

Minute to IMYM Monthly Meetings re FGC Institutional Assessment

April 9, 2017

To Intermountain Yearly Meeting and the Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups of Intermountain Yearly Meeting:

As Quakers, we have a long and well-documented history of social justice and peace witness. Our daily lives are full of tiny moments in which we check our actions against our testimonies, seeking to act with courage and love rooted in our relationship to God and to humanity. We open our hearts to witness the pain and difficulty experienced by others around us, so that they are not alone, so that we have done our best to accompany them on their journey.

Self-examination is often more difficult than seeing the world outside. It often brings forth things we wish we hadn't known about ourselves. It requires honesty, it requires willingness to change, and it requires compassion. And very often, it requires someone else with a different perspective showing us things about ourselves.

Over recent years of the Friends General Conference (FGC) Annual Gathering, People of Color have repeatedly been the target of racism, both from people living or working around the sites chosen for the gathering, and from the people, the Quakers, attending the gathering. Their children at play have been watched by police, racist local residents have targeted the attendees of the pre-Gathering for People of Color, and white gathering attenders have invaded the safe space and time set aside for People of Color.

In loving challenge, the People of Color and their allies involved in FGC asked to be represented on the site selection committee for future gatherings, and for FGC to undergo an institutional audit for racism.

In the Fall of 2016, Friends General Conference Central Committee decided to move forward with an institutional assessment, and over half the site selection committee now are People of Color. FGC has gathered some of the funds needed to bring in outside resources to help them learn to do the assessment themselves.

Friends, we are challenged to recognize ourselves in this story. We are Quakers. We are part of Friends General Conference. This is not "they," this is "us." If we are not challenging white supremacy, examining it to break it apart, then we are participating in it. If we are not deliberately examining our own Meetings to be certain that we wrap love and recognition and curiosity around every single person who might enter our lives, then we are unquestioningly participating in being part of the dominant culture that does not embrace and lift up every single one.

Can we honestly say that we are constantly holding ourselves accountable to each other in this way? That we have the language to discuss racism and white supremacy, we have the stories of everyone in our Meetings, that we have the depth of loving relationship that allows us to have the difficult conversations we need so that we can hold each other accountable in seeing our own privilege?

Mountain View Friends Meeting encourages Intermountain Yearly Meeting and every Monthly Meeting and Worship Group of IMYM to consider these actions:

1. Minute support of and gratitude for FGC's Institutional Assessment process.

Knowing that this is deep and tender and difficult work, minute our gratitude that Friends General Conference is opening themselves to an institutional assessment focused on racism.

Minutes written so far in support of the assessment can be found at

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2016%20Minutes%20Supporting%20FGC%20Assessment.pdf>

2. Contribute financial support to the cost of the assessment.

The institutional assessment will cost \$60,000. So far, about a third of that has been raised.

3. Begin or refresh our own Meeting or Worship Group examination of institutional racism.

Recognizing that our own meetings very likely reflect the culture and systems in place at Friends General Conference, we can commit to beginning, renewing, or expanding our own exploration of institutional racism.

More information about FGC's institutional assessment can be found here:

<http://www.fgcquaker.org/deepen/help-your-meeting-challenge-racism/fgcs-institutional-assessment>