

## **Building resilience and integrity in the face of racism and climate change**

**a compilation of suggested queries and resources from Friends. We hope you will select some that speak to you to share with your meeting....** Material in [ ] was added in editing.

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**From Susan Christian** (Green Street MM):

The planet Earth and the beings who live here are in trauma [from the impact of billions of humans and their consumption of resources, including fossil fuels]. Structural racism is violence that begets more violence that begets trauma that begets more violence and trauma unless healed. People who are traumatized can benefit from counseling, and from connections to their communities and to the earth. We can build those connections, heal the human trauma as well as the planet's trauma through the kind of activity that heals, including creating green spaces and growing food together.

[What truth do I find in this statement? Have I experienced healing from the natural world? From interaction with others?]

**From Pamela Haines** (Central Philadelphia MM):

What do you treasure that is damaged or threatened by racism and/or environmental destruction? Have you given yourself time for the work of: grieving that loss, for healing from violence and trauma, and working through despair?

What grounds you as you face the twin evils of racism and environmental destruction? What gives you the strength to look directly at them? What gives you the vision to see to the other side? How can the powers that provide such strength and vision be nourished?

Where do you find seeds of resilience, in yourself, in your meetings, in your local communities? What powers do you have—as individuals and meetings—to nurture those seeds?

Where do you see the trauma and violence of racism and environmental destruction overlapping?

Where do you see the potential intersection in building resilience and transitioning to a sustainable earth-centered and whole community?

What is one real step you can gladly take, as an individual or a meeting, to be part of this transition?

**From Victoria Greene** (Green Street MM):

What is racism? What examples of racism have you witnessed/experienced on a personal level?

What does racism look like on a structural level? What examples can you identify?

In what ways does racism impact both the oppressed and the oppressor?

How can we support the ministries [of Friends], which are all affected by racism?

**From Margaret Wood** (Towanda MM, Upper Susquehanna Qtr, PQM Coordinator):

In our witness for the global environment, are we careful to consider justice and the well-being of the world's poorest people? Does our way of life threaten the viability of life on Earth? *Pacific Yearly Meeting, Advices and Queries, Harmony with Creation, Queries for the Meeting*

**From Glen Retief** (Pennsdale MM – husband of Peterson Toscano, 2014 PYM annual sessions keynote)

Have I absorbed the full existential weight of climate change as a threat to human and other life, as described by climate science? Am I in denial about the gravity of this threat? *(Climate science currently describes unsafe warming [as more than 2 degrees centigrade, which will be reached, if we do business as usual, within a decade]. Most scientists regard this as the most profound threat to human civilization and other life that has ever existed, exceeding even the threat posed by global nuclear war).*

Does my response to the climate crisis reveal a concern and awareness for the profoundly unequal impact climate change will have on races, cultures, genders, economic classes, regions, and nationalities? Do I make that awareness an integral part of my personal and communal response to the climate crisis? Who do I reach out to as allies and friends in that process?

**From PYM Faith and Practice - Queries on Equality**

How does our Meeting help to create and maintain a society whose institutions recognize and do away with the inequities rooted in patterns of prejudice and economic convenience?

Is our Meeting open to all regardless of race, ability, sexual orientation, or class?

What steps are we taking as a Meeting to assure that our Meeting and the committees and institutions under our care reflect our respect for all and are free from practices rooted in prejudice?

Do I examine myself for aspects of prejudice that may be buried, including beliefs that seem to justify biases based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, class...?

Am I teaching my children, and do I show through my way of living, that love of God includes affirming the equality of people, treating others with dignity and respect, and seeking to recognize and address that of God within every person?

**From Eileen Flanagan** (Chestnut Hill MM)

Who are those who are already suffering from [the droughts and rising seas of] climate change? It's the brown and black skinned people of the world. In the Maldives, everyone will be under water...in parts of Africa it has not rained in 10 years.

Pollution inequality is more exaggerated than any other. I take hope from people working together across historic dividing lines. [Have you seen examples of this in your own life?]

[Where can we find the courage needed] to fight climate change? [Those who have been oppressed] have a lot to teach us.

Are we aware of gaps between what we think we believe and how we act with others? Have you taken the Implicit Bias test? (see <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/>)