

July 17th, 2022

To our NPYM community and beyond,

During this Annual Session of North Pacific Yearly Meeting, we have reflected on the many aspects of Quakerism which have led us to this intentional community. Young Adult Friends are led here out of gratitude for the many intangible gifts Friends offer. We are drawn to this non-authoritative community because we value equality in action. We feel grateful for intergenerational community relationships which bring valuable learning opportunities that we do not find elsewhere. We want to achieve a beloved community where individuals can be their *whole* unique selves, and the light can be seen within all of us.

Out of care for this community and its future, we feel led to express our concerns about the way the Society of Friends is operating.

We are concerned about the dwindling younger generations in Quaker spaces. We are losing our peers and friends from this community. Many of us have doubts and concerns about our own paths. Everyone feels the loss of valuable younger members, as many of us are also relied upon to perform vital tasks to continue Annual Session and within our home Meetings.

We are ringing a warning bell: several members in our generations have left because of the oppression and the absence of collective support they have experienced. We have recognized a pattern of prioritizing older white Friends who are considered “weighty,” to the detriment of the rest of the community. This pattern tends to result in upholding oppressive norms which harm and alienate our marginalized members. We have regularly seen instances of white supremacy, colonialism, patriarchy, transphobia, heteronormativity, ageism, ableism, sexism, and classism.

This loss of community members is putting a strain on our ability to gather in the region. For example, there was almost no Event Planner this Annual Session. Next Annual Session will not occur if there is not a new person to take on the Event Planning role. Friends have even gone to the extent of taking on extra roles. We want to express our appreciation for the Friends who made this gathering happen. We call out this role as one example of a larger, systemic issue.

We recognize that it is difficult to hear criticisms of the community which you hold dear and work hard to improve, and we are only expressing these from a desire to continue in this community and build a better future together.

While we are grateful for intergenerational community relationships, we need more accountability and support in building them. Here are several suggestions we call on our collective to implement, to build a community that is diverse, recognizes harm, and can practice accountability in *consistent* and *transparent* ways:

- Schedule committee meetings outside of common weekday working hours to facilitate more young adult involvement.
- Our whole community needs to be on alert for condescension, paternalism, and patronizing attitudes. These cause harm.
- A living written document that describes the Ministry and Counsel committee and the services they provide to alleviate harm, reasons to contact them, and expected outcomes of working with them. These guidelines for the Ministry and Counsel need to be communicated to all ages so that all members of our community feel cared for and protected.
- When someone is harmed in our community, the person who experienced harm should not be burdened on their own with the task of repairing the relationship with the person who caused them injury. There needs to be community support for the person who was injured, especially when there are power differentials involved.

We join with Junior Friends in their plenary call for Friends to re-evaluate the state of our Society and to live our testimonies of community and equality.

We respect our elders and what they can teach us about Quaker values; therefore, we feel called to speak out when the actions of our elders do not align with the values we all hold dear. We have hope that this community can hold each other as we move through a constantly changing world. We want these changes to be felt for the better, and we need to get to work if we are going to thrive as a spiritual organization into the future. We thank so many of you for the continuous effort you have put into learning and decolonizing our actions and our gatherings. We thank you for listening to our concerns and taking action to flourish into the loving community we know we can be.

In love and in light,

NPYM Young Adult Friends