

FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE REPORT

From PFF/PFYM Representative Melissa Meyer

Along with trying to bring the budget into a better balance, FGC leadership has spent the last few years identifying and assessing the most pressing needs of FGC Affiliated Friends. Listening to Friends through their Yearly Meetings, workshops and feedback from Central Committee representatives, the following have been brought into focus:

1. Making the Gathering more affordable. An endowment is being set up to help lower the overall cost of the gathering.
2. Expanding the Spiritual Deepening Programs.
3. Better serving youth and young adults and
4. Deeply connecting and communicating with Friends across our yearly meetings. An additional person has been hired to help with our web presence and to facilitate E-retreats.
5. Continuing the work on anti racism. Central committee is hoping to bring more Friends of color into leadership by asking the help of Yearly Meetings to make a concerted effort to put forward the names of people of color for nominations to Central committee and into the decision making structure of FGC. An additional person has been hired to help with this.

At Central Committee, Oct. 2019, we were asked to consider these queries.

- Has your understanding of race and racism changed over the years? In what ways?
- Have you made efforts to notice how stereotypes affect how you experience the world and those you encounter in it? If so, what have you observed about your own unconscious biases?
- Can you feel internal push-back to the idea of white supremacy? Or guilt or shame? Or some other reaction or emotion? What do you do with those feelings?
- Is your current work toward social equity/social justice intersectional? In what ways could it be more so?
- In what ways could understanding internationalization create potential for positive outcomes?

THE MEETING HOUSE FUND

This fund yearly has lent money to meetings to help buy or renovate a meetinghouse. Now, funds will also be available for Friends schools and nursing facilities.

THE FGC ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDE (THE BLUE BOOK)

Melissa serves on the Organizational Guide Committee preparing recommended changes to the objectives, goals, program purposes, functions and operational details governing FGC.

NEW YEARLY MEETING JOINED FGC

Pacific Yearly Meeting has joined FGC in 2019, including two meetings in Mexico that are primarily Spanish speaking. This is a first for us!