

# Minute on continuing revelation concerning marriage and sexual identity 1983-2009

We experience the varieties of love in our community as gifts of God. We are children of God and we all have the same potential to reflect the Divine Light in our lives. Our hearts resonate deeply with the biblical injunctions to “love God” and to “love your neighbor as yourself.” We experience all forms of loving relationships as manifestations of God’s love on earth.

Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting Friends know from experience that families composed of gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered parents and their children face additional difficulties in our society. We hope to remain sensitive to those difficulties and respond together with love and integrity, and advocacy when needed.

We recognize from our experience the need to support children questioning their own sexual orientation or gender. We support their living out the sexual identity the Spirit leads them to.

We are aware that God’s gifts come through every individual – straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered – and that, when we do recognize the gifts offered, we enrich ourselves and our meetings.

Connecticut Valley Quarterly Meeting has threshed these issues for many years. In 1983 the Quarter brought a Minute on Homosexuality to New England Yearly Meeting affirming “that our belief in that of God in every person embraces all persons regardless of sexual orientation [and] that we welcome to our meetings for worship and to all occasions for fellowship attenders who are gay and lesbian.” The Yearly Meeting encouraged Monthly Meetings to give the subject consideration.

We then turned our attention to questions of committed relationships, especially same-gender relationships, and brought a Minute on Marriage to the 1987 session of New England Yearly Meeting. NEYM asked that this minute be included with the draft of a chapter on human sexuality for *Living With Oneself and Others* being sent to Monthly Meetings for comment by a NEYM Ministry and Counsel Working Party.

Our continuing concern to nurture the same-gender couples among us led to our bringing a Minute in support of legal same-gender marriage to New England Yearly Meeting in 2005. We offered it as “our witness, inviting Friends to endorse it or use it as they find helpful. We are heartened by the current existence of same-gender legal marriage in Massachusetts and by the state of Connecticut’s decision to recognize civil unions.” Connecticut has subsequently legalized same sex marriage.

Our 2005 Minute contributed to NEYM’s 2007 Minute of Commitment addressing NEYM’s response to concerns raised by Friends United Meeting’s personnel policy, and this opportunity for further discernment allowed us to discover that our focus has broadened beyond marriage.