This year FWCC held four separate regional consultations, rather than one. These Living Water gatherings were held in San Ignacio, El Salvador; Sacramento, California; La Paz, Bolivia; and High Point, North Carolina. Three of your representatives went to Sacramento and one to High Point. This is a piece of their experience:

The fourth FWCC consultation met in High Point, NC over the weekend of 11 April to 13 April. There were over 25 yearly meetings represented. The available workshops were

- Intercultural Communications: "Hearing Heart to Heart"
- Conflict Transformation
- The Kabarak Call and Service through Disaster Preparation
- Quaker leadership for the 21st century.

I attended the Intercultural Communications workshop. The focus of the workshop was learning how to listen to more than the words that are spoken. There were also examples of questions that are considered as “getting to know you” type in one culture which are an invasion of privacy in another. We also need to recognize that we listen to others based on our preconceptions. For example: While we are having a conversation, are we talking to an individual, or do we consider the other person as a spokesperson of a group? More specifically, is this person George who happens to be African-American, or is it an African American named George? Our interpretation of his words is influenced by this filter. I found the workshop had considerable overlap with one that Boise Valley Friends had which was on "Having Difficult Conversations".

I believe that this consultation has strengthened my ability to communicate with Friends from other traditions and it has increased my confidence that I can connect with EFI churches in the Boise area.

**Otis Kenny, Boise Valley Monthly Meeting**

FWCC consultation met in Sacramento, California, March 14-16 at
Sacramento Friends Church. Their tender and comprehensive hospitality was a lesson in action. Workshops offered included:

- Cross-Cultural Communication: “Whoever Has Ears Let Them Hear”
- Conflict Transformation
- Quaker Leadership for 21st Century
- Friends Serving God’s Purposes: Servant-Leadership Toward Peace and Eco-justice

I attended Cross-Cultural Communication, where our leader, Alan Amarisca, from Friends Church Southwest YM, engaged us in a discussion of the blessings and pitfalls of communicating across cultures. Using Paul’s letter to the Philippians 2:1-11, he described the undertone of pain and loss that runs through all cross-cultural communication and that we must accept that and deal with it if we want to communicate effectively. This text contains the virtues and values we are to embody in cross-cultural communication, such as serving, obedience, patience and relationship. We had a lively discussion of ascribed status and some virtues, like obedience, are easier for those with ascribed status. Otherwise, obedience can be misused as oppression. The more ascribed status we have, the more we must enter communication as a learner, a servant.

FWCC provides the opportunity for us to be in relationship with Friends of many Quaker flavors, from the Jewish Friend who said of her attendance at the consultation, “I don’t know much about Christianity, I don’t know why I’m here,” to the Evangelical Christian Friend who said of his effort to maintain a difficult relationship, “I guess it was worth the effort since he became a Christian.” Perhaps our identities and opinions don’t matter as much as acts of kindness and hospitality, such as those of the Friends at Sacramento Friends Church, who didn’t ask or care about our identities or beliefs when they opened their doors to us fed us delicious soup and tacos.

Kate Jaramillo, Bridge City Monthly Meeting

Some of my favorite parts of attending FWCC events are the interactions around the main event: sitting with new people at lunch, bible study in the morning, singing in the evening. I find out about how other meetings and churches are nurturing the spirit of their congregations and how they are acting in the world. I attended the conflict transformation, held by members of a
committee from the New York Yearly Meeting that helps its member meetings deal with conflict. Everyone there could share some example of conflict coming through our meetings and churches, often bringing with it pain. We had different experiences of how that conflict was resolved (or continues to smolder). The presenters discussed using that conflict as an agent of change, when it points to a habit that could be transformed. We also discussed the possibility that conflict is arising from someone whose needs are not our responsibility to meet. Our first responsibility is to the health of our meeting. They left us with this excellent resource: http://nyym.org/?q=ConflictTransformation­Videos.

One thread I noticed running through my time at the consultation was the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage. In my home group there was a young man and a women several decades older, both of whom spoke of their time as pilgrims as being pivotal to their life as Quakers. I was impressed with how important that experience was to them; a time of coming together with Quakers from many different places, cultures, ways of worshiping and forming true and deep bonds, FWCC in a microcosm.

**Elinor Jordan, Olympia Monthly Meeting**