

OVERVIEW of FRIENDS in the PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Quakers who call the Pacific Northwest home include Alaska Friends Conference (FGC), Alaska YM (EFI), Freedom Friends Church (independent, pastoral), North Pacific YM (independent, nonpastoral), Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends Church (EFI) and Western Half Yearly Meeting of Canadian YM (FGC & FUM.) Quakers have been in the Northwest since 1847, when Friends brought nursery stock to the area by oxen over the Oregon Trail.

In 1878 Chehalem (later Newberg) Monthly Meeting was recognized by Honey Creek Quarterly Meeting of Iowa YM. In 1893 Oregon YM was established. Irrigation projects brought Friends to Idaho's Boise Valley during the early 1900's. After a tent revival in Seattle in 1907, Friends Memorial Church was established in 1910 under the care of Indiana YM. In 1971 Oregon YM changed its name to Northwest YM of Friends Church. Northwest YM's ministries include Quaker camps in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho as well as Twin Rocks Friends Camp and Conference Center.

Currently Northwest YM has 67 churches/ministry points in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, nine of which are Latino congregations/ministry points. The yearly meeting has strong connections with George Fox University and George Fox Evangelical Seminary.

In March 2004 two Friends from Northwest YM formed independent Freedom Friends Church – Christ-centered, Quaker, and inclusive.

North Pacific YM has its origins in many worship groups. In the 1930's Friends concerned about outreach to students at the University of Washington opened Friends Center. In 1938 in Seattle, a non-pastoral worship group was recognized as University Preparative Meeting of Friends Memorial Church of Puget Sound Quarterly Meeting of Indiana YM. Also in the 1930's an informal group of Friends began meeting in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

During WWII Quaker conscientious objectors who performed alternative services as smoke jumpers formed a preparative meeting in Missoula, Montana. North Pacific Yearly Meeting, which includes unprogrammed Friends from Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, was set off from Pacific YM in 1974. It has 20 Monthly Meetings, 26 Worship Groups and 2 Preparative Meetings.

Some of the founding Quakers in the interior of British Columbia came to Canada from the United States before the Vietnam War in the early 1950's after WWII. Western Half Yearly Meeting started in the 1960's with an informal gathering of Quakers in Creston, BC in the Kootenay Mountains.

Alaska Friends Conference is the Yearly Meeting of Alaskan Quakers in unprogrammed meetings. It meets in July in Wasilla, Alaska and includes five monthly meetings and three worship groups.

Friends from California YM sent missionaries to Alaska in 1897, partly in response to an Inuit native, Maniilaq, who prophesized that a people would come to tell of a Great Father. Alaska YM, with headquarters in Kotzebue, was formed in 1970. Of the 13 Friends Churches in Alaska YM, 11 are in the northwest arctic region of Alaska, one is in Anchorage and one in Fairbanks. Alaska YM's Friends Bible Training School trains future pastors.