

**336<sup>th</sup> Annual Sessions  
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting  
July 27 – 31, 2016  
Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA  
Thursday, July 28, 2016 – Evening Session**

Worship

The 336<sup>th</sup> Annual Sessions of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends reconvened Thursday evening in Seegers Union Building of Muhlenberg College, Allentown, PA. The announced theme of our 2016 Sessions is “Be Transformed!” We gathered for All-Together Time at 6:22 pm and were led in an origami butterfly sharing exercise by Middle School Friends. At the appointed hour of 6:45 pm, we settled into brief Meeting for Worship, welcomed by Clerk Penny Colgan-Davis (Germantown MM). Then, at about 6:52 pm, the Clerk greeted us. Those present at the clerks’ tables had already been introduced at the morning session. Joining them on the stage was Chris Lucca, Elder (Yardley MM).

Quaker Life Council Report

The Quaker Life Council Report (QLC) was given by its clerk, Lane Taylor (her membership is currently housed at Plumstead Friends Meeting).

She read her butterfly origami and was touched by it. Eight QLC members stood to be recognized. The QLC clerk began by asking the question of Friends: “How does your Spiritual Community nurture your work?”, and asked Friends to answer as they are led. Responders answered: Their meeting has their back, gave them the year off, praises their gifts, established a mid-week meeting so they may worship when they couldn’t attend on First Day, worshipped with them while in rehab center, offered space to sell their work to the public, tells me how they love me, doesn’t let me give up, and visited me in the hospital.

An overview was given of the Council structure, and a reminder that internal committees (Governance, Funding, Program, and Sessions) exist to create and sustain its processes. We were asked to note a change: Sessions Planning is now the Sessions Coordinating Committee (responsible for both Continuing and Annual Sessions planning). The QLC clerk noted that the Council has extended an invitation to Friends outside of QLC to bring their wisdom, spirit, and expertise to the Council’s work, and offered a hearty thanks to Friends who have said yes.

Collaboratives are defined as self-organized and self-facilitated groups and are formed under the care of QLC by Friends who have a common interest or ministry through a process established by the Council. Friends establishing Collaboratives apply through the *Application for Work, Witness, or Activity* within PYM on the PYM website, and paper applications are

welcomed. The goal is to form a focused community that is not limited by geography within PYM. Each collaborative should have a representative mix of meetings. Current Collaboratives are: The Middle East Collaborative, The Eco-Justice Collaborative, The Legislative Policy Collaborative, The Spiritual Formation Collaborative, The India Friends Collaborative, The Public Education Collaborative, and The Supporting Individuals Calls to Ministry Collaborative. Members were asked to stand to represent the Collaboratives in turn and were thanked.

Highlights of Collaboratives' work were shared. Eco-Justice shared that The Friends Economic Integrity Project of EJC just published another book, *Toward a Right Relationship with Finance*, and a video, *Climate Race and Justice*, which will be shown at an Eco Justice workshop this Saturday at Annual Sessions or at monthly meetings, by request.

The Legislative Policy Collaborative's major goal for this current year has been to engage Young Adult Friends in public policy. On February 6, 2016, they held their first FCNL contact gathering at Friends Center to introduce the mission of their collaborative, share stories and lobbying practices, and to give monthly meeting contacts a chance to meet each other face to face.

The Spiritual Formation Collaborative recently completed leading its nine-month program at Lancaster and Central Philadelphia Meetings and is considering offering it to several other meetings. They are exploring offering two residential weekend Spiritual Formation renewal programs open to anyone who wants to bring the program to their meeting. These would be a time for Friends who are active in Spiritual Formation to get inspired, get grounded and continue to grow deeper in their faith. They hope to use the great experience and skill of the Baltimore Yearly Meeting folks in helping them move in this new direction.

The Supporting Individual Calls to Ministry Collaborative seeks to develop resources for supporting individual calls to ministry, which will be posted at [pym.org](http://pym.org), and may include discernment practices, clearness committees, support groups, spiritual accountability, mutual accountability, financial management, overcoming obstacles, job descriptions, frequently asked questions, and adult education curriculum. As a result of this work, QLC will host a threshing session for Minutes of Concern from Quarterly Meetings at Annual Sessions this Saturday at 1:30 pm (change of time noted) and will be facilitated by Tom Hoopes (Valley MM). The group also plans to conduct workshops to support individual ministry.

QLC funding and budget was presented. There is now a funding application for Fiscal Year 2017 at [QLC's webpages on pym.org](http://qlc.pym.org). The QLC Budget: \$39,150, Additional Donations: \$2,000, Strategic Reserve: \$50,000. From total QLC Funding Budget, \$16,775 was requested, \$13,675 was approved, \$3,694 was returned (total used: \$9,981) \$5,675 was used to support the work of the Collaboratives, \$1,500 was used to support the Summit of Change, \$6,500 was used to

support the 2016 White Privilege Conference, which around 200 PYM Friends attended. The body was asked to raise hands if they attended the White Privilege Conference and many hands were raised.

Early in its formation, QLC chose to supply additional funds (additional to the support that was provided as members of the host team) to help PYM Friends attend the Conference. These funds supported a total of 18 PYM Friends. Full reimbursements were given to everyone who requested them, which included several people who applied after the deadline.

The \$3,694 that was returned was unused scholarship funds. Zachary Dutton (Central Philadelphia MM), Associate Secretary for Program and Religious Life, has entered into discussion as to how structural racism may have been present in this process. Impediments might have included the registration and aid application process and insufficient outreach regarding availability of funds. QLC will continue to investigate potential barriers which that will better inform and improve their work in the future.

The Spirituality and Social Justice Thread Gathering is scheduled Saturday, September 24, 2016, at Swarthmore Meeting. This is a continuation of the work begun at the White Privilege Conference.

QLC's future work will continue to include solicitation of feedback. They affirm the statement that living in Spiritual Community is essential. They plan to delineate a structure for stewardship and mutual accountability between the Council and supported groups (Collaboratives, Sprints, etc.). In a further effort to discern these processes, there will be a Collaborative Meet-and-Greet at Sessions this Friday at 1:00 pm, with no location yet posted. A final plea was shared with the community to consider being a Resource Friend. The clerk shared her gratefulness for seeing such passion in action.

The Presiding Clerk and the General Secretary also suggested to Friends that if you enjoy connecting with others in your meeting, and requested a show of hands, that you might make a great Bridge Contact. Consider connecting Friends, and search [pym.org](http://pym.org) to see the Collaboratives teams.

A Friend thanked the clerk for the report and asked about meeting schedule. The clerk replied that the group meets monthly, as well as the subcommittees. Another Friend asked about how thread gatherings are decided. The clerk replied that QLC has care of Threads and still needs to discern how to engage Friends in the work of the planning, and in the interim, the current system for thread-planning that functioned in our previous structure continues. After a question about Faith and Practice, a Friend shared that there are five drafts in the session's library. The clerk was asked to further define Resource Friend. She gave the following example: If there is a

request for assistance from your meeting, the meeting could be connected with a Resource Friend can share their gifts/experience/resources. The Presiding Clerk added that the goal is to create a registry of Resource Friends.

The clerk reviewed Sprints briefly, mentioning the Retreat for Friends of Color in its planning stages, as is Nuts and Bolts, a resource for monthly meetings. This is not an exhaustive list. A Friend complimented the funding process for QLC, that it is much improved in ease.

Penny thanked Lane and QLC for the report, which was shared in summary and in full in advance of the meeting.

### Sessions Coordinating Committee Report

QLC's clerk then introduced the clerk of the Sessions Coordinating Committee (SCC), Emily Blanck (Mickleton MM), also a member of Implementation Committee. SCC's clerk gave the report, beginning by sharing what she loves about Sessions, thanked PYM staff Tricia Coscia (Yardley MM) and her assistant, Eric Berdis, for their work, and she asked us all to thank them. Four members of the committee stood in recognition. SCC's clerk also thanked us all for attending. She lifted the query: "What is sacred about Annual Sessions for you?" and we were asked to share that thought with one friend. SCC's clerk shared a presentation with Friends, mindful of the query shared at Annual Sessions 2015: "What is God calling PYM Quakers to do next to end racism and white supremacy in the Religious Society of Friends and Beyond?"

SCC's clerk gave the history of the last year of Sessions, beginning with Continuing Sessions held in Fall 2015, with 350 in attendance, and Spring 2016, with 375 attending. These Sessions included a focus on continuing education and work and witness to build stronger networks that will become Collaboratives. The growth of the SCC was outlined as beginning as the Interim Sessions Development Committee, tasked with the broad vision of Sessions, continuing to the present Session Coordinating Committee, tasked with the vision for the long term. She showed a word cloud lifting up key words for what is most important and sacred about "Annual Sessions."

The focus of Annual Sessions is on discerning individual leadings, deepening and enriching our faith, having joyous time together, conducting effective business, insuring that our corporate leading is part of our business, and meeting as a multigenerational community. Continuing Sessions needs to be lean since it is held on one day, focusing on core essential needs: belonging and fellowship, expressing and exploring our identity as Quakers, and multigenerational time. More Friends are needed for short and long term projects, and Friends should see the SCC clerk or Tricia Coscia to assist. The SCC clerk invited the community to Westtown on November 5, 2016 for the fall Continuing Sessions.

One Friend asked for a definition of racism and white privilege, and suggested a goal of “progress toward equity” rather than “ending racism.” The Presiding Clerk thanked the SCC clerk and the Committee for their report.

### Undoing Racism Group Report

QLC’s clerk affirmed the 2015 query lifted above in SCC’s report as clearly affirming the work that QLC does. She introduced co-clerks Vanessa Julye (Central Philadelphia MM) and Lucy Duncan (Green Street MM) of the Undoing Racism Group (URG) with their third co-clerk, Noah White, not being present.

Vanessa shared that URG was created at 2014 Annual Sessions, as a response to many Friends noting they did not see anything speaking to race in this new structure. It was suggested by then-clerk Jada Jackson that a group come up with a minute. The minute was not approved by the body, noting that it needed seasoning and work when brought before the body later in that Sessions. Their working document regarding their goals and work can be found at the [Undoing Racism Group pages on pym.org](#).

Four URG groups were noted:

- Friends of Color Retreat held in 2015 (Sprint); URG is in the process of planning another one
- Learning Communities- committed to put racial justice at the core of all that we do and in our practices
- Connecting with Communities of Color in our surrounding neighborhoods to collaborate more effectively (networking)
- Holding ourselves accountable to co-create a new kind of community here at PYM

Lucy reiterated that following our Annual Sessions theme, we are trying to transform PYM. Regarding the authors of *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship*, she shared that they wanted to do a book on the “courageous few.” Inspired by the idea, Lucy shared her vision of a courageous *many*; what if PYM was the “courageous *many*,” being the change we want to see? URG meets nearly monthly and generally has thirty members in attendance. Thirteen present Friends stood and were recognized for participating in these groups, which are open to anyone active in PYM. Each meeting includes a learning activity and then work. Their plan is currently on the PYM website. In September, this group will go on a retreat to assess its long-term vision.

Vanessa repeated our 2015 query. Three proposed actions around collective witness were offered in response:

1. William Penn Annual Lecture and the concern for changing its name considering Penn’s history of owning and trading enslaved Africans. URG will present the question to Young Adult Friends, which sponsors the event to see if perhaps it should be renamed. It was

shared that a Friend of Color who had been invited to be a featured speaker did not accept the invitation because of the current name. Names such as Bayard Rustin, Lucretia Mott, Sarah Mapps Douglass were offered as other options.

2. Desire to make Black Lives Matter (BLM) signs available to any meeting that would like them.
3. (Shared by Lucy) Initiative to look at the origins of our wealth as outcomes of oppression and considering the formation of a small fund toward reparations to support the ministries of Friends of Color.

The full group will meet for dinner Friday at Sessions, upstairs, and all are welcome to join them.

Penny thanked the presenters and asked for questions. One Friend shared that Concord Quarter is considering how to be present and responsive, exploring with other faith communities in West Chester, PA, how to accompany People of Color during emergency events. She gave support for BLM signs, but would like a sign to show our Quaker solidarity specifically.

Lucy reminded us of the work of the Quaker Social Change Ministry under the care of AFSC, which helps teach the practice of regular accompaniment, helps meetings find a neighborhood community to be with in accompaniment over time. Five pilot groups in this program this year were deeply moved by this work.

A Friend asked if John Woolman as a series name (for renaming the William Penn Lecture) might be an option. Lucy shared that the name was in fact offered, but the decision rests with Young Adult Friends. A Friend explained about networking, and that the Called Meeting in January 2015 helped Friends learn about what is being done throughout PYM. Several have signed up to be contact persons within their meetings. Friends may visit the website for networking lists.

In closing their report, Lucy noted that URG is not yet part of the PYM structure and that the proper fit has yet to be assessed.

#### Implementation Committee Report

The Presiding Clerk introduced the Implementation Committee (IC), thanking them for the work of 18 months. The IC presentation was given by their clerk, Jonathan Snipes (Fallsington MM)

The IC clerk thanked and named the members of the committee and began by sharing a dream about a collapsing wall, to which he reflected to his wife, “perhaps sometimes even old beautiful structures need to be taken down.” He felt the blessing of working with Friends to be profound, and thanked and recognized the varied gifts and skills of the group.

The IC was formed during the 2014 Annual Sessions to foster the process of moving PYM from its former structure to the structure proposed by the Long Range Planning Group. *Re-Kindling Our Fire: A 5-Year Plan for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting* was the framework used by the Implementation Committee in each step of its process. Friends including those serving on Standing Committees, Working Groups and other committees, moved with openness and good spirit as change was navigated together. Currently, Administrative Council and Quaker Life Council are in full operation, Nominating Council has been expanded, and new Collaboratives and Sprints have begun their work.

IC has been in dialog with the Undoing Racism Group, as it further discerns its role within PYM, as PYM has committed itself to ending racism and white supremacy within PYM and beyond. The Undoing Racism Group is playing a crucial and ongoing role in these efforts and is now seeking to define a formal role within PYM's structure. Consideration of this critical issue should be a priority for the group concerned with structure.

**The transition work now being substantially completed, Implementation Committee requests to be laid down. This request was approved with deepest thanks.**

The IC clerk then requested that in order to guide any remaining work and to deal with other issues of structure as they may arise, the formation of an *ad hoc* structure group composed of the clerks of the three Councils, PYM Presiding Clerk, General Secretary and five at-large members. To provide continuity, the five at-large members could be three Friends from Implementation Committee and two from Nominating Council.

A Friend asked how long would the *ad hoc* group last, and Jonathan suggested term length to be one to three years. Another Friend asked if this *ad hoc* group might be making the structure too complicated and that Administrative Council look at our governance structure. Several Friends also agreed that more seasoning is needed for this concept. Friends repeated the concern that we are building in extra structure and asked if the current structure can manage questions like these.

The Presiding Clerk shared that she is persuaded from the comments that we are not yet in a place for a decision, and she asked for other suggestions on structure. A Friend thought that we need a place for structure decisions when we need it, as we don't know when we'll need it. Another Friend asked that we include members of the Undoing Racism Group, as we need to be aware of institutional racism. Another suggestion was to consider how Elders are included. A Friend shared that we need some mechanism by which we can continuously monitor our process with periodic assessments and look for ways to improve.

Another Friend, concerned about going outside of our structure already, asked why the new structure couldn't handle these concerns. A Friend asked if Continuing Sessions might approve a proposal made by the Undoing Racism Group so that it has its properly-understood place and role, rather than "as this group over all of everything." A Friend then asked if we remembered what started us on this journey: As a body we noted a need for something in the structure that would help us with this work. She gave a plea for the view to be rather than as a group "taking over," but instead to be viewed as Friends with a deep concern and deep leading.

The Presiding Clerk reviewed our history with the new structure, created by the Implementation Committee, and stated that there is still one more question about our structure, understanding that others may arise. How will questions be discerned in future? We must understand if there is something existing currently to make these discernments or if we must create another substructure.

The General Secretary reflected that she heard a concern about the way in which we review our structure regarding institutional racism.

The Presiding Clerk determined that right action would be to give the leadership body of our clerks some time in discernment and that they may be able to come back on Sunday with a recommendation to the body. This course of action was supported by Friends.

We then adjourned at 8:45 pm, after a period of brief worship, intending to reconvene at 9 am on Friday morning.

In Service,

Recording Clerk, Erika Juran (Harrisburg MM)

Recording Clerk, John Lavin (Birmingham MM)

Presiding Clerk, Penny Colgan-Davis (Germantown MM)

# QUAKER LIFE COUNCIL REPORT

**ANNUAL SESSIONS**  
**July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

# Heart-Sharing/Shout-Out

- **Heart-sharing/shout-out: How does your Spiritual Community nurture your work?**

# Council Structure

- We've created internal committees (Governance, Funding, Program, and Sessions) to create and sustain these processes
  - Sessions Planning is now the **Sessions Coordinating Committee** (responsible for both Continuing and Annual Sessions planning)
- We have begun reaching out to Friends outside of our Council to bring their wisdom, spirit, and expertise to this work
- The Council now Meets once a month to create and implement processes for supporting the work and needs of our Yearly Meeting

# Collaboratives

- Collaboratives are formed by Friends who have a common interest or ministry
- They are self-organized and self-facilitated and are formed under the care of the Quaker Life Council (QLC) through a process established by the Council
  - Friends establishing Collaboratives will apply through the **Application for Work, Witness, or Activity within PYM** on the PYM website
- Collaboratives reach out to Friends in all meetings to form a focused community across worship groups, monthly meetings, or quarterly meetings
- By definition, each collaborative will include Friends from several different meetings

# Current List of Collaboratives

- **Middle East Collaborative**
- **The Eco-Justice Collaborative**
- **The Legislative Policy Collaborative**
- **Spiritual Formation Collaborative**
- **The India Friends Collaborative**
- **Public Education Collaborative**
- **Supporting Individuals Calls to Ministry Collaborative**

# What the Collaboratives are up to!

## Eco-Justice Collaborative

◦ The Friends Economic Integrity Project of EJC just published another book, **Toward a Right Relationship with Finance** and a video, “**Climate Race and Justice**,” which will be shown at an Eco Justice workshop this Saturday or at Monthly Meetings, on request

◦ ECJ is also: 1) working with Friends schools regarding greater sustainability;  
◦ 2) providing groups with climate witness and moral advocacy training;  
◦ 3) coordinating with faith groups and monthly meetings regarding climate advocacy in Pennsylvania; and  
◦ 4) organizing climate awareness nature walks

# What the Collaboratives are up to!

## Legislative Policy Collaborative

- Their major goal for this current year has been to engage Young Adult Friends in public policy
- On February 6, they held their first FCNL contact gathering at Friends Center to introduce the mission of their collaborative, share stories and lobbying practices, and give monthly meeting contacts a chance to meet each other face to face
- As part of the mission to engage Friends in public policy, they coordinated one major lobbying effort on Sentencing Reform (#UnlockJustice)
- More recently, they have planned a series of workshops for this Annual Session, which focus on the transformative nature of lobbying on behalf of our Testimonies as part of one's spiritual journey

# What the Collaboratives are up to!

## Spiritual Formation Collaborative

- The Spiritual Formation Collaborative has just completed leading its nine-month program at Lancaster and Central Philadelphia Meetings
- They are exploring offering it to several other Meetings
- They are exploring offering two residential weekend Spiritual Formation renewal programs open to anyone who wants to bring the program to their Meeting
- These would be a time for Friends who are active in Spiritual Formation to get inspired, get grounded and continue to grow deeper in their faith.
- They hope to use the great experience and skill of the BYM folks in helping them move in this new direction

# What the Collaboratives are up to!

## Supporting Individual Calls to Ministry Collaborative

- Develop resources for supporting individual calls to ministry:
  - These resources will be posted on the PYM website and may include discernment practices, clearness committees, support groups, spiritual accountability, mutual accountability, financial management, overcoming obstacles, job descriptions, frequently asked questions, adult education curriculum, etc.
- Conduct workshops and trainings related to supporting individual calls to ministry
- Cultivate discussions via PYM Connect to address common concerns and issues, offer prayer and support, and notify people of upcoming workshops and trainings

# Threshing Session for Minutes of Concern from Quarterly Meetings

◦ Thanks to the thoughtful work and discernment of the Supporting Individual Calls to Ministry Collaborative, the Quaker Life Council will host a threshing session for Minutes of Concern from Quarterly Meetings on **Saturday at 12:30 pm**

# QLC Funding

- The Quaker Life Council has also joyfully provided resources and support using our budget
- Like the **Application for Work, Witness or Activity within PYM**, there is now a **Funding Application for Fiscal Year 2017** on the PYM website!
- QLC Budget:**
  - Amount Budgeted: 39,150**
  - Additional Donations: 2,000**
  - Strategic Reserve: 50,000**

# QLC Funding, Cont'd.

- From total QLC Funding Budget, 16,775 was requested, 13,675 was approved, 3,694 was returned (total used: 9,981)
  - 5,675 was used to support the work of the Collaboratives
  - 1,500 was used to support the Summit of Change
  - 6,500 was used to support the White Privilege Conference (around 200 PYM Friends attended!!)
- The 3,694 that was returned were scholarship funds that were not utilized

# PYM & The White Privilege Conference

- In one of our first actions, the QLC chose to supply additional funds (additional to the support that we provided as members of the host team) should be designated to help PYM Friends attend the Conference
- These funds supported a total of 18 PYM Friends (we gave full reimbursements to everyone who applied, which included several people who applied after the deadline)
- As I previously mentioned, not all of the funds were used: there has been a conversation about where structural racism may have come up in this process, and it's mostly in the convoluted nature of the registration and then aid application process (we think that it made the whole thing less accessible)
  - We were also on a time crunch, swamped with other things, and didn't do hardly as a good job in outreach about the availability of the funds as we could -- this is where we will work to improve for the future

# PYM & The White Privilege Conference, Cont'd.

- The Spirituality and Social Justice Thread Gathering has been scheduled for Saturday, September 24 at Swarthmore Meeting
- We would like to make the focus of this Thread Gathering follow up from the White Privilege Conference
  - We'll invite all of the PYM people who attended the WPC to attend this Thread Gathering, and it will be announced in other places, too (we haven't yet discerned what the content of the time will be, as making WPC the focus of the Thread Gathering was a recent idea/decision)

# What We've Learned/Coming Soon

- Soliciting Feedback and living in Spiritual Community is essential!
  - Coming Soon
    - A structure for stewardship between the Council and supported groups (Collaboratives, Sprints, etc).
    - Resources Friends
    - Inviting more Friends to participate in the new structure: it won't work without Friends participating! Please think about saying yes!
  - A Collaborative Meet & Greet at Sessions: **Friday @ 1:00 pm**

## **Report from Implementation Committee Philadelphia Yearly Meeting 2016 Annual Sessions**

The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) Implementation Committee was formed during the 2014 Annual Sessions to foster the process of moving our Yearly Meeting from its former structure to the structure proposed by the Long Range Planning Group. “Re-kindling Our Fire: A 5-Year Plan for Philadelphia Yearly Meeting” was the framework used by the Implementation Committee in each step of its process.

The work accomplished in the past year and a half has been profound. Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and those serving on Standing Committees, Working Groups and other committees, moved with openness and good spirit as we all navigated this change together. At this point, Administrative Council and Quaker Life Council are in full operation, Nominating Council has been expanded, and new Collaboratives and Sprints have begun their work.

With this transition work substantially completed, Implementation Committee requests to be laid down. To guide any remaining work, and to deal with other issues of structure as they may arise, Implementation Committee recommends the formation of an ad hoc structure group composed of Clerks of the three Councils, PYM Presiding Clerk, General Secretary and five at-large members. To provide continuity, the names of several Friends from Implementation Committee will be forwarded to Nominating Council for its consideration to fill two of the at large seats on the ad hoc structure group.

Implementation Committee has been in dialog with the Undoing Racism Group, as it further discerns its role within PYM. The Yearly Meeting has committed itself to ending racism and white supremacy within PYM and beyond. Undoing Racism Group is playing a crucial and ongoing role in these efforts, and is now seeking to define a formal role within PYM’s structure. Consideration of this critical issue should be a priority for the ad hoc structure group.

In appreciation,

Jonathan R. Snipes, Clerk

Implementation Committee

# **Working Document of the Undoing Racism Group of PYM: Fostering Beloved Communities of Love and Justice**

## **The Call into Beloved Community**

During the 2014 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM) Annual Sessions, a Friend of color (among others) observed that PYM's diversity does not reflect the diversity of our neighborhoods, and called on PYM to address the racism that still persists in our Society. In response, a multiracial group of Friends came together at Sessions and has continued to meet since, holding honest conversations and seeking way forward for PYM and its faith communities. This Undoing Racism Group shares a collective vision and proposes actions which may work to develop the kinds of beloved faith communities we wish for our Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meetings, along with other bodies under our care.

## **A Vision for Beloved Community**

All PYM members and Meetings responsibly co-create that community which graces our Worship and other forms of Spiritual communion. As Bayard Rustin put it, "Good will and love build the sacred base of real [community], in which the dignity and equal opportunity of every person is sacred and guaranteed."

## **Our Current Condition**

Friends yearn for Beloved Community even as we live in a world marred by racism and the huge harm it has caused for centuries. Racism belittles us all, but people of color suffer the most. Many describe the central issue as "white supremacy," which legal scholar Frances Lee Ansley defines as "a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings." Friends may not consciously collude with these systems or realize the ways we participate in supporting them. However, to the extent that we as Friends do not actively dismantle white supremacy and racism, we remain complicit with and perpetuate them.

The October 2014 issue of Friends Journal featured articles by F/friends of color who testify that racism persists within the Religious Society of Friends, including within PYM. European cultural norms, which influenced the founding of the United States and of Quakerism, continue to be dominant within PYM as they are within the larger society. But that is only part of the story. Just as the Living Christ invited Early Friends into greater "perfection," our Guide encourages us today to be open to continuing revelation and the growth it asks of us. All of us deserve Beloved Community in our meetings; yet today, Friends of color experience daily the weight of racism and white supremacy. Our belief in "that of God in everyone" holds us responsible to our God, ourselves, and other people, to undo racism and white supremacy both within ourselves and within our faith communities.

## **A Spirit-Led Invitation**

To be a community richly reflective of all people and to assist Spirit to move freely within and between us all, will require that our meeting communities learn to embrace a world-view of wider and more varied cultural norms, to identify and dismantle white privilege, and to engage in anti-racism work within and beyond the Religious Society of Friends. The Undoing Racism Group sees this as vital spiritual work from which all Friends can benefit. We freely acknowledge that this requires long-haul commitment, and we believe that, with Divine assistance, PYM Friends can co-create sweet Beloved Community, welcoming, inclusive, and nurturing of us all. We invite Friends and Meetings to join us, as they are led.

## Priorities and Plan of Action (a work in progress) of Undoing Racism Group of PYM

The Undoing Racism Group, as individuals and corporately, feels Spirit powerfully rising among us. We share the following as a work in progress with our PYM community. We have formed working groups to address each of the following four areas. We hope that you will join us in implementing the following actions, and we welcome your heart-felt prayers, thoughts, words, and actions, to help this vision become a reality.

1. **Learning communities.** We commit to put racial justice at the center of our spiritual commitments, to make changes to our structures and practices as we learn, and to:
  - a. Provide and participate in annual trainings for PYM Friends and staff, to learn models for discussing racism and white privilege. These will include separate spaces for white people and for people of color, as well as opportunities for these groups to join together.
  - b. Provide and participate in trainings for white Quakers to learn effective ways to identify and lovingly interrupt instances of racism. Create and nurture ongoing support circles for white Friends committed to this work.
  - c. Provide ongoing programs for Young Friends and Middle School Friends to learn about racism and ways to address it in their own lives.
  - d. Encourage participation in the White Privilege Conference in Philadelphia, March 2016.
  - e. Provide a library of related resources on the PYM website.
  - f. Examine and revise our Quaker practices and structures, based on discerning that which is essential to Quaker faith. Pare away those artifacts of white, class-specific culture we may find there.

Contact: Kathy Miller [kathy.miller@gmail.com](mailto:kathy.miller@gmail.com)

2. **Support Friends of color.** We commit to finding practices that actively support Friends of color so they may feel welcome and safe to grow as fully engaged members and leaders of our faith communities, by:
  - a. Supporting Friends of color through the development of leadership, support committees, travel committees along with providing childcare to enable meeting participation and active involvement.
  - b. Providing opportunities for Friends of color to gather together.
  - c. Developing and implementing a clear process to respond early, humbly, firmly, and lovingly to support both Friends who experience racist behavior among Friends and Meeting communities which, wittingly or not, commit it.

Contacts: Vanessa Julye [v\\_julye@aol.com](mailto:v_julye@aol.com) or Viv Hawkins [friendviv2@gmail.com](mailto:friendviv2@gmail.com)

3. **Connect with communities of color.** We commit to reaching out and learning more about people and communities of color in our surrounding neighborhoods, seeking to find how Friends can be supportive and collaborate more effectively with these neighbors, and to:
  - a. Teach and support meetings to find effective and spiritually grounded ways to connect with and companion those local communities most impacted by oppression.
  - b. Learn ways to develop meaningful relationships with people of color in the communities in which we reside, knowing that real love is a motivator for change, and that our inevitable mistakes may become the source of our greatest learning.

Contact: Lucy Duncan [lduncan@afsc.org](mailto:lduncan@afsc.org)

4. **Hold ourselves accountable.** We commit to hold ourselves accountable to co-create a new kind of PYM community committed to undoing racism and examining and ending white privilege within PYM. Toward that goal, we will work to implement the following mechanisms:
  - a. Assess annually our progress in undoing racism and eliminating white privilege among PYM.
  - b. Assist a portion of the state of the meeting reports to reflect on meetings' efforts to understand and address racism and white supremacy.
  - c. Advocate time is allocated for this work annually at PYM Annual Sessions throughout the 5-year implementation of the Long-Range Plan, with the assistance of PYM's clerk and the Sessions Planning Group.

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