The Reparations Action Working Group (RAWG)

Report to Interim Meeting - March 2024

The Reparations Action Working Group (RAWG) offers this report for IM so that Friends can hold us in the Light as we seek greater clarity and invite other Friends to join in some part of this work:

At November Interim Meeting, Friends approved a $2,000 donation on behalf of BYM to the organization that supports the museum that memorializes our history of lynching in the US, the Memorial for Peace and Justice. This is the first time that we know of that BYM has acted as a faith community to support an aspect of retrospective justice and reparations. We are very glad to have taken this important step.

Other steps: 1) Please look at the RAWG webpage on the BYM website! We have added resources and other information that we hope Monthly Meetings will find useful. If you have found good resources, have questions, or would like RAWG to help with something at your Meeting, please let us know at reparations@bym-rsf.org

2) We have worked with other BYM committees on common issues. A) Co-clerks of our Working Group and the co-clerks of BYM’s Development Committee met to talk through different perspectives about both groups’ work. B) BYM’s Ministry and Pastoral Care Co-Clerks invited the three groups that are focused on antiracism work - the Working Group on Racism, the Growing Diverse Leadership Committee, and RAWG - to meet with them in a coordinating group, so that we can better keep up with each other’s work. We have met with them several times. C) The Faith and Practice Committee also reached out to our three groups and asked us to help them revise the section of F and P focused on Prejudice and Discrimination. We have had two planning meetings and a meeting with members of all three antiracism groups to discuss possible updates in perspectives, language, and ideas that we would recommend that the Faith and Practice Committee consider.

3) RAWG is planning a workshop for Annual Session. We are also considering other workshops and speakers we might bring to the BYM community to help us all grow in our knowledge about and understanding of Reparations and other forms of Retrospective Justice.

4) One of our major goals is to establish a fund for Retrospective Justice. There is a lot to consider when planning to a new fund on a topic that all Friends are comfortable with. We seek to create a fund that will be truly a positive thing, not unintentionally replicating oppressive practices. Here are some aspects of a fund that we are clear about:

* We should begin, as soon as possible, to share our resources to address harms of racism in specific ways that empower those who receive our funds.
* We may have an initial fund that allows us to raise funds and give funds while we are working out the logistics for a long-term and larger fund that may take another year to develop.
* By beginning to share funds, Friends can show that our intentions are genuine and that we seek to promote economic and social equity among communities who have been harmed by racism.
* And, by sharing as a faith community and as Quakers, we can let our commitment be known to the wider world and so inspire others to do the same.
* A fund lets BYM work for economic justice in a way that is equitable for BYM, too – when we give as a community, the focus is not on individual giving, but on the gift that we can create and give together as a faith community. Doing so may strengthen our shared identity and commitment to social and economic justice.

Our meetings each month are rich in discussion as we seek and create a path forward. Again, we invite others who have an interest in this work to join us.