



Santa Barbara Friends Meeting

Friends Called to Consider World Population (Approved June 13, 2004)

In the middle of the seventeenth century, when Quakerism was founded, there were over 600 million people on Earth; now there are more than six billion. The human population is growing at the rate of 3,000 every twenty minutes, while a plant or animal species is extinguished in the same time.

Directly or indirectly rapid population growth is threatening the quality of life worldwide.

Billions of people face shortages of food and water, of medical care, education and opportunity. The poorest places are also the places with the highest rates of population growth, rates that threaten to overwhelm the Millennium Development Goals, which were unanimously adopted by the United Nations in 2000. In the midst of this critical situation President Bush's 2005 budget request fails to allot funds for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This organization, the world's largest international source of funding for population and reproductive health programs, supports programs that help people to plan their families and avoid unwanted pregnancies, improve childbirth safety, avoid sexually transmitted infections and combat violence against women. The Global Gag Rule, an executive order issued by President Bush in January 2001, blocks assistance to foreign family planning agencies that are accused of providing abortion services, counseling or referrals. This rule costs the UNFPA an urgently needed \$34 million a year.

For the sake of humanity and with love of the Creation, the Santa Barbara Society of Friends supports the United Nations Population Fund and its efforts to help all requesting nations to address their reproductive health and population issues, as well as family planning and reproductive health activities in the United States.

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