

THE NEW POPULATION DEBATE

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IN THE YEAR 1790 the Venetian monk Gianmaria Ortes reached the conclusion that a zero population growth would eventually prove necessary, since infinite expansion is impossible within a finite world.¹ His demographic projections pointing to the likelihood of a doubling of human population within a generation of thirty years were concurred in by Thomas Malthus in 1798. In the latter's *Essay on the Principle of Population As It Affects the Future Improvement of Society*, Malthus maintained that whereas population increased by geometric proportion, food and economic output remained within the confines of arithmetic proportion.² The two clergymen had entered into a debate whose beginnings trailed back to the mid-seventeenth century. The discussion involved a mercantilist populationism that favored large families and deplored celibacy as a principal check to population growth.³

The demographic debate continued down to the early 1950's at an academic pace, with occasional acerbic exchanges between pronatalist and antinatalist policy makers and religious leaders. At mid-century, however, a realization of the possibly disastrous proportions of the population increase in relation to local and world resources suddenly dawned upon a number of concerned individuals, voluntary organizations, and officials involved in government assistance programs. One result was a shift in objective to development rather than assistance projects on the part of foreign-aid organizations, including both international and governmental agencies and U.S. Catholic War Relief Services, Caritas Internationalis, and other ecclesiastical and private groups engaged in uplifting depressed populations in rural and slum areas of the

¹ *Riflessioni sulla popolazione* (Venice, 1790). Originally a Camaldolese monk, Ortes had written on economic problems before entering the field of population. He estimated a 1 billion population for his day (only a few million in excess of what modern research has established), predicted the world's carrying capacity at 3 billion, but felt that disease, delayed marriage, infant mortality, and food shortages would keep the demographic level below potential. Cf. William J. Gibbons, "Population," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 11 (New York, 1967) 582-83.

² Writing in response to the optimistic projections of William Godwin and the Marquis Condorcet, Malthus contradicted their supposition that as man progressed, poverty and population would diminish. He advocated late marriage and prudence in the use of resources as population checks rather than the traditional famine, war, and pestilence. Cf. T. R. Malthus, *An Essay on Population* (2 vols.; New York, 1958).

³ Cf. D. V. Glass and D. E. Eversley, *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography* (Chicago, 1964).

undeveloped world.⁴

As a consequence of the revelations of the 1960–61 world censuses concerning fertility averages, the population debate reached an apocalyptic level with the publication of the Paddocks' *Famine 1975!*, Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*, and Garrett Hardin's "The Tragedy of the Commons" and "Nobody Ever Dies of Overpopulation."⁵ These essayists proposed a get-tough policy to force the reduction of world population, which, they maintained, was headed for a demographic catastrophe far more ominous than that predicted by the Malthusian diminishers of war, disease, pestilence, and famine. But while these essays were in the making, a "green revolution" was achieved with the discovery in 1967 of new strains of wheat and rice whose reproductive capabilities have increased the possibility of feeding the world's burgeoning millions for several more generations.⁶ A side effect of this discovery was the encouragement it gave to experts who discount the ominous character of the exponential population increase presently in being. Whatever the merits of the argument concerned with the race between fertility and food, individual nations now are suffering from an inability to cope with millions of people living at subsistence level or below in rural and slum urban areas.⁷

While a few countries are troubled with a low level of population, and most of the developed nations are tending toward a zero growth pattern, governments in the underdeveloped regions are faced with grave demographic increases threatening their economy, social structure, and stability. While pursuing development programs and seeking the assist-

⁴ Organized in 1943 to assist refugees and war-torn areas, Catholic (War) Relief Services had a substantial part in distributing U.S. aid in Latin America, Asia, and the Far East and in encouraging the hierarchies of these countries to get involved in development programs. Its representatives at Vatican Council II witnessed to the possibility of co-operation between various religious and secular voluntary agencies, and gave impetus to the formation of the Vatican's Secretariat for Justice and Peace. See Joseph Gremillion, *The Other Dialogue* (New York, 1965) pp. 199–206.

⁵ William Paddock and Paul Paddock, *Famine—1975!* (Boston, 1967); Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York, 1968); Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science*, Dec. 13, 1968, pp. 1243–48, and "Nobody Ever Dies of Overpopulation," *Science*, Feb. 12, 1971, p. 527.

⁶ Cf. Lester R. Brown, "The Green Revolution," *Population and Affluence: Growing Pressures on World Food Resources* (Washington, D.C.: Overseas Development Council, 1973) pp. 17–22.

⁷ Mass hunger and starvation have threatened parts of Asia and six countries in Africa during the past two years. With 75 million people added to the world's population each year, and the world's grain reserve depleted by more than a third already, food prices are being driven up on the world market, and scarcities document the fact that half the world's population goes to bed hungry every night. Cf. D. H. Meadows *et al.*, *The Limits to Growth* (New York, 1972) pp. 46–54.

ance of interested organs of the United Nations and voluntary agencies, they are also introducing national family-planning policies in the hope of reducing fertility levels on a persuasive basis.⁸

THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEM

Historical demography estimates the world population in 1650 as between 470 and 545 million people. By 1900, the level was approximately 1 billion, 700 million. The 2 billion mark was reached in 1930, and the 3 billion level in 1965. At the present rate of growth, the 4 billion level is on the horizon for 1980, and by the year 2000 the world population should register between 5.6 and 7.2 billions, depending on intervening developments in birth and death rates.⁹ A principal factor in this so-called population explosion is the reduction in mortality rates of infants.

What gives the current population crisis an ominous note is the fact that, combined with increase in longevity due to the introduction of modern medicine and health services, infant natality is increasing exponentially in the developing nations, so that by the year 2000, it is estimated, the economically well-to-do nations will have a population of 1545 millions (22.4 percent) and the less developed nations will contain some 5040 millions (77.6 percent). Unless the latter group of countries can increase their food supply and energy resources substantially while strengthening their economy, they cannot upgrade their level of living, and their numbers will be so great that the developed nations will not be able to assist them sufficiently.

Despite increasing attention to demographic phenomena, the exact reasons for difference of demographic growth or decline are not known.¹⁰ One fact seems acquired. Education and higher levels of living reduce birth rates, while people living in poverty and illiteracy do not reduce their fertility rates. In the economically advanced regions of Western Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth century the birth rate declined despite the opposition of government, the Church, the medical profession, and the intellectual milieu. And, as Philip Hauser indicates, this took place before the introduction of modern methods of contraception, modern medicine, or the availability of birth-control clinics.¹¹

⁸ See *Measures, Policies and Programmes Affecting Fertility* (New York: United Nations Population Studies No. 51, 1972) pp. 57-81.

⁹ Cf. Gibbons, *art. cit.*, pp. 586-87.

¹⁰ Cf. R. Freedman, "Statement by the Moderator," *Proceedings of the World Population Conference 1* (Summary Report: United Nations Publication, 1965); A. Sauvy, *De Malthus à Mao Tse-Toung* (Paris, 1958); B. Berelson, S. F. Behrman, L. Corsa, and R. Freedman, eds., *Fertility and Family Planning: A World View* (Ann Arbor, 1969).

¹¹ Philip M. Hauser, "The Chaotic Society: Product of the Social Morphological Revo-

Most contemporary demographers agree that the decline of fertility in already developed lands can be attributed to economic progression and industrialization. The process of modernization that influences fertility control includes decline in mortality rates, the rising status of women, rationalism in health and welfare concerns, literacy, and education. R. Freedman and A. Sauvy have confirmed the supposition that in modern industrialized society a large family becomes a liability rather than an asset. Children cost more both in their raising and in their education. Finally, a higher minimum age for marriage does have a modifying effect on population decrease.¹² Nevertheless, no totally satisfactory explanation has been discovered as to why and how most of the now developed nations arrived at a low birth rate before the introduction of modern methods of contraception, medicine, and national family programs. Recognition of this fact has changed the angle of incidence of the demographic debate, rendering the demand for population control as the sole panacea for threatening catastrophe unrealistic. It has not solved the problem of too many births in a world where half the human beings now alive exist at or below the subsistence level. That this is a serious concern for the moralist is obvious. It is a matter that simply cannot be avoided by the churches.¹³

THE UNITED NATIONS

Despite the involvement of UN agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in fertility research and policy-processing studies during the 1950's, proposals for the introduction of family-planning programs by the General Assembly were consistently opposed by delegates from Roman Catholic and Communist countries. A projected WHO study of contraception in 1952 was opposed by Catholic delegates and was eventually abandoned. Instead, a UN program to teach the rhythm method was undertaken in India between 1952 and 1954; but it had to be

lution," *American Sociological Review*, Feb. 1969, pp. 1-19; *Rapid Population Growth: Consequences and Policy Implications* (Baltimore; National Academy of Sciences, 1971) pp. 103-22.

¹² Cf. Ruth B. Dixon, "Explaining Cross-Cultural Variation at Age at Marriage and Proportions Never Marrying," *Population Studies* 25 (July 1971) 215-33; S. N. Argawala, "Pattern of Marriage in Some ECAFE Countries," *IUSSP International Population Conference* 3 (London, 1969) 2106-25.

¹³ Cf. J. Philip Wogaman, ed., *The Population Crisis and Moral Responsibility* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1973); Carlos Vega, *Estrategia para el desarrollo: Las iglesias, las naciones unidas, los expertos* (Madrid, 1972); Denis Munby, *World Development: Challenge to the Churches* (Washington, D.C., 1968).

terminated as impractical.¹⁴ At a UN World Conference in Rome in 1954, it was agreed that co-operative action by the members required respect for different ethical and religious values and the promotion of mutual understanding. In 1963, delegates from France, Argentina, Lebanon, Liberia, and Peru passed a motion for the deletion from the General Assembly Resolution of a clause authorizing assistance for "national projects and programs dealing with problems of population." And at the UN World Population Conference in Belgrade in 1965, the Undersecretary for Economic and Social Affairs reiterated the UN policy of neutrality out of "respect for all beliefs."¹⁵

The General Assembly in 1962 had debated the question of population growth and economic development. But the UN role was confined strictly to the processing of national policies, although a resolution in 1966 called on the UN family to "assist when requested in further developing and strengthening national and regional efforts for training, research information, and advisory services in the field of population."¹⁶ On December 17, 1966, a General Assembly Resolution made reference to a principle stating that the family was entitled to decide freely and responsibly concerning the number and spacing of its children.¹⁷ At the International Conference on Human Rights in Teheran in 1968, this prerogative was repeated as "the basic right of parents."¹⁸ In the discussions of the General Assembly in 1970 concerned with a program of concerted international action for the advance of the rights of women, the text sets out as a minimum target making "available to all persons who so desire the necessary information and advice to enable them to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children."¹⁹

¹⁴ Cf. *The World Population Situation in 1970* (United Nations Population Studies No. 49, 1971) p. 76, n. 172; M. J. Huth, "Birth Control Movement," *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 2 (1967) 582.

¹⁵ Huth, *loc. cit.*

¹⁶ Cf. *The World Population Situation in 1970* (United Nations Population Studies No. 49, 1971) p. 74; Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-first Session, Supplement No. 16 (United Nations, 1967).

¹⁷ United Nations Standards Concerning the Relationship between Human Rights and Various Population Questions (United Nations, E/CONF.60/SYM.IV/3, August 1973) pp. 3-5. This action followed a declaration by twelve heads of states on Human Rights Day, 1966, proclaiming "the opportunity for individuals to decide the number and spacing of their children as a basic right." While this action was stimulated by an interested group from voluntary agencies, there is little doubt that the UN Declaration following it was influenced by the favorable attitude toward family planning in *Gaudium et spes*, nos. 50 and 87. In 1967 the number of heads of states adhering to the declaration rose to thirty and included Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and the Philippine Islands. Cf. *The World Population Situation in 1970*, pp. 74-75.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5; see United Nations, A/CONF.32/C.2/SR.12, pp. 143-44.

Fertility Control

The development of principles in United Nations declarations and resolutions concerned with the contemporary world's confrontation of fertility acknowledges a legitimate variety of goals in population policies. Some nations are satisfied with current levels of fertility. Others are seeking increases. Still others are strenuously working to reduce fertility levels in the hope of achieving social and economic development. While some states are concerned more with problems of sterility and subfecundity, the majority seem most anxious to control fertility and to persuade their people, particularly in the developed areas, to cut back on the overuse or wastage of natural resources and to reduce human reproduction in keeping with current food and energy needs.²⁰

The UN approach to the population problem is based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which asserts that men and women of full age "have the right to marry and found a family."²¹ This fundamental prerogative locates relevant human rights and responsibilities in the family, which, "as the basic unit of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members, especially children and youth, should be assisted and protected."²²

The possible conflict between the exercise of freedom to procreate and the assumption of full responsibility for the care and upbringing of offspring is to be settled in favor of the child.²³ The details of the latter's rights are given full attention in UN instruments. They include the right of the child to be brought up in an "atmosphere of affection, and of moral and material security" based on the child's need for love and understanding. In turn, this requires that the child be given the possibility of growth and development in health, the enjoyment of adequate nutrition, housing, recreation, and medical services in the care of its parents.²⁴ Provision is also made for an education on the basis of equal opportunity to develop its abilities and judgment, its sense of moral and social responsibility to become a useful member of society, protected from

²⁰ See "Current Population Policies," *Measures, Policies and Programmes Affecting Fertility* (United Nations Population Studies No. 51) pp. 17-56.

²¹ United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 16; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Art. 23; Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Art. 10; General Assembly Resolution 2018 (XX) 1 Nov. 1965.

²² International Conference on Human Rights at Teheran, 1968: United Nations A/CONF.32/C.2/SR.12, p. 142; Declaration on the Rights of the Child: United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1386 (SIV) 20 Nov. 1959, principles 9 and 10.

²³ "Resolution on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women," United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2263 (XXII) Art. 6, par. 2.

²⁴ United Nations International Conference on Human Rights at Teheran, 1968: A/CONF.32/C.2/SR.5, p. 56 and SR.12, p. 142.

neglect, cruelty, and exploitation.²⁵

These provisions for the rights of the child indicate that parents should not have a child when they are not capable of giving it the essential care to which it is entitled. This reflection is crucial to the problem of population control; for it means that both in affluent societies and in deprived areas no one should conceive a child and bring it into the world without the possibility of giving it the essential love and care that will enable it to develop into a mature and responsible individual. It is primarily within the context of these considerations that government is justified in setting out population policies, and in the attempt to persuade people not to beget more children when their own or the country's economic and social conditions make it difficult or close to impossible to provide them with the factors necessary for the exercise of human dignity.

Marriage and Parenthood

The UN approach to the population problem acknowledges the fact that considerable diversity exists in the concept of the family. This pluralism of cultural values has to be taken into consideration in any attempt to clarify human rights in their relation to fertility. In many societies, *de facto* unions far outweigh formal marriages. A large proportion of the female population enters into more or less permanent consensual unions or casual "visiting" arrangements in which childbearing is accepted and begins early. This phenomenon is prevalent in many parts of the underdeveloped world and is not rare in vast urban slum areas. In more developed societies single women are demanding the right to parenthood.²⁶ Provision for the amelioration of laws regarding illegitimacy, for the suppression of betrothal before the age of puberty as well as of child marriages, and recommendations regarding polygamy are already contained in UN instruments and proposals.²⁷ But the impermanence of casual marital arrangements and the independence of the unmarried mother challenge the obligation of responsibility in childbearing enunciated in the UN instruments clarifying the rights of the child.

United Nations documents indicate that the principle of responsibility involves both parents in the obligation to provide factors essential to the

²⁵ Declaration on the Rights of the Child, principles 9 and 10. Discrimination for reasons of race, color, ethnic origin, poverty, etc. is considered the equivalent of genocide. See "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide," UN document E/CN.4/984/Add.18, paras. 23-30.

²⁶ Cf. "Women's Rights and Fertility," United Nations, E/CONF.60/BP/11, pp. 17-18.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16; *A Study of Discrimination against Persons Born out of Wedlock* (United Nations Publication No. E.68.XIV.3); *Measures, Policies and Programmes Affecting Fertility, "Polygamy,"* pp. 51-52.

child's well-being. In most societies, however, the impact of this obligation devolves more directly on the woman, whose physical involvement in bearing the child and in caring for its immediate wants and needs during infancy and childhood is substantive. Although the man's desire for offspring and his affection for the child are positive and powerful factors, his involvement is almost always contributory rather than essential to the immediate care and welfare of the new human being.²⁸ In the clarification of women's rights recognized in UN instruments, the equality of the wife with the husband is explicitly asserted.²⁹ This recognition contradicts ancient and traditional customs whereby male domination prevailed in decisions affecting the family despite the substantive part played by the woman in childbearing and in her contribution to the domestic economy. It likewise opposes the control of marriage and births by the mother-in-law in a matriarchal society. But the exercise of equality is still far from achieved.

What now seems evident is that legislation and propaganda efforts by governments or voluntary agencies do not change ingrained custom, particularly where it is buttressed by ancient tradition, religious beliefs, and clan, tribal, or national aspirations, without a concerted effort at modernization of living and working conditions. Planned-parenthood programs, while listened to politely and understood in their basic applicability, are simply ignored by people who are poor and illiterate and who feel that their privacy is being invaded.³⁰ Similarly, in less developed societies more generally, sexual behavior is not considered a matter for discussion, and early marriage is encouraged as part of an ethic that looks to male and female fulfilment in offspring. Here the experience of recent decades indicates that only a most sensitive approach to the cultural values motivating people's family structures and reproductive mores has any chance of success. On the other hand, where resistance to birth-control practices exists, it cannot always be categorized on an aprioristic basis. The assumption that a failure to accept family planning denotes the absence of rational behavior is frequently not valid. The gains in economic and social well-being associated with a smaller family by birth-control proponents may not appeal to individuals or groups who feel that the advantages of a large family outweigh all such considerations. And it is possible that within the context of a particular region or nation large families are in fact

²⁸ See United Nations, E/CONF.60/BP/11, pp. 20-22.

²⁹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Art. 16; Declaration on Social Progress and Development, Art II (b) and (f); Resolution of the Economic and Social Council 1326 (XLIV); cf. United Nations, E/CONF.6/543.

³⁰ Cf. Willard A. Hanna, "Population Review 1970: Indonesia," *Fieldstaff Reports, Southeast Asia Series* 19 (1971) 15-16.

advantageous.³¹

The accomplishment of the UN in hammering out a detailed list of human rights and fleshing them out with concrete observations and resolutions as to their comprehension and extension is a remarkable advance toward the resolution of mankind's problems. While these principles can be looked upon as merely paper declarations, they do represent a consensus of the most divergent ideologies in regard to human rights, and they form a working agreement for the vindication of human dignity in all its proportions. As such, they are invaluable for the development of mankind. There is an obvious conjunction between these UN declarations and the teaching of Pope John XXIII in *Pacem in terris*, where the Pope insists upon human dignity as the foundation for man's rights.³²

THE CHURCHES

Until 1930, opposition to birth control was almost unanimous among religious bodies. Among Jews and Christians, generally speaking, the biblical condemnation of Onan (Gn 38:7-10) was interpreted as a strict prohibition of artificial birth-control practices. The first religious proponents of birth control were the Universalists, Unitarians, and the adherents of Reformed Judaism. In 1930 the Lambeth Conference of the Church of England recognized abstinence as the ordinary means for limiting births, but allowed contraceptive methods where abstinence proved impossible. In 1931 the Committee on Marriage and Home of the Federal Council of Churches in the United States allowed a "careful and restrained" use of contraceptive devices. This precedent was gradually accepted by all major Protestant denominations with the exception of the fundamentalist churches.³³

In 1930, likewise, the Central Conference of American Rabbis (Reform) had approved contraceptive practices for economic, social, and health reasons. This was followed by the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly of America in 1935; and in 1958 the Rabbinical Alliance of America (Orthodox) indicated that such practices could be performed by women

³¹ *Measures, Policies and Programmes Affecting Fertility*, p. 135. In many cultures there are close ties between children and uncles, aunts and close relatives. Children are borrowed, lent, solicited, given, and otherwise more or less formally passed back and forth between families. What might seem like an excess of children in a family unable to support them becomes an opportunity for relatives and friends.

³² Nos. 11 to 27.

³³ M. J. Huth, *art. cit.*, p. 580; Population/WCC Study Paper, *Origins: NC Documentary Series 3* (1973) 252; Richard M. Fagley, *The Population Explosion and Christian Responsibility* (New York, 1960); Martin E. Marty, *Protestantism* (New York, 1972) p. 250. A. J. Dyck, *Religious Views and U.S. Population Policy* (Hastings-on-Hudson, 1971).

for reasons of health and family welfare.³⁴

No similar development is met with among Muslim groups. Mohammed had counseled his followers to be fruitful and multiply. The Muslim is disposed to believe that whether or not a person has children is a matter of the Will of Allah. While the Hindu and Buddhist traditions have no rigid religious preconceptions in regard to fertility, all three favor a plentiful progeny controlled by the extended family structure. In the nature of a religious factor among most of these peoples is the rejection of birth-control methods and family limitation based on a feeling that such considerations are an affront to both personal pride and physical modesty involved with male virility and female fecundity. Whether or not one has children is assumed to be a matter of family and personal concern and not of government or the outside world.³⁵ For the woman in these societies, both social and personal modesty rejects exposing her body to any man but her husband. Even where medical clinics are conducted by women, there is great reluctance to submit to physical examination. In some Asiatic and African countries polygamy is still legitimate among Muslims, and to a minor extent among Hindus, particularly in rural areas. But the effect of this phenomenon on birth rates is not known.³⁶

In many underdeveloped areas, restrictions against birth-control practices are being broken down by women's associations that play a leading role in modernization efforts through health and literacy, political and social uplift programs that have spread from the cities and urban areas to the villages, hamlets, and kampongs. But the process is slow and runs into opposition from religious and tribal traditions as well as from a reluctance to allow interference with the one source of personal satisfaction still open to otherwise desolate lives.³⁷

The Catholic Position

The Roman Catholic position on birth control has been badly confused in consequence of the Encyclical *Humanae vitae* of July 26, 1968. Traditionally, the Catholic Church had opposed both the notion of birth control and the use of artificial means to interfere with fertility processes. The teaching that procreation was the primary end of marriage led to the conviction that interference with reproduction was to be discounted. The condemnation of contraceptive practices was given harsh reformulation

³⁴ D. M. Feldman, "The Pragmatic Spirit of Judaism," in J. P. Wogaman, ed., *The Population Crisis and Moral Responsibility* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1973) pp. 324-26.

³⁵ Cf. Hanna, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

³⁶ "Polygamy," *Measures, Policies and Programmes Affecting Fertility*, pp. 51-52.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

in Pope Pius XI's Encyclical *Casti connubii* of December 31, 1930: "Any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of grave sin."³⁸ However, the Pope did uphold the legitimacy of periodic abstinence under certain circumstances as a means of child spacing and family limitation: "Nor are those considered as acting against nature who in the married state use their right in the proper manner, although on account of natural reasons, either of time or of certain defects, new life cannot be brought forth." In 1951 this teaching was reaffirmed by Pope Pius XII.³⁹ In 1953 he outlined serious reasons of medical, eugenic, social, or economic character that might justify the temporary and even permanent use of periodic continence.⁴⁰ But in 1958 he condemned the use of anovulant pills as contraceptives: "A direct and therefore illicit sterilization is provoked when ovulation is arrested to protect the uterus and the organism from the consequence of pregnancy."⁴¹ It was on the basis of these positive condemnations summing up the witness of tradition that Pope Paul VI felt obliged to reject artificial contraceptives in *Humanae vitae* and to reiterate the principle that "every conceptual act has to be open to the transmission of life."⁴²

The furor that greeted the appearance of the Encyclical within and outside the Church is well known. What is also evident is that national conferences of bishops in various parts of the world felt obliged to offer clarifications of the Encyclical's moral teaching regarding contraceptive usages. In short order, the episcopates of Canada, Holland, Germany, Austria, Scandinavia, and Belgium went on record as accepting the papal teaching but modifying its application in favor of the right of the individual to make up his or her conscience. In particular, the French bishops declared that whereas every contraceptive act was always a disorder, it need not always be considered a sin. And the Italian bishops, while supporting the papal position as an ideal, indicated that people could not be compelled to live up to ideals; while struggling to conform, they should not consider themselves guilty of sin if they did not always succeed. The United States bishops were less clear. They repeated the papal teaching verbatim, then indicated that in the final analysis people had to follow their consciences. But an episcopal spokesman immedi-

³⁸ AAS 22 (1930) 560.

³⁹ AAS 43 (1951) 846.

⁴⁰ AAS 45 (1953) 673.

⁴¹ AAS 50 (1958) 734-35.

⁴² *Humanae vitae*, no. 12.

ately interjected his opinion that good Catholics could hardly make up their consciences in opposition to the mind of the Holy Father.⁴³

The diversity of reactions to the Encyclical by lay and clerical theologians and activist laity, particularly in the United States, helped to soften the adverse reaction of the other Christian churches and secular organizations, who were frankly shocked by the papal decision, particularly since it had not reflected the conclusions of the Papal Commission on Population and Family Life in favor of change in the traditional teaching. But the bishops of England, Ireland, Australia, the Iron Curtain countries, and most of the underdeveloped regions supported the Encyclical almost without question. In the over-all picture, the document tended to confuse the issue of commitment to responsible parenthood enunciated by Vatican Council II.⁴⁴ It also caused considerable anguish among Catholic couples who had made up their minds, in keeping with the conciliar directives on the right of parents to decide the number of their children, that contraceptive practices were licit. But the document had little effect on a widespread movement among married Catholics who felt themselves obliged to resort to artificial birth-control practices.

In 1955 a reliable study on the extent of family limitation in the U.S. was made from carefully drawn national samples of white married women aged 18 to 39 inclusive. The investigation concluded that 83 percent of fecund couples had used some means of family limitation prior to the interview, and only 4 percent did not intend to use any contraceptives at any time. Among couples married 10 years or over, 92 percent had attempted family limitation. Economic and educational differentials showed that 78 percent of wives in the 35 to 39 year bracket who had no more than a grade-school education used some family limitation. The percentage rose to between 91 and 97 percent for those with more than a grade-school education.

Among fecund Catholic wives, 70 percent had practiced family limitation before the interview and 11 percent expressed the intention to do so. While among all Catholic couples, 70 percent had either not tried to limit their family or used rhythm, 50 percent of those married at least ten years had used some method other than rhythm. In the over-all picture, 47 percent of Catholics, 89 percent of Protestants, and 96 per-

⁴³ See in particular the reaction of the U.S. theologians as quoted by R. Hoyt, *The Birth Control Debate* (Kansas City, 1968) pp. 179-212; W. H. Shannon, *The Lively Debate: Response to Humanae vitae* (New York, 1970).

⁴⁴ This was admitted by two notices in *Osservatore romano* in November 1968 (see *Documentation catholique* 1538, April 20, 1969, p. 366).

cent of Jews had used chemical or mechanical means.⁴⁵

By 1960 Catholic authorities had to acknowledge the good faith of those whom they considered to be in moral error because of their approval of contraception. The fact that Catholic fertility rates in the U.S. continued somewhat higher than non-Catholic birth rates suggested that the fairly well-to-do Catholic's values included a preference for large families.⁴⁶ Most recent studies indicate that while the official Church still exerts a strong conservative influence in the area of population policy, radical changes have taken place among the faithful in the last ten years. In 1965, research had indicated that a majority of Catholic couples were using illicit means of birth control. By 1970 the proportion of Catholics employing contraceptives had grown even higher.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, the Encyclical *Humanae vitae* had appeared and served as a catalyst in forcing the liberal group of theologians and clergy to stress the teaching of *Gaudium et spes* that companionship and conjugal love are equally valid purposes of marriage and have to be balanced against the procreative functions.

While a large majority of Catholics are still opposed to unrestricted availability of abortion services, between 1965 and 1970 the proportion of Catholic women who endorsed the idea of abortion in cases of rape increased from 43 to 63 percent.⁴⁸ However, the recent reiteration of the Church's hard line against abortion and the stirring of Catholic consciences through Pro Life movements in developed countries are making a considerable difference in the attitude of most of the faithful. Many advocates of abortion as a method of birth control feel it is the lesser of two evils when compared with bringing unwanted or defective children into the world. While they would prefer to have people utilize contraceptive means, they feel that abortion should be available as a backup for accidents that result in unwanted pregnancies. While the Catholic Church and most of its members are unalterably opposed to abortion, a

⁴⁵ See R. Freedman, P. K. Whelpton, and A. A. Campbell, *Family Planning, Sterility and Population Growth* (New York, 1959).

⁴⁶ See Thomas K. Burch, "Catholic Parish Priests and Birth Control: A Comparative Study," *Studies in Family Planning* 2 (June 1971) 121-36. Recent study indicates that resistance to birth-control propaganda in so-called Catholic countries is not as influential as once imagined. See James P. Grant and William Rich, "Development, Social Justice, and Smaller Families," in *How Many People?* (New York: Foreign Policy Assn., 1974) pp. 27-28.

⁴⁷ Charles F. Westhoff, ed., *Toward the End of Growth: Population in America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973) pp. 168-170. Strangely, Westhoff believes that *Humanae vitae* returned the Church to the doctrine that procreation is the primary end of marriage.

⁴⁸ E. Jones and C. Westhoff, "Attitudes toward Abortion in the U.S. in 1970 and the Trend since 1965," in R. Parke and C. Westhoff, *Aspects of Population Growth* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Printing Office, 1973) pp. 569-78.

nuanced attitude toward its advocates is being suggested by many Catholic thinkers. The gradual awareness of a legitimate pluralism in respect to public issues was acknowledged by Vatican Council II in the Decree on Ecumenism and in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. It is supported by Pope Paul's Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniente* of May 14, 1971, where the Pope says:

In concrete situations, and taking account of solidarity in each person's life, one must recognize a legitimate variety of options. . . . From all Christians who at first sight find themselves in opposition as a result of starting from differing options [the Church] asks an effort of mutual understanding of the other's position and motives.^{48a}

Awareness of this development is gradually penetrating Catholic thinking, so that the faithful can respect their opponents on this and similar issues, and while continuing discussion in the hope of achieving a better appreciation of each other's viewpoint, they can continue to co-operate in confronting the larger issue of population control, and the social and economic development essential to its achievement.⁴⁹

In its November 1966 meeting, the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops opposed the United States government's policy that offered birth-control information and means to people requesting it. They said they were concerned with the threat such a policy presented to individual freedom, to the right to reproduce at will, to the right of privacy in family life, and to the right of liberty to determine the course of one's life. They accused government officials of coercing individuals to the practice of birth control by threats to withhold welfare assistance, and expressed grave concern in regard to foreign-aid policies based on a birth-control mentality.⁵⁰

The bishops' statement was controverted by government officials, and by other religious and Catholic groups, who pointed to the fact that poor, ignorant people did not enjoy liberty of choice in regard to reproduction, since they had neither the knowledge nor the means to choose freely and responsibly. It was not merely a right but an obligation of government to provide the knowledge and means so that there should be no discrimination between the rights of the rich and the poor in family life. As for the accusation of coercion and violation of privacy by what the bishops considered subtle pressures connected with welfare procedures, it was pointed out that similar charges of invading personal spheres of interest

^{48a} No. 50; AAS 63 (1970) 439.

⁴⁹ See G. Baum, "Abortion: An Ecumenical Dilemma," *Commonweal* 99 (1973) 231-35.

⁵⁰ "The Government and Birth Control," *Pastoral Letters of the American Hierarchy*, ed. H. J. Nolan (Huntington, Ind., 1971) pp. 600-603.

could be brought against government aid in almost any sphere of human endeavor from educational grants to farm subsidies.⁵¹

By 1973 this attitude of the U.S. bishops had changed to a point of admitting the obligation of the government to concern itself with these matters and to provide both information and effective means on the domestic scene as well as in foreign assistance and development programs. In their November meeting the bishops said:

Public authorities can provide information and recommend policies regarding population, provided these are in conformity with moral law, and respect the rightful freedom of married couples. . . . Men and women should be informed of scientific advances in methods of family planning whose safety has been well proven and which are in accord with the moral law. . . . Finally we urge the U.S. government to increase foreign assistance programs to the developing nations, especially to those nations where population problems are complicating economic and social development.⁵²

Acknowledging that shortages of food, housing, schools, and jobs generate extraordinary pressures on governments trying to develop dignified and equitable living standards for their people, the bishops cited rapid population growth as an element aggravating these pressures. They affirmed the right of government to concern itself with population problems of its own nation in the hope of bringing about those conditions in which married couples, without undue material, physical, or psychological pressure, could exercise responsible freedom in determining family size.⁵³

Women's Rights

Vatican II focused attention on the situation of women in the Church and gave impetus to the Catholic wing of the women's-rights movement. The emancipation of women from *Kirche, Küche und Kinder* and their involvement in policy making as well as in official positions in the Church are slowly being acknowledged. The effect on family structure and on the problem of fertility is substantial. The exercise of independent judgment in regard to having and spacing children is becoming more noticeable. Thus, the bishops in the Roman Synod of 1971 were forced to take note of this development and to give it endorsement.⁵⁴

⁵¹ See John A. O'Brien, *Family Planning in an Exploding Population* (New York, 1968) pp. 92-115.

⁵² "Population and the Catholic: A Positive Approach," *Origins: NC Documentary Service* 3 (Nov. 29, 1973) 256.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 255-56.

⁵⁴ See *The Quest For Justice*, ed. W. R. Callahan, P. J. Henriot, and W. F. Ryan (Washington, D.C.: Center of Concern, June 25, 1972) p. 5.

While a revolutionary change in sexual morality has been in the making since before World War II, it has been given new dimensions by the separation of sexuality from fertility through the new artificial contraceptive methods. The result for women's rights is obvious. But so is the obligation of women to concern themselves with the moral developments calling for a new ethic. In the mind of many churchmen, the current breakdown in sexual morality is due to a concentration on hedonism and a return to the worst features of paganism. This is a shortsighted viewpoint. These elements are present, but they are not the total inducement. Also involved is a new sense of personal freedom. For many, this has meant a lapse into what traditional morality considers licentiousness. But for many others, this freedom involves a new sense of personal responsibility for the shaping of their lives and for their rights and responsibilities when contemplating the possibility of marriage and of giving birth to new life.⁵⁵

The Love Ethic

Over the centuries a curious dichotomy had developed in the Christian ethic regarding marriage and the family. The tension between the rights of the individual and the common good was not analyzed sufficiently from a sociological viewpoint. The moralists presumed that individual rights had to cede before the requirements of society; and this principle was applied specifically to the regulation of marriage. The preservation of the family as an institution was given precedence over all personal rights. One consequence of this doctrine was a failure to take into consideration the well-being of the individual married person, particularly in his or her striving for the harmony and affection needed to consolidate the marriage bond. Instead, full emphasis was placed on conjugal obligations—in Augustine's analysis, *proles, fides et sacramentum*—offspring, fidelity, and sacrament. Because the rights of the individual vis-à-vis these objective norms were hardly considered, almost no headway was made in confronting the psychological and human difficulties leading to the breakup of marital unions.⁵⁶ Total attention was focused on the obligation of "rendering the debt," particularly by the woman. Individual roles and desires were suppressed in favor of the family and of safeguarding the sacrament. The latter was taken in an almost mechanical sense as completed once the marriage ceremony had been duly celebrated and the coital act performed.

⁵⁵ Charles Curran, *Contemporary Problems in Moral Theology* (Notre Dame, 1970) pp. 159-88; Andrew Greeley, *The New Agenda* (New York, 1973) pp. 132-67; *Sexual Intimacy* (Chicago, 1973).

⁵⁶ See J. Marshall, *Catholics, Marriage and Contraception* (Baltimore, 1965); G. Martelet, *Existence humaine et amour* (Paris, 1969).

A significant change in this regard was registered in Pius XI's Encyclical *Casti connubii* (1931): while vigorously condemning artificial birth control, it developed an ethic of love between the spouses as essential to the proper ordering of marriage. This development was practically ignored by the Vatican juridical offices dealing with marriage. It was not allowed to affect the legalistic approach to the sacrament that was incorporated into the schema on marriage put together by the antepreparatory commission of Vatican Council II. The word "love" was used once in an appendix to this document.⁵⁷

However, the teaching of Pius XI had been developed by a number of "personalist" theologians led by Dom Hubert Doms in his book *The Meaning and End of Marriage*, where he made a careful distinction between meaning and end.⁵⁸ For Doms, the meaning is the realization of unity of the two persons, the scriptural two-in-oneness.⁵⁹ It has an objective that is both personal and specific. The personal end is the perfection and mutual completion of the spouses on every level of their existence. The specific end is the child. But just as marriage has meaning in itself, so the sex act is first and always a union of two persons which finds its highest expression in the way that husband and wife entrust themselves to one another physically. Thus the sexual act is far more than an act of generation; it is the fulfilment of the two persons.

In the controversy that followed the publication of Doms's book, Roman-trained theologians reacted unfavorably. A decision of the Holy Office in 1944 declared that the traditional teaching of the Church regarding the primary and secondary ends of marriage was still obligatory. However, in a talk to Italian midwives in October 1951, Pius XII asserted that the 1944 Holy Office pronouncement should not be interpreted as diminishing or minimizing the personal values in marriage that are essential and of substantial worth. Parents are not simply progenitors. They are personal beings, and their sexual activities are more than mere biological acts. They are personal commitments expressing loving and mutual surrender.⁶⁰

In the period following World War II, a call was sounded for a total reorientation of the Church's moral thinking and teaching. In Germany and France, in particular, moral theologians sought new ways of

⁵⁷ The antepreparatory commission for marriage based its considerations on canon 1013 of the Code of Canon Law. Cf. *Schema constitutionis de castitate, virginitate, matrimonio, familia, Pars altera: De matrimonio et familia* (Vatican Press, 1962).

⁵⁸ H. Doms, *Von Sinn und Zweck der Ehe* (Breslau, 1935). See the appreciation of Doms's contribution in G. Martelet, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-36.

⁵⁹ Mt 19:5-6.

⁶⁰ Decree of the Holy Office, AAS 36 (1944) 103; Pius XII, Discourse to Midwives, AAS 53 (1951) 853-54.

accommodating the Church's traditional attitudes and teachings to the new philosophies and life styles. In 1954 Bernard Häring provided a concrete model of the new approach in *The Law of Christ*.⁶¹ Then, with the discovery of the anovulant pills in 1957, despite the immediate attempt by Pius XII to solve the ensuing moral dilemma by referring to the action of these drugs as sterilants, a great debate broke out among theologians that continued down to 1968 and was faithfully chronicled by A. Valsecchi.⁶²

Meanwhile, Vatican II in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World had changed the nature of the argument by introducing a new frame of reference. *Gaudium et spes* in its teaching on marriage ended the domination of the primary and secondary ends. The conciliar fathers, after a spirited debate, described marriage as a "community of love," and, carefully avoiding the terminology of primary and secondary ends, spoke of the natural ordering of marriage and conjugal love to procreation.⁶³ The Council assured parents that they alone had the right to make a judgment on the number of children they should have. But in so doing, it cautioned (no. 50):

They will thoughtfully take into account both their own welfare and that of their children, those already born and those which may be foreseen. For this accounting they will reckon with both the material and the spiritual conditions of the times as well as of their state in life. Finally, they will consult the interests of the family group, of temporal society, and of the Church herself.⁶⁴

This teaching was further nuanced with a caution against "breaking off the intimacy of married life" when they "find themselves in circumstances where at least temporarily the size of their families should not be increased." Insisting that the moral aspects of any procedure to be used in regulating the transmission of life depended on objective standards, the Council refrained from entering the debate over the problem of methods, deferring to the decision of the Holy Father, whose Commission for the Study of Population and Family Life had this matter

⁶¹ B. Häring, *Das Gesetz Christi* (Freiburg, 1954; 8th ed., 1967); Eng. tr., *The Law of Christ* (3 vols.; Westminster, Md., 1961-66). A reorientation was called for by F. Tillman, *Handbuch der katholischen Sittenlehre 3: Die Idee der Nachfolge Christi* (4th ed.; Düsseldorf, 1953); J. B. Gillon, "La théologie morale et l'éthique de l'exemplarité personnelle," *Angelicum* 34 (1957) 241-59, 361-78; P. Delhaye, "La théologie d'hier et d'aujourd'hui," *Revue des sciences religieuses* 27 (1953) 112-30; O. Lottin, *Morale fondamentale* (Paris, 1954).

⁶² A. Valsecchi, *Controversy: The Birth Control Debate 1958-1968* (Washington, D.C., 1968).

⁶³ See *ibid.*, pp. 119-52.

⁶⁴ W. Abbott and J. Gallagher, *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York, 1966) p. 254.

under consideration.⁶⁵ But the Council declared that the moral evaluation of sexual conduct should be based on the consideration of "man's person and his acts." In *Humanae vitae* the Pope chose to ignore this innovation and returned to the traditional bases of "marriage and its acts." This reversal gave weight to the accusation that the papal decision repudiated the Council teaching and returned to a biological foundation for its moral evaluation.⁶⁶

In dealing with the population problem as such, the Council acknowledged the obligation of government officials to deal with demographic matters, particularly in social legislation as it affects families, in migration to the cities, and in information relative to the conditions and needs of the nation. Finally, however, while asserting that human beings should be judiciously informed of scientific advances in the exploration of methods whereby spouses can be aided in arranging the number of their children, the Council stated: "In view of the inalienable human right to marry and beget children, the question of how many children should be born belongs to the honest judgment of parents. The question can in no way be committed to the decision of government."⁶⁷

Of great pertinence to the problem of fertility control, of course, is the attention the Council paid to the "material and spiritual conditions of the times" and to the "interests of the family and temporal society." This teaching would seem to indicate clearly that parents have an obligation not to beget children when they are convinced by their own circumstances or the advisement of public authorities that the exercise of their reproductive rights would be a definite detriment to the well-being of local or global society.

Environment

In his message to the participants of the UN Conference on the Environment (June 5, 1972), Pope Paul VI acknowledged the fact that "man and his environment shape the life and development of man." On this premise, the Pope called for a respect for the laws that govern nature's dynamism and its capacity for regeneration. He condemned the use of atomic, chemical, and bacteriological weapons outright, and signaled the dangers in the upheavals in the biosphere caused by the undisciplined exploitation of the planet's physical resources, including the pollution of soil, air, and water and the waste of unrenowable raw materials. He recognized the danger of self-destruction attendant upon

⁶⁵ *Gaudium et spes*, no. 51; cf. *Documents*, p. 256, n. 173.

⁶⁶ See R. A. McCormick, "Notes on Moral Theology," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 29 (1968) 729.

⁶⁷ *Gaudium et spes*, no. 87; *Documents*, p. 302.

further exploitation of natural resources.

The Pope said that just as the population problem is not to be solved by limiting access to life, so the problem of the environment cannot be coped with in terms of technology alone. "Technological measures," he asserted, "will be ineffective unless accompanied by a radical change of mentality." Calling for a discovery in time of the way to master material growth, Paul said that both public and private agencies must regulate the environment for the well-being of mankind.⁶⁸

The significance of this papal awareness seems obvious. While recognizing the obligation of people to use the earth's goods moderately, the Pope indicated the right of government to intervene in preventing further abuse of the earth's riches. But this can only be accomplished by limiting man's rights to an overuse or exploitation of material things. The obligation of the state to interfere directly in curbing what has been considered a natural right in the use of property introduces the question whether this principle can be extended to the problem of fertility control when it becomes evident that high population intensity is proving a direct danger to the environment. The immediate negative reaction based upon the assertion that "the environment is for man, not man for the environment," must be modified by the Pope's acknowledgement that "man and his environment shape the development of man." This fact could lead to an interference with human liberties in procreation in favor of the common good of a state or the community of nations.⁶⁹

SOCIOLOGICAL SOLUTION

In approaching the demographic crisis, Philip Hauser speaks in terms of a "social morphological revolution."⁷⁰ The phrase includes the concentration of people on relatively small portions of the earth's surface or urbanization; the intergroup conflicts due to the diversity of culture,

⁶⁸ "The world man lives in is not a *res nullius*, the property of no one; it is a *res omnium*, the patrimony of mankind. Those responsible for the environment, both private and public agencies, must regulate the environment for the well-being of all men, for man himself is the first and greatest wealth of the earth" (*Osservatore romano*, June 7, 1972, p. 1).

⁶⁹ In his address to the 24th Anniversary of the FAO in Rome (Nov. 16, 1970) Pope Paul spoke of the need for "those responsible to work with fearlessness and generosity for the development of the whole man and every man; this, among other effects, will undoubtedly favor a rational control of birth by couples capable of freely assuming their destiny." He referred to J. M. Albertini, "Famine, controle des naissances et responsabilites internationales," *Economie et humanisme* 171 (Lyons, 1966) 1-10; P. Praverdand, "Les pays nantis et la limitation des naissances dans le Tiers-Monde," *Développement et civilisation* 39-40 (Paris, 1970) 1-40.

⁷⁰ Philip M. Hauser, *Rapid Population Growth: Consequence and Policy Implications* (Baltimore, 1971); "The Chaotic Society: Product of the Social Morphological Revolution," *American Sociological Review*, Feb. 1969, pp. 1-19.

language, religion, values, and life styles of people who live in too close contact, mainly in urban areas; finally, the technological advances in the use of energy, means of transportation, and communication. Hauser employs the terms "implosion" for the rapid urbanization process, "displasion" for the conflict of aspirations between the disparate groups, and "technoplosion" for the rapid introduction of advanced services. He concludes his analysis of the population situation by stating that implosion and displasion will probably create more human misery before the end of the century than will population increase. But he acknowledges that the demographic explosion presents a grave danger to the food, energy, and resources potential, and threatens environmental degradation, while presenting severe obstacles to the aspirations of the underdeveloped peoples and nations.⁷¹

In the sociological analysis of family-planning policies, Hauser asserts, three types of programs are often confused, though they are diverse: conception control, birth control, and population control. Conception control is the means by which conception is prevented: behavioral, mechanical, chemical, physiological, and surgical. Birth control involves abortion as well as conception control. Population control means policy and programs concerned with all components of demographic change, including fertility, mortality, migration, and the milieu that affects them. The economically well-to-do nations have achieved substantial control of fertility and growth. The developing nations, with over two thirds of mankind, exercise relatively little control over family size and do so mainly by abortion. The efforts of government in the underdeveloped nations to achieve viable family planning can be interpreted not only as efforts to control family size but to substitute conception control for abortion.⁷²

Given the present situation in any nation, he asks, what are the alternative paths to zero growth? And which one or combination of alternatives is feasible and desirable? There is no short cut to zero growth. It has even been suggested that too fast a fall in birth and growth rates may produce problems as difficult as those which are apparently being avoided.⁷³ Consequently, targets for population control should

⁷¹ Philip M. Hauser, "Population Criteria in Foreign Aid Programs," in J. P. Wogaman, ed., *The Population Crisis and Moral Responsibility* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1973) pp. 233-51. Hauser believes that the main impetus for the civil strife in Northern Ireland, Biafra, Bangladesh, and other areas of racial and ethnic difficulty can be traced to displasion.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 248.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 249. Hauser addresses himself to the various theses proposed in "optimum population," "effective population policy," and other "simplistic solutions" and refers to the Rockefeller Commission's Report on *Population and the American Future* (1972) as, despite its limitations, the most balanced of official proposals thus far.

include continued lowering of mortality and a closing of the gap in mortality rates generated by differences in socioeconomic status, an equitable control of immigration and emigration, a reasonable population distribution accompanying urban renewal and rural development, full attention to environmental balance and ecological dangers, increased equality of opportunity for diverse population groupings by elimination of discriminatory attitudes and practices towards minorities, and increased quality of population through equal opportunity for education and the acquisition of skills.⁷⁴

In a spirited attack on the prophets of drastic solutions, Hauser criticizes the advocates of "population criteria" as concentrating too narrowly on high fertility-growth rates and economic development, leaving out of consideration human and political facts. He chides the Paddocks, Ehrlich, Hardin, and the Meadows *et al.* of *Limits to Growth* for failing to consider the many factors beyond population that limit a nation's growth potential.⁷⁵ He cites a pre-Newtonian outlook, the power control exercised by the elite, structures guiding the allocation of income and resources, political corruption, work ethic, religious and cultural values, national aspirations, and the ability of a government to mobilize collective action. In relation to these and other pertinent factors, he maintains that population growth must be evaluated in keeping with the weight it deserves. By way of illustration, he cites the often quoted example of success in family planning achieved by Taiwan, Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong. But he maintains that these areas had achieved significant decreases in fertility long before large-scale family-planning programs were introduced.⁷⁶

There is a striking parallel between these prescriptions and the official attitudes of the churches, particularly in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Pope John's and Pope Paul's social encyclicals, and the policy statements of the World Council of Churches. Pope Paul's solution is contained in the idea of development.⁷⁷ It includes the reorientation of all factors affecting human life—social, economic, political, medical, cultural, and religious. This approach does envision the need for fertility control, but it takes exception to what it considers illicit means, such as artificial contraceptives, abortion, and sterilization. The Protestant churches as represented by the World

⁷⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 249.

⁷⁵ See D. H. Meadows, D. L. Meadows, Jørgen Randers, William Behrens III, eds., *The Limits to Growth* (New York, 1972). Hauser remarks with acerbity that "a limit to growth of population was widely publicized by Malthus towards the end of the 18th century, a conclusion reached without the use of a computer" (*op. cit.*, p. 247).

⁷⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 238.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Populorum progressio*, where he indicates that development is the new word for peace. A similar idea is embodied in *Octogesima adveniente* (1971).

Council of Churches agree with the holistic approach, but accept artificial contraceptives as a reasonable solution at the family level. Some non-Roman churches, with the exception of the Orthodox, concede that abortion could be a legitimate resolution in special cases.⁷⁸

The policy of development is considered outmoded by recent theologians and activists, particularly in Latin America, who promote an ideology of total liberation. Proceeding from a perception of society locked into a pattern of domination and dependence, this theology attempts to liberate man from social and economic servitude. The evil it opposes resides less in the malice of individual men than in unjust political structures and systems, monopolistic capital economies, and international trade. Establishment violence must be resisted by revolutionary violence. In this perspective, developmentalism without radical change in the structure of political and financial power is rejected as self-defeating gradualism. Foreign aid and investment without radical change in the organization of government power and economic potential will only increase the domination of the rich nations and classes over the poor. As an ideology, this approach is greatly influenced by the Marxists; but it is fundamentally Christian in origin and inspiration. Characteristic of the New Left in Latin America, it has been acknowledged by papal social thinking with great caution.⁷⁹

Incentives and Control

In the documents dealing with population emanating from the UN, concern is focused on the exercise of basic rights vis-à-vis family life and fertility. No attempt is made to confront the question, at what point can government interfere to insist upon the common good over the rights of the individual when the exercise of the latter's prerogative to beget children becomes a clear and imminent danger to the rest of mankind? In a UN Report on the World Plan of Action, all countries are urged to respect, regardless of their over-all demographic goals, the right of couples to determine, in a free, informed, and responsible manner, the number and spacing of their children.⁸⁰ The answer to the hard question, however, involves a most difficult dilemma and can only be approached by way of a consideration of the development of moral perspectives in the immediate past.

⁷⁸ Cf. G. Baum, "Abortion: An Ecumenical Dilemma," *Commonweal* 99 (1973) 232.

⁷⁹ Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y., 1973); Phillip E. Berryman, "Latin American Liberation Theology," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 34 (1973) 357-95; I. Illich, "Birth Control et conscience politique," *Esprit* 37 (1969) 1056-69.

⁸⁰ United Nations World Population Conference, 1974 (Sept. 21, 1973: E/CN, 9/292, p. 13).

The evolution of principles concerned with social and economic problems between Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* in 1891 and John XXIII's *Mater et magistra* in 1961 is normative. The treatment of the right to private property and the moral limits to its use arising from the duty to pursue the common good provides a balance between the individual, his relation to the natural world, and social existence in the economic field. In Leo's thinking, the need to preserve the dignity and freedom of the human person against state interference and expropriation was paramount. Limits to property ownership are dictated by the obligation of the owner to support the worker and his family. At the same time, government is obliged to create conditions under which it is possible for employers to pay a just wage without being destroyed by competition.⁸¹

Pius XI's *Quadragesimo anno* in 1931 confirmed this teaching and suggested the corporate state as one possible way of assuring its implementation.⁸² For Pope John, "the daily more complex interdependence of citizens . . . due to . . . technical and scientific progress, greater productivity and efficiency, and a higher standard of living . . . are a cause of the growing intervention of the public authorities in matters that pertain to the more intimate aspects of personal life."⁸³

John named the process of government intervention "socialization" and accepted it as just despite minor reservations. This development is acknowledged by Paul VI in his 1967 Encyclical *Populorum progressio*, where he reaffirms the teaching of *Gaudium et spes* on the right of all men in charity and justice to have a fair share of worldly goods. He insists that "all other rights, whatever they are, including property rights and the right to free trade, must be subordinated to this norm."⁸⁴ Again, in *Octogesima adveniente* of 1971, this teaching is expanded in discussing the aspiration to equality and participation of individuals and groups.⁸⁵

In the evolution of Catholic moral teaching there is a considerable contrast between this development and the doctrine on family life and the begetting of children. In *Rerum novarum* Leo XIII affirmed: "No human law can abolish the natural and primitive rights of marriage, or in any way limit the chief and principal purpose of marriage [expressed in the biblical] 'increase and multiply'" (Gn 1:28). In *Casti connubii* Pius XI granted the state a role in the procreative area as a protective

⁸¹ *Rerum novarum*, nos. 35 ff.; *Mater et magistra*, nos. 68-103.

⁸² *Quadragesimo anno*, no. 79. See the interesting remarks on the writing of this Encyclical by Oswald Nell-Breuning, S.J., "Quadragesimo anno," *Stimmen der Zeit* 187 (1971) 291-93.

⁸³ *Mater et magistra*, nos. 59 and 60.

⁸⁴ *Populorum progressio*, no. 23.

⁸⁵ *Octogesima adveniente*, no. 24.

influence in the social context of the family; but the freedom of the married couple to procreate is insisted upon vigorously. In *Gaudium et spes* as well as in *Humanae vitae* there is an explicit denial of the government's right to determine the number of children a couple should have. Nevertheless, considering the rising agitation in favor of governmental responsibility before the mounting crisis of population growth and the threatening inadequacy of food and human resources, the problem of coercion has to be faced.

Incentives and Coercion

The frequently proposed use of incentives to discourage people from having children elicits complex ethical and practical problems. Since the 1930's, a number of countries, particularly in the developed regions, have had pronatalist policies supported by tax, monetary, and service benefits for parents with children. They have been reasonably successful.⁶⁶ Experience with disincentives has not had a similar success. Besides, the attempt to persuade people not to have children through the threat of penalties brings in various dangers, the most obvious of which is penalizing children through monetary or tax sanctions visited on their parents. In any system that would amount to a licensing of couples to have one or two children, again discrimination against the poor becomes an immediate probability. Recent experience seems to indicate that in underdeveloped lands in particular, people will not pay attention to government propaganda directed at implementing birth-control programs unless they are motivated at their own level of understanding; even then, there is the problem of inducing them to continue to take the trouble involved in using birth-control measures. Thus the question arises whether under the threat of catastrophe strong measures might be resorted to, eventually arriving at forced abortion or sterilization.

The churches have recognized the right of society to set an age for marriage, to compel people to submit to medical examination before marriage to prevent the spread of disease, and to prohibit marriage within degrees of consanguinity. Society likewise acknowledges the right of the state to interfere in the case of incompetent parents and to protect children by removing them from parental neglect or abuse. It submits to the state's restraining power in many other areas of human interest and concern. In the past, cruel means of punishment, including maiming and

⁶⁶ Cf. *Measures, Policies and Programmes Affecting Fertility*, pp. 145-147; Robert Veatch, "Governmental Incentives: Ethical Issues at Stake," in J. P. Wogaman, ed., *The Population Crisis and Moral Responsibility*, pp. 207-24; Edward Pohlman, "Incentives: Not Ideal, but Necessary," *ibid.*, pp. 225-32; Arthur Dyck, "Population Policies and Ethical Responsibility," in *Rapid Population Growth: Some Consequences and Some Public Policy Implications* (Baltimore, 1971).

mutilation, were tolerated as necessary for the good of society; and even the strange custom of castrating young singers to protect the youthful quality of voice was justified by some theologians.

Thus, in the present race between population and food, it is not inconceivable that a serious effort might be made by government to take drastic measures. In the hypothesis that the situation was truly desperate, could the state order men of a certain age to undergo vasectomy, and women with, e.g., two children to be sterilized? Pushed to the wall, the answer could be in the affirmative. But at this juncture it is most probable that human ingenuity in evading governmental regulations would interfere to obviate the effect of such an edict. Other factors, such as war, famine, pestilence, and revolt, would certainly be threatening, thus rendering such a solution futile. Before reacting in horror at the drastic possibility of such governmental action, the moralist as well as the churches will recall the Hitlerian and Stalinist atrocities, and realize how vital it is to give total attention now to the alarming and all-embracing dangers of the population problem.

A final solution is proposed by way of genetic engineering. This involves both the attempt to ameliorate the human species by siphoning out defective genes, and cloning, or the reproduction of a specific individual from the culture of one of his single cells. Considerable progress has been made in both these fields in animal culture, and experiments are under way applying these techniques to human reproduction. Whatever may be the development within the order of physical reality, there is no intrinsic moral problem if the end of cloning is not a new person with intelligence and freedom. A grave moral problem is involved, however, in the methods used and in the attempt to reproduce human life outside the context of marriage and family life. For the time being, these problems do not seem to have grave influence on population problems. But what might have to be confronted is the use of gene screening to eliminate reproduction either temporarily or altogether. If this were possible, it would raise serious ethical difficulties, for it would risk changing the nature of man and thus depriving him of an inalienable right involved with human dignity.⁸⁷

In the thinking of the United Nations and the Christian churches, coercion of the individual to birth-control practices is illicit. It offends against basic rights fundamental to human dignity. It is likewise an admission of the failure of the nations to correct the real sources of the threatening breakdown in civilization that is caused by the production of modern armaments, monopolistic financial maneuverings, and the

⁸⁷ Cf. Michael P. Hamilton, ed., *The New Genetics and the Future of Man* (Grand Rapids, 1972). Cf. also the September 1972 issue of *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES*, a special theme issue on Genetic Science and Man.

overconsumption of world resources. If coercion is to be utilized, it must be applied to society as a whole in programs of world austerity, decreasing the abuse of the biosphere, and gradually extending controls of resources with equity to all echelons of society. Here a difficulty arises in that it has been the economically advanced nations that have been the greatest offenders in the overuse of world resources. As the underdeveloped nations reach the transition level, they feel they should not be prevented from enjoying at least some of the luxuries which the affluent society commands.

CONCLUSION

The end result of the discussion thus far indicates a convergence of three elements intimately concerned with the renewal potential of the earth: the United Nations, the demographers, and the churches. The common denominator of their interest is a realization that the world crisis in population and food resources cannot be solved by fertility control alone. Population problems are an element of a complex of factors that must be solved in the economic, social, and political order while working toward a proper balance in the demographic sphere. Nevertheless, the dangers inherent in the current imbalance of population vs. resources and life necessities cannot be ignored. While every effort is made to feed, clothe, educate, and employ people, there is still need for highly responsible fertility control.

The problem has many facets. In the developed nations there is danger of the disfunction of values due to a consumer ethos that, when threatened by a cutback in favor of a more equitable use of world resources, immediately shows signs of an economic depression. In turn, this menace endangers the foreign assistance and development programs initiated by developed nations that must cut back to save the home economy. Nevertheless, the pursuit of austerity as a government program deserves immediate consideration. If states in the past have been able to inspire or force men to risk their lives in war or pestilence for patriotic motives or national survival, it should not be impossible for nations now to employ similar methods of persuasion to prolong human survival with honor and decency. The ethos of consumerism that prevails in most developed societies and among the well-to-do in underdeveloped nations cannot be allowed to dominate world aspirations for tomorrow. As a derogation from rational pursuit of human life through the abuse of the world's goods, this phenomenon has contributed maximally to the pollution of the air, water, and soil, and the exhaustion of natural resources.

In the progression from individual to family and on to societal

responsibility required for a just solution of present difficulties, effort must be made to avoid the suppression and coercion of the individual that frequently resulted from the parameters of the tribal or extended families of the past. A quantum leap in human awareness separates the social phenomena involved in the concepts of the extended and of the nuclear family. However, the prosecution of the rights of the individual that demands a breakaway from the forces of tradition and custom must not be allowed to destroy the security and life direction furnished by the older structures. In the new situation, the deprivation of a societal awareness that afflicts many individuals has a deleterious effect on their sense of responsibility vis-à-vis the rights of others. When this imbalance in social consciousness pervades marital relations, it invariably does damage to offspring, and eventually to society.

In the Middle Ages the Church justified its involvement in the political order *ratione peccati*. In modern society a failure to face up to the totality of modern man's dilemmas would constitute a grave sin on the Church's part. Certainly, the problem of population is an area of fundamental moral responsibility. The Church can use its great persuasive powers to inspire people not only to a grave sense of responsibility for their own well-being and the conscientious use of their rights within marriage, but also to a communitarian vision of world society in which the individual recognizes the fact that "no man is an island." Co-operation between the churches and with the United Nations and other organizations intent on solving the present population crisis is a moral obligation that falls on the individual, the family, and religious groups from parishes to world-wide institutions. Within this perspective the new population debate should achieve its proper significance and effect.