

2015 - FWCC Representative Report

Geeta McGahey, Matt Riley, Michael Galovic

Your three reps are enthusiastically in support of the work of FWCC. We have had the chance to become deeply interconnected with Friends across the Americas at the Section meetings and to labor and discern together at the quarterly consultation. For me, my faith has deepened. I have a new appreciation of Friends from other branches and the life-affirming and healing power of Christ in people's lives. I have learned to listen for the experience behind the words. I have heard a message that was given to me to speak in English then delivered by Pablo in Spanish as a different wording of the same divine message. There are unfolding opportunities for Friends who have different theologies and practice to labor together to keep Quakerism both connected to its roots and alive and vibrant. Our work together will bring the Kabarak Call to a troubled world. Matt and Michael too are both engaged and energized for this work.

I would have loved to continue as SAYMA representative to FWCC for another term, but when I read that the [FWCC World Plenary Meeting](#), "Living the Transformation", would have "...a primary focus on youth", I felt led to try to find an active young adult friend to take the position. Friends at the plenary "will consider: developing leadership and a living ministry to strengthen the Religious Society of Friends; encouraging membership and religious formation to strengthen our worshipping communities; addressing governance and meeting requirements for FWCC; and furthering the Kabarak Call for Peace and Eco-Justice and considering how we contribute to a peaceful and sustainable life on Earth." The subtheme is "Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God (Romans 8:19)". Our representatives will urge us on return to consider what it means to be a member of the worldwide Religious Society of Friends and to discover how we are called to transformation in our lives and for the world. Hopefully they will have ideas for transforming attenders at our meetings into members of the Quaker community.

I hope that just as after the Kabarak conference, we had a plenary devoted to the topic, we will also have ample opportunity to consider what the representatives bring back from Peru. I am pleased the September Representatives Meeting authorized the three delegates allotted by FWCC. Michael Galovic and Matt Riley are making plans to go. Kelsey McNicholas is between jobs and wants "*so much* to go, ... [but has] to clear that with a future job first.

We propose new changes to the descriptions in the Handbook for the usage of the World Conference Fund and Third World Delegate Fund.

"The Third World Delegate Fund is money that SAYMA contributes to FWCC Section of the Americas to assist Friends from poorer parts of the Quaker community to attend FWCC programs such as Section Meetings and World Conferences or International Representative Meetings. Currently, Section Meetings occur every two years and World Conferences or IRMs every four years. Historically, the amount of money contributed in this way has been approximately equal to the cost of sending one SAYMA delegate to the targeted FWCC meetings. The money in the Third World Delegate Fund should be sent to FWCC Section of the Americas the year prior to each meeting. The FWCC representatives will send a request to the treasurer no later than the September Rep meeting, expecting costs for the section meetings to be half the cost of the World meeting."

“The World Conference Fund is used to send SAYMA delegates to the FWCC World Conference of Quakers or International Representatives Meeting, formerly known as the Triennial but now occurring every four years. SAYMA will pay the registration fees of the delegates and reasonable travel costs from this fund. The number of delegates sent will depend on factors including the number of delegates FWCC allows SAYMA to send, the availability of interested Friends, and the amount of money in the fund. The number sent will be determined by Representatives Meeting for each particular world conference. In determining the number of reps, consideration should be given to such factors as the environmental impact of travel, available funding, the individual rep's roles within FWCC, and the frequency that each rep has been financially supported in that role.”

SAYMA had excellent representation at the Section Meeting in Mexico, “Friends Woven Together in God’s Love,” attended by representatives from thirty-one yearly meetings across five branches of Quakerism and twelve countries. Tim Lamm was there on the Nominations Committee, Michael Galovic SAYMA Rep on the publications Committee, Matt Riley, assisting with thank-you notes to donors to the travel fund, Geeta McGahey, on-coming finance Committee member, Judy Lumb up from Belize, and Carol Lamm, who remained positive and cheerful even in light of a broken arm the first day.

The most important business at the Section Meeting was the 2020 Strategic Plan. The Visitation Program will be the central focus of work of the Section of the Americas. It will primarily serve to organize a corps of Spanish and English-speaking (but not necessarily bilingual) Friends, particularly FWCC reps and volunteers, to send throughout the Section as traveling ministers (Friends who are recognized by their local church, monthly meeting or yearly meeting and called to travel in ministry among Friends, regardless of age, gender, education, occupation, or status as “recorded ministers.”). They will cross Yearly Meeting lines and other divisions among Friends.

The most contentious part of the response to the Strategic Plan was the laying down of Wider Quaker Fellowship and how that will happen. It is unclear who is notifying meetings and subscribers about the demise of the pamphlets. Celo has not received any communication. The Connections Program is charged with writing, finding and posting needed resources. The new website “Voices of Friends” www.voicesoffriends.org will provide to seekers an entry point to understanding Quakerism today in all its diversity and information about meeting locations.

The most important work was practicing listening to each other and allowing a variety of ministries to penetrate and transform us. Home groups of 8 or so with a translator who is also a participant allowed many insights and leadings from a few bible verses. We looked at different translations of Colossians 2:1-3, over four meetings. By the end of our six hours together labels and modes of worship didn’t matter. We were woven together and gathered by God’s Love. If only we could share similar experiences in our communities with others of differing practices and beliefs, we truly could live God’s Kingdom.

Respectfully submitted,

Geeta Jyothi McGahey, Celo Friends Meeting, SAYMA Representative