

On August 6, 2016, after a year of seasoning by local Meetings, Yearly Meeting committees and many individual Friends, Baltimore Yearly Meeting in Annual Session approved an addition to its vision statement to make clear that we see ourselves as a very diverse faith community and that we aspire to make our vision increasingly real. Our Vision Statement (with the new paragraph shown in bold) appears in a separate box on this page.

The BYM Working Group on Racism proposed adding language to the Vision Statement explicitly addressing multicultural diversity because of its understanding that making such statements is often an important—but very early—step many organizations take on their way to becoming genuinely anti-racist and multicultural.

In close coordination with the Yearly Meeting's Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator and the *ad hoc* Committee on Growing Diverse Leadership (GDL), the Working Group on Racism has begun asking each Local Meeting to identify one or more Friends within the Meeting who will commit to helping the Meeting lower existing barriers to involvement of people of color in the Meeting. Several local Meetings have already responded affirmatively to our request,

We envision this effort as a partnership between the Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator, the GDL Committee and the WGR on one side and local Meeting groups on the other. Friends in local Meetings have crucial knowledge about the culture of their own Meeting as well as an understanding of the larger community where they are. The Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator and members of the GDL Committee and the Working Group on Racism are familiar with many of the resources available for doing this work. We have already begun providing some written resources to local Meetings and visiting them when invited to help them with their effort.

Addition to the BYM Mission Statement:

We Friends are of many skin colors, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, stages of life, and socially constructed racial identities. We are all seeking the Spirit's presence in our lives, and in our life together. We recognize that some of us have experienced oppression and marginalization in ways that others have not. We aspire to live as members of the blessed community, which is one of liberation, equity, and great diversity across all differences.