

Baltimore Yearly Meeting

of the Religious Society of Friends
17100 Quaker Lane
Sandy Spring, Maryland 20860-1267

301-774-7663
fax: 301-774-7087
info@bym-rsf.org

When Counting Counts

As a mixed-heritage person, I know what it's like to be confused or uneasy about checking boxes and quantifying an identity. We know that race as a biological concept does not exist. We know that as full human beings we are each so much more nuanced and complex than any categorization can account for. And we know that numbers in a room is never the complete story. Yet, we know also that in the context of our society, each of us can have very different experiences based on our heritage and the ways the world perceives us. Because of this, racial and ethnic identities can have a very real impact in our day to day lives and on determining the communities with whom we end up sharing fellowship. As BYM commits to taking on increasing participation of young adults and people of color, it is important for us to have ways to recognize the demographics of our current community and to assess how that changes over time. This survey is one—though certainly not the only—method we will use to do this.

While no system of categorization will ever be perfect, every effort has been made to make an inclusive list. Spaces are left next to each description so that if something more specific (like a particular term, tribe, country of origin, or other clarification) feels like a better fit, it can be added. Our hope is that—in addition to giving us concrete measures to work with—learning about and being interested in each other's heritage in all the different ways that is defined might open us up to deeper knowledge, sharing, and understanding.

Dyresha Harris
Outreach and Inclusion Coordinator
OIC@bym-rsf.org