

## POVERTY, POPULATION, & FAMILY PLANNING

(2008) from RTN to Theologian: “In all of the materials I can find about the Millennium Development Goals, I cannot find anything about family planning/population control. It seems to me that the relief of world poverty is tied significantly to population growth. Are you aware of any comments on the topic?”

Response from theologian: I don't think MDGs do include family planning, though they certainly ought to, in my opinion because it is directly related to the abolition of poverty. You can't have one without the other.

Three additional RTN inquiries to Church and other sources about MDG went unanswered.

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E-mailed links and comment from a science professor at a major New England university (2008)

Regarding population and poverty (and other ills), I suggest having a look at:

<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/2804102.html>

*International Family Planning Perspectives* Volume 28, Number 1, March 2002  
Population and Poverty: New Views on an Old Controversy By Thomas W. Merrick

<http://www.earthpolicy.org/Indicators/Pop/index.htm>

*Earth Policy Institute Resources on POPULATION and HEALTH*

[http://www.sustainer.org/dhm\\_archive/index.php?display\\_article=vn126manupured](http://www.sustainer.org/dhm_archive/index.php?display_article=vn126manupured)

**Poverty Causes Population Growth Causes Poverty**

This article from The Donella Meadows Archive is available for use in research, teaching, and private study.

[http://www.populationaction.org/Publications/Reports/The\\_Security\\_Demographic/Summary.shtml](http://www.populationaction.org/Publications/Reports/The_Security_Demographic/Summary.shtml)

**The Security Demographic - Population and Civil Conflict After the Cold War** by Richard Cincotta, Robert Engelman, and Daniele Anastasion

<http://www.populationmedia.org/2008/07/10/july-11th-world-population-day/>

**July 11th - World Population Day!**  
**POPULATION MEDIA CENTER**

“My personal view is that birth control has to accompany death control (*i.e.*, modern agriculture, health care, etc.). A mismatch is not sustainable because the planet has a limited capacity to supply us with resources and recycle our wastes. If we don't exercise birth control, then the problem will be solved as nature does for all other creatures, *i.e.*, by declining health (which increases mortality and decreases fertility). This ugliness is avoidable with modern birth control. While we are smart enough to have invented it, it is not clear that we are smart enough to make good use of it.”

## 'Hardball with Chris Matthews' for Friday, July 22, 2011, 5p Show

Excerpt

**Good evening. I'm Michael Smerconish, in for Chris Matthews.**

Michael A. Smerconish is an American radio and television personality, newspaper columnist, author and MSNBC Political Analyst.

**SMERCONISH: Welcome back to HARDBALL.**

**I just read a provocative piece in "The L.A. Times" that got me thinking, what if this heat wave that is baking a good part of the country is happening because our planet is overpopulated?**

**The article by Mary Ellen Harte and Anne Ehrlich reads: "The effects of overpopulation play a part in practically every daily report of mass human calamity, but the word 'population' is rarely mentioned. Wildfires threaten ever more people because expanding populations are moving nearer and into forests. Floods inundate more homes as populations expand into floodplains. Such extreme events are stoked by climate change, fueled by increasing carbon emissions from an expanding global population."**

**Lester Brown is president of the Earth Policy Institute. Bob Engelman is the executive director of the Worldwatch Institute. Both organizations are environmental think tanks in Washington.**

**Lester, I took a walk in Central Park last night. I was so moist, when I came back and dropped my clothes in the corner of my hotel room, this morning, they were still soaking. Does that have something to do with how many people are on the face of the planet?**

**LESTER BROWN, PRESIDENT, EARTH POLICY INSTITUTE: Well, the—the driving force in climate change is carbon emissions, from burning fossil fuels, from deforestation and so forth.**

**And the more people there are, the more fossil fuels we burn for generating electricity, mostly coal, for running cars, mostly oil. And—and so, as population grows, carbon emissions rise and climate changes faster. So, the more of us there are, the more—the more climate is going to change.**

**SMERCONISH: Bob, it's a frightening thought when one considers that the world population increased from three billion in 1959 to six billion by 1999, a doubling that occurred over 40 years. World population now expected to grow from six billion in 1999 to nine billion by 2044. That's a 50 percent increase.**

**ROBERT ENGELMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE: Well, we don't really know what will happen between now and 2044, but we can say with very high confidence—at least we're told by demographers, the people who count people—that this year, on October 31, there will be seven billion people on the planet. Whether that's coincidence or not, that happens to be Halloween. I don't know whether someone is trying to tell us we should be very afraid of this number.**

**But it's a phenomenal increase in a very, very short period of time, particularly in the context of the rate that climate usually changes. Look, I don't doubt that, when you were walking in Central Park, you were experiencing temperatures that have been experienced on the planet before we were numerous on the planet. But the fact is we're continually breaking climatic records in terms of storms, in terms of droughts, in terms of temperatures. And we have altered the atmosphere in a way that one species has never altered the atmosphere before.**

**SMERCONISH: Well, and not just—not just heat.**

**ENGELMAN: It's a matter of scale.**

**SMERCONISH: I mean, with record—with record snowfalls as well.**

**I look at Syracuse, by way of example. I know they had a big winter. I know they also broke 100 degrees yesterday. So, the—the erratic nature, Lester, of the weather pattern is—is really the big story.**

**Am I wrong?**

**BROWN: One of the things that meteorologists have been warning us of for decades is that with climate change will come many more extreme climate events. And we're experiencing them in this country. I mean, when I've been watching the news channels on the major networks, I wonder sometimes if I'm watching the**

Weather Channel by mistake, because so much of the news now is weather related, whether it's tornadoes, or floods or wildfires or what-have-you.

So, for those who doubt that climate is changing, you need not go beyond the news reports. And we've soon some extraordinarily extreme things like last summer, the drought and the heat wave in Moscow. If someone had told me early last year that the average temperature during the month of July in Moscow would have been 14 degrees above the norm, I would have—I would have said, you know, I'm not a climate denier, but that's beyond anything we can expect. But that's exactly what happened.

We're lucky that heat wave was centered in Moscow and not in Chicago because if we had lost 40 percent of our grain harvest, as the Russians did last year, there would have been chaos in world grain markets.

SMERCONISH: Let me pursue the population argument again, Bob. I don't often here the climate change matter debated with the word population as part of the mix—which is why I that "L.A. Times" piece so provocative. Am I missing it, or is there a reason why that's something that not normally is discussed in this context?

ENGELMAN: No, there's an overwhelming silence on the topic—

SMERCONISH: Why?

ENGELMAN: -- and it's somewhat understandable.

Well, one of the things is that consumption is a big part of this, how much each of us consumes. So, typically, when people like myself, a well-to-do male person living in the United States of America brings this issue out, someone is likely to say quite accurately, well, the people having the greatest number of children in the world are emitting very few greenhouse gases. So, what is exactly the connection?

And what they fail to realize is that, yes, there are tremendous differences in per capita emissions and we should be more aware of them and we should be addressing them in climate change. But everyone engages in activities that releases greenhouse gases—every one of us.

SMERCONISH: But does it also raise family planning matters? I mean, is lurking in the background some kind of choice debate that people don't want to tie to this issue?

ENGELMAN: People haven't realized yet that women want to use family planning. And one of the reasons we have the number of people we do in the world is that women historically and still today have not been able to choose for themselves when, who with and how often to have children.

Look, people have sex a lot more often than they want to become new parents. And we still aren't able to deal with that fact and make it easy for people to make decisions about child bearing. Paradoxically, if we did, population would probably stop growing before that 9 billion number in 2044 and gradually start declining. But we face a lot of obstacles to make that available to people.

SMERCONISH: Lester, what's my takeaway relative to population and the heat wave we're experiencing all across the country?

BROWN: If you're concerned about climate change, you have to address, among other things, the population issue. Bob was talking about the women in the world who want access to family planning services and don't have them. The latest survey is that 215 million women who want to plan their families but lack access to family planning services.

One of the things we can do is press for more assistance. That family planning gap, filling it would take very little in the way of resources. But the benefits would be huge to the women, to their families, and to the world as a whole. It would help very much, as Bob implied, to move us toward population stability much sooner.

SMERCONISH: I appreciate the time of Lester Brown and Robert Engelman thank you.