

Some People Are Not Having Children Because Of Climate Change



It is sad that so many young couples have bought the lie of overpopulation and then drunk the cool-aid of action to not have any children. This not only terminates their own family tree, but denies one of the greatest pleasures in life. Technocracy is cruel in using science to achieve such social outcomes. □ TN Editor

Add this to the list of decisions affected by climate change: Should I have children?

It is not an easy time for people to feel hopeful, with the effects of global warming no longer theoretical, projections becoming more dire and governmental action lagging. And while few, if any, studies have examined how large a role climate change plays in people's childbearing decisions, it loomed large in interviews with more than a dozen people ages 18 to 43.

A 32-year-old who always thought she would have children can no longer

justify it to herself. A Mormon has bucked the expectations of her religion by resolving to adopt rather than give birth. An Ohio woman had her first child after an unplanned pregnancy — and then had a second because she did not want her daughter to face an environmental collapse alone.

Among them, there is a sense of being saddled with painful ethical questions that previous generations did not have to confront. Some worry about the quality of life children born today will have as shorelines flood, wildfires rage and extreme weather becomes more common. Others are acutely aware that having a child is one of the costliest actions they can take environmentally.

The birthrate in the United States, which has been falling for a decade, reached a new low in 2016. Economic insecurity has been a major factor, but even as the economy recovers, the decline in births continues.

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And the discussions about the role of climate change are only intensifying.

“When we first started this project, I didn’t know anybody who had had any conversations about this,” said Meghan Kallman, a co-founder of Conceivable Future, an organization that highlights how climate change is limiting reproductive choices.

That has changed, she said — either because more people are having doubts, or because it has become less taboo to talk about them.

If it weren’t for climate change, Allison Guy said, she would go off birth control tomorrow.

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But scientists’ projections, if rapid action isn’t taken, are not “congruent with a stable society,” said Ms. Guy, 32, who works at a marine conservation nonprofit in Washington. “I don’t want to give birth to a kid wondering if it’s going to live in some kind of ‘Mad Max’ dystopia.”

Parents like Amanda PerryMiller, a Christian youth leader and mother of two in Independence, Ohio, share her fears.

“Animals are disappearing. The oceans are full of plastic. The human population is so numerous, the planet may not be able to support it indefinitely,” said Ms. PerryMiller, 29. “This doesn’t paint a very pretty picture for people bringing home a brand-new baby from the hospital.”

The people thinking about these issues fit no single profile. They are women and men, liberal and conservative. They come from many regions and religions.

Cate Mumford, 28, is a Mormon, and Mormons believe God has commanded them to “multiply and replenish the earth.” But even in her teens, she said, she could not get another point of doctrine out of her head: “We are stewards of the earth.”

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