

Overpopulation: a Threat Caused by Religion

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When do people in a crowded theater begin to panic? Not until fire breaks out and they see that paths to the exits are crowded, threatening their safety. So it is with the population issue. Only when the effects of population growth begin to affect Americans directly, do we take serious notice.

The tragedy of 9/11 in 2001 forced us to recognize the dangerous link between excess populations and terrorism. Yet this disaster might never have happened had we heeded the warning of the United States Security Council in 1979, when they determined that world population growth seriously threatened the security of all nations, including our own. [1] And had we pursued the recommendations of National Security Study Memorandum 200 (NSSM 200) to help developing nations around the world control their numbers.

While the highest echelons of the U.S. government back in the mid-1970s acknowledged the global population crisis and sought to address it, sectarian special interests managed to derail government efforts by pursuing their own agendas. One of the results can be seen in the fact that Hispanics currently make up almost 13% of the population, much of it due to immigration from our southern neighbors. [2] Hispanic women-many of them undocumented immigrants-are reported to have the highest birthrate with a fertility rate of 3.16 children per woman. [3]

This trend was foretold by population scientist Stephen D. Mumford who warned about not controlling our immigration in his 1984 book, *American Democracy & The Vatican: Population Growth & National Security*. Pope John Paul II, during his 1979 visit to the U.S., had campaigned for the right of illegal aliens to migrate at will to our country. [4] Mumford contended that the Catholic Church is pitted against the national security interests of the United States by its efforts to further its own power with increasing numbers. [5]

This intention is confirmed by Fr. Richard J. Ryscavage, executive director of the Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Catholic Conference, in a November 8, 1992 article in the *National Catholic Register*, where he noted that „[...] We are in the middle of a huge wave of immigration .. and most of them are Catholics... It's the key to our future and the key to why the church is going to be very healthy in the twenty-first century." [6]

By the mid-1960s America had become increasingly aware of the world population problem. The invention of the contraceptive pill in 1960 stimulated broad public debate on birth control, as did Paul Ehrlich's book *The Population Bomb* [7] and Garret Hardin's essay "The Tragedy of the Commons," published in the journal *Science* that same year. [8]

Even mainstream religious denominations called for a bold response to the problem. In 1965 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church urged „the government of the United States to be ready to assist countries who request help in the development of programs of voluntary planned parenthood as a practical and humane means of controlling fertility and population growth." By 1971, it recognized that „the assumption that couples have the freedom to have as many children as they can support should be challenged. We can no longer justify bringing into existence as many children as we desire. Our corporate responsibility to each other prohibits this." And in 1972, the Presbyterians called on governments „to take such actions as will stabilize population size. .. We who are motivated by the urgency of overpopulation ... would preserve the species by responding in faith: Do not multiply-the earth is filled!" [9]

When Pope John XXIII created the Commission on Population and Birth Control, it was hoped that the Roman Catholic church would change its long-standing opposition to contraceptives. But according to Thomas Burch, one of the members of the Commission, they were asked by Pope Paul VI two questions: (1) Suppose the Vatican changed its mind on contraception. What can we do to present this in such a way that the Church will not lose its moral influence over people? And (2) Suppose the Vatican changed its mind on these issues [population and birth control]. How can we preserve our [the Church's] influence over the marital behavior of individuals?" Although a majority of both the Commission and a subsequent group of Cardinals and Bishops voted to make the change, the Pope, in 1968, issued the

encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, retaining the ban against „artificial" contraception and abortion. Thus the authority of the Church was preserved. [10]

President Richard Nixon set in motion a broad range of government actions to address the problem of overpopulation. Among these was the creation of the Rockefeller Commission which made over seventy recommendations, including establishing population education programs in the schools, sex education, especially through the schools, and contraception and abortion available for all, including minors, at government expense if necessary. [11]

These bold suggestions were immediately challenged. When Rockefeller was asked later why no concrete program resulted from the Commission's recommendations, he responded: „The greatest difficulty has been the very active opposition by the Roman Catholic Church through its various agencies in the United States. [13]

After his successful reelection in 1974, President Nixon made another effort, ordering a study done on the „Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security and Overseas Interests." This was a joint study by various government agencies that resulted in National Security Study Memorandum (NSSM) 200. [13] After many revisions, its recommendations were endorsed by then-president Gerald Ford in National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 314. [14] The policy set forth in NSDM 314 has never been officially rescinded.

Somehow, both of these critical reports were stamped „classified" and buried with a notation, „this document can only be declassified by the White House." Although declassified on July 3, 1989, they did not come to public attention until Mumford saw a reference in a 1991 issue of the *National Catholic Register* and acquired a copy. According to him, NSSM 200 had rather accurately predicted the effects of world population growth on the environment, living standards, and U.S. security interests. It stated that „If future numbers are to be kept within reasonable bounds, it is urgent that measures to reduce fertility be started and made effective in the 1970s and 1980s." [15]

Had the recommendations of this report been carried out, we would have a much more manageable world today. Instead, sectarian special interests were allowed to derail those intentions. On August 31, 1976, President-elect Jimmy Carter met with 15 Catholic leaders who pressed Carter to de-emphasize federal support for family planning in exchange for Catholic support for his presidential race. When Carter became president, he put two federal agencies with family planning programs under Catholic control: The Agency for International Development (AID) and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The latter department ignored the Food and Drug Administration's recommendations for approval of the contraceptive, Depo-Provera, and specifically directed that it *not* be approved. [16]

In 1975, American Catholic Bishops had issued their *Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities* which laid out a detailed blueprint for infiltrating and manipulating the American democratic process at the national, state, and local levels. The plan details a three-pronged attack, one devoted to each of the three branches of our federal government: legislative, judicial, and administrative. [17] Abortion was the issue chosen to galvanize the movement, as proposed by Jesuit priest Virgil Blum in a 1971 *America* magazine article. [18] The plan also called for the creation of a broad-based popular movement which emerged between 1976 and 1980 and became known as the „New Right Movement."

Then in 1980, according to Mumford, the Vatican used this infrastructure to help elect a president. The Reagan administration, overwhelmingly the most Catholic in American history, proceeded to further the agenda of the Vatican. [19] First, Reagan took the unprecedented step of granting formal diplomatic recognition to the Holy See, headquarters of the Catholic Church at the Vatican, and shortly thereafter, in 1984, instituted the „Mexico City policy," reversing U.S. commitment to international family planning. He withdrew funding from both the U.N. Population Fund and the International Planned Parenthood Federation, [20] a policy later endorsed by the first President Bush, and now reinstated under George W. Bush.

William Wilson, the first ambassador to the Holy See, confirmed that the Vatican dictated the agenda, when he stated in *Time* magazine on February 24, 1992, „American policy was changed as a result of the Vatican's not agreeing with our policy. American aid programs around the world did not meet the criteria the Vatican had for family planning."

The Vatican expanded its control to population conferences sponsored by the United Nations, where, as the Holy See, it enjoys a unique „nation" status, giving it voting rights no other religion possesses. This has allowed it to disrupt conferences, joining forces with several repressive Muslim regimes to argue points and block consensus on issues dealing with birth

control.

The New Right Movement has supported the Vatican in its interference in these conferences. In the August 1995 monthly letter for *Focus on the Family*, James Dobson, FOF president, asserted that the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, „will represent the most radical, atheistic and anti-family crusade in the history of the world..“

Focus on the Family is a huge magazine publishing and radio empire with broadcasts reaching millions worldwide. It is an evangelical Christian ministry with firm ties to other conservative religious organizations who have the same political objectives. A former worker with FOF estimates that if you combine the Southern Baptist membership with the followers of Dobson and the Christian Coalition you have around 25-30 million people. [21]

Numbers like this have clout. The May 4, 1998 *U.S. News & World Report* featured a cover story about James Dobson, „Righteous Indignation.“ It describes his meeting with 25 House Republicans where he threatened, in effect, to bring down the GOP unless it made conservative social issues, including abortion, a higher legislative priority. „If I go,“ he said, "I will do everything I can to take as many people with me as possible."

Just two months before, Dobson had issued a press release showing a letter he had sent to all Republican legislators on Capitol Hill, as well as Republican Governors, outlining pro-family legislative priorities for the remaining 105th congressional session. The first item listed was to „defund Planned Parenthood and other pro-abortion organizations.“ [22]

Such power to control the pulse of the nation rivals the authority of the Catholic Church. The sheer force of numbers claimed by both the church and what is now called the Religious Right has helped elect members of Congress who consistently vote against family planning measures that would help control the world's population.

Although George W. Bush ran on a promise of moderation, he has been zealous in his attacks on family planning now that he is president. On his very first day on the job, the president re-imposed the global "gag rule," first instituted by President Ronald Reagan, then lifted by President Bill Clinton in January 1993. It bars international health providers receiving American family planning assistance from providing abortion services even with their own money, or counseling women about abortion, or even engaging in lobbying their own governments on abortion, in effect limiting their right to free speech. Many providers were forced to turn down our country's family planning help because of these conditions.

More international assistance was lost when President Bush cut off the \$34-million support for the United Nations Family Planning Agency, the largest multilateral provider of family planning and reproductive health assistance serving over 150 countries. The UNFPA estimates that the money it lost would have been enough to prevent 2 million unwanted pregnancies worldwide, avoiding 800,000 abortions, 4,700 maternal deaths, 77,000 infant and child deaths, and 60,000 serious maternal illnesses. [23]

Unfazed by the suffering this has caused, the Bush administration has recently taken additional steps to appoint antiabortion activists to key positions on U.S. delegations to U.N. conferences, [24] and in October it publicly announced at a U.N. Asia regional meeting that it was unable to reaffirm its commitment to the 1994 Cairo Plan of Action, a global agreement between 178 countries to support reproductive health and family planning. U.S. delegates said some of the wording, including „reproductive health services“ and „reproductive rights,“ could be read as advocating abortion and underage sex. They also attempted to block an endorsement of condom use to prevent AIDS. U.S. demands for changes or deletions in the regional document were overwhelmingly rejected, [25] representing an embarrassing defeat for the Bush administration.

Other actions of this administration include the following:

In 2002, U.S. delegates to a U.N. Special Session on Children tried to block a proposal promoting children's rights because it promised "reproductive health services," and the delegates even opposed special U.N. efforts to help young girls who are war crime rape victims.

Last summer, the White House withdrew support for the Senate ratification of a Women's Rights Treaty that would require countries to end discrimination against women's access to legal rights and health care.

In November, the U.S. held back a \$3-million grant to punish the World Health

Organization's reproductive health program for conducting scientific research into the „morning after“ pill. [26]

On January 12, 2003, *The New York Times* declared, „President Bush's assault on reproductive rights is part of a larger ongoing cultural battle. If abortion were the only target, the administration would not be attempting to block women's access to contraceptives, which drive down the number of abortions. His administration would not be declaring war on any sex education that discusses ways, beyond abstinence, to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Scientifically accurate information about contraceptives and abortion would not have begun disappearing from federal government Web sites.“

These deliberate efforts to subvert attempts to reduce world population must cease if our country is to make any progress in fighting terrorism. When more than 150,000 children are born each day around the world with no reasonable hope of good education, jobs or health care, [27] this contributes to terrorism. When surplus young adult males (what some call „rogue males“) predominate now in seven Asian countries-Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Nepal, China and Taiwan-the resulting instability can lead to „rogue“ governments that harbor and aid terrorists. [28]

Population plays a prominent role in the conflict in the Middle East, where nearly half of all males in the Palestine Territory are aged 15 to 29-the group most likely to engage in violence. [29] There are simply too many young men seeking jobs, mates, and recognition who find instead squalor, alienation, and hopelessness. Overpopulation creates conditions of unrest and instability in places already overburdened by poverty, disease, and natural resource depletion. Support for terrorism is rooted in these conditions.

The Bush administration is ignoring the truth. The National Intelligence Council (NIC) report „Global Trends 2015“ tells us the world will be rife with conflict and increased terrorism unless rapid population growth can be curbed. As the demand for limited-in some cases, nonexistent-resources increases, hostilities will erupt. The NIC report cites future water shortages as flashpoints for conflict. It also predicts the potential for famine in some parts of the world. It is no wonder that there will be global unrest when such suffering affects so many people. [30]

Excessive births in other countries lead to high immigration here at home. Not only has this created economic problems for states with tight budgets, but high traffic across our borders increases the difficulty of preventing terrorists from entering and committing terrorist acts on our own soil.

It is encouraging that some presidential candidates are beginning to address the connection between overpopulation and terrorist attacks. They must, however, understand that our government is now controlled by anti-family-planning forces, and until that hold is broken, no progress can be made. They must then make the voters realize that the very safety of our country may depend on a change in American policy.

We must take back our government from dogmatic beliefs that refuse to recognize reality, preferring to believe that „God will provide.“ We must elect a president who regards the „good of the world“ and the national security of our country as being more important than promoting the ideology of his or her contributors.

John D. Rockefeller III, who was involved in President Nixon's plan, wrote: „Men of influence must be shown that the true objective of population stabilization is the enrichment of human life, not its restriction.... To my mind, population stabilization is not a brake upon human development, but rather a release that, by assuring greater opportunity to each person, frees man to attain his individual dignity and to reach his full potential.“ [31]

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Przypisy:

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