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Wednesday 23 September 2009

Cardinal George Pell
Catholic Archbishop of Sydney
Polding Centre
133 Liverpool Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Cardinal Pell

I am planning to give a talk to the National Press Club in Canberra later this year, and one of the points I would like to address is the fact that Governments, whilst talking about the problems of global warming, avoid acknowledging the “elephant in the room” – that is, the enormous challenges which will result should the projected increases in our world’s population begin to emerge as a reality.

Even as a simple car radio installer, I know that if present population increases continue then, subject to no catastrophic intervention to curtail such increases, there will ultimately come a time when there will be no more than one metre of land for every human being on Earth. Of course, for considerable time before this, people will suffer terribly from the effects of our planet’s diminishing resources.

When I ask politicians about this dilemma and why, as mentioned, they seem to avoid the subject, they tell me that the problem is “Cardinal Pell”. I ask what they mean, and they say that if either of the major political parties came out with statements relating to population control, then they would lose the support of yourself and, consequently, “the Catholic vote”.

I simply can’t believe this could be true.

I understand the inference is that if we are to have any discussion on population, we would have to include birth control in the debate, and this – it is suggested - would evoke disapproval from the Catholic Church and its constituents.

I am also grappling with the anomaly, as I understand it, that Italy has one of the lowest population growths in the world – indeed I think it could even be negative – despite its predominantly Catholic population.

Would you be able to advise if the Church has a clear policy on population, and whether the Church would truly object if our leading political parties opened up this major issue for discussion?

It is possible that such debate could go so far as to suggest population control, despite the fact that our existing Capitalist economy relies on consistent patterns of growth in order to prevail.

However, as necessity is the parent of invention, no doubt it is possible for an alternative economic system to be devised. But this is a separate subject!

I look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully

Dick Smith.