

**Permanent Board Meeting
Held over Zoom Video Conference
June 26, 2021**

21-49: Opening Worship

Friends opened with a period of worship. The clerk reminded us of the anniversary of the Stonewall Riot this weekend and of the importance of finding a faith community that is welcoming and affirming of the LGBTQIA+ community. We continue the work of becoming a welcoming community to all seekers and we celebrate the presence of those Friends who might not feel welcome elsewhere.

21-50: Roll Call

The recording clerk called the roll:

Present: Leslie Manning, Clerk; Hannah Zwirner Forsythe, Recording Clerk; Peter Bishop, Deana Chase, Darcy Drayton, Chris Gant, Beth Hansen, Ian Harrington, Rebecca Leuchak, Fran Lightsom, Ed Mair, Christopher McCandless, Jean McCandless, Gina Nortonsmith, Bob O'Connor, Carole Rein, John Reuthe, Martha Schwope, Sara Smith, Will Taber, Bill Walkauskas, Diane Weinholtz, Donn Weinholtz, Morgan Wilson, Kathleen Wooten, Tom Vargo, Mary Zwirner

Ex-Officio: Scot Drysdale (Finance Clerk); Noah Merrill (Secretary); Bob Murray (Treasurer); Bruce Neumann (Presiding Clerk); Elizabeth Reuthe (Secretary's Supervisor)

Visitors: Polly Attwood, Gail Charpentier, Marian Dalton, Susan Davies, Sarah Gant, Elizabeth Hacala, Mey Hasbrook, Janet Hough, Becky Jones, Kathy Malin, LouAnne McDonald, Aaron Sakulich, LVM Shelton, Diana White, Honor Woodrow

Regrets: Kim Allen, Travis Belcher, Martin Zwirner Forsythe, Anna Raddochia, Elizabeth Szatkowski

21-51: Approval of the May Minutes

The minutes from the May meeting were distributed for review. With small corrections the minutes were approved.

21-52: Presiding Clerk's Report

Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk, submitted a written report with updates on his recent work. The report is appended.

21-53: Recommendations on Yearly Meeting Secretary's Sabbatical

Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk, brought a recommendation from Coordinating and Advisory (C&A) on the guidelines for the YM Secretary's sabbatical. That recommendation is appended. It includes three proposed actions for the Permanent Board's consideration:

- Authorize payment of the YM Secretary's full salary during his sabbatical (expected to occur during FY22). This may require drawing on reserves.
- Suggest that the Personnel Resource Group consider a formal and permanent recommendation to this effect.
- Suggest that the Finance Committee incorporate a line item such that funds for the fully-supported sabbaticals are accumulated over a period of years.

Given current reserves, the treasurer believes this proposal could be funded without negative impacts to the YM.

Friends asked questions about the ways Noah might spend his time on sabbatical and were overwhelmingly supportive of this proposal, and of Noah taking a sabbatical.

Friends approved this proposal.

21-54: Sessions Committee Purposes, Procedures, and Composition

Bruce Neumann brought a rewritten Purposes, Procedures, and Composition (PPC) document for the Sessions Committee. That document is appended. In the process of rewriting, Coordinating and Advisory looked at the structure of the Sessions Committee and how the planning process for Sessions can best be served by the committee. This rewrite significantly restructures the Sessions Committee in the hopes of being both more efficient in the various aspects of planning, and more faithful in listening to the needs of our community. Though the document is more detailed than the previous PPC for Sessions committee it is not intended to describe all of the work that goes into the planning for Sessions.

Friends raised a number of concerns with a common theme of inclusion: the role of volunteers is pared down in this PPC document, the role of Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness working group is not named as part of the planning process, and how we plan for accessibility at our events is also not named.

We heard clearly the need for all to feel included in the planning process for our events. We are also reminded that this document is not intended to name all participants in the planning process or all tasks to be completed. Sometimes there is work going on that isn't described and laid out in full. That doesn't always mean that something has been forgotten.

Given the concerns raised, further consideration of the Sessions Committee PPC is postponed until a later meeting.

21-55: Moses Brown Report and Nominations

Dawn Tripp, clerk of the Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown (CNFEMB), shared a brief report about the last year of the committee's work with Moses Brown.

Dawn presented an update to the Moses Brown bylaws which allows for remote participation in Moses Brown Board meetings. The details of this change are appended. Friends approved the change to the Moses Brown bylaws.

Dawn presented a nomination to the Moses Brown Board and several nominations for the CNFEMB. These nominations are made by the committee and have been approved by the Moses Brown Board, pending approval from the Permanent Board.

Zona Douthit as the Friend Nominee to be a Trustee of the Moses Brown Board

Zona Douthit to serve on CNFEMB

Megan Smith to serve on CNFEMB

Friends approved these nominations.

Dawn also presented a recommendation about the clerkship of the committee. David Bourns has agreed to serve as the new clerk of CNFEMB but has requested to ease into the position. Dawn has agreed to continue serving as clerk of the committee, with the assistance of Mike McGuigan (the outgoing Friends Coordinator), while David transitions into the role as clerk.

Friends approved David Bourns as the new clerk and of the transitional period in the clerking role.

21-56: Friends Camp Update and Nomination

John Reuthe, clerk of Friends Camp Committee, updated the Permanent Board on activities at Friends Camp. Children were welcomed to camp this week and though the structure of camp will look different this year we are thrilled to be running the Camp in person this year.

Natalie Bornstein was introduced as the nominee for Assistant Clerk of the Camp committee. The role of Assistant Clerk was created to allow for the training and orientation of the next clerk before they assume the full clerking role.

Friends approved this nomination.

21-57: Secretary's Report

Noah Merrill, YM Secretary, shared an oral report on his work since our last meeting.

After 16 months of sprinting through the worst of the pandemic, Noah reflected on discussions about how to rest. He is encouraging the staff to take time off and thinking about his upcoming sabbatical. As we reenter the world changed by the experience of the pandemic we need to find ways to “return to normal” while giving ourselves space to breathe.

Noah brought an informal request to take a sabbatical beginning somewhere after Oct 1, 2021, to return sometime in February 2022, being gone for about 4 months. A formal request including details about the exact dates of his absence and who will be responsible for the various parts of his work are being discussed and will be shared at our next meeting.

Friends approved the date range for Noah’s sabbatical.

21-58: Challenging White Supremacy Working Group Report

Susan Davies, clerk of Challenging White Supremacy Working Group (CWS), spoke to the written report from the meetings of CWS with members of Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group (NPWG) and the Permanent Board. That report is appended.

CWS does not propose specific actions at the moment; their report is a reflection on the conversations the group has had, their observations on the condition of the Yearly Meeting and noticed patterns of oppression and faithfulness working in the YM.

CWS requested to be laid down in their report to the PB at the March meeting. Our limited discussion on the report from CWS revealed a longstanding tension in discussion of challenging topics in the YM between wanting to take action and not wanting to push the YM beyond its compass. We seek not to outrun our guide but also not to wait for a comfortable invitation to a conversation that requires a level of discomfort.

21-59: Board of Managers of Pooled Funds Report

Kathy Malin, clerk of the Board of Managers of the Pooled Funds, shared an update on NEYM assets in the pooled funds.

The Board of Managers continues its work on transparency in reporting and sharing information about how our funds are invested.

There are many openings on the committee and the Board of Managers hopes that a more diverse group of Friends will consider joining the committee.

Friends had the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns.

21-60: Proposal on Endowment Funds

At the May Permanent Board meeting Bob Murray, Treasurer, shared a proposal to amend the Funds Policy for the use of rollover income from our endowment funds.

The Treasurer requests that the Permanent Board approve a change to the Funds Policy to remove this statement dealing with endowment funds:

“Unspent income shall be reinvested in the fund where it originated unless the fund’s governing instrument instructs otherwise,”

and replace it with:

“Any unspent income remaining in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall remain spendable in the following fiscal year, unless the fund’s governing instrument instructs otherwise. The Treasurer will notify the designated NEYM spending authority and/or the Permanent Board if there is a pattern of unspent funds being built up in a particular fund over a period of years.”

In accordance with proper procedure, this proposed change was given preliminary approval at the May meeting and returned to this meeting for final approval, allowing time for discernment and for concerns to be raised. There being no objections the Permanent Board approved the change to the Funds Policy.

21-61: Laying down of Working Group on Call to Urgent Loving Action

In the advanced documents the Permanent Board received a report from the working group on the Call to Urgent Loving Action. That report is appended. The working group believes their task is complete and that continued work on the Call to Urgent Loving Action is best done in the monthly meetings. The working group requests to be laid down.

Friends approved laying down the working group with appreciation for the ways they have supported discussions on this topic throughout the Yearly Meeting.

21-62: Memorial Minutes

The memorial minutes received by the Permanent Board over the course of the year will be forwarded to Sessions for the Memorial Meeting. Friends approved.

21-63: Closing Worship

Friends closed with a period of worship. We will meet again on July 17th via Zoom.

leslie Manning
leslie Manning (Sep 22, 2021 15:27 EDT)

Leslie Manning, clerk

**Report to Permanent Board
From the Presiding Clerk
June 26, 2021**

At our recent Coordinating and Advisory meeting, we discussed several things of interest to PB:

- Sabbatical for Noah: Over the past year the timing of a Sabbatical for Noah has come up several times. I think I can speak for this body in saying that while we understand the need to postpone the timing from his initial thoughts, we have been encouraging, understanding that the opportunity for refreshment is well-deserved and important to sustain his on-going work. While I assume Noah will communicate the details of timing and planning, C&A has also discussed sabbatical remuneration, and I expect that we will have a proposal about this.
- As part of our continuing review of Purpose and Procedure docs, with the particular concern expressed by Sessions 2019 to *“pay attention to how committee structures can best facilitate effectiveness in the work of our Yearly Meeting”* we considered the form of Sessions planning and how it has evolved over recent years, in particular with changes necessary because of the pandemic. We are submitting a Purpose, Procedure and Composition for Sessions Planning which, if approved, would replace the P,P,&C for Sessions Committee
- We were asked by the FUM Committee to review a proposed minute they would like to bring to Sessions. The minute suggests several ways New England friends might engage with work for the benefit of LGBTQ rights and well-being, simultaneous to continued efforts to change the FUM personnel policy. C&A endorsed the minute, and you can expect to read it in the Sessions Advance Docs.

I'd also like to share some more about the relationship of presentations and discernment this year. At two recent Clerks' Table meetings, with the addition of two Noticing Patterns folks, we considered the weight of several of the agenda items, and the way they are connected, as I said last month, by a “legacy of straight, white people believing that they had or have the authority to exert control over those who do not look like them.” But the recognition of their combined legacies gives us an opening to pivot from reflection to aspiration - a consideration of who we want to become, who do we want to be? We have chosen a rather unusual approach, in that (after tending to a few other pieces of business) we will hear presentations about all the remaining business, initially without time for discernment. The remaining business sessions will be devoted to open discernment around the question “What is God calling us to do? Who is God calling us to be?” I imagine that the various agenda items will rise and be discerned, but that in considering them as a whole the discernment will reflect that awareness. It is also possible that some new minute or action will arise.

Years ago, in a clerking workshop I took with Gordon Brown, he said “Friends come together eager to engage in discernment,” and that they will exercise that discernment on whatever is on the agenda. While we need regular reminders to be tender with each other, I find that I am looking forward to Friends engagement with this year's agenda.

Bruce

**Request to Permanent Board
From Coordinating and Advisory Committee
June 26, 2021**

As Coordinating and Advisory Committee has consulted with Noah over the past year about the need for and timing of a Sabbatical, we have repeatedly considered the remuneration the Secretary is allowed during the time of the sabbatical. Current policy states that the Secretary will receive ½ funding.

But in our consideration we recognize that this may be a limiting factor to a candidate's hope for reflection and renewal. Assuming that a sabbatical is likely to include some travel expenses and such things as fees for retreat centers, in addition to standing expenses that do not vanish during this time (rent, car insurance, etc), the ½ pay could be a very limiting factor in the choice of what to do which will set the stage for true renewal.

Coordinating and advisory requests that PB:

- Authorize payment of the YM Secretary's full salary during his sabbatical (expected to occur during FY 22). This may require drawing on reserves.
- Suggest that the Personnel Resource Group consider a formal and permanent recommendation to this effect.
- Suggest that Finance Committee incorporate a line item such that funds for fully-supported sabbaticals are accumulated over a period of years.

On Behalf of Coordinating and Advisory,
Bruce Neumann, Presiding Clerk, NEYM

Purpose, Procedure, and Composition of Sessions Planning

Purpose:

The Sessions planning team exists to plan the schedule and events that make up the annual gathering of Friends in New England. The various events which comprise our annual sessions should reflect a careful consideration of the spiritual condition of the wider body, considering where there is life, where there is not, where there are breakthroughs, patterns and examples of the Spirit; what needs careful attention and care, and what needs lifting up and celebrating.

The purpose of annual sessions is understood to be the following:

Friends gather at Annual Sessions to encourage the ministry and spiritual life of the Religious Society of Friends in New England. We seek to gather in ways that are intergenerational, welcoming, and inclusive. We seek to share our experience of how the Spirit is moving, and the ways it is impeded, to learn from each other, to discern how God is leading us as a people, and to experience divine love as it appears in our midst and is revealed in our relationships.

We respond to this purpose through: worship, meetings for corporate discernment, workshops, and opportunities for connection, training, fellowship, play, and celebration. At the heart of these events are the meetings for worship with attention to business where we discern how God is leading us as a people.

Procedures:

- Sessions planning will occur by designated groups with differing primary functions, which work will be overseen and coordinated by the Sessions Coordination Team. In addition to more general oversight and coordination, the Sessions Coordination Team will draft a Sessions schedule for consideration by the other functional groups.
 - Theme and Speakers Team: This group discerns the theme for the following years sessions, and Speakers. It is clerked by the Sessions Clerk
 - Program Team: Focuses on Adult programming, typically including Business meetings, Plenary, Bible half-hours, small group opportunities, workshops, etc. Clerked by Sessions Clerk
 - Logistics Team: The Logistics Team will translate specific needs of Adult and Youth programs into physical (room size and numbers), communication (including advance docs, newsletters), and administrative (registration and housing) needs. Clerked by Events Coordinator.
 - Youth Programs Team: Focuses on the programming that will be offered for youth at Sessions, including recruitment of staff. Clerked by the Events Coordinator
- In September of each year, the Coordination Team, the Theme and Speakers Team, and any others they choose to invite will meet to consider the Sessions which just happened. They will consider sessions evaluation forms as well as personal experience, to learn from the recent event. What went well, what challenges were there? What changes might be useful or necessary? How was the spiritual life of Friends in New

England nourished and encouraged? How was the life and experience of monthly meetings considered and supported? The conclusions from this gathering should be the foundation and touchstone for all aspects of planning for the coming year. This meeting will be convened and clerked by the Sessions Clerk. The meeting should include those involved in the previous year's planning who are not otherwise continuing in service.

- Following this meeting, the Theme & Speakers team should meet to consider: their sense of the spiritual condition of the body of Friends who attended (informed by the meeting described above); their sense of how Spirit is moving (or impeded) in the wider body; and wider input, on both potential theme and suggested speakers. This team should distill that sense to a few words or a phrase for the theme, which will be a simple reflection of the work they believe the body needs.
 - This team will then consider what guests should be invited to speak to the gathered body. While most often over the years we have had a plenary speaker on Sunday, and a Bible Half-hour presenter, this group may be led to suggest a different configuration.
 - This team should present the suggested theme and proposed speakers to the Coordination team for approval. The Sessions Clerk should report these to PB for their awareness. Approval by PB is not necessary
 - Upon approval by the Coordination Team, the Sessions Clerk will contact proposed speakers to invite them, and upon their acceptance will assist those individuals in putting together a team of elders.
 - Once the theme, speakers, and elders are confirmed, this team (excepting the presiding clerk and the sessions clerk) can consider that their work is done for the year
- The Coordination Team may meet occasionally through the fall and winter months.
- Beginning in March, the functional teams and the Coordination team should begin to meet regularly to translate the perceived needs into specific events and fit those events into a schedule. Events should include
 - Opportunities to gather in worship
 - Business meetings
 - Opportunities for learning
 - Opportunities for sharing
 - Opportunities for performance, celebrations, special events, and play
- On recommendation of the Coordination Team and with approval of the YM secretary (because of financial implications) a variety of stipended positions may be established to hold a particular piece of work, (e.g. registrar, housing coordinator). Stipended positions will participate in the appropriate functional team, and will be supported by the appropriate staff person, as identified in their role description.
- The NEYM Office Manager will set the schedule for required submissions, including invitation to sessions, program schedule for publication, advance documents, etc.

- The YM Secretary has ultimate responsibility for and oversight of implementation, logistics, financial management, liability, legal and safety concerns for Annual Sessions.

Composition:

A Sessions Clerk should be appointed by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee. This individual will clerk the Coordination team, the Program Team, and the Theme and Speakers Team. This person will work closely with the Events Coordinator, creating the planning schedule and the agendas for planning meetings in consultation with the coordination team. This person will hold an overview of the planning process and will facilitate significant decisions, where the Events Coordinator will be more involved in the implementation of those decisions.

The rosters of each of the following groups will likely include the roles below, but may change based on experience and needs. The Session Clerk, the Presiding Clerk, the Events Coordinator, and the YM Secretary will consult on whether there are personnel changes or procedural changes necessary

The Program Team consists of the Yearly Meeting Secretary, the Presiding Clerk, the Sessions Clerk, the Events Coordinator, the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator, and one of the youth ministries staff.

The Logistics Team consists of The Events Coordinator, the Office Manager, and the Tech Team Lead, and the Sessions Clerk

The Youth Programs Team consists of the Events Coordinator, the Junior Yearly Meeting/Junior High Yearly Meeting Coordinator, the Young Friends Event Organizer, and the Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator.

The Theme and Speakers Team consists of The Presiding Clerk, the Sessions Clerk and 4-6 other Friends chosen by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, both for their connectedness to the wider body of Friends, and ability to listen to those Friends' condition.

The Coordination Team consists of representatives from each of the other teams.

For NEYM Consideration: (Information Only)

Proposed revision to MB bylaws allowing for remote participation in decision making Approved by Moses Brown Board of Trustees on May 25, 2021

Article 2, Section 9: Meetings

The Board shall hold an annual meeting at such time as the Board or its Executive Committee shall decide, or at such time and place as it shall determine from time to time. There shall also be not fewer than four regular meetings during the school year, to be held at such time and place as the Board may determine.

Other meetings of the Board may be called by the Clerk or the Recording Clerk or upon the request of five members of the Board, to be held in the State of Rhode Island, and for such purpose as shall be stated in the call and notice of such meeting.

Consistent with Quaker practices, it is the expectation that Members of the Board attend meetings in person in order to allow the spiritual energy created by attendees to lead the decision-making process. Nevertheless, the School recognizes that it is impractical to expect all members of the Board to attend all meetings and understands that situations may arise in which the Board would benefit from the involvement of members who are not physically present but who are able to participate in the school's governance work by remote means. For the purposes of holding a meeting, the Clerk of the Board may allow one or more Board members to participate in a meeting without being present, provided there is a quorum present in person. For the purposes of joining in discernment and decision making, there shall be no distinction between in-person and remote Members.

~~Consistent with Quaker practices, it is the expectation that Members of the Board attend meetings in person in order to allow the spiritual energy created by attendees to lead the decision making process. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the School recognizes that it is impractical to expect all members of the Board to attend all meetings, and further recognizes that situations may arise from time to time in which the Board would benefit from a discussion which included one or more members who were not physically present but who could participate by means of a telephone or video conference or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other at the same time. The Clerk of the Board may, therefore, in special, extenuating or emergency situations as determined by the Clerk, allow one or more Board members to so participate in a meeting without being present, it being understood, however, that the member or members who do not attend the meeting in person shall not be included in the final discernment of any decision reached by the Board during such meeting.~~

For NEYM Consideration:

The following are recommendations we are seeking approval for by NEYM. This recommendations have been made by the Committee for Nurturing Friends Education at Moses Brown. They have been approved by the Moses Brown Board at its May meeting pending consideration by NEYM:

Friend Nominee for the MB Board:

- **Zona Douthit** – Trustee for the Moses Brown Board –

Zona, an attorney, is a member of Providence Monthly Meeting. She is active in the Peace and Social Action, Pastoral Care and Adult Religious Education Committees. She worked with NEYM to design and implement the Interfaith Pre-Inauguration Vigil on January 19, 2021. Zona has advocated for moving PMM to donate funds for local organizations that provide food and other assistance to families suffering from COVID-19's effects. She is a leading participant in the Alternatives to Violence Project and the PMM's Anti-Racism dialogue. Zona is a wonderful advocate for diversity and issues of justice, and caring for the local community.

Friend Nominees for the Committee for NFEMB:

- **Zona Douthit**

See bio above

- **Megan Smith**

Megan Smith is a member of Providence Friends Meeting and currently on the Board of Trustees and Moses Brown. She works at the House of Hope Community Development Center – a resource and support organization for the homeless. Megan is working towards her doctoral degree in Social Work at Boston University which she will have completed by the fall of 2020. Megan has been an activist, organizer, and leader in helping the homeless. She is clear minded, principled, and articulate. Her faith is deep and supportive of her humanitarian commitments.

Recommendation for Clerkship of CNFEMB:

Because of COVID and the inability for Friends to convene in person, the CNFEMB has recommended a slightly different path for the clerkship of Nurturing Friends for the 2020-2021 school year. We have selected a rising Clerk for this committee, **David Bourns**. David has indicated a desire to ease into the position, and is hoping to have the chance to connect in person with other members of the MB Board as well as the Committee through the fall.

Between now and when David assumes the position of Clerk of NFE later in the school year, **Dawn Tripp** (the current Clerk of NFE), along with **Mike McGuigan** (the outgoing Friends Coordinator) will co-clerk this committee. Dawn is also serving as the incoming Friends Coordinator of the Moses Brown Board. While Mike will no longer be a current trustee, he will be attending all

meetings of the Executive Committee at MB, and he will also partner with Dawn and a small working group to craft the MB Board Retreat in late September on Friends Decision Making and Clerking Skills.

David Bourns

David is a longtime Friend and Quaker educator. He is a member of Providence Friends Meeting where he has served as Clerk of Ministry and Counsel, as well as on a range of other committees. He is currently on the Board of Trustees at Moses Brown. He has served as Head of School at Oakwood Friends School and as Head of School at the George School, a Friends School in Newtown PA. He was the Founding Head of School at the Paul Cuffee School in Providence. David has served as a Board Member and continues to serve as an Honorary Board Member of Community Music Works. David's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as his wisdom and range of experience will be a tremendous contribution to the MB Board.

**Report to Permanent Board from the *Ad-hoc* anti-racism workgroup,
(members of Challenging White Supremacy, Noticing Patterns and Permanent Board)
June 26, 2021**

Purpose, Background and Policy:

At its March 20, 2021 meeting the Permanent Board requested that an *ad-hoc* workgroup comprised of members of Challenging White Supremacy wg (CWS), Permanent Board (PB), and Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness wg (NP wg) meet to explore how to proceed with the recommendation brought by CWS to the March 20th meeting: In short that recommendation was that NEYM affirm (in a minute or some different process) “*that Friends in NEYM intend and aspire for our Yearly Meeting to become an Anti-Racist Faith Community*”. This report shares some of the diverse ways we each have tried to faithfully hold this concern.

We note that NEYM *has already made a clear commitment to anti-racism* – Sessions approved the following minute in 2003.

New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends affirms its commitment to becoming an open, affirming, anti-racist Religious Society. Our understanding of racism is that it is a system that accords advantage or disadvantage based on racial identity. Racism is fundamentally inconsistent with the divine guidance that has led our Religious Society to testimonies such as Equality, Peace and Community. We seek divine assistance and the help of other friends of Truth to examine our individual and corporate complicity in racism. We aspire to a more perfect union with the Author of all, who shows no partiality in the diversity of creation. (second paragraph is not included here)

We, as a yearly meeting have lost sight of the 2003 minute to the extent that we did not even notice it was no longer on our website.¹

Review of workgroup activities:

1. In preparation for convening the larger group meeting, CWS met on April 19th with four members of NP wg who had all attended the 3/20/21 PB meeting.
2. The full workgroup has met 3 times since then, with Friends from CWS, PB and NP wg.
3. Because CWS initiated this concern, as Clerk of CWS Susan Davies has been serving as acting clerk of this *ad hoc* working group. The *ad hoc* working group has received, from some seasoned members, the sense that we are probably best viewed as a transitional body, whose most beneficial role is to shepherd Friends towards establishing a more experienced, knowledgeable, and likely more professionally skilled team, better equipped to help us, in NEYM to see ourselves more clearly, and to help us know how to change how we are with each other.
4. The PB antiracism wg sees little point in affirming another minute that we wish to “be antiracist”.

After our June 17th, 2021 meeting one Friend offered the following observations of patterns and possible responses that might help. We encourage those reading this list to hear this as a dialogue among patterns, not separating each one out, but working across them, to see a larger context:

Pattern: People experience harm and, depending on who they are, they do, or don’t, get support in the repair work needed.

¹ Some monthly meetings have prominently posted the minute in their places of worship. The NEYM Office has now made the 2003 minute more prominent on the NEYM website: <https://neym.org/social-justice-resources>.

Possible action: We identify a process for holding space for and healing harm when it is done that supports those harmed (and doesn't expect them to do all the emotional labor of teaching & managing the process while they are also trying to process their pain from the harm done). We will need this if we are truly to address white supremacy and racism among us

Pattern: When there is a working group or a committee holding the work, some things happen, when the working group or committee is no longer holding the work, it dwindles (for example, the Working Group on Racism, under care of M&C, wrote and worked on the 2003 minute and was laid down a few years later).

Possible action: There needs to be a group charged with helping us all live into the 2003 minute

Pattern: Minutes that we get excited about at Sessions and come to unity to approve don't always have legs beyond Sessions (2003 antiracism minute, 2013 Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery, 2019 minute on Climate Change, etc.) *

Possible action: We need a way keep these minutes alive in both our work between Sessions and in anchoring our work during Sessions (vertical and horizontal integration)

** One Friend responded to this noticing of a pattern in this way: "This does not match my perception when we have passed minutes at Sessions. My take on the 2013 minute of Repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery is that it has had legs. There may have been no immediate actions but it seems to me that it was like a seed that was planted and it was growing out of our sight. It has been mentioned in our work on the Letter of Apology. It was a seed of awareness that was planted and when we came back to working on our relationship with Native Americans, the awareness of the history of the Doctrine of Discover was already present among us so that we have been able to proceed with a greater understanding of the larger historical context. Are we too impatient for immediate results that we do not appreciate the value of slow growing seeds?"*

Pattern: We don't quite know what to do and are also not in unity to ask for outside/expert guidance or help.

Possible action: Find and use internal expertise OR seek consultation from outside expertise around developing a process for moving forward

Pattern: The process needed to delve into deeper anti-racism work is not linear nor prescriptive so it is hard to envision or plan at this stage.

Possible action: Develop some shared vision and find Friends who have experience with iterative/adaptive change processes to support this work (for example, *Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown provides an intro to this kind of process work)

The current group cares about this issue deeply, but is not the full group to carry this work forward (young people are missing, composition is mostly voluntary, etc.)

Possible action: Take some time to think about the composition needed to carry this work forward, and then form a new committee/working group

Pattern: We haven't done much and feel crummy about it.

Possible action: Concretely identify what has happened on the YM level, as well as the work around the MMs, and then look at how we build on our strengths and identify the areas we need to address.

Pattern: We talk a lot, write some minutes, and then ...

Possible action: Using the list from the point above identify action steps that have worked well recently and replicate/build on them

Another Friend observed:

“Racism is the greatest of our oppressions, but it is only one. I would like us to become an anti-oppression yearly meeting. The definition of anti-racism is not as important as living into practices that will build the Realm of God, the beloved community. It is both interior and exterior work. That means that I need to transform myself, to be more humble, to see clearly the harm being done, and to listen more deeply. We do not need to look at things as all good or bad, or to beat ourselves up. For me, I need to see the nuances and complexities. I need to see where my work, in my little areas of influence, can make the world a better place, especially for people who have traditionally been oppressed.”

And another Friends observed:

“... from Lao Tzu, “Have faith in those who are faithful. Have faith in those who are unfaithful, because faith is a virtue.” I realized that I have been judging myself because there is no star of Bethlehem over my head. This does not mean that I am unfaithful, or that I am faithful. I just do the best I can and take the next step. I am learning to let go of setting goals and I focus on what needs to be changed right here, at this current moment. What does this moment need? Most of my learning is unlearning. I get in trouble when I make assumptions. Be as a child. Let your faith be as a child. To do the right thing is not to do something wise or well-reasoned or clever. What matters is that I listen, then listen some more, and do what seems right in that moment, not what seems right in the final plan. I am grateful for this opportunity to work with the Noticing Patterns group, and the current clerks table which is willing to work in uncertainty and learning all that will have to be let go.”

Another Friend observed:

I feel like a beginner but, or so, I keep seeking experiences to stretch me. I have had plenty of opportunities to role model making mistakes and owning them without defensiveness. This keeps me coming back. I don't want to not do things because I am afraid. Being part of a group helps me. Seeing the YM engage in this work encourages me.

The meager evidence of action disappoints and discourages some: why does NEYM seem incapable of taking any big, bold action? Other Friends lift up the need for humility, stamina, and persistence, and striving to cooperate faithfully in the slow work of Grace. It is not about doing something different but being something different. Out of this will come a different thing. The structures are impenetrable until we have become something else, and then they will change because we have changed.

A Friend offered that a piece of the work is about framing the work that needs to be done, understanding that the YM has needs at different levels. Some of the work is urgent, some is intangible and we do not know when the seeds will sprout. Can we find a framework that has openings at the various levels of need in the yearly meeting? How can we call each other to be committed?

Final Report to NEYM Permanent Board

From Call to Action working group

Concerning *The Call to Urgent, Loving Action for The Earth and Her Inhabitants*

June 15, 2021

At New England Friends' Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions in 2020, Friends affirmed the *Call to Urgent, Loving Action for The Earth and Her Inhabitants*. The Call invited Friends into a year of intellectual and spiritual discernment regarding social injustice, including racism and the plight of Mother Earth, to discern actions that can address these systemic and interconnected challenges. A working group consisting of the Clerks of Earthcare Ministry (EMC) and Racial, Social, & Economic Justice (RSEJ) was convened to provide Monthly Meetings with the assistance and support they may need as they answered this call. Friends from the wider Quaker community enriched the Call by adding their thoughts and voices.

In the past year, we have undertaken a number of actions. We have contacted each Quarter and offered an opportunity for us to conduct a presentation on the Call to Action. To this date we have presented at 5 of the 8 Quarters. In October, FWCC also invited us to conduct a presentation on the Call to its northeastern regional meeting. Members of our committees have also taken part in supporting and heralding the call in their meeting communities.. Many participants have expressed a good deal of excitement and energy about the Call and some have articulated a great desire to meet and collaborate with others.

We have also created a set of resources on the NEYM web site for the Call, including the video and text versions of the Call, a number of queries for use in worship-sharing, and related reading materials. We led a worship-sharing at East Sandwich Preparative meeting, and are preparing a template for worship-sharing that can be used by other meetings. This template will also appear on the NEYM site.

There have been others in the Yearly Meeting who have taken up the Calls from Sessions. We particularly note the efforts of Beacon Hill Friends House to address these Calls. We also have heard of Monthly Meetings that have independently engaged in the work of the Call.

We have also made an attempt contact monthly meetings individually, offering our assistance, if needed, and ask meetings to share with us what they have done as individuals and corporately on racial and climate justice. That effort, however, led to only 2 responses to 15 letters sent to individual meetings. We await further opportunities to see how Spirit is moving in the monthly meetings on this critical set of issues.

Several things have given us great joy as we do this work. First, we have been uplifted by seeing how the Call has been received, both at Sessions and at individual quarterly and monthly meetings. Second, we have been inspired by the opportunity to help L.J. Boswell prototype their anti-racism workshop. Third, we appreciate the support of Bruce Neumann, Noah Merrill, and NiaDwynwen Thomas, who met

with us regularly to help provide guidance, particularly on issues of communication. And we gained real energy from the opportunity of having the Earthcare Ministry and the Racial, Social & Economic Committees work together in crafting and supporting the Call.

At this point we ask that the working group be laid down, not because the work is done, but because the remaining work needs to be done at the monthly meetings.






FINAL 2021-6-26 PB Minutes

Final Audit Report

2021-09-22

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