

Minute on Policing and Racial Justice

Approved March 10, 2017

The Peace Testimony is our witness to the world of a transformed life centered in Love. . . This love requires compassion, but living our lives centered in this love also requires constructive action that seeks an end to poverty, violence, and suffering.

– *Faith and Practice*, Northern Yearly Meeting Religious Society of Friends, 2017, p. 36

We affirm the inherent worth and humanity of Black people.

As Quakers, our witness for peace is an affirmation of the divine Light in every human being. To remain silent in the face of state violence against Black people is to be complicit in the violence.

Most American cities today employ heavily armed police departments whose officers are not accountable to the communities where they work. This practice positions police and communities as opposing sides in a war. Communities of color are the most heavily policed and the most likely to be viewed with suspicion. Black Americans in particular are placed in daily personal danger by the system of policing, and shockingly often are killed by it.

In light of Friends' commitment to nonviolence, we cannot abide this status quo. George Fox made a radical statement when he said that he "lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars." It is this life and power we must seek. We make the painful acknowledgement that racism can obscure and distort the guidance of Spirit when working for justice. Therefore, we commit ourselves to respect the wisdom and experience of those who are most affected by this violence, to believe them, and to affirm their authority to lead the movement for Black lives. Both individually and corporately, we are called to work for peace. We call for a reexamination of the role of police in our society and a transformation of the priorities of policing.