

July 12, 2013

Fred Hoskins, Clerk, Executive Committee
Wilmington Yearly Meeting
Wilmington College Pyle Center, Box 1194
1870 Quaker Way
Wilmington, OH 45177

Re: The Decision to Withdraw Discussion of the Approval of the 1997 Minute on Same- Gender Marriage as a “Working Document.”

Dear Mr. Hoskins,

The Ministry and Counsel Committee of Wilmington Friends Meeting would like to respond to your minute requesting Patricia Thomas, Presiding Clerk, Wilmington Yearly Meeting, withdraw the scheduled discussion at the August Yearly Meeting Sessions regarding the intent of Friends when the 1997 Minute on Same-Gender Marriage was approved as a working document.

In every definition of a “working document,” there are two important assumptions: first, it is a temporary document used while ongoing work on a permanent document is in process, and second, it is to be used for a limited period until a permanent document is agreed upon. It appears the 1997 document has lain unexamined for sixteen years and a conversation on Same-Gender Marriage is long overdue. It is vital that re-examination and renewed discussion occur.

We recommend that even though the discussion of the “working document” is a procedural concern, there must also be discussion about the issue of Same-Gender Marriage, a pastoral concern, in order to seek unity. We urge the Executive Committee to task the Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel Committee with further discussion on the issue and the development of a proposed way forward. Each Monthly Meeting should be encouraged to discuss the matter prior to discussion in YM M&C. We believe free and open discussion is the best way to address the concerns around this important and timely issue. We ask that this issue be ready for discussion no later than the 2014 Yearly Meeting Sessions.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our concerns regarding your recent recommendation to table the discussion of the 1997 working document. May the Executive Committee find a way forward to open this issue for discernment and respectful discussion in the near future.

Respectfully yours,

Sandra W. Neville, Clerk, Ministry and Counsel
Wilmington Friends Meeting

CC: Patricia Thomas
Doug Haag