year at Oberlin College in the state of Ohio, USA with a declared major in Economics and a double minor in Spanish Language and Middle Eastern & North African Studies.

We are delighted for Thistle to have this opportunity to share with and learn from you. We thank them for providing loving support to Alyssa Nelson's ministry and look forward to hearing how Spirit continues to move in this journey.

In the Light,

[to be signed by PYM Presiding Clerk if approved]

Attachment X: Travel Minute for Alyssa Nelson

5 March 2016

Dear Friends in Australia Yearly Meeting,

Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends introduces Alyssa Nelson (Davis Friends Meeting, California, USA), whom we have employed as our Youth Programs Coordinator since 2011. We recognize Alyssa as a trusted and experienced Friend who has been moved to a ministry of participation, inclusion, diversity, unity, solidarity, and liberation among youth and adults. In the same vein, Alyssa carries a concern for right relationship with indigenous peoples –having experience that includes co-creating an annual service-learning camp for Quaker and Native American youth and adults– that we believe will be strengthened by learning from Australian Friends’ relationships with First Nations peoples and efforts toward reparation and healing.

Alyssa came to Friends at age 25 with experience in social and environmental justice work and a yearning for spiritual community. By now, Alyssa has over 20 years’ experience in participatory youth and community development, and holds academic degrees in Religion (AB), Experiential Education (MS), and Geography (PhD) that she draws upon in her ministry. She has lived and worked with indigenous communities as a participant-facilitator in the American Friends Service Committee’s Mexico Summer Service Project and as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in Mali. Alyssa attended the 2005 World Gathering of Young Friends and has served as a representative to Friends World Committee for Consultation. Her offerings to our community have included a weekend workshop at Ben Lomond Quaker Center, “Seeking Spirit All Together: Intergenerational Faith, Fun and Fellowship through Service” and day-long workshops on “Becoming Adult Allies to Youth.” She acts as a resource person for individual Friends of all ages; committees of our Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings; and Quaker organizations within PYM.

We are pleased that Way is opening for Alyssa and our Youth Programs Coordinating Committee to accept your invitation to have Alyssa attend Australia Yearly Meeting in July 2016 and to travel among your local and regional meetings and The Friends’ School in Hobart. We hope your community benefits from the time you spend with Alyssa and that we and the wider body of Friends are also enriched as a result. We entrust Alyssa to your care and look forward hearing how Spirit is moving among you and to reading your words of endorsement upon her return.

In the Light,

Diego Navarro, Presiding Clerk
Pacific Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Attachment XI: Friends World Committee for Consultation Report

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)

Attachment XII: Latin American Concerns Committee Report

Latin American Concerns Committee Report to Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session 2016

In 1997, PYM annual session established a standing Latin America Concerns Committee to gather and disseminate information to Pacific and other Yearly Meetings regarding Friends groups and service projects in Latin America. The intention is to support rather than replace spirit-led projects already supported by Monthly Meetings, Worship Groups and individual Friends.

LACC has met three times since last annual session. This Annual Session we are assisting Robert Broz, Director of El Salvador Projects in attending. He will be presenting an Interest Group to inform PYM about conditions in El Salvador and his work there.

LACC and Peace and Social Order Committee brought a minute to PYM Annual Session in 2015 which was supported by Annual Session as follows:

“ This year six monthly meetings in Pacific Yearly Meeting have approved minutes of concern for refugee children crossing the border from Latin America. A special subcommittee of the Latin American Concerns Committee, Child Refugees and Migration, was formed to address this concern. Many Friends have taken action from visiting elected officials, accompanying a local child refugee through the legal processes, to traveling to Texas to be in solidarity with these children and their families. Pacific Yearly Meeting’s Annual Session supports the efforts of the LACC and numerous other Friends who are seeking justice and showing compassion toward those who are fleeing the violence in their home countries and need a place of refuge in our country. We encourage monthly meetings and individual Friends to read the attached

minutes and take them to heart. We also encourage Friends to support the efforts of AFSC and FCNL to promote just and compassionate policies toward immigrants.”

Reports of the subcommittee and service projects follow:

Child Refugee and Migration Subcommittee

We have been meeting regularly, tracking and reporting on the work of some monthly meetings, collecting and sending on information and information sources about child and family asylum seekers coming from Central America, adding to the resource list on the PYM website and following political changes and challenges regarding these refugees. We have planned an Interest Group for 2016 Annual Session presented by Rev. Deborah Lee. She is the Director of Immigration-Northern California at the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity in Oakland. She will be speaking about her bay area interfaith immigration work as well as the People of Faith-Root Causes-Delegation to Central American that she led last August to Honduras and Guatemala.

In the minutes of our meetings we have discussed and shared specifics about Johanna’s asylum-seeking (Redwood Forest), Sonia’s perseverance and status (Santa Barbara), the providing of sanctuary and assistance to a family (La Jolla), family detention challenges, new information about programs from various sources, reports on the East Bay Sanctuary visit to Central America, learned of and passed on ideas about how we can help even if not near the border, and provided encouragement and information to monthly meetings.

We want to do more educating of ourselves, advocacy and making presentations, and supporting meetings providing sanctuary. We are planning an Interest Group for Annual Session with the leader of the Bay Area Immigration Covenant as speaker.

Casa de los Amigos www.casadelosamigos.org

Casa de los Amigos approaches yet another transition! This one is all good, and the Casa is in a good spot. There’s a board meeting this Saturday to, among other things, make a final decision about a new executive director. To all of you good Casa allies out there, here are three accurate 2016 Casa talking points you can use to talk to anybody in the world about Casa de los Amigos:

1. 2016 is the Casa’s 60th anniversary year! There will be a celebration in October, and the Casa’s deep roots will be a present theme throughout the year. The celebration will also serve as a release date for a long-awaited book about Casa de los Amigos. Kickstarter campaign launches any minute now, when you hear about it please help spread the word!

2. The Casa’s peace work is stronger than ever. You have to visit to truly get a sense of the dizzying array of projects and movements that the Casa is meaningfully involved in. But you should know that the Casa houses thousands annually in its peace guesthouse, provides emergency housing to migrants and refugees, central meeting space for dozens of NGOs, supports local small producers and solidarity

economics, has a cool environmental concerns program, and is a social justice clearinghouse for movements and groups from around Mexico and the world.

3. Hayley Hathaway is sad to go but feels right in her decision to turn the page and leave the Casa after over six years of nonstop service. The good news is that the Casa today is on an excellent footing, a wide net has been cast and 60-some applications received for the director spot. The important things to know about bringing in a new person at this time is that the person will arrive to a firm foundation of partner-based programs running strong, financial support and institutional networks, and a dynamite on-the-ground team willing to work to help orient, train and support a new director.

El Salvador Projects pafmelsalvadorprojects.org

Carmen Broz started the El Salvador Projects in the context of a civil war so viciously destructive that it brought this smallest country in Central America to the world's attention. Her initiatives in child care, maternal and child health, early education, community development, and ultimately support for higher education for young people from poor rural families were transformative, bringing hope and tangible improvements to many lives. That legacy continues today. The candles we light with your support do more than dispel some of the darkness for individuals, as important as that is. Every child whose dream is made real, every family that takes a significant step away from the desperation of poverty into a more secure future, every young adult whose path leads to a role of positive service and leadership in the community – each of these demonstrates to others that there are realistic alternatives to despair. In my reports I share my experiences and observations with you frankly, confident that you will realize that in times of adversity the assistance and opportunities we are able to offer together become even more important.

Reports on social and economic conditions in El Salvador by both domestic and international news agencies are overwhelmingly dismal these days, reflecting a toxic blend of human activities and forces of nature:

- Allegations and investigations of political corruption at high levels.
- Escalating warfare that pits Salvadoran gangs against the police and military.
- A dramatic decline in visits by tourists and solidarity delegations due to fear of violent crime and health risks caused by serious new viruses – Chikungunya in 2015 and Zika fever in 2016 – which are spread by mosquitoes, like the dengue that preceded them, and are now common in the region.
- A failing economy that is affected by all of the above factors.

Reforms to a 1959 anti-corruption law were passed in December of 2015 and put into effect in January of 2016. Since then, 29 investigations have been opened against past and current politicians and high-level government employees. These reforms were pushed through by the governing FMLN in alliance with other parties and opposed by the right-wing ARENA party, which expected the law to be used against former officials of the ARENA party who controlled the central government for more than 20 years with obvious corruption and no fear of criminal charges.

In practice, application of the law appears impartial. High-level politicians including three former presidents, one of them the immediate past president Mauricio Funes (FMLN), are being investigated to determine sources of financial gain during their terms in office. Current FMLN Vice-President Oscar Ortiz was accused of having had business ties in a local land development company since the early 2000's with Salvadoran drug lord José Adán Salazar Umaña, alias Chepe Diablo, who was named years ago by the U.S. as the leader of El Salvador's Taxis drug cartel.

The dramatic news of allegations against Ortiz nearly made Salvadorans forget about Francisco Flores of the right-wing Nationalist Republican Alliance, President from 1999-2004, who was under house arrest for embezzling millions of dollars of a donation from Taiwan. Flores's reported illness and death soon after being admitted to a private hospital is suspected by many of being a well-orchestrated trick to get him out of the country. They ask why no autopsy was performed and why the family held a low-profile, closed casket burial. Even in social media networks like Facebook, photos of the Flores family celebrating in the US were published shortly after the funeral. The now-famous *Panama Papers* reveal tax evasion by most of El Salvador's larger companies as well.

Although currently we see few news reports like those of early 2015, when literally thousands of minors fled El Salvador and Honduras to escape the intense violence caused by gangs, the situation has hardly improved. Both countries are still listed as the most violent countries in the world where there is no war going on. In 2015 El Salvador surpassed Honduras in violent deaths per capita, and now leads the world in that grisly statistic.

I can foresee no quick fix for this complex situation, of course. Some of the newer programs at both local and central government levels may lead to long-term improvements, but even these can involve drastic tactics that impact the general population. No longer willing to negotiate with the leaders of internationally recognized organized crime groups, the government has combined police and military efforts to disable the high commands of the gangs. A recent initiative involved working with cell phone companies to block signals at the prisons, an imprecise process that usually causes residents of surrounding areas to lose their phone service. With many gang leaders operating from prison and a low-paid prison guard receiving up to \$3000 per illegal phone introduced to the prison, little more could be done. Just days before the signal blocking was implemented, a cell phone with \$20,000 in credit was decommissioned from one inmate. This was possible, apparently, because a new way to send money using cell phones was implemented by two of the larger telecommunication companies. It is assumed that these new ways to send money are now used to transfer illicit funds to the kingpins in prison.

As I write this report, a newly trained battalion of soldiers is scheduled to be on the streets by late April. These 600 elite soldiers will join 400 police attempting to catch gang members as they flee from one gang-ridden area to another just before a police operation, a practice that has been common for years and raises the suspicion that gangs have infiltrated the police and military. This new unit is very controversial, compared by right wing politicians and the local press in many cases to abuse of police and military forces in the 1970s and 1980s, but now controlled by the FMLN rather than by the military dictatorships of the past.

As I said earlier, Salvadorans are drastically affected by the country's worsening economy. The U.S. State Department and many other foreign government websites list El Salvador as the most violent country in the world, with travel advisories that discourage travel to El Salvador because of the high level of violence and several dangerous mosquito-transmitted viruses. The result is an enormous decline in private travelers, as well as solidarity, religious, and educational delegations. Tourism, which had been considered until 2015 one of the fastest growing components of El Salvador's economy, is now withering.

In just two groups I work with in addition to the El Salvador Projects of Palo Alto, I have seen more than 20 delegations cancel trips planned for 2016, causing non-profit organizations in both El Salvador and the U.S. to re-evaluate current budgets, reduce projected spending, let staff go, and in one case even close the local offices. If we combine this with the loss of income to small communities where project money is spent, and additional services like food services and transportation are taken into account, the lost income enters into to every aspect of the local economy, motivating Salvadorans both young and old to consider

taking the dangerous trip to the north in search of the American Dream that more than three million Salvadorans already live.

On a much brighter side, some positive programs are in place around the country – better street lighting, full school days, sports and arts programs, vocational training programs, scholarships, seed and fertilizer programs to insure a decent production this season and income for the poor *campesinos* who continue to produce the majority of our local grains on small parcels of land. How different their lives are from those of the large sugar cane and coffee producers who form part of the wealthiest upper-class of Salvadoran society!

In the private sector, too, determined efforts continue for a new El Salvador with a positive future. Since the September 2015 death of my mother Carmen Broz, founder of our Projects and our university student loan program in El Salvador, and more recently the death of my good friend Frank Cummings, who was an attender of Atlanta Friends Meeting and founder of two other local scholarship programs, I have seen positive changes. Within the municipality of Suchitoto Frank was my “accomplice in Education,” as I used to say, for the last ten years. Frank and I worked for years to unite several educational programs and now, in 2016, we are moving very quickly to do just that in honor of his work.

We now hold monthly student meetings with around 90 university students supported by our own El Salvador Projects, the programs of Frank Cummings, and Santa Lucia Parish. I oversee a new scholarship program managed by a local non-profit called CORDES that has financial support from the City of Suchitoto. At our meeting in April when we asked for volunteers to form a new committee of scholarship students, nine stepped forward in just five minutes! The new committee met on April 10th to start work on planning this year’s University Fair, a task that Frank and I had done alone for the past nine years. As I write this report, students from the new committee will be visiting the six schools in Suchitoto that offer high school (*secundaria*) to promote the upcoming Fair, the several financial aid programs, and the opening of the entrance process at the National University to the 2016 graduating high school students in Suchitoto. The committee will also be responsible for all logistics of the Fair, and with some guidance will help with the selection of scholarship students for the different programs in 2017. A dream Frank and I shared is to one day have the programs not only managed by ex-beneficiaries, but even supported financially by the professionals we have helped to gain a college education. We are on the path!

You will probably not be surprised when I say that the months since our last newsletter have been a period of mourning and intense emotion for me. In addition to my own mother’s death and the death of my dear friend Frank, my work has involved situations of a kind that are all too common in El Salvador. I think the case that continues to be most unsettling to me is that of Erika, a young woman from a small, remote village in the rural northeast part of Suchitoto who started in our program in 2015. Erika contacted me late last year, telling me she would be unable to continue her studies in modern languages in 2016. Initially she said only that her decision was for personal reasons, but as I questioned her she told me her mother had given birth, had complications, and was admitted to the hospital. As the only daughter, Erika decided to drop out of school to bring up her new little sister. When I realized that this was the only realistic option for Erika and her family I cried, as I am now while writing this report, knowing there is little that I or our program can do to help. I have told Erika that we will help her in the future if she decides to go back to school, but as her mother continues to deal with serious health issues she does not see this as a possible future.

My work as Project Director has always involved difficult situations, and although this case was more severe and personally emotional than many others over the past eleven years, I always find peace and joy knowing our programs have made a difference and will continue to make El Salvador a better country. I see an example in one of our new students, Rosa Isabel, who is in her first year of medicine at the

Salvadoran University Alberto Masferrer (**USAM**). Rosa Isabel is the oldest daughter of one of our past students, Rosa Orellana, who studied and is now a licensed teacher working at one of the rural schools in Suchitoto. Rosa Isabel tried to enter the National University where the medical program is one of the hardest to get into. When she did not make the cut she was still determined to follow her dream and study medicine. She also opted to join our coed student house in San Salvador, where 22 students from five different programs live. One of our continuing students in the house is a third-year student of medicine, and Rosa has already used this in-house resource for tutoring in this first year. Rosa Isabel was last on my list for new student candidates in 2016, but when Erika told me she would not be continuing her studies, we opened her spot for young Rosa Isabel. This late and final addition of Rosa Isabel to our list of new students in 2016 felt so right, and it brought a feeling of light and peace in this work that at times can be difficult.

Guatemala Friends Scholarship Program (PROGRESA)www.guatemalafriends.org

PROGRESA has just celebrated its 43rd year providing an opportunity for education to rural, poor Mayans. We saw 17 of our students graduate in 2015. Their careers included teaching, law, nursing, natural resources, computer science and bookkeeping. In the 2016 school year, we have 75 new and continuing students. Most are women and they are studying at the university level.

Progresas's Teaching English Experience has just completed its 7th year with 15 North Americans and 15 Progresas students sharing a fun-filled and rewarding week together in Antigua, Guatemala. Join us next year January 3-11, 2017.

In the 1990's Progresas received funding for scholarships for refugees of the armed conflict from Casa de los Amigos when Casa laid down their Central American Refugee Program. We were invited to the community who received these scholarships, Primavera del Ixcán, for their annual meeting and celebration. It is in a remote area and it was an adventure getting there. We have 18 former and 2 current students from this community. In a meeting with our former students (many are teachers), we learned that this community has an educational system far superior to other communities in remote areas with 97% of their children finishing primary school. One of our former students was responsible for obtaining governmental approval for a high school in the community, a major achievement.

The new President of Guatemala just appointed one of our former students, Hector Canto, Assistant Secretary of Education in charge of rural education. Hector has asked to speak with our director, Miguel Costop, about Progresas's work in rural education. We look forward to this collaboration.

Hector Canto was the keynote speaker at our Annual Student Conference where he sought in-put from our students and encouraged their participation in improving rural education. A Meeting for Worship was held and over 50 of our students joined the four North American Quakers present in a deeply moving spiritual experience.

For more information about the scholarship program or the Teaching English Experience next January, call Donna Smith (707)542-2874 or Harriet Lewis (707)526-1066 Co-Clerks of the program at Redwood Forest Meeting.

Submitted by Donna Smith, Co-Clerk

Attachment XIII: Ministry and Oversight Committee Report

Pacific Yearly Meeting Ministry & Oversight Committee Annual Report 2015-2016

The role of Ministry & Oversight Committee is to help foster the spiritual life and good order of the Yearly Meeting, by offering assistance and counsel and endeavoring to make the annual session a fulfilling experience for all participants. Ministry & Oversight serves as support for the Presiding Clerk and upon request, may assist any committee, Meeting or individual of the Yearly Meeting. The committee also takes into discernment other matters as identified by the Yearly Meeting, Representative Committee, and/or the committee itself.

Much of the work of Ministry & Oversight Committee this year has been related to reviewing last year's Annual Session and preparing for the 2016 Annual Session. We have labored with individual Friends and Monthly Meetings on different issues. In addition, Ministry & Oversight is working on other projects and discernment currently before the committee, which are described in this report.

Structure of the Pacific Yearly Meeting Organization

Ministry & Oversight Committee is examining the structure of our Yearly Meeting organization. We struggle as a body to fill positions. We recognize that some Yearly Meeting activities are duplicated or even triplicated with the Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. There are approximately 165 positions within the Yearly Meeting, serving a membership of approximately 1,300 Friends. Is the Yearly Meeting a tree with branches that exceed the support of its roots? Does our tree need pruning to make it more vital and grow stronger? In addition to service to the Yearly Meeting, Friends are also serving their Monthly and Quarterly Meetings. Are Friends over-committed to service?

Our discernment on this issue is ongoing and Ministry & Oversight Committee will be talking with Friends and Meetings before bringing proposals for change to the Yearly Meeting body.

Abuse Prevention Policy

A draft of a new Abuse Prevention Policy was presented at Annual Session 2015. Ministry & Oversight Committee continues to labor with Children's Program Committee, Junior Yearly Meeting, Young Adult Friends, and the Youth Programs Coordinator to incorporate their concerns and insights into the policy. Friends are invited to submit additional comments and/or concerns to Ministry & Oversight. The current draft of the policy is attached. We hope to bring the final draft of the policy to the 2017 meeting of Representative Committee for acceptance by the Yearly Meeting.

Minutes of Concern

Ministry & Oversight Committee continues to discern the role of Minutes of Concern based on the queries: Why are Minutes of Concern brought to the Yearly Meeting? Why do we approve them? How do they serve our PYM community? Ministry & Oversight is laboring with defining Minutes of Concern and will invite the collaboration of other committees of the Yearly Meeting to review and refine the current draft guidelines for bringing Minutes of Concern to the Yearly Meeting to then bring these guidelines to the body for approval and adoption.

Monthly Meeting Representatives to Pacific Yearly Meeting

Ministry & Oversight Committee is examining the role of the Monthly Meeting representative to Pacific

Yearly Meeting and how our constituent Meetings are represented in the Yearly Meeting's decision making process. We are also considering how these representatives are selected and building a process of two-way communication between the Monthly Meeting and the Yearly Meeting.

Friends General Conference

Ministry & Oversight is working on a process to bring forward a proposal for Pacific Yearly Meeting to formally affiliate with Friends General Conference. Affiliation would represent positive care for the spiritual life of Pacific Yearly Meeting and would acknowledge the fact that we are already benefiting from and contributing to Friends General Conference and its programs and services. We heard concerns at the meeting of Representative Committee and will be preparing an information packet to be distributed to the Monthly Meetings that will include details of what affiliation would mean for Pacific Yearly Meeting. Friends carrying concerns about Pacific Yearly Meeting formally affiliating with Friends General Conference are invited to approach Ministry & Oversight to have their concerns heard. We hope to bring the formal proposal of affiliation to the 2017 meeting of Representative Committee for approval and action.

Other Ministry & Oversight Concerns this Year

Communication within the Yearly Meeting and its community has been a common theme this year. Ministry & Oversight participated in the Coordination Team conference calls in the fall and in the spring, sharing with and supporting others.

The committee supports the three-committee proposal on reducing the number of Pacific Yearly Meeting delegates to outside Quaker organizations. Ministry & Oversight will continue to explore which organizations Pacific Yearly Meeting should or could send delegates to and how this representation is part of our function. Is our energy being spent in ways that most support us as a spiritual community? The committee will also be looking at setting expectations on these delegates in terms of reporting back to the Pacific Yearly Meeting community.

Attendance Assistance Fund

Ministry & Oversight Committee administers the Attendance Assistance Fund, which offers financial assistance on a case-by-case basis to Friends wanting to attend Annual Session who may require a little additional financial help in order to do so. The \$9,000.00 Attendance Assistance fund is helping about 33 people to attend Annual Session this year.

Visiting Friend Program

Roena Oesting (La Jolla) served as Visiting Friend for Pacific Yearly Meeting this year. She made 16 visits during the year, spending time with Friends from 17 Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups, plus visits to the “Golden Rule” and participation in Southern California Quarterly Meeting and the meeting of Representative Committee. Roena offered discussions on a variety of topics and presented her Elizabeth Fry program. Details and photos of her visits can be found on the Facebook page “The Visiting Quaker”. Copies of the endorsements of Roena’s Travel Minute can be found in the Quiet Room at Annual Session. We thank Roena for her service.

Ministry & Oversight is discerning the continuation of the Visiting Friend Program, considering aspects such as building a strong Visiting Friend Support subcommittee and asking Monthly Meetings and Friends to contribute to the Visiting Friend Fund, among others. Friends interested in supporting the Visiting Friend Program are encouraged to approach Ministry & Oversight.

Subcommittees

Electronic Communications: The subcommittee believes it would be able to supervise and advise, but not execute a plan for the PYM website. The subcommittee is also looking at our Yearly Meeting’s communication systems and privacy policies. Ministry & Oversight has asked the subcommittee to develop a proposal for contracting the services of a professional web designer.

Racial Justice: The subcommittee has spent much of the year working on its *39 Questions for White People* interest group presented at College Park Quarterly Meeting and again at Annual Session, and also promoting the use of Shakti Butler’s *Breaking the Codes: the System of Racial Inequities* film and workbook among Monthly Meetings to raise awareness of racial justice issues. The film is available on the

Pacific Yearly Meeting website under the Gallery tab (sign-in required). Ministry & Oversight asks the subcommittee, what is the inward work we are doing within our Monthly Meetings and the Yearly Meeting?

Representative Support: The subcommittee serves as a resource for Meeting representatives. Ministry & Oversight encourages Friends to consider serving on this subcommittee.

Visiting Friend: The subcommittee stewards the Visiting Friend program. (*see Visiting Friend Program above*)

Ministry & Oversight has laid down the Experimentation and Implementation Subcommittee. The committee as a whole has taken up the work of examining the organization of the Yearly Meeting.

Ministry & Oversight Committee Meetings

The committee meets in person three times a year and daily during Annual Session. Each committee meeting is hosted by a different Monthly Meeting so that we might better understand the needs and concerns of local Meetings and so that Friends might better understand the Yearly Meeting. This allows us to share Meeting for Worship, adult education, and social gatherings with many Friends. This past fall we met with Grass Valley Meeting at Sierra Friends Center and offered a discussion on the Yearly Meeting and Annual Session. Our winter meeting was hosted by Orange County Meeting, where we talked about how the Yearly Meeting can help nurture the spiritual life of the Monthly Meeting. In the spring, we met at Santa Cruz Meeting and enjoyed sharing with local Friends over a potluck lunch. Listening with these Friends has enriched both the members of Ministry & Oversight Committee and our service to the Yearly Meeting. We invite other Meetings to consider hosting a meeting of Ministry & Oversight Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Bronwen Hillman, on behalf of PYM Ministry and Oversight Committee