Fifth Month: Family and Sexuality

Love makes a family.
-Bonnie Tinker, 2002

We are learning that radical inclusion and radical love bring further light to Quaker testimony and life.
-Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, and Queer Concerns, 1999

Advices from Faith and Practice

It is important to live in the sense of assurance that all are children of God. In the eyes of our children, in the loving expression among adults, in the concern we have for the well-being of all in the Meeting family, we feel God's love at work on earth. Ideally, family is an expression of deep emotional and spiritual unity. Whatever its composition, it is a precious and sometimes tenuous bonding of people and may bring anguish as well as joy. We do well to look past the outward appearance of orientation and identity to see the quality of individuals and relationships in our Meetings. Just as there is that of God in every person, there is that of God in every relationship that calls upon God. We remain tender toward all relationships founded on integrity, mutual respect, commitment, and love.

The Meeting may be a source of love and care for all those associated with it. The Meeting can support, yet does no replace, the family in the care of children. At the same time, every member of Meeting is responsible in some measure for the care of families and their members, including children. Given this sense of common concern, our families may gain a sense of belonging and commitment to the expanded family of Quakers and to our heritage.

Queries

- How do we make our homes places of friendliness, peace, and renewal where Spirit is real for those who there and those who visit?
- How do we keep commitments outside the home from encroaching on the time and loving attention the family needs for its health and well-being?
- How does our Meeting walk alongside members and attenders at all stages of their lives?
- Do we accept and appreciate our sexuality as part of our humanity and as a gift from God?
- How safe is our Meeting? How do we create an environment appropriate for discussion of deeply personal issues?
- How willing are we to talk openly and listen carefully when others' ideas and behavior are different from our own? How do we respond to that of God in them while acknowledging our own discomfort or disagreement?