

Oct. 27, 2020

Dear FCNL General Committee members,

In preparation for the October 27 online General Committee meeting with our Freedom Road consultants, we are today sending to you the Community Agreement towards diversity, equity, and inclusion which those consultants have helped the FCNL Executive Committee to write and approve over the past two weeks. We ask that you carefully, prayerfully read the document as a framework and enhancement of understanding for Freedom Road's presentation during Tuesday evening's General Committee meeting.

The Community Agreement is based upon Executive Committee members' responses to a consultant's request for words describing qualities of the person with whom they feel safest and most valued, even during times of disagreement, disappointment, or uncomfortable differences. After that list was compiled, the committee was challenged to commit ourselves to helping FCNL become an organization that can be described in those same words. We are grateful to Freedom Road's Lisa Sharon Harper for preparing a first draft of the Agreement, and to assistant clerk Bridget Moix for gathering and incorporating members' suggestions and refinements into the final document you are receiving.

As the Agreement states, "this is a living and active document" that can be modified as needed as this process moves forward. On October 25, the Executive Committee approved it for distribution to the General Committee with that understanding. The General Committee is asked only to accept the document at this time. We hope that time will be available during November's Annual Meeting to hear Friends' responses and test the General Committee's leading towards its approval or modification.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter of preparation for the October 27 General Committee meeting. We look forward to seeing you there.

In peace,



Ron Ferguson, clerk

**FCNL Executive Committee
Community Safety Agreement
Process engaged on 10/13/2020**

Approved by Executive Committee on: October 25, 2020

Submitted to FCNL General Committee on October 27, 2020, for acceptance and continuing consideration.

As we, the FCNL General Committee, seek to support FCNL in its process of becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization, we commit to create a brave space where we will interact with one another in ways that protect each other and all those with whom the Committee engages from injury. We will take up the work of engaging in conversations and taking courageous actions toward FCNL's, and our own, growth and transformation. We move forward embracing the necessary discomfort that is part of this process.

Further, we understand that this transformation is possible, if we are willing to be held accountable. Due to the nature of the General Committee and how we are appointed, we recognize that our own diversity will require that we work on this concern in ourselves, our home Meetings, and in our service with FCNL. We also understand that the General Committee comes to the work of diversity, equity and inclusion at a point in its story when there may be the need for a separate agreed upon process for the repair of injury that has already taken place.

As Quakers, we are committed to transformation through God's refining fire as the necessary process to create the world we want to create.

We therefore identify the following ways the FCNL General Committee will engage its process of transformation. We understand that this is a living and active document and we can add to or modify it if necessary.

We aspire to:

- **COMMITMENT TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT:** We will offer reparation, restitution and repentance when injuries occur within our work together.
- **RESPECT:** We will communicate respect for each other; ensuring that our words come from a caring place.
- **HONESTY:** We will call it as it is; committing to speaking candidly, plainly and tenderly with one another.
- **NON-JUDGEMENTAL:** We will exercise the discipline of deep listening and will respond in a way that does not diminish the courage of the one that has spoken honestly. We will exercise the discipline of listening with the intent to understand "the other" before we respond from our own point of view.
- **SUPPORTIVE:** We will approach each other with an open posture. We will help each other through our difficulties so that we can reach the next stage together. We will actively affirm each other when we resonate; communicating when we understand.

- **TRUST-WORTHY:** We will hold our process together close and deep. We will not hold past wrongs or injuries against each other or spread stories about each other within the community. We will consider our brave space as a sacred lockbox where we protect our trust with one another.
- **PATIENCE:** We will not rush conversation or process. We will allow each member to have her or his own process at their own pace.
- **AGAPE:** We will value and affirm each member because of the presence of God in each one, not because of performance or failure in performance.
- **UNSHOCKABLE PERSISTENCE:** We will recognize that we have seen a lot and there is still more to be seen. We will engage each other in a way that does not shame, but rather exercises persistence. As a way of honoring the humanity in each of us, we commit to not abandoning the process or each other. Rather, our persistence will lead us to say: “We are not going anywhere.”
- **MOVE BEYOND QUAKER NICE:** We will move beyond “Quaker nice.” We will be willing to be disrupted and shocked.
- **SELF-AWARE:** We will cultivate the depth of self-awareness that makes it possible to center the needs of and hold space for “the other” when necessary.
- **EMPATHY:** Recognizing that different cultures communicate empathy and connection differently, we will practice the kind of deep listening that communicates empathy through our words and our body language. As we seek to feel with “the other,” we will show that we resonate in ways that are culturally appropriate to our own culture. We will seek to recognize and appreciate empathy when communicated in a way that is unlike my own culture.
- **CURIOS:** The more complicated things get, the more we will lean in. We will not assume we understand each other. Rather, we will explore together, asking honest questions without judgement or shame.
- **KNOWING:** While we recognize that the General Committee is a large body with members that cycle on and off and come together for short stints each year, over time we build up a body of experience with each other and stories of life outside of our meetings that add to the possibilities of knowing each other. During the times that we come together we will seek to know each other as much as possible within the time that we have, and to draw from the best of our shared community of the past. We will protect each other’s dignity by considering the whole experience of each other, not only the moment at hand.
- **CARING:** We will care for each other in ways that validate and acknowledge when difficult things are said. We will communicate care by focusing on what “the other” is saying and affirming they are a person with value.
- **COMMITMENT TO BE BRAVE.** We will sit and reflect on what we need to do before we move to the next thing, thus opening courageous process of transformation within the group.