

Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business
Asheville Friends Meeting
Sixth Month 11, 2017

Fourteen Friends were present: Kitti Reynolds; Katherine Kowal; Sharon Smith; Steve Livingston; Edie Patrick; Wanda Guokas; Jim Barham; Gita Larson; Adrienne Weir; Rusty Maynard; Jim Cavener; Sarah Jane Thomas; Patti Hughes, Clerk; Barbara Esther, Recording Clerk.

Meeting began with a period of silent worship from which clerk, Patti Hughes, read the following:

"Peace does not mean tranquility, and anger does not mean violence. Indeed, peace is all about how we deal with conflict, not how we avoid it when it's present. Sometimes conflicts need to happen for individual and social change to occur."

Quaker Peace and Social Witness, London Yearly Meeting, 2002

Friends accepted the agenda as prepared.

Minute 1: Friends approved Fifth Month Minutes as posted with one spelling correction, Max Parthas.

SAYMA URJ discussion (see attachment)

A Friend offered a query: How do we learn to let go of our defenses of white supremacy and trust the discernment of those among us who are doing the work of dismantling racism in the Religious Society of Friends? Another Friend spoke of her concern for her daughter who has experienced racism "to the detriment" of Friends of Color. She has experienced the hurt and trauma of being a FOC among young Friends in SAYF. Another Friend spoke of her daughter and grandson. A welcome to Amherst Meeting led her to worship while she was a student and mother. Unfortunately, her daughter rejected Quakerism because of her experience in meetings. The question of what we will be doing in our yearly meeting sessions this coming week arose. In order to further a positive outcome, we offer the following minute.

Minute 2: Asheville Friends approve the vision, mission and goals of the Ad Hoc URJ Committee. We seek to empower Friends of Color and support the growth of anti-racism and awareness of the implicit racism white Friends carry in our society. We hope that the committee will be given standing committee status and be able to begin its work. We look forward to the formation of a support group made up of Friends who identify as white.

One Friend stood aside from approval of the minute with some concerns about "the implicit racism" phrase regarding white Friends in the society of the United States.

Committee Reports:

Nominating Committee-Jim Cavener

The first recommendation is for finance committee, Satchel Loftis has offered to be our treasurer.

Secondly, Communication Committee has requested that Nathan Phillips and Bob Lackey be nominated to join them.

Margaret Farmer asks to be released from Peace and Earth Committee. Nominating Committee seeks someone to replace Margaret Farmer on that committee.

Minute 3: The meeting approves the release of Margaret from her work with Peace and Earth Committee, with thanks for her work.

Minute 4: Friends approved Satchel Loftis to serve as treasurer; Nathan Phillips and Bob Lackey to serve on the Communications Committee.

Announcements:

50th Anniversary celebration date set for Sun., Sept.3rd at the rise of worship. We may be able to change the date that the Ethical Society uses the meetinghouse so that we do not have the constraint of time.

SAYMA Annual Sessions run Thurs. -Sun., June 15-18. Friends are reminded that we provide the chat and chew snacks on Thursday evening. The items will be taken by Friends attending SAYMA or left at the meetinghouse by 11:00 am Thursday for Patti Hughes to take.

We closed with a moment of worship and gratitude for each of us who took time to labor with today's agenda to meet again as way opens on Seventh Month 9, 2017.

Attachment 1:

Friends,

At Yearly Meeting last summer, a group of Friends of Color (FOC) were tasked with forming an ad hoc committee to design a standing committee to support FOC in their local communities and to bring more FOC into Quakerism.

This ad hoc committee reported to the March Representatives Meeting, receiving general approval to bring a proposal to SAYMA Yearly Meeting. The name of the committee they propose is the **Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) Committee**. Their specific proposal is included as Appendix A. The minutes from 2016 SAYMA Yearly Meeting guiding their work are in Appendix B.

The matter of creating a standing committee is significant moment of growth for SAYMA. And since the subject of this committee is also related to the central focus of two SAYMA Yearly Meetings (*2016--Unraveling Racism; 2017--Weaving our World Together: Lifting up Racial Justice*), I would ask Friends to reflect on the SAYMA/URJ Committee proposal (Appendix A) before attending Yearly Meeting. Perhaps this could be the focus of an intentional discussion, or it might just be provided to Friends as a seed so that by the time we assemble at Warren Wilson in June we will be able to come together in unity around this important work. Recall that Meetings were invited to reflect upon the following queries earlier this spring.

- How has your monthly meeting used Quaker values to unravel racism?
- What is your meeting doing to weave the threads of our world together?
- How do we avoid conflict or face it fearlessly in divine presence? How do we promote open and honest dialogue in the face of conflict? How does your meeting use Quaker process to resolve conflict?
- How does your meeting outwardly reflect your inner values?
- What is your meeting doing to make Quakerism relevant to young people and people of all ages? Do newcomers feel welcome?
- How do we respond when the “empire” requires us to do something in conflict with our faith and our practice?
- Furthermore, the FOC who are doing this important work need some help identifying other FOC in SAYMA monthly meetings who are not known to them. Consequent to the March Rep Meeting, SAYMA is hosting a retreat for FOC the day before SAYMA. It is important that all FOC are aware of this opportunity and the resources supporting their attendance.

Please give the names and contact information of any Friends of Color associated with your Meeting with the SAYMA/URJ clerks as soon as possible, so that invitations and registration materials can be sent out in a timely manner.

Peace,

Jon Saderholm, clerk SAYMA jsaderholm@gmail.com
Folami Prescott-Adams, co-clerk SAYMA URJ committee drfolami@me.com
Sharon Smith, co-clerk SAYAMA URJ committee starsmith13@gmail.com

Appendix A

SAYMA/URJ Report

Six Friends of Color (Folami Adams (Atlanta), Lisa Bennett (Memphis), Gabrielle Hammonds (Atlanta), Shahina Lakhani (Atlanta), Art Jones (Atlanta) and Sharon Smith (Asheville) were charged with forming a standing SAYMA committee to support Friends of Color and provide educational resources to SAYMA yearly and monthly meetings regarding issues of race and racism. Loving fellowship was enjoyed by all as we accomplished the tasks through working worship on the weekend of November 18-20, 2017 in Atlanta.

The committee members decided that the name of the standing committee is **SAYMA/URJ (Uplifting Racial Justice)**. Folami Adams (Atlanta) and Sharon Smith (Asheville) are its co-clerks. A draft mission statement and vision were written and approved by the committee. Goals were agreed on by canvassing a wider group of SAYMA Friends of color (FOC) regarding what they need to feel safe and welcome as SAYMA Friends of Color. SAYMA/URJ organized the concerns FOC shared with us into Goals, which were approved also.

Vision: SAYMA/URJ envisions a Yearly Meeting community where every Friend of color is safe and feels welcome. We see a SAYMA community where the divine light within every Friend of color is affirmed, his or her unique history, spiritual journey and lived truth is honored, where our messages and concerns, are heard and respected with due consideration. We see a SAYMA community where Friends of color are empowered to build close spiritual Friendships, appreciation, love and support for the weighty responsibilities we carry as people of color embodying Quaker Testimonies, within and outside of the Religious Society of Friends.

Mission: To help SAYMA become a safe and welcoming place for Friends of Color. The committee will do this by providing a safe place for Friends of Color to bring issues and concerns regarding racism within their monthly meetings and SAYMA, and to find support and advocacy. The committee will also work to raise awareness about white supremacy (aka racism) within SAYMA by compiling and disseminating educational resources.

Goals: The following goals were compiled by canvassing SAYMA Friends of color (FOC). We asked what FOC needed to feel safe and welcome among Friends.

1. Help navigate Quaker culture and process (e.g., a FOC welcome committee; a printed guide to Quaker culture for newcomers; and/or assigned mentors).
2. Provide opportunities to connect with other FOC, in order to build a community of support, share experiences and resources, and receive emotional and tactical support from other FOC.
3. Commit to addressing the concerns of FOC and respond to said concerns in a timely manner with sincere listening and not avoidance, “management,” and “process violence.” *

4. Engage in a conflict resolution/reconciliation process that does not expect victims to facilitate or take responsibility for what happened to them.
5. Hire skilled facilitators for private FOC only sessions, to help FOC understand and heal from generational racial trauma and develop personal and group empowerment.
6. Arrange ongoing workshops and other opportunities for learning that focus on dismantling racism for all SAYMA Friends, beginning with the Yearly Meeting leadership (including all clerks, the Planning Committee, Ministry and Nurture, Junior Yearly Meeting, YAFs and the Finance Committee).

Approved:

1. Folami Adams and Sharon Smith will serve as co-clerks.
2. SAYMA/URJ will meet every quarter.
3. Only FOC will be members of SAYMA/URJ
4. SAYMA/URJ encourages Friends of European descent to support SAYMA/URJ by forming a separate committee or working group.
5. SAYMA/URJ will create and manage an independent operating budget with sufficient funds readily available to dispense grass roots reparations and fund operational expenses as needed (e.g., lodging, transportation, and travel expenses; resources; training as well the cost of an annual pre-SAYMA gathering and skilled facilitation).

Recommendations

1. Hire CrossRoads Anti-Racism Training and Organizing to train all the YM clerks and staff as well as Friends in Ministry and Nurture, the Planning Committee, Finance Committee, the Nominating Committee, Junior Yearly Meeting, SAYF and YAFs. <http://crossroadsantiracism.org/organizing/institutional/>
2. Include SAYM/URJ members on the SAYMA Planning Committee, Ministry and Nurture, the Nominating Committee, the Quaker Education Committee, and the Finance Committee. Ideally, there should be at least one SAYF representative/intern working with SAYMA/URJ.
3. Grant SAYMA/URJ an independent operating budget (following the budget model of the SAYF program).

SAYMA/URJ requests a separate bank account in order to establish financial independence and confidentiality for Friends of Color. The money will be used to dispense grass roots reparations** and fund operational expenses as needed (e.g., lodging, transportation, and travel expenses; resources; training; the cost of our annual pre-SAYMA gathering; skilled

facilitation for racial trauma healing for FOC; part-time administrative support, compilation of an anti-racism/multicultural resource database for all SAYMA Friends).

Here is to SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice!

Folami Adams (Atlanta) SAYMA/URJ co-clerk

Sharon Smith (Asheville) SAYMA/URJ co-clerk

Lisa D. Bennett (Memphis)

Shahina Lakhani (Atlanta)

*Process Violence: When Quaker Process is used to block and/or control leadings of the spirit, and otherwise cause harm.

**Grass Roots Reparations: To do right, by giving-back, according to your capacity, without waiting for an act of Congress[one Friend suggested replacing “an act of Congress” with a literal act of Congress]. Individuals and institutions can do this.

Appendix B.

SAYMA 2016 Minutes Concerning the Formation of a Racial Justice Committee:

46-13 Racial Justice Proposal Steve Livingston (Asheville), SAYMA’s representative from Asheville presented the following minute from Asheville Meeting. Asheville Friends approved the proposal at Fifth Month Meeting for Business in Fifth Month. The proposal calls for SAYMA to create a Racial Justice Committee—or whatever they want to call it—charged with supporting SAYMA Friends of Color as a place they can bring their issues and concerns when they come up, as they inevitably must, in an effort to make SAYMA a safe and welcoming community for Friends of Color. This committee would also be charged with educating the wider SAYMA community regarding issues of race and racism; compiling and disseminating resource materials; identifying and selecting workshop presenters, anti-racism trainers, organizers and organizations within our SAYMA region; and facilitating access to said resources among SAYMA Friends.

Comments from the floor: Overall, there was support for creating such a committee; however, some Friends wanted to make sure that we were spending some time reviewing the minute and figuring out what the Yearly Meeting needs in forming said committee.

Friends were clear that this was not the same as Peace and Social Concerns as Racial Justice is not just about what is happening outside of the yearly meeting but also what it happening inside our own body. The Racial Justice Committee would be a place for people of color to come when they have concerns about something happening in the yearly meeting as well as be a committee to support the developing resources for our monthly meetings. This is a

population that deserves to be heard, loved, and fully included. The role of this committee is extremely important for the yearly meeting as a whole to educate and add resources to understanding the issues of racism and the things white Europeans are doing to contribute to racism.

Friends expressed the need to make sure that we are doing outreach and working with our children and addressing their understanding and exposure to diversity or the lack thereof. This committee may help do outreach to people of color. We have this wonderful religion made up of great faith and practice, yet we keep it a secret. There is an opportunity for us to encourage people of color to join our Faith through this committee. Another Friend mentioned that we might want to set guidelines about the makeup of the committee as well as make sure we get input from our young adult friends.

Friends were concerned that at times we have seasoned a topic too much. Friends thought that we might make it an ad hoc committee so that it could start working and discerning what it was called to take part in. Another Friend mentioned that ad hoc did not prioritize the group enough to show that we as a body are committed to the work for the long haul. Also with seasoning, it become easy to make too broad of a proposal that then doesn't allow the committee to do its work reasonably and then dies from over commitment.

Friends mentioned that three different issues had been mentioned: race, outreach and youth. Yes, they all merge, and it is too broad. 46-13-01 The Yearly Meeting affirms the broad idea from Asheville Meeting to form a Racial Justice Committee and unites to form this committee by the end of the weekend. Rebecca Sullivan (Atlanta), Sharon Anise (West Knoxville) and Tim Lamb (Berea) will convene a group of interested Friends to get together to present a report back by Saturday business meeting.

46-31 Racial Justice Committee Proposal Continued Tim Lamm (Berea) presented the edited proposal on the creation of the Racial Justice Committee. We want SAYMA to be a welcoming and safe place for people of color. Therefore, we propose SAYMA create a standing committee on Racial Justice to support SAYMA Friends of Color and provide education and resources to monthly meetings and the yearly meeting regarding issues of race and racism. Examples include: providing spaces for listening and talking about our experiences of race and racism; compiling and disseminating resource materials; coordinating workshops and trainings. We propose an ad hoc committee to address needs that arise for support and education. We also ask the ad hoc committee to develop the standing committee's charge and structure to be presented at Spring 2017 Representative Meeting. We expect the ad hoc committee to be drawn largely from Friends of Color.

Friends asked for clarification about why the ad hoc and standing committee were both used in the proposal. To create a standing committee, we need to follow some procedural steps to get the committee description and procedures prepared, so we are creating an ad hoc committee to both set up the procedures as well as act on any concerns that may arise for the standing committee before it is completely formed. Friends had some concerns regarding the

racial makeup of the committee. However, other Friends spoke of the importance of the committee for all of us no matter our race. 46-31-01 Friends approved the proposal.