

Unto us, fewer and fewer children are born

Falling fertility won't bring joy to the world

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Christmas is about the birth of a child. While Christians celebrate the Nativity, our own cradles are increasingly empty — a trend that will not bring joy to the world. Steeply falling fertility or demographic winter could spell the end of civilization. Except for some countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, almost every nation now has below-replacement fertility. Soon, worldwide population decline will begin. Where it will end, no one knows.

America's fertility rate has fallen from around 3 per woman in the baby boom years to 1.62 today, well below the replacement rate of 2.1 births for the average woman.

Still, the United States is swimming in diapers and baby formula compared with the rest of the developed world. In Britain, the total fertility rate is 1.41. In Germany, it's 1.35 and in Italy, 1.2.

Asia is in worse shape. Japan's total fertility rate is 1.15, China's is 1.0 and South Korea's is 0.72. Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi calls the baby bust her nation's biggest problem. Japan has the world's oldest population: Almost 30% are older than 65, compared with 18% in the United States.

So many Japanese are dying alone that they have a name for it: "Lonely death."

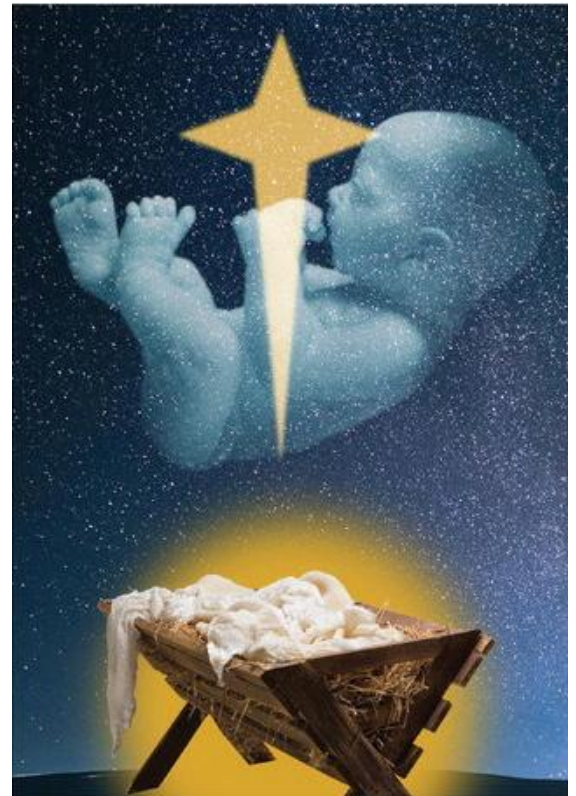
Japan is a sign of things to come. Crashing fertility will affect everything. Where will we find the workers of tomorrow? With a shrinking tax base, how will we cover the pension costs of a growing elderly population? Who will take care of society's vital functions, including law enforcement, health care and education? This is where civilization starts to unravel.

Modernity has set society on a collision course with human survival.

Falling fertility parallels the decline of marriage. In 1970, 71% of American households consisted of married couples. By 2022, that figure had fallen to 47%. Like the Japanese, many Americans are choosing a solitary existence.

Increasingly, those who can have children don't want them.

Of adults younger than 50 who are childless, 47% say it's unlikely they will ever have children, according to a 2023 Pew Research poll, up from 37% from 2018. People don't just wake up one day and decide to end their family line. A lot of indoctrination went into creating the anti-child mindset.



About 35% of men think the nation isn't having enough babies, but only 18% of women agree. The culture tells women that childbearing is the chief obstacle to female empowerment. Why have children when you can get a degree in gender studies instead?

Yet parenthood is the most important job most of us will ever do. Nothing we can accomplish in our lifetime will do more to shape the future.

All the fake crises of our age work against procreation. First, there was Paul Ehrlich's neo-Malthusian "The Population Bomb," published in 1968, which predicted mass starvation because of "overpopulation" in the 1970s. I must have been dining out when that happened.

Then there was climate doom. Humanity is supposedly destroying the pristine planet with carbon footprints. Former Vice President Al Gore said polar bears would be extinct by 2050 because of global warming, but there are significantly more of them now than in 2007, when he made the prediction. It's humans who are threatened with extinction.

Children are too expensive, they tell us. So how did our grandparents manage to have large families during the Great Depression?

Feminism, population control, economics and global warming hysteria combined to give us the current birth dearth. People also seem to have forgotten that they have an obligation to past and future generations.

Leaders and policymakers are looking for solutions to the fertility plunge. Most involve subsidies. Their impact is negligible. Poland provides generous direct payments to families: a monthly allowance of \$220 per child. Despite this, the number of births in Poland last year reached a postwar low of 252,000, compared with 409,000 deaths.

For the solution to demographic winter, look at who is having children: evangelical Christians, traditional Catholics, Hasidic Jews, Mormons and the Amish. These believers heed the biblical injunction to be fruitful and multiply. People who have faith in the future have children. Those who don't, don't. Faith in the future comes from faith.

It's up to us to encourage marriage and procreation as part of God's plan for humanity. Religious leaders should preach large families.

In this season of hope, let us follow the light of faith away from the darkness of a world with fewer and fewer children.