

- ❖ How can we free men and women from their stereotyped gender roles?
- ❖ What is the relationship between sexuality and the balance of power within a couple?
- ❖ Which efforts with regard to sexuality will also be effective in slowing population growth?
- ❖ How do we balance our sexuality, our need to procreate, and our concern for the natural world?

### **A Friends witness on sexuality, contraception, and childbearing**

Sexuality and spirituality are at the depth of our being. Friends believe in the spiritual equality of the sexes: Marital partners in the Religious Society of Friends give identical marriage vows. Joint decision-making of couples regarding sexuality, family planning, and fertility behaviors is a natural extension of our beliefs. We offer the following Friendly ideals:

1. We regard sexuality as an expression of a couple's love for each other. Therefore, the separation of sexual intercourse and reproduction via contraception is appropriate. Use (or non-use) of contraception would be decided jointly and supported by both partners.
2. Each episode of sexual activity would be voluntary for both partners and desired by both.
3. Couples would reach mutual clearness on their desired family size, and each intended pregnancy would represent a calling to parenthood, so that every child born into the world would be wanted and loved and have equal opportunity to share in the world's resources.
4. If an unwanted pregnancy occurs, the choice of whether to have an induced abortion or not would be a decision made together by the couple.

By adhering to these ideals, we could enhance sexuality, take away the occasion of most abortions, stabilize population, and help preserve the natural world.

### **Sources of facts**

- Lauman, M. et al. 1994. *The Social Organization of Sexuality*. University of Chicago Press.
- Masters, W.V., Johnson and R. Kolodny. 1986. *Sex and Loving*. Little, Brown & Co., Boston.
- Population Reference Bureau. *Population Data Sheets*. 1875 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 520, Washington. DC 20009
- United Nations. *World Population Prospects: 1998 Revision*. New York, 1999.

### **Quaker Earthcare Witness**

Working to bring the message of the world's population impact to Friends and Friends Meetings through visitations, workshops, and publications.

### **QEW 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 to the earth.

### **For further information contact:**

**Quaker Earthcare Witness**  
 173-B N. Prospect St.  
 Burlington VT 05401-1607  
 802/658-0308;  
[info@QuakerEarthcare.org](mailto:info@QuakerEarthcare.org)  
[www.QuakerEarthcare.org](http://www.QuakerEarthcare.org)

# **A Witness on Sexuality for Friends**



***Quaker Earthcare Witness***

# A Witness on Sexuality for Friends

## Why is sexuality a QEW concern?

- ❖ Rapid population growth—the aggregate outcome of individual sexual activity throughout the world—poses a major threat to our natural environment.
- ❖ Each year more people add to the pollution of our water and atmosphere, the degradation of our soils and forests, and the extinction of species.

*The Friends testimony on sustainability leads us to be concerned.*

## Why is sexuality a Friends concern?

- ❖ Many pregnancies and births are unwanted.
- ❖ Low status gives many women few options besides early marriage and childbirth.
- ❖ Many women are forced to have sexual relations or to continue pregnancies against their will.

*The Friends testimony on equality leads us to challenge this situation.*

## We seek clarity on the following unresolved issues:

- ❖ Provision of contraception to unmarried individuals in order to reduce unwanted pregnancies.
- ❖ Sexual relations outside of marriage.
- ❖ Same-sex unions.

## Some facts

- ❖ Human population has increased from 1.6 billion in 1900 to 6.7 billion in 2008, and we continue to add 70 to 80 million persons each year.
- ❖ Twenty-two percent of women in the United States report having had forced sex at some point in their lives.
- ❖ The percentage of individuals in the United States who were virgins when they first married has declined from 55 percent of women born in the 1930s to about 20 percent for the generation born 30 years later.
- ❖ While the average age of marriage is increasing in almost all populations in the world, sexual intercourse outside of marriage is also increasing.
- ❖ The teen pregnancy rate in the United States is twice that of western Europe, despite the fact that teens there have about the same rate of sexual activity as teens in the U.S.
- ❖ Only 56 percent of couples of reproductive age worldwide are using contraception.
- ❖ Women with access to education and economic opportunities are more likely to be equal partners in the decisions regarding sexual activities, contraception, and childbearing.

## Queries

- ❖ Why is talking about sexual behavior so difficult?
- ❖ What are our beliefs about the connections between sexuality and spirituality?
- ❖ How can our love and sexuality help to deepen our spiritual lives as a couple?
- ❖ How have religious teachings about sexuality affected our own beliefs and practices?
- ❖ Do we believe sexual energy can be channeled into spiritual pursuits through celibacy?
- ❖ What is our position about sexual activity before marriage? Outside of marriage?
- ❖ What beliefs about sexuality do we instill in our children by our reactions to nudity, reactions to their own sexual behavior, and responses to their questions?
- ❖ How does the de-linking of sexuality and childbearing via modern contraception affect our beliefs about sexuality?
- ❖ How has our position on same-sex unions been affected by outward and inward spiritual and secular influences?
- ❖ How is the macho attitude of some men related to their attitude as masters over nature, and how is this reflected in the general culture?