

Swarthmore College

Works

Library Staff Works

Library & Information Science

11-12-2001

“Sex Is Not A Shortcut To Spirituality”: Liberal Quakers Confront The 20th-Century Sexual Revolutions

J. William Frost
Swarthmore College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://works.swarthmore.edu/sta-libraries>



Part of the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

J. William Frost. (2001). "“Sex Is Not A Shortcut To Spirituality”: Liberal Quakers Confront The 20th-Century Sexual Revolutions".

<https://works.swarthmore.edu/sta-libraries/125>

An [accessible version](#) of this publication has been made available courtesy of Swarthmore College Libraries. For further accessibility assistance, please contact openaccess@swarthmore.edu with the title or URL of any relevant works.

This work is brought to you for free by Swarthmore College Libraries' Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Staff Works by an authorized administrator of Works. For more information, please contact myworks@swarthmore.edu.

“Sex Is Not A Shortcut To Spirituality”: Liberal Quakers Confront The 20th-Century Sexual Revolutions

J. William Frost

July 28, 2001

Most Americans tell pollsters that they derive their moral compass from organized religion. Spirituality and morality rather than politics or attitudes toward the general society are considered appropriate subjects for Sunday sermons. So looking at the ways denominations have responded to the moral changes involving marriage, the family, and sexuality during the twentieth century is one way of assessing the impact of religion upon individuals. It is also a way of approaching a basic conundrum in religious studies: to what extent is religion an independent or dependent variable? My conclusion is that liberal Quakers did not initiate the changes in attitude towards sexual practice, but their traditions allowed them to respond earlier than other denominations to the social pressures in ways that would preserve what they now redefined as the essence of their previous teachings, even when the certainty of earlier attitudes was jettisoned.

This paper will discuss the changing attitudes of liberal Friends to marriage, the family, and sex from the First World War until the 1990s. My thesis is that after World War I there were a series of incremental changes in Friends' moral perspectives on these subjects. The emphasis changed from accepting marriages out of unity (that is of a Friend and non-Friend) to worries over the rising divorce rate. During and after World War II, Friends embraced the necessity of sex education, family planning, and marriage counseling. The major shift in teachings that occurred in the 60s and 70s was made easier because Friends had already become accustomed to changing their attitudes because some of their members were professional advice givers—MDs, psychiatrists, marriage counselors, sociologists.

Quaker schools, colleges, and meetings used a variety of strategies to cope with the changing moral climate. Quaker boarding schools continued to advise and to attempt to enforce sexual abstinence for their students. By contrast, in the late 1960s Quaker colleges repudiated *in loco parentis* and stopped trying to regulate the sexual life of students. By the 1970s they created coeducational dorms and allowed students pretty much to do so they pleased—so long as the sex was consensual. The clearness committees of meetings did not consider asking whether unmarried people had been living together; rather, they were relieved that the couple was marrying instead of continuing to cohabit. Meetings now recognized that there were a bewildering variety of family arrangements in their midst. Parents' attitudes evolved from just say "No", to "not in my house you don't," to gratitude when their children agreed to wed their "significant other" and reluctant resignation and regret that there might be no grandchildren.

In the late 1960s the family was under attack as a patriarchal institution which oppressed women and repressed natural sexual impulses. Some Friends advocated

touch therapy, sexual freedom before marriage, and open marriages. In the 1970s American Friends in response to agitation from within from gay and lesbian Quakers began openly debating the treatment of homosexuals. Friends' first response was to condemn the persecution of gays and to examine their own homophobic impulses. Acceptance of homosexuals was relatively easy for liberal Friends. The AIDs epidemic brought a conservative reaction to any emphasis upon the free exercise of sexuality. Now homosexuals desired the meetings' blessings to create monogamous families. The next step of ceremonies where the meeting affirmed the sanctity of unions or marriages, the difference in terms occasioned much discussion, came only after soul-searching and the price of this was growing estrangement with evangelical Friends.

By the 1990s within liberal meetings and Quaker colleges the concern had shifted to violence within families and such topics as sexual harassment and date rape. Ostensibly the colleges' new codes were an attempt to forestall lawsuits, but in actuality moral regulation had surreptitiously reappeared. Observers report an increasing emphasis upon sexual morality and structure among young Friends, but whether this is a new trend or only an aberration I cannot tell.¹

In essence before 1950 the first generations of Quaker liberals or modernists rejected traditional creeds and theology but retained what is oftentimes seen as the rigidity of Victorian moral standards. Beginning in the 1940s and becoming normative in the 1960s when confronted with new "scientific" evidence and visible changes, Quakers focused on the nature of the relationship rather than a series of dos and don'ts. Friends replaced what they now viewed as oppressive moral rules by a vague subjective standard of a deep or caring relationship, even though they were aware of the difficulties for clear thinking by youths when they were newly in love.

I. Liberal Quakers

The major sources for this paper are four: the disciplines and the minutes of the two Philadelphia Yearly Meetings' committees on marriage and the family, tracts and books authored by Friends, the published rules of the colleges, and interviews with those who taught or were deans of Quaker schools and colleges during the 1960s—the decade of most rapid change.

Liberal Quakerism, a subset of American Protestantism, is easily studied because of good records. Its numbers are small, no more than 30,000 in the whole country, but its members are well educated and perhaps too inclined to write. Most members are white and middle class with relatively few other minorities. Liberal Quakers official commitment to silent meetings and pacifism has a limited appeal in the

¹ The Guidelines for Young Friends at FGC gatherings, drawn up by the youth, state: "NO INAPPROPRIATE SEXUAL ACTIVITY. This means: No hooking up, petting, making out, or ANY KIND of sex. If you're in doubt, ask somebody. If you're still in doubt, don't do it." Young Friends allow smoking, because when they forbade it attendance dropped 30–40%. My guess is that adult Friends would be more inclined to pass stringent guidelines on smoking and would see no possibility of finding unity in regulations about sexual activities.

marketplace of denominational competition; so Friends are a self-selected group who, while rejecting some major themes in American culture, strongly resist authority and affirm the importance of individualism and a subjective experience of Truth.

Among Friends there may be a gap between the devout and fellow travelers, particularly as the distinction between members and attenders has lessened, but there are no clergy or liturgy or hierarchy to impose a perspective. Dissidents more often drop out rather than attempt to cause a schism. In fact, only the members' often superficial knowledge of Quaker history and adherence to unwritten roles of behavior stops the denomination from being a weather vane of whatever intellectual and/or religious currents are becoming dominant. Quaker procedures, correctly termed sense of the meeting and often referred to as consensus, means that decisions reflect the views of all who have opinions on an issue. For its members, and for scholars as well, Quakerism is in a very real sense an exemplar of popular religion.

Liberalism or Modernism was a theological movement that emphasized the primacy of religious experience, treated doctrinal statements as symbolic utterances rather than literal truth, stressed a loving rather than a judging God, and emphasized New Testament ethics. Jesus became a supreme ethical exemplar and the Sermon on the Mount a guide for reconstructing the general society. Liberals were optimistic, believing in the possibility of creating the Kingdom of God on earth. God was immanent in the creation and revealed His personality through nature, poetry, music, and familial love. Among Friends leading liberals included Rufus Jones, Douglas Steere, and Howard Brinton.

Liberals should be contrasted with evangelicals. An evangelical is a person who claims a saving experience of God or Christ. Evangelicalism is a subset consisting of those who use revivalism to obtain this experience and who insist upon a literal interpretation of Scriptures. An additional subset of evangelicalism are fundamentalists who insist upon a few "fundamental" doctrines: the inerrancy of scripture, the virgin birth of Jesus, the bodily resurrection, the substitutionary atonement, millennialism. For Quakers, the Orthodox after 1827 were evangelical; after the Civil War Friends in the middle and far West endorsed a holiness-evangelicalism.

Liberal Quakers are defined in this paper as the members of Friends General Conference (FGC), a loose organization of all Hicksite Quaker Yearly Meetings formed in 1902. The twentieth century has seen the merger of Hicksite and Orthodox meetings in New York, New England, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. The first three yearly meetings are also affiliated with both FGC and what was formerly called Five Years Meeting, but is now termed Friends United Meeting. Unlike most of the meetings in FUM which have adopted a pastoral system and programmed worship, virtually all the East Coast meetings (except for North Carolina which is not a member of FGC) continue to practice traditional unprogrammed or silent worship.² As the division between liberal and

² The correlation between theological perspective and yearly meeting affiliation or geography is far from exact. Evangelicals, liberals, and quietists often belong to the same monthly meeting. The fact that they

revivalist-evangelical yearly meetings has widened in America, the connections between East Coast Friends and London Quakers have strengthened. For example, from the late 1940s until the 1960s Philadelphia's two yearly meetings utilized a pamphlet on family planning originally printed by London Yearly Meeting. I suspect, but cannot prove, that American Friends are more influenced by British Friends than vice versa.

By World War I, liberalism or modernism, symbolized by Rufus Jones's thought, had made major inroads among the formerly Orthodox Yearly Meeting on the East Coast. As these meetings became estranged from the evangelical or fundamentalist outlook of the midwestern and southern churches of FUM, they began cooperating with Hicksites. In Young Friends and in selected committees, including peace and family relations, Orthodox and Hicksites met together and formulated common responses.

II. Family Planning and Divorce: The Interwar Years

Our survey begins with World War I. The Hicksites had for nearly fifty years allowed a Quaker to marry the non-Quaker, a change necessitated by the fact that nearly 50% of the members were doing so anyway. Tolerance for deviation in marriage did not lead to moral relativity on the duration of marriage. The discipline insisted that meetings should not remarry a divorced person if the other partner still survived.

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Orthodox since the 1840s had been paralyzed by a division between evangelicals and quietists that stopped basic revision of the discipline. Quietism slowly succumbed to liberalism before America entered the war. So Philadelphia Orthodox begrudgingly decided to allow marriage between a Quaker and non-Quaker only in 1916 but the discipline made clear that Friends still officially believed that "unity in religious belief is essential to the full enjoyment of the blessings of a married life" and to rearing children in "Truth." Parents were exhorted to watch over children to prevent "unsuitable intimacies." Young people before marriage should consult with parents and guardians to preserve them "from the dangerous bias of forward, brittle and uncertain affections." Wedding certificates labeled those outside the faith as non-members. A wedding not held after the manner of Friends brought a visit from Overseers to see if either bride or groom wished to retain membership.³

The Orthodox also eased the rules at Westtown School as a belief in plainness was replaced by an emphasis upon simplicity. The dress code no longer outlawed wearing of ribbons, silks, and jewelry; a Victrola was allowed as suitable recreation but the general committee in 1923 insisted it had no place in the general curriculum, although three years it later allowed a piano and piano teacher; in 1910 Milton's "Comus" was presented as a recitation; in 1923 a version with costume was staged; the

know each others' perspectives and disagree with them makes for considerable controversy within and among meetings. Friends are not unique in this regard; Protestant denominations have the same difficulties because of internal divisions.

³ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Orthodox. *Revised Marriage Rules Adopted by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting*, 1917, p. 3-4, 8, 10, 13.

"Merchant of Venus" came three years later. Although the school had always been coed, boys and girls now could eat meals together.⁴

At Orthodox Haverford College dances had been held off campus in Philadelphia or Wilmington; by 1921 they were permitted on campus. Because it was a male school, Haverford did not create the kind of detailed regulations for social life of either all female Bryn Mawr or coed Swarthmore. There were no hours when students had to be in the dorm or sign out sheets. Alcohol was outlawed; however, social life was regulated by an honor code to which all students pledged obedience and student government enforced compliance. Haverford men had to act like gentlemen at all times. The honor code, which remained in effect until the late 60s stated: "Any act which, if it became public, would damage the reputation of the student, the woman guest, or the college shall be deemed a violation of the Honor System." It was irrelevant whether the act became public. The term "any act" included sexual acts, but was not restricted to these.⁵

Before 1914, co-educational Swarthmore College forbade any private conversation between male and female students not held in parlors where chaperons were present. The hours when even talk was allowed were severely circumscribed, even between a brother and sister. By 1920 new rules permitted boys and girls during the afternoon the right to walk together on selected areas on campus, to canoe on the Crum and even to drive together in cars until 6 pm. Swarthmore created an honor code and male and female government associations which, with the advice of deans, created and enforced social regulations. The men recognized that a double standard was in effect; because only women had strict curfews, had to sign out, and obtain permission from their parents to ride with a male in a car. Males in the 1920s could smoke publicly; women could smoke in selected areas but never in public.⁶ In general, the general framework of regulations adopted in the aftermath of World War I would remain in place until the 1940s with some easing on times, i.e. bridge could be played in the parlours until midnight on Saturday. Marriage among students was so unthinkable that there was not even a rule for it.

The first open and positive discussion of sexuality in any Quaker pamphlet came in a 1924 pamphlet by a group of British Friends entitled "Marriage and Parenthood: The Problem of Birth Control." The pamphlet also was organized in a manner which would be followed by another more famous group of Friends forty years later in a pamphlet called "Towards a Quaker View of Sex." That is, neither pamphlet carried the imprimatur of a yearly meeting, but was authored by a group of British Friends. The first

⁴ Helen Hole, *Westtown Through the Years 1799–1942*. (Westtown Alumni Association: Westtown, PA., 1942), 329. Personal communication from Margaret Haviland.

⁵ The quote is from student regulations of the honor code 1949–50; the interpretation in 1964–5 restricted "any act" to sexual acts. Get the exact citation from Diana.

⁶ "Students' Handbook of Swarthmore College," 1911, 1915–16, 1922–23, 1930–21, 1940–1, 1945–46, 1952–53, 1965–6. These were issued under various names; after 1933 the same book had regulations for men and women.

was privately printed but could be bought at Friends' Bookshop. Both pamphlets grew out of a series of discussions called to deal with a problem. Both had a history section, a medical section, and then an advice section. Both also contained a bibliography and a summary of scientific literature as an appendix. One difference, in 1924 unlike 1963, the Quaker authors claimed neither medical nor sociological expertise. Still, the pamphlet proved popular, being reprinted by the Marriage Council of the two Philadelphia Yearly Meetings in 1943 with a bibliography adapted for American use.

The 1924 pamphlet advocated a qualified use of family planning as morally permissible with contraceptive devices described as leading to fewer emotional problems in marriage than either alternative: abstinence or the rhythm method. The authors proclaimed that sex should be seen as a part of God's creation designed to bind husband and wife in an emotional, physical and spiritual union. The pamphlet rejected the claim that sex was a taint and that the entire purpose of the sex act was procreation. The Friends opposed the belief that contraceptive devices would encourage promiscuity and were therefore immoral, arguing instead that promiscuity was immoral and the use of contraceptives neither added nor detracted from the immorality. The advantage of contraception in marriage was that there was no need for 10 or 12 children; 5 or 6 should be sufficient.

However, the group also insisted that there were dangers of a married couple using contraception, particularly if newly wed. It could make sex too important (an end in itself), lead to a devaluation of "self-control" in marriage, or overemphasis on the cult of the small family. The committee worried that advocating contraception could lead to family limitation as a way of preserving social status or allow the government to postpone needed reforms for the poor in education and housing.⁷

In Philadelphia, in 1936 the Religious Education Committees of the two yearly meetings and the young Friends published "The Meeting's Responsibility For Its Adolescents," a series of questions and bibliography designed for discussion groups, and included sections on vocations, home life, and worship. Under "Boy and Girl Relations" the pamphlet emphasized the necessity of "natural boy and girl contacts" at home, in play, in co-education school and First-day classes. The need to learn dancing, both formal and country, would break down the culture's artificial obsession upon sexuality. Obviously premarital sex was out of the question and not even mentioned, but "petting" was more ambiguously considered: "we must be careful to examine current practices and conventions with understanding and insight." A citation from a scientific book entitled the "Sex Life of Youth," did not clarify the meetings' position: "'the question can not be answered in any dogmatic way nor in any fashion which will be applicable to all cases.'"⁸ Friends also received suggestions on diversions for the unattractive boy and girl, particularly if he or she had crushes on persons of the same sex.

⁷ A Group of... Members of the Society of Friends, *Marriage and Parenthood: The Problem of Birth Control*. Privately printed, no date, ca. 1920s, pp. 4, 8, 10–12.

⁸ Education Committee, Philadelphia Yearly Meetings, "The Meeting's Responsibility For Its Adolescents" (Pendle Hill: Wallingford, PA, 1936), p. 10–11.

In 1932 in the aftermath of a divorce, the Orthodox Yearly Meeting created a committee on Marriage Relations to give advice on marriage and its problems, to educate the young people, and to accumulate data on the experiences of the "happily married." Its first task was to canvas all monthly meetings on the state of marriage. The resulting statistics showed between 1936-40 227 marriages, only 68 were endogamous; there were nineteen divorces; 4 when both were Friends or 4%; 15 with mixed marriages or 9%.⁹ The problem of mixed marriages and divorce would continue to perplex the committee, attended by members of both yearly meetings after 1940, and which in 1944 became a joint committee.¹⁰

III. 1945-1960s: Expert Advice

Concerned about the "dangers to family life and the decline in moral standards," London Yearly Meeting in 1946 appointed a commission on marriage difficulties. Of the 20 British Friends who signed the report, thirteen qualified as experts: medical doctors, psychiatrists, social workers, marriage counselors. After a conference for all Friends, the Yearly Meeting approved and published the report in 1949. The Marriage Council, now renamed the Family Relationships Committee of the two Philadelphia Yearly Meetings obtained several thousand copies, later asked for more, and distributed it to Friends as its official position at least through the early 1960s.¹¹

The pamphlet saw the weaknesses in marriage as a problem with apocalyptic dimensions. If the family were significantly weakened, "the whole structure of our society would crumble, and there would be no security for future generations."¹² Signs of future dangers were rising incidence of divorce and rapid increase of the numbers of first-born children being conceived before marriage. The cause of these dangers were:

1. lessening of religious background
2. lowering of personal moral standards
3. decline in belief in the necessity of permanence in marriage

Many of these changes had recently accelerated due to the social disruption of the war, but Friends argued for the primacy of more long term factors: too much sexual

⁹ Family Relations Committee, Miscellaneous Papers, ca. 1940 Quaker Collection, Haverford College. The papers of this committee are at Haverford. There are duplicates at Swarthmore until 1969. Unfortunately, the papers of this committee during the 1970s and 1980s were not turned over to the Yearly Meeting nor to the two Quaker collections and appear to have been destroyed.

¹⁰ In 1941 the Council issued "Marriage in the Religious Society of Friends", p.3; it was reissued in 1944 by both Yearly Meetings (Marriage Council of Orthodox and Social Service Committee of Hicksites). The pamphlet was essentially a how-to recounting the processes necessary for the meeting and the couple to do in order to have a Quaker marriage ceremony. The preface called "religion" the "good way of life" and insisted that "the Christian religion in its ethical point of view has elevated the place of the family and the value of human relations to supreme importance." This is the only discussion of religion in the 11 pages of the tract.

¹¹ "The Committee on Family Relationships" (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meetings, 1948) was a printed report of the work of the committee.

¹² "The Marriage Relationship: Report of a Commission appointed by direction of London Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), (London; Society of Friends, 1949), p. 12.

stimulation but too little knowledge of male and female sexuality and the best methods of family planning, the influence of alcohol, more freedom for women (welcomed as congruent with Quaker traditions but also dangerous), and the breakdown of parental control.

The tameness of the solution recommended seems incongruent with the seriousness of the issues, but reflects a frequent Quaker response when confronted with problem the meeting is powerless to resolve: i.e. stress education. Young people should learn about marriage as an emotional, physical, and spiritual partnership which should lead them to a more mature consideration of the proper reasons for marriage and more realistic expectation of the discipline required to build a long-term relationship.

The committee saw marriage not as a divine ordinance but as institution created in history to provide for basic human needs: an opportunity for love, "the miracle of creation" through children, satisfaction of "the sexual instinct in a setting which is socially acceptable," and "the greatest chance of achieving personal happiness." The pamphlet rejected the argument that sexual experimentation and casual sex were personal decisions that caused no harm. Instead, promiscuity before marriage was likely to cause lasting harm, particularly for the girl, and might lead to a proclivity to sexual relations after marriage—which would weaken the relationship and lead to divorce.

Yet there was one hedge: if the couple were in love, linked in deep relationship and engaged, "sexual intercourse falls naturally into its place as the physical expression of a much deeper unity, and we do not question its essential rightness." After all, not a ceremony but the quality of the relationship determined "rightness."¹³ Still, if a couple had reached this stage, they should get married and the ceremony gave the blessings of the church to an already existing deep relationship. In such a marriage, divorce would not be an option. Yet divorce did occur, and—although a "calamity," no couple should stay together for the sake of legality when spiritual, emotional and physical bonds were sundered.

I know of no American Friend who commented upon what should be seen as the pamphlet's instrumental views of marriage or pre-marital sex.¹⁴ Marriage here is not an ordinance instituted by God, a holy state, but an institution created by society for certain necessary functions. It endures by the weight of public opinion. The social scientists' structural-functional perspective dominated, though cushioned by the final conclusion

¹³ *Ibid.*, 13, 18. For family planning information, the committee referred readers to the 1926 pamphlet on family planning.

¹⁴ Sarah B. Leeds to Lovett Dewees, 9/28/1947 complained about Dewees' referring to marriages as "man made" and quoted "Faith and Practice" on "marriage as an *ordinance of God*." Miscellaneous Mss. Family Relationships Committee, Quaker Collection, Haverford. The 1950 New York Yearly Meeting, *Faith and Practice*, p. 40 termed marriage "as religious in nature, being a covenant made in the presence of God and not merely a civil contract." Philadelphia Yearly Meeting's *Faith and Practice* in 1950 and 1961, p. 25 regarded "marriage as a continuing religious sacrament."

recommending religious commitment and worship as tending for "greater stability in home-life."¹⁵

The Philadelphia Family Relations Committee did recognize the need for pamphlets stressing the spiritual sign of marriage; so they created a brief description of the Quaker wedding ceremonies; it was one folded sheet with a romantic picture of a Victorian Quaker wedding and a description of Friends' wedding procedures. Its main function was as a handout for non-Friends attending a Quaker marriage ceremony.¹⁶ In 1959 A second pamphlet in nine pages discussed "Engagement, Marriage, Parenthood." This tract sought to provide practical counsel at a time "the engaged couple walks on air in their mutual happiness and love." Friends advised against long engagements as "unnatural" and leading to strain - this indirect reference was the only mention of premarital sex. Instead, Friends stressed that the couple should be discussing finances, the "complications" of mixed marriages, and the qualities needed for a successful marriage and parenthood. Sex in marriage was "neither moral nor immoral" and, depending upon the couple, could be "the expression of a deep love or the casual satisfaction of an appetite." The hope was that for a loving couple "there will be no line of demarcation between the spiritual and the physical."¹⁷ The pamphlet assumed that the couple would want children but recommended family counseling and/or adoption in case of sterility.

During and after World War II the emphasis of the now renamed Family Relationships Committee changed to sex education, with the group hearing a report from Alfred Kinsey about his research in 1944. The reaction of one commentator to Kinsey was that the whole definition of what was normal sex would need to be rethought.¹⁸ However, the committee never endorsed this perspective. Instead, the committee was strongly in favor of sex education in Quaker and public schools because it believed that sex education would be used to strengthen traditional moral teachings. That is, educating young people about sex would stop ill-advised pre-marital liaisons and strengthen marriages by ending a repressive attitude to sexuality and at the same time allow birth control. So committee members visited Quaker colleges to conduct sex education courses (one informant said all students really learned was the proper names for sex organs) and also had special gatherings with teachers in Quaker secondary schools. The Council sought to educate overseers about the relation of physical to spiritual goals and created a library—though having a supply of books did not guarantee that they were read. The Council recognized the inability or unwillingness of overseers to deal with many complex personal issues. After using a variety of volunteer counselors, the yearly meeting in 1954 employed professional

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹⁶ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, "A Quaker Marriage," 1964; Family Relationships Committee, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, "Engagement, Marriage, Parenthood," Philadelphia, 1959.

¹⁷ Family Relationships Committee of PYM, "Engagement Marriage Parenthood", p. 8

¹⁸ "Human Sex Behavior: Notes on the Talk of Alfred C. Kinsey... Dec. 12, 1944; response of Dr. English (1945?); W. Edwin Collier to Dr. Dewees, May 22, 1945. Miscellaneous Mss. Family Relationships Committee, Quaker Collection, Haverford.

counselors—most of whom were not Friends. Counselors reported to the committee on the number of clients and the issues discussed. Friends without the ability to pay received free counseling; others were asked to contribute. The counseling service was a success, at least as judged by the number of those who used it.¹⁹

In their emphasis upon sex education as a way to strengthen marriage, liberal Friends drew upon the expertise of members who were professionals: the most important of whom were David Mace, Mary Calderone, Robert Blood, and Elise Boulding. All of these individuals gained a national or international reputation; in fact, outside of Richard Nixon, they may have been the most prominent Friends of the post-war era. All had M.D.s or Ph.Ds. Other prominent Friends active in promoting sex education were Eric Johnson, a teacher at Germantown Friends, and Dorothy T. Samuel, a former teacher and radio commentator.²⁰ All these individuals wrote and lectured extensively. They moved easily between being a Friend and being a scholar, but most of their books addressed the general public. Even when they were being secular, there was a strong moral or normative context to what they wrote and they had an almost missionary zeal in proselytizing the gospel of sex education. Though drawing upon scholarly research, their writings were not abstruse nor filled with jargon. To those who read their many books and articles, they did not appear as dry academics, but as wise men and women using scholarship to help people deal with immediate issues.

David R. Mace (1907-1990) was a Methodist minister turned Quaker who founded and served as executive director of the National Marriage Council of Great Britain and was a member of the London Yearly Meeting committee which wrote "The Marriage Relationship." He moved from Britain in 1949 to become a professor at Drew University and then at medical schools at the University of Pennsylvania and later at North Carolina. With his wife Vera, he served as executive director of the Association for Couples in Marriage Enrichment. Mace occupied a unique place among Friends because his thirty-three books (several co-authored with his wife) and many pamphlets appealed to both moderate evangelical Friends of FUM and liberal Friends of FGC.²¹ He

¹⁹ By 1959 there had been 74 clients; 44 women and 30 men. Subjects dealt with were 44 marriage, 10 parent-child, 11 personal problems, and 5 mentally ill. An evaluation of Friends by a retiring counselor was "Friends as a group have too many scruples, tend to a rigidity of personality, and are apt to suppress their emotions." By 1963 there had been 1,792 interviews for counseling. Family Relationships Committee, Minutes, 4/6/1959; 1/7/1963. Quaker Collection, Haverford.

²⁰ Johnson wrote several books about sex and also guides for teachers on educational programs in sex education including *Love and Sex in Plain Language* (1967), *Love and Sex and Growing Up* (1970) His books provide some indication of the content of Quaker courses on sex; Johnson taught sex education and English at Germantown Friends. Samuels wrote *Fun and Games in Marriage* (1973) and *Love, Liberation, and Marriage* (1976).

²¹ David R. Mace, *Getting Ready for Marriage* (1972); *The Christian Response to the Sexual Revolution* (1970); *Abortion: The Agonizing Decision* (1972); with Vera Mace, *We Can Have Better Marriages: If We Really Want Them* (1974) *How to Have a Happy Marriage* (1977). All these books were published by Abington. His earliest books were *Marriage: The Art of Lasting Happiness* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1952); and *Hebrew Marriage: A Sociological Study*. (London: Epworth Press, 1953).

and his wife Vera conducted marriage enrichment workshops for many groups of Friends and he addressed FGC and PYM on this subject.²²

In their writings the Maces made no secret that they were Friends, but their audience was not Quaker. Many of their books were published by Abington, a Methodist press, and used the language of liberal Protestants. For example, David Mace drew upon modern exegesis to demonstrate that the Biblical norms about procreation were a product of a specific social situation. He sought to return the Church from what he defined as a Greek inspired view of sex as evil to a more Hebraic understanding. Yet he also spoke as a social scientist, university professor, and president of professional associations in dealing with issues of marriage and family.

For Mace, silence about sex and a negative attitude towards sex caused emotional problems which could lead to repression and guilt and which brought a reaction resulting in pornography and casual sex. Open discussion about and education about sex could help bring about sexual fulfillment in marriage. He advocated family planning, but his discussion of abortion written in dialogue form sought to provide guidance for a woman debating an abortion but left the final decision to her. Mace never discussed whether he believed abortion either was or was not a moral option. Whatever his opinion on homosexuality, he did not discuss it in his books on how to achieve a happy marriage. As a social scientist Mace may have held radical views, but as an author he provided Christian self-help advice.

David Mace worked closely with another convinced Quaker, Dr. Mary Calderone. In 1953 Calderone, at age 50, became medical director of Planned Parenthood, advocating birth control which in the 1950s was still illegal in 40 states. She helped persuade the American Medical Association in 1964 to endorse physicians discussing information on birth control and to give birth control pills to all patients who needed them. In 1964 Calderone joined with Mace in creating the Sex Information and Education Council of the US (SIECUS) and became its executive director. Calderone became an apostle of sex education, traveling an estimated 50,000 miles a year speaking in schools, colleges, and church groups about the necessity of accurate information about sex.

Calderone advocated sexuality as an "integral part of health and education." Calderone argued that children were from infancy sexual beings, that old people like young people should enjoy sexual relations, that masturbation was a normal useful means for "relieving natural tension in a healthy and satisfying way." She insisted that sex was an integral part of God's creation and that "beyond the birds and bees, we need to enjoy sex." She became a strong defender of the right of a woman to an

²² David Mace, "Marriage as Vocation: An Invitation to Relationship-in Depth." The 1968 Rufus Jones Lecture. Religious Education Committee, FGC: Philadelphia, 1969. Reprinted 1970; "Marriage Enrichment Retreats: Story of a Quaker Project." Philadelphia: FGC, 1974?

abortion. Calderone joined with Eric Johnson in writing an instruction book for families on sexuality.²³

In retrospect what seems most striking about American Friends' views of sexuality in the 1950s is the emphasis upon the family and the assumption that sex education would not change traditional teachings about sex before marriage.²⁴ For example, Quaker Robert Blood of the University of Michigan was the author of influential textbooks on marriage and the family.²⁵ Blood wrote as a social scientist and neither Quakerism nor overt moralism was present in his texts. Blood mentioned male homosexuality only in passing, and—like Mary Calderone—stressed that it was caused by a dysfunctional family situation—normally an overly protective mother.

Blood cited statistics, some derived from the Kinsey report, about the frequency of and dangers of sex before marriage. Most premarital intercourse came when the couple was already engaged and even here there were dangers from guilt which might intensify after marriage and cause serious problems in the relationship. Blood cited several studies showing that illicit sex after marriage would almost always threaten the survival of the marriage. The primary inhibitor of sex before marriage was religion. He showed the existence of a double standard of behavior for men and women and the difficulties posed by religiously and racially mixed marriages. On abortion, Blood cited contrasting policies in other nations and the frequency of illegal abortions in the United States, but provided no discussion of the emerging controversy on the legitimacy of abortion.

My reading the major books that the Maces, Johnson, Calderone, and Blood produced before 1960 found almost no indication that they believed that the U.S. was on the verge of a major change in attitudes on premarital sex.

In 1960 as in 1950 the issues the Friends Family Relationships Committee addressed were prevention of divorce, family planning, sex education, and mixed marriages. It publicly endorsed family planning, saw the dangers in but sought to be tolerant of inter-religious and interracial marriage, but internal controversy stopped any statement about abortion as late as the 1980s.²⁶ The Committee emphasized that sex was an important part of marriage, and that marriage was a relationship with a spiritual

²³ David Mace, "Mary Steichen Calderone: Interpreter of Human Sexuality," in *Living in the Light: Some Quaker Pioneers of the 20th Century*. ed. Leonard S. Kenworthy. FGC and Quaker Publications: Kennett Square, PA, 1984 (75-87); *New York Times*, Obituaries, Sunday, Oct. 25, 1998, pp. 52. Mary S. Calderone and Eric W. Johnson, *The Family Book About Sexuality*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1981) She helped edit a book on abortion (1958) and was co-author of *Release From Sexual Tension* (1960) and two short tracts for Friends

²⁴ Elise Boulding, "Friends Testimonies in the Home," Philadelphia: Religious Education Committee of Friends General Conference, 1953.

²⁵ Robert O Blood, Jr., *Marriage* (New York: The Free Press, 1955, 1962), 117, 136, 144-5; Robert O Blood, Jr., *The Family* (New York: The Free Press, 1972), 566.

²⁶ Family Relationships Committee, 1944 and statement 2/10/67 on interracial marriage; on family planning, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Minute 38, 1962 and "Minute to Yearly Meeting of 1967 Regarding Family Planning," Misc. Papers, Family Relationships Committee.

dimension. When British Friends Home Service, published Harold Loukes' pamphlet on marriage - it was read and approved on both sides of the Atlantic—he wrote as not as a social scientist but as a Christian, seeking the will of God. His argument was traditional: marriage is God's "means of preparing us to know him." Masturbation as a child is healthy, but not as an adult. Restrictions on lust are good; sex should not be a toy but should reflect a total relationship. There should be no sex before marriage and monogamy after. Divorce was a tragedy, but the meeting should emphasize forgiveness and could sanction remarriage within the meeting. The family was designed for children and contraception as a way of limiting the number of children was needed but "if contraception is literally 'against conceiving', it merits all the suspicion it has received from Christian thought."²⁷

IV. The 1960s: Decade of Rapid Change

In 1963 a group a British Friends published a much more revolutionary statement, *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*. The statement came from the group of teachers, doctors, and psychiatrists who had formed as a working party with the intent of investigating society's treatment of homosexuality. Over a seven year period they became convinced that the Friends were neglecting to minister to an important subgroup of the society. Their pamphlet argued that homosexuality as an orientation and a practice was a legitimate form of sexuality, was no more or no less a sin than heterosexuality, and that gay men should not be persecuted because of their sexual orientation.

While the ostensible focus was homosexuality, the authors conducted a far-reaching critique of traditional Christian morality as negative and repressive. While insisting that they wished to uphold the family and oppose free love, permissiveness, and casual sex, the authors insisted that "love cannot be confined to a pattern." Neither pre-marital sex nor a triangle in marriage was necessarily immoral. There could be no legislation because "God can enter any relationship in which there is a measure of selfless love." So the practice of intimate relations outside of marriage—by single individuals, homosexuals, and by a married individual—was now declared to be acceptable morally.²⁸ The qualified Quaker language softened the new approach, but these often got lost in the press reaction. No wonder that one scholar termed the pamphlet a revolutionary document.²⁹

The pamphlet received considerable publicity in the British press and occasioned a vigorous debate in the London *Friend*.³⁰ In America, the tract was barely mentioned, at

²⁷ Harold Loukes, *Christian and Sex—A Quaker Comment* (London: Friends Home Service, 1962), 11, 18–19, 21, 27, 29.

²⁸ *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*, ed. Alastair Heron. London: Friends Home Service, 1963. Considering the closeness of time of Loukes pamphlet, I suspect that Friends Home Service published it as a counter to the controversy they foresaw coming from the Heron publication.

²⁹ Graham Heath, *The Illusory Freedom: The Intellectual Origins and Social Consequences of the "Sexual Revolution,"* London, William Heinemann, 1978, 41

³⁰ *The Friend*, Feb. 13, 1963; March 22, 1963; April 12, 1963; May 17, 577.

least by liberal Quakers. I am told that homosexuals welcomed it and it infuriated evangelical Quakers, but have not found documentary evidence to support these assertions. The review in *Friends Journal*, by Lawrence Miller, coupled it with the officially sanctioned Loukes' pamphlet, supported the openness of the discussion of sexuality, thought the discussion of homosexuality "excellent" and complained that the authors role as counselors had caused them to emphasize unduly "the problems of the relatively abnormal and unhappy person." Like other reviewers, Miller complained that the writing and organizations could have been better, but blamed even more the press for quotes out of context.³¹ At Pendle Hill, the tract was not openly displayed in the bookstore, but sold as it were under the counter. When one member of the Family Relations Council offered to have a series of discussions on the pamphlet at her home, the other members did not accept the invitation and the official records made no comment upon its content. The pamphlet was republished in America, but not by Quakers. In America undergoing an assassination of the President, a civil rights revolution, an intensification of the Cold War, and soon a major war in Vietnam, the time was not propitious for addressing the issue of the attitude of Friends to homosexuality. So far as I can tell, *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* first became important for liberal Friends in the 1970s when they began debating homosexuality.³²

Just when the sexual revolution of the 60s impacted Friends is difficult to determine. The Dean of Women at Swarthmore at the time said the introduction and widespread use of the contraceptive pill after 1960 changed young peoples' attitudes, but some faculty thought the change came very rapidly after 1967.³³ Teachers and deans at Friends boarding schools thought the shift came at the colleges in the early 60s; by 1967 it had filtered down to Westtown and George School. The director of Pendle Hill, who was directly involved in counseling students there, thought that there was no revolution in the 1960s, rather there had been a gradual erosion of traditional standards. The difference may be in part due to age differences in the people in the secondary schools, colleges, and Pendle Hill. Also Pendle Hill at this time was widely used as a retreat center for those putting their lives back in order after a divorce or breakdown. The director estimated that 50% of those who came had some kind of a gender/identity problem - which could be caused either by a heritage of sexual repression, ignorance, or sexual dysfunction. In 1964 counselors of the Young Friends noticed a change in the motivation of those attending conferences. So they scheduled a

³¹ Lawrence McK. Miller, *Friends Journal*, April 15, 1963, 174-5.

³² The pamphlet was praised by Dr. Charles R. Shift in a speech to the Family Relationships Committee at Pendle Hill in Nov., 1963, but the committee had great difficulty in getting anyone to publish the speech.

³³ Swarthmore's dean met in 1960 with deans at Earlham, Oberlin and at Reed. Swarthmore and Oberlin had just begun to notice a change in sexual mores; it had not yet arrived at Earlham; the dean at Reed said that her campus had a reputation for liberality and that sexual permissiveness had a long tradition there. The New York Times in an article Jan. 16, 1964 entitled "Changing Customs Bring Many Moral Questions to Campuses" discussed the great freedoms on campuses with regard to sex and drugs and noted that "the average American family does not allow its son or daughter to entertain the opposite sex in a bedroom." The article insisted that colleges "should not put themselves ahead of the times by promulgating a moral code that is out of line with present family and cultural standards."

workshop with the Family Relations Counsel seeking guidance on proper attitudes and strategies. The workshop's conclusion - that young Friends wanted more structure and guidance - makes me wonder who those in attendance represented. The consensus of those I interviewed was that the sexual revolution came first and built rapidly, but soon could not be separated from increasing use of drugs, the civil rights movement, the anti-war protests, women's liberation, and a general counter-cultural reaction against traditional authority and institutions, including the family, schools, churches, and moral standards. "Make love, not war" seemed to legitimate sexual freedom as a part of human liberation.

Friends looked to the Family Relations Committee to provide guidance and it looked to the Quaker sex experts. The Committee did a survey to find the impact of its previous emphasis upon education. It found that half of the meetings had no books about sexuality, marriage and Christian ethics; two had only 1 book.³⁴ Sex was not discussed in meetings for worship and there was no discussion of it in either 1955 or 1961 PYM *Faith and Practice*. Overseers felt uncomfortable with the subject in providing oversight to marriages. If there were problems, couples were referred to the Yearly Meeting's professional counselors. The committee sought to provide workshops for meetings, which some Friends reluctantly agreed to attend, sponsored sessions at Friends General Conference, and had special conferences and lectures at Pendle Hill. Interest groups on sexuality became a constant feature of FGC summer gatherings. Mace, Mary Calderone, Dorothy Samuel, Emily Mudd and others lectured, led retreats at Pendle Hill and elsewhere on sexuality and marriage counseling, teaching Friends how to conduct marriage enrichment weekends. The Family Relations Committee published Mace's pamphlet on the same subject. Still, Friends did not issue statements showing shifts in their view of sexuality until the early seventies, and even then traditional views prevailed, at least in the discipline.³⁵

The three Philadelphia Quaker colleges and Pendle Hill had long had policies to deal with drugs and premarital sex.³⁶ All these institutions were at this time small enough that administrators knew personally the students and all the interviewees said that deans interpreted the rules on an individual basis and with considerable sympathy. All had a long tradition of involving students in the formulating and enforcing social regulations in consultation with deans and faculty. Swarthmore had regulations about when boys and girls could be in each others' rooms: only at special times like

³⁴ Family Relationships Committee, Minutes, May 3, 1965.

³⁵ Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, *Faith and Practice* (1972), 21-22. After recognizing the goodness of sexuality, the meeting declared: "Friends have believed that casual or promiscuous sexual relations are wrong. Friends know that such relations are widely practiced today, often quite openly; but they have not changed their belief. Self-discipline is an important factor of life....A story told by Mary Hoxie Jones is that the committee did not know where to put the section on sexuality; finally, they placed it between the sections on family and recreation!"

³⁶ Whether Bryn Mawr should be considered a Quaker college is debatable. It did not identify itself as such and students who were there in the 60s deny that it was or that Quakerism contributed to the way it handled social/moral issues. Still, Bryn Mawr was closely linked with Haverford.

Sunday afternoons and before a dance; even then the door had to be open at least 6 inches and there were student proctors who walked the halls. Haverford and Bryn Mawr allowed boys and girls to be in rooms until 2 am, but no member of the opposite sex was allowed in a room from 2 am until 7:30 am. At Haverford when girls were in the dorm, males and females had to either stand or remain seated with feet on the floor, but there was no attempt to enforce this regulation. An interpretation of the honor code in 1964-65 specified that only "acts of a sexual nature" counted as "disrespect for a woman."³⁷ Haverford students before Bryn Mawr's May Day ceremony regularly did some prank. The dean announced to the boys that if they were arrested and thrown in jail, then "at least, I will know where you are." He admitted that deans at Bryn Mawr did not always have such a tolerant attitude of Haverford mischief. Haverford's honor code remained in effect, and social problems (like alcohol and drugs) often came to the attention of the dean only when they impacted academic performance.

At Swarthmore if students wished to marry, one of them would have to drop out of college. At Bryn Mawr a student who became pregnant would have to leave school. If she had the baby and left it with her parents, she could return to school and live in the dorms. Occasionally married students whose husbands were absent (as in World War II) lived in the dorms. Married students living off campus continued to attend classes, though most of these were in graduate school.

The tendency at Swarthmore during the 1960s was to tighten social regulations. After an article in *Life* magazine praised Swarthmore academic rigor but noted the sloppy dress, President Courtney Smith in a collection address in 1961 called for a dress code. With what appears to be general approbation from students, faculty, parents and the board, Swarthmore initiated a dress code. Dinner dress for males was coats and ties and for women was dresses or skirts. Any students who came to dinner in sandals without socks would be barred. Concerts required coats and ties with shirts tucked in. Those who violated such regulations had to do labor: on the grounds for males and in the library for females.³⁸ The student judiciary willingly enforced these regulations. When on one occasion, the judiciary complained about the rules, a dean rebuked the members—arguing that the judiciary was not a policy making body and discussion could be done elsewhere. Swarthmore cared about its reputation for training gentlemen and lady scholars.

Even before the 1960s there were gaps in the social regulations that make me wonder if the purpose was to provide a socially respectable environment and to reassure parents that the college did provide supervision but which would not unduly restrict students. For example, Haverford's honor code applied only to the campus; Bryn Mawr students on weekends could be off campus with a boy until 3 am. Swarthmore

³⁷ Haverford College, Student Handbook, 1964-65, 71-72.

³⁸ "To all Students" July 14, 1961; and response from Student Council and Nov. 4, 1962; "Memorandum Concerning Dress in the Sharpless Dining Hall," Sept., 1966; Student Affairs Committee Meetings, Presidential Papers, Courtney, 1955-1969; Board of Managers, Student Life Committee; Student Judiciary Committee. Friends Historical Library.

allowed some students to live off campus where the dorm restrictions did not apply. The colleges were well aware that violations could easily take place even on campus. For example, at Swarthmore when students asked to increase the amount of time they could be in each others' rooms on Sunday afternoon by fifteen minutes, the dean refused. When a boy complained that there was nothing that could be done in two hours that another fifteen minutes would change, the dean replied "but they could do it twice."³⁹ At all three colleges students helped make and enforce most rules and they applied them with a sense of social responsibility. And the faculty agreed. For example, at Swarthmore a senior who had passed his honors exam with High Honors spent senior week living with a freshman girl in a dorm. Her parents called the college because they didn't know where she was. A search discovered the two. The faculty, which voted all degrees individually at Swarthmore, debated the appropriate punishment. The girl was expelled; the faculty determined that since outside examiners had awarded the grades to the young man, they could not rescind it. However, the young man could not graduate with his class and would have to wait a year.

For the presidents, deans, some faculty and many but not all students, upholding moral standards were important. Most faculty believed that colleges like the wider society had rules. The rules were important, even if the rationale for them was questionable, and they should be obeyed. Colleges had an obligation to promote high ethical standards not just in academic work but in social life.

The new attitude in the late 60s was that students openly defied the rules and the faculty and administrators decided they would not be enforcers. During the fifties having premarital sex on campus was grounds for expulsion, but by the early 60s faculty members on Swarthmore's judiciary committee said that burden of proof was so high that virtually no one was convicted i.e. just being in a boy's room at odd hours was not sufficient. However, for lesser offenses like violations of parietals the Student Life Committee applied penalties like probation and work on the college grounds. A female student was caught in a boys room at an inappropriate time. The penalty was working so many hours on the campus grounds. Earlier students so penalized took their work hours where they would not be noticed. But this young woman scheduled her hours

³⁹ This dean was strict in enforcement of rules out of a sense of moral obligation; yet she also sought to help students. Years later it was discovered that on occasion she had arranged for abortions for students. She accompanied the students, held their hands during the procedure, and paid the fees. Such students were not expelled. Yet the policy was not consistent. Once in the early 60s a student had an abortion which was botched and she was in danger of bleeding to death. The police summoned the dean of women to give permission for blood transfusions in the hospital. She persuaded the student to call her parents and get their permission. In this case, because the illegal abortion had become public, the woman student was expelled, but the dean entered no complaint upon her record and obtained her transfer to the University of Pennsylvania. The boy, who came from a poor family, was also a senior and wished to go to medical school. The dean of men called medical schools and asked if they would refuse admission if Swarthmore expelled a male student under circumstances. When they said they would refuse, the male was allowed to graduate. For the President of Swarthmore, the issue was the publicity and the involving of the police after what was at the time an illegal action. The dean at Bryn Mawr at the time said her school would have followed the same policy as Swarthmore.

where she would have maximum publicity, making herself a heroine against college regulations. When the deans at Swarthmore sought to sponsor a symposium on sexuality, the students did not attend - because they concluded correctly that the administration was trying to influence their sexual behavior.

Enforcement of regulations on the young broke down after 1967; all three colleges endured sit-ins, drugs, and students' sexual permissiveness. The result was the end of in loco parentis. At Swarthmore, the faculty proposed ending parietals in 1967; the board refused citing the Quaker traditions of the college. In 1970 the college asked parents if it should continue to act in loco parentis. The parents said they trusted their children and the college repudiated parietals. By 1974 there were co-ed dorms and within a few years non-coed dorms were the exception. Drug use was not condoned, but could not be stopped. Any student caught selling drugs, however, would be expelled.⁴⁰ The same pattern prevailed at Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Earlham.⁴¹ All four schools stopped regulating consensual sex, but until recently they did not allow a boy and a girl to sign up for the same room or apartments.

The Quaker boarding schools had strict regulations which they did not drop. At George School before the 60s students using drugs or engaged in or found in an inappropriate place (i.e. a boy in a girl's room at 1 am) would be expelled by a faculty committee. At Westtown, in 1947 when a group of boys and girls were caught having a party on the grounds after hours, they were expelled. When the governing committee complained (some of their children were involved), the headmaster and faculty met again and confirmed the judgment. The same basic policy remained in effect through the 1950s. After 1965 the boarding schools faced the same problems as the colleges; approving of student agitation about race and the war, but disliking the extension of protest to open violation of rules. In 1968 the headmaster of Westtown wrote the school committee that coeducational boarding schools had become an increasing difficult proposition because of the decline in civility and use of drugs.⁴² The main change at

⁴⁰ One non-Quaker tenured faculty member at Swarthmore had a party in a college-owned house attended by faculty and students where pot was available and all received glasses of champagne. Attendees practiced touch therapy and there was a sort of tent to which couples could retreat for private acts. At times in the 1950s single male faculty dated students; some even lived with them. While there were private remonstrances from fellow faculty members (rejected by the male), the college officially did nothing. The faculty during the 1970s abolished "moral turpitude" as grounds for dismissal under the rationale that moral turpitude was too vague and unprofessional conduct was more clear!

⁴¹ After 1965 when drugs became an issue, the deans at Haverford had first to educate themselves (and parents) about the effects of different drugs. The Honor Code had no policy on the issue. Also this was a time when Timothy Leary advocated using LSD to gain a kind of religious high. The dean said the values of the Society of Friends played a major role in how decisions on social policy were made at Haverford. Both faculty and deans sought in disciplinary cases to respect the individuals, consider the consequences of actions, rescue the student rather than stand in judgment, and understand the motivations. I don't know whether Haverford students caught in violations of the honor code thought these principles were consistently applied.

⁴² At Westtown, the policy on drugs until 1994 was expulsion. Now a student is suspended for two weeks and must undergo psychiatric counseling for the extent of drug use. If readmitted, the student must submit to random drug tests. There is a Faculty Resource Group which deals with students suspected of drug use. Drug education is also a part of the curriculum.

George School was to create a joint faculty-student committee to administer discipline. The school decided that it did not wish to investigate or to establish proof what students were doing sexually. So if a boy and girl were together after curfew in an inappropriate place, this would be sufficient for disciplinary action. One offense would bring counseling; two would bring expulsion.

Pendle Hill had never had parietals and relied upon the good judgment of the students. It retained its policy of zero tolerance for the use or selling of drugs. However, it did not attempt to enforce regulations on sex, except when some individuals acted as sexual predators attempting to seduce as many students as possible. These were expelled. Normally, the director attempted to interact with as many students as possible on a confidential basis and to have frank but non-judgmental discussions about sex. When asked why the stringent policy on drugs as contrasted with that on sex, the director replied: "sex was not used as a shortcut to spirituality."⁴³

The director may have been wrong. Some of the Quakers who viewed freeing sex from repressive morality as a liberation, a celebration of God's creation, believed it was better to err on the side of permissiveness. One staff member at Pendle Hill became an advocate of touch therapy. Touching one another in many places, perhaps even engaging in sexual intercourse, was seen as freeing from hang-ups. The director knew of no examples of open marriage at Pendle Hill before he left in 1970. Other informants have noted that a male staff member at Pendle Hill had relationships with a number of women students with whom he counseled. Moreover, in various Quaker movements and communes including Backbenchers, the New Swarthmoor movement, and Movement for a new Society bisexuality, open marriage, and various forms of non-exclusive attachment were practiced. At New Swarthmoor, if a man and woman wished to become sexually involved, they might call their housemates or friends together to participate in a committee of clearness. One task was to make sure the relationship would be non-exploitive. In general the infatuation with open marriage did not last long, because the participants concluded that the practice caused too much emotional pain. A lecturer at New England Yearly Meeting, told of washing dishes at a Quaker retreat with two other Friends. One man said he had persuaded his reluctant fifteen year old daughter to go on the pill so that she could become sexually active and liberated. The other dishwasher became so upset by this announcement that he had left the room.⁴⁴ When the Young Quakes met in Arch Street meeting house, no questions were raised when unmarried boys and girls shared sleeping bags. In their quest to liberate sexuality from the dead hand of moralism, some Friends (I have no idea how many) sought to "eroticize" all of life by advocating masturbation, touching, and multiple

⁴³ Interview with Dan Wilson. Other information is provided in his memoir, "The Spirit of Pendle Hill," 1994. Copy at Friends Library, Swarthmore.

⁴⁴ Gordon Browne, Jr., "On Being a Peculiar People," Speech at New England Yearly Meeting, 1982. Browne told of a male and female student at a Quaker school being expelled after being discovered having intercourse. When parents protested to the school committee, they informed the headmaster that his actions were "hasty, unwise, and unwarranted."

partners.⁴⁵ In theory at least, not casual but caring sex was the operative objective. The issue for those Friends critical of traditional moral attitudes was how to make sure sexual liberation was governed by a loving care which did not exploit others.

David Mace and Mary Calderone sought to interpret the meaning of the sexual revolution for Friends. Mace in a 1970 book entitled *The Christian Response to the Sexual Revolution* argued that the sexual revolution was in attitude and that the attitude change was catching up to earlier practice. The revolution was a positive development: the repudiation of negative moralism and repression and an embrace of freedom. It was essentially over and Christians would have to live with consequences. Some Christians still professed traditional moral attitudes, others accepted divorce, and a third group embraced permissiveness. Christians needed a new social ethic based on "fundamental principles":

The first is that gross exploitation of one person by another for sexual purposes cannot be tolerated, or no one is secure. The second is that sexual behavior that offends the community's sense of propriety and good taste must not be flaunted publicly. The third is that men and women must assume responsibility for the children born as a result of their sexual unions.⁴⁶

Note two assumptions in Mace's formulation. The first is that exploitation must be "gross." Second, that moral rules have changed into "the community's sense of propriety and good taste." Yet the sexual revolution meant that there was no long a unified community to agree either on definitions of exploitation or good taste. In fact, many of the revolutionaries of the 1960s had deliberately flaunted good taste.

Mace endorsed the sexual revolution as providing an opportunity to create a new Christian ethic of sexuality, one that would divorce the link between sex and sin. The new ethic would not evaluate sex acts as right or wrong in themselves but as to whether it had "a positive or negative effect upon the quality of the relationship", and was "permissiveness with affection." Mace identified contextual morality with the teachings of Jesus. Even if this new ethic were not satisfactory, the church was no longer in a position to dictate to the general society on the subject. He endorsed as a correct Christian attitude, the words of a man and woman he counseled who prayed each time before intercourse, "For what we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful."⁴⁷

Mary Calderone's 1973 lecture to Friends General Conference echoed themes similar to Mace. Good riddance to the traditional moral standards which had been so

⁴⁵ Gerre Goodman, George Lakey, Judy Lashof, Erika Thorne, *No Turning Back: Lesbian and Gay Liberation for the 80s*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1983), p. 90–1, 100, 116, 121–2. While written for lesbians and gays, the book's prescriptions were intended to revolutionize the wider society.

⁴⁶ David R. Mace, *The Christian Response to the Sexual Revolution* (Nashville, TN: Abington, 1970), 88,92, 98.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 114, 117, 133.,

destructive to a healthy sexuality. Since "sexuality is an innate part of the human beings, then there surely be that of God in human sexuality." She claimed to be speaking as a "neutral scientist" in outlining the stages of human sexual development and the increasing redefinition of marriage. "The marriage *ceremony* is increasingly looked upon as a literally moveable feast in the life span or a given relationship, to be elected or not elected according to the value of the relationship itself, rather than a pass conferred by society to mutual sex experiences..."⁴⁸ Eroticism was a part of human nature which the young people were exercising for "reproduction? Obviously. For lusty pleasure? Unquestionably? For deep, mutual passion? Hopefully. For tenderness and caring, for fun and laughter, for companionship, for communication? A thousand times yes. To bring us closer to God?" Here she might have paused before proclaiming: "If an affirmative relationship with another person can do this, sex may or may not be a part of it." Calderone was not a reborn seventeenth-ranter, however. The relationship of the people rather than the sex act could bring one close to God. If the relationship did this, Jesus would have approved.⁴⁹ This was the new morality Calderone endorsed, but she was careful to insist that if sex could be "sacramental" it could also be "frivolous" and Friends should not deny "my neighbor's right to his or her own sexual life style."

The Quaker colleges had already arrived at Calderone's position. They would not judge nor deny students the right to "his or her own sexual life style," but it had to be consensual sex—not date rape. Their focus would be on sexual harassment and in the 1990s they would draw up elaborate codes of permissible behavior for dates.⁵⁰ They took their orientation not from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting or the Society of Friends, but the policies of other liberal art colleges. Haverford became co-ed and Bryn Mawr had co-ed dorms; so all three became in social regulations more alike.

However, Mace was wrong in 1970 in asserting that the sexual revolution was over. Instead, the issue which would face American Friends in the 1970s was what had perplexed British Friends in their study group from 1957 to 1963: homosexuality. The liberal Quakers response affirming the legitimacy of homosexuality as both inclination and acts could come more easily because they had already decided that marriage was a social institution, not a divine ordinance. Sex should be an aspect of a deep relationship of caring and love and could be valued the same whether before or during marriage.⁵¹ In a pamphlet issued by the Family Relations Committee in 1980 as a guide

⁴⁸ Mary Calderone, *Human Sexuality and the Quaker Conscience*. Philadelphia: Friends General Conference: 1973, 1, 8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁰ It could be argued that these codes, drawn up to prevent the institution from being sued, showed the impossibility of divorcing sexuality from morality. The codes on date rape demand that the sex be consensual i.e. using alcohol or drugs as an aid to seduction is outlawed; the sexual harassment codes protect minority rights and also require that a hierarchical relation should not be abused.

⁵¹ New England Yearly Meeting began in 1972 to create working papers on family life, mainly dealing with issues of divorce. The first draft must have been controversial, because it took workshops, conferences and two more drafts before the final statement was published as "Living with Oneself and Others: Working Papers on Aspects of Family Life", 1978. The essence of the document is a series of queries directed at individuals and meetings to be used before, during, and if the marriage breaks down, and remarriage.

to clearness committees, Elizabeth Watson made explicit that "Caring determines whether a relationship is right or wrong...Meetings should also find ways to be supportive of couples who live together in love, whether legally or not, and this includes couples of the same sexes well as those of different sexes."⁵²

V. Gay and Lesbian Relationships

In the section on the family, the PYM 1997 discipline for the first time recognized the legitimacy of same sex relationships. This was a major revolution. Through the 1950s liberal Friends preferred neither to think about nor to discuss homosexuality. For example, Bayard Rustin, a birthright Quaker and a leader in the peace and civil rights movements, an employee of the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the AFSC, was a close associate of A.J. Muste, an esteemed radical pacifist who had, beginning in the 1920s, taught Friends the value of demonstrations and civil disobedience. Rustin was openly gay, a fact known by many Friends who continued to feature him as a speaker at FGC conferences. However, after he was arrested in San Francisco in 1952 and his homosexuality was publicized, Muste and the AFSC terminated contacts with Rustin, believing that his behavior had discredited the peace movement.

A pattern of silence and looking the other way remained the norm for Quaker institutions. There were male students at Swarthmore in the 1940s that other students thought were gay; when a woman student complained to a dean that another female had made a pass at her, the dean suggested that the first student was imagining things. There were also faculty not just at three colleges but at Quaker boarding schools who fellow faculty thought might have been gay or lesbian. So long as there was nothing public and no involvement of students the schools took no notice.⁵³ None of my

Some Friends feared that the focus on divorce would encourage more separations. Most of the queries seem rather conservative—i.e. could have been published during the 1950s. Only in the discussion of single person's sexuality does the influence of the 60's appear: "Sexual continence is accepted by some as the only way: others find this impossible. Most want sexual relationships to be based on affection, tenderness, and mutual interests, and which may lead to committed partnership or marriage. Most are, or want to be monogamous: others prefer non-exclusive relationships." p.38. Homosexuality is not mentioned. The generally conservative nature of the pamphlet, as compared with the discussions of the Family Relations Committee, shows how difficult it is to generalize about the beliefs and practices of Friends on marriage, sexuality, and divorce.

⁵² Elizabeth Watson, "Clearness for Marriage," PYM Family Relations Committee, 1980, 4, 8. That same year Eric Johnson gave an address at FGC entitled "What is Sexual Morality" as a guide to Friends about sexuality, particularly as related to teenagers. He wanted Friends to unlearn 1. that sex and genitals are the same; 2. most popular information about sex; 3. that sex was the "best thing" and therefore you should be in a hurry to get a lot of it; 4. that sex was either "an orgy or a sacrament;" 5. that you "could have sex without human consequences;" 6. that you can "prove yourself by sex;" 7. that sex is "natural" and not learned; 8. and that it was "okay" to get carried away by passion and to ignore responsibility. A sexual ethic would involve information, responsibility, control, consideration, and communication. Johnson refrained from saying the adolescent, pre-engagement, or sex outside of marriage was right or wrong. He also insisted that there was no distinctive Quaker ethic about sex. Johnson did not use any specific religious language; in fact he felt uncomfortable about using the term God. Johnson's speech was issued in a 12 page mimeograph, but with no Quaker agency taking responsibility.

⁵³ There was a case at Swarthmore involving a librarian, but he was dismissed so quickly that my informants could not be sure it involved a homosexual approach to a student. There was also a famous historian barred from using the collections of Swarthmore, Haverford, and the Historical Society of

interviewees at any of the Quaker colleges or schools could recall a judicial case involving gay or lesbian students. When in the early 60s Swarthmore's dean asked a faculty member whether one of his female students was a lesbian, he replied that the thought had never occurred to him. At the time he wasn't even sure just what a lesbian was. No one could remember any cases of verbal harassment of boys or girls suspected of being gay or lesbian. Until I interviewed a dean, I thought that Swarthmore was a haven of tolerance. Then I learned that the policy which remained in effect throughout the 1960s was automatic expulsion for any male or female student engaged in a homosexual act. Evidently the President made this decision and no records would be kept. I do not know whether similar policies were followed at other Quaker colleges and boarding schools.

Traditionally, Friends, like other churches, insisted that the Bible in the Ten Commandments and elsewhere provided a summary of the moral law, a law used to condemn homosexuality. However, the authors of *Towards a Quaker View of Sex* summarized briefly the conclusions of several scholars who argued that a careful exegesis of the passages that the church had relied upon to condemn homosexuality were based either upon a holiness code in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, whose other prescriptions no one took seriously, or rested upon an extrapolation from Paul (or pseudo-Paul) that had more relevance to first century temple prostitution than modern life. At the very least, scholars showed that there were several alternative interpretations of the Scripture verses on homosexuality. So to declare the immorality of homosexuality based on a few verses of the Bible was a simplistic exegesis based on bad scholarship.

For liberal Friends, the Bible was a guide for spiritual life, but it was a product of history and many of its strictures were obsolete. The women's liberation movement had long complained about patriarchal language in the Bible and the church and claimed that traditional morality had camouflaged oppression of half of the population.⁵⁴ Friends had already accepted the legitimacy of women's protest and sought to create a more inclusive language, referring to a Mother-Father God or Sophia. In addition, most liberal Friends by the 1970s had only a superficial knowledge of the Bible and the few surviving biblical scholars like Henry Cadbury and Alexander Purdy, now old men, had not written on homosexuality. So unlike the continuing discussion of scriptural passages on homosexuality in other denominations and even among evangelical and fundamentalist Friends, the discussion on homosexuality among FGC Friends did not rely upon biblical exegesis. The only liberal Quaker contribution to this debate was a pamphlet by Walter Barnett, published in 1979 which discussed the biblical view in fourteen pages and which had no footnotes, but a good bibliography.⁵⁵ His exegesis

Pennsylvania. No one seems to be sure whether this was because he was a thief of manuscripts or actively seeking sexual partners. His relatives informed me that they already knew he was a thief. At Westtown there were young gay faculty whose contracts were not renewed; if their homosexuality was a cause, it was not made public.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Watson, "Sexuality A Part of Wholeness," Philadelphia: Family Relations Committee, 1982

⁵⁵ Walter Barnett, *Homosexuality and the Bible: An Interpretation*. Pendle Hill Pamphlet #226 Lebanon, PA: Sowers, 1979. The pamphlet was issued in an edition of 3000 copies.

provided a rationale for liberal Friends to ignore the Bible but was not of a quality likely to persuade evangelical opponents who thought all homosexual acts sinful—although careful study of the books in the bibliography could have changed opinions.

Instead, the initial discussion was on equal rights. Gay and lesbian Friends who had been active in civil rights and anti-Vietnamese War protests realized that the treatment of gays was another form of discrimination. Homophobia led to an oppressive society that denied civil liberties. With the subject presented as an equal rights issue, it was easier for Friends to conclude that these men and women had to live in fear and were openly discriminated against. As consenting adults, they had a right to privacy. So initially Friends finessed the issues of whether homosexual acts were moral or whether persons became gay or lesbians because of biology or environment or could or should be converted to being straight.

Friends began to discuss openly homosexuality around 1970 at a Conference on Sexuality of the New Swarthmore movement, in articles in the *Friends Journal* written by gays using pseudonyms, and in young men's declaring that they were gay in meetings for worship. Several of these men formed a Committee of Concern in 1970. An ad which appeared in the *Journal* and *New Republic* brought a hundred responses. At the FGC Ithaca conference in 1972 gay Friends roomed in a dorm reserved for old folks (away from children) and had their own worship sharing groups.

The executive committee planning the 1972 conference had agreed that unmarried couples could be housed together because Friends had no basis to judge who was married and who was not. This policy, showing the impact of the changes of the 1960s, was highly controversial and was rescinded after a threshing session of the executive committee.⁵⁶ Mixed housing would be provided only for married couples. By 1975 the executive committee recommended that Friends be "sensitive" in making roommate selections, but that attenders' preference would be granted. The high schoolers had separate dorms for girls and boys. College age students were treated as adults.

Gay and lesbian Friends met as a committee of concern in the FGC gathering in 1972.⁵⁷ They adopted two strategies to bring their plight to the attention of meetings who might have preferred for the whole subject to go away. First, important Friends such as a pastor of the Friends Meeting in Minneapolis and a former clerk of New England Yearly Meeting "came out", that is, declared publicly that they were homosexuals. London Yearly Meeting's Social Responsibility Council published David

⁵⁶ The only record of the perspective of opponents I can find was in a letter in 1984 which argued that the executive committee did not have the authority to change a basic Quaker testimony on marriage or on the legitimacy of gay and lesbian relationships without the consent of the general body of Friends. Herbert N. Lape, Sept. 1, 1984. The letter was discussed in a PYM winter conference in Feb. 1985 where only a minority supported Lape's position. "Civil Rights of Homosexuals, Feb. 15, 1985," Miscellaneous Papers, FLGC, Swarthmore College

⁵⁷ In 1975 the committee changed its name to Friends Committee for Gay Concerned; it was broadened again in 1978 to friends for Lesbian and Gay Concerns or FLGC. In 1979 it organized itself with clerks.

Blamires, *Homosexuality from the Inside* which depicted the emotional cost of being homosexual and being subjected to the repression of society. Blamires argued that homosexuality was a natural inclination of a minority which, like heterosexuality, was part of the core being of a person's make up and was not inherently evil.⁵⁸ So homosexuality was presented to Friends not an abstract problem but a human dilemma. FLGC also sought to send its members to individual meetings to hold workshops. They wrote to Quaker schools, yearly meetings, and Quaker organizations asking for policy statements. The alternatives for Friends became simple: do we drive these people away and, in essence, deny that they are children of God, or do we include them and learn to deal with their definition of sexuality?

Elizabeth Watson, a weighty and esteemed Friend who became an advocate for the FLGC, told me she began attending the worship periods sponsored by the Friends for Gay Concerns at FGC because she found the larger services too often became "popcorn" meetings. She and others found the gays had a depth of spirituality, perhaps occasioned by their sense of suffering, that was authentic. Friends soon realized that there were a substantial number of gay and lesbians attending FGC, and that they liked and admired them.

Liberal Friends always took pride in their sense of inclusiveness, and the decision to provide a supportive environment came with what for Friends was surprising speed. In 1972, after Quaker Mary Calderone lectured, New York Yearly Meeting endorsed equal civil rights for gay and lesbians. Between 1972-1974, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Illinois, and Pacific Yearly Meeting passed minutes affirming civil rights for homosexuals.⁵⁹ Such decisions could be approved by those who saw homosexual sexual relations as sex outside of marriage an immoral, because the issue was a matter of laws persecuting Americans. Heterosexuals and homosexuals deserved the same right not to have private sexual acts declared illegal.

In 1973 PYM authorized an ad hoc Committee of Gay and Lesbian Concerns which became a standing committee in 1976.⁶⁰ In 1974 Young Friends of North America issued a declaration calling for the "equality of All persons before the Eternal in matters Spiritual regardless of their sexual orientation." In 1975, when the FLGC began issuing a newsletter, FGC had decided that gay couples could room together and pay the same lower room rate as married couples; the next year it scheduled the first discussion group. In the fall of 1975 four AFSC staffers publicly announced they were gay; in 1978 eighteen more came out and received a letter of support from 250 people in the organization. This letter called the treatment of homosexuals a civil rights issue and

⁵⁸ David Blamires, "Homosexuality from the Inside," (London: Society Responsibility Council of the Religious Society of Friends, 1973).

⁵⁹ Bruce Grimes and Geoffrey Kaiser, "Gay Rights Movement in the Religious Society of Friends," Misc. Papers, FCGL.

⁶⁰ The official name was Committee on the Civil Rights of Homosexuals and endured until 1987. The sub-committee on Homosexuality of the Family Relations Committee continued.

demanded that within five years there be on all AFSC committees 20% Third World people, 40% women, and a gay presence.⁶¹

George Lakey became a prominent defender of homosexuality, declaring his bisexuality in a plenary session of FGC in 1974 attended by nearly 1500. The impact was greater because George Lakey an influential Friends and AFSC staff member was married with children. His coming out was done with the approval of his wife. The impact was greater because a married practicing bisexual male would stretch the definition of a non-traditional marriage. Lakey linked homophobia and patriarchy with the oppression of women and a macho culture legitimating violence. As an advocate for non-violent revolution, Lakey in his person and writings joined a defense of the peace testimony with openness about sexuality. He insisted that sex was not only "fun" but had a "spiritual dimension". "Eros is one way of connecting with Agape," with both forms of love needed to create a "community of awareness." Lakey insisted that even though American culture often emphasized physical love to the exclusion of other means, it could become a method of communion and "joyous physical caring."⁶²

What seems in retrospect liberal Friends rather easy change of policy on equal rights stands in sharp contrast to a more cautious or hostile response from evangelical and fundamentalist Friends. Becoming a public debate at the 1977 Conference of Friends in the Americas in Wichita, Kansas, a controversy over the morality of homosexuality, also involving biblical authority, has embittered relations between FGC and evangelical Friends and occasioned discussions in liberal meetings. Within FUM whose meetings encompass many varieties of Quakers, the debate has been particularly sharp and almost led to California Yearly Meeting's cancelling its invitation to host the Triennial Meeting in 1984 if homosexuality were even discussed.⁶³ In the early 1980s various evangelical groups connected to FUM and FGC failed to change what they saw as the permissive policies on homosexuality in FGC's executive committee. In the 1990's the hostility of holiness-evangelistic Friends to what they saw as non-Christian emphases and support for homosexuality by Quakers in Baltimore, New York and New England Yearly Meetings led to a call for realignment of meetings. The purpose of the realignment would be to cut contacts between those meetings associated with both FUM and FGC and the "real" Christians in FUM.

Many Friends who believe practicing homosexuality is immoral now believe in no discrimination and equal rights for gays and straights. Even today the Friends

⁶¹ Staff Concerns Committee, American Friends Service Committee, "Statement of Support and solidarity for gay people," Dec., 1975, Mis. Papers FLGC.

⁶² George Lakey, "Masculinity and Violence;" Notes for a speech on Bisexuality at FGC, June, 1974" with Bruce Kokepeli, "Gayness and Pacifism: Two Closets - Same Bedroom." Lecture at Pendle Hill. Susie Day, "Mr Family Values," Lesbian and Gay New York, April 7, 1996. All available at FHL.

⁶³ *A Friendly Letter*, Feb., 1983, Sept., 1983; Nov., 1984. California Yearly Meeting's leaders quite correctly saw discussions of the issue as an attempt to change their position and as an attack upon biblical authority. They saw homosexuality as immoral and weakening of their testimony against it as encouraging wickedness and, therefore, unchristian. But by insisting on no discussion they changed the issue for liberal Friends to freedom of conscience and the authority of continuing revelation.

Committee on National Legislation has no policy affirming the need for equal rights for gays, because its goals must reflect the wishes of all American Friends and there is at present no consensus.

In the 1980s the issue for FGC members became: should meetings perform same-sex marriages? The gay communities seeking official recognition of marriages was a new phenomenon—very unlike the attack upon patriarchal family and monogamy of feminists and the open sexuality approved by many gays. There are two possible reasons for the shift: one is that these were gay Friends, with the emphasis upon the Friends who wished to live moral lives and did not believe this required a denial of their sexuality. The other is the AIDs epidemic. To paraphrase Samuel Johnson on hanging, watching one friend slowly die concentrates the mind on serious subjects. The depth of spirituality that straight Friends found among gays and lesbians came from pain—suffering discrimination and then death of partners and friends. If marriage were not just a ceremony, as liberals Friends had long been proclaiming, but a relationship, then gay and lesbians could ask God's blessings on their union.

The first minute of approval of same-sex marriage under the care of Friends came from San Francisco Monthly Meeting in 1973. By 1985 there had been five "same-sex celebrations of commitment" in Washington state, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Maryland and three yearly meetings had provisions in their books for such celebrations. Gay Friends wished to gain the approval for their marriages without splitting meetings. Their strategy was to gain the approval of some large meetings in each yearly meeting. Then when conservatives in reaction sought to write a policy prohibiting gay marriages, no unity could be obtained because a few meetings had already engaged in celebrating gay marriages. In 1985 PYM committee on Testimonies and Concerns adopted a minute in "support of rights and privileges of committed relationships" and in 1986 asked overseers of monthly meetings of PYM whether the yearly meeting should adopt such a policy.⁶⁴ During the 1990s many meetings have adopted minutes allowing homosexual unions or marriages.

Gay marriages remain a highly controversial issue, particularly in those yearly meetings affiliated with both FGC and FUM. Some FGC meetings now celebrate them, others bless homosexual unions but refuse to use the term marriage, and some have managed to ignore the subject. Cambridge, MA. has a policy of making sure there are written guarantees for the rights of siblings, inheritance, and social responsibility in all marriages. Because monthly meetings have become almost autonomous and there are issues of legality in different states, it is likely that there will continue to be considerable variation in practice.

In 1996 Powell House in New York and Pendle Hill sponsored retreats attempting to see whether an intensive dialogue among committed Friends of different perspectives on homosexuality could result in a unified perspective. For both groups the answer was

⁶⁴ Testimonies and Concerns of PYM, Minutes in Support of Right & Privileges of Committed Relations, Sept. 16, 1985; "To Overseers of Monthly Meetings," Feb. 1, 1986.

the process was valuable but neither could arrive at a sense of the meeting. Divergent interpretations could not be reconciled over the use of Scripture, the authority of meetings, the way for Quakers to change testimonies, and the fruits of practices of those in traditional and new family/sexual relationships could not be bridged.⁶⁵ The two conferences illustrate that discussion of homosexuality cannot be separated from other issues of sex and marriage. The Society of Friends reflects the cultural divisions that occurred more generally in American society.

Disagreements among Friends on sexuality show no signs of ending. New York began debating changing its Faith and Practice even as it approved a revision in 1974. Discussions of marriage and sexuality joined those of membership and organizations and the resulting impasse lasted until 1998 and resulted in a pastoral evangelical meeting withdrawing from the yearly meeting. New York's new discipline replaced the term marriage as a heading in favor of "Covenant Relationships" and reflects the lack of agreement on standards. "Some of us live alone and find love and community among our friends. Some of us are single parents, caring for our children. Some members' families follow traditional patterns; others do not. Just as there is that of God in every person, there is that of God in every relationship that calls upon God."⁶⁶

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting also revised its Faith and Practice, although the process of a committee drafting a document, sending it out for meetings for comment, and then revising was rather routine and accomplished with what for Friends was relative quickness. Philadelphia still uses the term marriage in terms of a "couple" (sex not specified) entering into a "sacred commitment." Sexuality is a gift of God, but "Friends are wary of the preset moral code to govern sexuality." Still, "Quakerism does not sanction license in sexual behavior." A sexual relationship becomes "sacramental" if the persons involved seek the will of God. The meeting could arrive at no unity on abortion. There was also no endorsement of any preferential form of family: "single parent households, same gender commitments, blended families" and traditional ones.

In 1988 a group of British Friends started meeting in an attempt to revise and update the 1963 *Towards a Quaker View of Sex*. Instead, the committee ended by publishing a series of personal experiences about sex. The committee concluded "there isn't a right or wrong way to 'do sex,' as long as the relationship is one in which the lovers respect and care for each other." The committee also rejected any professional advice, concluding "we want to help people give up any thought that there are experts who will tell you how to do it properly." These very vague counsels did not please the

⁶⁵ Pendle Hill Issues Program, 3/15/1996.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20011121123357/https://pendlehill.org/same-sex-issues.html>.

⁶⁶ New York Yearly Meeting, *Faith and Practice* (1998), 29. Herbert Lape, "A Case Study of New York Yearly Meeting, 2/23/1995," for Pendle Hill Issues Program, Report Number 2, <http://www.pendlehill.org/issues/nym.html>.

Quaker Home Service Committee, originally sponsors of the group, which refused to publish the pamphlet.⁶⁷

VI. Prognostications

My forecast for the next twenty years is that issues on homosexuality are easier for liberal Friends to resolve theologically than those on sex outside of marriage. The biblical passages on homosexuality are ambiguous, and most Friends oppose discrimination and approve of rights of privacy among consenting adults. So if homosexuality per se continues as a divisive issue, the cause will be not religion but fear. By contrast, the biblical passages forbidding sex outside of marriage are clear and there is potential exploitation of the third parties, either in or outside the marriage, including children.

The history of divorce may provide a key to the future. Not just the Bible, but Jesus issued a clear command against divorce. Yet in the twentieth-century American liberals, moderates, and fundamentalists have come to accept the legitimacy of divorce. (The highest rate of divorce in the U.S. is in Arkansas, a region where fundamentalist/evangelicals are very strong.) All religious bodies and many family counselors still deplore divorce, though they recognize that it may at times be necessary. With fifty percent of marriages ending in divorce, the results of refusing to remarry divorced people or not allowing remarried people to retain membership would be to jeopardize survival. This would conflict with the primary mission of churches to minister to sinners. So most churches have learned to live with divorce. Liberals would say this is the way religions normally respond to social change and the same process is occurring over sexual mores.

Meetings have already learned to tolerate couples living together who may or may not marry.⁶⁸ With a high divorce rate and the legal complications of divorce, youth believe they can justify a trial period as less likely to lead to divorce, however. More difficult to justify socially and theologically is open marriage and bisexuality. My prediction is that Faith and Practices will deplore sex before marriage for high school students, advise caution but not forbid it for older youth and adults, and continue to deplore open marriages as exploitative.⁶⁹ Moreover, liberal meetings, all of which have already jettisoned corporate authority over lifestyles in favor of advices given in a spirit

⁶⁷ *This We Can Say: Talking Honestly About Sex* (Reading, UK: Nine Friends Press, 1995), p. 9

⁶⁸ The modern liberal Quaker attitudes on sexuality are summarized in the queries provided by Peggy Brick, "Some Quaker Perspectives on Sexuality," *Friends Face the World*, ed. Leonard Kenworthy, ed. Kennett Square, Pa: published cooperatively by FGC, FUM and Quaker Publications, 1987, 84-96. Brick has taught an interest group on sexuality at FGC conferences for many years.

⁶⁹ A conference for young Friends on sexuality at camp Onas, in Aug. 2001 advertises that most teaching about sex involves "scarce tactics and moral judgments" (notice the equivalence) or "over-sexualization of teens" in the media presenting an "image of teenage sexuality as a miraculous remedy to all of the gawky movements of adolescence." The conference aims at a third way - neither "repression nor exploitation" which will create a "safe space" in which to integrate "emotional integrity and spirituality values" with choices about "sexuality and relationships." The conference listed sessions on sexual violence, "hard core facts", relationships which preserve identity, and a "massage workshop."

of loving concern, will privately condemn but also tolerate open marriage of members. They will condemn as immoral and exploitation sexual relations between adults and children or the powerful and vulnerable.⁷⁰

The future course of events may be determined by whether morally conservative evangelical Friends will be able to keep their youth observing an ethos of sex permissible only in marriage and be willing to bear the social cost of jettisoning members who practice the new sexual morality. Quaker history would legitimate such behavior because there is a long tradition of defying American culture by being consistently sectarian. Standing against cultural norms reinforced Quakers finest moments: opposing slavery, supporting native American and women's rights, defending COs. Evangelical Friends who uphold traditional sexual morality can legitimately proclaim that they are upholding Quaker, Biblical, and church traditions. They will be reinforced in their position by the some 40% of Americans who are traditionalist Catholics and Protestants. However, to be consistently sectarian Quaker (and not just conservative Protestants) the evangelical-fundamentalist Friends will need jettison their working alliance with the superpatriotic political and economic right wing symbolized by the conservative wing of the Republican Party which supports a strong military and unfettered capitalism.

For liberal Friends, who had already repudiated sectarianism, decisions to accept new sexual behavior patterns were easier. One can see the whole series of small steps: first marriage with non-Quakers, then family planning, remarriage of divorced people, sex education, pre-marital sex, and finally equal rights for gays and lesbians and then celebrations of same sex unions or marriages. Each stage required adjustments in attitudes to the family and would ultimately lead to a repudiation of traditional morality and the meetings' ability to enforce or even to proclaim clear standards. Liberals could justify all these changes in terms of other basic Quaker values and the "scientific" views of experts. For liberals in the future, the question is whether diversity of opinion and lack of clear guidance on moral issues involving sexuality before and after marriage among heterosexuals and homosexuals will cause parents, youth, and newly married couples who look to religion for ethical norms to ignore the Society of Friends. A second issue is whether Friends can create a new ethical synthesis dealing with sex and family which can combine the 70s emphasis upon freedom and loving concern with a recognition that traditional morality provided valuable restraints useful to guide psychologically and religiously vulnerable, prideful, self-willed fallible, and sometimes rational boys and girls, women and men.

Bibliography:

Interviews: Paul Mangelsdorf, Barbara Lang, Peter Thompson, P. Linwood Urban, David Smith, James Lyons, John Spielman, Anne Wood, Rachel Letchworth, Elizabeth

⁷⁰ *A Friendly Letter*, #49, 7 mo. 1987; #76, 4 mo., 1985 focused on two meetings dealing with pedophilia. Friends also have become concerned about the dangers from emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of children by parents.

Watson, Tom Hamm, Bruce Grimes, Geoffrey Kaiser, George Lakey, Dan Wilson, Pat McPherson, Joelle Bertolet, Peggy Brick, Paul Machemar, and conversations with many others.

I am also grateful to those who responded to my speech at Friends General Conference, and particularly the expansion of it on the web where I briefly discussed FGC attitudes to morality.