

# Zero Population Growth

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Motherhood has, in certain circles, become a nasty state. Ten or so years ago the ideal American mother was one with two, three or several more children who enjoyed her family role. Today there is a paranoid element evident according to which the “Mother of the Year” is a woman who has been voluntarily sterilized and has adopted two children. Pregnant women with two or more children are made to feel unpatriotic if not as criminals about to perpetrate a horrible crime against society and nature. Who are these zealots responsible for this phenomenon? They are the population doomsdayers, many of whom have banded together in organized groups at various levels to promote what they rather fondly call “Z P G” — “Zero Population Growth.” These wild sociologists and self-styled ecologists would lay most if not all the blame for society’s many ills—crime, pollution, disease, child abuse, racial hatred, etc. at the feet of overpopulation. Under the guise of “humanitarianism” they distribute literature and use the pages of prominent magazines to attack motherhood and the family unit. Pregnant mothers have been stopped on the streets by college students — many typically long-haired, slovenly dressed and sporting beads and the so-called peace symbol — and have been told they should join the ZPG movement. After all, babies are something evil now and ought to be stamped out, ripped out of the womb if need be, to prevent further population growth. How are we ever going to improve the “quality” of life if mothers keep having babies? Get with it! This is the age of women’s liberation. Liberate yourself from the drudgery of the age-old female role of child-bearing and child-rearing — and from the guilt which you ought to feel for overpopulating this world and thus promoting its many revolting aspects.

Various figures and statistics are adduced to impress one with the scope of the population problem. On a world-wide scale, there were approximately three and one-half billion people living on this earth in 1966. While a figure like that does not mean much in itself, the accelerating rate of population growth is more readily apprehended. It required from the beginning of recorded history to 1830 for the world to get its first billion inhabitants. The second billion required only one hundred years, from 1830 to 1930. The three billion level was reached after only thirty more years, i.e., by 1960. And in six short years another half billion was added. By the turn of the century there are supposed to be 7 1/2 billion inhabitants on this earth — over twice the population of 1966. By the year 2050 there is supposed to be only a foot of land available for each person. And by 3050 or thereabouts the earth will no longer be able to support the weight of its human population! Are we concerned about this prospect, young people? As a child of God you certainly ought not be! You see, do you not, what a chaotic world with all manner of frightening possibilities this earth becomes when the Creator and Sustainer is left out of consideration? The fruits of Godless evolutionistic thought are horrible indeed.

On a more local level, overpopulation is often cited as the root of various social ills. Included in these are high perinatal and infant rates, illegitimacy, crime, venereal disease and dependency on welfare, to name a few. Also mentioned are the high incidents of bearing “unwanted” children and the “battered child syndrome.” Now it is clearly true that a lower socioeconomic status is associated with a higher perinatal and infant death rate. This is attributed largely to nutritional and environmental factors. But it must also be recognized that often poor nutrition and unhealthy environmental factors, especially in our welfare society, are by choice. Funds for adequate nutrition and housing are squandered on alcohol, drugs and riotous living.

There is also blatant exploitation of the poor and ignorant by unscrupulous entrepreneurs and landlords. Illegitimacy is and always has been a problem of all strata of society, yes, even in the church. Venereal disease is a social disease climbing to astronomical proportions. It has been recently reported that nationally one out of every five high school students will contract a venereal disease before he graduates. It is interesting that this is true even though (I am certain because of the fact that) fertility is so readily controlled in our time. Again, this is found in all strata of society. The unwanted child and the battered child are tragically simply children “in the way” of selfish, self-centered, diabolically sinful parents. Any contention that limiting fertility and population expansion will alleviate these social problems must be vehemently challenged! Again, the Christian perspective provides us with the true insight into this morass. No amount of population restriction will remove the totally corrupt nature of fallen man. This the reprobate will never understand.

Mention has been made of the emphasis some place on improving the “finality” of life. It is clear that what in most instances is meant by this is accumulation of worldly goods and freedom to come and go as one pleases without the restriction of parental responsibilities, including the freedom to enjoy “mind-expanding” drugs, alcohol and sex without limitation. After all, these are our bodies and we should have the right to gratify all our desires and lusts with all the abundance this earth has to offer — or would have to offer if there were not too many people. Obviously then, unless we use all means available to achieve ZPG, we are going to be cheated out of life’s “quality”. Is that the “quality” you envision, young Christian friend? God forbid.

What must we say then about ZPG? First of all, we must recognize it as a hideously Godless movement, although, undoubtedly, there are many associated with it who would loudly attest that they are “just as Christian as you are.” Many of you have heard that argument from the unregenerate humanitarian before. The Christian knows that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, from Genesis 1 through Revelation 22. We know that our omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God created the earth and the heavens and all that they contain in six days and rested the seventh day. He did this not simply by providing a motivating force behind natural processes and then standing back to watch things evolve, perhaps over millions if not billions of years. No, God spoke and it was so, even as He planned it from eternity down to the minutest detail. Moreover, God not only created the earth and the universe and all that they contain but He directs and sustains them by His creative Word in every minute detail and moment by moment, according to His eternal counsel. Are we not told that even the sparrow is not forgotten in the sight of God and that the very hairs of our head are numbered? (Luke 12:6, 7). Read Lord’s Day IX-X, Q&A 26-28, along with the reference texts, concerning Creation and the providence of God. We surely are not living in a world where events happen by chance or accident and where the course of history is ultimately determined by the decisions of man.

Scripture, however, tells us more than about God’s Creation and providence. It tells us of Adam’s disobedience and man’s consequent fall. We have already stated that the totally corrupt nature of fallen men is the underlying cause of all of society’s ugly problems. But there is still more, is there not? God provided His only-begotten Son to redeem His elect children from all ages. What has this got to do with ZPG? Everything! The assumption of the reprobate mind is that this world will continue endlessly, or at least as long as its destruction by the crush of humanity can be prevented. We, however, know better. God has revealed to us that at one point in time that last elect saint shall have come to repentance (II Peter 3:9). When His church is complete, and only then, our risen and ascended Lord shall return upon the clouds of heaven to

claim His own (I Thess. 4:16-18; Matt. 25:34). All this corrupt world will be destroyed and all made new (Rev. 6:12-16; 11:15-19; 16:17-21; 18; 19:11-21; 20-22). Does not all this clamor about a population problem seem foolish in this light? Again, we see what an awful darkness enshrouds those who live in rebellion against God.

Secondly, we might for information's sake ask whether there is indeed an overpopulation problem today. Have we outstripped our food supply or are we soon about to do so? The answer is no. Yes, there have been and will be famines in localized areas (occurring, you understand, in God's providence). At such times many do die of starvation, particularly in areas of high-density population. India is a country that comes to mind readily, where malnutrition and starvation have been serious problems. Is this not proof of the ZPG contentions? No. Again, the root of the problem lies in man's corrupt nature. Man has refused to be God's steward. Land has not been used wisely. This is especially evident in our own country, where agricultural production could be boosted many times over what it now is if farmers were not paid to not use their land. Also, valuable land is foolishly squandered on housing and industrial construction for the sake of convenience. In India, application of modern agricultural technology has to date already largely alleviated the food shortage problem. Failure to utilize an available meat supply remains for the obvious reason of pagan beliefs.

Finally, we should give some consideration to the means proposed to limit population. These are primarily periodic and temporary suspension of fertility, chiefly by means of oral contraceptive hormones or "birth control pills," permanent sterilization (male or female), and abortion. Abortion has been quite thoroughly discussed in several issues of *The Standard Bearer* during the past two years and I urge you, if you have not already done so, to carefully read these excellent articles. Except in that case where the mother's life is without question endangered by the continuation of a pregnancy (a very rare situation, indeed), abortion is murder, and is to be vehemently condemned by the Christian. With regard to fertility control, however, I believe we approach a matter that belongs in the realm of Christian liberty. Oh yes, motherhood (or parenthood) is a gift of God. Many couples there are from whom this gift is withheld. It is a rich blessing and privilege for covenant parents to bring forth covenant seed. We read that "children are a heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them . . ." (Ps. 127:3-5). It is apparent, however, that not all parents are capable physically and, particularly, emotionally of coping with large families. Parental instruction and guidance of covenant offspring, yes, even provision of love, fall far short of what they should be. In this situation there is room, I believe for the exercise of responsible parenthood through the utilization of methods of conception prevention. This must be undertaken with much prayer and thought and only if one is honestly led to believe this is the proper course for a Christian to take. It may be, and has been, argued that fertility control is an attempt by man to frustrate the will of God in our lives. I do not believe this argument is any more valid than one which would deny use of medication to treat a physical health problem, such as use of antibiotics to treat infection. There are limits to human physical and emotional endurance, even for the faithful, and I do not believe we are called upon to surpass these limits if means are available to prevent this. I bring this topic up mainly to emphasize a danger involved here. That danger is that the Christian falls prey to the reasoning of the sinner (which we all are) and argues that without limiting our family size we will not be able to provide adequately for our children's material needs. This argument is one of economics and follows closely that of those who express concern for the "quality" of life. I earlier stated what this all too often implies. We and our children do not need an abundance of

this world's goods — fancy homes and cars, campers, swimming pools, trail bikes, snowmobiles, the latest in TV's and radios, the latest styles of clothing etc. We do not even need steaks. No, these things are not evils in themselves. They are, however, often associated with a lifestyle that is dangerous for the Christian. Consider how difficult it is for us to realize our complete dependence on God when we are so abundantly materially blessed. Perhaps you, too, have heard our ministers state that what the church needs to improve her spiritual health is an economic depression. This is no idle statement. Responsible parenthood for the Christian requires a thorough comprehension of Christian contentment. The recent "Meditation" by Rev. Schipper on the topic of Christian contentment fits in perfectly here (*The Standard Bearer*, Vol. XLVIII, pp. 485-487). Read this timely article thoroughly and digest it. May God grant us all, young people and parents, the grace of contentment.

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