Working Group on Racism: Timeline 2001-2021

2001
BYM Peace and Social Concerns Committee agreed to sponsor a diversity working group and the idea was accepted at Fall Interim Meeting.

2002
At its initial gathering in April, the group renamed itself as the Working Group on Racism Among Friends.

2003
The Working Group completed a Listening Project on Diversity and Outreach in BYM.

2004
The Working Group arranged for Donna McDaniel and Vanessa July to talk about the history of Quakers and African Americans at a BYM plenary session.

2006
The BYM Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee took the Working Group under its care. The Working Group shortened its name to the Working Group on Racism and adopted its mission statement.

2007
The Working Group began arranging for liaisons in local Meetings to improve communications between the Working Group and those Meetings. The Working Group also began preparing monthly items for use in local Meeting newsletters.

2009
The Working Group arranged for the authors of *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship* to make presentations at Friends Meeting of Washington and Stony Run Friends Meeting and encourage other Friends at Annual Session to read and discuss the book.

2010
The Working Group arranged for three plenary presentations at BYM Annual Session:

- Maurice Jackson spoke about his book, *Let This Voice Be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism*
- Dr. Amanda Kemp's Theatre for Transformation performed her play, *Sister Friend*, about Phillis Wheatley.
- Betsy Cazden spoke on "The Uses and Misuses of History" especially as it relates to Quaker history with African Americans.

2013
The Working Group conducted a plenary presentation at BYM Annual Session guiding Friends through an exploration of their experiences with privilege, exclusion, and inclusion with respect to race, gender, class, age, and sexual identity. The Working Group also undertook a "One Book" campaign urging local Meetings to read and discuss *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander about mass incarceration and racial profiling.

2014
WGR participants who live in Maryland joined others in creating the Maryland Alliance for Justice Reform, which lobbies the Maryland legislature on legislation related to issues addressed in *The New Jim Crow.*

2015
The Working Group joined a silent vigil that Stony Run Friends had first held in 2014 on the Saturday before Martin Luther King Day across the street from where the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Sons of Confederate Veterans held an annual event at an equestrian statue honoring Confederate Generals Lee and Jackson. Those two organizations decided not to hold that event in 2016 and the City of Baltimore removed the statue in 2017.

The Working Group asked local Meetings to season a proposed addition to the BYM Vision Statement to state explicitly that BYM is composed of people of all sexual orientations, racial, ethnic, gender, and class groups and that it intends to work to overcome the existing barriers to that vision.

2016
Based on input from local Meetings, BYM committees, and Friends at the 2016 Annual Session, the Yearly Meeting adopted a revised addition to the BYM Vision Statement. The Working Group began encouraging local Meetings to organize "Change Groups" to take the lead in helping lower racial barriers within those Meetings.

2018
The Working Group began to offer "Connecting Local Meetings" opportunities at Annual Session for Friends in Change Groups to share the work they have done, their plans, and the challenges they are encountering.

2019
The Working Group and the Growing Diverse Leadership Committee arranged with Dr. Amanda Kemp and Dr. Erika Fitz to provide "Racial Justice From the Heart" training for members of Change Groups.

2020
Beginning in June 2020 after the murder of George Floyd attendance at WGR meetings tripled from about six attenders to about eighteen. Several local Meetings either started new Change Groups or revived moribund ones.