

Report to Permanent Board From the *Ad-hoc* Workgroup on Challenging White Supremacy

September 19, 2020 Permanent Board Meeting

Purpose, Background and Policy:

The Permanent Board *ad-hoc* workgroup on Challenging White Supremacy (CWS) was convened in 2017 with the charge of responding to the query from the Clerk of New England Yearly Meeting with regard to the 2016 NEYM Minute on White Supremacy: *“How will this faithful engagement with the work of interrupting white supremacy among the people called Quakers in NE continue?”* (Fritz Weiss, NEYM Clerk).

Review of workgroup activities: The focus of this workgroup from the outset has been to support, motivate and encourage New England Friends who identify as white, and their monthly meetings, to energetically progress on the road to becoming a caring, just and anti-racist society. CWS has offered workshops from 2 to 6 hours in length, for meetings, Quarters and NEYM, on racial identity, implicit bias, how to see the signs and evidence of white supremacy-tainted thinking and behaviors, and how to transform these behaviors when we recognize them in ourselves.

We, as a PB workgroup, dedicated to “challenging white supremacy” wish to attest to, and celebrate the widespread evidence of a shift in readiness and commitment to the work of anti-racism around the Yearly Meeting due to committed and faithful outreach to encourage racial healing by many Friends, and due to the inspired and compelling ministry we have received, to awaken hearts to the imperative of this work.

Going Forward:

With all the evidence that priorities and needs are evolving, CWS wants to maintain an agnostic attitude about the future of the workgroup. All members of CWS have demonstrated a personal commitment and priority to continue the work of racial healing. In fact several of our members have accepted responsibilities for racial justice-related work that will limit their time and availability for service on CWS. Some on the workgroup have expressed a leading to move beyond the initial stages of teaching racism awareness as a cultural phenomenon, and to rather engage with Friends in the deeper spiritual imperative to root out the foundations of “othering” and domination culture within our hearts—work for which white people have a particular responsibility. CWS is clear that we, as an *ad hoc* work group, are in a place of transition in our understanding of our mission. Our priority is to support and advance the blossoming sense of collaboration and intersectionality that is in evidence among the various racial justice committees and work groups (RSEJ, Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness, Reparations (now laid down), and Earthcare Ministries). We also appreciate and support the effort and commitment that was devoted to the “Calls” for healing and justice that were brought to Sessions 2020, and the *ad hoc* activities of individuals who are working diligently to interrupt racist behaviors and foster racial healing.

The landscape of the work of racial justice and racial healing is evolving within the Yearly Meeting and CWS does not yet know how we as individuals, or as a work group, can best support that evolution. We have welcomed the news that RSEJ/Earthcare Witness wish to reconvene a meeting of representatives

from the various racial justice committees this fall and we trust that way will open as we listen and strive to be faithful to the work together.

Submitted by Susan Davies,

Clerk of *ad hoc* Challenging White Supremacy workgroup