

# Institutional Assessment on Systemic Racism within Friends General Conference as Reported October 2018

*“Culturally, racism is part of America’s national character. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to believe that Quakers would be free of so integral part of our culture. Quakers, unharried by their own racist underpinnings, and espousing a “melting pot” liberalism, deceived themselves with racially emancipated identities. I am not saying that racism is a common trait of Quakers. I understand that the full measure of racial determinants among religious groups would probably find that Quakers are considerably less racist than others. As an etiological agent, racism is a disease or disordered cause agent so deeply rooted in the fabric of our country that it has ruptured some of our religious and cultural cohesiveness. Talk of racism and Quakers leads to “enlivened” conversation that doesn’t fit appropriately into the fabric of Quaker fantasy.”*

(Brown, 2002)

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*Update February 1st, 2020: In the original report, Cape May was incorrectly identified as a "sundowner town" on page 5 and 17. In late 2019, we were made aware by a Friend that Cape May was not a sundowner town, but did support and enforce racist policies while the FGC Gathering was held there between 1916 and 1968. We have updated this report to include the corrected information.*

## Preface

For years, Friends of Color have told stories of racism and marginalization in their Monthly Meetings, at Gathering, in Committee Meetings, and at Central Committee. The stories include travel, hospitality, and many “peculiar” traditions of Friends General Conference (FGC) and of the affiliated Yearly and Monthly Meetings. Some Friends of Color wonder why FGC needs to spend money on an assessment process when we have heard these stories. It is the hope of those Friends who have committed time, energy and resources to gathering this information that a historic review of the stories will provide a description of how deeply systemic racism is embedded in our culture. The stories, paired with a collection of qualitative and quantitative data collected during 2018, could not only help FGC Quakers of European descent finally see the full complexity and depth of the problem but could inspire Friends to change how our language, our processes, and our unexamined traditions have pushed Friends of Color away from our community. This report reflects a desire for transformation that will strengthen our beloved community.

In her “Quaker Speak” video talk, “Quakers, Racism and the Blessed Community” Vanessa Julye proposes white supremacy as a direct threat to living into blessed community where everyone has value and where we are able to see that of God in each person, sharing the gifts that God has given to us with each other (*Quakers, Racism, and the Blessed Community*, 2014). White supremacy restricts the creation of a blessed community because it makes it difficult for people of color to be a part of the community. White supremacy is white dominance. In this culture, what is considered “American” is really European-American culture. If you are a part of that culture and fit into that culture, you don’t notice it. It is invisible. If you accept a structure as normal there’s no need to change it.

## Stories: Historical and Present

Racial equality within the Religious Society of Friends and specifically Friends General Conference has been one of struggle and confusion with occasional bright spots. Friends have striven to address the issues of racism in our secular communities in both Canada and the United States. These struggles have had a basis in the values that Friends have historically held. On occasion, Friends have codified these values into statements to guide additional work in the area of racial equality. A modern example of this is the Minute of Purpose and Major Goals, approved by FGC Central Committee in October 2009. Efforts such as this have been supplemented with inward looking queries to fellow Friends.

1850 "It is a remarkable circumstance, that although the members of our religious society have been so long and so extensively known as the advocates of the coloured race, and the discipline established among us presents no impediment to their reception into membership ... still the number of coloured persons found within the society has

always been exceedingly small. This circumstance may justly raise the enquiry whether the cause lies with them or with us. Is the religion of Friends unsuited to the coloured race? Or are they kept at a distance by our neglect or repulsive conduct?"  
(Lewis, 1850, p. 697)

- 1944 "We want those who feel separated from us by race or color to know of our realization that racial discrimination, hate and pride will never lead to peace and the kind of world in which we want to live. We have been thinking of you and have been trying to find ways by which we can show our feelings of kinship with you.

We will strive to carry with us through the coming years respect and appreciation for the Negro and other races and will endeavor to practice this good will in our daily lives. We want to understand and value your contribution to our common culture. We need your help to do this, as we cannot do it alone. Only by individual contact between you and us will this understanding come about."

- A statement from high school students attending the 1944 FGC meeting in Cape May (McDaniel & Julye, 2009, p. 227)

- 1979 "A revolution of great magnitude is in progress in the United States. What has been the response of the Society of Friends to this revolution? For the most part, the members of the Society of Friends have been content to be 'white liberals.' Though they have advocated marginal reforms, they have accepted the American system, the legitimacy of its basic values and institutions. They have accommodated to the poor housing, inadequate schools, and squalor in ghettos adjacent to their suburban communities. But they have not been able to act forcefully for civil rights for fear of losing social status and incurring the disfavor of their neighbors. Conformity has been a dead weight around their necks.

Living thus, Friends have not experienced the degradation and frustration inherent in the total experience of black people in America; and they fail to understand Black Power, which they equate with arrogance, violence and separateness....It is with respect to the question of violence as advocated by some ultra-nationalists that Friends have found Black Power most objectionable....Institutional racism in America is covert violence - the day to day violence that has been perpetuated by white on black Americans for over three hundred years. Friends have accommodated to it. They have lost their 'revolutionary faithfulness'...and have unwittingly become allies in maintaining a violent society. We Friends are therefore guilty of our kind of violence..."

(Fletcher & Mabee, 1979, pp. 33–34)

The Religious Society of Friends holds our history and stories as sacred examples of how we practice and live into the Light. The stories and words of historic Friends -- George Fox,

Margaret Fell, William Penn, John Woolman, Isaac Pennington, and Lucretia Mott, to name a few -- guide our moral character. This report begins by offering a collection of stories that create a picture of how racism functions within Friends General Conference. Taken alone each individual story can be thought of as an aberration but when put together, the stories reveal patterns that can and must change.

These and other efforts within the Religious Society of Friends are complicated by the stories and events involving Friends of Color that reveal shortcomings in our efforts to achieve and sustain racial equality. The stories, some of which are years old, provide insight into Friends struggle to build the blessed community. We offer a sampling of stories that Friends of Color have related in our Meetings, our writings and our prayers. It is a sampling because others are still too raw to share. For purposes of this report, the stories have been summarized or excerpted from the original version to lift up issues Friends of Color have been trying to convey to our Society. The messages in the stories are complicated by the tendency of many of us to focus on individual acts of racism while remaining oblivious to systemic racism.

- 1916-1968 Between 1916 and 1968, the Gathering returned to Cape May, New Jersey a total of 23 times. As in many communities in the northern United States, the town of Cape May engaged in both de facto and overt racism. During much of this time Cape May supported segregation in housing, in schools (1928 – 1948) and until, at least, 1956 with “white only” and “colored” beaches.
- 1978-1981 Only once was a Friend of Color ever appointed to be the General Secretary of FGC. During his service, this Friend was elbowed by the head of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting who told him he was not trusted by FGC Friends because he would interact with Quakers from other branches of Quakerism (FUM, EFI).
- 1985 Two African American women who worked as secretaries at FGC in the mid-1980s requested that FGC conduct racism training because of their experiences working in the office. The organization did not follow through with any training despite this clear request.
- 1992 An African-American woman who joined Sandy Spring Friends Meeting shared her lived experience of being the only Person of Color in a monthly meeting. She had felt fully involved in the life of the meeting until one week she opened her eyes and saw another Person of Color. The presence of this individual caused the tension that she realized she had been feeling as the only Friend of Color in the meeting to be released from her body. She felt calmer. She wondered what was happening. She had a similar response the next time there was another Friend of Color at meeting for worship. The third time she

experienced this feeling of kinship was when she gathered with the Fellowship of Friends of African descent. Each time, her experience of that worship was one of being able to be calm and to center deeply in the presence of other Friends of Color. Among Friends of Color, she experienced a shared language, a sense of being understood without explanation, and increased willingness to express emotions (Powell, 2003, p. 16).

- 1994 The initial Gathering workshop for Friends of Color only was held at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst) Gathering. A European American man arrived the first day, insisting he belonged there. Friends of Color labored with him to help him understand why it was important for him to leave and respect the space created by the workshop. Even today, some Friends of European descent object to designated “only” spaces for specific communities including Friends of Color.
- 1994 Friends of Color requested a People of Color Center. As they called for the center, they referred to the other centers for men only and women only. Their request was successful and the first People of Color Center was established at the 1995 Gathering at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.
- 1996 During the Gathering at McMaster University (Hamilton, Ontario, Canada) there was a workshop for People of Color only. Participants took a field trip to the John Freeman Walls Historic Site and Underground Railroad Museum. It was a powerful experience for those present to learn the stories of the men, women and children who survived the genocide of American chattel slavery and might have been the ancestors of each participant. The following morning, these Friends of Color learned that their children were expected to participate in an intergenerational re-enactment of the Underground Railroad experience, planned by the Junior Gathering. Disturbed by this apparent lack of sensitivity, these Friends wrote a letter to the General Secretary, the Clerk of Central Committee and the Clerk of Long-Range Conference Planning Committee objecting to the planned activity and requesting that it be canceled. A representative of this group of Friends spoke with the Clerk of Long-Range Conference Planning and then the Junior Gathering Clerk. After listening carefully to the concerns, all Clerks agreed to cancel the activity. The representative of the Friends of Color who worked to get the activity canceled was later accused of being un-Quakerly. This reputation followed her during her service on Long Range Conference Planning Committee of FGC (Julye, 1996, p. 10).
- 1998 At the first Gathering at University of Wisconsin at River Falls, one evening two Friends of Color saw a local establishment that had a sign over its back door

that read “Slave Entrance.” Gathering attenders, both Friends of Color and European American Friends, approached the owner and requested they remove the sign. The woman made clear she was going to keep the sign up. She and other townspeople who were approached said, “You are from out of town and will leave so it does not matter.” Two Friends pursued the matter after leaving the Gathering by contacting a Wisconsin lawyer. As a result, the State of Wisconsin filed an anti-discrimination lawsuit which was won and the sign was removed.

- 2000      A Friend of Color became upset when a person making a presentation at Central Committee wore a t-shirt showing a photograph of William Bacon Evans (a Philadelphia Quaker who made puzzles and was known for his humor) standing in a store with an arrow over his head. This Friend of Color felt the image continued the racist stereotype of Indigenous People’s violence.
- 2002      During the Gathering at Illinois State University (Bloomington/Normal) the Gathering planning committee did not invite any plenary speakers of Color to speak. Neither did they arrange field trips to nearby places describing the area’s history with regard to People of Color, nor did the list of local establishments distributed to Gathering attenders include the African American-owned store within walking distance of campus. After doing their own research, Friends of Color were able to arrange a field trip to a local museum where a member of the city council presented a talk about the town’s anti-racism program. The planning committee did not think at all to engage with Friends of Color or learn anything about things relevant to them within the community. Friends of Color had to do all of their own research in order for any interested Friends to learn about efforts in the community to address issues of racism (Julye, 2002, p. 18).
- 2002      The Committee for Ministry on Racism Program sponsored a Meeting for Worship with Attention to Acknowledging Racial Wounding in Bloomington/Normal. A Friend of Color rose and spoke of the pain she was experiencing at the Gathering. Unexpectedly, a European-American Friend rose and asked the Friend of Color to stand with her. The Friends of Color in attendance were alarmed as this is not something done during a meeting for worship. It was unclear why this European-American Friend was directing the Friend of Color to stand when this was a time when Friends were to speak out of worship of our personal experiences of racial wounding. The European-American Friend began singing to the Friend of Color “You are so beautiful and whole.” Not only was she invalidating the experience of the Friend of Color who spoke, but many Friends of Color felt her actions made the room unsafe for all Friends of Color. Another Friend of Color felt hurt, angry, surprised, and helpless and wanted to run from the room. A European-American Friend stood and shared her anger

about the song. The African-American woman who felt unsafe spoke asking Friends to stop and think before performing an action on someone else and not respecting another's personal boundaries. It seems particularly unfortunate that at a Worship addressing racial wounding, in fact more racial wounding occurred (Julye, 2002, p. 18).

- 2004 Not all European-American Gathering and Evening Planning co-clerks understand the impact of their decisions on racial equity efforts. In 2004, a European-American man declined to be an evening plenary speaker when he learned that all the speakers would be European-American men. The decision to have only European-American men speak was a failure to understand the impact of invitations to speak had upon Gathering participants as a whole. Does this lack of sensitivity welcome Friends of Color?
- 2004 A popular Quaker Sweat Lodge workshop was again scheduled for the high school program at Gathering at the University of Massachusetts (Amherst). The Mashpee Wampanoag people (upon whose land we were holding our Gathering) learned about this practice and demanded that it be canceled. The leaders of the Mashpee Wampanoag indicated they knew of no historical practice within Quakerism to hold sweat lodges, while this tradition was clearly a part of indigenous people's spiritual practices. The Mashpee Wampanoag let Friends know that they experienced this as being both religious and cultural appropriation. The General Secretary of FGC and a Friend of Color (who was clerk of the Committee for Ministry on Racism) agreed to meet with Mashpee Wampanoag leaders to listen and enter into dialogue with them. This meeting was a traumatizing experience for everyone in attendance. The cancellation of the workshop was tough for the participants in the High School program for whom this was felt to be an important workshop.
- 2005 FGC hired an African-American woman at 40% time to serve as the Coordinator of the Ministry on Racism Program. In 2006, the appointment was increased to 60% time. In 2009, the appointment was temporarily increased to 80% to support requests for presentations related to the publication for Fit for Freedom. In 2010, it was reduced to 60% with addition of responsibility for the Youth Ministry Program and the time for the Ministry on Racism work was reduced to 40% with the remaining 20% for the Youth Ministry Program. In 2017, her work was increased for the FY18 to 70% to support the Institutional Assessment. This pattern of FGC frequently changing employment conditions with no consistent financial commitment to FGC's work of anti-racism requires the individual to accept varying levels of employment income which can threaten one's livelihood.



- 2009 After participating in a two-day retreat on anti-racism training with Niyonu Spann (a Quaker with years of experience doing anti-racism training), FGC staff formed a Staff Diversity Committee of volunteers. This committee was charged to assist all staff in continuing to address issues regarding racism lifted up in the workshop. Although this committee facilitated regular diversity exercises and created learning experiences for all staff, members had to meet during their lunch hour and work during unpaid time. Because some activities were scheduled after the work day, staff members choosing to participate were doing so during unpaid time.
- 2010 A Friend of Color, when speaking from and grounded in extensive professional training and experience, frequently experiences that when they speak to FGC Central Committee, Executive Committee or other FGC committees and working groups, they are dismissed. For example, when a proposal was brought to FGC Executive Committee to redo the website, a Friend of Color who is also a professional computer networking specialist and a systems analyst, objected saying the amount budgeted would not be enough so the proposal should not be approved. The body went ahead and approved the proposal in spite of the objection. Several years later it was clear the Person of Color had been correct in raising their objection.
- 2010 A proposal was brought by the FGC Committee for Discernment, Planning and Priorities (CDPP) to Central Committee to pull all the ministry committees together into one committee called Committee for Nurturing Ministries (CNM). A Person of Color objected saying it would mean the Committee for Ministry on Racism (CMR) would become invisible to its constituents. An additional concern was that CMR was committed to have parity in their membership among People of Color and European Americans. They feared this strong commitment to racial parity in this committee would end up being lost in the new committee structure because in the new structure the Ministry on Racism program was combined with the Youth Ministry Program into one subcommittee. Quickly thereafter, the majority of volunteer members of CNM's Transforming subcommittee were Friends of European descent.
- 2011 Central Committee approved, for five years, a minute directing that two-to-three hours of its meeting time each year be devoted to conversations and/or exercises to help Central Committee members explore and deepen their understanding of white privilege, racism and ageism. In addition, it agreed to have yearly "Diversity-Related Queries for FGC" be considered by each committee, subcommittee and working group of FGC. Answers were to be sent to the Transforming Subcommittee of the Committee for Nurturing Ministries.

Unfortunately, not every committee took the opportunity to consider and learn from the queries.

2011 The Staff Diversity Committee developed an FGC Diversity Plan which was never funded or implemented (FGC Staff Diversity Committee, 2011).

2014 The mid-winter meeting of the FGC Committee on Nurturing Ministries in Tallahassee, Florida was fraught with issues that threw them into chaos. Both Friends of Color and Friends of European descent were acutely aware of being in the state where Trayvon Martin had been killed by George Zimmerman, who six months earlier was acquitted of Martin's murder. The question of meeting in Florida raised a moral issue for Friends of European descent. But for Friends of Color, racist violence and physical safety can be an issue of life or death. Questions of exercising white privilege in decisions around where Friends meet is another example of structural racism within our society that has caused Friends of Color to feel unsafe.

A large snow storm heading toward the Northeast moved some Friends to arrange an early departure. Because some individuals left early, their reports were given by people unprepared to address questions due to a lack of background information. As Friends asked questions about a new project, it was unclear if there had been any Friends of Color involved in the planning for new meetings intended for areas where People of Color resided. At one point, a European-American man became so upset, he yelled and used strong language and later apologized. A Friend of Color became so distressed he left the meeting, noting that only a white man could raise his voice and use profanity in a committee meeting.

2014 A Friend of Color serving on an FGC committee expressed concern that when traveling for FGC, they were expected to accept home hospitality with local European-American Friends. This often means staying in unfamiliar neighborhoods that are primarily white, where People of Color may fear for their safety. The legacy of violence, particularly in former sundowner towns, gives Friends of Color going into an unfamiliar predominately white area great concern. This Friend noted that when traveling in service for another Friends organization he is provided with hospitality in a local motel and accepting offers of home hospitality is not expected.

2015 An African-American woman offered a presentation at the Gathering at Western Carolina University (Cullowhee) about her leading to place markers in graveyards to honor People of Color. The woman had participated in the pre-gathering workshop for Friends of Color and their families. During a previous

retreat for Friends of Color and their families, she requested assistance with an issue she was having with her monthly meeting that arose after a ceremony honoring the unmarked graves of People of Color buried in the Meeting's graveyard. Attenders at this retreat of both African and European descent agreed to provide her with support. Several Friends were regular prayerful presences during Meetings for Worship and Meetings for Worship for Business at her monthly meeting; other Friends who lived far away stayed in touch with regular phone calls. But the dispute escalated and rather than working through the conflict, the meeting suspended Meetings for Business for a year and then read her out of the Meeting altogether.

2015 A Friend of Color arrived at the airport in North Carolina for the Gathering at Western Carolina University (Cullowhee). She was not greeted by the person at the airport designated to meet arriving Friends, but she was able to identify the group because she recognized some of the Quakers. During the drive to the university she became increasingly disturbed by the isolated nature of the area through which they were driving, the presence of pick-up trucks with visible guns, the number of confederate flags prominently displayed and roads marked with do-not-enter signs. The Friend of Color felt unsafe and, after arriving on campus, did not feel safe to leave campus and venture out into the community. Other Friends of Color had similar reactions to the area.

2016 At the Gathering held at the College of Saint Benedict (St. Joseph, Minnesota), Friends of Color encountered a troubling and hostile environment upon arrival to the campus and throughout most of the scheduled Pre-Gathering Conference of Friends of Color and their families. Friends of Color were warned to avoid going into town without a companion. They were cautioned to limit town excursions to business hours. This warning was further reinforced by actions of racial profiling by the campus security police force. These actions consisted of:

- Overtly following Friends of Color as they moved into and walking between the dorms.
- Performing surveillance on Friends of Color while preparing their campsite for the upcoming Gathering.
- Following children of color and performing surveillance on them during playtime and while moving between dorms.

As a result of these experiences, Friends of Color did not experience this small rural community as a welcoming environment. Doubts were raised as to whether or not the upcoming Gathering would be successful if the actions of campus security continued.

After numerous reports of other incidents to the staff at the Pre-Gathering retreat, the Friends of Color and their families attending requested that the FGC staff and volunteers responsible for the Gathering meet with them.

During this meeting, the Friends of Color and their families shared their experiences and years of frustrations. They explained the importance of having Friends of Color involved in choosing sites for Gathering. The Friends of Color felt their safety concerns were significant and needed immediate action. As a way forward and to try to avoid future similar experiences, Friends of Color requested that the Site Selection Subcommittee of the FGC Long-Range Conference Committee be reconstituted and have a majority of Friends of Color serving on this subcommittee.

- 2016 At the Gathering at the College of Saint Benedict, after the difficulties experienced during the Pre-Gathering, Friends of Color felt insulted by the all-white Gathering Planning Committee inviting them to sit on the stage during the opening evening. They noted that the invitation arose only after issues of racial justice became central to the Gathering, and it was evident no Friends of Color had been invited previously. As a result of this late invitation which was not felt to be from the heart, Friends of Color felt tokenized and declined to participate or attend the plenary at all. They drafted a statement which they asked the General Secretary to read to the Gathering in its entirety (Crossno, 2016).
- 2016 At the College of Saint Benedict, a Friend of Color was moved to join a meeting of European-American Friends who had stayed in touch since their anti-racism workshop the year before. These Friends were concerned about the repeated pattern of FGC Gathering locations being chosen with no regard for the lived experience of Friends of Color and so they began circulating a petition requesting that FGC undertake an institutional assessment on its systemic racism. The Friend of Color who joined the group encouraged them to approach the People of Color Center to obtain their endorsement before continuing the effort. Many have misconstrued this as an effort that was begun and carried out by Friends of Color.
- 2017 A woman Friend of Color who was co-opted to Central Committee did not receive the materials about when, where and how to register for the annual meeting at the same time as others. A staff member who normally is not responsible for distributing the materials went ahead and sent them to her.

- 2017 The first “urban” setting for Gathering chosen by the re-constituted Site Selection Subcommittee of the Long-Range Planning Committee having equal representation of Friends of African descent and Friends of European descent was the 2018 Gathering at the University of Toledo (Toledo, Ohio). During the Lake Erie Yearly Meeting annual sessions, a European-American woman told a Friend of Color that she would not go to the Gathering in Toledo because it would not be safe for her to be there. Toledo, Ohio is a city of approximately 275,000 people with approximately 40% of its population being People of Color. The FGC Gathering has historically been held in communities that are more than 95% European-American. At the FGC Gathering in Toledo, the attendance at Junior Gathering was approximately half its usual size. Was this because European-American families unfortunately decided to stay away because of the location?
- 2018 In our experience, when only one Person of Color serves on an FGC committee they can become a token. Occasionally European Americans expect the Person of Color to speak for all People of Color. Our tradition teaches us to speak only for how Spirit moves us individually.
- 2018 Expanding the circle of Persons of Color invited to serve on Central Committee, its committees, subcommittees and working groups helps prevent burn out of the very small number of Friends of Color who are often asked to serve in multiple roles. Only three Friends of Color have been appointed by their yearly meetings to serve as the representative to Central Committee. Only four Friends of Color have served as clerks of committees and one has been asked to serve for multiple committees as a clerk. Only one Friend of Color has served as a part of the clerks table for the Central and Executive Committees, an unfortunate but powerful visual reminder of the impact of white supremacy in our faith community.
- 2018 During the Gathering at the University of Toledo, it was reported that European American Friends were rude to and mistreated university staff members and the high school students visiting campus who were People of Color.
- 2018 A longtime Friend of Color and a founder of the People of Color Center has left the Religious Society of Friends. In leaving they stated, “My experience with Quakers over the years has taught me some hard lessons about how to resist evil and bigotry in a faith community. I have also learned how to have thick skin and to protect myself among Quakers. But that's not enough anymore for what I need today in a faith community. My spirit is suffocating and not growing any among Friends.”

## Foundation Story: How we got to the Assessment

In spite of some Quakers' participation in the abolition movement to end enslavement in the United States; in spite of some Quakers' commitment to dismantling Jim Crow during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's; in spite of some Quakers' visible work to support the Black Lives Matter movement and in spite of all of us feeling horrified when yet another unarmed black or brown person is shot by police, our Meetings remain mostly white and Friends of Color do not necessarily feel safe or welcomed in a Quaker faith community.

Quakerism emerged from a Euro-centric culture. The article, "White Supremacy Culture", describes a list of characteristics that exist in organizations (Okun, n.d.). It also acknowledges "one of the purposes of listing characteristics of white supremacy culture is to point out how organizations which unconsciously use these characteristics as their norms and standards make it difficult, if not impossible, to open the door to other cultural norms and standards." FGC is not excused from this examination and, as we all breathe in this Euro-centric culture we recognize it is difficult to see these characteristics and parallel habits. Some examples of aspects of Euro-centric culture that the article lifts up and that are confirmed in our data include: defensiveness, worship of the written word, only one right way, paternalism, either/or thinking, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, I'm the only one, right to comfort.

The Institutional Assessment is a direct response to the events at the 2016 Gathering that encapsulates the long history of lived experience of People of Color of systemic racism among Friends. A similar assessment focused on Indigenous Peoples, classism, ageism, and disability is encouraged in the future. We hope the results of this assessment may inform FGC's inclusion of Friends from all communities.

In 2016 the entire nation was confronted with media stories of unarmed people of color being killed by the police, with numerous accounts of racial intimidation and violence ever present in our daily lives. This was the environment in which the 2016 Gathering met in St. Joseph Minnesota. There, Friends of Color had multiple experiences and related stories of racism in the St. Joseph community and at St Benedict's college. This includes the dismissal of the seriousness of the stories by some Friends of European descent of the demonstrated racism. A small group of Friends were moved to petition FGC staff and Central Committee representatives to address the systemic racism within our organization.

More than 358 Friends signed the petition during and after the Gathering. Yearly Meetings raised the issue of racism within our communities. In October 2016, Central Committee, after discernment, approved a minute that directed development staff to raise money to support the Institutional Assessment on Racism. If the money raised was sufficient, said the body, a consulting firm would be hired to train and guide a group of Friends through the assessment. A total of \$63,455 was raised within six months and we were ready to move forward by 2017

Gathering. Friends gave generously with donations for the assessment coming from 62 individuals, 21 Monthly Meetings, four Yearly Meetings and one foundation.

As the Development Staff sought funding for this enterprise, the Committee on Nurturing Ministries recruited four volunteers to serve on the Institutional Assessment Working Group (IAWG) whose charge was to review the research done on potential consultants, select a consulting group to work with us, manage the logistics of the assessment including communicating its progress and identify a small team to collect data and write the report. The four volunteers, Sharon Lane-Getaz, Justin Connor (co-clerks) Carolyn Lejuste, and Marvin Barnes were joined by Vanessa Julye, the staff person assigned to the assessment, Frank Barch, FGC Presiding Clerk and Barry Crossno, FGC General Secretary served ex-officio.

The Diversity Committee prepared a request for proposals that went out to consulting firms. Once the funds were obtained, FGC contracted with Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training. (See their website online at <http://crossroadsantiracism.org>)

## **Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training**

Crossroads teaches their clients participatory research where the subjects of the research learn and implement research methods, analyze the findings and write the report. Thus, the people studied engage with the materials, do the work and own the results. This approach is used in Popular Education and grows out of the work of Paulo Freire and others working in liberation theology movements in Central and South America.

Once a contract was signed with Crossroads, the IAWG began to identify Friends willing to serve on the Task Force. A team of twelve people was created with half being Friends of Color and half being Friends of European descent. The four volunteers serving on the IAWG and Vanessa Julye as FGC Staff for the Institutional Assessment all joined the Task Force. Four Adult Young Friends were intentionally recruited to be part of the twelve Task Force members.

During the third weekend of November 17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017, forty-three representatives of FGC, identified by the IAWG as primary stakeholders in the organization convened at Stony Point Retreat Center in Stony Point, NY to attend an intensive Crossroads anti-racism training. The intent of inviting these specific representatives was to create a shared understanding of *structural racism* among the volunteer leadership and staff of FGC. Representatives included all staff, committee clerks, some yearly meeting representatives and the members of the Institutional Assessment Task Force. The training was the result of six months of spirit-led work by the Institutional Assessment Working Group (see Appendix A of this report).

At the workshop we shared our experiences and reviewed the historical roots of white supremacy within the structure of the Religious Society of Friends and the structure of our society at large, the insidious ways in which racism is embedded in the structure of our culture,

and the impact that racism has on governmental systems, people and communities in the United States and Canada. Specific stories and historical facts, particularly those arising within the context of the Religious Society of Friends, were lifted up in detail. The unrelenting and long story of systemic racism in both our faith community and in the broader culture where we are situated was collectively documented on large pieces of newsprint. This newsprint surrounded us throughout the weekend. It was undeniable and we mourned the depth of its impact upon us.

On Monday, after the conclusion of the two-and-a-half-day workshop, the twelve-member Institutional Assessment Task Force remained to learn from Crossroads how we would collect and analyze information regarding systemic racism within FGC. In order to effectively undertake its work, the Task Force formed three subgroups to gather assessment data:

- **The Continuum team** reviewed Crossroads' six-stage continuum (listed in Continuum section of this report p. 27). This team proposed over thirty statements based on this continuum to the survey team.
- **The Power Analysis team** examined FGC documents using a "matrix of domination" filter. To what degree does our Quaker culture uphold white supremacy and marginalize subcultures. "How might Quaker practice, programs, etc. benefit white society and oppress people of color?"
- **The Survey team** developed and executed an online survey with input from initial focus groups and the other two teams. They used themes arising from the survey to create a facilitation handout that was used to guide focus groups during FGC Gathering and at several Yearly Meetings.

## Design

The continuum group guided the development of questions that map back to key indicators of anti-racist transformation. The survey included fifteen demographic questions, one open-ended question and fifty-nine main questions which have been clustered around ten themes: Monthly Meeting Engagement, Yearly or Monthly Meeting Engagement, Welcoming, Governing Structure, Participatory Decision-Making, Finance and Budget Equity, Racism and White Privilege, Racial Tension and Conflict Resolution, Dominant Worldview, and Overcoming Cultural Exclusivity. By asking multiple related questions the reliability of our results is improved (internal consistency of the survey was measured at 95%). To complement the findings of the focus groups and survey, historical FGC data was uplifted and reviewed for indications of past problems and efforts in dealing with systematic racism within the organization. From this effort, the Taskforce determined that the best way to report on systemic racism within FGC was to present a portion of the history of FGC through the stories of Friends and the data in parallel.



# Findings

## Demographic History

A statistical review of FGC demographics reveals a telling story. There have been sixteen General Secretaries since its founding around 1900, and all but one is of European descent. FGC has never had a Presiding Clerk of Color.

Beginning in 1900, FGC Gathering has met at twenty-seven different locations, some multiple times. Only five sites have a city-wide population of more than 15% people of African descent: Toledo, Ohio. Niagara Falls, New York, Kalamazoo, Michigan (twice) Oberlin, Ohio, Rochester, New York. Sixteen locations had over 80% population of white/European-American descent and eight of those locations were over 90% white/European-American.

Historically, the location most often used was Cape May (New Jersey) where the Gathering was held twenty-three times between 1916 and 1968. As mentioned previously in the Stories section of this report, Cape May, NJ was engaged in both de facto and overt racism.

Since 1989, among all the thirty-seven Clerks who have served FGC Central Committee, including as Presiding and Assistant Clerks, Recording Clerks, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, there has only been one Person of Color, who currently serves as Assistant Clerk.

Again, since 1989 there have been ninety-five Friends serving as FGC Committee Clerks. Three have been of African descent, one of Asian descent, and one identifying as Multi-racial. Therefore, a total of ninety of the nine-five Committee Clerks have been of white/European descent (a total of 95%).

Central Committee does not solely depend on Yearly Meeting Representatives appointed to Central Committee but has a system to draft additional Friends to serve referred to as “Co-opted Members” of Central Committee. From 2001 to date, there have been 173 Friends co-opted onto Central Committee, of whom thirteen have been People of Color (less than 8%).

Evidence of systemic racism can be seen in FGC’s perpetuating a pattern of hiring People of Color only in lower level administrative positions rather than in professional positions with growth opportunities. There have been sixteen People of Color who have worked for FGC since 1950. Fourteen worked in administrative support positions, some full-time and other in part-time or seasonal work. One male Friend of Color worked as General Secretary full-time, one female Friend of Color is coordinator of two programs at 60% time. This position increases and decreases in work time as projects are funded and defunded. As is true for many families, inconsistent hours work only when there is another fully employed person in the household.

## Survey and Focus Groups

Open between May 1 and July 31, 2018 the survey was distributed to all Yearly Meetings, Affiliated Monthly Meetings, Central Committee Members, Friends who signed the petition, and others. Questions were developed using the Crossroads document “Continuum on Becoming Antiracist Multicultural Institution”. The continuum describes six stages of an organization from an exclusive segregated institution to a fully inclusive transformed institution in a transformed society. All but one question was sorted into ten indicators, each with a specific score. We used the score and other evidence to place the indicator on the Crossroads Continuum and identify FGC’s progress toward becoming an Anti-Racism organization.

By its conclusion 1168 Friends had completed the survey. Of the Friends who chose to complete the demographic portion of the survey their racial background is as follows: 1124 (96%) Friends of European descent, forty-four Friends of African descent, eleven Friends of Asian descent, fifteen Friends of Latinx descent, twenty Friends of Native American descent. (Because Friends had the opportunity to choose multiple racial or ethnic categories or “other” the percentage of Friends of European descent is the most reliable number.)

In other descriptors, 621 Friends identified as female, 290 as male. Forty-three respondents identified as affiliated with the Adult Young Friends (AYF) community, 124 respondents as members of Friends for Lesbian Gay Bi-sexual Transgender and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC), twenty-four respondents as Fellowship of Friends of African descent (FOFAD). Fifty-seven respondents are currently serving on Central Committee while 126 identified as previous members of Central Committee.

## Data Review

The findings presented here come from the survey and are supported with statements from the seventeen focus groups, the survey comment section and, the collected stories listed in the front of this report.

The survey measures respondents’ attitudes and opinions. Respondents are asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement on each survey statement. Many statements were written from both a positive and a negative perspective.

Responses were encoded numerically on a 0-5 scale: 0 = “I don’t know,” 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree. “I don’t know” responses were removed to compute the average response.

This report uses the results of the survey in the aggregate. The complete data analysis can be found on the FGC website. It includes specific information and comparisons of the responses of subsets of demographics.

## **Theme 1: Monthly Meeting Engagement**

Nine survey statements are related to Monthly Meetings. The statement wording and the average rating for the respondents' level of agreement is reported.

Survey Statement	Average Rating
My Monthly Meeting looks to FGC to provide resources to engage in conversations around race and racism.	Disagree slightly (2.8)
My Monthly Meeting actively seeks out partnerships with Black churches, mosques or other spiritual communities of color.	Neither agree nor disagree (3.0)
My community is predominantly white and racism is not seen as a local issue.	Disagree (2.4)
Friends of Color in my Monthly Meeting have been or are actively involved in national Quaker organizations.	Agree slightly (3.3)
My Monthly Meeting would like to know how to better welcome People of Color.	Agree (4.1)
My Monthly Meeting takes on issues of concern to communities of color.	Agree (3.5)
In my Monthly Meeting the physical space, including pictures and bulletin boards, reflect white cultural norms.	Agree (3.5)
There is evidence of structural racism in my Monthly Meeting.	Neither agree nor disagree (3.1)
When Friends make personal connections across race in their local community, Quakers are more likely to be seen as a spiritual community to join.	Agree (3.9)

Respondents see some progress within their Monthly Meeting to engage in race and racial issues. Even though most Meetings are predominantly white, racism is seen as an issue to be addressed. Meetings are taking on issues of concern to people of color and respondents would like to know how to better welcome People of Color. However, the physical space itself reflects white cultural norms.

Statements from our focus groups and survey comments offer insights into things we know should change to be more welcoming but also into a lack of commitment to become an anti-racist Meeting.

- “[Our] Meeting has become more racially diverse in the last fifteen years, but artwork in the Meeting House doesn’t reflect a diverse community even though the surrounding community is racially diverse”
- “We are not really doing activities that attract non-white culture. Ex. How to engage People of Color at Jazz festival, planned a table, but no follow-through.”
- “People of Color are welcome until they rock the boat”
- “...I have seen examples of unintended racism in my monthly meeting as well as considerable efforts to educate ourselves, make changes and work on structural racism in

the community. Working on our own structural racism is more challenging, though we are trying.”

## Theme 2: Yearly or Monthly Meeting Engagement

Two survey statements and one yes/no question relate to Yearly or Monthly Meetings. The statement wording and the average rating for the respondents’ level of agreement is reported.

My Yearly Meeting has ongoing discussions concerning racism.	Agree (3.8)
FGC Friends need to recognize our own participation in systemic racism and work to dismantle it in our Monthly and Yearly Meetings.	Agree (4.3)
My Monthly and/or Yearly Meeting has approved a minute, epistle, or formal public statement regarding racism, white supremacy, sanctuary or a related topic.	Yes 66% (1.7)

Respondents are in broad agreement that Friends need to recognize our own participation in systemic racism and work to dismantle it in our Monthly and Yearly Meetings. Yearly Meetings are engaging in ongoing discussions concerning racism, and many have approved a minute on the topic

Statements articulate and support the survey findings by requesting help from FGC for resources to work on addressing racism within Meetings.

- “Need program and instructional structure to help organize continuing opportunities to work on addressing racism”.
- “Whites have to do some work. FGC has to give us some materials”
- “... I am on NEYM’s active ad hoc work group Challenging White Supremacy and it seems to me that we should be better liaised with FGC efforts. Most of the answers I supply above come from reading about FGC and from a sense--justifiable or not--that the dynamics and culture of white supremacy evident in New England meetings and at Sessions must share common ground with FGC historical practice. It is a joyful thing--if desperately belated--that the Quaker world seems to be more seriously oriented than ever before toward examining our whiteness and altering (or at least "contemplating the need to alter") our structures, thinking and behaviors”.

## Theme 3: Welcoming

Six survey statements address progress toward being more Welcoming. The survey statement wording and the average rating for the respondents’ level of agreement is reported.

FGC's stated mission, values, purpose, and by-laws reflect a desire to be a transformative anti-racist organization.	Agree (3.6)
FGC's doors are open to People of Color.	Agree (3.8)
Within FGC needs of People of Color are considered when designing and/or implementing programs	Agree slightly (3.3)
FGC is exploring ways to allow all constituents to have equal access to participation in FGC committees and events.	Agree (3.9)
FGC carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts to recruit People of Color.	Agree (3.7)
People of Color (POC) who are successfully recruited to serve in FGC are readily welcomed.	Agree (3.5)

Respondents believe that FGC's doors are open to People of Color and that FGC is exploring ways to allow all constituents to have equal access to participation in FGC committees and events. Our mission and values statements show a welcoming intent. However, respondents are more neutral as to whether needs of People of Color are considered when designing and/or implementing programs. It is worth noting that many skipped these questions or said they did not know how to answer.

One statement beautifully describes the dilemma in which FGC has worked on issues of racism.

- “[Our] Focus has been on personal prejudice, a lot of time the work is to fix the day-to-day interactions, but statistically we see way less people of color in positions of power. We need to see this as a long-term systemic thing, and need to educate [ourselves] more about that... We can see how an interaction had personal prejudice, but hard to look at a body of people and tangibly see systemic racism”.

## Theme 4: Governing Structure

Four survey statements explored the transparency of FGC's governing structure. Transparency is one aspect of Euro-centric culture that serves to make access to organizations unavailable to People of Color.

FGC's organizational structure is egalitarian and nonhierarchical.	Disagree slightly (2.9)
FGC's organizational structure is transparent and easily understood by constituents.	Disagree (2.6)
FGC's governance structure may silence People of Color.	Agree slightly (3.3)
FGC's organizational structure is convoluted with only a few people who know how to get things done.	Neither agree nor disagree (3.2)

Respondents were split as to whether FGC’s organization structure lacks transparency. However, among those who would best be able to assess this, respondents who previously served on Central Committee were concerned about non-transparency in the governance structure.

At least one person in a focus group clearly recognizes problems in governance.

- “Secret unwritten rules are continually perpetuated”

Another person wrote in the comment section of the survey;

- “I’ve been to Central Committee and Long-Range Conference Planning Committee. My personal experience (as a European-descent white female) is that FGC and Central Committee is insular and self-perpetuating. I am not surprised that People of Color don’t feel heard as I felt very much like an outsider the time I went. There was an insider language, culture, and structure that were not at all obvious or transparent. And a sense that if you are not one of the chosen few, your opinion doesn’t really matter. I also think that for an organization that believes in the “sense of the Meeting,” we don’t apply that well to issues that affect the larger body (by having a small, select group make decisions). I’m not sure how to rectify that, but I would love to see us try. I love my faith and identity as a Quaker, but worry about our sustainability as an institution. I appreciate this survey and the work that is happening. I do think that we need to increase Friends’ financial investment in FGC (including my own). I think it would increase ownership”.

## Theme 5: Participatory Decision-Making

Four statements address decision-making.

Formal policies unintentionally maintain decision making by people of European descent.	Agree (3.5)
Quaker decision-making is clarified for new attenders at Meetings for Business.	Disagree slightly (2.8)
FGC’s organizational decisions are made in open Quaker process and discernment.	Agree slightly (3.3)
FGC’s decision-making process is transparent and easily understood by constituents.	Disagree slightly (2.7)

Among those who answered, the majority found FGC’s decision making to lack transparency. Respondents believe that decision making is not clarified for new attenders. FGC’s decision-making process appears to be nontransparent to constituents. If our goal is to have greater participation in decision-making, transparency is a first step. Respondents believe that it is unintentional that formal policies are primarily made by Friends of European descent.

- “Opacity of FGC structure makes it easier for people who know people to be involved in Central Committee.”
- “Lack of acknowledgement of existence of power.” (Focus Group p. 19)
- “Presence of decision-making structures are imbedded and not subject to change or shift”.

Friends new to Central Committee do not know how to enter the system in a spirit of equality.

- “When the Quaker Basics DVD was released, the cover photo was of all white, mostly older members. This sends an active message of whiteness and ageism. When I pointed it out, I was thanked and told a new cover was being considered. It should have been a foregone conclusion to have made an inclusive cover”.

## Theme 6: Finance and Budget Equity

Four survey statements explore finance and budget equity.

The FGC budget is developed and controlled mostly by people of European descent.	Agree (3.85)
FGC structures its fundraising to give small donors a sense of ownership and a feeling of value.	Agree slightly (3.2)
FGC funds come from a limited source of selected foundations and a small number of very large donors.	Neither agree nor disagree (3.0)
FGC’s dependence on foundations and large donors perpetuates institutional racism.	Neutral neither agree nor disagree (3.0)

While most respondents did not know how to respond to statements about FGC’s finance and budget, those who did respond believe that FGC’s budget is developed and controlled mostly by people of European descent. Respondents were unsure if this has an impact on institutional racism. They also believed that donations primarily come from large donors and selected foundations. However, among those who currently serve on Finance and Development only 45% disagree or strongly disagree that donations primarily come from large donors and selected foundations (compared to 26% of others).

- “We have a reformist tendency...just reassigning some resources doesn’t fix systemic problems. We need to eliminate artificial scarcity”.
- “Unwilling to invest resources in advertising is used to limit who attends. This maintains community as it is”.

Many Friends know FGC through their attendance at Gathering.



- “I think that the current financial system whereby the Gathering is expected to pay for itself and that all raised funds go to other programs is a barrier to access in many ways. Directly, it means Gathering is expensive and therefore people of less means are less likely to be able to go. This disproportionately affects people of color, disabled people, working class people, and young people”.

## Theme 7: Racism and White Privilege

Six survey statements address racism and white privilege directly.

FGC Quakers recognize white privilege and racism embedded in our midst.	Agree (3.5)
FGC Quakers see themselves as a “non-racist” institution.	Agree (3.8)
FGC Quakers see themselves as an “anti-racist” institution.	Agree (3.6)
FGC lives up to its stated mission to “fully value and encompass the blessed diversity of our human family.”	Neither agree nor disagree (3.1)
FGC, as an organization, is unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control.	Neither agree nor disagree (3.1)
Quakers find it difficult to name racism among ourselves.	Agree (3.8)

Results suggest that respondents think FGC sees itself both a “non-racist” and an “anti-racist” institution. However, respondents fall short of naming racism among ourselves and are neutral as to whether we live up to our stated mission to “value and encompass the blessed diversity.”

- “We have trouble hearing those who are not middle class or educated, but those voices may get us back to a sense of who we are...”
- “First you have to name it...then have to be deliberate about ways to not marginalize people who do not behave by those criteria...will require giving up power you didn’t realize you had in the first place. Have to decide you want to do it. It has to be a priority”.

## Theme 8: Racial Tension and Conflict Resolution

Nine survey statements address this theme.

At FGC, conflict is embraced as an opportunity for learning and growth.	Neither agree nor disagree (3.1)
Multi-cultural and racial tensions remain unresolved in an FGC culture of conflict avoidance.	Agree (3.6)
Friends of Color are not listened to until they organize together with one voice.	Neither agree nor disagree (3.0)
People who are new to Central Committee have very little power.	Agree slightly (3.2)

It takes a long time for Friends of Color's gifts and experiences to be recognized and used by the organization.	Agree slightly (3.3)
For an individual Person of Color to be heard they must exhibit an extraordinary level of resolve.	Agree slightly (3.3)
People who raise issues that make others uncomfortable are considered troublemakers.	Agree slightly (3.3)
Diversity training tends to address implicit bias and individual acts of racism rather than systemic racism	Agree (3.6)
Even Quakers who are working to root out their own racism may not be aware of FGC's systemic racism.	Agree (4.0)

Results suggest that Friends recognize that unresolved racial tension persists. Friends of Color may not feel heard, and those who speak up may be treated as troublemakers. Systemic racism may not have been addressed with prior diversity trainings. Friends agree that even Quakers who are working to root out their own racism may not be aware of FGC's systemic racism.

- "I find myself conflicted. I would be glad to see more Friends of Color employed by FGC and active on Central Committee. And, I think the current involvement is at least commensurate with the population we serve. It is a fact that Friends of Color are a very low percentage of regular attenders in FGC-affiliated monthly meetings in the USA and Canada. That may well be an indication of a different problem. I don't see how having more Friends of Color on the staff would impact that situation".
- "I pray for FGC's success in fully implementing the multicultural institutional audit, and then in fully engaging the organization and the constituent yearly meetings, monthly meetings and members in the process of putting the recommendations and insights of the audit into action... I am very grateful that the site location committee composition has changed, and that site selection now includes strong consideration of the comfort and safety of Friends of Color. I heard that some volunteers helping to organize the Gathering have received negative feedback from white Friends about the UT campus location this year, but that Friends of Color find it a better location for their needs than some past locations. I hope that FGC will more widely share information about all the factors considered in site location for the Gathering, and the balancing of needs that goes into the choice. White Friends need to take the needs of Friends of Color into consideration".
- "I have felt that additional training is necessary for the Junior Gathering Staff and maybe the whole body on how to do the work we need to do on our childhood misinformation about racism so that people don't just hush or paternalistically teach our young people but can be of genuine help to them in understanding racism and internalized racism. I feel we give them little help as evidenced by an incident in junior gathering where a 6-year-old white boy and a boy of color got into a fight over some toy and the white boy called the boy of color the n-word. Staff and then parents swooped in to shush the white boy and make him apologize leaving the boy of color by himself. It seems we helped neither child".

## Theme 9: Dominant Worldview

Six survey statements are directed toward this theme.

Quaker traditions predominantly reflect white culture.	Agree (4.0)
FGC operates out of a dominant worldview that includes individual competition.	Neither agree nor disagree (3.0)
FGC harbors the perception that resources are scarce.	Agree (3.6)
FGC's decision-making employs "either / or thinking."	Neither agree nor disagree (3.0)
Historically, FGC has primarily been accountable to people of European descent on board and staff.	Agree (4.1)
Currently, FGC is primarily accountable to people of European descent on board and staff.	Agree (3.6)

Despite wanting to claim the "non-racist" and "anti-racist" moniker as described on the Crossroads continuum, there are a number of responses that suggest a lack of progress toward anti-racist transformation. Respondents believe that FGC operates assuming a scarcity of resources, using either/or thinking, and encouraging individual competition. Respondents believe that FGC is primarily accountable to people of European descent on board and staff. These traits are indicative of maintaining a so-called "dominant worldview."

- "I believe there are many European-descent Quakers who believe themselves to not be racist, but who have refused to look deeply into the nature of implicit bias, institutional racism or any of the manifestations of these deeply embedded systems, thinking that a good heart is sufficient. I was among these until relatively recently, and the learning curve is steep."
- "I'm thinking of the responsibility to be the person who says 'wait a minute...I don't think we listened well to what this person shared.'"
- "[I'm] aware of the impact when we hear "that People of Color are not already Quakers [which] makes People of Color invisible".
- "I learned numbers at Gathering were down because Toledo was risky. My husband is a doctor and can't always travel with us so, I travel away from home [to Quaker events] with my kids where we are not close to safe. It hurts my feelings that we Friends of Color are not important enough for white Friends to be reciprocal. There are truly dangerous places in this country but Toledo is not one of them."

## Theme 10: Overcoming Cultural Exclusivity

Seven questions addressed this theme.

The insular nature of our nominating process may exclude Friends of Color.	Agree (3.5)
FGC programs reflect a predominantly white culture.	Agree (3.7)
Program success is measured, in part, by the number of participants of color in attendance but not the quality of their experience.	Agree (3.4)
FGC intends to provide programs that are inclusive but with little success.	Agree (3.4)
FGC programs are delivered in a way that demonstrates a lack of sensitivity to and knowledge of People of Color culture(s).	Neither agree nor disagree (3.1)
Friends of Color who are successfully recruited to serve in FGC are known by someone who already serves on Central Committee.	Agree (3.6)
It is difficult to be full-time employed and volunteer to serve FGC at the level expected.	Agree (3.9)

A majority of respondents held concerns about the exclusivity of FGC Quaker culture. Respondents believe that programs are delivered in a way that reflects white culture. Respondents show concern that the insular nature of FGC's nominating process may exclude Friends of Color. Respondents agree that it is difficult to be full-time employed and volunteer to serve FGC at the level expected. (This is a challenge for all who might serve FGC but may be a greater challenge for People of Color who statistically have less discretionary income and Adult Young Friends who are establishing themselves in the world).

- "The struggle to figure out how to have organizational culture that doesn't privilege the dominate culture is a serious challenge. What are the assumptions we [European Americans] don't even realize?"
- "Hard to find a place where white privilege is not dominant."
- "When white people are in charge they miss [a lot]."
- "Whose safety are we prioritizing?"
- "Friends of Color are never safe."

Finally, there is one statement on the survey that does not fit under any of these themes. "As an FGC Quaker, I turn to FGC for guidance regarding racism discussions". Responses included 374 who disagreed or strongly disagreed, followed by 364 who agreed or strongly agreed, and 362 who were neutral. This statement may serve, over time, as a "bellwether" to track FGC's progress toward becoming a model of anti-racist transformation to our constituents.

## The Continuum Explained

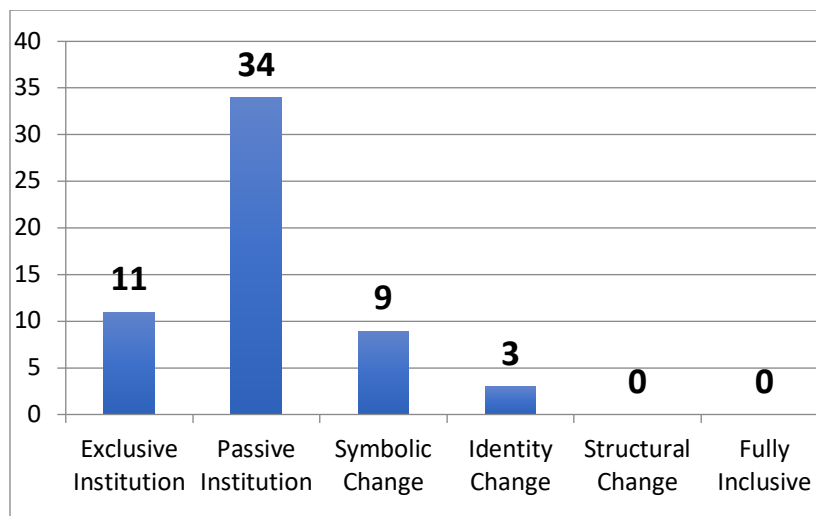
The Crossroads tool, "Continuum on Becoming an Anti-racist Multicultural Institution", provides a basis for locating an organization's progress through six typical stages of growth:

### 1. Exclusive, A Segregated Institution

2. Passive, A 'Club' Institution
3. Symbolic Change, A Multicultural Institution
4. Identity Change, An Antiracist Institution
5. Structural Change, A transforming Institution
6. Fully Inclusive, A Transformed Institution in a Transformed Society.

Using the Continuum and two Crossroads documents that identify institutional values as described in the article "White Supremacy Culture", members of the Task Force developed questions for the survey (Okun, n.d.). After the survey was closed the Task Force reviewed all data and together discussed and agreed upon the location of each survey statement on the continuum. During the discussion of each survey statement, they looked to both the demographic information and stories that could support or contradict the survey score.

As they discussed each individual score, Task Force members observed some high scores on the survey were not supported by demographic data or the lived stories of Friends of Color. Thus, many survey statements that Friends believe to be true are contradicted by other evidence. From this examination they assigned each survey statement to a stage of organizational growth. FGC descriptors thus assigned fall into four of the six possible stages with the center of the distribution at Stage 2: Passive Institution.



### Task Force Discernment

## Summary of Findings

While analyzing the survey data, focus group transcripts and the experiences of Friends of Color in FGC, we found that while FGC seeks to welcome People of Color to the Religious Society of Friends, the depth of tension and experience of racism faced by Friends of Color has never been fully heard nor understood by white/European-American Friends. Conflict avoidance has ruled

the day. Whistle blowers have often been deemed troublemakers and have been sidelined or simply have chosen to leave our blessed community with no resolution to the conflicts that have arisen.

When surveyed Friends describe themselves as non-racists and even as anti-racists. White/European-American Friends will say that “we don’t see a problem”. Our Monthly and Yearly Meetings have written minutes, epistles, and public statements regarding racism, white supremacy, and related topics in the world at large. We offer workshops on racism and white supremacy. However, white/European-American Friends often fail to see or credit the overwhelming evidence that Friends of Color have not felt at peace at our Gatherings or that the words and actions of white/European-American Friends continue to perpetrate violence against Friends of Color.

Survey respondents report that many Quaker traditions reflect and/or are rooted solely within white/European-American culture. Our board and staff are primarily accountable to people of European descent. Our meeting walls do not reflect a diverse, blessed community. Our nominating process tends to reinforce the status quo. The projects and services to which we commit our funds do not typically address racism. In light of what we in fact do, how can we, in all truth, name ourselves as anti-racists? What evidence is there for making this aspiration our lived reality?

What is the status quo? In their survey responses, many Friends reported that they perceive FGC’s governing structure as non-egalitarian, non-transparent, and hierarchical. Friends on Central Committee admit there are only a few people who know how to get things done. Decisions within FGC are most often made by Friends of European descent. Our decision-making process tends toward secrecy rather than transparency. These traits describe a club-like institution that is passive about its role in anti-racist work.

It’s time for real change. It’s time to look into the mirror and see ourselves clearly. We must act now. It’s time we truly transform ourselves, to model what it means to work toward an anti-racist society by transforming what FGC does, how we do it and who is included in the process. The Spirit is calling Friends to do this work. Will we answer this time? Are you with us on this journey?

## Recommendations

Our recommendations are arranged in three sections: Two minutes that were presented for Central Committee’s approval at its October 2018 meeting; requests regarding the organizational structure for Friends engaged in that discernment; advice for the proposed Anti-racist Transformation Implementation Group describing ways forward to becoming an anti-racist organization.

## **I. Central Committee Minutes**

### **A. Minute 1 – as approved on October 28, 2018**

Central Committee resolves that in all FGC decision-making processes during FY 2019, each body shall answer the following query with respect to each decision, “How does this decision support FGC in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?”

### **B. Minute 2 – as approved on October 28, 2018**

Central Committee approves the establishment of a group to implement the work of the Institutional Assessment on Systemic Racism within Friends General Conference. Its charge shall be to guide the transformation of Friends General Conference into an anti-racist organization.

Consistent with the decision of Central Committee in 2017 to prioritize the work of anti-racism, FGC commits to work to eliminate white supremacy within the Religious Society of Friends and model anti-racism, as we support the work of the implementation group.

Central Committee authorizes the Institutional Assessment Working Group (IAWG) to serve as a naming committee to bring forward the names of eight Friends to serve on this implementation group. The names for the implementation group shall be brought forward for approval to Executive Committee at its winter 2019 meeting. The individuals to be recommended shall constitute at least 50 percent Friends of Color and consideration shall be given to include Young Adult Friends and broad geographic representation.

The implementation Group will use the information and recommendations from the Institutional Assessment on Systemic Racism within Friends General Conference 2018 report to begin their work and its work shall not be limited to the scope of the report and its recommendations. The implementation group shall be accountable to Central Committee and will report its progress to each Executive Committee Meeting and annually to Central Committee. Central Committee authorizes the IAWG to propose an appropriate budget to support the work of the implementation group and authorizes the Executive Committee to approve that budget at its winter 2019 meeting.

## **II. Organizational Structure**

The following recommendations address questions relating to Organizational Structure and shall therefore be forwarded to FGC Central Committee and Executive Committee for their further consideration.

- I. Change the governance of FGC to be more multi-racial and multi-cultural, inclusive, nonhierarchical, egalitarian, efficient, anti-racist and possibly smaller.

- a. Assure the efforts of other working groups whose charge is to consider changes in FGC organizational structure and culture includes the goal of becoming an anti-racist organization.
  - b. Develop a structure that allows us to more fully receive the spiritual gifts of Friends of Color and Young Adult Friends in all of FGC functions.
  - c. Create a functioning and standardized communication mechanism with YM and co-opted representatives to Central Committee.
  - d. Develop a comprehensive communication strategy specifically for further inclusion of Friends of Color and Adult Young Friends including with regard to the use of technology.
  - e. Make the governing body more racially, culturally and age diverse, and consider making it smaller.
  - f. Improved orientation for those serving on the governing body.
    - i. Use the Diversity Committee's resources to assure understanding of systemic racism and structural racism within the organization.
    - ii. Provide training to all (old and new) Central Committee members in the body's decision-making process and provide the query in #3 (above) in advance of all meetings.
    - iii. Know and use the gifts of new volunteers fully and immediately.
    - iv. Have a trained buddy for new volunteers
      - 1. Develop guidelines for the buddies
      - 2. Consider pairing new volunteers of color with either other Friends of Color or Friends of European descent who have participated in anti-racist training.
  - g. Develop and maintain a nominating data base that includes Friends of Color which is available to nominating committee as committee membership changes
    - i. Ask Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meetings to collect and provide to FGC demographics of their Monthly Meetings that include age and race.
  - h. Provide opportunities and resources for Friends of Color who live in the West to fully participate in FGC governance by holding meetings in a variety of geographical locations across North America.
  - i. Develop and implement a racial harassment policy and complaint procedure for staff and volunteers.
- II. Consistent with the review of priorities at the 2017 Central Committee Meeting and the sense that the FGC Ministry on Racism Program is one of its highest priorities, FGC shall increase its support of FGC's Ministry on Racism program by:
- a. Making the coordinator a full-time position; and
  - b. Moving back to the original name of Committee for Ministry on Racism (CMR) from the current Transforming.
  - c. Re-instating the requirement that the Committee for Ministry on Racism is comprised at a minimum by 50% People of Color; and



- d. Increasing the capacity and financial resources of Ministry on Racism Program to provide anti-racism learning opportunities for Yearly Meetings and Monthly Meetings (similar to the Traveling Ministries program)
- III. The role of FGC's Diversity Committee will be to:
  - a. Continue to assure every staff meeting includes time for increase awareness of racism.
  - b. Ensure that new employees' orientation includes individual and systemic racial awareness
  - c. Support Gathering Planning Committee orientation regarding racism. Reinforce FGC commitment to lifting voices of People of Color in Gathering Evening Programing by inviting speakers who represent a diverse mix of race, gender, age, etc.
  - d. Develop and deliver annual racism and racial justice awareness programing for yearly Central Committee meetings.
- IV. FGC shall conduct a detailed review of its policy & procedures with a view to considering the intentional and unintended consequences and the impact on the participation of Friends of Color.

### III. Implementation Group

The following Recommendations shall be forwarded to the newly established Anti-Racism Transformation Implementation Group for its consideration and for it to bring appropriate recommendations for action before Central Committee, Executive Committee and/or other appropriate FGC bodies:

- I. Seek Friends of Color to serve in positions (volunteer and staff) of leadership
  - a. Identify and engage Friends of Color in Monthly Meetings to consider FGC service.
  - b. Specifically ask Yearly Meetings to nominate Friends of Color to Central Committee.
  - c. Provide enough resources to assist Friends of Color to serve FGC
  - d. Make every effort to bring in new Friends of Color rather than further burdening the few Friends of Color currently serving in leadership capacities with FGC.
- II. Develop a means to examine and change Quaker traditions, language and process developed by our European ancestors to be inclusive of other cultures.
- III. Have Development Staff seek funding to implement the recommendations including but not limited to:
  - a. Create an endowment to offer funds for People of Color and other underrepresented communities to support volunteers' travel to committee meetings and hospitality (paid accommodations) beyond local Friends.
  - b. Increase the Bayard Rustin Fund so it can continue to provide travel support for Friends of Color to participate in FGC sponsored events including the ability to supplement registration fees for FGC sponsored events.

- c. Commit to solving the barriers People of Color face that preclude them from fully functioning as a volunteer for Central Committee and other FGC activities.

## **Statement made at Central Committee by the Task Force**

Central Committee is the governing body of FGC whose membership is comprised of more than 120 Friends from Yearly and Monthly Meetings that span the United States and Canada. At the Central Committee meeting of October 24-28, 2018, the Institutional Assessment Task Force (IATF) brought forward its work, including a minute, an executive summary, and the full report.

At Central Committee, the IATF brought forward the following minute for discernment:

### **IA Task Force Minute**

Central Committee approves the establishment of a group to implement the work of the Institutional Assessment on Systemic Racism within Friends General Conference. Its charge shall be to guide the transformation of Friends General Conference into an anti-racist organization.

Consistent with the decision of Central Committee in 2017 to prioritize the work of anti-racism, FGC commits to model and work to eliminate white supremacy within the Religious Society of Friends, and to support the work of this implementation group.

Central Committee authorizes the Institutional Assessment Working Group (IAWG) to serve as a naming committee to bring forward the names of eight Friends to serve on this implementation group. The names for the implementation group shall be brought forward for approval to Executive Committee at its winter 2019 meeting. The individuals to be recommended shall constitute at least 50 percent Friends of Color and consideration shall be given to include Young Adult Friends and broad geographic representation.

The implementation Group will use the information and recommendations from the Institutional Assessment on Systemic Racism within Friends General Conference 2018 report to begin their work, and its work shall not be limited to the scope of the report and its recommendations. The implementation group shall be accountable to Central Committee and will report its progress to each Executive Committee Meeting and annually to Central Committee. Central Committee authorizes the IAWG to propose an appropriate budget to support the work of the implementation group, and authorizes the Executive Committee to approve that budget at its winter 2019 meeting.

Upon hearing the minute, the Central Committee body offered a series of changes. Eventually the Clerk, in an attempt to find unity, asked members of the Task Force to gather, re-write the

minute, and bring it back to the body. The Task Force members present returned and gathered at the front of the room and one of its co-clerks read out the following statement.

### **Statement of the IA Task Force**

Friends, we heard that you're concerned about the process, about accountability, about how we're reporting, and about our grammatical error. Also, there was some confusion about whether we need a budget now or the budget should be approved after we know what the full scope is. Further, some of you voiced concerns about whether the implementation group is going to be accountable to Central Committee (with reporting to Executive Committee in between) and what is it that Central Committee is giving authority to the body to do. We feel, that if you carefully read the minute, that we've answered these questions within the minute.

With respect to accountability, we feel that the minute is clear that the implementation group is accountable to Central Committee which shall approve its recommendations.

With respect to reporting, we feel that it is clear that this body will regularly and consistently report to Executive Committee and Central Committee.

With respect to the budget, we trust that it is clear that the IAWG will do the initial budget for this year only and for 2020 onward, the implementation group will present its own budget for approval.

With respect to authority, we feel that it is clear what specific limited authority has been delegated by Central Committee in the minute.

With respect to our vision for change within the Religious Society of Friends, we note that we are all a part of the Religious Society of Friends, and when we move outside FGC circles we share what we learn here.

We carefully thought about each word in the minute, and so our considered decision is that the only change we propose to the minute is to correct the grammatical error with respect to the placement of white supremacy.

And now we wish to bring forward a new minute for approval, before we return to our revision to the previous minute.

### **New Proposed Central Committee Minute**

Central Committee resolves that in all FGC decision-making processes beginning now with the FY 19 budget, each body shall answer the following query with respect to each decision, "How

does this decision support FGC in its goal to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community?”

And we have made one change to the following sentence in our previous minute, to read as follows:

Consistent with the decision of Central Committee in 2017 to prioritize the work of anti-racism, FGC commits to work to eliminate white supremacy within the Religious Society of Friends and model anti-racism, as we support the work of the implementation group.

*Both minutes were approved and the Task Force had one more thing to say.*

#### Our Lesson in White Supremacy Showing Up at Central Committee

The IATF shared a story at Central Committee from Jessica Vazquez Torres, an anti-racism trainer, who led the anti-racism workshop at Central Committee. Jessica said a white Friend noted to her at the close of our last session,

“So, did you see that just happen? That is us – that is our Quaker white supremacy in action in our process. We tell you to bring us a big, beautiful expansive dream, and then through our process we will whittle it down for you and put it into a box.”

*The IATF then shared with the body,*

“We are reflecting to the body what we just experienced. We brought you an expansive dream, and then you seek to control it, you seek to police it, and you say that you have no trust of the group appointed to do this work, and you are coming from a scarcity, either/or mindset.”

Once the IATF held up a mirror to Central Committee, the micromanaging fell away and Friends’ hearts were broken open, recognizing that indeed many of the concerns raised by the body had been addressed, all along, by the original minute.

Central Committee found unity and FGC has now affirmed its commitment to becoming an anti-racist organization through the processes and actions described in the minute and the summary report. This will be a multi-year process to uproot from within ourselves the on-going reality of white supremacy that spiritually harms us all.

While it is true that the body reached strong unity, it is also important to stress that the discernment at Central Committee was challenging for many Friends. This underscores the

ways that even when we are largely united in moving forward, systemic racism inserts itself in a myriad of dispiriting ways.

As individuals, as an institution and as a religious body, we have much work to do and we are committed to doing it. Let us all, as Friends, be united in doing the hard work necessary to make manifest the Kingdom of God on earth. Let the Divine search us, to hold up the mirror, so that we, individually and as a body, might see Truth.

## After Thought

*“...John Woolman (in Plea for the Poor) wrote, ‘May we look upon our treasures and the furniture of our houses, and the garments in which we array ourselves, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these possessions.’ And so it is today. Friends are called to look at not only the seeds of war in our lives, but also the seeds of privilege...Can our Friends meetings be free of privilege and be a living sanctuary where all of God’s self is free to minister to us in all of her offices as teacher, priest, and prophet? Can our Friends meetings be those thin places in which our relationships, regardless of race or class, be a sacrament of grace and wholeness? Can our Friends meetings be the body and hands of the Holy Spirit in the world today?” What spiritual insights and depth are we losing when we (European American Quakers) do not shed our mantle of privilege and work with our Friends of Color to co-create the beloved community? (Ricketts, 2014, p. 15)*

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## **Respectfully Submitted by the Institutional Assessment Task Force**

### **Task Force Members**

- Marvin Barnes (Lake Erie Yearly Meeting)
- Justin Connor (Baltimore Yearly Meeting)
- Janice Domanik (Illinois Yearly Meeting)
- Michael Doo (Baltimore Yearly Meeting)
- Vanessa Julye (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting)
- Sharon Lane-Getaz (Northern Yearly Meeting)
- Carolyn Lejuste (Lake Erie Yearly Meeting)
- Katrina McQuail (Canadian Yearly Meeting)
- Elanna Reber (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting)
- Marijke van Roojen (Northern Yearly Meeting)
- Dwight Wilson (Lake Erie Yearly Meeting)
- Keira Wilson (Philadelphia Yearly Meeting)

The Institutional Assessment Task Force welcomes your thoughts, feedback, contributions and/or response to this report. Please reach out via e-mail to share your light with us at: [institutionalassessment@fgcquaker.org](mailto:institutionalassessment@fgcquaker.org)