

Report to the NYYM body
from its representatives to the 2014 FWCC
Section of the Americas' Consultations
(Summer sessions 2014)

The purpose of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) is to encourage fellowship among all the branches of the Religious Society of Friends. NYYM is a member of the FWCC-Section of the Americas. Departing from the tradition of holding a single annual meeting in March, in 2014 the Section of the Americas held four open consultations in El Salvador, Bolivia, North Carolina and California.

With the theme "Let the Living Water Flow! Friends Serving God's Purposes", each conference offered workshops for Friends to develop our intercultural communication skills for intra-Quaker dialogue and for supporting Quaker leadership. The weekend-long, residential conferences included a variety of worship, plenary addresses and small group discussions in addition to workshops. Over 400 Friends, from more than 40 yearly meetings in the Americas, participated in the four consultations.

Gloria Thompson represented New York Yearly Meeting at the North Carolina consultation. The NYYM conflict transformation committee presented workshops at both the North Carolina and California consultations. Sylke Jackson and Mike Clark represented NYYM at the El Salvador consultation. Sylke and Mike also visited Suchitoto, El Salvador, to explore the possibility of taking NYYM youth to participate in the Palo Alto Friends Meeting's long-term project there.

Here are some notes from Sylke and Mike's experience.

We traveled in an old bus from Suchitoto to Aguilares to wait for the El Salvador Yearly Meeting van that was en route from Soyapango Friends Church. We squeezed into the last few seats that seemed to appear miraculously in the tightly packed van to San Ignacio. As we pulled out of the parking lot of our meeting place, the popular Pollo Campero in Aguilares, our FWCC gathering was already underway.

In the confluence of Friends that hailed from one end of the Americas to the other, the talk quickly flowed from descriptions of our homes and connections to Quakerism to lively discussion of Quaker history, the

concept of "the Light" and its theological resonance, the individual's direct, immediate relationship with Spirit, and early Central American missionary work. In the stimulating introduction to a new group of fellow seekers we were also getting to know our own faith. Searching for the Spanish words and phrases to describe our understandings of God gave us perspective and insight on our own beliefs. It became clear that in our immersion in all that is familiar we can lose track of our connections to the past and the world community.

In a tender, respectful communion the body of Friends gathered at San Ignacio began to trace and awaken these connections. Quakers from Costa Rica, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Bolivia, and the United States ate together—meals that brought to light the universal Quaker love of sharing food. We slept together in same sex rooms of up to 10, often talking late into the night, swapping stories of our lives and spiritual journeys. We worshipped together, and experienced new practices that inspired and stretched us. And we addressed each other as *hermana* or *hermano*, sister or brother, as Central American Quakers do, and found a rising sense of kinship.

Through this kinship, we saw that we share with the Latin American Evangelical Friends the transformative work of AVP, a desire to change the world for the better, a love for our neighbors, and a direct relationship with the Spirit that guides us, as well as our historical connections.

For a more specific description of the program please see the FWCC section of the Americas page:

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs116/1100905870059/archive/1116798292432.html#LETTER.BLOCK12>

Or you may read it in Spanish at:

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs116/1100905870059/archive/1117024923175.html>

The upcoming FWCC Section of the Americas events include:

- o The 2014 Quaker Youth Pilgrimage in Peru and Bolivia July-August.
- o The 2015 Section of the Americas Annual Meeting in Mexico City. (March 12–15)
- o The 2016 International Representatives Meeting in Arequipa, Peru. (Formerly known as the FWCC Triennial) January.