

A Sustainable Environment: Our Obligation to Protect God's Gift

by
George P. Nassos

Is There a Solution to Population Growth and World Hunger?

During the past few months, there have been numerous TV shows, events and written articles dealing with planet earth. One of the issues that is being treated as alarming is the population growth rate. During the time of Jesus Christ, there were about 150 million people on this earth. It took almost 1900 years to reach one billion people, but it took only a little over 100 more years to add another five billion people. At the current growth rate, we could reach nine billion people by 2050. Can the earth handle this population? Can we produce enough food to feed nine billion people? Will there be enough fuel to produce and transport the food to this number of people?

In an earlier article, I described an experiment where scientists placed 29 deer on an island that had no predators but sufficient agricultural growth to sustain about 2,000 reindeer. After a number of years, the population of the deer grew to about 6,000, giving some thought that the scientists had miscalculated the potential of the island. A few years later, due to disease and starvation, the population went down to 42 deer and never increased above that number. The 6,000 deer had exceeded the carrying capacity of the island to an extent that it collapsed in terms of renewable substances such as food. Are we heading that way with planet earth?

As the population has been increasing during the past 100 years, there seems to have always been about one billion poor people that are hungry. As we produce more food to feed the increased population, we continue to have about one billion hungry people. It appears that an increase in population is met with an increase in food production, but this stimulates another increase in population. Food produced in the developed countries (U.S., Canada, Western Europe, U.K., Japan & Australia) is plentiful, and this is where the population growth rate is zero or even negative. The underdeveloped countries, where food is less abundant and even scarce, contribute greatly to the increase in population. Why is that? Perhaps it is because the children in the developed countries are considered a burden to the family and are not expected to contribute to the family's income, whereas in the developing countries, the children are necessary for gathering food and fuel for the family to survive, and they contribute to the family's income. But where is it going to end? About 20 to 30 years ago, we exceeded the carrying capacity of planet earth with six billion people.

It appears that somehow the earth needs to be regulated in terms of population growth and consumption, and if we don't do it ourselves, it could lead to a disaster – or perhaps, God will step in to help. But should we expect God to intervene in order to solve this problem? He has done this before when He warned Noah. Was the tsunami of

a few years ago a warning – or message – of what may be necessary? Or is it up to us to solve this problem? Do we have the will to do it?

Can we really expect God to save us? If a tourist is attacked by, say, a tiger and is killed, you might ask why didn't God intervene and save the tourist. Or if a swimmer is attacked and killed by a shark, why didn't God kill the shark to save the swimmer. Or if a person is bitten by an insect carrying a deadly bacteria, why wasn't the insect or even the bacteria eradicated? Does God play favorites or does He love all living things. Has He given us will-power so we can do what is necessary to solve our problems, or are we going to wait for God to solve this problem? In a recent movie titled "Children of Men", all the women on earth suddenly become infertile, a situation that would reduce our population significantly in just a few decades. Hopefully, we are not waiting for something like this to save us. We need to take action – now. In the same manner, we need to take action on solving the global warming problem, or else we may experience some of the scenes from the futuristic movie "The Day After Tomorrow" when a major city is flooded from the rising ocean.