

## North Pacific Yearly Meeting Annual Session 2018

University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, WA

### Minutes of Record, Second Plenary Session

July 26, 2018; 10:30 – 11:45 am

#### **Presentation by Vanessa Julye, Friends General Conference Staff Visitor: Uprooting Racism**

Vanessa Julye was introduced by her long-time friend, Annis Bleeke. Vanessa is a member of Central Philadelphia Friends Meeting. She is co-author, with Donna McDaniel of *Fit for Freedom not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans, and the Myth of Racial Justice*.

Vanessa's presentation was in the context of a meeting for worship. She began with a tribute to the Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

Some of the issues she raised were as follows:

- Some African American Friends find their monthly meetings to be deeply uncomfortable because of racial isolation and an aura of long-standing white supremacy.
- Racism hurts both people of color and the white people complicit in assuming white superiority.
- The trauma of experiencing racism, including reconstruction of past practices, hurts our biology, is registered in our genetic makeup.
- Real community depends on common memory, and the common memory is different for people of European descent as compared to people of color.
- Within the Religious Society of Friends there is conflict between our values and our behavior.
- The attitude that people of European descent are superior to people of color began centuries ago (especially with the Doctrine of Discovery first declared in the 15<sup>th</sup> century) and is normalized in the United States.
- We Quakers seek and conflate comfort and safety.
- Acceptance of each other requires leaving ethnicity and heritage "outside the door."
- Uprooting racism requires stepping outside the white cultural boundaries, allowing awareness of our actions as they are (in spite of our good intentions), and resilience in the experience of discomforts when we confront the issues.

As an activity, she asked each of us to report what we were thinking and feeling as we listened to a partner.

Vanessa's presentation will be posted on the NPYM website.

Prepared by Angie Alexander, Recording Clerk