

Committee for Ministry on Racism Report

SEYM Summer Executive Committee Meeting
8 Eighth Month 2020

"The most important lesson I have learned in the fifty years I have spent working toward the building of a better world is that the true work of social transformation starts within. It begins inside your own heart and mind, because the battleground of human transformation is really, more than any other thing, the struggle within the human consciousness to believe and accept what is true. Thus, to truly revolutionize our society, we must first revolutionize ourselves. We must be the change we seek if we are to effectively demand transformation from others." – John Lewis, in his book, **Across That Bridge, A Vision for Change and the Future of America** (2017)

"You can turn your back now and you can keep your club in your hand, but you cannot beat down justice. And we will register to vote because as citizens of these United States we have the right to do it," Vivian declared, wagging his index finger at Sheriff Jim Clark as the cameras rolled." (**New York Times**, July 17, 2020)

Greetings, Friends:

The Committee for Ministry on Racism deeply honors, and is grateful for, the profoundly courageous lives, immersed in God's love, of the late U.S. Congressman John Lewis and the Rev. Dr. C.T. Vivian. Their core visionary leadership and making "good trouble" (John Lewis quote) during the Civil Rights Movement and up until the time of their deaths were transformational in undoing some of the systemic racism in the United States. Throughout their lives they provided nonviolent, persistent, steady action for social justice in addressing the barriers to equality and equity in living for Black, Brown, other People of Color and therefore, everyone. Black Lives Matter. One of our committee members, Kathy Hersh, recommends John Lewis's book, in the lead quote above, as a gift for graduates and anyone seeking inspiration.

The Committee has immensely valued hearing from a variety of SEYM Friends on both the actions they are taking to address racism and the many resources they have sent us. Some Friends are attending the AFSC series on "**Radical Acting in Faith for White People.**" Committee members and SEYM Friends have recommended the Krista Tippett "**On Being**" interview with Robin DiAngelo (author of **White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People To Talk About Racism**) and Resmaa Menakem (Minneapolis trauma therapist and author of **My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies**): <https://onbeing.org/programs/robin-diangelo-and-resmaa-menakem-in-conversation/>. Some Clearwater Friends have watched, and recommended to the rest of their Meeting, viewing on You Tube the clear examples of U.S. systemic racism in, **The Segregation Myth: Richard Rothstein** [author of **The Color of Law**] **Debunks an American Lie | Now This.** <https://youtu.be/2roWLzrqOjQ>.

A Clearwater Friend designed and created colorful wristbands with attractive supportive graphics to support the message: "**Black Lives Matter to Me.**" Kody Hersh, SEYM Youth and Young Adult Friends Coordinator recently led a popular intergenerational Zoom evening on the film, **The Hate U Give.**

Beverly Ward, a Committee member, recommended the hour and a half Post Carbon Institute You Tube video: **Decolonization: Digging deeper to get at the roots of systemic injustice and unsustainability.** <https://youtu.be/mxVRvgrUTpl>

She also shared with us and other Friends the Florida Council of Churches executive committee statement on civic engagement and voting. **#FreedomSummer is Now.** <https://floridachurches.org/now-what-freedomsummer>. Friends who are so led may sign it as an individual or as a Meeting. In addition, we will be placing on the CMOR website valuable resources Beverly shared with us from the "How White Supremacy Built Wall Street" webinar, sponsored by the Stop the Money Pipeline Coalition. <https://stopthemoneypipeline.com/>.

We celebrated that the Dakota Access pipeline must be shut down through court order by August 5 and is “a momentous win for American Indian tribes that have opposed the energy transfer LP project for years.” (Bloomberg Law online, July 6, 2020). It was an historic day for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the many people who supported them in stopping the pipeline.

The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition’s (www.boardingschoolhealing.org) 2020 webinar series is about to begin. “**Truth in History: Examining Indian Boarding Schools in California.**” Past webinar series are available, including “how tribal nations are healing from the ongoing legacies of the Boarding School Era.” We are grateful to Jane Westberg, Committee member, for keeping us current with the Healing Coalition’s activities.

Our Committee is available to provide support to Friends regarding racism. Susan Taylor was gladly able to accept an invitation from Clearwater Friends who invited the Co-clerks of our Committee “to help open a discussion on the topic of racism and social justice” during their August 16th Zoom Meeting for Learning. For SEYM, we eagerly accepted the SEYM Worship and Ministry Committee’s invitation to provide **Quotes and Queries on Racism** (attached) for SEYM Worship Sharing Zoom sessions on July 11 and August 8. Feedback we received indicated that Friends were hungry to share deeply and experientially on the topic of racism. We, as a committee, had stretching conversations about race during the development of the queries, and are grateful to the Worship and Ministry Committee for their invitation.

Wendy Clarissa Geiger, Co-clerk, adds:

The members of the Committee for Ministry on Racism are available and willing to discuss racism with Friends: who are curious about racism and are ashamed of our ignorance; who are petrified of being found out to be more racist than we want anyone to know we are and have no idea - and would like to explore - what to do with our racism; or, who want to share stories of our shame, shenanigans, successes, blessings & woes, and what we are learning in this exciting time to be alive, to die, and to carry on as best we know or imagine as Quaker revolutionaries - at least revolutionaries of the heart, if not the street or work/living space.

Thank you, Friends, for all the conversations we’re having about race and for the actions we’re led to take, in the Spirit, to dismantle systemic racism. We will take them to our next Zoom meeting, which we are beginning to plan.

With loving blessings, in tenderness and wholeness,

Wendy Clarissa Geiger, Co-clerk (Jacksonville)
Susan Taylor, Co-clerk (Tallahassee)
For the Committee
Minerva Glidden (Orlando)
Katie Green (Clearwater)
Beverly Ward (Tampa)
Jean Larson (Gainesville)
Jane Westberg (Miami)
Kathy Hersh (DeLand WG, Miami)
Cheryl Demers (Gainesville)