

North Columbus Meeting of Friends Minute on Responding to Systemic Racism and Police Violence

Guided by the inward conviction of our Quaker Peace Testimony, North Columbus Friends Meeting asserts that peaceful resolution through nonviolent means is always superior to aggressive measures. Our experience convinces us that there is the Light of God in all people and that we must turn to love, truth-saying, nonviolence, and imagination to heal with the aim of freeing all concerned to find just and peaceful solutions.

As we bear witness to the violence wrought by centuries of cultural and institutional racism in this country and reflect on the unconscionable suffering that this violence inflicts upon Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and people of color, as well as our collective humanity, we appeal to our elected representatives and law enforcement to actively renounce all divisive language and actions in response to the ongoing peaceful protests to confront racism.

Breaking cycles of violence, standing as courageous peacemakers, and focusing on solutions to the root causes of racism, is the better way to serve both country and community. To that end we urge all municipal law enforcement agencies to take stock and embrace the development of non-violent communication skills and de-escalation tactics in an effort to move the dynamic from one of militarism to one of humanitarianism; from one of 'battle space' to one of safe space for peace.

We recognize the unprecedented challenges presented by this call for systemic change and we believe the will exists within law enforcement and society as a whole to implement such change. We urge all state and local governments and law enforcement agencies to redirect funding to invest in communities of color and in reform aimed at eliminating violence in policing.

Only reforms grounded in compassion, love and understanding will have a meaningful and lasting impact. Such reforms are voiced by the NAACP (<https://naACP.org/latest/update-naACP-demands/>) and the Friends Committee on National Legislation (<https://www.fcnl.org/updates/america-needs-police-reform-2825>).

In Peace, Judy Hartman, Clerk, on behalf of
North Columbus Friends Meeting
14 June 2020