QEW with FWCC in Pisac, Peru

By Mary Gilbert and Judy Lumb

The Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC) brought Friends from all over the globe together in a loving and somewhat challenging mix. From January 19-27, 2016, more than 300 of us gathered in Pisac, Peru. Do you wish you had been there? Go to http://fwccamericas.org/ to watch a video of the meeting while listening to Rachel Guaraldi read the "To Friends Everywhere" minute.

Quakers seem to come in three broad categories, which can be seen in the nature of the three large Quaker organizations in the US:

• Those who practice unprogrammed, silent worship: http://www.fgcquaker.org/

• Those who practice programmed worship: http://friendsunitedmeeting.org/

• And those who are evangelical Friends: http://www.evangelicalfriends.org/

Missionaries from FUM went to Kenya’s Western Province in 1900-’01 and converted folks there to Quakerism. Since that time Quaker practice and identity has spread to some nearby regions in Africa. At a later date, evangelical Quaker missionaries travelled to South America, where they too succeeded in converting Quechua- and Aymara-speaking people in Peru and Bolivia, respectively. Therefore many South American Friends are evangelicals.

The full panoply of Friends met daily in small "home groups" of about 10 people, which were, in most cases, very helpful in bridging our differences. In my home group there was deep sharing and growth in mutual understanding.
Consultation on Sustainability

Three of us from QEW—Judy Lumb, Marjorie Isaacs and Mary Gilbert—attended a four-session consultation to look at the FWCC Kabarak Call issued four years ago and consider what Friends should be doing now. The text of the Kabarak Call was made available, and about 60 of us sat down to do some guided brainstorming.

Jonathan Woolley, director of QUNO Geneva, with the assistance of Rachel Madeyika from QUNO’s New York office, and Young Adult Friend Charlotte Gordon from Aotearoa-New Zealand YM, facilitated the consultation with great skill. After all, Jonathan has practice with diplomats whose countries are at odds. We Quakers are quite disparate, but at least we all intend good will.

We worked in small groups and shifted around while the facilitators took notes and put together what we said. Young Adult Friends were prominent in the process. The resulting statement was approved at the final plenary session:


It is not a document we would have written, but that’s the point. Mary and Judy were both consulted to review early drafts, but often our suggestions were not accepted. For example, where individuals are encouraged to plant trees and grow their own food, Mary wanted to add "manage landscapes for the benefit of the whole biosphere." It wasn’t accepted. The organizers gathered a small group of Young Adult Friends for the final editing process, which seemed in right order. It is their future!

QEWS’s Future with FWCC Friendly Contacts

Judy set up a display of QEW materials in a space for displays and sales of some handcrafted items being sold by Peruvian and Bolivian Friends. With the help of Tere Campos and Brad Stocker, Emma Condori of Bolivia, and Yanira Zamora of Mexico City, we were able to provide translations of two QEW trifolds in Spanish: Contemplative Action in the Time of Climate Change and A Friends’ Witness on Population. Emma was particularly excited by the population material and plans to use the trifold in workshops with women in Bolivia. She is willing to work on more translations, and we hope to get more Spanish QEW material into Latino Quaker hands soon.

Additionally, a young man whose pastor feels that all these concerns about the environment are distracting people from their real business of salvation asked me for a list of Bible verses that support working toward sustainability that he can share with his pastor and congregation. This is being done with the help of Benigno Sanchez-Eppler, originally Cuban and now a long-term member of NEYM, who is now clerk of the FWCC Section of the Americas.

QEW has been invited to offer at least one workshop at the next meeting of the FWCC Section of the Americas meeting, which will be some time next year in North America. This will be another chance to do important outreach to Friends of all kinds. We do have a message, and it is not in conflict with more traditional teachings. We will do our best to share it.