



## Population Control

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"And God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth...'" (Genesis 1:28a). This command is one of the "Creation Mandates" of Genesis 1,2. Today, the great debate about this passage is whether or not the earth has been "filled." That is, has the population of the earth reached the level at which its resources are inadequate to meet the needs of all people on earth?

The answer that gets the most attention today is that the earth's population has indeed reached or exceeded that level. Many Christians believe this answer. However, the overwhelming evidence is that the earth's resources and man's technology is quite capable of supporting many times the present six billion people on earth. Some of that evidence follows.

First, Colin Clark estimates that the world could sustain 35 billion people on the "over-consumptive" American diet and 100 billion on an "adequate" Japanese diet. Historically, famines have six causes: war, the prevention of cultivation, the willful destruction of crops, defective agriculture, government interference by regulation and taxation, and currency restrictions.

The continuing famine in Ethiopia is an example. For centuries, Ethiopian farmers had stored food after good harvests to provide for years of bad harvests. However, by government decree such storage was labeled "hoarding" and disallowed. Families were relocated and commercial marketing of food was forbidden. And, many other governmental "changes" disrupted a fairly efficient system of food production and supply that severely aggravated (if not caused) this continuing famine.

Second, productivity is not necessarily limited where

people are closely populated. Taiwan, while two-thirds the size of Switzerland but with sixteen million people, has the second highest standard of living in Asia (behind Japan, another densely populated country).

Third, food production has increased more rapidly than the population on a world-wide basis. Even in the United States where large surpluses of food are produced almost every year, more could be produced were it not for government controls. But, politics is not the only problem. Worldwide, the average work day varies from 45 minutes to seven hours. Surely, there is a great deal more time for greater production!

Thus, in Creation God gave mankind abundant natural resources to provide for the needs of a planet "filled" with people. In addition, He has given mankind an ingenious mind that is capable of utilizing those resources, provided man is willing and is free to pursue such development.

Why, then, is overpopulation rhetoric so appealing? The answer has to do with short-term vs. long-term costs, apparent consensus of expert judgment, population as a cause of pollution, judgments about people's rational use of resources, one-sided news media exposure, and hidden agendas that include increasing government control and an elite power structure.

Population statistics indicate that 2.2 children per married couple is necessary to maintain population at current levels. Thus, the logical conclusion is that couples who are able to have children should be "fruitful" with 3 or more to continue to "multiply" within God's Creation Mandate. This number should also be adequate statistically to fill the void of those who are physically unable to bear children.

These children will themselves become the resources to feed themselves and others. As long ago as the 18th century, Adam Smith recognized the surest sign of a healthy economic order was continued population growth. As children "multiply," their needs of children (food, shelter, clothing) increase, and economic expansion occurs. (This reality is certainly a message to the United States in the 1990's with its abortion rate and stagnant economy.)

In addition, an expanding number of children are necessary to provide for the needs of their parents. In the United States, an inordinate burden is being placed upon productive workers because the abortion of one in three pregnancies for 18 years has greatly limited present and future workers.

Population growth creates new economic opportunities and markets. Such growth expands markets, making investments more attractive by reducing risks and increasing total demand for goods and services. Larger numbers of people lead to proportional economies that make large public investments such as highways, bridges, railroads, irrigation systems, and ports less expensive on a per-person basis.

Finally, we must believe God. Every mention of the bearing of children is described in positive terms (e.g., Psalms 127:3-5). This Biblical affirmation of children coupled with the Creation Mandate provides the authority to override any scientific objections to population control. And, God never limited or abrogated that affirmation or mandate. As pointed out, however, the greater scientific evidence points to more-than-sufficient resources to meet a growing population. And likely, God will either terminate history before actual overpopulation occurs, or He will continue to give man the ingenuity to stay ahead of population needs until His Second Advent.

## Bibliography

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