

TEACHING HUMAN DIGNITY SERIES:

**Are There Too Many
People in the World?**

**What Economics
Can Tell Us**



Population Worries: 1968

- “The battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970’s hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now.”

The Population Bomb
(Paul Ehrlich, 1968)



Comparing Countries Reveals...

	Chad	US in 1850	US
GDP/person	\$1,600	\$2,700	\$46,300
Infant Mortality	9.7%	23%	0.8%
Life Expectancy	48 years	40 years	78 years
% Farming	80%	58%	3%
Primary Schooling	40%	63%	98%



The Importance of Growth

- Every single country that has high average living standards today was poor in 1850
- These countries all improved their average living standards by experiencing a century or more of per capita economic growth
$$\text{per capita economic output} = \frac{\text{economic output}}{\text{total population}}$$
- None of these countries attained per capita economic growth merely through long-term population reductions (reducing the denominator). Something deeper happened to increase the numerator.



Knowledge and Growth

