

Dear Friends:

**"White rage is not about visible violence, but rather it works its way through the courts. The legislatures, and a range of government bureaucracies. It wreaks havoc subtly, almost imperceptibly. ... White rage doesn't have to wear sheets, burn crosses, or take to the streets. Working the halls of power, it can achieve its ends far more effectively, far more destructively. ... The trigger for white rage, inevitably, is Black advancement. It is not the mere presence of Black people that is the problem; rather, it is Blackness with ambition. With drive, with purpose, with aspirations, and with demands for full and equal citizenship. It is Blackness that refuses to accept subjugation, to give up. A formidable array of policy assaults and legal contortions, has consistently punished Black resilience, Black resolve."**

From **"White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide"**, by Carol Anderson, Ph.D. (p. 3)

Unfortunately, Black and Indigenous Friends of color, (BIPOC) have been subjected to this type of quiet racism, ever since the earliest days of Friends in the Americas, right up to the present day. When we examine our record, there is no doubt that subtle, and not-so-subtle racism, has been a part of SAYMA since its beginning, and it is abundantly clear that it is still operating now. We see white domination, aka racism, enacted through SAYMA's formal and informal business processes, overtly and covertly. We have witnessed the spiritual gifts and spirit-led activism of BIFOC maligned and suppressed. Our continuing revelations (spirit-led initiatives) effectively undermined through various unfriendly means.

Since the formation stages of the SAYMA Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) committee, BIFOC have been viciously attacked, with almost total impunity. Every anti-racist initiative SAYMA-URJ has brought forward has been met with white outrage and resistance. BIFOC who have been doing exactly what they are called to do to address longstanding issues of racism among Friends, have been called liars, con artists, bullies, and abusers, basically over **differences of opinion**—as to what racism is, how it operates, specifically among Friends, and what strategies to dismantle it—which is to say, no good reason, whatsoever.

Worse than that, SAYMA BIFOC have consistently been pitted against one another over issues of race, in order to discourage us from connecting with one another in fellowship, possibly finding unity with one another, specifically concerning matters of race and racism in our own Meetings, or acting with unified spirit-led purpose, as Friends of color. Every trick in the tried and true white supremacist playbook has been employed to keep BIFOC separated, and divided against one another. Yet, to this day, not one single white Friend who has engaged in, or enabled these absolutely racist activities, has been held accountable for the harms they have caused to BIFOC. And, the specific Friends of color who have been targeted by Quaker racists, have yet to receive anything resembling restorative justice. In fact, there are SAYMA Friends, in positions of responsibility now, who think SAYMA-Uplifting Racial Justice (URJ) is responsible for the reluctance of the few remaining SAYMA BIPOC to participate in SAYMA activities. Some even question whether SAYMA-URJ is owed an apology, for being treated so

poorly, by Quakers who say they are committed to becoming an anti-racist faith community that is welcoming to diverse peoples of color.

But, how is that ever going to happen, IF no white Friend is ever accountable for the racist harm they cause? How will you meet your diversity goals, IF you are not willing to act in a fair and equitable manner, with regard to BIPOC?

Fundamentally, anti-racist praxis involves empowering BIPOC, respecting our unique interpretation of Quaker Testimonies, and expressions of faith, and practice, based on our unique lived experience as Friends of color, AND holding white people accountable for their racist behaviors. Nobody cares about what you think or how you feel. Love is what you DO, not how you feel or what you say. Quakers should already know this. Yet, in order for BIPOC to be considered worthy of inclusion into white Quaker spaces, we are not empowered to be ourselves, but expected to accept your Eurocentric colonizing racially biased preconditions, social norms, and protocols. And, you expect us to make you feel "safe", while you threaten us with paternalism: your Eurocentric colonial white sense of superiority, and your European cultural addiction to exploitation, control, and domination.

However, Friends cannot expect to reduce people's gifts and leadings to something you can effectively white-manage if you really intend to meet your diversity goals, because, it is simply not possible to build relationships of trust with people you do not respect. Again, as Quakers, you should already know this.

It is a well-known fact, verified by Quaker history that the Society of Friends has been a white supremacist organization from its inception. Historically, Friends have not seen BIPOC as fully human, and ripe for exploitation and oppression. Quakers profited from human trafficking through the slave trade. Friends traded in Africans and Indigenous Americans. Quakers collaborated with the US government to steal indigenous peoples' children in order to assimilate them or kill them if they could not be assimilated, through Indian boarding schools, adoptions, and foster care agencies. Friends profited by dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their ancestral lands, communities, and lifeways.

Clearly, many Friends are struggling with these facts, and maybe this is where the Friendly desire to become anti-racist Quaker Meetings originates. Except, current patterns of racism practiced across the Quaker world, clearly demonstrate that the sense of the white Quaker community, at large, is just not there yet. Structural change has been so slow and incremental that your integrity must now be called into question.

We know that white people have been socialized to believe your pathological and predatory Eurocentric ways are superior. You've been taught that you are better, and more deserving of "the pursuit of happiness" than the Natives whose land your ancestors stole, and the Black people your ancestors enslaved. Too many of you still think you are better than the BIPOC you say you want to be your Friends. All BIPOC have learned from generations of experience, that white people are culturally addicted to exploitation and control. We've seen how you treat BIPOC who dare to approach you as equals or do not share your inflated opinion of yourselves. Yet here you are, still trying to deny that

**YOUR RACISM** is the problem, NOT the behavior of any BIFOC's spirit-led anti-racist activism, and not any individual BIFOC who dares to call you on your racist patterns of behavior.

Even though some Friends claim they want multicultural "diversity" and "inclusion", Friends are extraordinarily reluctant to accommodate cultural difference, or culturally different understandings and expressions of Quaker faith, worship, and practice. SAYMA Friends of color, along with a few white Friends who are brave enough to support our efforts toward racial justice, have borne the brunt of your white rage for far too long. People's lives are on the line while you dither. We've had enough. It is past time for Quakers to honestly and openly face your racist colonial past and admit you are addicted to the power your whiteness affords you and be the CHANGE you say you want to be, or face the fact that you like being a racist.

According to the SAYMA Friends of color we spoke with, patterns of systemic white supremacist behaviors show up in SAYMA in the following ways:

1. Controlling the narratives, processes, and resources are the primary ways white supremacist Quakerism is maintained. White Supremacy (WS) is also maintained by well-meaning folks who enable unjust laws, rules, policies, procedures, and social conventions to continue, without question or challenge.
2. Racist Quakers are responsible for instigating conflict and division between Friends of color by pitting FOC against one another. They "divide and rule" in order to serve their racist agendas, and to derail URJ's efforts to build a harmonious spiritual community with SAYMA FOC, consciously, and unconsciously. (Note: Quakers have not treated LGBTQ+, women's, children's or environmental justice groups the same way they have treated Friends of color.)

SAYMA FOC already told you what they want/need to feel welcome among Friends. URJ's vision and Mission were approved, by SAYMA FOC before they were approved by the body of SAYMA in 2017. But, SAYMA has yet to support URJ's work, financially or spiritually. EVERYTHING URJ has tried to do in fulfillment of its vision, mission, and goals has been undermined by racist actors in positions of responsibility, and so far no one has admitted responsibility, apologized, or been held accountable.

**Vision:** SAYMA-URJ envisions a Yearly Meeting community where every Friend of color feels welcome. We see a SAYMA community where the divine Light within every Friend of color is affirmed, their 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 welcoming place for Friends of color. The committee will do this by providing safe space for Friends of color to bring issues and concerns regarding racism within their Monthly Meetings and SAYMA, 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.

“If you are neutral in a situation of injustice, you have sided with the oppressor.”  
--Desmond Tutu

Therefore, IF you are serious about becoming an anti-racist multicultural faith community capable of welcoming diverse peoples of color and families, without re-traumatizing them with your uniquely Quaker brand of disingenuous Friendship, the following good faith action steps are for you. As always, the choice is yours. But please, DO NOT dare to say out loud that SAYMA is an anti-racist community Friendly to any Black and/or Indigenous people if you should choose not to follow the action steps laid out for you by SAYMA’s Black and Indigenous Friends of color.

1. No Quaker individual, committee, or Meeting can be neutral in the face of racial injustice and expect to be anti-racist. Therefore, White Friends must practice noticing patterns of racist behavior within Quaker meetings and speak out against the racism they see, within and beyond the Quaker context.
2. As the victims of racism among Friends, we have a human right to “name names” and “point fingers” at those individual Friends, communities, organizations or committees who are sustaining white supremacy/racism, thereby causing harm to FOC. What would be the worst outcome if white people felt and faced their fear and shame when they are called on their racism?
3. Controlling financial resources is one of the primary ways white supremacy is maintained. Therefore, Finance Committee’s business should be open and transparent; no longer confidential. Any Friend should be welcome to attend Finance Committee meetings.
4. All efforts possible, should be made to help SAYMA Friends understand how internalized oppression: both “internalized superiority” and “internalized inferiority”, impacts SAYMA’s progress toward becoming an anti-racist faith community. This is not about how much SAYMA pays for anti-racism work, but about how white people change their relationship to racist ideology and white power.
5. White Quakers must accept responsibility/accountability for racist Quakers, your racist/colonizing presence, and legacy. Clerks are present to keep Quaker order, not to allow racist attacks against FOC or take sides in disagreements between BIPOC. In fact, Quaker clerks/committees perpetuate racism whenever they permit racism, by inaction.
6. FOC expect a cessation of mean-spirited racist attacks against FOC— especially attacks against FOC engaged in anti-racist analysis and organizing among Friends. This behavior is usually in defense of fragile white feelings, and it must be stopped. Any Friend who feels they are being abused by the Truth is no Friend, at all.

7. SAYMA Friends must accept the reality that racist Quakers are responsible for instigating conflict and division between FOC, by pitting FOC against one another, playing "divide and rule", in order to derail our efforts to build spiritual community with one another and find unity. This covert racist organizing can be stopped by exposing the individual Friends engaged in it and encouraging FOC to resolve whatever artificially contrived conflicts we may have.
8. White Friends must respect BIPOC's diverse cultural frameworks, modes of expression, and our various ongoing legacies of resistance to oppression, anti-racist/ counter-colonial organizing, and activism.
9. We are tired of hearing about white people's hurt feelings and being accused of bullying for speaking the truth. White people never care about the feelings of BIPOC you oppressed and exploit, so white people's feelings are far down the list of important elements in the context of anti-racism work. Because racism is about white power and domination, not about your fragile or fake hurt feelings. Therefore, how white people feel about being called on their racism cannot be central to the work of dismantling racism/white supremacy among Quakers. Seriously, what kind of Friends are harmed by Truth?

"If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, and it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

--Frederick Douglass, August 3, 1857

In Friendship,

SAYMA Friends of color