

**Report from Northampton Friends Meeting's
Nuclear Disarmament and Climate Action and the Racial Justice Working Groups
in response to New England Yearly Meeting's Call to Urgent, Loving Action**

The Nuclear Disarmament and Climate Action (NDCA) working group and the Racial Justice Working Group held a 9:30 hour in November 2020 to engage with New England Yearly Meeting's Call to Urgent, Loving Action. Earthcare Ministries, one of the sponsoring committees of the Call, wants to know what work meetings have done to address the intersection of racial injustice and climate change, in part to inspire other Meetings and to move us forward as a Yearly Meeting. What follows is a synopsis of the 9:30 hour and a report from the two working groups on the work that Northampton Friends Meeting has done, primarily through these two working groups, to address the intersection of climate and race.

9:30 Hour on New England Yearly Meeting's Call to Urgent, Loving Action report

Places where we have seen the intersections:

- The 2011 tornado that hit Springfield, taking out a swath of section 8 housing
- Disparity of impact of the pandemic, with communities already living with racial and economic disparities being hardest hit by the pandemic and bearing the largest brunt of climate change and environmental pollution
- Biomass project proposed for Springfield
- Conflict minerals (profits from ores mined in harsh conditions used to finance war and avarice); uranium mining on Native lands

Some of the work we have done, both corporately and individually:

- Minutes on racial justice
- Voluntary Carbon Tax fund
- Engage with NEYM's Draft Letter of Apology to Native Peoples
- Nuclear weapons ban work (which is linked to the racism of nuclear testing being done on Native lands)
- Variety of 9:30 hours and workshops that help us talk across differences and beliefs (looking at money, Christian language, for example) to help us build capacity for engaging in the difficult conversations related to race and climate change
- One member's scholarship focus has shifted to embrace indigenous issues
- FWCC, FGC, and Everence can help people think about how to deal with their wealth

What can help us stay committed:

- Look at our testimonies on a regular basis for accountability
- Be attentive to food as an intersectional issue
- Work together
- Have regular working group meeting times
- Cultivate the habit of noticing (attitudes, systems, and patterns re race and racial disparities)
- Discipleship with the Poor People's Campaign

- Submit ourselves to different cultural experiences and expressions.

Work we can do and what gifts we have:

- Create a forum for sharing our activism; more sharing would give us more opportunity to see intersections and to get inspired
- Do more work intergenerationally, to inspire young people; to listen to young people's spiritual leadings.
- Support preventing evictions in Springfield
- Address Biomass issues
- Highlight environmental gains from less travel during the pandemic.
- Build community by hosting opportunities to educate the larger community to help them/us find their path.
- While each working group can have its own focus, there's a vitality and release of energy to look at the intersections of our work

We identified some next steps

- Work with other faith communities
- Relook at having a Peace and Social Justice committee
- Just do something! Trust that any collective action helps build community which helps us feel less fear. To do something as a meeting, we have to do something.
- Lobby for basic income

Recap of work Northampton Friends Meeting has done to address these intersecting issues:

- We have two working groups dealing with racial justice and with climate issues/nuclear disarmament
- We have study groups that engage in understanding racial injustice and in unearthing and dismantling white supremacy culture
- The NDCA working group guided the Meeting into compliance with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
- The NDCA travels in the ministry, educating other meetings within the Yearly Meeting on coming into compliance with the Treaty
- Because we don't know what we don't know, the Meeting continues to educate itself/ourselves on issues of racial justice and climate,* so that we understand the deep roots of racism, the causes of war, and the effects of climate injustice. We keep learning, which motivates people in Meeting to take corporate and individual actions. One example: after Meeting changed banks to come into compliance with the nuclear treaty, one member divested in her personal life; another person continues to talk to her bank about the issues
- Many from our meeting have been attending programs offered by AFSC, Beacon Hill Friends House, the Karuna Center, and Sojourner Truth School for Social Change Leadership
- We have approved minutes on racial justice, climate issues, nuclear issues

- We endorse events and movements, such as the 400 Years Project
- People bring information about local organizations engaged in social change back to the working groups and to Meeting, such as Arise for Social Justice and Gardening the Community
- Individuals bring opportunities for civic engagement and sponsorship to the meeting community
- Until the Pandemic, we were supplying a meal a month to the homeless shelter
- On nuclear issues, we're trying to get the Yearly Meeting to align with the Treaty and with our Quaker values by removing any connections the Yearly Meeting may have with the nuclear weapons industry
- We encourage people to participate in events related to racial justice and climate change: for example, community watching of *Dawnland*; attending Quarterly meeting when topics relate to Climate Justice; joining in a celebratory demonstration the day the Treaty went into effect; participating in a march related to indigenous reparations
- A member of the Racial Justice Working Group has been involved in the commission established in Northampton to study policing practices and reform options

Possible next areas to focus our attention. The two committees are open to Meeting's guidance, leadership, and involvement here:

- Address the intersection of nuclear disarmament; racial inequalities; climate issues through support of the Green New Deal
- Poor People's Campaign also addresses these issues
- Informing ourselves on Springfield's Biomass plant and supporting community opposition to it
- Study the relationship between climate change and reparations
- Restorative justice
- Share how we bring our Quaker values to our activism, our work, our neighborhoods, providing the opportunity for grounding our activism in Spirit and seeding ideas for activism
- Keep grounding the work in meeting for worship

* Examples of some of our educational programs:

- Co-sponsor a workshop with Mt. Toby to work with Dr. Amanda Kemp on learning to *Say the Wrong Thing*
- Inviting Gardening the Community to speak with our meeting
- 9:30 hours on noticing the air we breathe (white supremacy culture); making the unconscious conscious; looking at the intersection of food production and race; learning to apologize; the Doctrine of Discovery; engaging with NEYM's Letter of Apology and

Call to Urgent, Loving Action; looking at local indigenous history; covenant of reciprocity

- Role-playing and practicing interrupting patterns of oppression
- Discussion and study groups on *The Hate U Give*; *Me and White Supremacy*; *My Grandmother's Hands*
- Multiple sessions after the murder of George Floyd to address racial inequities and policing practices