

Legacy Grant Application  
Briana Halliwell  
September, 2020

“While the current circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic catch all of us off guard in many ways, some of us have a deepening intuitive sense and experience that the unveiling of the fragility of our civilizational constructs and assumptions is well under-way.”

“There are moments when, akin to a waking dream, we are fully aware of ourselves in the grand sweep of history, when we can feel, viscerally, that we are in the midst of seismic shifts in our lives.”

I am in the midst of a personal seismic shift which is but a microcosm of the shift my spiritual community, New England Yearly Meeting, is undergoing, which is but a reflection of the global seismic shift we all are experiencing to some degree. The world is changing, more rapidly than ever before, and we, as individuals and communities, need to be prepared to anticipate how we will weather the cataclysmic transformation laid out before us.

New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) is in the throes of a revolution, working to dismantle patterns of domination culture (re: Empire) intrinsic to our Quaker structures which lead to and perpetuate the oppression of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) and contribute to the continued destruction of the Earth, both actively and passively. As was stated in our Sessions 2019 Epistle, we as a body are “...awakening to new, yet timeless truths, buried beneath old masks; uncovering the past to uproot the present and plant the future in soil anew.” We are already engaged in the work of “ReMembering”, a term brought to the gathered virtual body of NEYM Sessions 2020 by Bible Half Hour speaker Cherice Bock, an ecotheologian from Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting.

To ReMember is to recall and reclaim your rightful place in the order of things; to surrender to and accept your role as a member of the living ecology you inhabit. Through the process of ReMembering, you will naturally begin to shift from an egocentric worldview to an eco-inclusive philosophy which places humans within the circle of life rather than at the top of the empirical pyramid established and controlled by European colonial order, both historically and today.

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ReMembering provides a richer understanding of the links between colonialism, climate change and structural racism, all of which are the result of an egoic worldview which separates “man” from “nature.” The very real and harmful effects of both systemic racism and ecological destruction signify a wildly out-of-balance relationship between humans and all other living things, including other humans who exist outside the dominant culture. The work of ReMembering leads to an unraveling of old stories, allowing the true history of colonization to be not only rewritten, but fully embodied in time and place in a way that leads to fundamental personal, communal and, eventually, global revelation and transformation.

Through the process of ReMembering comes the possibility of an eco-reformation, another concept gifted to the participants of NEYM Sessions 2020 by Cherice Bock. An eco-reformation, from the book of the same title, attests that, in order “...to address the eco-crises we face, we also need to conceive anew what it means to be human.” Humans, according to Cherice Bock and countless other Friends and ecotheologians, are part of the whole web of interconnected life which “breaks down the illusion of hierarchy” presented by the top-down empirical model of an egocentric worldview first purported by white European settlers in colonial times. According to Friend Bock, “...part of the necessary shift is learning to see and interpret our history, our sacred texts, and our own lives through the lens of this eco-reformation,” leading to a “participatory community of all life.”

My leading, as I understand it and as it relates to the seismic shifts happening both within New England Yearly Meeting and the wider world, is to help give birth to the eco-reformation laid out by Cherice Bock through the process of ReMembering - first for myself, then for the community of NEYM and beyond. The first step to manifesting this ministry is to educate myself and embark on my own journey of ReMembering. Then I will introduce the process of ReMembering to individuals and groups within NEYM, expanding and developing my ministry, knowledge, and gifts of leadership as I go. The money from the Legacy Grant will support both my own education and the ongoing process of ReMembering for individuals within NEYM.

This leading began eight years ago, when I was an 18 year old freshman at Guilford College, a Quaker undergraduate institute in Greensboro, North Carolina. I received a clear message in response to a lifelong quest to understand, “Who am I and why am I here?” during an

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“Experiment with the Light” meditation in 2012. I posed these lofty queries to the Light and none other than Christ itself appeared in my vision to answer: “Love All there is to Love. Be All there is to Be. And Truth will come.” Love. Be. True.

I spent the next 8 years shying away from the intensity of the Spirit who’d answered my call before I felt ready to surrender to the transformation God was calling me into. Ego dictated decisions, precipitating a series of dead-end jobs and relationships I thought were in alignment with my call. I was steeped nose-deep in Empire, but my third eye remained clear, peripherally questioning the circumstances of my life until another call came in 2018 - a leading to return to New England Yearly Meeting. “Yes,” said my Spirit. “Yes,” said my heart. “Yes,” said my ego. I left North Carolina and moved home to Maine, at last surrendering to my call.

And here I am, two years later, with a clear sense of direction and understanding of how, by releasing egoic thinking and embracing an eco-mentality, I can truly “Love All there is to Love and Be All there is to Be,” both individually and communally. For to adopt a philosophy of eco-inclusivity is to accept that my being exists only within the context of life as a whole. And to love anything is to love everything, encompassing all, both within and without. To Be and Love All There Is to Be and Love requires ReMembering my own identity in the framework of ecology, a conversion of Spirit, mind, body, and soul.

I am fortunate now to be connected with an eco-theological organization called Sequoia Samanvaya whose sole mission is to help people (especially white, European Americans) ReMember their place in the order of things, both through courses and discourse as well as through the work and ministry of building “anticipatory communities.” These anticipatory communities serve as an extension and expansion of the beloved community that many Christian scholars and racial justice organizations already have a deep understanding of and appreciation for.

According to Chris Fici, an early benefactor of the term anticipatory community, “...the anticipator understands that the ecology of our human-being is always already entangled with the ecology of our Earthy-being.” He goes on to say, “One needs ‘superb catastrophic imagination’ to anticipate well and to teach others the art amidst such accelerated precarity. These are times in which it feels like a chain of revelations is being given to us. The anticipator is one who responds

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to these revelations by helping others find their creative and regenerative energy, in the process of unveiling.”

I see myself and have been named by others as an anticipator, a Seer, a prophetic visionary. My ministry as I understand it now is to help build the anticipatory capacity of New England Yearly Meeting. As stated above, this capacity building must necessarily begin with my own education through courses and apprenticeship opportunities offered through Sequoia Samanvaya. Then I see my ministry extending to the NEYM community, in the shape of intergenerational ReMembering retreats, either in-person or online, COVID-dependent, throughout the next few years.

I envision myself bringing Sequoia Samanvaya’s courses to Friends within New England Yearly Meeting to begin galvanizing our communal response to the local, regional, and global seismic shifts at hand, confronting both systemic racism and climate change while simultaneously releasing Friends from the patterns of white supremacy and domination culture through the work of ReMembering. I see the ministry I carry as a process of midwifery to help Friends in New England live more fully into the kin-dom of God, leading to the very real manifestation of an eco-reformation within New England Yearly Meeting and beyond.

I am not otherwise employed, and I see this ministry, this call to manifest an eco-reformation in the world today, as vital to the continuation of both our own community and, to some extent, the global community as well. The funds I am requesting from the Legacy Grant for support of my ministry will be used to support my livelihood as I dedicate at least 9 months to the process of deeply ReMembering. The budget breaks down more of the nitty-gritty details of how I envision the money supporting the outward manifestation of my inward ministry. For now, the main parts include:

- 9 months of ministerial reckoning, beginning with aspects of education through the ReMembering course offered through Sequoia Samanvaya
- Basic living expenses for 9 months, either through the Legacy grant and/or from other sources as well.

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- COVID-dependent travel to various places throughout the U.S, both within Maine and beyond.
- ReMembering Retreat facilitation slated for the end of August, early September, in midCoast, Maine
- Continuing to sit with and discern my ministry on a daily basis without ever worrying where my next plate of food will come from.
- Development of my ministry and leadership capabilities, both within NEYM and beyond
- Weekly and/or monthly phone calls with Friends around New England to discuss how their ministry is related/leading to an eco-reformation (or not).