

Vatican Capitulates!

Imagining a headline out of the future

by John H. Tanton

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Pope leaves for Avignon

St. Peter's converted to mosque

Background: Birthrates have fallen throughout Europe, but nowhere faster and further than in Italy. There the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has declined to 1.2 – just about half of the (on average) 2.1 children per woman needed to replace the current generation and maintain the population. Since a generation spans about 25 years (the average age of first birth), the population of Italy can be expected to drop about one-half by 2030 from its current 57 million. It will continue on down to about a quarter by 2055 or so, if the TFR doesn't change.

At the same time the population will age dramatically. The UN projects that by 2020, 35% of the population will be over 65 years of age. This aging means it will be more difficult to restart the demographic engine should the Italians decide they want to survive as a people, since there will be fewer young people in the childbearing years.

In contrast, the nearby Muslim populations of Albania, North Africa and the Middle East are young and expanding rapidly. They are already moving into Europe in general, and Italy in particular, in massive and increasing numbers. Combining a shrinking and aging population with an expanding and youthful population sets the stage for demographic overthrow of the current Italian population.

This will likely be peaceful and gradual, rather like the story about the frog in the pot on the stove, the temperature of which is raised one degree a day. The

frog finally finds itself cooked, without being able to pinpoint the exact day the change took place, and not feeling too much sudden discomfort along the way. There will be no need for fire and the sword this time, just patience for the numbers to play themselves out. In fact, violence would be counterproductive, as it would alert and activate the otherwise quiescent and declining native population and political system, as well as the overseas Italian diaspora.

To alert the Italians (and other members of Western Civilization) to this developing situation and likely outcome, I have chosen the literary technique of a Retrospective from the Future. The proposed setting is a television news report from Vatican City, on April 10, 2020. The purpose of this “prophesy” is the one common to all prophesy: not to predict the future, but to project the likely outcome of present behavior, so that it can be changed if the envisioned consequences are not acceptable. This is sometimes known as the “Jonah effect” (see the sidebar). Here are some of the elements of the storyline:

The program opens with a shot of a headline and story from the Vatican City newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, datelined on one of the highest of holy days in the Roman Catholic Church – Good Friday. We then cut to an announcer, ubiquitous microphone in hand, addressing the camera, with St. Peter's Square and basilica in the background.

Reporter – “The Muslim population of Italy has grown to a majority, and they have staged a democratic demographic takeover of the government at the ballot box. The newcomers have insisted that the pope move his headquarters out of this newly-Muslim territory to what remains of the Christian world. He has accepted an invitation of the French government to set up at Avignon, as the popes did in the fourteenth Century. This area in the south of France is already heavily

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The Jonah Effect

Detractors of the population and environmental movements like to cite predictions of disaster that have not come to pass as evidence that the basic tenets of those movements are flawed. The critics thus show their misunderstanding of the role of the prophet in society — a role that is well-illustrated by the ancient tale of Jonah and the Whale.

The Lord called Jonah to go and prophesy the downfall of the sinful city of Nineveh. Despising Nineveh and its inhabitants, Jonah demurred and took to the sea in the opposite direction to evade the call. This resulted in his trip through the belly of the whale, after which Jonah decided that the Lord was really serious. Suspicious of God's mercy, Jonah went through the city and barely whispered his prophecy that the city would be destroyed if it did not mend its ways. He then retired to a spot overlooking the city to wait for the carnage.

To Jonah's dismay, the King took Jonah's prophecy to heart, repented in sackcloth and ashes and had his people do the same, with the result that the Lord was moved and spared the city.

The role of the prophet, then, is not to predict the future, but to show what will happen if we don't change our ways. The successful prophet is the one whose prophecy fails because it is taken to heart. His or her prophecy is truly self-defeating.

Those who criticize the "prophets" of the population and environmental movements fail to credit the prophet who changes the behavior of the people and allows them to deflect or minimize the projected disaster.

They would criticize Jonah because his prophecy failed to come true.

— John H. Tanton

Muslim, so it is not certain how long this arrangement will last."

The reporter continues, "Before leaving, the pope handed over the keys of St. Peter's to the Caliph of Baghdad. The Swiss Guard, on duty defending the Vatican for centuries, has struck the pope's flag and their replacement, the Muslim Brotherhood, has run up the Islamic crescent.

"As to St. Peter's itself, its impending conversion

to a mosque parallels what happened to St. Sophia, the main Christian Orthodox Church in Istanbul, when that city was captured by Mehmed II in 1453. Initially it was made into a mosque, though subsequently it was converted into a museum, and remains one today. Incidentally, this is not a new or isolated phenomenon. There was also a St. Sophia Church in Nicosia, Cyprus, that suffered a similar fate in 1571. It is now the chief mosque for Cyprus.

"Since the Muslims do not believe in statuary (as we witnessed some time ago when the Taliban blew up ancient statues of the Buddha in Afghanistan), the pope asked to take along several sculpted emblems of his religion. The Caliph granted the pontiff, his party and effects, safe passage." [*Here the camera cuts to a scene showing the Pieta being crated for shipment.*]

"An agreement was also reached not to paint over Michelangelo's frescos in the Sistine Chapel, as was done with the ceiling mosaics when St. Sophia's in Istanbul was taken over. They were subsequently restored when, under Ataturk in 1935, the building became a museum."

Other ideas to be explored in a subsequent hour-long documentary on this epochal change:

1. Will there be a Charles Martel for our time? It was Martel and his troops who turned back the Muslims at the battle of Tours, France, in 732. Or who will be Western Civilization's Jan Sobieski, the Polish king who lifted the Muslim siege of Vienna in 1683? Or will the conquest this time roll on through the remainder of Europe, which also has marked sub-replacement fertility and is thus similarly susceptible?
2. There should be some retrospective on the past conflicts between Muslims and Christians, going back to the Crusades. (Who are the infidels this time?)
3. Current conflicts between Muslims and Christians, as in Indonesia, and between Muslims and the Jews should also be surveyed. One can project a similar demographic overwhelming of Israel, since the Muslim population of the Gaza Strip has the highest annual rate of increase of any area in the world: 4.4%, giving a doubling time of 16 years. On the West Bank, the rate is somewhat less at

3.3% (doubling time: about 21 years). As a result, the Judeo-Christian tradition stands to lose control of one or more of its holy sites in Palestine.

4. What will be the psychological effect on world Christianity of losing one of its shrines, this time in Rome itself? Will there be a call for some sort of new Crusade to retake the Vatican? What might be the nature of the effort, given UN and “world community” opinions and the opposition to inter- (versus intra-) national violence? Will this re-ignite demographic warfare as a means to control one’s own territory? The works of Jack Parsons (*Human Population Competition*) and Milica Z. Bookman (*The Demographic Struggle for Power*) are relevant here. Both are available at www.thesocialcontract.com/bookstore.

5. It is likely that long before 2020 (perhaps due in part to diagnoses and prognoses such as this one) the Western World will awaken to its sub-replacement fertility dilemma, and make efforts to raise fertility rates toward or to replacement levels. How might this be done? What will be the effect on the feminist movement, and on the efforts to restrict abortion and the availability of birth control? Will the perception of homosexuality in the context of sub-replacement fertility change opinions of that phenomenon? Or rather than consider such vexatious matters, will the West instead elect to go voluntarily, and quietly into the demographic dustbin of history?

6. This topic gets us into the fascinating demography of declining populations, about which almost nothing is currently known by the general public, or even most demographers, for that matter. This includes in particular *negative momentum*, and how long it takes and how difficult it is to arrest such a decline, once well established. It also includes the social policies, such as child subsidies, childcare and parental job leave, all of which (and more) will be proposed to encourage even replacement level childbearing. How will all this be financed? We would need to have families of three, and even four, to make up for families with no children or only one. How will we determine how much income needs to be transferred from the latter to the former to make such relatively large families financially possible?

7. Another fascinating topic: the celibacy of the Roman Catholic clergy versus the fertility of the Muslim Imams. The latter encourage their brightest and best to

reproduce, even polygamously. The former are culturally neutered. Which is the winning strategy from the biopolitical and natural selection/Darwinian points of view?

8. What will be the effects on Eastern Orthodoxy? In some ways that faith group is more in harm’s way than the European variations of Christianity, due to physical proximity.

9. Samuel Huntington’s books, *Clash of Civilizations*, and *Who We Are* need to be explored for relevant ideas. In the first, he said that the borders of Islam are “bloody,” for which he took heavy criticism. But note that in this piece we’re positing a gradual peaceful takeover where the natives just wake up some day and realize they’ve lost it, not a sudden and bloody upheaval.

10. Jean Raspail’s novel, *The Camp of the Saints*, is essential background reading for those seeking to understand the potential for migration coming from the Third World. India, the example in Raspail’s novel, has just passed the one billion population mark, and is increasing its numbers by about 50,000 a day. It is already sending its excess people abroad by the plane load. The BBC film of 1990 called *The March* is also sobering visual background material for understanding the potential for the invasion of Europe from Africa – and Europe’s psychological inability to respond to the challenge.

11. On the same tack of “a picture being worth a thousand words,” there are some astounding visual records of flotillas of Albanian Muslims trying to get into Bari, in Southern Italy in 1991. More recently, about 1000 Kurds came ashore on the Sun Coast of France. There have been stories in *The Atlantic* and other magazines of smugglers running people into Spain from North Africa via speedboat. The beaching of the *Golden Venture* on Long Island in the mid-1990s brought such assaults home to Americans.

The take-home message: Countries whose citizens elect low fertility must control their borders or they are very likely to be overrun demographically by their supra-replacement-fertility neighbors. •

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