

The Climate Change Dogma: The Gospel According to Thomas Malthus

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This paper has been motivated by the claim that the world is heading for catastrophe as a consequence of global warming induced by anthropogenic (manmade) carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Predictions of this kind have been common in recent human history. In the 1960s, a cooling trend encouraged some climatologists to tell us that we were heading for a new ice age. In the 1980-90s, when the trend was to warmer weather, we were told that we were heading for massive sea rises, increased drought, the wholesale spread of disease and an increased incidence of violent weather. The idea that CO₂ could cause warming of the atmosphere harkens back to Svante Arrhenius, the first Swede to receive a Nobel Prize, although he quotes Tyndall as having raised the possibility sometime earlier (Arrhenius, 1896).

When I was in school I learned that CO₂ was a natural gas and a vital substrate in the photosynthetic process by which plants manufacture glucose – the main source of energy in plants and animals. Consequently I found it difficult to accept that CO₂, even anthropogenic (man-made) CO₂, could be a pollutant and this led me to undertake my own investigations into so-called global warming. Contrary to the proclamations of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), I found that there is:

- **No evidence of any unusual climate change/global warming.** There was some warming in the 1980-90s but from 2002 onwards steady cooling has brought temperatures back to 1980 levels; all of which can be explained by normal solar cycle (sun spot) influences (www.rightsidenews.com Dec.28, 2008).

- **No evidence of any glass house effect.** The classical paper by Svante Arrhenius is denied. Satellite data show that the hot spot in the troposphere indicative of a glass house effect is simply not there. This was confirmed by Dr David Evans, the ‘rocket scientist who devoted six years to carbon accounting and building models for the Australian Greenhouse Office’, who resigned his job as a consequence of the satellite data (www.theaustralian.news).

- **No evidence that carbon dioxide (CO₂) is influencing world temperature**1 (www.auscsc.org).

- **No evidence that the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets are melting.** I am talking about ‘evidence’ not ‘hearsay’. The mean temperature of the Greenland sheet is -25°C and the Antarctic sheet is even colder, so a rise of 0.5°C, or even 2°C, will not cause any melting (www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story, April 18th 2009).

- **No evidence that the number of violent weather events have increased** over the past twenty years. In fact, the number of cyclones and tornadoes has decreased since the 1960/70s (www.bom.gov.au/weather/cyclone)

- **No evidence that increasing temperatures will increase the incidence of diseases** like malaria. The worst malarial pandemic was on the Arctic Circle in Siberia in 1922 (www.auscsc.org).

These findings left me wondering why some people calling themselves scientists are identifying with and supporting the claims of the IPCC, especially when there are 31 000+ other scientists in the USA who agree that the facts are as I found them (www.ngpcc.org). Controversy in science is not new but to discard the facts because they do not suit the agenda is not science; yet this seems to be what is happening in the case of Climate Change and the IPCC (Plimer, 2009). The Canadian Minister for the Environment threw some light on the matter when she announced that ‘the facts may be wrong but we are going to keep on saying it because it is all in a good cause’. What good cause?

To ignore the facts is bad science but to twist the facts to produce a desired outcome is at least teleological and at worst apostate. What I mean by an apostasy is *an agenda that deliberately distorts the facts in order to establish a power base*. The more I read the more I become convinced that the Climate Change dogma is not just an opinion but a strategy aimed at pulling down and transforming civilization as we have known it. Who would be pushing such an agenda?

If there were a glasshouse effect, CO₂ constitutes less than 1% of so-called greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and a doubling of its concentration would be insignificant alongside water vapour which constitutes over 95% of greenhouse gases. CO₂ concentrations are presently only around 385 ppm (Plimer, 2009); vegetable growers get best results when they pump in CO₂ to 1000 ppm, the same level that submarine commanders have found to be best for the sustained health of their crew.

Digging deeper into the literature I uncovered the

UN Millennium Eco-System Assessment Report (www.millenniumassessment.org), a current UN document claiming that all of the world's ecosystems are heading for disaster due to adverse human activity. And behind that I found some old adversaries - the people who insist that the human population must be limited and even reduced if life on the planet is to survive. It was they, I discovered, who were successful in getting the IPCC established in 1988, they who organized the Brazil Earth Summit in 1992 and they who sponsored Kyoto in December 1997.

My first encounter with these people was in 1971. I had been a practicing soil conservationist since 1957 and from 1966 the person in charge of soil conservation extension and research, land mapping and arid zone ecology in South Australia. I mention this to make the case that I was not uninformed in environmental matters when I was asked to apply for the position of Director of a new Conservation Society being formed in South Australia. During the interview, one panel member asked me what I thought about Zero Population Growth. I replied that, as Australia was producing children under that rate, I did not see it to be a crucial issue. I could see from the questioner's facial expression that I had given the wrong answer as far as he was concerned but at the time I had no perception that he represented a considerable body of people who saw population control as absolutely necessary. I was not offered the job!

On May 5th 2009, the Good Club, a group of billionaires including Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, George Soros, David Rockefeller Jnr, Michael Bloomberg, Ted Turner and Oprah Winfrey, met in the home of Sir Paul Nurse in New York. The meeting was private but a spokesperson reported that the main topic had been over-population and a consensus had emerged that the group would 'back any strategy in which population would be tackled as a potentially disastrous environmental, social and industrial threat' (www.etaiwanews.com/./news). This came as no surprise because Buffett has been a long time financial supporter of research aimed at improving contraceptives; and Gates, Winfrey and Turner had spoken publicly against population increases numerous times. These billionaires between them are reported to have invested more money than any government in plans aimed at population reduction. Why is the level of population so significant and why do billionaires, in particular, regard it as so important?

It is clear that there is a contingent of people operating in the political realm who have been highly successful in overturning a number of

established conventions in recent times; I refer to legislation and public attitude changes with regard to contraception, abortion, euthanasia and homosexuality. What has not been so clear, perhaps, is that all of these agendas have a common denominator – reduced human population. But such matters remain controversial and by themselves unlikely to bring about universal demographic changes. The Climate Change model is a superior strategy, holding hope of worldwide population diminution via the reduction of food supplies. The vilification of CO2 opens the door for an attack on the fossil fuel essential for the production and transport of grain crops; and the vilification of ruminant animals because they burp methane (another so-called greenhouse gas) is a sure way of reducing meat and milk supplies. Add to this the evil genius of cap and trade of CO2 emissions and you have a strategy to wrench the financial control of the world out of the hands of the current Cornucopian² stake holders. The modern Green movement is no longer a call to manage ecosystems responsibly, it is violent political movement bent on causing humanity to return to living in the primal state. Sadly, all of this has been reinforced in schools over the past thirty years; every day, naïve teachers feed children a diet of politically correct environmental untruths, believing that they are doing us all a good turn.

Greenpeace founder, Dr Patrick Moore, is reported as saying 'the green movement has been taken over by neo-Marxists promoting anti-trade, anti-globalisation and anti-civilization' (www.greenspirit.com.index.cfm). I want to argue that the problem is not with neo-Marxists but with neo-Malthusians, for the architects of the Climate Change dogma not only agree with the Rev Malthus's dystopian view of the human condition (Malthus, 1798) but are taking action to ensure that humans: (1) abandon their prerogative to rule over nature; (2) accept that they are no different and have no superior rights to the world's resources than any other animal or plant species, and (3) accept that true happiness and welfare lies in a return to a bio-diverse, pristine, anti-development world in which humans are subservient to nature. All of which is a denial of the utility of a science that seeks to improve the human condition. Regrettably, the bulk of the

²*Cornucopians are futurists who believe that continued progress and provision of material good for mankind can be met by technology. Once the Earth's resources are fully used they see the abundance of matter and energy in space giving humanity unlimited room for growth. The name Cornucopian is derived from the magical 'horn of plenty' in Greek mythology. Cornucopians are often called Boomsters, while Malthusians are referred to as Doomsters.*

population is not aware where the Climate Change dogma is leading us. Across the world, politicians and even industry has been led to accept the Green agenda, not fully realizing that it is a leap into space, a recipe for the extinction of the human race.

The Dystopian Malthusian View

The Reverend Thomas Robert Malthus was born in Surrey, England in 1766. He gained an MA from Cambridge in 1791 and became a Fellow of Jesus College in 1793. In 1797 he took orders and became an Anglican country curate. In 1804, aged 38, he married his cousin Harriet and with her had three children. In 1805 he was appointed Professor of History and Political Economy at the British East India Company College in Hertfordshire. In 1818 he became a Fellow of the Royal Society based on his treatise, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. He had an early introduction to philosophy - his father, Daniel, was a friend of David Hume and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In later years, through his connection with the British East India Company, he was part of an elite group that included John Mill and John Stuart Mill (www.en.wikipedia.org). His ideas were controversial. He had support from people like Charles Darwin, who claimed that Malthus's ideas had been a major intellectual stepping stone to the concept of the survival of the fittest, and William Pitt the Younger, Prime Minister of England, who withdrew a Bill to extend Poor Relief after reading Malthus's work. Other contemporaries who were inspired by Malthus's work included David Ricardo, William Paley and Francis Place, the first to advocate contraception (1771-1854). In the 20th Century Malthus's work has been admired by John Maynard Keynes, Paul Ehrlich, the Club of Rome, Julian Huxley and Isaac Asimov. He also had his critics, suffering sometimes vitriolic insults from people like the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marx and Lenin saw the Malthusian position as a denigration of the labouring class; Engels described Malthus's hypothesis as '...the crudest, most barbarous theory that ever existed, a system of despair which struck down ideas like love thy neighbour and world citizenship'. Malthus died in 1834. The following discourse draws on Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, (Malthus, 1798) (www.esp.org/books/malthus). In assessing Malthus's view of the world we need to remember that it was derived from knowledge and experience that predated the 19th Century industrial revolution and 20th Century technological advancement. It should also be remembered that he was a member of an

intellectual and economic elite (not unlike our billionaire's club above) that thought it reasonable to pontificate on the affairs of 'lesser men'. His *Essay* was written, not for the general public, but specifically as a philosophical response to Godwin's *Avarice and Profusion* and 'remarks by M. Condorcet and other writers' - see title page.

Propositions

Malthus saw the great question for philosophers as 'whether man shall henceforth start forward with accelerated velocity towards illimitable and unconceived improvement or be condemned to a perpetual oscillation between happiness and misery and after every effort remain still at an immeasurable distance from the wished-for goal'(p.1)³. He regretted that 'writers on both sides of the argument had kept aloof from each other, that their arguments had not met candid examination' (p.1) and saw a need for a synthesis that draws the best from each view. But it is clear that he fell away from speculations of the 'perfectibility of man', seeing too many unconquerable difficulties in the way. Drawing on Hume, Adam Smith and Wallace he presented two postulates: (1) food is necessary to the existence of man; (2) the passion between the sexes is necessary and will remain nearly in its present state (p.4). This led him to his main proposition which he saw to be axiomatic: '**the power of population is indefinitely greater than the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man**' (p.4) and the corollary: '**by the law of our nature which makes food necessary for life, the effects of these two unequal powers must be kept equal by a strong and constant check on population from the difficulty of subsistence...** a difficulty that must fall somewhere and be severely felt by a large portion of mankind' (p.5). Reading on we find that he spells out his pre-suppositions more precisely: (1) population cannot increase without the means of subsistence increasing; (2) population invariably increases where there are the means of subsistence; and (3) the superior power of population cannot be checked without producing misery and vice (p.11).

Economic Management

Malthus's choice of postulates makes it clear that his project is grounded in philosophy and not in the discipline economics. If he had been operating in the economics we would have expected him to address the economic axiom that development

³All quotations are from Malthus, 1798 – pages indicated.

required inputs of *land, labour* and *capital* (and, we might add, '*no-how*' and *available technology*).

Identification of the means of production leads to the conclusion that the condition of the 'lowest orders of society' (p.23) may be explained by the fact that they have no land or capital and have no hope of having same; that, with only their labour to offer, they remain permanently at the mercy of the cashed up, landed minority. And, if this is the case then, Malthus's conclusion that human social structures are not the cause of human misery and vice is discounted. He may have a point when he says that handouts to the poor will raise costs, for this is supported by recent evidence whereby handouts to first home buyers in Australia have raised housing prices in 2009. And there is evidence that handouts weaken the resolve of individuals to work and maintain their independence, although we might not go so far as to agree with the opinion of master manufacturers in Malthus's day that 'high wages ruin their workmen' (p.28). To conclude from his analysis (pp.24ff), as Prime Minister Pitt did, that the Poor Fund was unhelpful, was to take bread from the mouths of children who lived in hovels while the wealthy ate the best of everything in mansions. For a cleric in holy orders like Malthus, this constituted a casting aside of the care of the fatherless and widows, an abandonment of true religion (The Bible, James 1:27). In summary then, Malthus's concepts fall a long way short of being a prescription for economic management leading to an improvement in the material circumstances of the masses.

Social Organisation

It is implicit in Malthus's writing that he accepts the class distinctions of his day (e.g. p.20, 23, etc). In chapters 3 & 4 he attempts to justify his propositions by referencing a variety of macrosocial groupings: hunters, shepherds, agriculturalists ('the state of mixed pasture and tillage', p.17), men of liberal education, tradesmen and servants. In doing so he presents no original empirical evidence and maintains a *macro-social* view of humanity that fails to recognize individuality and the power of human agency. On the rare occasion that he mentions an individual he is generally derogatory, e.g. 'a labourer who marries without being able to support a family may in some respect be considered an enemy to all of his fellow labourers' and 'the labouring poor live from hand to mouth... they seldom think of the future' (p.27). No wonder Marx, Engels and Lenin were upset with him!

If one discounts human agency it is not surprising

that one would hold to a pessimistic view with regard to the possibility of humans avoiding cycles of misery and vice, especially if one agreed with Malthus that we are controlled by matters greater than ourselves – the sex drive and the ability of the earth to supply our needs. Malthus saw all of this to be ordained of God so that humans learned the importance of industry and sexual control (p.4, etc)!

Population Checks

Malthus sees two classes of population check: (1) positive agencies; and (2) preventative actions. In the first class he lists *war, famine* and *disease* and to these we may add cataclysmic events like *volcanic eruptions* and *tsunamis*. It seems to me that there is a strange, unnatural depravity in listing such agencies as 'positive' when we consider the degree of suffering they engender. The extension from Malthus's view is that starvation and sickness are a blessing; unintended, perhaps, but something for which we should all be thankful. We can only conclude that Malthus's privileged class position has protected him from personally experiencing the impact of such disasters. How easy it is to philosophise in an ivory tower, to pontificate at the macro level without regard for human misery at the level of the individual. How quickly in the 20th Century we forgot the impact of pneumonia, diphtheria and small pox as it existed prior to antibiotics and advances in medical technology. To accept the Malthusian view is to argue that it would be to our advantage to abandon the search for better medical solutions. In fact, this happened in the 1970s in some developing countries where the population was expanding at the rate of 3.5% per annum; government policies focused on education and agricultural development, not medical assistance.

Amongst the preventative actions promoted by Malthus were *postponement of marriage, celibacy, prostitution, abortion* and *contraception*, to which we can add *euthanasia* and *homo-sexual behaviour*. To support such actions in Malthus's time was provocative, especially as the author was a Christian minister. His views are sometimes quaint compared with modern attitudes and practices, e.g. he speaks of the 'the dictate of nature and of virtue... to be an early attachment to one woman' (p.6, etc.). Francis Place is adamant that his push to develop birth control was inspired by Malthus's *Essay* and it is evident that improved methods of contraception have resulted in movement away from single partners and 'the wed'; and led to population control in developed countries. The empirical evidence is that Malthus's presupposition that 'the population

increases when there is the means of subsistence' is denied. Abortion has only been decriminalized in many countries in recent times with a marked effect on demographics. In Australia 71 773 abortions were reported in 2006, i.e. 1 380 per week (www.fpq.com.au). The New South Wales Right to Life believes the figure is closer to 90 000 with 46 million world wide (www.newsrtl.org.au). Live births in Australia in 2005 were 255 820, about 1.2% of a population of 21.5 million (www.abs.gov.au). Concomitant with this, life expectancy in Australia is rising; in 2007 the expectancy for a male at birth was 79.0 years and for females 83.7 years. Only 137 900 people died in Australia in 2007 (6 per 1000); 1200 of these were children (4.2 per 1000 births = 0.4%). Overall, a baby is born in Australia every 1 minute 47 seconds; one person dies every 3 minutes 47 seconds and one person is added to the population by immigration every 2 minutes 23 seconds – giving an overall figure of 1 person added every 1 minute and 24 seconds. So, Australia is not conforming to the concept of zero population growth after all; a fact which must disturb the architects of Global Warming!

Whether we can go on murdering 90 000 babies every year is another matter. We do not throw foetuses in the Tiber River as the Romans did, or down pit toilets as they do in Africa in certain circumstances, but we do use them to manufacture cosmetics and little or no account is taken of the psychological consequences experienced by many women who abort a child. What is extremely worrying is the malevolent push by some women politicians (the Emily list) in Australia whose object is to gain acceptance of abortion throughout the whole gestation period rather than limit it to the eight week period following conception when the foetus is not fully humanoid. The battle rages and conservative forces continue to be on the back foot. The push for acceptance of homo-sexual acts over the past thirty years has been relentless. This has been against the common-sense normative attitude with regard to sexuality and it has been critical for the introduction of legislation that the opposition be silenced. In developed countries there is now an army of agents active on defining and refining laws aimed at crushing discrimination against homosexuals. We are not allowed to say, for instance, that the bulk of HIV/AIDS patients in Australia are male homosexuals. Nor are we allowed to tell young males that practicing homosexuals need regular anal reconstructions – the muscles of the anus being designed for excretion, not penetration. I am not too sure what constitutes lesbian sexual practice but it must border on the bizarre. That such practices are matters of personal and private choice is evident but why are homosexuals

allowed to promote their views in public and those who are strictly heterosexual silenced? Where is the balanced justice, the fair deal for all, in that? The euthanasia lobby is small but active in Australia. On average, a new bill seeking to establish the right of people to do away with themselves is offered in an Australian parliament every two years or so. The difficulties resulting from legislation of this nature is well established in Holland and Oregon State, USA; elderly people are afraid to submit to medical assistance for fear of being eliminated ahead of their time, especially if they have organs suitable for transplanting in other individuals. Euthanasia is certainly a slippery slope. So much for Malthus's population checks; sometimes bizarre, sometimes callous, his views must be seen as purely philosophical and not a recipe for social action.

Darwinism

Before proceeding to look more closely at the current population problem I should mention the influence that Malthus had on Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace, both of whom developed theories of evolution after reading Malthus's *Essay*. Darwin himself makes the point that Malthus's views were a trigger for him to propose his theory of survival of the fittest (Darwin, 1876, see www.ncmp.berkeley.edu/history/malthus). The particular passage that provoked Darwin is found in page 5 of the *Essay*:

'...nature has scattered the seeds of life abroad with the most profuse and liberal hand... (but) she has been comparatively sparing in the room and the nourishment necessary to rear them. The germs of existence contained in (one) spot of the earth... with ample room to expand would fill millions of worlds in the course of a few thousand years. Necessity, that imperious all pervading law of nature, restrains them within prescribed bounds. The race of plants and animals shrink under this great restrictive law. And the race of men cannot, by any effort of reason, escape from it. Among plants and animals its effects are waste of seed, sickness, and premature death; among mankind, (its effects are) misery and vice'.

Darwin's thought was that in such a regime 'favourable variations would tend to be preserved, the unfavourable ones destroyed and the results of this would be the formation of a new species; here then I had at last got a theory by which to work' (op cit). How he came to such a conclusion is obscure because there is nothing in Malthus that

would suggest that superior individuals are present or that survival is anything but a matter of chance that 'some seed fell on good ground'. Further, Gregor Mendel's genetics would argue that the formation of a new species would require a great deal more than survival across a range of growing conditions. If this is really what Darwin based his 'theory' on, how meagre are the foundations of the 'theory of evolution'. Regrettably, it is on this criterion that people like Malthus sees men to be nothing more than another animal species, destined to conform to the dictates of nature. The problem for this kind of reductive positivism is that it insists men are animals but continues to rationalize, despite the fact that by its human ontological prescription humans are excluded from doing so. Evolution is a fatuous kind of theory that has ruled the minds of some people ever since Anaximander first proposed that men came from fish in the 5th Century BC and we are daily subjected to Jurassic Park symbolism in the modern media. But its implications are nowhere near as dangerous as those resulting from the climate change dogma, apart from the fact that it provides a pre-supposition that supports the view that it is legitimate to manage human populations like any other species.

Review

So far we have seen that Malthus's propositions fall short in that they provide no ground for economic policy and management, are based on a macro view of humanity that has long been discarded by sociologists (see below) and propose checks on human reproduction that are both callous and brutally paternalistic.

We can expect that there will always be those who will maintain a macro-social view of humanity that sees humans are locked into conditions over which they have no control and acts on the presumption that societal norms are strong enough that individuals within a group are bound to conform to them. Like all dogmatic generalizations, such propositions have an element of truth, but it is a truth which ignores the reality of human agency.

Contrary to what Malthus is saying, humans are not automatons or 'cells in a body', that have no control over their sex drive or the environment; they are individuals with an extraordinary capacity to devise rational strategies and take purposive action. This has been recognised by many sociologists since the social science revolution of the 1960s and none have expressed it better than Anthony Giddens whose *theory of structuration* assures us that, contrary to the macro-social view, humans make the rules and

submit to them only as a matter of convenience (www.en.wikipedia.org). Unfortunately, the macro-social view has been carried forward in our time by people like John Maynard Keynes; he felt more comfortable developing macro economic theory than doing the empirical work necessary for finding out what really goes on in human groups and communities.

The inability of macro-theorists to predict human action with any degree of certainty, as evidenced daily in the current financial world, demonstrates the futility and extreme mischief of such practice. Macro theory is not a way forward to understand the human condition. This is the fundamental problem with Malthus's position – his approach is flawed and his conclusions figments of his philosophical imagination. This makes him dangerous. He presents himself with a sad face and a sober word: 'I am sorry, but wars, famine and disasters are positive agencies for our general good'. And if they are insufficient to control population we can kill our unwanted off-spring and revert to the unnatural use of our bodies.

This then is the theoretical ground for the latest piece of macro-social folly – the climate change dogma. In what follows, I seek to re-examine the problem of land productivity and population referencing *an informed human agency*. In the process, I will present some genuine empirical information with regard to human attitudes to reproduction at the grass roots level, and argue that human ingenuity is not frustrated by a diminishing land area per capita ratio.

Back to Basics

It is an arithmetic certainty that populations in which the birth rate is consistently less than the death rate are heading for extinction. This is as true for humans as for any other animal species. When an animal species is threatened with extinction concerned people set up a breeding program. The environmentalists know that, although they seem to be reluctant to grant humans the same rights as the Tasmanian Devil or a unique shrimp languishing in some coastal backwater. But macro population trends do not concern the masses. The thing on most peoples' minds is the awareness that later in life they will lose the physical capacity needed to sustain themselves and this makes it imperative that at that time there are young people to support them otherwise their plight will become desperate. Ask an African subsistence farmer or a Chinese peasant and they will give you the same answer: they need children to look after them in their old age. That is the way it has always been and the relevance of such thinking has been confirmed

recently in northwestern Zambia and south western Malawi where the land has become unoccupied as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which left a population composed entirely of very young and very old people. Being unable to support themselves, these people found it necessary to move to areas where there were people of economic age. Similarly, in the West the 'baby boomer' population bubble has been recognized by political administrators to be a problem because they foresee that there will be insufficient people of economic age to support the 'boomers' in their old age, especially as people are living longer these days. Managing the population is a problem, not because the land is getting scarce and humans are messing up the planet but because it impinges directly on human survival. The real population managers are not bureaucrats, some 'immense tutelary power' (Taylor, 1991); they are individual couples working out their destiny in a hostile and largely dysfunctional world. The number of children regarded as sufficient to ensure the care of the aged varies with the circumstances, for the death rate is not determined solely by the aging processes. Natural disasters like the 2006 tsunami in the Indian Ocean, war, disease and unexpected crop losses, like that which precipitated the Irish Potato Famine, also have a major impact on our longevity. Couples settle on a reproduction rate consistent with their expectations with regard to these kinds of hazards. In Australia in the 1970s we worked on the hypothesis that a mean birth rate of 2.4 babies per couple would be sufficient to keep our numbers stable. This figure was based on the vastly improved life expectancy we were enjoying as a result of the discovery of antibiotics and the relative peace and harmony within our borders. At the same time in Sub-Saharan Africa north of the Limpopo River, 40% of babies were dying before they reached 5 years of age, so a zero population growth birth rate for African people was somewhere between 4 and 8 children. As a risk strategy, it is interesting that all groups tend to produce slightly more children than necessary. It is hard to have 2.4 children – to meet this goal requires that you have 3 children!

It is not true that reproduction is a haphazard process, even in the developing world. African women do not resort to Western methods of contraception (despite the push from the West for them to use condoms) but they are still able to maintain a strict code of producing babies at two year intervals until the required quota of children is reached. Apparently they have some means of preventing conception that the West has forgotten about, for there are reports that in the time of the Slave Trade slave women were regularly raped but never conceived. I find African people

remarkable in that they are able to sustain their numbers even in the face of a disaster like the HIV/AIDS pandemic. What is critical for the present debate is that no amount of persuasion from the promoters of population decline is going to change their reproductive practice. If food supplies become limited, like an orange tree that is about to die, human populations will instinctively increase their breeding to off-set the effects of the disaster. I recall the testimony of a doctor in Italy during a cholera epidemic; he reported that people became unusually sexually active at that time.

In what follows, I take another look at land and population ratios. In doing so, I take it to be axiomatic that humans are superior to animal species - rational beings with the capacity to manage the environment for the benefit of all. I do not discount the fact that greed and ignorance can cause significant degradation of the environment from time to time, and that there is a need for responsible oversight of human action. But to conclude that half of us need to leave the planet is not likely to strike a cord with individuals concerned about their welfare in their latter years. Perhaps it is the people who propose such a simplistic philosophical position who should set a good example and be the first to leave; but I doubt that many Climate Change dogmatists would agree with that proposition.

Another Look at Land Resources/Population

The surface area of the Earth is 510 million km² of which approximately 149 million km² (29.2%) is covered with land, i.e. 13.4 billion hectares (ha). When Malthus wrote his *Essay*, world population was 906 million, with a mean space per capita of 16 hectares (www.geociyies.com/dtmcbride). He mentions (p.7) that there were seven million people in England at the time on 241 590 km² (24.16 million ha) so they had 26 ha of land per capita. No doubt Malthus would be surprised to find the UK population is now 61 million and the general level of health well above what it was in his day despite each individual only having 0.4 ha of land on which to live. And England is still a 'green and pleasant land. Malthus underestimated the ability of humans to manage the environment; and his present day fellow travelers seem to be making the same mistake, insisting that England should return to a primal state in which people live in remote and isolated communities, dressed in skins and disease ridden.

Today's population is 6.8 billion and the mean space available per capita is 2 hectares. Of this 11% (1.5 billion ha) is devoted to cultivated crops; 24% (3.2 billion ha) is devoted to pasture and grazing; 32% (4.3 billion ha) is devoted to forests

and woodlands; and 33% (4.4 billion ha) is desert, ice sheet or devoted to urban occupation (www.theglobaleducationproject.org). Thus, at least 67% of the planet is capable of supplying food and shelter for human use and this takes no account of oceans and lakes which hold large supplies of fish, an important food alternative for many human groups. From these figures we can calculate that the mean cropland available per capita is 0.22 ha, pasture 0.48 ha and forest and woodland 0.64 ha. That is to say, each family of two adults and two children has available to it 0.88 ha of land for planting grain and vegetable crops, 1.92 ha for grazing domesticated animals and 2.56 ha from which to obtain wood for construction and fuel. By any standard this is more than enough to sustain life. Current food production figures support this view (see below)⁴. There are starving people in the world. Some of this is due to their inability to develop because they lack capital. Nobel Laureate, Professor Muhammad Yunus of Pakistan, has shown how small amounts of seed capital can transform lives (Yunus, 1998). Other are starving because they are the victims of their belief system (e.g. animism) or because they are being perpetually preyed upon by those who control the world's economic and political systems. The problem is not the non-availability of land. The Cornucopian view, in direct contrast to the Malthusian view, suggests that there is enough matter and energy on the Earth to sustain 9.5 billion people. (My own calculations suggest 8 billion is the peak but I will not quibble). They see the problem of hunger as, not a lack of resources but an inadequate distribution system. Of course redistribution is not a simple matter, even if you take away economic and political restraints; a Simple Equality redistribution system whereby equal quantities of resources are handed over to every citizen will not work. The hand-out to Australian aborigines in remote areas is a case in point; everyone receives the same amount on pension day but by week's end all of the money is in the hands of the local store-keeper. Walzer (1983) has proposed a Complex Equality under girded by a theory of goods which he sees located in an ideal economy in which goods are conceived, created and distributed within coherent human groups,

⁴Current field crop yields are as follows (2008 year):

Crop	Mean Yield	World Product.	Per Capita
Corn	8.7 mt/ha	308 million mt	51kg
Wheat	2.4 mt/ha	58 million mt	10kg
Soya Bean	2.7 mt/ha	77 million mt	13kg
Rice	7.0 mt/ha	661 million mt	110kg

neighborhood and political entities (Homans, 1962). Within such groups he argues for a social definition of goods derived from and contributing to a collective conscience. His central position is that there is no single good but a multiplicity of goods, with no single access, no single medium of exchange and no single set of creative or distributive agents. In another place, I have argued that the distribution of education is illuminated by Walzer's proposition (Potter, 1995).

It is, in a nutshell, a Cornucopian view would see the supply of essential goods created and distributed to all through the application of human rational purposive action in a site of mutual inter-dependence. That is the way it has always been done and the way it will go on being done if we can find some way to eliminate practices of domination which some humans seem determined to perpetuate despite past bad experiences. The appeal for democratic participation is critical if we are to solve the misery currently experienced by the poor. Not kill our babies.

Modern Environmentalists

Malthusian environmentalists see development as a relentless process whereby eco-systems are destroyed with no regard for animal and plant populations or the future. And in some cases they are right; the ongoing destruction of forests in Papua New Guinea is a disgrace. So, we can agree that development needs to be monitored but not that we should move from one extreme position to another. In the post Second World War years, agricultural scientists treated land degradation as a serious threat and went about developing solutions on the assumption that *there was a means of using land that would both preserve the resource and produce an economic outcome*. And in this they were very successful. Today's environmentalists have moved to a preservationist position that wants to exclude humans from at least some sites all together and the remnant population subsisting on land reconstituted to pre-development conditions.

This is not hearsay. The Adelaide University took over a parcel of land south of Adelaide recently. They decided to develop part of the property for housing to generate funds for developing the bulk of the land as a vegetation reserve. They were refused planning permission for housing by the local authority and told that they must re-plant the whole area to its pre-colonial condition (*MessengerPress*, Adelaide). What is being over looked here is that this extreme form of conservation is nothing more than a 'rich man's hobby'. Why should the University of Adelaide pay money to return a piece of land to its prior

condition purely as an act of benevolence? On local television we are shown gardens full of pristine indigenous plants, birds and other animal species. Such projects receive our praise but it is clear that the resources that paid for the development did not come from the land on which it is located. It is disturbing that many urban people seem to have lost sight of the fact that human survival is dependent on land, as well as labour and capital. Many young people in cities are ignorant of where milk and other food items come from, despite having a 'good education'.

Another point of concern is that the environmental lobby tends to be carried by people holding to common sense views based on hysteria rather than facts. The River Murray is a case in point. The Murray, like many other river systems in Australia, is an ephemeral stream – water only flows when there is sufficient rainfall in the catchments. When European settlers arrived in Australia they found that they could drive their horse and buggy across the Murray in the dry season and only operate river boats when the spring flows came. In the 1930s, State Governments, noting that much valuable water was running out to sea, built weirs across the Murray to store water for use in the dry part of the season. The result was that the river now consists of a number of stagnant pools of water and to the uninformed it looks like a permanent stream. Unfortunately, State Governments over allocated the stored water supplies and there is now insufficient water to go around. The Commonwealth Government is currently buying back water licences and we are hearing a lot about 'environmental flows'. What are they? Before the weirs went in there were no 'environmental flows', why do we need them now? Further, why does the South Australian Government pay \$3 million per annum to have sand in the Murray Mouth dredged out when it is patently obvious that there is no utility, either economic or environmental, in allowing fresh water to flow out to sea. Besides, the Southern Ocean re-fills the mouth with sand as soon as it is dredged. It is agreed that we need to care for the environment but let's do it in a manner that gives due consideration to informed opinions. But I am getting away from the main topic of this paper which is managing human populations for long term sustainability.

Final Thoughts

So far we have seen that Malthus's position is ignorant of basic economic axioms, operates in a macro social view that ignores human agency, treats disasters as blessings and fails to recognize that the main driver of human reproduction is the

recognition that a person needs children to support them in their latter years. Perhaps the main sadness of his position is that it comes from a man of the cloth, for the Judaeo-Christian position is definitely Cornucopian. The Hebrew scriptures tell us that the first command of the Elohim God to humans was:

'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moved upon the earth' (Genesis 1:28).

Scofield sees the word subdue (Heb. = *kabash*) as the 'divine magna charta for all true scientific and material progress... (asking humans) to acquire knowledge and mastery over the material environment' (Scofield, 1967). And this position was reaffirmed to Noah after the world wide deluge (Genesis 9:1) and to Christians operating under the New Covenant (Ephesians 2:10). From this perspective Malthus's position is not only antisocial but anti-God; especially his insistence that misery and vice as experienced by the masses was God's plan!

Having said that, we recognize that world populations are increasing while the land available remains the same. We also note that there is still misery in the world; the times have changed, but the question remains the same: 'how will we feed ourselves if the population continues to grow'. The Malthusians say, reduce the population but this is easy to say and not so easy to implement. China has had a one child policy for some time and, as a result of selective breeding, there are now 60 million Chinese men who cannot find wives because families have preferred to have a son rather than a daughter. (Malthus reports that the Chinese 'expose' their unwanted children, i.e. throw them on the rubbish heap, Malthus, 1798, p.19. He was probably correct because the practice is still common in China (and in other places) today, see (e.g.) www.ccpr.ucla.edu/docs/YaqiangQi.pdf and www.gendercide.org, etc. Will one child in China be able to support two ailing parents? Probably not. This method of reducing the population seems not to be working. So, what about Malthus's preventative measures, are they working? In Australia, we are breeding at just over 1% of population annually despite a high rate of abortion, contraception and Gay Mardi Gras.

Thanks to improved health services we more than make up for those who are dying by natural means and on top of that there is immigration. So the Malthusians are moving to implement the grand strategy: reduce food supplies by implementing a

cap and trade green house gas emission scheme that will starve out a significant proportion of the population. Natural disasters are difficult to arrange but man-made famine is a definite possibility.

In Australia, farmers have always dealt with a wide range of hostilities. Drought is an ever present threat and farmers are always at the mercy of their input suppliers. The price of Mono-ammonium Phosphate fertilizer in Australia in 2008 was \$800/ton; in early 2009 the price doubled to over \$1600/ton so one farmer looked off-shore and found a source selling the same fertilizer at around \$650/ton. When he put his product on the market at \$800/ton the main suppliers dropped their prices to \$800/ton over night! Machinery supplier's play the same game – the price is whatever you can get the farmers to pay. Some rural industries are in dire trouble. The current price of milk in the supermarket is \$2/litre but the latest regulated payment for fresh milk supplies from dairies is 28 cents/litre. Seeing that the cost of production is 40cents/litre we can anticipate that milk supplies are going to dry up if this continues. Many dairy farmers are suicidal and if they go who will have the expertise to grow our milk supplies? Now, on top of this kind of vulnerability the Australian Government is set to impose a Carbon Credit Tax on Australian food producers. Many of them will be eliminated, for crops cannot be planted, harvested and transported using solar or wind energy and the farmers will not be able to pay the carbon tax. Rice growers in Australia have already been shut down by allocating them a nil irrigation water quota. And the River Murray irrigation districts have taken a further blow when even wood cutting operations have been closed down because their operations are seen to be disturbing a parrot that does not like to fly over open land – so we are told!

This action has been taken by the Federal authorities, despite the fact that wood cutters were only cutting trees designated by the local Environment Protection Agency. Similarly, the national environment department has insisted that some 60% of Australia's coastland be declared a Marine Park that will be unavailable to commercial fishermen because some obscure shrimp or seahorse is considered to be threatened; this despite the fact that fish stocks have been responsibly monitored by Fisheries Officers over many years. Such decisions are not coincidental; they each contribute to a well orchestrated plan to reduce food supplies with the object of reducing population.

On the world scene there are a thousand similar

stories. Kenyan vegetable growers have had a lucrative market in Europe and the UK; this has now been sabotaged by marking their products *eco-unfriendly* when they are displayed in super market shelves because they have been transported by aircraft using fossil fuel. Kenyans are losing their businesses and the European public is resorting to digging up their back yards to grow food; at least some of them are, these days most urban dwellers do not have a back yard. The world price of rice went from \$140/ton to \$1100/ton in the latter half of 2008. This effectively means that a large percentage of the people for whom rice is the staple diet are no longer able to buy it. All of which suggests that a world wide famine is a definite possibility in the near future.

The billionaire's club will survive the cataclysm but ordinary folk, particularly the aged on fixed incomes, will have no alternative but to scratch out an existence as best they can in the primal manner, if they can find some land – and this is a big 'if'. Malthus's prescription has no power to do anything but create more misery and vice. Will the Cornucopian community buckle under the onslaught or will this be their finest hour? This is the real question of the age.

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