

## **Working Group on Racism 2022 Annual Report**

### **Major activities**

The Working Group developed a series of recommendations for procedures to reduce racial bias when BYM recruits and hires new employees. Those recommendations were submitted to the Supervisory Committee and the BYM General Secretary. The Supervisory Committee has adopted some of those recommendations for its search for an Administrative Assistant to the General Secretary.

The Working Group collaborated with the Growing Diverse Leadership Committee, the STRIDE Working Group, the BYM Presiding Clerks, and the General Secretary on a request for proposals (RFP) to conduct a racial justice audit of the Yearly Meeting. The RFP was developed in consultation with several BYM Friends of color. The draft RFP was submitted to Interim Meeting for its consideration. Interim Meeting laid the draft over for additional seasoning and refinement.

The Working Group has recommended that a half-time administrative assistant be employed to support the work of the STRIDE Coordinator, the Growing Diverse Leadership Committee, the Reparations Action Working Group, and the Working Group on Racism. The Supervisory Committee and the General Secretary have engaged in dialog with the Working Group on this recommendation.

In May of 2021 Working Group members conducted a workshop for clerks of BYM Monthly Meetings and Yearly Meeting Committee Clerks to help them understand and recognize implicit racial bias. The workshop also addressed ways to mitigate the impact of implicit bias.

Several members of the Working Group are organizing a “One Book” initiative to encourage Friends throughout the Yearly Meeting to read and discuss the book *Caste*.

Ellen Cronin organized an antiracism mentoring program for WGR members to work with Monthly Meeting clerks who want to incorporate antiracism practice in their clerking.

Tronette Anochie and David Etheridge met with the new Camping Program Director to explore ways the Working Group could support him in addressing racism issues that have been identified in the BYM camping program. Tronette Anochie now serves as a member of the Antiracism Subcommittee of the Camping Program Committee.

Barbara Bezdek is coordinating an effort to engage local Meetings in exploring the possible racial impacts of their membership decision making practices.

### **The 2021 BYM Annual Session Workshops**

The Working Group sponsored two workshops during the 2021 Annual Session. Peirce Hammond and David Etheridge facilitated a “Connecting Local Meetings” session on efforts to lower racial barriers in

local Meetings. The other workshop was “Racial Wounding: Stopping It and Healing from It” facilitated by Tronette Anochie, Sabrina McCarthy, and David Etheridge.

### **Change Groups and Related Activities**

Much of the Working Group’s focus has been on encouraging and supporting racial justice Change Groups within local Meetings. Some Meetings have established or are working on establishing formal Change Groups. That process itself has occasioned a focus on racial dynamics within those local Meetings. Other Meetings have done racial justice work without forming a Change Group. The WGR serves as a clearinghouse, soliciting updates on local Change Group activities shared three times a year to facilitate exchange of information and inspiration as to what may be possible.

### **Workshops for 2022 BYM Annual Session**

The Working Group has scheduled three workshops for 2022 Annual Session. One workshop facilitated by Peirce Hammond and David Etheridge will be a “Connecting Local Meetings” session on efforts to lower racial barriers in local Meetings. Another workshop facilitated by Sabrina McCarthy and David Etheridge will be entitled “Quaker Response to Enslavement in BYM Territory.” The third workshop, facilitated by several members of the Working Group, will invite Friends who have read or are reading *Caste* by Isabel Wilkerson to share their experiences and ways they may feel stuck.

### **Within the Working Group on Racism**

Before doing other business, the Working Group makes time at its monthly meetings for Friends to share their recent experiences with respect to race. Friends share books, articles, films, and presentations on the topic of race that have come to their attention as well as personal experiences. Although this can take up considerable time, Friends feel it is an invaluable component of their meetings. Each month the Working Group also takes time to consider and discuss a different aspect of how “white supremacy culture” affects its work and that of the Yearly Meeting as well as what can be done about it.

### **Communications within BYM**

The Working Group is under the care of the BYM Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee. The clerk of the WGR meets once or twice a year with that Committee to keep it updated on Working Group activities and concerns and to seek counsel.

Several Working Group members participate actively on the BYM Growing Diverse Leadership Committee. The WGR Clerk is a member of the GDL Committee and the GDL Clerk is a member of the WGR.

The Working Group maintains a list of Monthly Meeting liaisons who receive a monthly item for their newsletters or other means of dissemination. It also maintains a Google group for distributing information about WGR work and resources related to racial justice work to about 175 interested Friends.

