

Equality—a deeply held Quaker value

Yet I feel bombarded recently by the stark reality that I hold white privilege
That blacks are more vulnerable than a white person—simply because of the color of their skin

We have a long legacy of equality for all persons...

Scripture – Both Old and New Testaments speak of care for others with respect and love
There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28 NRSV

George Fox and early Quakers

Use of plain language and refusal to give hat honor because all are equal before God
George Fox expressed it in the phrase, "that of God in everyone"

Declares the worth, dignity, and the divine capacity present in all persons

Equality of women, efforts in the prisons, treatment of the "insane"

John Woolman 1720-1772

As a young man he wrote a bill of sale for a slave, but was deeply afflicted
Worked tirelessly on behalf of freeing slaves, convincing some to free their slaves
He said that we bear responsibility to right the wrongs we committed in taking slaves
By 1758 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting banned buying and selling slaves for all members
In 1776, 4 years after his death, ownership of slaves was prohibited by Quakers

Underground Railroad—transporting slaves to freedom in the north

My ancestors were among those who worked on the underground railroad

Civil War 1861-1865

Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 freed slaves by Presidential executive order

Civil Rights Movement 1954-1968

Goal to end racial segregation and discrimination against Black Americans

Dora Ellen Simmons has told us of her involvement in the civil rights movement

Dr Martin Luther King Jr. 1929-1968

Pastor, activist, humanitarian, and leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement
7 days after his death, the Civil Rights Act was enacted on April 11, 1968

The **Civil Rights Act of 1968**, provided for equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed, or national origin and made it a federal crime to “by force or by threat of force, injure, intimidate, or interfere with anyone ... by reason of their race, color, religion, or national origin.”

Sometimes we are tempted to think that racial equality is the norm—that we solved that problem

We're even proud of our history—particularly as Quakers

Yet recent events have shown that we continue to have a problem

Trayvon Martin

Michael Brown in Ferguson

9 Blacks killed at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in downtown Charleston, SC

...

Vandalism and hate against Curry Temple CME Church in Seattle this spring

49 killed in a gay bar in Orlando, Florida

Alton Sterling

Philando Castile

5 police officers killed by a sniper

Fear that all black men live with that they might be killed without cause

Warnings by their mothers not to wear hoodies and how to act when stopped by police

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander
Societal repression of African American men who are incarcerated at a much higher rate
Felons are trapped in a second class status that is almost impossible to escape

It has become blatantly clear that we continue to perpetuate racial attitudes
The belief that we can be "colorblind" only creates denial about the truth
It is also true that emphasis on the "few bad apples" doesn't address the systemic racism in our country
It lets the rest of us off the hook, rather than looking deeper at the issues

Even those of us who work to avoid discrimination often make unintended racist judgments
I read an article in the New York Times, "Racial Bias, Even When We Have Good Intentions"
Identical job resumes with stereotypical names result in 50% more response if white
Jobs offered equal for Blacks with NO criminal record and whites with a criminal record
Those who prize hiring diversely were shocked when caught in their own racial bias
While in slow thinking we work to avoid discrimination, it creeps into fast thinking
Our snap judgments are deeply impacted even when we work to do otherwise
*"Ugly pockets of conscious bigotry remain in this country, but most discrimination is more insidious. The urge to find and call out the bigot is powerful, and doing so is satisfying. But it is also a way to let ourselves off the hook. Rather than point fingers outward, we should look inward — and examine how, despite best intentions, we discriminate in ways big and small."*¹
This is very disturbing, yet true!

To change our fast thinking and snap judgments requires healing and transformation
Change at this core level is accomplished only by the grace and power of God

How do we go forward from here?
Black lives do matter!

Jesus stood for the marginalized and said that they matter and have value...
Samaritan, children, women, leper—
Jesus crossed boundaries to include them
Today, Jesus stands with Blacks and says that their lives do matter!
We say, Black lives matter!

The answer is not found in more violence—violence even in the name of good, begets violence
We must name and let go of the myth of redemptive violence
*"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."* Dr. Martin Luther King Jr

"...the Lord shewed me that the natures of those things which were hurtful without were within, in the hearts and minds of wicked [people]... The natures of these I saw within, though people had been looking without. And I cried to the Lord, saying 'Why should I be thus, seeing I was never addicted to commit those evils?' And the Lord answered that it was needful I should have a sense of all conditions, how else should I speak to all

¹ New York Times, **Racial Bias, Even When We Have Good Intentions**, January 3, 2015, Economic View,
By Sendhil Mullainathan

conditions; and in this I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death, but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness. And in that also I saw the infinite love of God; and I had great openings.”² George Fox

Jesus, we have seen the evil in our nation—it is all around and within
Lord, have mercy. Forgive us for evil done intentionally or unintentionally
Teach us to respond with your infinite love

FCNL has responded with a #lovethyneighbor campaign³

We are to show love to those who are targets of fear

Fellow Quakers from Puget Sound attended the Mosque in Federal Way at the end of Ramadan
Intent was to stand in solidarity and to say we respect and support you

Polly Jirkovsky Gual, a Quaker and member of South Seattle Friends Meeting, explained why she joined in Friday’s event. *“It seems like there’s a real sense of fear and threats, even in Seattle, in this place that’s supposed to be really progressive. Personally, I wanted to show that not all American’s feel that way, not all white people feel that way, not all people of Christian derived faith feel that way. It was important for me to come out here and say that I think we are all neighbors.”⁴*

They carried the FCNL signs

FCNL suggests that we take photos of friends and neighbors with these signs

I see the Light in...

I see Value in...

I see Dignity in...

I see God in...

I see _____ in...

Then post the photos on social media

I will close by reading from John 1:1-18

² Journal of George Fox, edited by John L Nickalls, Philadelphia: Religious Society of Friends, 1995, page 19.

³ http://fcnl.org/resources/toolkit/love_thy_neighbor/

⁴ <http://www.seattleglobalist.com/2016/07/02/quaker-muslims-ramadan-show-of-support-lovethyneighbor/53361>