

Balanced View, April 2006

This and the other back issues of newsletters are archived here so that interested parties can learn about the kinds of activities in which World Population Balance is involved and learn about the importance of our growing population problem. To receive timely information in our free newsletter, please subscribe to our newsletter.

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Public Radio Responses Exciting!

Responses to our public radio announcements have been exciting and highly encouraging! Our messages are reaching hundreds of thousands of additional Upper Midwest residents on a daily basis. Respondents are in several categories. First are the many of you who chose to increase your generous support from previous years. Thank you. Another group includes listeners who had not supported us in the past and now choose to do so. We deeply appreciate your support, as well.

We are hearing from others in a third and probably very large group of people being educated by our messages. They tell us how much our messages and web site are helping them understand the crucial importance of humanely slowing and stopping population growth as well as reducing resource consumption. We are thrilled to be educating these additional tens of thousands of people about the realities of this mega-issue. The box shows one of the messages we have aired in recent weeks. Here is another one:

Programming is supported by World Population Balance, a Minnesota non-profit focusing on the future of working to humanely balance increasing population with declining resources for generations to come. More at WorldPopulationBalance.org .

If funding allows we would like to greatly expand our media campaign. We are considering commercial radio, billboards, and television as prime possibilities. If you have any ideas or connections with people in the media or advertising field, please call our office (612-869-1640).

Thank you very much for your help!

"Are you asking for my money? Then listen up!"

Many of you have told us how astounded and frustrated you are that so many Americans still think increasing world and/or national population is not a problem. Member Boyd Wilcox sends the following letter to organizations requesting funds in hopes of reminding them that increasing population is an enemy of all their charitable efforts. You are welcome to use it.

Dear People at _____ :

You do good work and valuable work, as your fund-raising letter indicates. But there is a fundamental flaw, a crucial missing element in your advocacy. The conclusions of the 1972 Rockefeller Commission tell what is missing:

... We have concluded that ... no substantial benefits will result from further growth of the Nation's population; rather, that gradual stabilization of our population would contribute significantly to the Nation's ability to solve its problems.

These words were presented more than 34 years ago, when the U.S. had 90 million fewer people. But our great nation has yet to respond. The problem/issues you care so much about are heavily impacted by the increasing scale and complexity that inexorably flow from continued growth of U.S. population.

We desperately need a National Population Policy designed to stabilize population at a level/range deemed sustainable for the long-term future. Use a portion of your group's resources to advocate a National Population Policy. Join with other groups to do likewise, not as an end game, but as a starting point for ... the Nation's ability to solve its problems.

A National Population Policy will, in the long run, ensure your group's success, as well as the nation's. Do this, and I'll consider sending you money, but not until.

Sincerely,

The Costliest War of All Time

Right now all six and a half billion of us on the planet are involved in a war that most people have heard nothing about. By far, it is the most costly war the world has ever seen and probably ever will! Unlike all others, this is a quiet war. Unlike recent wars with weapons like ships, tanks, planes and smart bombs the weapons of this war are scientific-research-evidence and words. It's very much a war of words.

Basically, there are two armies in this war, and all six and a half billion of us are in one or the other. As I describe the two, I invite you to choose which one you're in or would like to be in.

Most of the world's senior scientists lead the first army. They are shocked and alarmed by the rapid and unsustainable destruction of our planet's vital resources. Let me quote some of their primary concerns: Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment and on critical resources. If not checked, many of our current practices may so alter the living world that it will be unable to sustain life in the manner that we know. Fundamental changes are urgent if we are to avoid the collision our present course will bring about.

They continue: Pressures resulting from unrestrained population growth put demands on the natural world that can overwhelm any efforts to achieve a sustainable future. No more than a few decades remain before the chance to avert the threats we now confront will be lost and the prospects for humanity will be immeasurably diminished.

The second army consists of all the people who are unaware of the scientists' warnings that resources are being overexploited or who choose to deny that it's really a problem. Actually, most of humanity including nearly all American politicians, economists, and other leaders are in this group. They tell us not to worry because there are



From the President
By David Paxson

plenty of resources even though research data abounds that documents the decline of resources all around the world. They tell us not to worry because new technology will fix the problems even though most technology comes with high costs and added problems. (As the saying goes, there's no such thing as a free lunch.) They tell us that population growth is not a problem even though more people exist today in suffering and misery than the entire population of the planet a couple hundred years ago.

Earlier I said this war will be the most costly war of all time. That's because the current, rapid over-consumption of many vital resources is costly beyond calculation! In addition, hundreds of millions of our fellow human beings struggle every moment just to exist. And the poorest billion people exist in absolute poverty. Here is a definition of absolute poverty: a condition of existence so limited by malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid surroundings, high infant mortality and low life expectancy as to be beneath any reasonable definition of human decency. Of course, the human costs of hundreds of millions existing in such conditions are incalculable, as well! Allowing such overwhelming misery and suffering shatters the dignity of each of us.

I close with a word to those of you who are truly worried as I am about humanity's future. People are always asking me: *What can I do?*

Certainly, there are many things, and we list many on our web site. However, the most immediate and helpful thing you can do is to support World Population Balance financially. Our public radio underwriting is expensive, and in order to bring the topic to the **front burner** of more people, we need funds to continue programs already underway and start new campaigns.

So, if you are deeply concerned, we invite you renew your membership. Whether you contribute thirty-five dollars, a thousand dollars, or some other amount, we welcome your support.

We envision the day when everyone in this great country understands that increasing population on a finite planet is unsustainable. And with your help we will humanely stabilize our human numbers and create a global culture that will continue to thrive for thousands of years to come!

Plan B 2.0

Earth Policy Institute's Lester Brown has just published an updated version of Plan B: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble. This excellently researched and written book documents the decline of many of our planet's resources as human numbers continue rapidly increasing. Recently our member, Bill Milbrath, sent us the following article about Plan B 2.0 by his pastor, Ronald Johnson, of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

Jared Diamond, author of Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed was interviewed recently on National Public Radio. He talked about societies in the world's history that were confronted with major environmental challenges and failed to respond in a manner that enabled continued life. Diamond poses a question about this society and the world community. Will there be a sufficient response to the mounting signs of a global economy that is outgrowing the capacity of the earth to support it? Diamond is convinced that there are the skill and resources necessary to make appropriate changes in the way in which the human community functions, but he seems to wonder if there is the political will.

Lester Brown, of the Earth Policy Institute, seems to share the same feelings. He calls attention to the fact that we are consuming renewable resources faster than they can regenerate. Forests are shrinking, water tables are falling, and fisheries are declining. Oil is being used at increasingly rapid rates, with alternative energy sources nowhere near the level necessary to compensate for the inevitable decline of oil. Greenhouse gases are being generated much faster than nature can absorb. There is little doubt that the planet is under great stress and civilization is in deep trouble. There are no societies within the world that are safe, since we live in a thoroughly interdependent world.

Brown says that while some good things (particularly at local and state levels) are happening, the world as a whole seems to be operating on the basis of Plan A, which he calls "business as usual." He maintains that this plan is leading

toward economic decline and eventual collapse.

Plan B is what Brown offers, and in a book titled Plan B 2.0 he lays out what is involved. The U.S., the richest nation in the history of the world, must play a major role in any effort to reverse the apparent direction of the world's life. If this is to happen, there needs to be a recognition of basic realities. Much of what comes from current presidential leadership is the idea that terrorism is the great threat to our way of life. Terrorism is a threat, but it is probably nowhere near the major threat facing our society and civilization. Brown makes a good case for saying that population growth, climate change, poverty, spreading water shortages, rising oil prices, and a potential rise in food costs are the most fundamental challenges. If there is not effective management of these things, there could be enormous instability.

Brown maintains that \$161 billion dollars, or roughly one-third the current U.S. military budget, would make a major contribution to reversing the drift toward world disaster. Much of the world's current instability is the result of unmet social and political needs. Terrorism is sustained and supported, for the most part, by people who have run out of hope. We may well see more acts of terrorism. They have long been part of the world's history. If, however, we focus a disproportionate amount of attention to it, we shall fail to address the larger challenge of addressing the environmental consequences of the way in which we live. From these consequences there can be no escape. The failures of past societies offer us an important warning. We appreciate Pastor Johnson's kind permission to reprint his article.

Volunteers Needed

We are thrilled that increasing numbers of people are realizing that humane population stabilization in a world of rapidly declining resources is vital to our long-term health and well-being.

We continue to deliver our message as far and wide as our resources allow. We realize that with twice the funds and twice the help we would more than double our impact. Would you help us? We have several great new projects on the drawing board and need your energy to help make them happen.

If you have a couple of hours a month and would like to help, please call us (612-869-1640).

Here are a few of the projects:

- creation of population ads for TV, radio, and print media
- research for these ads
- working with media people to cover the population issue
- helping maintain our website
- grant writing and other fundraising help

This is only a partial list, so please call us with your great ideas.

Students Thank Frank Babka

Following are recent notes students sent to Frank Babka about his presentations:

Mr. Babka, thanks for coming and telling us information. I really learned a lot Ð especially when you talked about how many people were dying and being born. Hope to see you again.

-- Tiarah

Mr. Babka, I enjoyed hearing the description of your occupation. ThatÕs the first time I've heard about a job where

someone is concerned about the future of the world and the benefit of people rather than about making a profit. Thank you for coming.

-- Shakia

Made \$10,000 Match

Thanks to many of you, our members and supporters, we successfully qualified for the generous \$10,000 challenge match from The World Population Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation at the end of 2005.

Your strong support comes at a crucial time for us, since we have undertaken the public radio underwriting announcements.

We are grateful to The World Population Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation for another matching challenge grant they have just issued. We hope you will soon take advantage of this double-your-money opportunity, as well. Our media initiative is expensive, and in order to continue it, we do need your generous support right now.

Thank you.

Our Mission

World Population Balance is committed to educating the general public, policymakers, and the media about current population facts and trends, the consequences of population growth, and the benefits of stabilization.

We are a non-profit organization and present our message through public presentations and conferences, appointments with elected officials, written articles, our newsletter, web site, media interviews, and public service announcements.

Every minute, the world gains over 140 people, net gain -- over 70 million more every year. Yet many renewable and non-renewable resources are decreasing. "Any cause is a lost cause without population stabilization." Support global and national population stabilization. Join World Population Balance.

"Every increment of added population and each added increment of affluence invariably destroy an increment of the remaining environment."

-- Albert Bartlett, University of Colorado

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