

Re: Re: Quest for the CFers

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.econ/2004-09/0992.html>

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Date: 09/18/04

Date: Sat, 18 Sep 2004 04:31:44 GMT

In

Message-ID: <ce9f3a02.0409171112.6b660b26@posting.google.com>
posted on 17 Sep 2004 12:12:53 -0700, abacus wrote:

> *nilkids@invalid.com.au* wrote in message news:<isakk0pfm0bnnh61hgh6hjfe4aap84ekn7@4ax.com>...

>

>> > *Since you asked, I'll respond. However, since many of your newsgroup*

>> > *regulars don't care for posts by people who don't share their outlook*

>> > *and attitude regarding children, I'm crossposting this to sci.econ.*

>> > *It's another group I lurk in regularly and occasionally post to.*

>>

>> *Fair enough, although I think I can almost guess the*

>> *economic arguments as our system does somewhat depend on*

>> *continuing growth, or is thought to.*

>

> *Well, I lurk here regularly and I'm not at all sure what responses the*

> *question might bring, so you may be surprized. At any rate, I am*

> *curious to see what others might post. Also, the only other group I*

> *post in occasionally is misc.kids and I've seen what crossposts*

> *between ASCF and MK bring. While I enjoy spirited argument and lively*

> *debate, I don't like what such crossposts between those two groups*

> *invariably degenerate into.*

>>

>> *Personally, though, I don't consider economics as a*

>> *"science". I wouldn't even consider medicine or psychology*

>> *as sciences.*

>

> *As you wish. I won't argue that point. Nevertheless, I find*

> *economics an interesting approach to analyzing human behavior. In*

> *addition, this group gets some actual economic experts occasionally*

> *contributing and I find I learn a lot from lurking here.*

>

>> *I don't consider humans as being all that predictable. How*

>> *many economists have accurately predicted various stock*

>> *market booms or, more importantly, busts?*

>>

>> *However, will crosspost to the group as suggested, although*

>> *not sure will have enough time to keep up with another*

>> *group.*
>
>*Thanks. I'll look forward to your responses.*
>
>> *[Shrug!] alt.support.childfree is an unmoderated group,*
>> *and moderated groups on this subject are available.*
>>
>> *As in any usenet group they don't have to follow this*
>> *particular thread, or they can killfile both of us if they*
>> *wish.*
>
>*True. But I have no desire to deliberate annoy others. I'll try to*
>*confine my responses to sci.econ. My apologies in advance to ASCF*
>*members for if and when I forget to delete the crossposts.*

I don't consider it as deliberately annoying others. They do not have to read any posts they don't want to read. Am sure they recognize my pseudonym by now. Some news readers have filters and provision for kill filing individuals. I highly recommend Forte Agent for newsgroup use.

>
>> >> *If you are a breeder, how do you justify bringing children*
>> >> *into an already overcrowded and rapidly deteriorating world?*
>> >
>> >*If you are alive, how do you justify breathing, eating, and consuming*
>> >*resources of all sorts in an already overcrowded and rapidly*
>> >*deteriorating world?*
>>
>> *I cannot, of course, but it was not my choice to be here,*
>> *and my religion discourages suicide. :-). . . Am sure*
>> *some on the group will be disappointed to hear this. :-)*
>
>*I don't think either choice – to continue human life as an individual*
>*or to continue human life by having children requires justification.*
>*We exist. We are alive. We reproduce. I don't see that any of that*
>*requires justification for human beings any more than it does for any*
>*other living organism. Whether the organism is a bacteria, a plant, a*
>*mosquito or a human being, that is what living organisms do. They*
>*exist and (most of them anyway) reproduce or at least attempt to do*
>*so.*

Most animal behaviour is instinctive, not reasoned. Most humans have both intelligence and free will to make decisions.

>*Humans are the only organisms that even consider the option of*
>*not attempting to do so.*

Reproduction is a deliberate choice. There are ways to prevent it. Soon after I got married decades ago my wife and I decided that we simply didn't want kids so I got a

vasectomy. One of the wisest decisions that I ever made, as ensured a childfree state, and we are both still very happy that we don't have children.

>> *It is scientifically pretty obvious that the present rate of population growth cannot continue indefinitely, so it seems likely that a drastic crash will occur sooner or later.*
>> *From a scientific view, my view is that it could well occur sooner rather than later.*
>>
>> *From my Christian point of view, perhaps God will chose to end the world and call an end to the experiment before the human race manages to completely end the species by its own efforts. :-)*
>
> *Well, from my species centric point of view, I hope the human race doesn't end for a long long while yet.*

> *From my point of view, it will end eventually, just as the Bible predicts it will. The only question is when. I do consider it interesting that there is a promise that the end will not be caused by flood, but by fire, see 2 Peter 3:10:*

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
><http://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/2Pe/2Pe003.html><

I think it interesting that until the 20th century we didn't have the technology to melt some of the elements with a high melting point. However, then we developed atomic energy, and the temperature of even the first fission bomb was more than sufficient to melt all known elements. [Nor are there any unknown ones elsewhere in the universe visible to us. There are no unexplainable spectra.]

So if we postulate that nuclear weapons might have a role to play in the end times we might take a look at some other verses. In chapter 13 of Mark, Jesus is asked about the end times. He has many things to say about coming signs, but those curious can look them up at the URL given. Will just mention one of them, as it may bear on the above point.

Mar 13:14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:
><http://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/Mar/Mar013.html><

[These are the KJV translation but the site has others.]
Now the Bible doesn't explain what is meant by this
abomination of desolation. However, many think that a
nuclear weapon could be fairly described as a weapon that
causes desolation, and fleeing to the mountains might not be
bad advice to the survivors in the neighborhood.

> *Even a serious crash is
>unlikely to doom us to complete extinction.*

It might be more than a serious crash, of course. Even for
agnostics and atheists we cannot get around the fact that
doomsday weapons have been possible for over 50 years.
Those interested can check my earlier post:

Newsgroups: alt.support.childfree
Subject: Re: Re: Earth to be swarming with 9 BILLION people
by 2050
Message-ID: <usqki0p5qp8d8l4ebk80kb2ch3b3jtbich@4ax.com>
Lines: 105
Date: Mon, 23 Aug 2004 23:29:19 GMT

>*I think it more likely
>such a crash would be followed by the surviving humans evolving into
>many different species (hopefully even some off-planet).*

Where off-planet? We are a very long way from having a
self-supporting colony anywhere in the solar system, and
even further away from technology that would allow us to
reach the nearest star in less than centuries, and there is
no reason to think that it has any habitable planets.

Of course, perhaps science is wrong about the limiting
factor of the speed of light. Perhaps there are shortcuts
to alternate universes. Perhaps we could develop a time
machine and go back to undo past mistakes such as allowing
unlimited breeding on earth, then we could just stay here.
Then again, it is more likely the Bible is right and the
whole thing is going to end at some future date. :-)

> *However, no
>way of knowing at this point what might happen. I seem to recall
>reading that something like 90% of all species that have ever existed
>on earth are now extinct, so most likely humans will be too
>eventually.*

Yes, there have been some large mass extinctions. The
reptiles dominated the earth for far longer than mankind has
been around.

>

>> *So, for the sake of argument, perhaps we could presume that*
>> *the human race will suffer a great population crash, or*
>> *even manage to wipe itself out, in the next 25 or 50 years.*
>>
>> *The possibility has existed for decades, but God may*
>> *intervene of course.*
>>
>> *If any of these apply, then why bring children into the*
>> *world at all?*
>
>*First of all, I don't agree that a great population crash will occur*
>*in the next half-century. I agree that if things continue as they are*
>*eventually such a crash will occur. When I don't know. People were*
>*predicting such a crash would occur prior to the end of the last*
>*century, but it did not. Things will not continue as they are.*
>*Change is inevitable, so such a population crash is not.*

It is always hard to predict when an event will occur. The world will eventually run out of fossil fuels such as oil, coal, etc, but the question is when, not if.

>
>*I had children because I wanted to. My children have brought a great*
>*deal joy and laughter into my life. I am delighted on a daily basis*
>*by them. I have a better, more enjoyable life with my children than I*
>*would have without them.*

Fine, that is you. Others have different opinions.

>
>*Why did you choose NOT to have children? I gather from your other*
>*posts that you made your choice for the same reason: because you felt*
>*you would have a better, more enjoyable life without children, not*
>*because you wanted children but decided to forgo the experience*
>*because you felt it was better for the future of the planet or the*
>*human race that you not do so.*

No, I am not greatly worried about the future of the planet once my wife and I are gone from it. :-)

Much simpler than this. Neither of us were particularly happy as children, and simply had no desire to inflict life on a child. The world was starting to "go down the tubes" even when we were kids, and neither of us could see any probability of it getting much better. Which it hasn't, in our opinion. Why should we be selfish enough to produce descends only to see them suffer, and know that if they were stupid enough to have kids, the grandkids would suffer even more.

However, this wasn't the only reason. Neither of us honestly felt that we had the required patience to raise children. Since they aren't returnable, we didn't really want to take the chance to find out.

Then too, both of us had seen previously happy marriages break up when the couple had children. Why risk this either?

When a course of action is perceived as having more likely negatives than positives, why take it? I still fail to see any positives. As pointed out in an earlier post, surveys have revealed that more than 50% of parents wouldn't have children again if they could live their life over. We are capable of benefiting from others experiences. Why try to buck the odds?

>
>> *Will admit am biased. As pointed out in an earlier post on this group, I wouldn't repeat adolescence knowing what I knew then for any conceivable amount of money. Nor would I ever want to have a child and expose either a son or daughter to such misery.*

>
>*Personally, I think anyone who tells a miserable teenager that "these are the best years of your life" ought to be slapped. Or forced to be an adolescent again. I can only say that those were the worst years of my life. But adolescence is not forever, nor is it so horribly painful for everyone.*

Why put anyone or anything through any amount of unnecessary pain?

>
>> *If reasonable normal, they can even grow up and be sent off to wars whether they wish to go or not, and become trained killers.*

>
>*Once they are grown, they can make the decision for themselves about whether or not they wish to fight in a war. Sometimes war is justified. Sometimes not. Reasonable people can differ about when it is and is not justified. But it's adults who fight, not children except in the most extreme circumstances.*

Technically, the law once defined anyone under 21 as a child. It wasn't until the Vietnam War that the age of adulthood was lowered to 18. Logically enough, those who were under 21 argued that if they were old enough to be drafted and die then they should at least be entitled to drink and vote.

>
>> >> >>
>> >> >> > *What*
>> >> >> >*makes you so angry and hostile towards society's weakest link.*
>
>> *Am not arguing that aspect. Am questioning the need for*

>> *more children at all.*

>

>> *If talking about the survival of human society, though, can
>> leave out children at all. What do you think is the weakest
>> link that would endanger the survival and happiness of the
>> human race? I could suggest a few, but am interested to
>> see what others might suggest. :-)*

>

>> *>Who else do you think would qualify as "society's weakest link".*

>

>> *OK, if you insist on an answer, how about militarism, human
>> stupidity, the sheeplike willingness of humans to be led by
>> others?*

>

>*Oh, okay. I think we had VERY different interpretations of what the
>OP meant.*

>*I was thinking of "weakest link" of those individual who require the
>most assistance to survive, not those who "endanger the survival and
>happiness of the human race."*

By that definition, then, I would argue that premature children would be the weakest link, as those born a few months early often require extensive medical intervention to survive. Whether we do them any favors in helping them to survive is another question, as many suffer severe physical and mental handicaps as a result of their premature birth.

>> *Do you intend to argue that if severe defects can be
>> detected by amniocentesis, ultrasound, etc. that the child
>> should proceed to term regardless?*

>

>*No. I feel that bringing any pregnancy to term is a decision best
>left to the mother and should not be imposed upon her by others.*

Make that the mother in consultation with her doctor and would probably agree with you. Some mothers wouldn't realize how severe defects can be. Having seen severely retarded children and adults in institutions who didn't have as much intelligence as my cats, I do think that people should be warned of some of the more unpleasant possibilities. I once heard of an argument between a doctor and a nurse as to which of two infants had the lower IQ, A or B. The doctor insisted that A was more intelligent. The nurse won by pointing out that although there were no neuromuscular defects, infant B had enough intelligence to turn over when it was uncomfortable in bed. Infant A apparently didn't.

>

>> *A few years ago in Australia a guy in his mid fifties, from
>> memory, was out surfing, got dumped by a wave, ended up with*

>> *a high cervical fracture which meant that he ended up in
>> hospital not only paralyzed from the neck down but not even
>> able to breathe on his own, let alone suicide.*
>>
>> *Some kind person assisted him to suicide. Or would you see
>> this as an act of kindness and mercy? Please do try to
>> reply to this question, incidentally.*
>
>*If the individual is aware of their condition and able to communicate
>such a desire, I think it could be an act of kindness and mercy.
>However, I would have a great deal of concern about whether such a
>desire was a temporary reaction (i.e. I think it best to give them
>adequate time to adjust mentally to their situation and see if they
>still feel that way). Without knowing more of such specifics in the
>case you've cited, I can't say definitely one way or the other.*

Apparently the individual was able to convince a friend or relative to assist in the suicide, which is still unfortunately illegal under Australian law. I don't know which one of them knew enough to pull the plug on the patient monitor to prevent the alarm from being raised before he disconnected the life support system.

The police did investigate, but I doubt that they looked very hard for the friend or relative.

I'm not at all moved by the argument that the person should be given more time to adjust to their situation. People have free will, and are capable of making decisions. It is their life, after all. Where a person is sure they want to die, what business is it of anyone else? Why make them suffer unnecessarily?

Some people make what are called "living wills" making advance decisions about whether they want to live or die in various circumstances.

However, they have no real legal validity and are not legally enforceable. A person might wear a medical alert bracelet or carry a card that says "Do not resuscitate" but there is no assurance that their wishes will be honored.

AFIK, the only country that presently has a legally enforceable euthanasia law is the Netherlands. Obviously a very progressive country. Here, the Northern Territory had such a law for a few months, but the Federal Gov't managed to overthrow it.

>> >> *If you have children, don't you ever feel any guilt for
>> >> bringing them into the world? If not, why not?*
>> >

>> >No, I don't feel guilt. Why not? Why should I? I don't feel guilt
>> >for having children anymore than I feel guilt for being alive, for
>> >eating, drinking, and polluting the world with my bodily wastes.
>> >Should people feel guilty for peeing? For breathing in oxygen and
>> >breathing out carbon dioxide?
>>
>> Just because your parents cursed you with life doesn't mean
>> that you have to perpetuate the mistake, does it?
>
>I don't feel that I was cursed with life but blessed with it. I don't
>think of having children as perpetuating a 'mistake', but as giving
>the gift of life and as a sharing of the joy I take in being alive.

Again, opinions differ. That is what makes betting on horse races possible. :-)

Perhaps there is a genetic basis for happiness. At least you are civilized enough to discuss the issue without all the emotional crap we have seen on alt.support.childfree.

Why should some people who have chosen to have children insist on coming on the group and arguing with those who have chosen otherwise.

>
>> >I'll look for your response in sci.econ. Regards.
>>
>> You will see it in both groups. Thanks for the post. I do
>> realize that you are sincere and that perhaps you and I just
>> view the world from very different points of view.
>>
>> However, the basic question may be why people are so
>> intolerant of other points of view on any given issue.
>
>Indeed, that is one that I ponder deeply myself. I have no good
>answers, but I enjoy finding out more about other people's opinions on
>many different issues. I love the Internet because it allows me to
>hear others discuss their values and ideas and why they feel the way
>they do.

Yes, it is very useful for that, isn't it?

>
>> Anyway, though, have spent too much time on this particular
>> post and have others to deal with. Nevertheless, looking
>> forward to any replies from either group, although cannot
>> promise to answer them all at such length. :-)
>
>Thanks. I've enjoyed your reply. Hopefully, you'll find time for
>more conversation.

You can count on it. This group isn't as busy as I thought it might be.

sci.econ: Re: Re: Quest for the CFers

Regards,
"nilkids