

SAYMA-URJ Report

June 2017

SAYMA 2016 Minutes Concerning the Formation of a Racial Justice Committee:

46-13 Racial Justice Proposal Steve Livingston (Asheville), SAYMA's representative from Asheville presented the following minute from Asheville Meeting. Asheville Friends approved the proposal at Fifth Month Meeting for Business in Fifth Month. The proposal calls for SAYMA to create a Racial Justice Committee—or whatever they want to call it— charged with supporting SAYMA Friends of Color as a place they can bring their issues and concerns when they come up, as they inevitably must, in an effort to make SAYMA a safe and welcoming community for Friends of Color. This committee would also be charged with educating the wider SAYMA community regarding issues of race and racism; compiling and disseminating resource materials; identifying and selecting workshop presenters, anti-racism trainers, organizers and organizations within our SAYMA region; and facilitating access to said resources among SAYMA Friends.

Comments from the floor: Overall, there was support for creating such a committee; however, some Friends wanted to make sure that we were spending some time reviewing the minute and figuring out what the Yearly Meeting needs in forming said committee.

Friends were clear that this was not the same as Peace and Social Concerns as Racial Justice is not just about what is happening outside of the yearly meeting but also what is happening inside our own body. The Racial Justice Committee would be a place for people of color to come when they have concerns about something happening in the yearly meeting as well as be a committee to support the developing resources for our monthly meetings. This is a population that deserves to be heard, loved, and fully included. The role of this committee is extremely important for the yearly meeting as a whole to educate and add resources to understanding the issues of racism and the things white Europeans are doing to contribute to racism.

Friends expressed the need to make sure that we are doing outreach and working with our children and addressing their understanding and exposure to diversity or the lack thereof. This committee may help do outreach to people of color. We have this wonderful religion made up of great faith and practice, yet we keep it a secret. There is an opportunity for us to encourage people of color to join our Faith through this committee. Another Friend mentioned that we might want to set guidelines about the makeup of the committee as well as make sure we get input from our young adult friends.

Friends were concerned that at times we have seasoned a topic too much. Friends thought that we might make it an ad hoc committee so that it could start working and discerning what it was called to take part in. Another Friend mentioned that ad hoc did not prioritize the group enough to show that we as a body are committed to the work for the long haul. Also with seasoning, it become easy to make too broad of a proposal that then doesn't allow the committee to do its work reasonably and then dies from over commitment.

Friends mentioned that three different issues had been mentioned: race, outreach and youth. Yes, they all merge, and it is too broad. 46-13-01 The Yearly Meeting affirms the broad idea from Asheville Meeting to form a Racial Justice Committee and unites to form this committee by the end of the weekend. Rebecca Sullivan (Atlanta), Sharon Anise (West Knoxville) and Tim Lamb (Berea) will convene a group of interested Friends to get together to present a report back by Saturday business meeting.

46-31 Racial Justice Committee Proposal Continued Tim Lamm (Berea) presented the edited proposal on the creation of the Racial Justice Committee. We want SAYMA to be a welcoming and safe place for people of color. Therefore, we propose SAYMA create a standing committee on Racial Justice to support SAYMA Friends of Color and provide education and resources to monthly meetings and the yearly meeting regarding issues of race and racism. Examples include: providing spaces for listening and talking about our experiences of race and racism; compiling and disseminating resource materials; coordinating workshops and trainings. We propose an ad hoc committee to address needs that arise for support and education. We also ask the ad hoc committee to develop the standing committee's charge and structure to be presented at Spring 2017 Representative Meeting. We expect the ad hoc committee to be drawn largely from Friends of Color.

Friends asked for clarification about why the ad hoc and standing committee were both used in the proposal. To create a standing committee, we need to follow some procedural steps to get the committee description and procedures prepared, so we are creating an ad hoc committee to both set up the procedures as well as act on any concerns that may arise for the standing committee before it is completely formed. Friends had some concerns regarding the racial makeup of the committee. However, other Friends spoke of the importance of the committee for all of us no matter our race. 46-31-01 Friends approved the proposal.

SAYMA/URJ Report

Six Friends of Color (Folami Adams, Lisa Bennett, Gabrielle Hammonds, Shahina Lakhani, Art Jones and Sharon Smith) were charged with forming a standing SAYMA committee to support Friends of Color and provide educational resources to SAYMA yearly and monthly meetings regarding issues of race and racism. Loving fellowship was enjoyed by all as we accomplished the tasks through working worship on the weekend of November 18-20, 2017 in Atlanta.

The committee decided the name of the standing committee is **SAYMA-URJ (Uplifting Racial Justice)**. Folami Adams (Atlanta) and Sharon Smith (Asheville) are its co-clerks. A draft mission statement and vision were written and approved by the committee. Goals were agreed on by canvassing a wider group of SAYMA Friends of color (FOC) regarding what they need to feel safe and welcome as SAYMA Friends of Color. SAYMA-URJ organized the concerns FOC shared with us into Goals, and they were approved, also.

Vision: SAYMA/URJ envisions a Yearly Meeting community where every Friend of color is safe and feels welcome. We see a SAYMA community where the divine light within every Friend of color is affirmed, his or her unique history, spiritual journey and lived truth is honored, where our messages and concerns, are heard and respected with due consideration. We see a SAYMA community where Friends of color are empowered to build close spiritual Friendships, appreciation, love and support for the weighty responsibilities we carry as people of color, embodying Quaker Testimonies, within and outside of the Religious Society of Friends.

Mission: To help SAYMA become a safe and welcoming place for Friends of Color. The committee will do this by providing a safe place for Friends of Color to bring issues and concerns regarding racism within their monthly meetings and SAYMA, and to find support and advocacy. The committee will also work to raise awareness about white supremacy (aka racism) within SAYMA by compiling and disseminating educational resources.

Goals: The following goals were compiled by canvassing SAYMA Friends of color (FOC). We asked what FOC need to feel safe and welcome among Friends?

1. Help navigating Quaker culture and process (e.g., a FOC welcome committee; a printed guide to Quaker culture for newcomers; and/or assigned mentors).
2. Provide opportunities to connect with other FOC, in order to build a community of support, share experiences and resources, and receive emotional and tactical support from other FOC.
3. Commit to addressing the concerns of FOC and respond to said concerns in a timely manner with sincere listening and not avoidance, "management," and "process violence." *
4. Engage in conflict resolution/reconciliation processes that do not expect victims to facilitate or take responsibility for what happened to them.
5. Hire skilled facilitators for private FOC only sessions, to help FOC understand and heal from generational racial trauma and develop personal and group empowerment.
6. Arrange ongoing workshops and other opportunities for learning that focus on dismantling racism for all SAYMA Friends, beginning with the Yearly Meeting leadership (including all clerks, the Planning Committee, Ministry and Nurture, Junior Yearly Meeting, YAFs and the Finance Committee).

Approved:

1. Folami Adams and Sharon Smith will serve as co-clerks.
2. SAYMA/URJ will meet every quarter (a schedule has yet to be approved).
3. Only FOC will be members of SAYMA/URJ.
4. SAYMA-URJ encourages Friends of European descent to support SAYMA-URJ by forming a separate committee or working group.

5. SAYMA-URJ will create and manage an operating budget with sufficient funds readily available to dispense grass roots reparations** and fund operational expenses as needed (e.g., lodging, transportation, and travel expenses; resources; training as well the cost of an annual pre-SAYMA gathering and skilled facilitation).

6. SAYMA-URJ needs its own bank account to create financial independence and autonomy for FOC.

Recommendations

1. Hire CrossRoads Anti-Racism Training and Organizing to train all YM clerks and staff as well as members of Ministry and Nurture, the Planning Committee, Finance Committee, the Nominating Committee, Junior Yearly Meeting, SAYF and YAFs.

<http://crossroadsantiracism.org/organizing/institutional/>

2. Include SAYMA-URJ members on the SAYMA Planning Committee, Ministry and Nurture, the Nominating Committee, the Quaker Education Committee, and the Finance Committee. Ideally, there should be at least one SAYF representative/intern working with SAYMA-URJ.

3. Grant SAYMA-URJ an independent operating budget (see budget request).

Budget Request

SAYMA/URJ requests \$16,000 (approximately 20% of SAYMA's overall income) for fiscal year 2017 in order to faithfully and sufficiently fulfill its mission and goals.

SAYMA/URJ requests a separate bank account in order to establish financial independence and confidentiality for Friends of Color. The money will be used to dispense "grass roots reparations"* and fund operational expenses as needed (e.g., lodging, transportation, and travel expenses; resources; training; the cost of our annual pre-SAYMA gathering; skilled racial trauma healing facilitation for FOC; part-time administrative support, compilation of an anti-racism/multicultural resource database for all SAYMA Friends).

It was suggested at the SAYMA Representative Meeting in March, that SAYMA-URJ model its budget process on the budget process SAYF uses, as SAYF has a separate bank account and does its own budgeting, record keeping and reporting.

The disbursement for SAYF is budgeted by SAYMA at a set amount each year. They don't submit a budget proposal to receive funds. They submit regular financial reports and accounting records.

SAYF uses Quickbooks for bookkeeping - recording reimbursements for expenses, transactions on their account, income and so forth. They electronically store expense receipts and also use an Excel database for retreat by retreat bookkeeping, and physically file copies of deposit information. They currently communicate Quarterly Financial Reports to the SAYMA Treasurer and an Annual Financial Report, as well as an Annual Report on SAYF's activities and participation, to SAYMA each June.

These are the aspects of the SAYF budget and fiscal process SAYMA-URJ would like to adapt. We ask that someone from the Finance Committee work with the SAYMA-URJ co-clerks to set up a similar SAYMA-URJ financial system.

Here is to SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice!

Folami Adams (Atlanta) SAYMA/URJ co-clerk

Sharon Smith (Asheville) SAYMA/URJ co-clerk

Lisa D. Bennett (Memphis)

Shahina Lakhani (Atlanta)

*Process Violence: When Quaker Process is used to block and/or control leadings of the spirit, and otherwise cause harm.

**Grass Roots Reparations: To do right, by giving-back, according to your capacity, without waiting for an act of Congress. Individuals and institutions can do this.