

A Christian Looks at the "Population Explosion"

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“The population explosion may be subject to overreaching prophecies, but it is something to worry about. Its consequences are widespread misery, undernourishment, waste of human and natural resources and a constant threat among desperate peoples to a peace of the world.”¹ Sociologists have been projecting a population explosion and its devastating consequences for many years. In 1965 the report of the Citizens Committee on Population stated, “that this may be the last generation which has the opportunity to cope with the problems on the basis of free choice.”² This same committee reports that the rate at which the population is growing requires urgent action if compulsory birth control is to be avoided.

This is the prediction and problems with which the sociologists are concerned today. Let's look at the problem. Demographer, Phillip M. Hauser of the University of Chicago expects “the world's population to nearly triple in the next half century, a rise of 6.4 billion people; the less developed areas will have 7.7 billion people; the developed countries only 2 billion. Despite the plans to control climate, harvest the oceans and increase agricultural yields to feed all these people, food production must more than quadruple.”³ Hauser predicts that the population squeeze will ignite explosive situations which already threaten world peace. He characterizes the next fifty years by an increase in social unrest, and more, not fewer threats to world peace. He warns that men must begin to control population growth and increase productivity simultaneously. Sociologist, Roger Revelle, states that he does “foresee declining wealth and comfort, diminishing diversity in all aspects of life and a less wholesome relationship of people to their environment.”⁴ What about this crowding? Demographer E. T. Hall stated the consequences like this. “Crimes of violence, sexual deviations, breakdown of family ties, lapse of habits of cleanliness, and many other symptoms of social disorganization in our cities might be traceable to the effects of crowding.”⁵

Answers and Solutions:

Those offering an answer to this “problem” can be separated into unbelievers and Christians. Let's look first at the answer the world gives in response to increased population.

The answer of the world is characterized by unbelief and is directed toward humanistic ends. Both their answer and their efforts to stop the population growth are evidence that they fail to recognize God as sovereign over the universe, and as a consequence of this they seek to bring the population under rational human control, directed toward a peaceful relationship between men. The world fails to reckon with the wonderful fact that God maintains and sustains and controls all the forces of nature and the development of man. Their notion is that the earth is theirs and under their control. It would follow then, that when God causes an unusual increase in population and famine and unrest, they consider it their responsibility to control such a dangerous situation.

The world answers in the form of a plea for men of all countries to take up the fight against population growth by controlling the birth and death rates by any possible methods such as contraceptives, infanticide, sterilization and abortion.

A report issued by the Committee on Population of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council stated, “no family should be fated through poverty or ignorance to have children they do not want and cannot care for.”⁶

In order for every couple to conceive only the children they deliberately choose to have, the committee urges a threefold program of research education and training and services by public and private agencies in the methods of birth control.

Aid is offered by the National Council of Churches and the Church World Services. Through ministers, missionaries, doctors, and nurses, the N.C.C. and C.W.S. seek to educate the ignorant and to make birth control devices easily available through physicians and hospitals. The N. C. C. and C.W.S. expect criticism of their actions, but their answer is this, "Such criticism should be offset by vigorous support from those churches and individual Christians who believe with the N.C.C. that responsible parenthood is a moral obligation."⁷ In a policy statement four years ago the N.C.C. resolved that its duty "to help our fellow men overseas included assisting with various measures to alleviate population pressures and to extend family planning ... as part of a wise and dedicated effort to advance in the underprivileged regions of the earth the essential material conditions conducive to human dignity, freedom, justice, and peace.

Hence, the world is concerned about the alleviation of such consequences as social unrest, inadequate housing, hunger and loss of material wealth through birth control. By alleviation of these consequences through birth control the world disrupts the perfect and constant law of God in nature: that perfect attraction of man for woman and that perfect drive to reproduce children. They would disrupt the very law upon which they depend for their calculations concerning the population.

A Christian's answer to the world's plea for a fight against population growth by birth control is an expression of belief in the sovereign control of God and an expression of willing service to the Will of God. God created the world in order that he might establish His Covenant through the line of continued generations, beginning with Adam, to the end that he might gather His Church into the new heaven and earth. In Genesis 17:7 God says, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." In Acts 2:39 we read, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." All things, then, that have happened in the past and are happening at present, and those things which Scripture says will happen, are in God's counsel, under His control, and directed toward the establishment of His covenant.

First, concerning the promise of God regarding the deliverance of the Church through the covenant, all children of God serve His purpose by bringing forth seed. This is, then, a negative reply to birth control for these reasons:

1. The marriage of believers is used to bring forth the body of Christ, the elect children of the promise. Christ will return and gather His Church when the last elect child is born. Birth control, then, is an instrument of the devil (working through a plea for urgent action to curb population growth) to keep the last elect from being born.

2. Today, as well as in the Old Testament, God opens and shuts the womb. Only God! Sarah did not bring forth seed until she was 90 years old (Gen. 21:2). Rachel also waited until the Lord opened her womb and brought forth children of the promise (Gen. 30:22). Samuel was born after Hannah prayed fervently for many years to bear a son (Sam. 1:6, 20). God will bring forth the exact number of children he has determined in his counsel to bring forth, in spite of the world's efforts to stop this.

Secondly, in the light of Revelation Christians do not need to worry themselves about preventing a population explosion. God controls the forces of nature so that an equilibrium is maintained. Besides, Revelation speaks of famine, war, violence, death, poverty, greed, etc.

(Rev. 6:1-8). These things WILL happen in the world and it happens because God causes it to be. That includes a population growth too. Christians know this is of God's hand and according to his divine pre-determination. The world refuses to recognize the power of God and consequently work against the Will of God by seeking to control God's affairs.

However, the world cannot stop what God has set in motion, the same as they cannot cause the earth to fall out of its orbit. The horses of Revelation are running today. Pursuing their course they cause death, and poverty, and homeless families; in fact all the "problems" which the world combats are determined to happen and no one can stop them. God controls population by sending forth the horses and their riders of which Revelation speaks. He does not need birth control!

The red horse runs his course and bloodshed and violence and war follows. The black horse's rider holds a balance with which to measure the contrast between scarcity and plenty, poverty and wealth, feast and famine. The pale horse is death. "Death as he riots in our streets, as he stalks over the battlefields, as he kills by the sword and by pestilence, in homicide and suicide, in hurricane and typhoon and tornado, in earthquake and tidal wave, by the beasts of the earth — death in all its forms rides through the earth, killing its one-fourth and sometimes its one-third, but always its proper quota, just as many as is in harmony with the history of the world according to the divine plan. And no one is powerful to stop him!"⁹ God will maintain and sustain the proportion of people upon the earth. The horses which are running today kill one-fourth the number of men. The world will not reckon with God's power to control all things!

Also, Revelation speaks of the judgments that are called forth by the angels who have the power to kill one-third of men by gathering forces which represent a combination and more terrible manifestations of the red, black, and pale horses (Rev. 8). Through these judgments vegetation is burned (Rev. 8:7), waters and rivers become polluted and bitter (Rev. 8:11), the sun and moon and stars are darkened (Rev. 8:12), and as a result many men die.

When the world asks, "Shouldn't we prevent those horrible conditions which the population "explosion" is causing?" we say, "No, they cannot be prevented." Believing Christians are assured that "all the various forces and trends in history are not so many uncontrolled forces, running fatalistically rampant through the world. But they are strong and irresistible forces which are well directed and controlled, which proceed from the book with its seven seals, the counsel of God, and which must serve God's purpose."¹⁰ The only way of looking at what the world calls a population explosion is to recognize it as a sign of the times which must come to pass before God's Church is delivered.

1. George Hunt, "Population Explosion and Anti-Babyism," *Life* LVIII, (April 23, 1965), 6.
2. "Gains for Birth Control," *Newsweek*, LXVI (December 13, 1965), 94.
3. Robert J. Moskin, "Year 2018" *Look* (May 28, 1968).
4. "Too Many Born? Too Many Die. So Says Roger Revelle," *Horizon*, X (Summer 1968) 36.
5. E. T. Hall, "Human Space Bubble," *Horizon* (Autumn, 1967), 51.
6. "Population Problems Are Still Critical" *Science News Letter*, LXXXVII (June 12, 1965), 374.
7. "Promoting Family Planning," *Christian Century*, LXXXII (August 11, 1965), 980.
8. *Ibid*, 980.
9. Homer C. Hoeksema, "The Horses Are Running," *The Standard Bearer*, XLIV (June 1, 1968), 390.
10. *Ibid*, 391.

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