

Pacific Yearly Meeting

Friends World Committee for Consultation Representative

Report to Annual Session 2021

SUMMARY

This last year has been busy for FWCC representatives. There were two large gatherings: a regional meeting in September of 2020 and the Section meeting in March of 2021. At both the attenders experienced the special joy of an FWCC gathering. In this report, we will share our experiences with FWCC this year.

Our Report

To understand the joy of an FWCC gathering requires an understanding of FWCC and its mission. That, in turn, requires knowledge of the makeup of the Society of Friends. We are a worldwide Society and include people from North America, Latin America, Africa, Europe, Middle East, East Asia and the West Pacific. There are four different types of Quakers: Liberal, Conservative, Friends Church, and Evangelical. Evangelical Friends brought people from Latin America and Africa into the family of Friends. The FWCC is made up of four sections and we are part of the Section of the Americas. The Section of the Americas describes its task as "Connecting Friends, crossing cultures, changing lives." On the surface we are quite different. Some worship the way that Protestants do. Some are Christocentric and lean on the Bible. We speak different languages, come from different cultures and include the economic scale from rich to poor. Our experience is that when we meet together, we are one in heart, and Spirit moves powerfully among us.

In September we had a meeting of the Southwest Region, which includes Pacific Yearly Meeting, Intermountain Yearly Meeting, and the Western Association of Friends, which is made up of the friend's churches in Berkeley and Whittier. IMYM includes the four corners states. Emelyn Buskirk organized this gathering as part of her role as regional coordinator. Because Mexico City meeting is part of PacYM, the event was fully bilingual, which means using consecutive translation. We were inspired by our keynote speaker, Myron Guachalla from Bolivia. Myron owns a music shop, and he describes himself in several ways: musician, entrepreneur. But for him, the most important word is "Quaker". He shared some of his experiences of colorism in Bolivia. We got to know each other in small groups with translators so that Spanish speakers and English speakers could communicate. The gathering was an experience of connecting Friends and crossing cultures.

The Section of the Americas consists of the entire Western Hemisphere, from Alaska to the Andes. We met in March of 2021, and meeting on ZOOM was a plus for us because more Friends from Latin America were able to attend. In total, twice as many attended than when we met in person, with most of the increase coming from Spanish speaking countries. Spanish and English were used equally to communicate. Sometimes the program was in Spanish with translation into English. This is how Bible study was conducted. Sometimes it was the other way around. Bible study is a good example of people of different cultures studying together. Our leader was pastor Manuel Guzman of the Friends Church in Ciudad Victoria, Mexico. He had studied in an evangelical seminary in Mexico, then later attended Earlham School of Religion, a Quaker seminary. Participation by others, including Kevin Mortimer, a professor of religion and philosophy from Barclay College in Kansas, made it a rich experience.

Sarah Hernandez spoke to us on the topic "To change it one must name it." She recommended that we become aware of our own internalized racism and colonialism in order to name the injustice. She also reminded us of the importance of rest, self-care, and making room to find joy. We need to let the Light guide us in the change. There is work to be done and continuing long term effort is required.

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Everyone enjoyed a feast of Latinex culture. There were several talent events and Latin Americans were in charge. At one event we heard from a group of young people who were singing in Aymara, a Native American language of Bolivia and Peru. What a joy it was to see people from so far away who were sharing their talent. Another place of sharing was the home groups, which are like our worship--sharing groups. Our time together ended with programmed worship from a Friends Church in El Salvador. The service included music from "Mensajeras de la Paz" (Messengers of Peace). They were from Bolivia, and they praised God in the style of the Andes. As we heard pastor Nelson Ayala speak, we knew that despite our different languages and cultures we are one big Quaker family.

Hulda Muaka has been involved in the Travelling Ministry Corp. Its task is to send ministers to visit meetings and churches, and the pandemic brought real challenges. However, new opportunities opened as we explored virtual visits and gatherings. The FWCC goal of connecting Friends and building bridges was achieved in new ways. We realize that to go forward we realize that collective effort is required to use these new tools. In Latin America, the TMC organized online separate conferences for women, for men, and for youth. In North America we are continuing with weekly worship, prayer on request, and book discussion.

We would like to invite you to an opportunity to get a taste of the wide world of Quakerism yourselves. World Quaker Day will be celebrated by meetings and churches around the world on Sunday, October 3, 2021. Your event can be as small or large as you like. Emelyn once gave a five-minute slide show. Just go to the "World Quaker Day 2021" website to get started.

PacYM's Representatives to FWCC are Emelyn Buskirk and Hulda Muaka.