

Religious Consultation Report

News & Views from The Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health, and Ethics

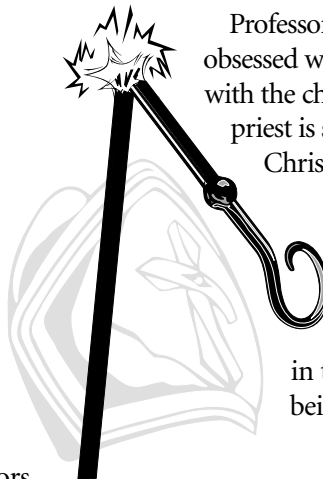
Volume 10 No. 1

Vatican and Bishops in Schism and Heresy

In response to several long years of unending scandals about priestly sexual misbehavior and criminal cover-ups by bishops, the Vatican set out to correct the situation. They would go right to the source, the seminaries, and they would set things right.

Needed was a plan of action. They produced one, called *Instrumentum laboris*.

Moral theologian Lisa Fullam at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley reports on the visit by the Vatican examiners in *Commonweal* (September 22, 2006). She reports that the inquisitors (my term, not hers) “focused almost exclusively on ‘fidelity’ to the church’s sexual teaching. Other aspects of priestly formation did not seem to interest them.” Testing



Professor Fullam notes. It could be that Jesus was not obsessed with pelvic issues and thus he just doesn’t fit in with the church’s current agenda. A pity, especially since a priest is supposed to try to be an *alter Christus*, another Christ. Maybe an *alter Ratzinger* is the new model.

Also, as Professor Fullam reports, “there was no mention of social justice, solidarity with the poor and marginalized, issues of war and peace...” all themes central to the Bible. What’s more, *Instrumentum laboris* took no interest in the ongoing devastation of the planet which is being cooked and double basted with CO₂.

continued on page 2

... A priest is supposed to try to be an *alter Christus*, another Christ. Maybe an *alter Ratzinger* is the new model.

seminarians’ acceptance of *Humanae vitae* was high on the checklist. *Humanae vitae* is the encyclical that bans all use of contraceptives — even if one’s spouse were HIV positive (according to the Vatican’s current interpretation).

Glaring Omissions

Other important things were MIA on the list of the examiners’ concerns, too. John Endres, S.J., a biblical scholar, remarked of the *Instrumentum laboris*, “I didn’t see anything about Sacred Scripture.” The Bible, missing in action? That’s quite something.

Guess who else was missing. None other than Jesus Christ. “Not mentioned anywhere” in the *Instrumentum laboris*,

— INSIDE —

Vatican and Bishops in Schism and Heresy	1-2
Fast Facts: The Disastrous Plight of Ethiopia	2
Rapid Population Growth Spurs Hunger	2
Stories from Dan’s Travels	3
Adolescents Less Likely to Use Modern Contraceptives	3
When Women Have Abortions	3
The Morning-After Pill is Over-The-Counter. What Now?	4
South India Cardinal Instructs Flock to Increase and Multiply ..	5
Book News	5
300 Million Americans, a Runaway Number	6-7
Clueless in America	7
90% of Malian Women Victims of Genital Mutilation	7
The Safe and Legal in Ireland Campaign Goes to the European Court of Human Rights	8
Young People’s Knowledge Limited About HIV/AIDS	8
Dutch Catholic Bishop Breaks Ranks and Urges Condom Use to Prevent the Spread of AIDS	9
Birth of a Grandchild — A Poem	9
The Staff of Life: Grain Supplies Threatened on Every Front ...	10
Movers & Shakers	11
Married Women and Childbearing	11

Vatican and Bishops

continued from front page

The final reports of these inquisitors, after having moved from seminary to seminary, will be sent to the American bishops. The possibility of the current cast of bishops criticizing the Vatican for its deviant obsessions and missed points is as likely as a sudden suspension of the laws of gravity.

Traditionally, Catholic theology at its best shared the biblical passion for the poor and saw justice as the only route to peace. The current Vatican and the bishops, their hollow echoes, are in schism. Jesus died fighting empire and defending the poor against their oppressors. The Vatican would point seminarians on another path.

That kind of defection is not only schism; it is heresy. It can also be called a damned shame.

The pope and the bishops could be powerful religious leaders on this imperiled earth with its masses of starving poor. Instead, they are separating themselves from the moral passions of Jesus and the prophets of Israel — squandering their authority on issues where they have no privileged expertise.

By Daniel C. Maguire

Rapid Population Growth Spurs Hunger

Today, less developed countries contribute 5.3 billion to the world's total 6.5 billion people. By 2050, these nations will account for a projected 8 billion of the world's 9.1 billion.



“I don't know how many green revolutions would be needed to feed these vastly increasing numbers, but I do know that there are more than 300 million couples who need and want family planning but lack access to modern methods.”

— DR. LAWRENCE SMITH, PRESIDENT, POPULATION INSTITUTE

Source: POPLINE, March-April 2006

FAST FACTS

The Disastrous Plight of Ethiopia

Ethiopian women average 3.5 children, a birthrate second only to Nigeria. The current population of 77 million is expected to top 118 million by 2025.

- Only 8% of married women use family planning methods. But 78% would like to space births or end child bearing.
- Famine plagues the country.
- 225,000 children die each year from diarrhea, a result of unsafe drinking water and poor sanitation.

Source: POPLINE, March-April 2006

RELIGIOUS CONSULTATION MISSION STATEMENT

The Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health and Ethics is an international network of progressive feminist religious scholars and leaders who seek out the positive, renewable moral energies of their faith traditions to direct them to the interrelated issues of population, reproductive health, consumption/ecology and the empowerment of women. The Consultation accomplishes this by participating in international and governmental forums, by convening small symposia of theologians and religious ethicists, and by publishing both scholarly and popular materials.

• BOARD OF DIRECTORS •

Mary Churchill, *University of Colorado*

Marvin Ellison, *Bangor Theological Seminary*

Rev. Debra W. Haffner, *Religious Institute for Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing*

Daniel C. Maguire, *Marquette University*

Mutombo Nkulu-N'Sengha, *California State University Northridge*

John C. Raines, *Temple University*

Anantanand Rambachan, *Saint Olaf College*

Sa'diyya Shaikh, *University of Cape Town, South Africa*

Laurie Zoloth, *Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine*

Contents of Religious Consultation Report
©2006 Religious Consultation on Population,
Reproductive Health, and Ethics

2717 East Hampshire Street, Milwaukee, WI 53211
Phone: 414/962-3166 Fax: 414/962-9248
www.religiousconsultation.org

Stories from Dan's Travels



Meeting Heroes and Heroines on the Road

On Courage. This summer, Consultation president Dan Maguire spoke to abortion providers and clinic workers in Portland, Oregon, and Vancouver, British Columbia.

In both places, he met doctors who were survivors of attempted assassinations. In Portland, he met an American doctor who had been shot by a woman protester. Luckily he was wearing a bullet-proof vest. Three bullets hit his chest protector, but two other bullets hit his arms, and he required long therapy. He was then put under the guard of US Marshals who would take him to and from his work. In Vancouver, Dan met a Canadian doctor who had been shot by an American "Pro-Life" terrorist and then, on another occasion, stabbed by another Pro-Lifer. Both doctors are still practicing medicine.

On Human Rights. On another trip, this one to Ireland, Dan was an expert witness in the case of Ann Louise Gilligan and Katherine Zappone. (Check out their case on Google.) The two women have been a couple for 25 years and were legally married in Canada in 2003. Now they are suing to get recognition of their union in

Ireland. See www.religiousconsultation.org for Dan's article, *A Catholic Defense of Same Sex Marriage*. Copies of this article were sent along with a letter from Dan to all members of Congress and to state legislatures considering same sex marriage.

Closer to home

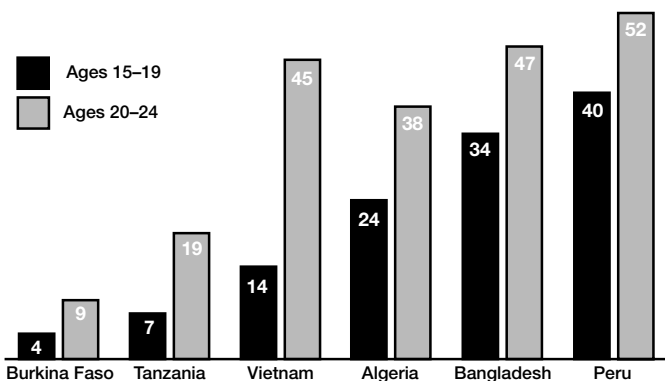
On Tenacity. Dan, in what he called "an act of undefeatable hope," wrote to all US Catholic bishops, sending them copies of his *A Catholic Defense of Same Sex Marriage* pamphlet and his *Catholic and Pro-Choice* pamphlet. See www.religiousconsultation.org. In his letter he urged the bishops to end their fixation on pelvic issues and start addressing the issue of the American addiction to war and the issues of world poverty and ecological crisis. Only three bishops answered: none agreed.

And the bishop in Dan's hometown denounced him in the archdiocesan newspaper for his effort — and banned him from speaking on any subject in any parish in the diocese. Dan was immediately invited to speak on *War and the Catholic Conscience* by a large group of Milwaukee Catholics. Since they could not meet on a Catholic site, he spoke at The Milwaukee School of Engineering!!

Adolescents Less Likely To Use Modern Contraceptives

Young women ages 15 to 19 are less likely to use modern contraceptives than women ages 20 to 24. Lower use may reflect a lack of awareness of family planning among women who marry young, societal expectations about having a first child, and more limited access to services for adolescents.

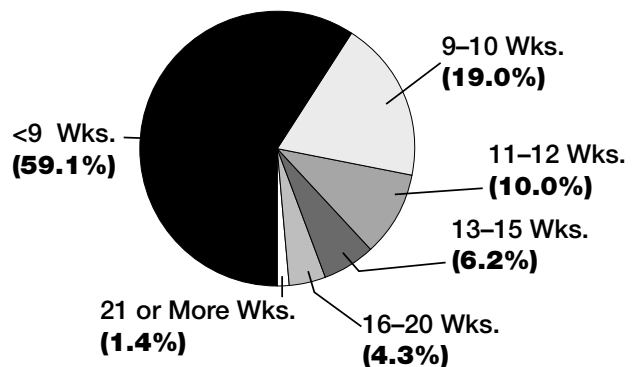
Percent of Married Women Using a Modern Contraception Method



Source: ORC Macro, Demographic and Health Surveys; and Pan Arab Project for Family Health of the League of Arab States. Survey years range from 2000 to 2004.

When Women Have Abortions (in weeks)

88% of abortions occur in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, 2001.



Almost half of women having abortions beyond 15 weeks say they were delayed because of problems faced in affording, finding, or getting to abortion services.

Source: The Alan Guttmacher Institute, New York, New York, 2001.



The Morning-After Pill Is Over-The-Counter. What Now?

After a long and acrimonious battle, the Food and Drug Administration relented and approved over-the-counter sales of the morning-after pill, also known as Plan B. However, while the pill has been made “legal” and will begin appearing in retail outlets this winter, there are still other hurdles to be overcome.

Dr. Darshak Sanghavi, an assistant professor of pediatrics at UMass Medical School and the author of “*A Map of the Child: A Pediatrician’s Tour of the Body*,” described these hurdles in an article he wrote that appeared in the *Boston Globe* on September 17, 2006. Dr. Sanghavi raises both education and cost as factors. He maintains that without taking additional steps in these areas, Plan B’s value to eliminate unplanned pregnancies will fall far short of its potential.

Dr. Sanghavi builds his case on this concept: “to avoid pregnancy, the average woman must prevent conception thousands of times during her life — and mistakes often

“...children getting contraceptive education weren’t more likely to have sex — and were two-thirds less likely to have unprotected sex than those taking abstinence-only classes.”

happen.” Planned Parenthood has gone on record as saying that over-the-counter access to this post-coital contraception could reduce the number of abortions by 800,000 a year. However, that number is calculated on the assumption that Plan B would be used correctly after every instance of unprotected sex.

A 1998 Scottish study showed that easier access and higher usage did not significantly reduce unwanted pregnancies. Researchers speculate that the Scottish women had unprotected sex repeatedly (while also repeatedly failing to take pills), or they lied to researchers about taking them, or used them incorrectly. Herein lies the concern. The efficacy of the long-awaited Plan B pill depends on use and education as well as access.

Education

Awareness. Dr. Sanghavi refers to an August survey in *Southern Medical Journal* that found one-third of women had not previously heard of post-coital contraception; 80%

thought it was the same as taking the abortion drug RU-486; only 16% percent had discussed it with a physician.

Teens. Education is particularly critical for adolescents, who are largely unaware of emergency contraception. In addition, teens will need prescriptions for Plan B, an obstacle to which The Society for Adolescent Medicine and the American Academy of Pediatrics strenuously objects. According to Dr. Sanghavi, Plan B’s approval should “herald more realistic strategies to combat unwanted pregnancy at many levels, especially in schools. In a 1999 study, children getting contraceptive education weren’t more likely to have sex — and were two-thirds less likely to have unprotected sex than those taking abstinence-only classes.”

Suitability of Plan B. Dr. Sanghavi points out that women who find themselves using Plan B again and again should probably use a more regular means of birth control. “One option: In many women, urgent placement of an intra uterine device, or IUD, after unprotected sex is safe and over 99 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, which is better than Plan B’s 80 percent efficacy. Also, IUDs stay in the uterus and provide reversible, long-term contraception.”

Cost

Dr. Sanghavi believes that while over-the-counter status will ease access, at a projected cost of \$25 to \$40 per dose, few women are able to stockpile doses just in case they are needed. He feels insurers should fully cover Plan B. Availability is critical, too. A dose at home may not be useful. Like condoms, Plan B should be kept with women in their purses to be readily available.

So Dr. Sanghavi’s case is a cogent one. Even though winning access to Plan B is a major step, it’s not the final step. There’s still work to be done to integrate this solution into lives of women.

“10 pre-school children die every minute from malnutrition — a number that has not changed since the early 1980s.”

Source: POPLINE, March-April 2006

South India Cardinal Instructs Flock to Increase and Multiply

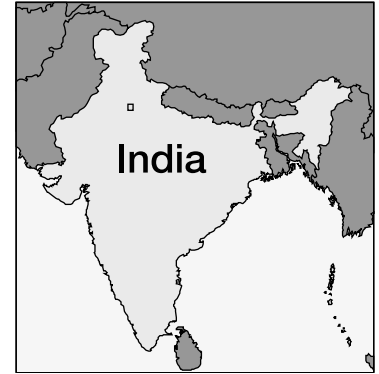
The declining percentage of Catholics in southern India, a region that has been long known as a center of Indian Christianity, has prompted regional Roman Catholic leaders to urge their flock to have more babies.

Agence France-Presse reports that in a letter read to Catholic congregations across the southern state of Kerala, Cardinal Mar Varkey Vithayathil wrote that members of the community need to “lead a life rooted in Christian values and beliefs.” The letter said “there has been a growing feeling that children are a nuisance to pleasurable life. Even those who have the resources do not beget for selfish reasons.” Says *Agence France-Presse*: “In short, have as many children as you can afford.”

A church spokesman, the Rev. Paul Thelakat, defended the cardinal’s words: “The Cardinal has issued the pastoral

letter out of serious concerns the church has on the falling population of Christians in Kerala.”

Home to about 31 million, Kerala has watched the percentage of Christians fall from 22% to 19% between 1991 and 2001, according to the most recent census. Church leaders blame a lower birth rate among Christians, compared with the birth rate of Hindus and Muslims. To put the numbers in context: Christians make up 2.34% of India’s population of more than 1 billion people. The population is overwhelmingly Hindu.



BOOK NEWS

Sacred Work: *Planned Parenthood and Its Clergy Alliances*

By Tom Davis, Rutgers University Press, 2005.



May 22, 1967, is a day that should be remembered each year. It was the day that Protestant and Jewish clergy announced on the front page of the *New York Times* that they were going to break the law and find safe abortions for women who needed them.

Before disbanding in light of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, these clergy served over 100,000 women. They also arranged for the first abortion clinic in the US — in New York.

Reverend Tom Davis, Ph.D. was one of the leaders of this movement. His landmark book describes the role of clergy in fighting for women’s reproductive justice.

The Political Economy of Global Population Change, 1950-2050

Paul Demeny, and Geoffrey McNicoll, editors.

The demographic transformation of the world between 1950 and 2050 will be marked both by vastly expanded human numbers as well as by the emergence of a low-fertility, highly urbanized — and increasingly elderly — world population.

In the decades before this eventual outcome, however, differences in the timing of change will give rise to striking contrasts in demographic conditions across countries and regions — in relative population sizes, in dependency burdens, in the pace of rural exodus and city growth, and in international migration pressures.

Demographic contrasts will inevitably create international tension and political conflict. The resulting challenges for national governments and international institutions are the subject of this new book. Its essays supplement the Population Council’s journal, *Population and Development Review*, looking both to the experience of the second half of the 20th century and forward to 2050.

The essays also give particular attention to the situations of the two demographic giants and emerging economic heavyweights, India and China; to Europe’s predicament in confronting low fertility and declining population in the face of rising immigration pressures; and to Africa’s situation, combining a heavy burden of disease, still-rapid population growth, and deep problems of governance.

The complete table of contents of this book can be found online at <https://www.popcouncil.org/publications/pdr/PoliticalEconomyTOC.html>. You may order online at <https://www.popcouncil.org/publications/puborder.html>. Single copies are available free of charge to individuals and institutions involved in reproductive health or population sciences in developing countries.

300 Million Americans, a Runaway Number

This month, the US population reached 300 million: a number that seemed unattainable 25 years ago. At this rate, by 2040, we will reach 400 million.

We can attribute the number to immigration, longevity, a relatively high birth rate, and economic stability. Since 1967, the US has grown by 100 million people, expanding its population faster than any of the industrialized nations. We now hold the dubious honor of being the world's third-most populous country, just behind China and India.

The US is alone among industrialized nations in its relatively rapid population increase. In fact, it is running counter to the other industrialized nations. The populations in Japan and Russia are projected to decline by almost one-fourth by 2050. In Germany, Italy, and most European nations, low birthrates account for dwindling populations.

Demographers report that lowered fertility in these countries is making them desperate. To offset deaths and keep populations stable, women must give birth to an average 2.1 babies. In Western Europe, the birthrate is 1.6 babies. In Italy, Spain, and other southern European countries, it's even lower: 1.4 babies.

Reasons for the US Boom

USA TODAY reports that the largest impetus of US population growth is immigration, both legal and illegal. Without immigrants, the US would have about 250 million people today. A spokesperson for the Pew Hispanic Center believes that about 53% of the 100 million extra Americans are recent immigrants or their descendants.

Yet at 300 million, US demographers are not thinking in terms of prosperity. Instead, this staggering number is raising questions about the consumption of our natural resources, the living space available to support this population....

The US, once a population made up predominantly of white Europeans, is now a multicultural society, represented by every continent on the earth. Immigrants arrive for many reasons: as refugees or in the time-honored tradition of seeking better opportunities. After settling in, immigrants have babies, spawning a national birth rate that well exceeds that of Europe and Japan.

Without Hispanic immigrants, the US would barely grow in the next 50 years. White women, who account for 56% of American births, average 1.85 babies. Blacks average



about 2, and Asians 1.9. Yet Hispanic women average 2.8 babies. True, high birth rates support industrialized nations that need workers. For industrialized nations, good numbers traditionally translated

into economic and cultural power. In addition, young workers contribute new ideas within the labor force and pay taxes to support the elderly.

Yet at 300 million, US demographers are not thinking in terms of prosperity. Instead, this staggering number is raising questions about the consumption of our natural resources,

At a time when Americans consider raising taxes an objectionable option, we are placing more demands on communities.

the living space available to support this population, and all the attendant problems of population density, from traffic jams and employment to pressures on social services and infrastructure.

At a time when Americans consider raising taxes an objectionable option, we are placing more demands on communities. All of this makes illegal immigration an even more volatile issue than it already is. According to a *USA TODAY*/Gallup poll last June, one-third of Americans believe population growth will become a major issue in their communities; more than one-half say it will be a major problem for the country as a whole.

What's at Stake

Some experts quoted in the *USA TODAY* article propose that the nations who face declining populations will face more manageable challenges than the US. Brian Dixon, director of government relations for Population Connection, a grass-roots advocacy group formerly called Zero Population Growth, says: "Figuring out a pension system has to be easier than dealing with the health crisis of polluted air or how we're going to address increases in childhood asthma. Is there going to be enough open space, enough parkland, enough housing, enough jobs? What does it mean for our quality of life?"

Dixon alleges that immigration is not a domestic issue: "Immigration is really foreign policy. What can the US do to ease problems in the developing world that drive people to

“...the nations who face declining populations will face more manageable challenges than the US. ... Is there going to be enough open space, enough parkland, enough housing, enough jobs?”

— BRIAN DIXON, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS FOR POPULATION CONNECTION

leave?” Dixon says that we ought to be finding ways to keep people in their native lands.

By 1970, a poor economy in Mexico and the aftermath of the Vietnam War prompted immigration from these countries. Current immigration levels are 15% Hispanic and 5% Asian, compared with 5% Hispanic and 1% Asian in 1970.

Not Just Numbers

Another expert in the *USA TODAY* article takes issue with simply blaming the numbers. According to Joel Darmstadter, senior fellow at Resources for the Future, a non-partisan research group that specializes in natural resources and the environment, research reveals that prosperity — not population growth — puts more pressure on natural resources. “It’s not immigrants who are going to buy those expensive houses in Phoenix or Tucson,” Darmstadter says. “To view immigration as the heavy in the problems of water use or energy use is a copout.”

For an up-to-the-minute count of the US population, visit *USA TODAY*'s interactive site:
http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-07-04-us-population_x.htm

Comparing Density

USA TODAY describes the crowding of America: 83 persons per square mile in 2004 vs. 70.3 in 1990. However, America is still far less dense than other nations such as France (287), China (361), Germany (609), and Japan (835). Arizona is getting denser: 50.5 persons per square mile in 2004 vs. 32.3 in 1990. That’s still far less than other parts of the country, including California (230), Pennsylvania (277), and New Jersey (1,173).

Some regions remain untouched by the nation’s growth. In fact, areas in the Great Plains have lost their population and watched their young abandon them. *USA TODAY* reports Nebraska’s density (22.7) and North Dakota’s (9.2) have barely budged this decade. “We’re still using a fraction of the national space,” says Robert Lang, director of the

Metropolitan Institute at Virginia Tech. “By 2050, the settled space will be more developed. A lot of places are literally out of land They’re having to go up rather than out, but there’ll still be the Great Plains and vast stretches of the Intermountain West.”

What will happen, however, in the next few generations? What then?

Clueless in America

While the world has its eyes on the US and its momentous milestone of 300 million, most Americans don’t track the numbers. In fact, few Americans know how many people actually live in the US or how many are expected to. *USA TODAY* reports that when asked, 29% guessed the population at or under 200 million; 19% guessed 1 billion or more; 12% came within 50 million or guessing correctly.

Now that we have met the 300 million mark, the news reporting on the event will create awareness. Some baby-food manufacturers plan to incorporate the number into their marketing efforts.

The world is raptly watching, while Americans are fairly oblivious of the event.

90% of Malian Women Victims of Genital Mutilation

The practice of genital mutilation is a custom that is believed to bestow status and honor. Given the unskilled practitioners and the use of crude and un-sterile instruments, it brings, instead, disfigurement, psychological damage, and sometimes death.



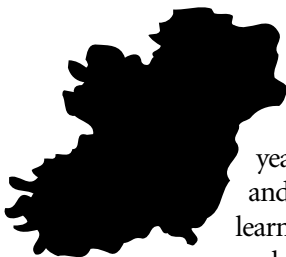
Mali has signed the Maputo Protocol, which calls for nations to ban and punish this practice. However, awareness and educational campaigns are needed. Each year in Africa, 3 million girls and women are mutilated.

Source: POPLINE, March-April 2006

The *Safe and Legal in Ireland* Campaign Goes to the European Court of Human Rights

The *Safe and Legal in Ireland (Sli)* Campaign involves a court case being brought to the European Court of Human Rights, a public awareness campaign, and a national and international advocacy initiative.

Three Irish women are bringing the case to the European Court of Human Rights, arguing that their human rights are being violated under the European Convention on Human Rights, relating specifically to **Article 8: the right of privacy in all family, home and personal interests, and entitlement to no public interference from any public authority in exercising this right.**



More Allegations

The women also allege a breach of the following articles.

Article 3, which protects individuals from inhuman or degrading treatment.

The women argue that the criminalization of abortion harms women by stigmatizing them and increasing feelings of guilt — and can result in difficulty in accessing necessary follow-up care.

Article 2, which safeguards the life of an individual.

The women allege that the Irish Government has provided no clear guidance as to when abortion may be legally carried out under the X case, an instance in which terminating pregnancy is necessary to save a woman's life.

Article 14, which affords rights and freedoms without discrimination.

The women argue that Irish abortion law discriminates on the basis of sex and financial status. Women are treated differently from men in making decisions concerning their private and family life. Furthermore, the ban imposes particular burdens on economically disadvantaged women and those who have difficulty traveling because of their age or legal status.

The three women maintain that these articles of the European Convention on Human Rights are being flouted by forced travel, forced childbirth, danger to the pregnant woman's life, and discrimination on the grounds of sex and financial status.

This case marks the first direct challenge to Irish abortion law by a group of women. While the European Court of Human Rights does not have the authority to revise

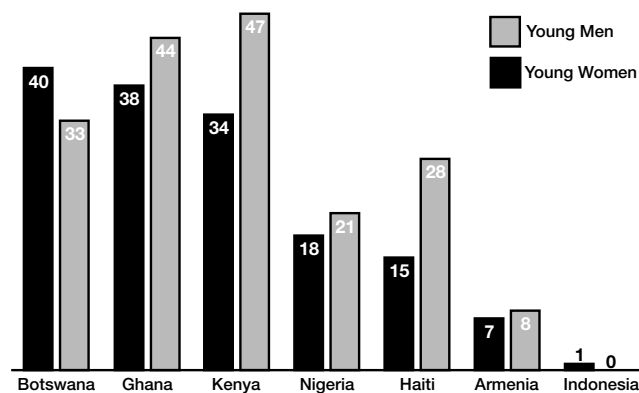
Irish law, the court can find Ireland to be in violation of the human rights convention. If this were to happen, Ireland would be urged to comply with its obligations under the convention.

The *Safe and Legal in Ireland* pro-choice campaign is looking for financial support for its pro-choice advocacy work. A General Election will be held next year, and anti-choice organizations are already organizing and lobbying. Email them at slcampaign@eircom.net to learn how to donate to their campaign and receive their e-newsletter.

Young People's Knowledge Limited About HIV/AIDS.

Surveys in developing countries reveal that fewer than half of young people are comprehensively knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS. Young women generally have less knowledge than young men.

Percent of 15–24-year-olds with Comprehensive Knowledge about HIV/AIDS*



*To be termed "knowledgeable," young people had to be able to 1) identify at least two major ways of preventing the spread of HIV; 2) reject the two most common local misconceptions about the disease; 3) know that a healthy-looking person can have HIV.

Survey years range from 2000–2003. Source: ORC Macro, MEASURE DHS+, HIV/AIDS database.

Dutch Catholic Bishop Breaks Ranks and Urges Condom Use to Prevent the Spread of AIDS

When Tiny Muskens, a Dutch Catholic bishop, visited Uganda in September 2006, he carried with him a revolutionary, but practical, message. The bishop told the people that he believes using condoms to prevent AIDS is acceptable. He feels that condoms are the lesser of two evils. His



words were welcome — currently, 1 in 10 Ugandans is infected with the HIV virus.

The bishop visited Uganda at the request of Stop Aids Now. Its director, Sjoera Dikkers, is quoted by *Radio Netherlands* as saying that the Bishop's very controversial message has been well received. Dikkers

made the point that organizations working with people who are infected or are in danger of becoming infected "feel buoyed up by a Dutch bishop who finally comes and says, 'ok, what you are doing is good work.'"

The Culture

The church wields great influence in Uganda. A large majority of the population is Christian and connected to a church, and most church leaders support the Vatican's position on condoms.

Not only does the Catholic ban on using contraceptives spur controversy, so does machismo. In a dominantly macho culture, men reject condoms. For that reason, says Dikkers, Bishop Muskens's message becomes even more important. People need to know that they get HIV through unsafe sex and that using a condom can prevent infection.

The Vatican

Bishop Muskens's words challenge the Vatican's message and the culture. They also run counter to a more moralistic campaign waged by US government-supported aid agencies in the African region. They promote complete abstinence as the solution to AIDS.

Sjoera Dikkers labels the bishop's viewpoint as "realistic." Dikkers says that organizations who work to combat AIDS watch as teenagers experiment with sex. These workers cannot reach these young people with a message of abstinence. Although abstinence can be part of the fight against AIDS, condoms, says Dikkers, are still the best remedy to halt the spread of HIV.

Words with Authority

Radio Netherlands reports, "That the words of Muskens are well received by Catholic aid workers surprises Dikkers. African Catholics are caught between the official teachings of the church and the terrible consequences of the AIDS epidemic. The message from the Dutch bishop is, according to Stop Aids Now, unbelievably important for the people who stumble on these human doctrines time and again."

Birth of a Grandchild



Who are these new creatures
formed not from dust, nor
as Djinn's from subtle fire
but, like the angels, formed
of light?

Not from desperation
or selfish motivation
but in affirmation of
Godlike remnants.

Formed from light
and given a name,
not for the day of the week
as in Igboland,
but in memory
of ancestors turned holy after
the passage of years.

— e o lipchik

The Staff of Life – Grain Supplies Threatened On Several Fronts



The Earth Policy Institute reports that for the sixth time in the last seven years, the year's world grain harvest is projected to fall short of demand — by 61 million tons.

The world's carryover stocks — the amount leftover when next year's harvest begins — are projected to drop to 57 days of consumption, the smallest amount since the 56-day-low in 1972, a supply that caused grain prices to double.

Historically, when carryover stocks drop below 60 days of consumption, wheat prices rise. And so it happened this year. In its June world crop report, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) projected that wheat prices will increase by 14% this year; corn prices will increase 22%. The world may be wrestling with high grain and high oil prices at the same time, putting low-income countries that import both products in a tough position.

The Need

World grain consumption has risen in each of the last 45 years except three — 1974, 1988, and 1995. In those years, smaller yields and spiking prices lowered consumption. Today, the annual worldwide grain harvest is used in three ways:

- 60% for food
- 36% for feed
- 3% for fuel

The need for food grows at about 1% each year, which means that each year the world's farmers must produce enough grain to feed an additional 70 million people, a task which is expected to continue until 2020. This expanding population comes from the Indian subcontinent and sub-Saharan Africa.

Growing Demand

Low-income people eat a diet made up of starchy foods, such as rice, corn, wheat, and cassava. But when their incomes grow, these people move to a more upscale diet that includes more grain-intensive products, like meat, milk, and eggs. In high-income countries, people consume grain only indirectly — through livestock products.

To quote the Earth Policy Institute: "Rising incomes worldwide are enabling some 3 or 4 billion low-income consumers to move up the food chain, consuming more

poultry, pork, beef, milk, eggs, and farmed fish. World meat production, which climbed from 44 million tons in 1950 to 265 million tons in 2005, moves higher each year. During this 55-year span, production per-person more than doubled, going from 17 kilograms to 41 kilograms."

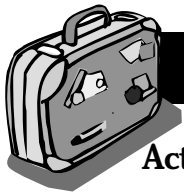
At the same time, the growing US demand for ethanol, will consume one-fifth of the projected corn harvest for 2006. This year, the accelerated use of corn to produce automotive fuel will equal the US export of corn: 55 million tons. To put that amount in context: 55 million tons is only 16% of the US grain harvest, yet it surpasses Canada's total grain harvest. The need for fuel has been growing more than 20% a year.

Growing Pressures

Consequently, world farmers are facing the highest demand ever for grain. Yet consider these pressures on agriculture:

- **Water tables are falling, and wells are going dry in the countries on this planet that contain half the world's population, including the big three grain producers — China, India, and the US.**
- **The world's water is continually being siphoned off to cities, not agriculture. In the US, for example, irrigation water is being sold off to cities such as Los Angeles, San Diego, Las Vegas, and Denver.**
- **The widespread practice of over-pumping aquifers to irrigate land is robbing future generations of water. While the world recognizes it is facing a water shortage in the future, when the dominoes begin to fall, the water shortage will translate into a food shortage, too.**
- **The rising temperature of the planet threatens our food supply. Crop ecologists speculate that for each single degree in Celsius the temperature rises above the historical average during the growing season, grain yields will fall 10%. It is happening already. The recent crop-withering heat waves have spawned significant crop losses.**

All of these pressures on farmers are going to create the shortages that will make grain a seller's market. Higher grain prices, like high oil prices, will be a force to be reckoned with.

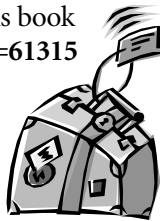


MOVERS & SHAKERS...

Activities of our Participating Scholars

Anantanand Rambachan is Professor of Religion at St. Olaf College and is the author of several books, including *The Limits of Scripture: Vivekananda's Reinterpretation of the Vedas*.

Anant's latest book, *The Advaita Worldview: God, World and Humanity* (State University of New York Press, 2006), is a new interpretation of Hindu tradition focusing on the nature of God, the value of the world, and the meaning of liberation. Learn more about this book at <http://www.sunypress.edu/details.asp?id=61315>



Patti Jung, co-editor of the *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics*, has been appointed the first woman chair of the theology department at Loyola University in Chicago. She has also been awarded two grants for Symposia on Evolutionary Biology, Human Sexuality, and the Catholic Intellectual Heritage. The grants came from the Center for Catholic Intellectual Heritage and Loyola of Chicago.

Last July, Patti attended the **Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church Conference** in Padua, Italy, where she presented *Theological Reflections on Human Sexual Desire: Implications for Church Leadership*.

Patti has also been busy with publications:

- *Christianity and Human Sexual Dimorphism: Are They Compatible?* in **Ethics and Intersex**. Sharon E. Sytsma, Editor. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer Publishers, 2006: 259-70.
- *Heterosexism in Sex from Plato to Paglia: A Philosophical Encyclopedia*. Alan Soble, Editor. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006: 442-47.
- *Homosexuality and the Roman Catholic Tradition in Encyclopedia of Religion and Homosexuality*. Jeffrey S. Siker, Editor. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Forthcoming.
- *Same Sex Marriage and Roman Catholicism in Defending Same-Sex Marriage*. Mark Strasser, General Editor. Westport, CT. Praeger Perspectives, Forthcoming.



Tavivat Puntarigvivat is the Editor-in-Chief of the *WFB Review* — an international academic journal on Buddhism published by the **World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB)**. The journal includes such recent issues as “Interfaith Dialogue,” “Sexual Ethics,” and “Gross National Happiness.”

He has also served as the Secretary General of the **Outstanding Women in Buddhism Awards Committee**. As part of the **Bay of Bengal Initiative for MultiSectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation**, Tavivat was recently invited by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand to join the cultural team for the official visits to Nepal and Bhutan (September 3-10, 2005) as well as India and Sri Lanka (March 20-27, 2006).

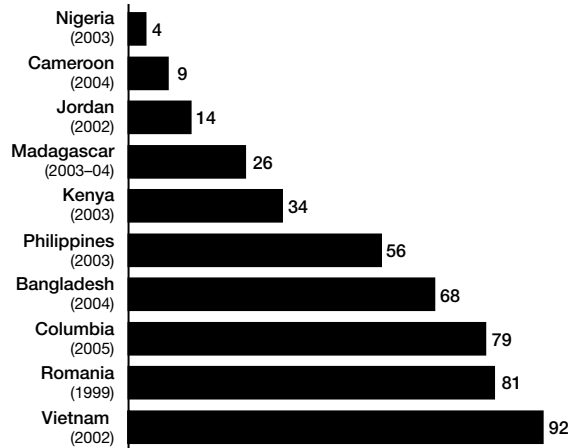
Tavivat was also asked to join a research project in the United States, **Liberation Theology in the World Living Religions**, led by Miguel A. De La Torre (publishing in progress). Tavivat contributed a chapter called *Buddhist Liberation Theology* from the Thai Theravada Buddhist perspective and experience.

Tavivat can be contacted at Humanities Department of Mahidol University at Salaya, Nakhon Pathom 73170, Thailand. Email: shtpt@mahidol.ac.th

Married Women and Childbearing

One very useful indicator of women's ability to limit their number of children — and of the prospect for future fertility decline — is their desire to cease childbearing. In Vietnam, 92% of women who had two living children said that they did not wish to have any more children. In Nigeria, by contrast, that figure was only 4%.

Percent of Married Reproductive-Age Women With Two Living Children Who Do Not Want Another Child



Sources: ORC Macro, MEASURE DHS STAT compiler, 2006; and Romanian Association of Public Health and Health Management and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Reproductive Health Survey, Romania, 1999* (2001).

To Support the Work of The Religious Consultation...

If you would like your name or that of a friend/colleague placed on our mailing list—

If you would like to support the work of the Religious Consultation in its mission of ensuring that progressive religious views are heard by national and international policymakers, community activists and the media — please photocopy this form and mail to the address below.

The Religious Consultation is a 501(c)3 organization. Donations are tax deductible.

Name _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City / State / Country / Postal Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Amount enclosed _____

Send to: Religious Consultation on Population, Reproductive Health and Ethics

2717 East Hampshire Street • Milwaukee, WI 53211 USA

www.religiousconsultation.org

**Religious Consultation on Population,
Reproductive Health and Ethics**

2717 East Hampshire Street
Milwaukee, WI 53211 USA

Non Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Milwaukee, WI
Permit No. 1830

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED