

Things we can do

1. Study the matter of immigration as individuals and as Meetings.
2. Include consideration of this concern in our *Faith and Practice*.
3. Continue to help individual refugees and groups of refugees and safeguard their rights.
4. Ask government to reduce military spending and to increase spending for family planning programs and other economic development in developing countries.
5. Oppose efforts to deny health, employment, and educational services to undocumented people.
6. Encourage provisions for greater protection of the natural environment in international trade agreements.
7. Support the United Nations' environmental and population programs.
8. Study the relationships among the imported products that we use, the natural environments where they are produced, and the migration pressures felt by the people who produce them.
9. Consider the implications of the "ecological footprint" of a North American versus a resident of a Third World country.

Sources of facts and information

- National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics Reports 47 #18 and 47 #19, 1999: <www.cdc.gov.nchs>.
- Statement of workshop group, "Welcoming strangers: Quakers and immigration" at Friends General Conference, 1994.
- United Nations Demographic Yearbook*, various years.
- Canadian government website: <www.cic.gc.ca>.
- New York Times*, various dates 1993–2000
- Barbara Brooks Kimmel and Alan Lubiner. 1996. *Immigration Made Simple*. Next Decade, Inc. New Jersey.
- Immigration and Naturalization Service website: <www.ins.usdoj.gov>.



A Friends perspective

Do not mistreat foreigners who are living in your land. Treat them as you would a fellow Israelite, and love them as you love yourselves. Remember that you were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.

—Leviticus 19:33–34

Quaker Earthcare Witness

QEW's Vision and Witness

WE ARE CALLED to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God.

WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God's Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the earth's ecological integrity.

WE PROMOTE these Truths by being patterns and examples, by communicating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship with the earth.

Quaker Earthcare Witness

173-B N. Prospect St.

Burlington, VT 05401-1607

802/658-0308;

info@QuakerEarthcare.org; <www.QuakerEarthcare.org>.

2. **Weak economies in some developing nations.** We must forgive some Third World debt and work to minimize military expenditures worldwide. The rights of workers must be guaranteed in a world of free trade.
3. **Ethnocentrism and racism.** Multicultural societies must be valued. Universal human rights must be respected, and xenophobia countered.
4. **Environmental degradation.** We must conserve natural resources, preserve biodiversity, and halt our exploitation of forests, watersheds, and arid lands throughout the world.
5. **Some structure for the orderly movement of people** between nations would need to be established.

Questions

1. What would have to change in order for it to be feasible, to have open borders?
2. *Political* refugees are recognized. Should we also recognize *economic* refugees?
3. Which rights (e.g. voting), if any, can justifiably be denied to immigrants and which cannot?
4. What can we learn from the evolution of the European Union's policy of open international borders?
5. Why are open borders seen as a threat to national sovereignty?
6. Some say that opening borders would lead to a large redistribution of population and, eventually a more equitable distribution of world resources. Does this scenario seem reasonable?
7. How do fears of losing our privileged position in the world lead us to passively support continuation of the status quo with respect to immigration?
8. Are we, in the materially rich countries, willing to live more simply?

- ❖ Some population and environmental groups believe we should strictly limit immigration to help slow population growth, reduce sprawl, and protect our undeveloped areas.
- ❖ The foreign-born filled 39 percent of jobs created in the U.S. between 1994 and 1998.
- ❖ Undocumented immigrants (about 5.6 million in the U.S.) will often work for less pay than legal immigrants or nationals, live in substandard housing, and work in unhealthy, unsafe conditions.
- ❖ The Internal Revenue Service estimates that two million Americans employ domestic immigrant workers, and only 250,000 of them meet all the immigration and tax laws.
- ❖ Currently, there are 62 miles of steel walls (14 feet high) and chain-link and barbed wire fences along the U.S.-Mexican border—and growing support for extending them.
- ❖ Quotas on legal immigrants mean applicants from some countries now have a 15- to 20-year wait.
- ❖ For about one-third of Chinese granted asylum in the U.S., the reason involves flight from fear of forced abortion or sterilization.
- ❖ Many persons are so desperate to get here that they risk their lives. A recent report estimated that 1,185 people died crossing the Mexico-U.S. border between 1993 and 1996. The numbers of stowaways in ship containers is increasing.

Our vision

OUR belief that there is that of God in every person leads to our testimony of equality. Following this testimony, we are clear that it is wrong to discriminate against persons because of where they were born; everyone should be able to move around the world, unrestricted by national boundaries. However, we all know that societies must change before borders can be opened. In particular, we must deal with the following specific problems before that can happen:

1. **Population growth.** Immigration is fueled by rapid population growth and the related poor economic conditions. We must support universal access to contraceptive services. Women's status must be improved. Population size must be stabilized; a level below the present six billion would allow more options.

Immigration in a Crowded world

A Friends Perspective

IN North America, the U.S. population is growing by 2 to 3 million persons per year and is projected to grow from 281 million in 2000 to 400 million by 2050. With our standard of living, natural resources are under tremendous and mounting pressure. Numerous species are endangered, water is becoming scarce in several parts of the country, and an area the size of Delaware is paved over each year.

The Population Concerns Interest Group of Quaker Earthcare Witness is aware that a significant portion of the population growth of the U. S. and Canada is due to immigration. Population pressure, political repression, environmental degradation, and economic inequalities are underlying reasons why persons in developing nations seek to emigrate to developed nations. Some people in the U.S. see immigration as a threat to their quality of life. The Interest Group feels the need to separate the facts from the fears and address the question of immigration from a spiritual base.

Facts

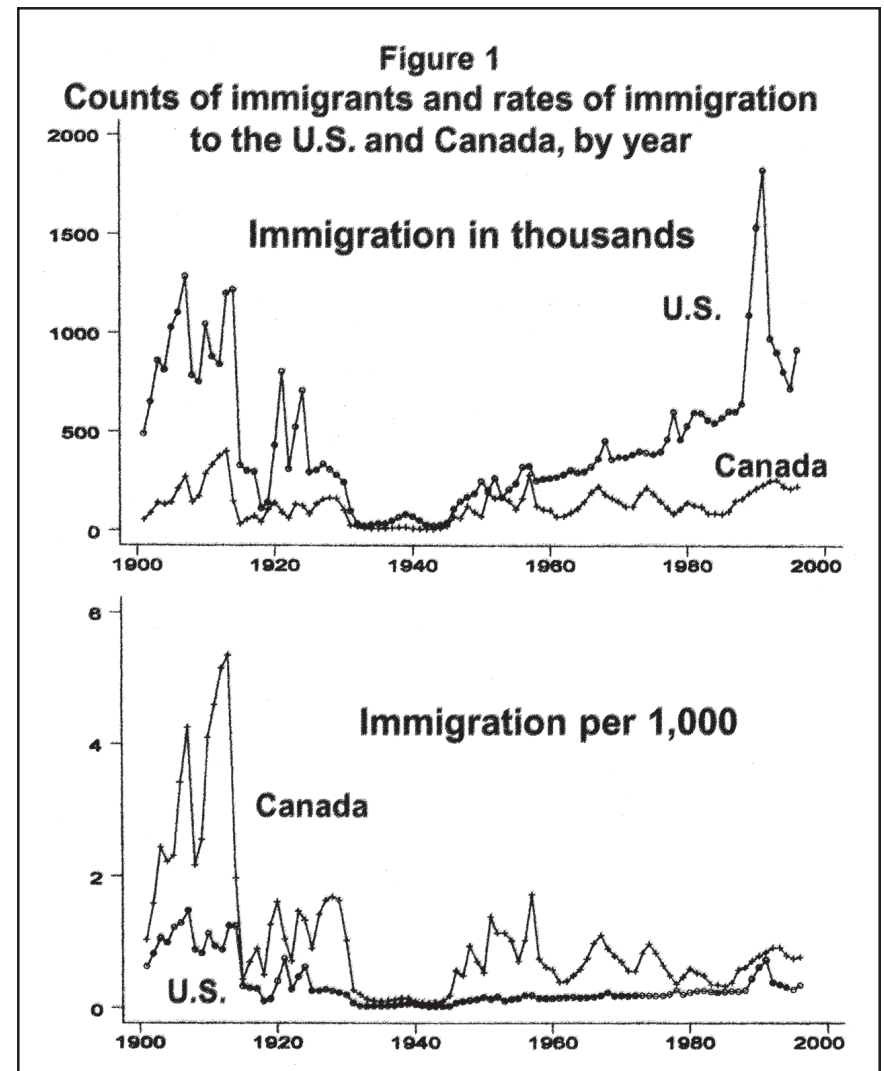
In the world

- ❖ For many millennia there were no national borders, immigrations laws, or passports because nation-states did not exist.
- ❖ The precise locations of national boundaries are more the product of physical geography, politics, and military history than of cultural or ethnic groupings.
- ❖ Nomadic people of Africa are having a difficult time adjusting to rules of citizenship and immigration, as borders they formerly crossed without even knowing it now are becoming fenced.

- ❖ The European Union has open borders, but only for those who are citizens of its member states. Some European nations have very restrictive immigration laws but at the same time have financial incentives to encourage births among their own nationals because European fertility is very low.
- ❖ The United Nations estimates that there are 20 million international refugees in the world; eight million of them are in Africa. A growing number are “ecological refugees”—the land where they live cannot support them.
- ❖ Immigration laws throughout the world are becoming tighter as populations grow and land fills up.
- ❖ In 1981 Nigeria deported two million Ghanians. In 1991 the Dominican Republic expatriated 50,000 Haitians. In 1998 Malaysia expelled several thousand Indonesians. Germany deported thousands of Gypsies to Romania, and Thailand expelled 300,000 illegals from Myanmar.

In North America

- ❖ Prior to 1875 virtually anyone from anywhere could enter the U.S. freely and take up residence here, though there were restrictions on citizenship.
- ❖ Nearly all North Americans are descended from relatively recent immigrants; native Americans account for less than one percent of the U.S. population.
- ❖ In 1790 the population of the U.S. was four million. Today, the U.S. population is 281 million.
- ❖ In the first decade of the 1900s, an average of one million persons came to the U.S. each year, and immigration accounted for 40 percent of the population growth. In Canada the corresponding figures were 140,000 and 78 percent! (see figure).
- ❖ *Legal* immigration to the U.S. is now set at approximately 800,000 per year. In addition, the number of *illegal* immigrants (who stay) is estimated at 400,000 annually. By comparison, there are approximately 1.5 million more births than deaths each year in the U.S. Current immigration accounts for about the same percentage of growth as in 1900.
- ❖ The U.S. admits the largest number of immigrants of any country in the world. Canada and Australia, however, admit a higher percentage relative to total population (Figure 1 contrasts the U.S. and Canadian rates of immigration.)



Types of legal immigration to the U.S.

(Canada has similar categories), by priority:

1. Immediate relatives of citizens—spouses, parents, and children.
2. Special immigrants (e.g. former U.S. government employees).
3. Certain other close relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent residents.
4. Employment-based.
5. Refugees.