

## **Declaration as an Anti-Racist Faith Community - Minute, and Queries**

adopted by Annapolis Friends Meeting (AFM) on 4/ 5 / 20

### **Background**

*“Be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come, that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one, whereby in them you may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you.”* -statement of George Fox - 1656.

Earliest Quakers resolved to see “that of God” in others and to live their beliefs including our testimony of equality. Yet, despite our own history of persecution, many Quakers over generations joined in buying and selling enslaved people before reaching clearness to seek abolition, education and other human rights.

Today, many Friends still benefit from systems that permit lesser educational and economic opportunities for nonwhites, de facto racial bias in law enforcement, and other routine discrimination in daily life. So, our faith again asks Friends to answer the Biblical call to “love thy neighbors” as ourselves.

Simply “addressing racism” is too weak. We must immerse ourselves in this concern and act. Our responses must kindly, but explicitly, acknowledge, illustrate, correct, and heal this infection that too often weakens social ties and effective citizenship. To do this, we must be authentic, logical, and empathetic.

We are encouraged by a practice adopted by Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM), Pendle Hill, and other groups to vet each of our decisions and actions using queries based on our Quaker practice.

### **Minute and queries**

Annapolis Friends are called on an ongoing basis to hold ourselves accountable, individually and collectively, in our decisions and practices, our actions and inaction.

Friends are urged to use queries for this purpose. For example:

To place our decisions in context, how do we hear the voices and include the concerns of our neighbors in our decisions and actions? Do our assumptions and stereotypes, privilege and assigned social-status impede our efforts to be in community with our neighbors?

To consider the impact of our decisions, how might our decisions or practices promote fairness and inclusion of those harmed by racist behavior or systems?

To offer a model, how do our decisions or practices fulfill our intention to be an anti-racist faith community? Do they enable us to “let our lives speak” and to be more welcoming?

### **Recommended actions**

Friends recognize that we cannot fully understand experiences of those we do not know. Therefore, we are called to “be patterns and examples” so that we can “walk cheerfully over the world answering that of God in everyone.”

AFM’s Change Group recommends that we adopt this Declaration as a living document that later may be changed and may be part of our learning process. The Change Group also recommends as examples that, individually and as a Meeting, we:

-Make it our custom regularly to seek visits with our African-American neighbors and others we perceive as different in their faith communities and elsewhere to listen and understand their lives and their concerns;

-Invite our neighbors, regardless of race, origin or class, to share our friendship and our communities as they are led;  
and

-Seek and adopt ways we can act to end racism and other harmful-isms, to undo prejudices, and to make our communities more inclusive, diverse and whole.