

Big families

Heidi Schlumpf | Jul. 20, 2009 NCR Today

I don't watch "Jon and Kate Plus 8" but since I don't live under a rock, I couldn't escape the news that the parents of twins and a set of sextuplets are splitting up. But the Gosselins aren't the only large family profiled on a reality TV show these days. You'd think this new obsession with big broods would be focusing on Catholics and/or Mormons -- the two traditional religions that encourage lots of kids.

Wrong:

The majority of the TV families are evangelical Christians. And, as I learned in the article, "[More Not Always Merrier](#) [1]," in the Lakeland, Fla., Ledger, most are associated with a controversial movement promoting large families called "QuiverFull," based on the verse in Psalm 127 that compares children (or "sons") to arrows: "Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them." The QuiverFull movement eschews any form of birth control or spacing, including Natural Family Planning.

The Ledger article refers to a piece by Christine McCarthy McMorris (now there's an Irish Catholic name for you!) in "Religion in the News" called "[Praise God and Pass the Diapers](#) [2]." She criticizes the producers of these shows for ignoring the religious beliefs that underpin these large families, which sometimes include a fear of Islam taking over the world through reproduction. "Big Christian families may be 2009's hot broadcasting trend, but the actual beliefs and practices of their faith are way too real for reality TV," she concludes.

Kind of makes Catholic teaching in *Humanae Vitae* look tame by comparison.

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[1] <http://www.theledger.com/article/20090718/COLUMNISTS/907185002?Title=More-Not-Always-Merrier>

[2] <http://www.trincoll.edu/depts/csrpl/RINV0112No1/Praise%20God%20Pass%20Diapers.htm>