**RESTRUCTURING PEACE AND SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE**

**& THE RACIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

 **A Proposal**

**Basic Idea**

1. The current Peace and Social Concerns Committee (P&SC) would be divided. One basic part of the restructuring would result in a separate and discrete Peace Committee of Germantown Friends Meeting.
2. The other section of the current P&SC would be merged into the current Racial Justice Committee (RJC).

If this basic action is approved by Germantown Meeting, additional issues of the membership, mandate, tasks, and governance of these restructured committees would need to be addressed to by the newly restructured bodies and other appropriated committees in subsequent sessions.

The basic proposal as outlined here is supported by the current co-chairs of P&SC, Jondhi Harrell and Dan Jones, and the membership of the Racial Justice Committee. It has also been approved by the Working Group on Mass Incarceration, a subcommittee of the RJC, and supported at the most recent session of the current Peace and Social Concerns Committee. It has also been reviewed by the Nominating Committee.

**Rationale**

1. The Peace Testimony is a fundamental belief and expression of the Society of Friends. There have been positive efforts through the years of expanding the Testimony’s meaning, outreach, and impact. The Testimony is, as it has always been, a basic source for Quaker action often in an unreceptive and hostile world.
2. There are constant reminders of the relevance of the Peace Testimony. We see it in the continuing ravages of militarism on our national priorities and political culture; the lingering effects of the two most recent wars; the under-examined use of drones; and the constant desire to renew military combat, and to restore the convenient villainies of the Cold War.
3. We believe that this is an opportune moment for Germantown Friends to explore, understand, and act upon some of these issues. For various reasons, in its current structure over recent years, P&SC has dealt almost exclusively on the social concerns dimension of its charge, not the peace aspect. We believe that this imbalance has been unfortunate. Many of those social concerns have overlapped into areas of mass incarceration, and various dimensions of race and poverty. We feel that the proposed restructuring can both strengthen the distinct role of peace work within the Meeting, but also renew the charges of both social concerns and racial justice. It is the feeling of many of us that almost every dimension of social justice in our society connects with race in our country whether or not such concerns carry an overt racial label. We believe that the second part of this propose restructuring-merging the current Social Concerns committee in the current RJC- can add depth to our understanding and our work.

**Next Steps**

We cannot be certain, of course, that this proposed restructuring will lead to the hoped for goals within the Meeting: that is, a reinvigorated Peace Committee, and a renewed and deepened approach to issues of social justice. But we are optimistic. And we do believe that the proposal can help promote additional programmatic possibilities for Germantown Meeting.

We request that members of the Meeting read and discuss this proposal, and that there be vigorous discussion as needed. Action be taken on it within the next month or as the way clears. Questions should be directed to Ed Nakawatase and others who have supported this idea.