

Report to Clerk of Meeting Re Julian Cook's Concern

For the past several months, the Care and Counsel(C&C) and Worship and Ministry (W&M) committees have jointly been considering a concern raised by Julian Cook.

Both C&C and W& M committees believe that Julian's concern is worthy of deep consideration by the entire Friends Meeting of Austin

We believe that committing spiritual energy and member time to meditate on this concern has the potential to energize FMA in both the short and long-term. Our hope is that many FMA members may find a meaningful leading through their participation in the process

After careful seasoning, the committees are ready to begin sharing this Concern with FMA and will be actively seeking feedback from all members as we consider the best process to fully address it.

Julian's concern and some discussion highlights follow below:

1. Julian Cooke approached Care and Counsel and Worship and Ministry committees with a concern:

How long has it been since FMA ***as a whole*** considered our resources and how best to utilize them?

Julian is not sure what process is appropriate for addressing this concern. However, he believes that whatever process is chosen should focus on the Spirit and not begin with finances.

3. Some of the discussion during the joint committee meeting included:

- Let the spirit guide us through Quaker process - possible retreat, forums, business meeting action item.
- This process must be spirit driven and not bogged down by previous assumptions, data or current practices.
- Look to Faith and Practice for guidance that is relevant to this concern.

"To turn all we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives"--this, in the words of Woolman, is the meaning of Quaker stewardship.

Do we regard our time, talents, energy, money, material possessions, and other resources as gifts from God, to be held in trust and shared according to the Light we are given? How do we express this conviction?

What are we doing as individuals and as a Meeting to use and thereby perfect our gifts? How do we encourage others to use theirs?

How do we exercise our respect for the balance of nature? Are we careful to avoid poisoning the land, air, and sea and to use the world's resources with care and consideration for future generations and with respect for all life?

In what other ways do we carry out our commitment to stewardship?

- Be open to all possibilities and consider our people power, facilities and financial resources as having potential for accomplishing Quaker goals.
- We should consider our resources in relation to community needs as well as FMA needs.
- After consideration of use of our resources, we should also meditate on our ongoing processes that determine how we use resources. This may include budgeting, processes for new proposals and annual review and reflections.
- Look to FGC and AFSC mission statements as examples:

FGC Vision Statement

We envision a vital and growing Religious Society of Friends—a faith that deepens spiritually, welcomes newcomers, builds supportive and inclusive community, and provides loving service and witness in the world.

Through Friends General Conference, we see Quakers led by the Spirit joining together in ministry to offer services that help Friends, meetings, and seekers explore, deepen, connect, serve and witness within the context of our living faith.

AFSC Vision

AFSC envisions a world in which lasting peace with justice is achieved through active nonviolence and the transforming power of love. We work toward a world in which:

- *All persons affirm the common good and recognize our mutual interdependence*
- *Societies steward resources equitably*
- *Caring, respectful economic development, including work with dignity, promotes wellbeing for all*
- *Communities and societies fractured by exclusion and marginalization are healed and transformed, embracing inclusion and equality*
- *Conflicts are resolved through restorative means and without force or coercion*
- *Governments and societal institutions are fair and accountable*