

FWCC Report to New Mexico Regional Meeting

23.April 2017

“We envision a thriving and integrated network of Friends from the Arctic to the Andes, woven together in transformative faith, learning to love, listen, and witness”

- Vision Statement of the Section of the Americas



Dear Intermountain Friends-

Greetings from your fellow Friends across the Americas and around the World. *THANK YOU* for your support!

This March, Cheryl Speir-Phillips and I (Rob Pierson) attended the Friends World Committee, Section of the America meeting in Stony Point, NY. The picture above is from a different recent meeting, but it gives you the idea – there is a vibrant community of Friends spread across South and North America. You are part of a larger world of English and Spanish speaking friends who want to know you and want to share their Quaker faith across the boundaries that normally separate and divide us.

There are around 320,000 Quakers world-wide, of which 90,000 live in the US and Canada, and 60,000 in Latin America.

I will keep this report short because I want you to read it! Also, you can find plenty more at the Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas website at <http://fwccamericas.org/> - a website that is now beautifully revamped and full of helpful and interesting information about Friends and activities of the FWCC. If you want to expand your Quaker horizons, check out the website and consider attending an FWCC event! Or invite Cheryl or I to visit your Meeting and talk to you about the wider world of Friends.

There is always a lot going on among Friends. At the recent meeting, discussions continued between North and South American Friends on fostering the spiritual basis of the call for ecojustice and sustainability that have arisen out of recent world gatherings of Friends. Within North America, Friends engaged on issues of racism and privilege that afflict our Meetings. But I want to focus here on the core initiative of the FWCC Section today.

At its core, the mission of FWCC involves intervisitation – getting Friends to meet one another and get to know one another in “that which is eternal.” However, resources are limited. Shipping Friends across the continents to gatherings is expensive and resource-consuming. As a result, FWCC gatherings are becoming less frequent

(every other year for the Section of the Americas, every seven years for the world gatherings). Yet, in an increasingly divided and polarized world, getting to know one another, at a deep personal and spiritual level and across divides of language, worship style, and culture is more important than ever! What are we to do?

FWCC's response is to revitalize the old Quaker tradition of *traveling ministry*. Quakers have always encouraged those called to ministry to travel among Meetings, knitting the community together through their intervisitation. At this year's meeting, the gathered Quaker community blessed and sent forth the first seven members of a *Traveling Ministry Corp.* (See picture at right) Each of these Friends are trained and prepared to travel, to come visit us at our Meetings, as a connection to the wider world of Friends. All we need to do is a little planning and hospitality – to reach out and invite their visit and to be willing to open our hearts and homes to their presence while they sojourn with us. Is your Meeting ready and interested? Contact me or the Section of the Americas!



Our Intermountain Yearly Meeting theme this year is “About Money: A Call to Integrity, Community, and Stewardship.” This theme couldn't be more timely. Please donate and encourage your Meeting to support FWCC. The ability to link Friends across the Americas comes at a cost. Those of us who hear the call to reach beyond our narrow boundaries and acknowledge the larger faith community need to take part in building this “beloved community.”

On a personal note, Cheryl Speir Phillips has taken on the role of Representatives Coordinator for the entire Southwest Region – from here to California! Rob Pierson is starting service on the Executive Committee for our FWCC Section of the Americas. Come talk to us about how we can help connect you to the world of Friends, and please consider attending Cheryl's FWCC interest group during the IMYM annual gathering at Ghost Ranch.

With peace and love,

- Rob Pierson / Albuquerque Monthly Meeting