

THE Nation.

THE BEAT

Family Farmers Respond to the Food Crisis

posted by **JOHN NICHOLS** on 04/28/2008 @ 7:16pm

Looking for a responsible, moral and effective response to the global food crisis?

Start by sending money to a group that is working to get food to starving people. I'm especially impressed with the savvy approaches of **Friends of the World Food Program**.

Then support the work of smart groups such as the National Family Farm Coalition to change failed U.S. policies that harm farmers and consumers in the U.S. and around the world.

The National Family Farm Coalition has for years been warning that a global trading system designed to enrich agribusiness conglomerates while undermining the interests of working farmers in the U.S. and abroad would lead to precisely the disaster that is now unfolding.

And they've proposed the right response: a food a fair food system that ensures health, justice, and dignity for all by assuring the basic right of communities to choose where and how their food is produced and what food they consume. The international campaign for this new approach is known as the Food Sovereignty Movement, and the NFFC has worked hard to build support in the U.S. for it as an urgently necessary step to avoid catastrophe.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration and most members of Congress were not interested when steps could have been taken to avert the hunger tsunami that has hit much of the developing world.

Now, the question is whether Congress will finally start listening to the anticipated the current crisis -- which has spread to more than three dozen countries, most of them in Africa but some as close as Haiti -- and who are proposing an immediate and important policy response for the U.S. and other countries.

An NFFC letter to Congress, which will be issued Tuesday, calls for a small but vital step by the U.S. -- the establishment of a Strategic Grain Reserve as a buffer against price shocks -- and by extension encourages recognition by U.S. officials of the need for a reversal of trade policies that have pressured countries around the world to abandon programs designed to maintain food stocks as a guard against the price volatility that is currently spreading hunger and instability across the globe.

In the U.S., the misguided policies of the Bill Clinton administration and the Republican Congresses of the 1990s -- as exemplified by the 1996 "Freedom to Farm Act" -- eliminated historic food-security provisions and handed over control of grain stocks to corporate agribusiness giants and commodities speculators.

This is a modest proposal, but it's a wise one -- and in some senses a radical one. The World Trade Organization, the World Bank and other champions of the corporate globalization have for many years discouraged nations from taking steps to assure that adequate food stocks will be available for their people. The Food Sovereignty Movement says that feeding the hungry is more important than removing barriers to agribusiness profiteering.

Establishing a Strategic Grain Reserve is a small step toward food sovereignty. But it is a step that the U.S. can take, and in doing so it can send an important signal to other countries. This is the right time to act: negotiators in Washington are putting the finishing touches on a new Farm Bill. And so it should come as no surprise that responsible farm, consumer, environmental and religious groups have signed on to the call.

Here's the NFFC letter and the list of signers:

April 28, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

All around the globe, food riots have shaken countries from Haiti to Egypt to India to Uzbekistan while rising rice prices cause grief in many Asian countries. A global food crisis threatens to impoverish millions around the world. Here at home, livestock and dairy producers, bakers and food processors have expressed their fears over skyrocketing commodity prices while higher food prices are eating into many family budgets. News reports nervously highlight that U.S. and world grain stocks are at all-time lows since World War II.

For more than a decade, and particularly during Farm Bill negotiations of the past year, we have been sounding alarms over the precarious state of our food security. The undersigned farm, consumer, environmental, religious and development groups believe it is urgent that we establish a Strategic Grain Reserve, similar to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, and re-instate the Farmer-Owned Reserve.

Under the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act, the United States eliminated all its government stocks, save for a very small amount in the Emerson Humanitarian Trust Reserve intended for foreign aid. We are just one drought away from possibly seeing \$10/bushel corn or \$20/bushel wheat with absolutely no plan in place to deal with such a calamity. The president and U.S. Congress have irresponsibly ignored this issue throughout the entire Farm Bill debate, even as other countries such as China and India build up their strategic stocks. Last October, the European Union stated they would examine establishing reserves to further buffer against price shocks. The United States cannot afford such ill-prepared planning that is putting our food system and larger economy at grave risk.

The idea of holding grain reserves to stem hunger has been a part of many ancient civilizations. In the Old Testament, Pharaoh put Joseph in charge of Egypt's grain reserves that would set aside one-fifth of production to account for seven fat years followed by seven lean years. A "constantly normal granary" operated in China for over 1,400 years. China's grain reserve is presently between 150 million and 200 million tons. During the New Deal, the United States established grain reserves as a way to protect farmers from depressed prices and to ensure soldiers and consumers had enough to eat. The idea for the government to hold "buffer stocks" as a way to stabilize commodity markets was widely popularized by Benjamin Graham, a Wall Street legend who mentored Warren Buffett. In 1977, Congress enacted the Farmer-Owned Reserve in the Farm Bill as a means of "maintaining adequate food reserves." These policy mechanisms were all dismantled by the 1996 Freedom to Farm Act. The global move towards free trade and trade liberalization means countries around the world have also forfeited much of their food stocks. The current price volatility roiling global food prices should come as no surprise.

Reinstating food reserves would facilitate more orderly marketing, protect consumers from price surges, and could meet energy and humanitarian needs. The possibility of short supplies seriously threatens our reputation as a reliable exporter and is one of the fundamental reasons behind current market speculation as suppliers hoard their stock and commodity traders buy and sell wildly. Currently, private corporations control U.S. grain reserves as a result of Congress's decision to privatize our excess commodity supply.

Our government should be responsible for providing a stable supply of food for their citizens in the face of unpredictable disruptions in grain production. Strategic reserves are also a much more responsible approach to addressing the rise in commodity prices that have caused much anguish from livestock and dairy producers, bakers and food processors. Some groups have advocated for allowing Conservation Reserve Program acres to be brought into production as a solution. We oppose this shortsighted move that would devastate ecologically sensitive land so revered by conservationists and hunters. We cannot grow our way out of this crisis.

Those clamoring for the days of cheap commodities need to remember that commodity prices collapsed after the 1996 Farm Bill, with corn falling to \$1.50 / bushel and wheat under \$3 / bushel. These prices were lower than what farmers received in the 1970s! As a result, thousands of farmers went out of business and billions were spent in emergency federal payments. Agribusinesses profiting from buying cheap corn and wheat have never showed much concern for the perilous plight of farmers. Now that higher prices are sparking cries for more production, the United States needs to have a long-term vision for preserving our food security and food sovereignty – much more than simply answering agribusiness's pleas for cheap commodities. A prudent reserves policy that stabilizes commodity prices would reduce controversial farm subsidy payments by ensuring prices do not collapse. Ten-dollar corn is a threat to our system, but \$2 corn should be every bit as unacceptable.

A Strategic Grain Reserve is just as vital as a Strategic Petroleum reserve. It is not too late for Congress to establish policy that will benefit both consumers and farmers instead of leaving our fates to the whims and dictates of unstable, globalized markets. As a matter of national security, our government should recognize and act on its responsibility to provide a stable market for food in an era of unprecedented risk.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Missions, Inc.

American Agriculture Movement, Inc.

American Corn Growers Association

Ashtabula County Farmers Union (Ohio)

Border Agricultural Workers Project (El Paso, TX)

California Farmers Union

Center of Concern

Community Farm Alliance (Kentucky)

Congregation of the Holy Cross; Coordinator for Peace and Justice

Family Farm Defenders

Farm Aid

Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund

Food and Water Watch

Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy

Grassroots International

Hispanic Organizations Leadership Alliance

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

International Labor Rights Forum

Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Kansas Farmers Union

Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Justice, Peace/Integrity of Creation Office

Missouri Rural Crisis Center

National Catholic Rural Life Conference

National Family Farm Coalition

National Farmers Organization

National Latino Farmers and Ranchers Trade Association

Ohio Farmers Union

Organic Consumers Association

Rural Advancement Fund (NC)

Rural Coalition /Coalition Rural

Western Organization of Resource Councils

Learn more about the NFFC and its campaign for food sovereignty by visiting the group's website at www.nffc.net.

Comments (100)

The US should take steps to protect the US food supply...but it is our responsibility for the entire world? I don't think so...

"..a fair food system that ensures health, justice, and dignity for all by assuring the basic right of communities to choose where and how their food is produced and what food they consume."

I choose to buy, eat or not to of any food I feel unsafe or dangerous to me..Is this not a responsibility of the buyer of the food? Me? And if I am not sure or comfortable with the source or I don't know the source of the food and it is a problem for me, then I will not buy or eat it...why do we need the US to police the grocery stores and graineries of the world?...we(our hemisphere)are the OPEC of food in the world...we can do something, but I am not sure we are the police the food supplies and sources any more than the Arabs are with who gets or does not get their oil.. Just more bloated bureaucrats in the making devouring precious resources to no avail.

Posted by **JOMAMMA** at 04/28/2008 |

I am all for a Reserve of grains...but I am afraid it will be too much like the Petro Reserve...a political tool that has no effect on prices or consumption...perhaps we all as individuals should have a food stock of flour and corn in our basements so we do not have to rely on others...or victory gardens...why not?

Gotta better than the poor excuse for commercial Wonder Bread...as in I wonder when all the nutrients went.

As you might surmise, I love to garden.

Posted by **JOMAMMA** at 04/28/2008 |

It is a reasonable idea, but the logistics on such a scale for a perishable product are staggering. It would be interesting to learn how it is proposed to be achievable.

Posted by **Benchrest** at 04/28/2008 |

"Unfortunately, the Bush administration and most members of Congress were not interested when steps could have been taken to avert the hunger tsunami that has hit much of the developing world.

Now, the question is whether Congress will finally start listening to the anticipated the current crisis."

Answered the question before you asked it, Mr Nichols.

Posted by **Mask** at 04/28/2008 |

In the U.S., the misguided policies of the Bill Clinton administration and the Republican Congresses of the 1990s -- as exemplified by the 1996 "Freedom to Farm Act"

.....

seems like many misbegotten roads lead back to clinton.....

Monday, April 28, 2008 9:39:39 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/28/2008 |

I choose to buy, eat or not to of any food I feel unsafe or dangerous to me..Is this not a responsibility of the buyer of the food?

Posted by JOMAMMA

well, if there's food to buy.....

Monday, April 28, 2008 9:43:20 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/28/2008 |

...we(our hemisphere)are the OPEC of food in the world...

Posted by JOMAMMA

that's what australia thought.....

Monday, April 28, 2008 9:44:22 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/28/2008 |

BOYCOTT ETHANOL!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Monday, April 28, 2008 9:45:58 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/28/2008 |

I hope you mean boycott ethanol produced for the purpose of running a car.

Posted by **mARKIATTIN** at 04/28/2008 |

indeed.

ethanol has no place ANYWHERE near a vehicle.

plant corn in order to run tractors in order to plant corn in order to run tractors in order to plant corn in order to run tractors in order to plant corn.

Monday, April 28, 2008 10:38:00 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/28/2008 |

Instead of waiting for congress to act I suggest joining a local food co-op. Starting your own garden and buying local (organic) foods to insure your strategic food reserves.

Posted by **mARKIATTIN** at 04/28/2008 |

that's right. buy local!

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/28/2008 |

Since we stockpile nukes and oil and anthrax and nerve gas... why not add food to the list?

Posted by **mARKIATTIN** at 04/28/2008 |

High gas prices? Food shortages and economic famine? Who cares because does Rev. Jeremiah Wright love america? well does he?

Posted by **Tzimisce** at 04/28/2008 |

Expecting anything to be done by this administration in the waning days of its life is ridiculous. We all know that The Dubs is on his 'Dave' montage moment(s) of how cool a guy he is. Singing, dancing, conducting, telling jokes, man I would so want to have a beer with him! And then later my phone could be tapped without a warrant, and maybe I could be waterboarded, which is torture when other countries do it but when America (fuck yeah! tm) does it then its to protect us from the terrorists. (and we all no that the only credible information is information that is tortured out)

Posted by **Tzimisce** at 04/28/2008 |

Peggy Noonan once again proves her ability as a wordsmith is more effective than epikak.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/declarations.html>

Posted by **Tzimisce** at 04/28/2008 |

High gas prices?

Posted by Tzimisce at 04/28/2008

Diesel is already over 4 dollars a gallon. Credible sources are predicting 5, possibly even 6 dollars a gallon gas. IF that indeed comes to pass then every other issue could be wiped off the slate. I cannot even begin to imagine the ramifications to the economy. It would be crushing.

Posted by **Benchrest** at 04/28/2008 |

Posted by Benchrest at 04/28/2008

Never under estimate the abject stupidity that is the american media. Real people probably don't even notice, I mean pundits talk to real people, don't they? maybe?

In all seriousness I totally agree with you. The problem is twofold, supply and demand. Demand is much much greater in the developing world and supplies are starting to trend downward or are stagnant. In the end global warming might be eliminated due to market forces rather than a moral outrage. but i guess that all depends on how we respond to the situation.

Posted by **Tzimisce** at 04/28/2008 |

If diesel goes higher than six just invest in biodiesel. Then your personal economy won't be so crushed.

Posted by **mARKIATTIN** at 04/28/2008 |

Posted by Tzimisce at 04/28/2008

My question is with ethanol. I know you already know this, but on average it takes 5 gallons of diesel to produce one gallon of ethanol. WHY does congress believe this is a credible alternative fuel? It makes absolutely no sense to me. Am I missing something or are they really that stupid?

Posted by **Benchrest** at 04/28/2008 |

Congress thinks its a good fuel because they're beholden to the agricultural lobby thats creating this food crisis. Also Brazil uses ethanol quite effectively in their economy.

Posted by **mARKIATTIN** at 04/28/2008 |

or are they really that stupid?Posted by Benchrest at 04/28/2008

Yes. It essentially is another big grab for Agri-business and both parties love to hand out pork in the form of farm subsidies. Ethanol has been lurking around for nearly two decades now and, like Star Wars missile defense, still doesn't work.

Though on Npr's Talk of the Nation Science Friday they had a show regarding new ways to make fuel. One that seemed interesting was the idea that the unusable parts of corn (husk and leaves) could be used to make fuel as well. But it also raised the spectre of GMOs.

Posted by **Tzimisce** at 04/28/2008 |

Brazil uses sugar ethanol which is much more efficient than corn ethanol. I can see it now that people will tout the success of ethanol in Brazil, but that is like comparing the success of Beta-max and VHS.

Posted by **Tzimisce** at 04/28/2008 |

Tzimisce

a lot of the rise in gas prices is actually the fall of the dollar.

compare oil price changes against the euro.

borrowing for a war, combined with limitless credit and

BOOM!

Monday, April 28, 2008 11:49:35 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/28/2008 |

Tzimisce

there's not enough arable land in the world to produce enough ethanol.

not even from sugar cane.

Monday, April 28, 2008 11:51:41 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/28/2008 |

Yeah its a hedge against the falling dollar, but there are also the supply and demand problems as well (though often times these seem manufactured). Is there any doubt though that the bush administration was/is totally negligent in its stewardship of this country?

Posted by **Tzimisce** at 04/28/2008 |

Posted by Tzimisce at 04/28/2008

OK, that was funny! Off to bed on a good note!

Posted by **Benchrest** at 04/28/2008 |

The post about VHS. I frickin hate this new format.

Posted by **Benchrest** at 04/28/2008 |

<i>As we continue to work out the bugs, take some time to become acquainted with the new site. SEND ME YOUR IMPRESSIONS EITHER VIA A WEB LETTER OR MAILING ME DIRECTLY AT JOANMCONNELL@GMAIL.COM.

I look forward to hearing from you.</i>

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 12:08:02 AM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

saw a prediction on msnbc that the US population will reach one billion within a hundred years. really? wow.

can technology keep up with this?

be fruitful and multiply!

well...if this kind of growth continues worldwide - its going to get ugly in this world. can we continue like this?

Posted by **ibblebibble** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by ibblebibble at 04/29/2008

Neo-Malthusianism. In the 70s, the predictions about the population of Europe in the 90s were wrong, because they failed to account for a sociological phenomenon (i.e. fewer Europeans having children) and the prediction failed to materialize.

Plus in 100 years, the technology will BE us.

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008 |

Plus in 100 years, the technology will BE us.

Posted by Mask at 04/29/2008

yeah - i thought it sounded a bit overblown myself. what i fear in the shorter term is that these worldwide food shortages are going to get worse. the developed countries who can control their population growth will be forced to transform into paranoid fortress states as famine, war, and epidemics (enabled by both) become more and more common. ultimately no border, regardless of security, can stop microbes.

well...what happens happens.

Posted by **ibblebibble** at 04/29/2008 |

here's part of the solution. requires some investment, but if population on our planet continues at this pace vis-a-vis no gain (hell, perhaps a loss of) arable land, what choice will we have?

<http://www.verticalfarm.com/>

man - i really hate the way you cant link on these things anymore. smacks of conscious decision to me, but perhaps not.

Posted by **ibblebibble** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by ibblebibble at 04/29/2008

Unlikely as well. AIDS is already ravaging Africa, but is relatively under control in Europe and North America.

Plus, people have been predicting apocalyptic wars and famines in the "Third World" since Paul Erlich and it never happens.

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008 |

and it never happens.

Posted by Mask at 04/29/2008 | ignore this person

has not yet happened. AIDS is easily controllable. the appearance of new airborne strains of illness - that is what is truly terrifying. and one lesson of history is that war and famine spawn pestilence.

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

nothing happens until it happens...lol...

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008

I meant the major wars and famines.

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008 | ignore this person

what i'm seeing is that eventually we will have to rely on massive scale engineering projects if the population cannot stop growing. that article on vertical agriculture i reffed is a peek into the future. saw something on one of the brainiac channels recently about how dubai is constructing massive and artistically pleasing artificial islands and penninsulas and seawalls...

if sea levels keep rising at the accelerating rate they are, eventually we will also be forced to do such or lose entire coastal metropolises. so real long term investors might be wise to look at engineering companies...

regardless, though, some form of governmental action/control is coming as well. my hope is that it will manifest not so much on a national level as on a state or even municipal level. local autarchy and authority is the wave of the dystopic future, just as it has been in dystopic pasts.

ah - localistic anarchy after all! perhaps under the umbrella of distant regional or global political entities such as the US government, the EU, the UN, whatever...and with massive multinational corporate entities out there as well.

but it will be the autarchous municipality that holds the greatest potential to resist larger tyrannies and provide services/comfort/protection/direction to the ever more bewildered average shcmuk. too much order spawns chaos every time and vice versa and too much complexity will likewise ultimately result in renewal of simplicity.

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008

Your flaw is the first assumption...that the population will keep growing. Again, look at Europe, theirs is going down...hence the need for more immigrant workers.

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008 |

a fair food system that ensures health, justice, and dignity for all by assuring the basic right of communities to choose where and how their food is produced and what food they consume.

Mr. Nichols, you forgot the most important right of all: the right to have other people pay for it by federally subsidizing whatever choices they make.

Posted by **marybretbrad** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by Mask at 04/29/2008 | ignore this person

i don't know. wonder when the US will reach zero pop growth. but continued immigration complicates the pic. good point, though.

but the biggest loss of oxygen producing forest is occurring in those tropical regions where the largest natural increase in human population is also occurring. even if developed regions reach somewhere around zero growth...when do tropical hellholes do so?

again the question goes back to economics. is population growth needed for economic growth? is rapid economic growth possible forever and ever? or even really desirable?

i'm having a hard time seeing it in already developed countries like the US.

economic/political/social development is indeed inversely correlative to population growth, but in our case, i see a growing underclass breeding as prodigiously as the third world global underclass. not going into the idiocracy topic, but just pointing out how unjust wealth distribution may well result in our population in fact not ceasing to grow in the future.

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

time and again in the pre modern world natural population control factors (mainly infectuous diseases enabled by starvation/war/crowding) have corrected out of control population growth. the miracle of modern medicine has largely removed this factor as well as sped up population growth by reducing infant mortality rates worldwide. but the earth is still a closed ecological system with a limit...

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

Its rather hilarious to find any of the above (who've never been near a farm) blogging on this topic. I guess there's never an issue where "my" opinion doesn't have relevance.

Posted by **Euler** at 04/29/2008 |

Since I'm at Iowa for "do" at present, should I describe what a farm looks like for any of you?

Posted by **Euler** at 04/29/2008 |

Since I'm at Iowa for "do" at present, should I describe what a farm looks like for any of you?

Posted by Euler at 04/29/2008

why please! do proceed, you who are "at Iowa". enlighten us!

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

or rather "at Iowa for do at present"...

are you miss teen south carolina, by the way?

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by ibblelibble at 04/29/2008

Ibb, again, you're going pure Malthusianism (with a tinge of C.M. Kornbluth...see below) and pure Malthusianism has been shown false.

Sociological factors play into it. As well as medical factors. You mentioned disease preventing drugs...but forget about CONTRACEPTIVE drugs were part of that package too!

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Marching_Morons

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008 |

ah yes...contraceptives...

not used, mask, by marching morons! if contraceptives were used by marching morons...there should be no difference in the population growth between more developed world and less developed world.

but there IS. hell - look at the lower class in THIS country. how much does a pack of condoms cost? how many poor and ignorants here can afford to buy birth control pills?

the only factor that seems to reduce birth rates is when women are educated and couples see an economic downside in huge families.

Posted by **ibblebibble** at 04/29/2008 |

and when our marching morons cant even retain enough information to understand simple mathematic or geography, much less more complex concepts like evolution or constitutional democracy...how are they supposed to make the connection between small families and economic stability (or even figger out how to take them confusing spirally packaged birth control thingies)?

Posted by **ibblebibble** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by **ibblebibble** at 04/29/2008

IBB, Kornbluth's error was the same as any Malthusian...failure to take into account changing sociological even pharmacological changes.

And MOST Americans, even the "dumb poor" (or whatever you're calling them) aren't popping out 5-6 kids. Maybe 3, which is just slightly above "replacement" level (given two parents).

Frankly you're drifting a little bit into a RIGHT-wing argument on "If them durn poor weren't having so many babies, we'd be better off" territory and I KNOW you don't mean to go there!

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008 |

"What we have here is a failure to commodify."

Huh? What the hell does that mean? It means there is no "free" market. Except the underground market in narcotics. The markets are all structured & regulated--good thing too or this entire house of cards would have collapsed 6-8 times since WW 2, just as the business cycle did all through the late 1800s & early 1900s.

Note the failure of food commodities markets, for instance. There is no real global food shortage--yet. In Haiti there are surplus quantities on hand--it's just that the price structure is so out of whack that the people who have less than \$1 per day for all expenses cannot afford corn meal that costs \$5 per kilo. So they eat mud. (You tried that yet? It's supergood and there are some high-end restaurants that offer blue clay appetizers. So what are these Haitians bellyaching about?)

Now, I was always taught that supply follows demand. If the price goes up, the corn factors will rush into the market to sell at a higher profit. Surplus arrives, doesn't sell & suppliers have to reduce price. Problem solved.

But this isn't what's happening. There is a lockdown over price. Same thing in the world petroleum market.

At \$120 per bbl., you'd think the suppliers would be cheating on OPEC quotas just like always. But that's not what's happening. I compare it to a fire drill vs. a real fire in a theater. In a fire drill, everyone files out nice & neat because everyone knows there's no real danger. But when the room fills with smoke, it's every man for himself and total panic. They all jam at the doors and scores suffocate & die. (Ex. The Station fire in Providence, 2003) Same thing in the oil market today, but greed is as big a driver as fear in this case. Everyone is demanding the current inflated world price, \$120. Now, it's nowhere near justified by costs or any other real world considerations. It's just what the market demands. So where are the jazillion gallons of supply rushing to cash in? Nowhere. Why? Because at this insanely inflated price, no one wants to buy more than they did last year at the more normalized price. They just want to eke out enough ready stocks to satisfy production needs until next month, when hopefully the price will decline. But there is no oversupply arriving to make that happen because there is no demand for the stocks to increase.

Lockdown. Over price.

Where else is this happening? On all commodities everywhere. Nickel. Manganese. Rice. Wheat. Jojoba beans. Name it. Why? Because these are the investment instruments that are performing right now. Why? Because all other major alternatives are underperforming: e.g. bonds, stocks, mortgages, etc. So the money has flowed to commodities because commodities are where the money is.

Sound familiar? Yep, it's a bubble. And it will burst. And we will see a new "dust bowl" collapse in the farm economy. And then we will be in REAL trouble, not some artificial trouble ginned up by the "free market" speculators and profiteers.

But in the meantime, don't worry. Be happy.

Posted by **goyadad** at 04/29/2008 |

Er, maybe I should have said "Be HAPPY2."

Posted by **goyadad** at 04/29/2008 |

we'd be better off" territory and I KNOW you don't mean to go there!

Posted by Mask at 04/29/2008

well MASK, i DO have my evil side...lol...

here - check this one out...

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flynn_effect

sans natural or artificial evolutionary effects, there appears to indeed be a limit, regardless of pharma effects, progress of intelligence. most of the flynn effect seems to have been a function not of raising the number of top end IQ's, but rather raising lower end IQ. sometime in the mid-late 90's it started reversing not only here in the US, but also in europe. the average IQ of black americans, so long lagging behind white and asians, interestingly and perhaps tellingly, still seems to be rising - and with the lowering of white IQ should soon equal or surpass before dropping as well.

but even holding steady on world population, combined with dirty industrialization of the planet's traditionally poorest regions...could spell disaster for even highly developed places like the US.

afterthought - actually if them durned poor werent having so many babies...THEY would benefit more than anyone...

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

But in the meantime, don't worry. Be happy.

Posted by goyadad at 04/29/2008

...and i feel fine!

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

saw a prediction on msnbc that the US population will reach one billion within a hundred years. really? wow.

can technology keep up with this?

be fruitful and multiply!

well...if this kind of growth continues worldwide - its going to get ugly in this world. can we continue like this?

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008

America white population, like Europe, is not being replaced...but the growth of the population in Hispanic communitys out paces the others here in the US....the good news? There will be no more illegal immigration, for we will be Mexico..

Posted by **JOMAMMA** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by frosty zoom at 04/28/2008 Ouroboros (or circle jerk .. take your pick)

re: ag-based fuels. The only way it gets anywhere close to efficient with corn is if we do a triple-bang; standard, fermentation. celulosic alcohol, and biodiesel from corn oil. Of course, that means we will no longer be exporting corn. As the middle east is one of hte larger consumers of our grain, this will almost certainly lead to retaliatory oil pricing.

On a moral perspective, can we condone "burning corn" to cart our obese asses around while the world starves?

Posted by **leftofcenter** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by **JOMAMMA** at 04/29/2008 | ignore this person

i think part of the hope of NAFTA is that mexico may become wealthy/developped enough to stabalize its population growth and then serve as a bulwark against further migrations from further south - ie turn mexico into a giant rio grande itself.

i am firmly in favor of - and certainly not for racist reasons) providing all sorts of funds for spreading birth control not just to mexico, but worldwide. best investment we can make. as long as poorer countries produce more babies than they can employ not only will they find development elusive, but they will produce surplus populations of desperate migrants.

but the fundyvangelist freaks who have infested your party dont want nothin to do with enabling non

reproductive sex no matter what the alternative, do they?

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

instead of corn-based alcohol, howabout making biodiesel from the bioprocessed high-fructose corn syrup known as "lardass" All we gotta do is start giving free liposuction and viola! A new and possibly limitless source of energy! (And I'm only being partially facetious - after all, from a biodiesel perspective - a lipid is a lipid. Except instead of your car smelling like french fries it will smell like old fat people.)

Posted by **leftofcenter** at 04/29/2008 |

but the fundyvangelist freaks who have infested your party dont want nothin to do with enabling non reproductive sex no matter what the alternative, do they?

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008

and not saying yer an ungodly man, but that kind of bassackward stupidity has to piss you off, JOMAMMA. i remember when the jesus freak march of morons to the republican party started, a good friend of mine who used to be a fairly big time republican party operative constantly expressed his disgust to me in private...

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by **leftofcenter** at 04/29/2008 | ignore this person

how bout crap? methane...

but i'm thinking a combo of hydrogen cells and electric plug in cars may be a good option...

the ethanol obsession seems to reflect in many ways a desire to continue our wasteful "everybody gotta have a bigass car or two" style of life than a desire to fix a problem.

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

but the fundyvangelist freaks who have infested your party dont want nothin to do with enabling non reproductive sex no matter what the alternative, do they?

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008

1. but the fundyvangelist freaks who have infested your party dont want nothin to do with enabling non reproductive sex no matter what the alternative, do they? Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 Sorry to disappoint your perceptions Ibb, but I don't know any evangelical who opposes contraception (although I'm sure that somewhere some can be found). And we love non reproductive sex within the bounds of marriage. It's wonderful.

What is opposed is unconstitutional government spending. That is a purely secular, not religious perspective.

There are adequate resources in the private sector if people want to contribute to that kind of endeavor.

However, the bigger issue is often the failure of those foreign governments to actually take steps leading to family planning. For that, no amount of US money, govt or private will really change the situation.

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008 |

However, the bigger issue is often the failure of those foreign governments to actually take steps leading to family planning. For that, no amount of US money, govt or private will really change the situation.

Posted by [lvliberty1](#) at 04/29/2008

actually, it's not so much the size of the family, but what that family does.

the average n. american uses resources of 40 people in many other nations.

a family of four here is a large village in laos.

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:25:40 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

i think part of the hope of NAFTA is that mexico may become wealthy/developped enough to stabalize its population growth and then serve as a bulwark against further migrations from further south - ie turn mexico into a giant rio grande itself.

~~~~~

mexico has reduced its birthrate from 5.7 in the 1970's to 2.2 now. (guesstimates, i gotta a run to work; they're close)

in not too many years, its birthrate will equal the u.s.

the problem is that they died at 55 in 1970, now they die at 73.

how dare they not die!

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:30:11 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

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u.s.'s

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

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There willl be no more illegal immigration, for we will be Mexico..

Posted by [JOMAMMA](#) at 04/29/2008

JM, in 100 years the whole planet will be covered with brownish people of all hues.

go forth and hybridize!

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:32:57 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

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Posted by [lvliberty1](#) at 04/29/2008 | [ignore this person](#)

well i just dont generally agree with your interpretation of the constitution, LL.

but if private institutions are not stepping up to the plate and something need be done, what entity other

than the government does it?

God?

but you know the opposition encountered from many on the religious right not just to abortion, but to any birth control. i usually get the impression that its out of an aversion to extramarital sex, but have yet to see extramarital sex stomped out by moral determination.

don't get me wrong, LL. i'm all for abstinence ed and all that - i'm just also for contraceptives "just in case" since abstinence is not anywhere near as effective as you would like it to be.

but i know you traditionalist christians love the sex as much or more than anybody...and not always within the bonds of holy matrimony in my experience either.

nothing like forbidden fruit and guilty pleasure!

so regardless...more cheap contraception and abstinence ed please!

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

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afterthought - actually if them durned poor werent having so many babies...THEY would benefit more than anyone...

Posted by ibblelibble at 04/29/2008

again, 10 poor kids in appalachia's planetary impact is nothing compared to a kid in an upscale phoenix suburb.

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:36:05 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

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BTW, I don't see any mention of it but it seems many Americans are doing what they have done for a couple hundred years in this country during times like this, take control of their own futures.

Sale of vegetable and fruit seeds are up nearly a 100%. Community gardens are increasing (even in Washington DC as noted on the news this week).

On our own property we have, apricots, apples, cherries, peaches, almonds, grapes, figs, plums, oranges, lemons, pomegranates, corn, zucchini, yellow summer squash, eggplant, green onions, tomatoes, and lettuce. We also have laying hens for brown eggs, and broiler chickens for meat.

Most people can be engaged in some level of gardening. Many vegetables and fruits can be grown in patio containers. Small yards can and do become useful areas for raising a small garden and having 4-6 laying hens.

This also helps reduce the use of fossil fuels. Less is needed for personal transportation to purchase these items. But more importantly, it reduces commercial transportation costs for wholesalers and retailers of these food items.

Finally, you are helping the environment (composting, more trees and plants are carbon eaters, less driving), you are helping your health and your families (organic foods, exercise to take care of gardens and chickens).

It also creates better bonding in families and communitites-see also local farmers markets.

I would think that all progressives would support this type of effort.

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008 |

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JM, in 100 years the whole planet will be covered with brownish people of all hues.

go forth and hybridize!

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:32:57 PM

Posted by frosty zoom at 04/29/2008

perhaps not - genetics is a strange thing and nutational/evolutionary adaptation, especially factoring in us shaved apes' huge brains, is not completely understood.

not that it matters to me. i've always been partial to the darkies myself...

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

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I would think that all progressives would support this type of effort.

Posted by lvliberty1 at 04/29/2008

hey, let me send you some SEEDS!

heheh

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:43:01 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

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again, 10 poor kids in appalachia's planetary impact is nothing compared to a kid in an upscale phoenix suburb.

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:36:05 PM

Posted by frosty zoom at 04/29/2008

hmmm...but the rich kid in phoenix is a lot plumper and juicier - them poor kids are all gristle...

but according to your figures on mexican birth rates we should soon start seeing less illegal immigration anyway within a couple of decades.

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

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Posted by frosty zoom at 04/29/2008 | ignore this person

careful.... -----

Posted by lvliberty1 at 04/29/2008 | ignore this person

thanks for reminding me - i've got plenty of back yard and have been meaning to do that. thats a great idea.

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

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less illegal immigration anyway within a couple of decades.

~~~~~

that depends on many more factors besides birthrate.

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:48:18 PM

ciao

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

but you know the opposition encountered from many on the religious right not just to abortion, but to any birth control. i usually get the impression that its out of an aversion to extramarital sex, but have yet to see extramarital sex stomped out by moral determination.

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008

Where do you get this from? I just don't see evangelicals opposing people using birth control. I have been part of conservative denominations for decades, and it's not part of any official or unofficial position. I never hear other pastors condemning birth control. As far as I know, that position is primarily from the Catholic Church..

As to adultery and fornication, they will always be issues to confront given the sin nature of mankind. It's just that those who truly live for Christ find power in the Holy Spirit to fight successfully against those temptations. Even someone who is pretty holy can lose their self control for a moment, that's human nature, but those who practice sin are most likely Christians in name only.

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008 |

damn - i HATE the new no time stamp format here...

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by **ibblelibble** at 04/29/2008

oh, just kidding about the SEEDS.

i've got nothing to do with that.

paz.

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 3:49:55 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

Even someone who is pretty holy can lose their self control for a moment, that's human nature, but those who practice sin are most likely Christians in name only.

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008 | ignore this person

well, regardless of your political retardation and amoral/creedal religion, you have always been a class act, LL, and i respect that. apologies if i have ever offended, but you apparant thick skin and always gracious, measured responses have shown to me that you do indeed walk the walk.

that said i have to go "do stuff"...talk later, shepard.

Posted by **ibblebibble** at 04/29/2008 |

well, regardless of your political retardation and amoral/creedal religion, you have always been a class act, LL, and i respect that. apologies if i have ever offended, but you apparant thick skin and always gracious, measured responses have shown to me that you do indeed walk the walk.

that said i have to go "do stuff"...talk later, shepard.

Posted by **ibblebibble** at 04/29/2008

thanks IBB, I enjoy our dialogue.

get that garden started!

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008 |

Where do you get this from? I just don't see evangelicals opposing people using birth control.---Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008

Oh, here ya go...

"I would like to outlaw contraception...contraception is disgusting - people using each other for pleasure."
Joseph Scheidler Pro-Life Action League August 1985

"By outlawing contraception, you're closer to outlawing surgical abortion..."So if, as the pro-life community, you're trying to outlaw surgical abortion but the court has told us its legal basis is founded on the necessity of abortion, shouldn't the pro-life community begin to take a look at contraception?..We're trying to overturn Roe v. Wade, but the court is pointing us over here," Those who don't turn their attention to trying to outlaw contraception at this point... hurt the anti-abortion cause" Matt Sande, director of legislative affairs for Pro-Life Wisconsin.

"Guns have little or nothing to do with juvenile violence. The causes of youth violence are working parents who put their kids into daycare, the teaching of evolution in the schools, and working mothers who take birth control pills." Tom DeLay, on causes of the Columbine High School massacre, 1999

"I don't think Christians should use birth control. You consummate your marriage as often as you like (marital rape?!?) – and if you have babies, you have babies." Randall Terry Operation Rescue

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008

But you made my point Mask.

You did not cite a single evangelical leader or Pastor.

As I said, I have never heard another Pastor in the Evangelical movement come against birth control. I'm sure they exist, but a very tiny minority. It is just not scriptural nor is it supported by Evangelical denomination statements.

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008 |

On a moral perspective, can we condone "burning corn" to cart our obese asses around while the world starves?

Posted by leftofcenter at 04/29/2008

Good point...so the question should also be asked of the peace loving Muslims who hold the oil...should you not offer discounts to foil the speculator markets and help out all the worlds economys not inflate?

Posted by **JOMAMMA** at 04/29/2008 |

but the fundyvangelist freaks who have infested your party dont want nothin to do with enabling non reproductive sex no matter what the alternative, do they?

Posted by ibblebibble at 04/29/2008

I have no problem with birth control and never did...I would put it in the worlds water supply.. for at least 50 years...and not tell anyone...)

Posted by **JOMAMMA** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by Mask at 04/29/2008

More info on my point on evangelicals and birth control

God's Protection

Evangelicals embrace the "contraception culture."

by CHRISTINE J. GARDNER

Friday, August 18, 2006 12:01 a.m. EDT

With the recent approval by the FDA of the over-the-counter sale of Plan B, the "morning after" pill, there has been much discussion of where various groups of Americans come down on the issue of contraception. When we think about American attitudes toward a topic like this, we tend to assume that religious "red state" Americans line up on one side of a divide, with secular "blue state" Americans on the other. Perhaps, but only up to a point. American evangelicals, as it happens, are pro-contraception. A Harris Poll conducted online in September 2005 shows that evangelicals overwhelmingly support birth control (88%).

<http://www.opinionjournal.com/taste/?id=110008814>

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by lvliberty1 at 04/29/2008 |

Ever heard of "Quiverfull", Larry?

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008 |

Ever heard of "Quiverfull", Larry?

Posted by Mask at 04/29/2008

No I had not. I had to google them. But again, you make my point about this. They are not in any formal ministry.

They represent no church or denomination or any Evanglical organization.

Furthermore, as the Wikipedia article notes, their numbers are in the thousands to low 10's of thousands in

the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and England.

Accordingly, Quiverfull theology opposes the general acceptance among Protestant Christians of deliberately limiting family size or spacing children through birth control.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quiverfull#cite_note-piper-28

As I noted, polls show that at least 88% of Evangelicals believe in birth control. I even noted that I'm sure that Evangelicals who do not believe in birth control exist. So what, they are a very tiny minority. You are trying to make an issue that doesn't exist.

And just to go on the record, I support couples using birth control and to as much as possible, plan their families. I counsel young couples not to rush to have children. That they should first grow in their marriage relationship, get their finances in solid order before bringing children into the world.

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008 |

Posted by **ibbleblibble** at 04/29/2008 The problem with H-fuel cells is where to get the hydrogen. It takes energy (generally electricity) to pry the H loose from water - meaning you burn coal to make H. Not very efficient overall. Sure, you can use light hydrocarbons in some fuel cells, but they still produce CO2. I would argue that unless we change the transportation paradigm substantially that some sort of biodiesel and/or cellulosic alcohol could be the wiser choice. If you do the wind/solar to make the electricity to make water to H hydrolsis cells, you might as well have just built electric cars.

Posted by **leftofcenter** at 04/29/2008 |

but those who practice sin are most likely Christians in name only.

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008

i'd say that's universal for every religion.

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 9:07:18 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

Tom DeLay, on causes of the Columbine High School massacre, 1999

~~~~~

what an idiot!

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

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peace loving Muslims who hold the oil...should you not offer discounts to foil the speculator markets and help out all the worlds economys not inflate?

Posted by **JOMAMMA** at 04/29/2008

JM,

you get your oil from canada, mexico, and venezuela.

if you're worried about inflation, you need to talk to benny bernanke et al.

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 9:11:29 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

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If you do the wind/solar to make the electricity to make water to H hydrolysis cells, you might as well have just built electric cars.

Posted by leftofcenter

mount thy bicycle!

Tuesday, April 29, 2008 9:34:48 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/29/2008 |

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Posted by lvliberty1 at 04/29/2008

You started adding all kinds of new caveats though...had to be an "evangelical leader"...had to be a church... without those, the point remains, there ARE evangelicals who oppose contraception, aren't there...throw in conservative Catholics and you've got a nice tidy sum of Christians, don't you?

Posted by **Mask** at 04/29/2008 |

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Posted by frosty zoom at 04/29/2008 And mount I shall .. but not tomorrow - its gonna be cold in the morning!

Posted by **leftofcenter** at 04/29/2008 |

---

You started adding all kinds of new caveats though...had to be an "evangelical leader"...had to be a church... without those, the point remains,

there ARE evangelicals who oppose contraception, aren't there...throw in conservative Catholics and you've got a nice tidy sum of Christians, don't you?

Posted by Mask at 04/29/2008

Not at all when you place it all back in the context of my original dialogue on the issue with IBB.

He talked about:

"but the fundyvangelist freaks who have infested your party dont want nothin to do with enabling non reproductive sex no matter what the alternative, do they?"

Posted by ibblelibble at 04/29/2008"

I then remarked that while they probably exist, this is not the position of evangelicals. What is most important to this dialogue was my comments about evangelical pastors and leaders. This is because of his suggestion that we are stopping birth control.

As I have demonstrated, that impression is a false one. The tiny minority who hold those views, lack both numbers and authority to be of influence and have not been.

As I also reminded IBB, the real anti-birth control influence is from the Catholic Church who does officially come against birth control.

Sorry Mask, I just don't see where you find any traction with this.

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008 |

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Another interesting note:

Aside from Ibbleblibble, no one on the left has commented on my discussion how home and community gardens are an excellent answer to the idea of a food crisis and also good for reducing oil dependency and good for the environment.

It continues to amaze me that most on the left (here at least) don't seem to endorse these notions. Yet Mother Earth magazine that I subscribe to has a mostly liberal subscribership. Go figure.

Posted by **lvliberty1** at 04/29/2008 |

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Posted by lvliberty1 at 04/29/2008

well, of course it's a great idea.

every american city i have visited seems to have plenty of vacant lots in plenty of poor areas. let the food floweth.

i live in an apartment, and the landlords kids would quickly flatten any tomatitos.

however, i have cultivated (heheh) friendships with a whole network of farmers and know who will have what crops at what time of year.

buy local! yum.

plus, i have located fruit trees of all sorts which have gone wild in alleys (the only wilderness in the city) and visit them each year. yum.

here's a little plant that is superpacked with god's noble power:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portulaca\\_oleracea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portulaca_oleracea)

purslane. verdolagas. grows everywhere.

<i>WHERE ARE THE ITALICS?!?!?!?!</i>

+++Purslane contains more Omega-3 fatty acids than any other leafy vegetable plant. Simopoulos states that Purslane has .01 mg/g of EPA. This is an extraordinary amount of EPA for land based vegetable sources. EPA is an Omega-3 fatty acid normally found mostly in fish and some algae. [3] It also contains vitamins (mainly vitamin C, and some vitamin B and carotenoids), as well as dietary minerals, such as magnesium, calcium, potassium and iron. Also present are two types of betalain alkaloid pigments, the reddish betacyanins (visible in the coloration of the stems) and the yellow betaxanthins (noticeable in the flowers and in the slight yellowish cast of the leaves). Both of these pigment types are potent antioxidants and have been found to have antimutagenic properties in laboratory studies.+++

plus, it's free. tastes like spinach with built in lemon.

Wednesday, April 30, 2008 12:13:10 AM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/30/2008 |

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Posted by lvliberty1 at 04/29/2008

LVLIB, I quoted....TOM DELAY.

You don't think he had SOME "infestation" of the Republican Party?!?!?!?

Posted by **Mask** at 04/30/2008 |

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Pray tell me what Malthus have any of you morons - you know who I'm asking? - ever read? Titles please. Where do you people crawl out from?

Posted by **Euler** at 04/30/2008 |

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As I said, I have never heard another Pastor in the Evangelical movement come against birth control.  
<Posted by lvliberty1 at 04/29/2008 >

No, they usually do that against the lavatory partitions. Leaves some nasty stains, too.

(Pardonnez moi, Mssr. "FROSTY." I can only imitate your panache, not recreate it.)

Posted by **goyadad** at 04/30/2008 |

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personally, that's not one i would have touched.

;+]

Wednesday, April 30, 2008 3:11:10 PM

Posted by **frosty zoom** at 04/30/2008 |

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