

## Minute Supporting the Right to Marry

October 31, 2004:

### 04-21 Support of Same Gender Marriage

The Salem Quarterly Meeting of New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) supports the right of all adult couples to join in legal marriage and to enjoy the full legal benefits of that state. We base our stand in our long held testimony of equality, that there is "that of God in every person", and in our understanding of marriage, that marriage is a spiritual union not imposed or defined by us. "For the right joining in marriage is the work of the Lord only, and not the priests' or magistrates'; for it is God's ordinance and not man's; ... for we marry none; it is the Lord's work, and we are but witnesses.", as George Fox, one of the first generation of Friends, wrote in 1669\*.

We oppose any law or constitutional amendment which restricts the right of gay and lesbian couples to legally marry. We support the extension of marriage with all its legal rights and responsibilities to adult couples who are willing to accept those responsibilities. We encourage our constituent meetings and all their members to make this stand known to their elected representatives.

\*George Fox, 1669. Quoted in Britain Yearly Meeting, Quaker Faith & Practice 1995, section 16.01