

Greetings to Friends Everywhere,

Black, Brown, Indigenous and People of Colour Friends from many Yearly Meetings gathered on 31 May 2025 for our first time together. Thirty one of us came with hope, joy, and some wariness. We are from diverse backgrounds and locations including the US, Canada, South Africa, Kenya, Philippines, Zimbabwe, the UK and the Kingdom of Hawai'i. We came from Baltimore Yearly Meeting, Britain Yearly Meeting, Canadian Yearly Meeting, Intermountain Yearly Meeting, the Nairobi Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting, Southern Africa Yearly Meeting, and Southern Appalachia Yearly Meeting and Association. We may be the first worldwide online Meeting between Quakers who are Black, Brown, Indigenous and People of Colour (BBIPOC), initiated by a grassroots group of Friends of Colour. Many are involved in anti oppression/ decolonization, racial justice, reparations, and community empowerment work through Quaker and other organizations.

In break-out groups and in our broader meeting, we approached key themes, which included: addressing white supremacy, supporting marginalized communities, environmental justice, and personal growth/healing.

We exchanged ideas about future initiatives, including organizing regional meetings, gatherings and having, someday, a BBIPOC Yearly Meeting. We emphasized the importance of recognizing indigenous traditions and building inclusive Quaker communities.

We touched on the visceral nature of Quakerism and the importance of grounding ourselves in somatic experiences. We voiced feelings about the global resonance of challenges faced by Quakers of colour, the need to recognize existing community efforts, and the importance of considering diverse perspectives from different regions. Our faith came to the fore when our conversations shifted to a more worship-like format, with participants reflecting on ancestors, gratitude, and the concept of "truthability" in sustaining harmonious relationships

A Friend emphasized the need for people of colour to come together and build their own Quaker communities rather than relying on white European people, cultures and structures. Another Friend highlighted the importance of personal growth and sustaining momentum in this work. A Friend from Kenya extended invites to the group to a gathering in Ghana in October to strengthen relationships and discuss decolonization. There was a suggestion about ways in which we could learn about decolonization efforts in different regions, including Africa, Asia, and Spanish-speaking areas, to better understand diverse perspectives

Indigenous Peace Traditions and Diplomacy

An indigenous Canadian Friend shared a story about Papunhunk, a prominent Munsee Lenape leader and diplomat who interacted with anglo-american Quaker missionaries in

the 18th century. The story highlights the sophisticated peace traditions of indigenous peoples that predated Quaker pacifism. We learned about an interaction between Papunhank and Quaker missionary John Woolman, where Woolman recognized the spiritual depth of the indigenous community.

We left physically tired but spiritually invigorated - looking forward to our next meeting, sitting with the joy and contentment of newly acquainted f/Friendship. Hopeful that the shoots of our new bonds will grow to become strong trees that give leaves of shelter and grow deep and connected roots.

We went our separate ways, listening to birdsong and on the screen was a picture of trees, the sky, shining sun. We felt the dawn of what is to come.

In hope, in peace, in joy, in Friendship,

Gloria Simon-Gould
Clerk
Tomi Nagai-Rothe
Assist. Clerk

Epistle Sub-Committee:
SY Boland
Diego Navarro
Marghuerita Remi-Judah

Imagine a world

Imagine a space
Imagine yourself a part of a special human space
Celestial in nature
Spiritual in performance
International in presence
Yes we are a part
Of a future present relational reality
We gather here
We gather there
By zoom we gathered from everywhere
May 31, 2025
31 Friends of Colour gathered
For a called meeting
We inhaled and exhaled individually and collectively
The multiple sounds of voices
Politeness are witness
To global majority discernment everyone was sure a stare

Staring eyes opened wide.. how did you meet
You know racism keeps you on your feet
The sounds were deep and held a space for energy, enthusiasm, cultivating
relationships and so much more
A million ideas, thoughts, expressions, sounds and movements around
Liberation in the air
Philosophizing with care
Signifying on all we have had to bear
We are building community
We are building trust we are eliminating the indoctrination that has kept us apart.
We listened for progress we spoke with enlightenment.
We listened for enlightenment and we spoke for progress. Distance cannot divide us
White comfort cannot separate us. The engagement of each other is like an egg being
birthed and cracking aloud and we are all in
Ahhh
to see what we are becoming
Ahhh
to know what we are creating
Ahhh
to know the essence of who we are caring
Ahhh
to know
we do
even in the unknowing
We know we are becoming
Completely anew
A new birth
A new vision
A new mission
I imagine, **what say you?**