

STRAWBERRY CREEK MINUTE IN SUPPORT OF FRIENDS UGANDAN SAFE TRANSPORT FUND

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends [Quakers] has noted with deep concern the Ugandan Government's passage of laws targeting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer population. These laws have created a climate where the life, health, and freedom of all LGBTQ Ugandans and their allies are at risk.

We are dismayed at hearing about those who have already been forced from their homes, denied basic rights, abandoned, beaten, imprisoned, or killed. Although the death penalty has been overturned by the Ugandan Supreme Court on a technicality, there are currently further efforts at passing new legislation targeting LGBTQ Ugandans. A climate of intimidation prevails.

Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting has been called to support Olympia Monthly Meeting's creation of a Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund project to aid LGBTQ Ugandans who are fleeing their homeland for their lives and safety. We support Olympia Monthly Meeting's efforts to provide direct assistance to help hundreds of LGBTQ Ugandans get to safety and freedom.

As Quakers, we remain convinced that there is that of God in every person. From the Christian tradition we can learn that love comes from God and is to be celebrated in any form. Jesus embraced all people considered unclean at the time, be they tax collectors or prostitutes or diseased or mentally ill or fishermen whose hands were dirtied by the blood of fish. Even the Canaanite woman at the well was able to convince a dismissive Jesus to include her daughter in his ministry.

Historically scripture has been used inappropriately to justify slavery, racism, colonialism and war. Let us not make the same mistake today with LGBTQ people. In so testifying, we do not condemn, but seek to love all persons caught up in this persecution, whether as perpetrators or victims, and to be able to say with George Fox, "I told them I was come into the covenant of peace which was before wars and strife were."

As many others remain at risk we join Olympia Monthly Meeting's call to all Friends, both individually and in Meetings, all Friends' organizations, and all people of good will to aid Olympia Monthly Meeting's Friends Ugandan Safe Transport Fund in their efforts to assist endangered LGBTQ Ugandans.

*Approved April 12, 2015
Strawberry Creek Friends Meeting
Berkeley, California*