

Greetings from Cherry Grove Friends Church –

We received your letter discussing the upcoming conversation at the mid-year meeting of Representatives. We would like to add our experience to your discussions.

The phrasing of the current, approved section on Human Sexuality within our Faith and Practice is painful to read, and painful to share. Jesus called for repentance, and sincere repentance can result in restoration within the church. The current phrasing almost appears to leave no hope for repentance. As such, we have found it a barrier to conversation with individuals outside the church regardless of their personal position on any particular sexual practice.

Therefore we welcomed the work of the NWYM Elders to revise this portion of our Faith and Practice to be more gentle and open to conversation, yet maintaining the traditional, well-reasoned position that sexual sin exists and that same-sex sexual acts are within the definition of sexual sin.

We have arrived at this position in examining it for close to two years, and we continue the discussion. We began our discussion in March of 2012 with a minute of concern to the Pastors, Elders, Clerk and Superintendent of NWYM. We furthered our understanding of our position during the preparation for Yearly Meeting in the summer of 2013, finding the original proposed wording for Faith and Practice to be acceptable yet wanting to assure that we maintained consistency to what we understand to be Biblical principles.

Finally, with the publication of the revised proposed statement for the Faith and Practice, we reviewed it against the previously proposed statement and found them consistent in position yet growing in the ability and interest to enter the conversation with the world outside of the church. We find this change in wording a positive trend for allowing engagement with the world, as long as we remain firm in our understanding of sexual sin.

We recognize that this position may still continue to create dissonance within NWYM as well as with the world outside the church, but we see no other place that God would have us stand.

We commend the NWYM Elders on their work, pray for their continued understanding of this issue along the lines they are currently positioned, and hope that it leads to deeper understanding within NWYM of what God has called us here to do and to be.

Blessings