

Cannon Valley Friends Meeting
Minute on Racism and Anti-Racism
(Approved by the Meeting on June 13, 2021)

Cannon Valley Friends Meeting (Northfield, MN), a monthly meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), believes that “there is that of God in every person,” that each human being is of intrinsic worth. From this core principle come guiding testimonies such as community, integrity, and equality, which call us to work for equity and justice as the foundations for peace. When we study our history we learn that white privilege often blinds us to the violence around us and to the work that can be done to create peace.

Although there have been Friends in our Society’s history who worked to abolish slavery, we must also acknowledge an ongoing history of many Quaker Meetings’ being neither welcoming nor fair to people of color. Even today, members or attenders of color may experience hurtful responses in our Meetings. There were Quaker individuals and families who owned slaves and whose descendants continue to benefit from the generational wealth created by that labor. In addition, we all live on land stolen from indigenous peoples. Some Quakers managed Indian Boarding Schools at various times in the 19th and 20th centuries. We acknowledge that our past treatment of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color has contributed to multigenerational trauma that is still experienced by these communities today. We deeply regret and apologize for these actions.

Today, most U.S. laws, cultural norms, and actions by state, local, and federal governments, beginning with the colonization of this continent, have instituted and sustained white privilege and white supremacy. These laws and norms deny the humanity of and perpetuate long-standing violence against black, indigenous, and other people of color in many ways, including the following examples (in alphabetical order):

- Cultural violence (construction of anti-Black monuments, omission/distortion of the history of black, indigenous, and other peoples of color)
- Direct violence (lynching, attacks on minority churches, police brutality)
- Economic violence (poverty, discriminatory hiring, housing segregation)
- Education violence (Schoolhouse to Jailhouse track, fewer teachers of color, less funding for schools in communities of color)
- Environmental violence (polluting industries and oil pipelines intentionally)

placed in minority and indigenous communities, unsafe drinking water)
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- Health violence (discriminatory medical treatment, health insurance linked to employment, higher rates of maternal and infant mortality)
- Political violence (voter disenfranchisement, gerrymandering)*

In response to our ever-deepening understanding of these truths we will act in accordance with our testimony of justice. We will consider how each of our actions and decisions can subvert the violence of white supremacy, in an effort to build toward a more just society. Using our resources as a Meeting we will work with others locally and beyond to repair harms, interrupt harms being committed, and create and strengthen relationships and institutions that affirm the divine humanity of each person.

[* This information is based on Pendle Hill Pamphlet #465 entitled “Race, Systemic Violence, and Retrospective Justice” written by Dr. Harold D. Weaver (October 2020).]