

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

At its June and November 2007 meetings the Executive Committee considered the position of affiliated organizations in the life of FWCC Section of the Americas. The context of this is the amount of activity spent by committee members, staff, and volunteers in Quaker organizations that have sought affiliation, and those that are not in unity with a particular organization's affiliation. While this work has helped us clarify who we are, and who we are not, it has also distracted us from our primary work of bringing Friends together throughout the hemisphere across yearly meeting boundaries.

What this report does **not** include

This is a complex matter, and it is important to distinguish between **programs** of FWCC Section of the Americas, which include funds for which FWCC acts as steward and those activities that have no "home" other than FWCC Section of the Americas, and organizations that are independent non-profit bodies which seek or have affiliation to FWCC for other reasons. This paper and subsequent recommendation does not address direct **programs** of FWCC such as the Elizabeth Ann Bogert Fund or the Rachel Metcalfe Scholarship Fund. Nor does it address **affiliated programs** such as QUNO-New York or Friends Committee on Scouting. All the above will be considered as part of the Executive Committee's intended study of the Section's program priorities and governance, and recommendations will be brought to Annual Meeting 2009.

Affiliated organizations

Our work of linking Friends is done formally in the Section via yearly meetings (and some smaller independent worship groups and meetings) that affiliate. These groups send representatives to meetings of FWCC at the world and section level.

The Section of the Americas is the only Section that makes provision for affiliation of organizations, though this not in our by-laws. These bodies, Friends Peace Teams Project and Right Sharing of World Resources are both independent 501(c)3 organization based in the USA. Right Sharing of World Resources began as a program of the Section and grew sufficiently to become an independent 501(c)3 organization. Friends Peace Team Project has a mission with which most, if not all, participants at Annual Meeting would be in sympathy. They, and many other organizations that are not affiliated to FWCC are welcome to participate in our activities and promote their work.

However, recent experience with applications for affiliation has led us to conclude that affiliation of organizations is an aspect of our work that should be laid down. This has nothing to do with the organizations. It is entirely to do with the **identity and priorities of FWCC**.

The major reasons to recommend ending the practice of affiliating organizations are:

1. As the Section becomes more diverse and less dominated by the US and Canada, applications are increasingly leading us into places where there is no unity on the rightness of affiliations. Some recent applications have run into opposition due to cultural acceptability of an activity; and disapproval in some yearly meetings of the mission and priorities of different organizations. It is not FWCC's job to offer an

imprimatur of acceptability of one organization over another. We want our tent to be large enough for all Friends, but the affiliation (or not) of organizations is not the way to achieve it.

2. The practice of affiliating organizations has focused mainly on one country in our section - the USA – which is not consistent with growing focus of being a full section that is tuned in to the needs of all of its constituent members.
3. An increasing amount of staff and Executive Committee time in recent years has been taken up in research and consultation to respond to applications for affiliation.
4. We do not have the capacity or the adequate background information to do adequate consultation in South America, which is necessary for some applications.

It is not our intention to “undo” the two current affiliations to the Section. However, we intend not to use the term “affiliated organization” in the future and we will no longer consider applications for affiliation.

We regret that Friends active in some organizations have felt hurt by our difficulty in coming to unity about their applications. It has necessarily been a long and challenging process to arrive at the realization that it is now difficult – probably impossible – to achieve agreement on any applications, given the breadth of theological and cultural diversity in our Section, and the fortunate fact that a wide level of consultation now takes place in decision-making. Each of the three applications we have considered over recent years ran into sharp and sometimes unexpected opposition at some point during the process.

One of the by-products of the broadening of consultation is that decisions are no longer made by a group of North American Friends that, while belonging to different yearly meetings, is fairly homogeneous in its outlook. This is both a blessing and a challenge.

It has also taken time for us to realize that this quest is not the best use of our time and limited resources. We celebrate all Friends organizations, well-known and less-known, that work to bring our testimonies into a troubled world. They are welcome among us.



Friends World
Committee for
Consultation

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Report to FWCC Section of the Americas February 2008

2008 brings with it new staff and leadership in the World Office, new energy, and new horizons and structure.

First the staff, Harry Albright, a Canadian Friend, has begun full-time work as Communications Director. His responsibilities will include all communications, written and web-based, plus international membership coordination. He may seem familiar as he has attended SoA annual meetings in the past and was formerly editor of *the Friend*. Harry's first day on the job was spent setting up a Kenya Crisis blog linked from our website [www.fwccworld.org] – unfortunately still active.

Also new to us is Jay Dugan-Brause, an attender originally from Alaska, who is half-time database manager and personal assistant. Jay is also a full-time student who will be in the office most mornings.

Our financial administrator, Michael Booth, has taken the position in Britain Yearly Meeting. He has been succeeded by Cathy Rowlands, a Friend who begins her work shortly. This is a two days per week position.

New faces have joined the World Office leadership team, complementing those continuing. Jocelyn Burnell, renowned astro-physicist and former Clerk of Britain YM, has become clerk of the Central Executive Committee and Roger Sturge continues as treasurer. Liz Gates of Philadelphia YM has become Assistant Clerk, supporting Duduzile Mtshazo. New at-large members of the Central Executive Committee are Kenya Casanova of Cuba YM, John Fitzgerald, an Irish Friend working for Britain YM, and David Bucura of Rwanda YM. Management of Europe & Middle East Section is passing from Bronwyn Harwood to Marisa Johnson of Cambridge as of Easter. Valerie Joy of Australia has succeeded Kenneth Co as Executive Secretary in Asia-West Pacific Section.

Realizing that the primary function of the World Office is communications, the creation of a communications post is the first step in focussing our work in that direction. It will mean working more closely with the Sections to serve them and to take advantage of expertise in the different offices, reducing duplication.

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For instance, EMES is in the midst of a pilot project to provide distance learning about Quakerism over the internet to small groups and individuals scattered around Europe. Having finished the first 10-week program with English speakers, they have had a training program for those participants plus native language speakers in 10 languages. What we learn from this program could have an exciting ripple effect for the International Membership Programme as well as all the Sections. In addition, I have been in initial discussions with other providers about a more global program.

Our International Membership program is inaugurating structural changes in its management to include the international members themselves and representatives from the four sections on the International Membership Committee. It will meet by telephone conference call and communicate mostly electronically. It will be supported by a British-based International Membership Applications Committee that will process applications for membership. Harry's work will be to foster the communications and help the IMC discern the best ways forward to nurture our far-flung international members and worshipping groups.

Also new to our structure is the Young Adult Friends Committee that is in process of being formed. Our intent is to provide the home for the continuing energy and enthusiasm from the World Gatherings of Young Friends in 2005 and to foster its vitality and contributions to the Society.

With a world conference planned for 2012 in Nairobi [more later] leaving a gap of five years between international meetings, the CEC is choosing to hold each year's annual meeting in conjunction with a section gathering. In 2008, the CEC will meet in conjunction with Asia-West Pacific Section in Bhopal, India in November. It will meet again less than six months later in conjunction with the Section of the Americas meeting in March 2009. In 2010, Africa Section gets the visit and in 2011 EMES. Africa and Asia meet only on a triennial basis.

In November 2007, Roger Sturge, the African leaders and I visited sites for the 2012 World Conference. We are pursuing the use of Africa Nazarene University on the fringe of Nairobi, a relatively new, modern campus. I have heard that it has not been directly affected by the violence due to its location. We are praying of course that peace will return to Kenya and by 2012, it will be stable.

With faith and hope,

Nancy Irving
General Secretary