

Pacific Yearly Meeting Peace and Social Order Committee Report to Annual Session 2020

Minutes of Concern:

Annual session historical context: It has been shown that use of plenary time to discuss wording of minutes of concern is not the best use of annual session plenary time. Minutes of concern approved by those in attendance at annual session, did not necessarily represent all of PYM due to those who were not present. Some felt that approved minutes were insufficient and that further commitment of action was needed.

Current societal context: Friends, we live in a time of extreme transition. Obviously the last few years we have witnessed the rise of the use of narrative to demonize people, normalize violence, and justify immoral policy making. In response to ongoing murders of black people and use of force by militarized police against peaceful protesters, we are witnessing outrage, civil unrest, and protests. For these reasons, we encourage Friends to make our voice of conscience more visible in the public sphere. Minutes of concern are one way our voice of conscience can be made public, and also a way in which we witness and narrate the struggles of our time.

PSO proposes that for a trial period of two years, PYM adopt the system for approving minutes of concern described below. At the end of this period, we propose that PSO review this system for revision or adoption.

Proposed procedure:

- 1. Minutes of concern may be initiated by any Monthly Meeting, by a major Quaker organization (e.g., FCNL, FCLCA, AFSC), or Committees of Pacific Yearly Meeting.**
- 2. A Minute initiated by a Monthly Meeting will be brought to PSO, which will distribute it to all Monthly Meetings within PYM. Monthly meetings may then discern whether to endorse the approved minute or approve a minute of their own.**
- 3. If the minute is approved or endorsed, we ask that all Monthly Meetings send letters to the editor and other local news sources, to amplify the message and expand public awareness. We further ask that Meetings let PSO know what actions they have taken, so that we can track the movement of the Spirit among us.**

Additionally, PSO would like to have the ability to directly communicate with Monthly Meetings in regard to peace and social justice concerns. We primarily see this as an avenue for distributing minutes of concern that Monthly Meetings have approved or that Quaker organizations have proposed so that other Monthly Meetings can sign on/endorse or reword if they so choose. We would also like to have a way to post announcements and resources for our Monthly Meetings. When the new communication data base has been set up, PSO would like to be able to use this system independently for our committee work.

In conclusion, can we take this moment to actually implement change, not just uphold the same structures we were taught? Can we implement systemic change within Pacific Yearly Meeting as well?

Antiracism work means changing power structures and changing processes regarding how power is used. It also involves desegregation of our own Quaker spaces and worship.

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Changing power structures and processes also includes the need to incorporate use of tech for outreach and networking with Monthly Meetings regarding social justice concerns and committee meetings (as well as worship) to engage future generations.

Friends, we invite you to open to new ways of being an effective Quaker in today's world. This means new forms of direct action and serious discernment about what the testimonies of right sharing, peace and community mean in our contemporary situation.

Respectfully, Peace and Social Order committee: Linnea Hanson, Zae Illo, Brian Johnston, Elizabeth Guthrie, Graciela Martinez, and Shannon Frediani (clerk).