



Clear Hearts
Quaker Circle

Epistle to Friends on Acknowledging Non-Monogamy *June 8, 2025*

To Friends Everywhere,

Over the past five decades, Friends have become more and more welcoming of diversity in sexual orientation and gender identity. For example, in 1992, North Pacific Yearly Meeting (NPYM) [found unity](#) to say:

“We find that the Spirit of God is present in all loving relationships, regardless of the genders of those involved. [...] Our love and support is for all persons and is not based on the gender of the person they love.”

And in 2017, NPYM [minuted](#):

“We recognize that when we embrace the Light within the full spectrum of gender identities in our meeting, our worship deepens and our community is enriched.”

At Clear Hearts Quaker Circle, we appreciate and applaud all of the work done by so many LGBTQIAP+ individuals, queer families, and allies to shift the status quo on these topics.

However, those of us who are ethically non-monogamous (polyamorous, polyfidelitous, etc.) still are waiting for acknowledgement and welcome.

The times when specific individuals are lifted up for public celebration and blessing are commonly family times: a baby is born, people are joined in marriage, someone has died and must be remembered. These observances may not be the main purpose of a faith community, but it is difficult to imagine a healthy faith community without them. Polyamorous folks mostly

have to live without access to them—or else lie about the true nature of their biological, legal, or chosen families. Quakers cannot continue to center the importance of these symbolic expressions of tangible community while minimizing the harm of excluding polyamorous families from them.

In the broader world, polyamorous people struggle with paperwork that assumes that children only have up to two parents, or that romantic/sexual partnerships are limited to only two people – and then have to worry about being kept out of hospital rooms if our loves or children are hurt, or wonder if our whole family will be legally recognized in a huge variety of scenarios. Beyond bureaucracy, there are hundreds of social and cultural norms that deny our relationship structures. We have to fight and pray for healthcare for all our spouses, for acknowledgement of all our children, for recognition of the existence of all our loves, for the “luxury” of not having people assume that even our most committed relationships are jokes, or frivolities, or unethical-by-default.

Non-monogamous people can legally be fired from jobs, kicked out of establishments, or denied housing for what our families look like. Harassment is common. We must weigh living a life in the closet, hiding not only our own identity but many of the relationships that matter most to us, against the real safety concerns of visibly stepping into integrity. We are not aware of any currently active body of Friends, besides Clear Hearts ourselves, who has formally specified that non-monogamous relationships are acceptable.¹ We reviewed the 157 posted minutes that talk about queer people and relationships on the [FLGBTQC website](#). Only ONE out of the 157 minutes does not explicitly or *de facto* exclude non-monogamous relationships.

Uncertainty about whether or not we would *definitively be excluded* is the rare, exceptional, BEST that Friends have offered non-monogamous people.

¹ Freedom Friends, a small worship group in Salem, Oregon, came the closest. They changed all exclusionary “monogamy” language in their *Faith and Practice* to language that left unstated how many people could be in a relationship, publishing this change along with a Facebook post affirming that “we have found God, health, and goodness in polyamorous families and individuals.” This intentional removal of exclusion happened just as they disbanded in 2019.

When we ask for safety and equality, a common reaction is to compare our loving, consensual relationships to abuse or betrayal. This is not acceptable.

To date, the only “solutions” Quakers have offered to the “problem” of the existence of polyamorous families in their Meetings are to shatter those families into more acceptable arrangements, or to drop the Integrity testimony and pretend like our families are different than they are. We condemn and reject the fact that so many Friends view the destruction of families as a lesser sin than the living out of mutually uplifting love between more than two people. We likewise condemn and reject the fact that so many Friends are comfortable with families publicly denying the existence and importance of that love.

Welcome is a predictor of health and mental wellness, and community is a universal need. Since non-monogamous families experience additional discrimination and hate, welcome and supportive community are even more important. Outside of Clear Hearts, we do not find explicit shelter for our families from ANY Friends body. Instead, we are constantly confronted by ignorance, bigotry, exclusion, and indifference to the real human costs of endless “seasoning.”

We urge Friends to include non-monogamous individuals and families explicitly. Or, if there is not unity to include us, we demand that your exclusion become explicit, so that we no longer must waste our time with false welcome and endure the pain of betrayal by those we call Friends.

It is time for Friends to become educated about non-monogamy. We are attaching a resource guide for this purpose. It is also time for Friends to decide whether or not non-monogamous people, and families like ours — whatever romantic bonds (if any) are present among adults, whatever sexual intimacy (if any) is present between consenting adults, whether the adults are guardians of children or not — are going to be allowed in from the margins.