



# Quaker social change ministry manual

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A PROJECT OF AFSC'S FRIENDS RELATIONS PROGRAM

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**American Friends  
Service Committee**

# Preface

In 2014, Jennifer Piper, AFSC's Interfaith Organizer in Denver, introduced Lucy Duncan to the work of three Unitarian Universalist ministers in the Denver/Boulder area: Kelly Dignan, Kierstin Homblette, and Deborah Holder. These ministers developed a model for doing congregational social justice work called "Small Group Social Justice Ministry." It is because of their generosity in sharing their work that Quaker Social Change Ministry came to be. This program would not exist if it were not for the work of these talented organizers. Thank you for allowing us to adapt your model to AFSC and the Society of Friends.

This manual was developed by Friends Relations Associate, Greg Elliott, based on the work of Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette and in consultation with AFSC's Friends Relations staff and pilot program participants. You and your group are encouraged to go at your own pace. The step-by-step meeting instructions are laid out only as suggestions. Consider them guideposts as you navigate your way through the process.

Special thanks to Lucy Duncan, Emily Cohane-Mann, Theresa Kirby, and Genevieve Beck-Roe for their contributions to this manual.

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# INTRODUCTION

## A prayer for the coming of the Light

by Lucy Duncan

The snow is melting, the air is crisp  
I sit in meeting for worship  
Notice the ticking of the clock  
A siren screeches  
The benches creak  
Bodies situate themselves  
Resting their bones  
Taking a breath, waiting

The noise revs up in my head  
The 'to do' list, the moments I said the wrong thing, the news of a friend's illness  
The awareness of all the walls we erect to keep what will heal us out

I let the clamor go by, I settle  
Underneath the din, I reach the interior  
I exhale and feel the sorrow

For the pain of the lost city  
For communities denied love  
For ancestors with hearts of stone  
For all the armor that must fall away for peace  
My heart races, I stand and speak, my voice shakes

"Hold still, feel the turbulence of creation  
The old world is crumbling  
The Light is on the edge of slumber  
Lend your hands to the labor  
Midwife the spiritual birth."

I sit, still shaken  
My heart lies down  
A hush encircles us  
A sparrow trills outside the open door

*"We can already recognize that today time is split between a present that is already dead and a future that is already living — and the yawning abyss between them is becoming enormous. In time, an event will thrust us like an arrow into that living future. This will be the real political act of love."*

—Antonio Negri

Dear Friends,

We are living in evolutionary and revolutionary times. The old world, the already dead present, is coming apart at the seams and all around us are signs of the groaning of the spiritual birth of creation, a new way of living and being grounded in love and connection, which throws off old ways of living disconnected from each other and the earth. The damage that colonialism, super-charged capitalism, and white supremacy have done to our communities and the earth is so clear and evident, and the need to transform our social relations and systems has never been so urgent.

The good news is that a new way of being is striving, longing, growing, and working to be born. But this new way of living won't come about without our active participation. God will knit our efforts together, but without many midwives of transformation working for the Beloved Community, creating alternatives, listening carefully to the wisdom of those most impacted by injustice who have learned what else might work, the emergent spiritual reality will likely get stuck, or worse, arrive stillborn. We as a human community are in the throes of a great creative project that could result in real transformation and shifting, but only if we lend our hearts, our minds, our hands to the work before us.

In my travels among Friends I have heard a longing to reconnect to spiritual practice and to meaningful peace and social justice work. I have talked with many Friends who believe that addressing the spiritual deformity of racism and white supremacy in our midst is key to us becoming the spiritual community our worship, testimonies, and practices would suggest we can be. I have seen a longing and witness to create alternatives to violence and retributive justice models. I have heard Friends long to be working collectively for deep change, willing to extend themselves into the transformative work needed for peace with justice.

I am so excited that AFSC can support Quakers in answering this expressed need and those longing to work in an intentional, committed way for the Beloved Community, the great turning, the kingdom of God. This social justice ministry model, which came to us through Unitarian ministers Kierstin Homblette and Kelly Dignan, offers a way to practice living in such a community, grounded in love. I believe it has the seeds of the changes we are seeking within it. Focusing on companioning communities most impacted by injustice decenters ourselves as predominantly white folks and re-centers the voices of those most directly experiencing the impacts of oppression. People living with oppression dream and see what else might work and they have so much to teach us.

Working in small groups from a covenant derived from love and care and in a way where we can share our mistakes, be vulnerable together, and learn to support each other as we companion communities facing oppression helps us to experiment with living an alternative to the retributive justice system. Together the practices of Quaker social change ministry support sustainable, long haul work to lay the foundation for the Beloved Community.

This manual, developed from materials from Kierstin and Kelly, has been pulled together by Greg Elliott to give you step-by-step guidance in how to live into this way of practicing our faith while yearning and working towards both personal and societal transformation.

I am excited that you have decided to embark on learning this practice with us and hope that you will let us know what you learn as you experiment with Quaker social change ministry.

There is indeed an ocean of darkness and death, but together and with faith we can help make visible the ocean of Light. Let us begin.

In Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lucy". The letters are fluid and connected, with a prominent loop at the end of the word.

Lucy Duncan

Director of Friends Relations

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

# About Quaker Social Change Ministry (QSCM)

*(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

### Why join QSCM?

As Quakers, our faith calls us to be agents for social change. Without a supportive community, social change work can be draining, confusing, unsustainable, frustrating, and scattered. Quaker Social Change Ministry (QSCM) provides a simple but transformative approach to doing social change work, bringing together small groups of Friends to focus on an issue that connects the congregation, the local community, and AFSC. A Quaker Social Change Ministry group is a place to worship, build trust, take risks, make mistakes, learn together, and deepen the connection between social change and spiritual growth. The Quaker Social Change Ministry group becomes a home base from which Friends engage with the world and return for reflection, discussion, and renewal. Quaker Social Change Ministry connects Friends to that which is larger than ourselves and calls us into right relationship as we walk beside our partners and endeavor to co-create the Beloved Community.

### Mission

Quaker Social Change Ministry began as a pilot program of Friends Relations in 2015 in order to:

- Create an opportunity for Friends to engage in social justice work at the congregational level in partnership with AFSC.
- Bring together Friends Relations staff, AFSC program office staff, and Friends meetings/churches in a shared vision and approach to social justice work.
- Organize Quakers to be effective allies for social justice through a model of accompaniment.
- Connect Spirit and action in Friends’ meetings and at AFSC.

### Vision

Friends Relations envisions Friends’ meetings and churches around the country participating in the QSCM program, utilizing the program as a vehicle for doing powerful social justice work while following the lead of communities most impacted and modeling the Beloved Community. QSCM groups can be relied upon to be supportive, constructive, and reliable allies, and Quakers are excited to have a useful role to play in building AFSC’s capacity and supporting social movements through the QSCM program. Friends and AFSC will both experience the benefits of this collaboration. Friends’ meetings and churches participating in QSCM will build deeper relationships within their congregations and deeper relationships with impacted communities, re-enliven their corporate witness, and welcome in new members. AFSC program offices accompanied by QSCM groups will appreciate their deep commitment, long-term support, and willingness to listen. The relationship between Friends and AFSC is an overwhelmingly positive one that can contribute significantly to building local capacity for social change.

## **Values**

- Living out Friends' testimonies in the world and reclaiming corporate witness.
- Restorative justice and centering the voices and leadership of communities most impacted.
- Modeling the Beloved Community we wish to co-create.
- Relationships built on trust, integrity, and staying in it for the long haul.
- Group process, learning, and sharing.
- A shared vision for peace with justice

## **How does Quaker Social Change Ministry work?**

- QSCM groups focus on one of five key issue areas—mass incarceration, migrant rights, racial justice, Israel/Palestine, and confronting Islamophobia.
- Justice work is done as accompaniment, building relationships with communities most impacted by the issue and following their leadership.
- QSCM connects Spirit and activism through storytelling, worship, and covenantal relationships.
- QSCM can be used within Peace & Social Concerns committees or by a small group working outside of meeting/church committee structure.
- AFSC provides one-on-one support, program materials, training opportunities, and regular conference calls with other QSCM groups.
- Groups commit to the program for at least one year in order to fully see its benefits.
- Each QSCM group has a coordinator or co-coordinators who stay in regular contact with Friends Relations and take on the responsibility of guiding their group through the program.

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

### Joining the program: A checklist

*(Adapted from "Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry," by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

Not sure if you're ready to join the program? Here is a handy checklist to help you and your group discern the way forward.

#### **Is someone willing to be the QSCM group coordinator or co-coordinators?**

As the coordinator or co-coordinator, your responsibilities will include gaining a thorough understanding of the QSCM program, maintaining regular communication with Friends Relations, and providing ongoing support and guidance to your group throughout the year. The level of involvement can vary a lot depending on your group and co-coordinator, but the basic tasks are making sure the various volunteer roles in the group are filled, encouraging all group members to share responsibility for the group, making sure new members are adequately welcomed and oriented, and when necessary, providing guidance and support to individual group members or to the group as a whole.

Facilitation/clerking can be shared among the different members of the group, but the coordinator should remain consistent throughout the year. Please notify AFSC if one of your coordinators decides to step down from that role.

Coordinators are also encouraged to inform AFSC of any issues, needs, or concerns your group experiences in relationship to the QSCM program and provide ongoing feedback to AFSC.

#### **Does your group consist of at least five committed members?**

Even if your group has been meeting for months or even years, it is a good idea to invite members of your meeting/church to join you as you begin the program. New members can join as time goes on, but joining the program can be an opportune time to welcome new folks into the room, especially those with more mystic or contemplative practices. Your small group does not have to seek the participation of the entire meeting/church, though it may want to work under the care of a committee. Five to 12 members is ideal.

#### **Are you willing to commit to the program for one year and meet at least once a month?**

This program is based on the belief that relationships of accountability and trust need to be at the center of all social justice work, so it will take some time to see the fruits of this process. We ask that your group commit for one year so that you can see for yourself the powerful growth, ministry, and solidarity that can emerge from doing social change work in this way.

Ideally, your group should meet at least once a month for one and a half to two hours, depending on the time constraints of your members. If you can meet twice a month, perhaps once during the week and once after meeting/church on Sunday, that's even better! Having consistent meetings that are engaging, supportive, and constructive will be important for the group as you build trust, welcome new members, and take risks together.

## **Do you have the support of your meeting/church?**

It is a good idea to let your meeting/church know about your interest in the program and seek their support at Business Meeting and/or Peace and Social Concerns. The earlier this happens, the better, as it may take your meeting/church some time to get familiar and comfortable with the program. Let them know that you will not be representing the meeting/church as a whole, but rather functioning as a small group witness within the congregation.

## **Are you committed to working on an AFSC key issue?**

Because this project seeks to build a deeper relationship between AFSC and Friends at a congregational level, we ask that your group focus on one or more of the following AFSC key issues: mass incarceration, immigrant justice, racial justice, and working for just peace in Israel/Palestine.

## **Do you feel comfortable following the QSCM meeting structure?**

The QSCM meeting structure can be found in this packet, and consists of a Part I (reading the covenant, worship/checking in, sharing a spiritual practice, and storytelling with feedback/next steps) and a Part II (the business of the meeting). We encourage you to experiment with new ideas and let us know how they go, but we do ask that you have a Part I focused on Spirit and storytelling and a Part II focused on the work of the group.

## **How will AFSC support your group?**

AFSC Friends Relations will provide support for you and your group in a variety of ways throughout the year:

- Information, training, and materials.

- One-on-one support through email, skype, or phone.

- Monthly conference calls for group coordinators.

- Monthly Calls for Spirited Action on a variety of topics.

- Opportunities for in-person training from AFSC Friends Relations staff (depending on availability).

- Workshops and ways to network at the AFSC Corporation Meeting.

- The AFSC Acting in Faith thread at the FGC Gathering.

## **What other opportunities are available?**

As a part of the program, you and your group will have opportunities to help shape Quaker Social Change Ministry for future groups. These opportunities include attending a conference for QSCM groups, applying for travel reimbursement and scholarships to attend the AFSC Corporation Meeting, participating in the Acting in Faith thread at the FGC Gathering, and facilitating workshops related to Quaker Social Change Ministry (as AFSC resources allow).

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

### Detailed description of a meeting

(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)

The form and flow of a meeting determines a lot and can function as an expression of the values of the people gathered. Many people, no matter how passionate they are about an issue, will determine their level of involvement in a project based on the quality of the meetings. This model is an attempt to create an environment where new members feel welcomed, the gifts and contributions of all members are valued equally, and deep, supportive relationships are grounded in Spirit.

#### Roles and structure of the meeting

Part I (45-60 minutes): Roles - facilitator, someone who shares a spiritual practice, and a storyteller.

- Read group covenant aloud (5 minutes)

- Centering worship (5-10 minutes)

- Individual check-ins (5-10 minutes)

- Spiritual practice (10-15 minutes)

- Storytelling (10 minutes)

- Group reflection (10-15 minutes)

Part II (45-60 minutes): Roles - facilitator, note-taker/recording clerk, researcher(s).

- Business (40-55 minutes)

- Closing words and closing worship (5-10 minutes)

#### Part I: Read group covenant aloud

This can be done at any point before the storytelling section of Part I. Group members pass around the covenant, taking turns reading each statement aloud. This reminds the group of its shared intentions and helps welcome new members into the group.

#### Part I: Centering worship

This can include the sharing of a “third thing,” or a brief poem, quote, or scripture verse. Centering worship is not just a way to quiet our minds. It is a way to connect to ourselves, to our fellow group members, and to Spirit/Love/Truth/God. The sharing of a poem, quote, or scripture verse is another way for group members to participate, and it can also help the group go to a deeper place of worship.

#### Part I: Individual check-ins

Allow time for everyone present to do a brief check-in. A prompt or format, such as joys and concerns, may be used to encourage sharing. It is important for everyone’s voice to be heard and respected, so that group members can bring their whole selves to the meeting.

#### Part I: Spiritual practice

For most Friends, meeting for worship is just one way to express and experience spirituality. This is an opportunity to share something that you do outside of meeting for worship that feeds your soul.

Some examples include writing activities, guided meditation, walking meditation, chanting, singing, “Lectio Divina,” making art, and nature activities. This is meant to be a participatory activity with the group being led in doing the spiritual practice together.

### **Part I: Storytelling**

This is an opportunity for a member of your group to share one story from the recent past related to QSCM and your focus issue. See “Sharing Stories” on page 23 for a detailed description of storytelling.

### **Part I: Group reflection**

After listening to the story shared, the group reflects and shares from a place of deep listening. See “Sharing stories” on page 23 for a detailed description of group reflection.

After group reflection, the facilitator is encouraged to summarize what they’ve heard and ask the group if they would like to take any action steps based on the experience that was shared or the group reflection. Ask yourselves, “As an intentional learning community, what do we want to learn more about?”

### **Part II: Business**

Your group may want to take a short break between Part I and Part II of the meeting. The business of the group is going to be very dependent on where the group is at in its process. It could include creating or editing the covenant, sharing research, sharing information about the group(s) or persons you are accompanying/companioning, making your group’s skill and resource list, planning for a protest, action, or event, or any number of other tasks that might come up.

Notes (or “minutes”) should be taken and approved by the group. This does not have to be a formal Quaker process of recording minutes, but should serve as a way to keep everyone on the same page and document the decisions and processes of the group.

The role of facilitator can rotate, be shared between two people, or assigned to one person.

### **Part II: Closing words and closing worship**

The facilitator ends the business of the meeting by summarizing what has been shared, reiterating any action items that have been agreed upon, and inviting the group to share in closing worship.

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

### After you join: Getting started

(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)

Although every group is different, this list is meant to help guide you in your first three meetings once you’ve decided that you’d like to join the program. These are only suggestions. You are encouraged to move through this process at your own pace.

If possible, we recommend meeting twice a month as you get started so that you can move through the early phases of the process more quickly.

#### Before your first meeting

Getting started looks very different depending on whether you are joining with a new group or an existing group at your meeting/church.

If you are joining with an entirely new group, then you or your group will need to decide early on which key issue you would like to focus on. You will also want to introduce QSCM to your meeting/church in business meeting and/or Peace & Social Concerns Committee, host an introduction to the QSCM program for all interested members of your meeting/church, and identify who would like to move forward as part of the new group (with the knowledge that others may decide to join later on).

If you are joining with an existing group, then your process will be a bit different. After your group has discerned together to join the program and gotten approval from your business meeting and/or Peace & Social Concerns committee, we encourage you to extend an invitation to the rest of your meeting/church. You and your group will want to hold an introductory meeting for all those interested. After that, your group will be ready to have its first official meeting after joining the program.

#### Meeting I

Hopefully your group has decided on somewhere comfortable to meet. Snacks always make for a better meeting. Perhaps your group can rotate bringing something to share.

Your first meeting should loosely follow the “Detailed description of a meeting” (see page 11), and set the tone of the meetings going forward. Go over the format first, and then begin with worship, including the sharing of a poem, quote, or scripture reading (broadly speaking), and the sharing of a spiritual practice, either by the facilitator or a volunteer chosen beforehand.

Since this is your first meeting, instead of one person sharing a story, everyone should have a few minutes to share with the group on one of the following topics: what led you to join, how do you experience the connection between Spirit and activism, what excites you about joining this group, or just sharing more about yourself. Limit sharing to two to five minutes depending on group size and the length of your meeting. We recommend that you go around the room in a circle rather than “popcorn” style, with the option to “pass for now” until everyone else has shared.

After everyone has shared, it is time for Part II of the meeting. This will be a time to answer any lingering questions and choose volunteers for the next meeting. You will need three to four volunteers: one to share a poem, quote, or scripture; one to share a spiritual practice; and one to share a story. You may also choose a volunteer to facilitate if you would like to rotate facilitation. This is only recommended if there are multiple people in your group with strong facilitation skills.

You will also want to review the business of the next meeting with your group. If your group is brand new, you may want to do more team building exercises at the next meeting, such as the accompaniment exercises or one of the supplemental exercises provided by Friends Relations staff.

Generally speaking, at the second meeting, most groups will focus on forming the covenant. If that is the case then you will also want to introduce your group to the sample covenant at this meeting (verbally and with printouts) so that they can prepare ahead of time.

Please see “Forming a covenant” on page 19 for more information.

Use this meeting to set the tone of meetings to come. You will know it was a success if people genuinely enjoy themselves.

## **Meeting II**

This meeting will more closely follow the format described in the “Detailed description of a meeting” on page 11, with the exception of the reading of the covenant. After Part I of the meeting has concluded, Part II will focus on forming the covenant as described in the document, “Forming a covenant,” on page 19. The term “covenant” is often used in Unitarian Universalist circles and may be unfamiliar to Friends. It is meant to signify a personal and spiritual commitment to one another. Your group can change the name if it wants to, as long as the name holds shared meaning and significance for everyone. It is important to remind people that this document is a “living document” open to continuing revelation and future editing.

Your group should be able to agree on the covenant in two or three meetings, depending on the discernment process. New volunteers will need to be selected for the next meeting.

## **Meeting III**

After your group comes to consensus on your covenant, your group should continue with team building exercises and begin following the accompaniment process as it is laid out on page 25 in the section titled, “Accompaniment: Preparing ourselves and finding the right organization.”

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

### For new groups

While some of the resources and suggestions on these pages are from AFSC, the large majority are derived from the experience of the QSCM groups who participated in the pilot year of the program. Their feedback has been instrumental in refining the QSCM program. We are grateful for their faithfulness, love, and patience in being the first Friends to walk this road together.

#### Group Racial Identity

The QSCM program is designed to be for Quakers of any race, ethnicity, gender, ability, or sexuality, knowing that Friends have a multitude of identities. Demographically, Quakerism within the United States is majority-white, with outliers by region and nuances by meeting. There may be QSCM groups with many people of color, or a few, or none. Even if your group is entirely made up of people who identify as “white,” we ask that you hold the space as a group of Quakers (a multi-racial group), not as a group of white allies.

QSCM groups seek to create a “brave space” where all Friends can take risks and stay in the room even when things get uncomfortable. In addition, we recommend that all participants in QSCM create mechanisms of support both inside and outside of the group to process particularly challenging or painful topics and experiences. While honest sharing is encouraged in QSCM groups, some things might be better processed first within a small, supportive group before bringing it to your QSCM group. It’s a good idea to check-in with members of the group during difficult conversations and see if perhaps the issue at hand would be better processed outside of the regular meeting time. On occasion, affinity groups may be helpful, breaking into spaces for white Friends and Friends of color to process separately.

For white Friends, QSCM invites you to commit to lifelong learning (and unlearning) around issues of white supremacy, white privilege, and racism. The goal is to constantly be engaged in this process, making mistakes, and learning from them in accountable relationships not just with people of color, but also with other white folks who share a commitment to undoing racism. White Friends are encouraged to view group meetings as simply one important part of a commitment to doing the work that is necessary to become an effective anti-racist activist. Readings, films, public discussions, and trainings are recommended for all white Friends participating in QSCM to deepen their analysis, commitment, and consciousness. For a list of anti-racism resources, please contact [friends@afsc.org](mailto:friends@afsc.org).

#### Stages of Group Development

*(Adapted from Bruce Tuckman’s article “Developmental Sequence in Small Groups”)*

The following image and model is included to help identify some of the stages your group is likely to go through in beginning to coalesce as a QSCM group. Identifying as you move through these stages may help keep the work you do with one another in a larger context when the going gets rough.

The first stage is **forming**, in which all group participants are united by excitement for shared engagement in the group, but lack clarity about the goals or behaviors appropriate in the group.

A group reaches **storming** when there is tension about what individual's roles are within the group, what values are held within the group, and what group expectations are. This is an extremely valuable stage, even as it feels uncomfortable to exist in tension.

That tension begins to abate in **norming**, as the group begins to identify and name standards and expectations. How are individuals' needs met, and how should the space be created to be welcoming to everyone? How are disagreements addressed within the group? These are some of the questions the norming stage finds answers to. Within QSCM, writing your covenant will be an important way for your group to establish norms.

Once a group has found security in group norms, significant and lasting **performing** can take place. The group is able to rest upon agreed upon values and behaviors as a foundation for doing work collectively. As your group changes, it will experience **transforming**, and will return to the forming stage. QSCM asks you to treat your covenant as a living document – as your collective work transforms you individually and collectively, you experience new storms and need to adapt to new norms.

## **Commitment**

QSCM is similar to the Quaker committee model; however, the depth of the process requires a somewhat greater requirement of time and energy than most committees. Within meetings, Friends will be asked to worship and share deeply with one another, in addition to conducting business. It will likely be hard for your group to move forward together without regular attendance from members. Your business meetings may result in “homework” for all or some individuals. All members will hopefully grow and be transformed, and at times this work may be uncomfortable.

While AFSC hopes you will take this process slowly for sustainable growth, slow movement is different from stagnation. If your group feels stuck, first please reach out to Friends Relations for support. Then, consider sharing frustration constructively within the group. One way accountability can be built is through members “calling in” one another to more full and responsible participation in the group. Left unsaid, frustrating or irresponsible behavior can become a norm; however, with loving and open dialogue, miscommunications can be remedied, and behaviors can be modified.

## **Possible tools and resources for growing a new group**

AFSC has compiled a variety of activities to build trust, communicate effective share skills, and learn facilitation, in addition to other resources. These activities come from a variety of well-regarded activist organizations. AFSC has created a folder of these documents with an associated annotated bibliography that gives an overview of each activity (brief summary, estimation of time, materials needed, etc.). Let Friends Relations staff know if your group would like to make use of this resource.

## **One-day retreat**

We recommend that your group hold a one-day retreat early on in which to go deeper with one another than your once- or twice-monthly meetings allow. A retreat can also help form group cohesion and provide an opportunity to create shared focus and intention. Suggestions for workshops and exercises are available from Friends Relations staff.

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

# Pace and co-creating a Beloved Community

*“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”*

—African Proverb

### Pace

The Quaker Social Change Ministry program endeavors to create groups who will go far with one another to collectively support those impacted by injustice. QSCM asks groups to grow in two directions – with one another and with the group you are accompanying. Help your group to move forward together, even when that seems “too slow.” These injustices are massive and require urgent action, but there is a great need within the world of social justice activism for groups that have deep enough roots to stay in the struggle long-term without burning out or giving up. Be patient as your group grows to be able to sustain going far together. This growth might not look like what members expected or hoped for the group to be initially. Connection will not be built on a convenient or expected timeline, but with faith, love, and the grace of Spirit, your group will grow.

### Development of the group

*(Adapted from “The PEOPLE Process®” by Pam Hollister and “The Five Dysfunctions of a Team” by Patrick Lencioni.)*

QSCM requires deep engagement from all group members in ways that are beyond the usual scope of Quaker committees. This model of teamwork highlights five functions of healthy groups, with each function building on the ones below and enabling the ones above.



- 1. Trust:** Trust provides the basis for all the work you will do with one another. Without trust, your engagement as a group will be considerably limited. Be patient as you build trust.
- 2. Conflict:** Healthy transformation of conflict will bring your group into greater communion with one another.
- 3. Commitment:** Your work with one another will come to a collective sense of ownership when all are clear about your group’s goals and expectations and are willing to engage beyond a level of self-interest.

4. **Accountability:** A sense of accountability means that you will be able to support one another in your commitments to yourselves, to each other, and to the group.
5. **Results:** Once your group has built a foundation of trust, is able to be in conflict with one another in productive ways, shares a commitment to your group, and feels a sense of responsibility to and for the group, it is possible to manifest results as a group.

## Creating a more just world

*(Adapted from a write-up of Bryan Stevenson's keynote address at the Interfaith Mission Service 2014 conference in Huntsville, AL by AL.com and his book Just Mercy.)*

Bryan Stevenson, executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative, has a four-part plan for “rectifying the cruel flaws” of the criminal justice system in the US. Though rooted in that system, these principles apply broadly to the healing justice work of QSCM groups.

1. **Get close:** The systems of injustice in the world are allowed to fester in part because of segregation and isolation. Stevenson advises that, "when we get close, we hear things that can't be heard from afar. We see things that can't be seen. And sometimes that makes the difference between acting justly and unjustly."
2. **Change the narrative:** Once the other becomes known, dominant but shallow narratives built on prejudice and fear no longer suffice. It becomes necessary to confront these stories with new ones, based on first-hand knowledge and historical context. These new narratives enable a view of how current systems are not leading to safety and security, and demands a change of those systems.
3. **Be hopeful:** It can be shocking and disorienting when the unjust realities of the world come into clear focus. Stevenson warns against letting that shock slip into despair and hopelessness. He says that, "when we believe these problems are so big, when we give up - then injustice prevails where hopelessness prevails. When we become hopeless, we become agents of injustice." Practices of worship within QSCM seek to tap into reservoirs of spiritual nourishment to maintain hope.
4. **Commit to doing uncomfortable things:** The above three points are challenging. It is difficult to leave one's comfort zone, unlearn the stories we have been told, and maintain hope in the face of the deep abyss of injustice. Honor these challenges and the pain they bring, but don't give up. Ask for help, and practice good self-care to ensure discomfort can be tolerated without slipping into self-destruction and chaos.

## The Beloved Community

*(Adapted from "Being the Beloved Community," by Rev. Janet Robertson Duggins.)*

“It isn't about being ‘the perfect community’ but about being ‘the *beloved* community.’ ... [Dr. King] had a vision, a dream, that people could come together with a shared commitment to reconciliation and overcoming barriers, to rejecting racism, injustice and violence. That sounds like a utopian vision, and many people see it that way. But [Dr.] King didn't advocate for or expect the eradication of all the differences and difficulties of being human... He believed that only the love of God was powerful enough to overcome hate and injustice and fear, and to bring flawed human beings together. That's the beloved community: people who believe deeply that they are loved by God and that everyone around them is loved by God, too; people who believe this deeply enough that it shapes who they are and how they live their lives and how they deal with their own and each other's brokenness.”

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

# Forming a covenant: Our shared commitments

*(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

For some Friends, given our history of opposing creeds, the idea of forming a covenant might seem odd at first, but this process can be helpful in a variety of ways. Using group process, it is a way to make the group’s shared commitments visible and can serve as a guidepost for how to engage with one another. Visit [uua.org/governance/covenant](http://uua.org/governance/covenant) to learn more about covenants and how they function in UU congregations.

### **When should we form our covenant?**

Ideally, the group should set aside time to form a covenant in the first few meetings after joining the Quaker Social Change Ministry Program. The covenant is a living document and can be changed and edited over time. When a new member joins, it is important to go over the covenant with them and ask them for feedback or ideas for revision.

Good facilitation is vital to this process so that everyone’s voice is heard, and the facilitator should volunteer themselves prior to the meeting when the covenant is being formed so that they have time to review the process.

### **What is the difference between a creed and a covenant?**

Reverend Lisa Ward, a Unitarian Universalist Minister, has written beautifully about the difference between a creed and a covenant. For QSCM, the covenant is a way for us to co-create the community we need to support the work that is ours to do.

“A creed creates a static truth, something that does not incorporate new insights and realities.  
A covenant is a dance of co-creation, keeping in step with one another in the flow of our lives.

A creed seeks uniformity and a unison voice.  
A covenant seeks harmony and a shared voice. Sometimes we may arrive at a unison, but it is not required.

A creed gives authority to the statement.  
A covenant gives authority to shared intention.

A creed creates an “us” and “them.”  
A covenant invites relationship.

A creed is a prescription that must be relied on.  
A covenant relies on the treasures of shared truth.”

## **What is the process of forming a covenant?**

Many groups find it helpful to start with the sample covenant provided in this binder. Others may find it useful to engage in their own group process first, and then consult the sample covenant to see if they missed anything important.

Supplies: A marker board, chalk board, or poster paper. Something to write with.

Roles: Facilitator and scribe.

Guiding Queries:

How is Spirit guiding us to engage with and support one another?

In what ways can we model restorative justice and the Beloved Community in our group process?

When have we felt heard, respected, and supported in group settings? What was present that made us feel that way?

When have we not felt heard, respected, or supported in group settings? What was present that made us feel that way?

Guidelines for facilitation:

Invite everyone in the group to share at least one addition to the covenant, being sure that everyone's voice is valued equally. If there is disagreement or confusion about a suggestion, encourage dialogue among the group and ask the person who shared the suggestion to elaborate.

Re-phrasing and clarification will help move the group forward and create a shared understanding. This process should take 20-40 minutes.

After everyone has shared at least one suggestion and the list appears finished, ask the group if anything is missing. You may want to consult the sample covenant at this time to see how your list compares. The covenant should not be too long or overly restrictive, nor should it be too short or overly vague. When necessary, return to your sense of the meeting during this process.

As a sense of the meeting is reached, Friends agree on the covenant with the knowledge that it can be edited, added to, and changed over time. As a debrief, you may want to ask the group how that process felt to them and if they feel good about what has emerged.

You will need a volunteer (could also be yourself or the scribe) to type up the covenant and email it to your group.

## **Follow-up**

Remember to ask new members if they have anything to add or if something does not make sense. In every group, tensions and conflicts inevitably arise. Use the covenant as a way to gently remind members of the group what they have committed to. Since Quakers often err on the side of conflict avoidance, the covenant should be seen as a way of inviting healthy conflict and difficult emotions by intentionally creating an environment that is open, supportive, and loving.

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

### Sample covenants

*(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

These sample covenants can be used as a starting point for creating your own covenant. Visit [uua.org/governance/covenant](http://uua.org/governance/covenant) to learn more about covenants and how they function in UU congregations.

#### **Adapted from “Touchstones for Circles of Trust,” by Parker Palmer**

Be as fully present as possible, with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your joys and successes. When we offer attentive presence, we nurture love and respect.

Assume positive intent on the part of fellow participants.

Listen with resilience, “hanging in there” when hearing something that is hard to hear.

Refrain from interrupting others.

Set your own boundaries for personal sharing; ask yourself, “what parts of my life story, if any, am I comfortable sharing?” “Pass” or “pass for now” if you are not ready or willing to respond to a question – no explanation required.

Speak personal truths in ways that respect other people's truth. Speak using “I” statements, assuming others can deduce the meaning as it applies to them.

No fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting each other straight. Avoid telling others how they should be. Ask questions from the standpoint of curiosity, rather than arguing or debating.

When the going gets rough, turn to wonder. If you feel judgmental, or defensive, ask yourself, “I wonder what brought her to this belief?” “I wonder what he's feeling right now?” “I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?” Set aside judgment so you can listen to others—and to yourself—more deeply.

Observe deep confidentiality.

Commit to regular attendance.

## **Sample covenant from the Bull Run UU website**

“We covenant with each other, promising our goodwill and honest effort, pledging our care and support to one another and to our [Quaker] community, challenging one another to live in accord with our [Quaker] principles.”

With this common purpose as our source, we covenant to:

- welcome all who come to us with acceptance and respect for the differences among us.
- practice patience and speak the truth directly and with compassion.
- reflect carefully about the potential results of our words and actions before we speak or act.
- keep our discussions to topics and issues rather than personalities.
- acknowledge that we may not always agree with the group decisions, but we will support and participate in decision-making processes that are collaborative.
- seek to resolve disagreements to our mutual satisfaction and ask for help when needed.
- speak directly to those with whom we have disagreements.
- facilitate direct communication between parties in conflict, when appropriate.
- act with loving kindness, seeking to promote justice, equity, and compassion.
- speak out with loving kindness when we witness disrespectful interactions.
- understand that building our beloved community requires learning and practice.”

Website: [http://www.bruu.org/?page\\_id=2113](http://www.bruu.org/?page_id=2113)

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

# Sharing stories: Learning together

*(Adapted from "Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry," by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

Some might not think of storytelling as a spiritual or radical act, but when we incorporate storytelling into our communities, we create the opportunity for healing, learn from each other's experiences, and build supportive relationships.

### Storytelling logistics

Roles: Facilitator and storyteller.

The majority of time in Part I of the meeting is spent on storytelling and group reflection. Each meeting, someone shares a story and a new person is selected to share a story at the next meeting. Everyone takes a turn sharing a story before people can go a second time. Storytelling should take 10-15 minutes, and group reflection afterwards should take about the same amount of time.

### Choosing a story to share

The intention behind storytelling in this context is to provide the opportunity for the speaker to share a recent story that relates to the focus area of the group, preferably something that happened in the last one to three months. A good story will be a real-life experience. Although a book, movie, news story, etc. might play a role in your story, the focus should be on your own thoughts, experiences, and feelings.

Try sharing an experience that:

You are still processing and learning from.

You would like feedback on.

Connected you to something greater than yourself (eg. Spirit, a community, or a movement).

Was challenging, frustrating, or upsetting.

Was joyful, transformative, or encouraging.

Reminded you why you are passionate about your group's focus.

### Queries for storytelling

What feelings came up for you in that moment? What did you feel in your body as you shared that story? (We find that paying attention to the body can be window to the Spirit).

Did this experience connect you to something greater than yourself? (Another person or community? Spirit/God/the Light? Did you gain a new realization or insight?)

How does your experience relate back to the tenets of accompanying found on page 41?

In what ways does that experience relate to how you see Spirit at work in other aspects of your life? In the life of your meeting/church? In other people's lives?

How might this experience impact your social justice work? Your life as a whole?

## **Group reflection**

After deep listening and a time of silence, group members now have a chance to reflect on the event (if you were there) or the story as it has been told. Be sure to use “I” statements. This is not meant to be a discussion but rather a time for listeners to respond to what they’ve heard. Your group may choose to do a “worship sharing” format instead. When in doubt, refer back to the group’s covenant. Be sure to allow room for everyone who wishes to share.

## **Queries for group reflection**

How did you hear God/Spirit/Love working in this story? What praise (as in praise song or naming God’s or Spirit’s work) do you have for the teller?

How would you describe your feelings about the experience just shared? What happened in your body when you listened to this story?

Did hearing about this experience help you to feel connected to something larger than yourself?

How did it relate back to your own understanding and experience of accompanying?

In what ways does the experience that was shared relate to how Spirit is at work in your own life? In the life of your meeting/church? In other people’s lives?

How might the lessons of this story impact you or your group’s social change work?

## **Follow-up**

After group reflection, the facilitator is encouraged to summarize what they’ve heard and ask the group if they would like to take any action steps based the experience that was shared or the group reflection. Ask yourselves, “As an intentional learning community, what do we want to learn more about?”

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

# Accompaniment: Preparing ourselves and finding the right organization

*(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

As Glenn E. Martin, the founder of Just Leadership USA, puts it: “Those who are closest to the problem are also closest to the solution.” By following the leadership of organizations that are led by individuals and communities most impacted by injustice, we model restorative justice and build local capacity for social change.

### **Building relationships of trust and accountability within your group**

Before your group begins the process of finding an organization to accompany, it is vitally important to spend time building trust within your group. How can you build relationships of accountability with those you are accompanying if you haven’t spent time building those relationships within your group? It is also important to begin to create a shared analysis of your issue and of systemic oppression. Please contact Friends Relations for a list of supplemental resources and workshop ideas to help guide you through this process.

This process can take some time, but remember that two of the goals of the QSCM Program is to model the Beloved Community we wish to co-create and to support long-term commitments to social change. Once your group is ready to begin the process of accompaniment, you will want to consult this outline for suggestions for how to proceed.

### **Accompaniment exercises and materials**

The exercises and materials provided will help your group to get a shared understanding of what this process will look like on an individual and group level. Please engage with these materials as you begin this process:

- The accompaniment/companioning/followership exercise.
- The accompaniment exercise.
- The tenets of accompaniment.
- The tenets of companioning.
- Quotes on followership.

### **Researching organizations and coalitions in your area**

If you live near an AFSC program office that is working on your focus area, that office would be a natural place to start and a first choice for accompaniment. If, for whatever reason, that AFSC program office is not able to assist you, Friends Relations staff will be happy to help you in finding other organizations to accompany. The whole group shares responsibility for this work, but we recommend choosing one or two volunteers who will make this research a priority and report back to the group what they find out about local organizations, coalitions, campaigns, and current events related to your focus issue.

Unless your group already has a good idea of who they'd like to accompany, the process of discerning the right organization to accompany will most likely take more than one meeting. You may need to accompany an organization at a distance, especially if your group is focused on Israel/Palestine. Take the time to really learn about who is doing work that resonates with your group at a spiritual and political level. You will want to focus particularly on organizations that are inter-faith, have active campaigns, are committed to nonviolence, or that you have an existing relationship with.

If you're having a hard time narrowing down your list, find out if a few organizations have upcoming events or meetings that are open to the public and participate. You may discover that an organization has a specific campaign that your group would like to focus on.

At some point in this process, your group should begin communicating directly with a representative from the organization(s) you're interested in accompanying. This will be a conversation between a point of contact in your group and a point of contact at the organization, preferably the person in the organization who handles volunteers and partners. Initially, you may be greeted with skepticism or confusion. This will be a learning process for both parties.

## **Making a resource/skills list**

Before you decide on an organization to accompany, list the skills, resources, and time commitment your group can offer. Here are a few examples:

- Meeting space
- Food preparation
- Attending marches or protests
- Providing childcare
- Accompanying court hearings
- Providing rides
- Petition drives
- Fundraising support
- Visiting prisons/detention centers
- Specialized skills

## **Discerning as a group**

As you try to find the "sense of the meeting," you will want to consider a number of factors:

**Grounding:** Are you listening to Spirit as you discern this call? Is this decision in "right order?" Where do we see Spirit/Truth/God in the organization(s) we feel called to accompany?

**Fit:** Does the organization share similar values with your group? Do the skills and resources of your group pair well with the needs of the organization? Do you have the capacity as a group to follow through with this commitment?

**Opportunity:** Is there an entry point into this organization where your congregation could be useful/effective? Does it feel like "way is opening?" What are we being called to do as a group in our work for social justice?

**Accountability:** Are there relationships in place/forming that are grounded in trust and accountability? Are you ready to be in this for the long haul? How do we expect to be changed and challenged by doing this work together?

## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

# Accompaniment: Building relationships of trust and accountability

(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)

There is no step-by-step process for building relationships of trust and accountability in the context of accompaniment/companioning/followership. Mistakes will be made, and that is ok. The important thing is to stay committed to the relationship, take responsibility for our mistakes, and learn from them. There is no saving or fixing or taking charge here. We allow ourselves to be changed in the process, learn new ways of being, and develop friendships and partnerships that can last a lifetime.

### Finding your part of the work

Finding an organization to accompany is the beginning of an ongoing relationship of followership, companioning, solidarity, trust, humility, and showing up. Difficult experiences, opinions, and emotions are bound to arise. It is important to share those challenges within your group and not with your accompanying organization. Part of the goal of the QSCM program is to organize Quakers for effective social change so that organizations led by communities of color do not have to do that work for us.

### Learning as a group

We cannot expect those we are accompanying to teach us, though we will learn a lot from them over time. Your group is encouraged to read books and/or articles together to deepen your understanding and analysis. It is important to remember, however, that there is a difference between *academic* knowledge and *experiential* knowledge. For example, we can read *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander and better understand the problem of mass incarceration, but that is not the same thing as being a returning citizen with first-hand knowledge and experience.

Remember that people in your group enter into this work from very different places. For some, this material may be entirely new. For others, racism might be a part of their daily reality. That is why Spirit, storytelling, relationships, and group process are at the heart of this program – to co-create a space where people feel grounded and safe enough to learn and grow together. We must be open to sharing and receiving feedback in a loving way that encourages growth and genuine reflection rather than defensiveness, shame, or blame. Supporting each other within and beyond your QSCM meetings will be crucial to your ability to take risks and stay involved for the long haul.

It is also important to make time for socializing, potlucks, and get-togethers with your QSCM group and your partner organization. Extend the invitation into your home and community but also venture outside of your community and your comfort zone. If you are invited to attend events or gatherings by folks in your partner organization, do your very best to attend. Modeling the Beloved Community does not mean all work and no play. Having fun together and getting to know each other is a vital part of building relationships of trust and accountability. For supplemental materials to help navigate challenging group dynamics or situations, please contact Friends Relations staff.

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## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

# Accompaniment/companioning/followership

*(Adapted from "Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry," by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

This exercise explores the use of these three words and how each one highlights a different but equally important aspect of the work of your group. The term "companioning" was chosen by Kelly and Kierstin as a more spiritual alternative to "accompaniment" and "followership" and will be familiar to those familiar with pastoral care. Many associate "accompaniment" with organizations like Christian Peacemaker Teams, where people are literally accompanying activists and the oppressed in violent or dangerous situations, but it also has a broader definition of solidarity work. "Followership" comes from the business world but is gaining wider use in the white ally community.

Feel free to continue using all of these words or decide on one that resonates with your group.

### Accompaniment/companioning/followership exercise

Roles: Facilitator, scribe (1-2).

Supplies: Poster paper and something to write with.

Objective: This is a relatively short, simple exercise to help gain a shared understanding of what these words mean to your group.

Write "accompaniment," "companioning," and "followership" on three separate pieces of paper. First, ask the group to share what comes to mind when they hear the word, "accompaniment," and write down what is shared. Do the same thing for "companioning" and for "followership." Once all three lists are completed, ask the group what they notice about the differences and similarities between the different lists.

Debrief: What have we learned about accompaniment/companioning/followership? How do we understand our role in this work? What excites us about this process?

This exercise should be done before the accompaniment exercise. The two exercises can be done one after the other or at consecutive meetings. If you do them separately, read "Doing companioning," "The tenets of accompanying," and/or "Quotes on followership" as a group at the end of this exercise.

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## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

### **Accompaniment exercise**

*(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

This exercise should be done after the accompaniment/companioning/followership exercise.

Thank you to Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette, who derived this workshop from academic and pastoral care resources along with interviews with Dr. Vincent Harding, Staughton Lynd, Rev. John Fife, Rev. Dr. Thandeka, Rev. Dr. Julie Todd, and companions in the struggle.

#### **How to do this exercise**

Roles: Facilitator, scribe.

Supplies: Printouts of each scenario (listed below these instructions), pen and paper for each participant.

Objective: To explore the topic of “accompaniment” within your QSCM group and create a shared understanding of the tenets of accompaniment for social change found on page 41.

How to:

Divide into small groups (2-4 people in each group).

Each group chooses a scribe that will record the group’s thoughts.

In small groups, read your scenario out loud. Your group may want to read it twice.

Next, follow the prompt written at the bottom of the scenario. The facilitator should keep track of time and encourage the groups to move the process in the time allotted.

After the small groups have finished summarizing their insights, each group will read their scenario out loud in the larger group and share their insights. The scribe records all of the insights shared by the different groups. The compiled list should be emailed to the entire group and used for reference moving forward.

After each group has shared, read “Tenets of accompanying for social change” (page 41) out loud.

Total Time: 45-60 Mins.

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## Scenario I

Staughton Lynd and his wife Alice are in their 80s and have spent years working in prisons, unions, the Black freedom movement, and for peace. He says that in all his years of experience, accompaniment or companioning is the most effective way to do social change.

Companioning, Staughton says, is more than allies helping people oppressed by the systems and policies of society. Instead, it is two people exploring the way forward together.<sup>1</sup> Two people walking together in a loving, respectful, trusting relationship.

He says companioning is a challenge for many of us, because it requires we unlearn our patterns of dominance - our patterns of taking charge and getting things done. It insists that we learn to struggle together with someone.<sup>2</sup>

## Prompt

Take two to five minutes of silence to reflect on this scenario. Write down your thoughts. What would it look like and feel like to do social justice work in this way? What patterns of dominance might you have to unlearn?

After everyone has finished writing, each person takes three to five minutes to share what they've written. Together, summarize your group's insights (in five or six sentences) to share with the larger group.

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<sup>1</sup> Lynd, Staughton. 2012. *Companioning: Pathways to Social Change*, 6.

<sup>2</sup> Todd, Julie. 2012. *Evaluating Violence and (Non)violence: A Critical, Practical Theology of Social Change*, Chapter 6: 16-17.

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## **Scenario II**

Dr. Vincent Harding was a historian, a social activist, and a speech writer and confidante of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He recalls the Mississippi Summer of 1964.

It was important then, he says, for the volunteers who were coming from the north to realize that they were coming with a very real burden of white, class, and academic superiority. They were coming to the Black community of Mississippi which was by and large working class. They had to find out how to recognize what they were bringing with them – which was an attitude of how much they'd be able to offer and give and do – and then they had to find a way to transpose that into a spirit of coming and giving thanks for the gift they were going to receive.

Dr. Harding says the fundamental model for the social change work we all do together now looks like listening more than speaking. Partnering instead of helping. People, holding onto and being held by people. Singing together. Being absolutely befuddled together. All of these actions are what grows out of us simply being on the path together – walking hand in hand.

## **Prompt**

Take two to five minutes of silence to reflect on this scenario. Write down your thoughts. What would it look like and feel like to do social justice work in this way? What “gift” will you be receiving by doing this work?

After everyone has finished writing, each person takes three to five minutes to share what they've written. Together, summarize your group's insights (in five or six sentences) to share with the larger group.

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## **Scenario III**

Rev. John Fife was co-founder of the Sanctuary Movement in the 1980s and more recently No More Deaths, a ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tucson.

Rev. John Fife says that if you are doing committee work in the community, make sure you are following the voices of those most impacted by systems of oppression. Don't serve on any action committee in the community that isn't led by those voices. And listen. Always listen.

We can come back to our church committees to share our experiences – and there we can set the agenda and use our language. But when we're companioning, we don't set the agenda. Communities most impacted by oppression do.

Companioning has to lead to disrupting the systems of oppression. It has to move us to raise our voices – resisting, confronting, and challenging – together.

## **Prompt**

Take two to five minutes of silence to reflect on this scenario. Write down your thoughts. What would it look like and feel like to do social justice work in this way? What would it look like for you to “follow the voice of the oppressed?”

After everyone has finished writing, each person takes three to five minutes to share what they've written. Together, summarize your group's insights (in five or six sentences) to share with the larger group.

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## **Scenario IV**

Two social justice activists who are undocumented immigrants say what they want from their solidarity partners:

Don't take over when we're trying to get something done. Don't act out of control at a rally. Be someone we can trust. Be someone who wants to get to know us. We want to be viewed as experts. And we need the help of partners to get access to decision makers, and to do some of the dirty work like fundraising, donating, and rallying their people. The most important thing is to be in it for the long haul. And be our friends.

## **Prompt**

Take two to five minutes of silence to reflect on this scenario. Write down your thoughts. What would it look like and feel like to do social justice work in this way? What do you need to stay in it "for the long haul?"

After everyone has finished writing, each person takes three to five minutes to share what they've written. Together, summarize your group's insights (in five or six sentences) to share with the larger group.

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## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

# Tenets of accompanying for social change

*(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

Accompaniment is hard work, and it is easy to feel lost, overwhelmed, and hopeless. These tenets, along with your group’s covenant, can help to guide you as you navigate this journey together.

### Tenets of accompanying for social change

1. Building relationships of trust and accountability with people and communities most impacted by injustice by showing up and staying in the relationships for the long haul.
2. Remembering that the liberation of everyone and everything is inherently connected, and together, we are on a learning journey toward it.
3. Walking together while navigating differences in a loving, respectful, trusting relationship.
4. Struggling together and encouraging one another’s spiritual growth.
5. Contemplating the gifts you are going to receive when accompanying, instead of how you will give, help, teach, tell, or fix.
6. Acknowledging and unlearning your patterns of dominance, like taking charge, leading, making decisions, etc.
7. Asking for and lending empathic support.
8. Moving beyond asking to acting.
9. Getting out of your comfort zone (materially, emotionally, and physically) and allowing yourself to be changed by this process.
10. Disrupting the systems and structures of oppression – with integrity and in authentic community with those most impacted, following their leadership.

The Latin roots of “accompanying” are:

To be together (“com”) in eating bread (“panis”), face to face.

*Derived from academic and pastoral care resource on the topic, along with interviews by Kelly Dignan with Dr. Vincent Harding, Staughton Lynd, Rev. John Fife, Rev. Dr. Thandeka, Rev. Julie Todd, PhD, and companions in creating Beloved Community.*

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## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

# Doing social change as companioning

*(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

The concept of “companioning” as it is used by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette is especially useful when doing one-on-one accompaniment.

1. Companioning is being present to another person’s pain without trying to take away the pain.
2. Companioning is going to the wilderness of the soul with another human being without thinking you are responsible for finding the way out.
3. Companioning is honoring the spirit as well as the intellect.
4. Companioning is listening with the heart before analyzing with the head.
5. Companioning is bearing witness to the another person’s struggle without judgment while trusting what emerges from the act of listening.
6. Companioning is walking alongside; it is not about leading with expertise and solutions.
7. Companioning is discovering the gifts of the sacred silence without filling up every moment with words.
8. Companioning is about being still and not about frantic movement.
9. Companioning is respecting the creative movement of disorder and confusion.
10. Companioning is learning from others before teaching them.
11. Companioning is cultivating curiosity as well as expertise.

Adapted from: *Handbook for Companioning the Bereaved: Eleven Essential Principles* by Alan Wolfelt (Companion Press, 2009.)

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## THE QUAKER SOCIAL CHANGE MINISTRY PROGRAM

### Quotes on followership

*(Adapted from “Implementing Small Group Social Change Ministry,” by Kelly Dignan and Kierstin Homblette.)*

These quotes can be used as a workshop, as prompts for worship sharing, or as inspiration at the beginning of your meeting.

#### **Chris Crass – excerpt from the article, “Standing on the Side of Love”**

“Thousands of UUs around the country are participating in Black Lives Matter demonstrations and direct actions, speaking out in their churches and communities. Many Black UUs and UUs of color are bringing spiritual leadership to the movement in powerful ways. Many white UUs are developing, what I’ve been calling “empowered followership,” of reaching out and asking about ways to support, which includes: making food for Black-led and Black only organizing meetings, huge amounts of fundraising, providing free space at their churches for meetings and staging grounds for actions, helping with a wide range of action planning logistics. And the “empowered followership” are promoting the leadership, analysis, strategy, and actions of Black activists to their networks, community and family.”

#### **Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove – excerpt from the article, “On Followership: Building Up the Movement I Can’t Lead”**

“He looks at the hundred or so people gathered in the room and says, ‘We can’t lead this movement. We’ve got to support the people who’ve got skin in the game.’ Which is not to say that we can do nothing. In America’s abolitionist movement, white evangelicals told the stories of freed slaves and Quakers opened their homes. Freed black folks gave money and established local groups to protect runaways from bounty hunters under the Fugitive Slave Law. All of this was crucial. But it depended on the leadership of [people like] Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass... We have found our leaders—and there are more yet to be found. To follow them is to support their cause and learn from their tactics. It is to pass along the stories and the wisdom they are living so faithfully.”

#### **Paulo Freire – excerpt from the book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed***

“Certain members of the oppressor class join the oppressed in their struggle for liberation.... However, as they cease to be exploiters or indifferent spectators or simply the heirs of exploitation and move to the side of the exploited, they almost always bring with them the marks of their origin: their prejudices and their deformations, which include a lack of confidence in the people’s ability to think, to want, and to know.... [Oppressors turned allies] truly desire to transform the unjust order; but because of their background they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. They talk about the people, but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change.”

**Tammerie Day – excerpt from the book, *Constructing Solidarity for a Liberative Ethic: Anti-Racism, Action, and Justice***

“It is not enough for a white community seeking community with [people of color] to follow the ‘add people of color and stir’ approach in attempts to form multicultural communities or coalitions. In a presentation on social justice coalitions, long-time civil rights activist Rev. James Lawson described the most direct – and least utilized – route for white people seeking to work for racial justice: follow the lead of peoples of color. White people tend to spend more time wondering why peoples of color do not join peace organizations, marches, churches, and movements that are predominantly white, when we could choose to work on what peoples of color are already working on, through neighborhood, city, regional or national initiatives. To live into an anti-racist identity through a commitment to solidarity with peoples of color, white individuals and predominantly white communities do better to listen to communities of color long enough to discern the interests of those communities, then working to understand how those interests are held in common with one’s own community, and committing energies to working for those interests in mutuality. As noted above, the formation of relationships with sufficient trust to enable this collaboration requires time and evidence of followership; it also requires – and helps to develop – accountability and mutuality.”

**Adeline Falk-Rafael – excerpt from the article, “Peace and Power as a Relational Leadership Handbook”**

“Followers reflect critically about ideas and take an active role in advocating for them and in supporting the leader (PRAXIS); Followers are aware of their own strengths and step forward when they are needed (EMPOWERMENT); Followers seek out information to understand the “big picture” (AWARENESS); Followers need to trust and be trustworthy, to see themselves as a community and work as a team (COOPERATION); and Followership is an art and skill that can be learned and requires continual learning (EVOLVEMENT).”

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# Quotes from AFSC's "An Introduction to Quaker Testimonies" booklet

"Without community, there is no liberation."

—Audre Lorde, poet

"Peace comes from being able to contribute the best that we have, and all that we are, toward creating a world that supports everyone."

—Hafsat Abiola, Nigerian human rights activist

"We are called to assist the Earth to heal her wounds and in the process heal our own— indeed to embrace the whole of creation in all its diversity, beauty and wonder."

—Wangari Maathai, Kenyan environmental activist

"Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth. It is the very purpose of life, not something you do in your spare time."

—Shirley Chisholm, politician and author

"My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together."

—Desmond Tutu, Christian cleric and activist

"...[B]eing worthy of respect does not depend on possessing attractive qualities or skills. Until we can respect another person without justification except that he or she is a child of God, it is not really respect."

—Paul Lacey, Quaker educator

"A community can use all the skills of its people."

—Maori proverb

"The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life."

—Jane Addams, sociologist and activist

"I think we have to own the fears that we have of each other, and then, in some practical way, some daily way, figure out how to see people differently than the way we were brought up to."

—Alice Walker, author

"From the depth of need and despair, people can work together, can organize themselves to solve their own problems and fill their own needs with dignity and strength."

—Cesar Chavez, farm worker and labor leader

“I have no idea of submitting tamely to injustice inflicted either on me or on the slave. I will oppose it with all the moral powers with which I am endowed. I am no advocate of passivity.”

—Lucretia Mott, Quaker abolitionist and activist

“Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time; the need for mankind to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr., civil rights leader

“If we are serious about peace, then we must work for it as ardently, seriously, continuously, carefully, and bravely as we have ever prepared for war.”

—Wendell Berry, author and activist

One has to fight for justice for all. If I do not fight bigotry wherever it is, bigotry is strengthened.”

—Bayard Rustin, Quaker civil rights activist

“So let your lives preach, let your light shine...”

—George Fox, founder of the Religious Society of Friends

“One’s life has value as long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, indignation, and compassion.”

—Simone De Beauvoir, author

“Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.”

—Helen Keller, author and activist

“Perhaps community is a constellation. Each one of us is a light in the emerging collective brightness. A constellation of light has the greater power of illumination than any single light would have on its own. Together we increase brightness.”

—John O’Donohue, poet and author

“May we look upon our treasure, the furniture of our houses, and our garments, and try to discover whether the seeds of war have nourishment in these our possessions.”

—John Woolman, Quaker activist and author