Life is Better Now Than Any Time in History

From Biblical Economic Policy by Arnott & Saydometov

- Extreme poverty fell from 18.2 percent of the world’s population to 8.6 percent in the last decade. In the 1980s, it was 44 percent.
- Globally: The gap in basic living standards is narrowing.
- Child mortality is at a record low. Fifteen thousand children died around the world in the last twenty-four hours. But in the 1990s, it was 30,000 each day.
- Famine has virtually gone extinct.
- Malaria, polio, and heart disease are all in decline.
- Half of the world is now middle class or wealthier.
- Mortality rates for women and children have been halved since 1990.
- The global mortality rate for children under five declined from 5.6 percent in 2008 to 3.9 percent in 2018.
- Primary education has become near-universal in nearly all the world.
- US: 73 percent in the top 20 percent at some time, 56 percent in the top 10 percent.
- Natural resources are more abundant and affordable than any time in history.
- Energy—the master resource—is superabundant. My freshman pay 25 percent less for gas (inflation-adjusted) than I did, and they get 50 percent more miles from it.
- Air and water are cleaner.
- There is no Malthusian nightmare of overpopulation.
- Global per capita food production is 40 percent higher today than 1950.
- In 1800, 90 percent of the population worked in food production. In 1900, it was 60 percent. Today, in the US, it’s 2.5 percent.
- The rate of death from physical destruction and natural disasters or severe weather has plummeted over the last fifty to one hundred years.
- Malaria deaths have been halved since 2000.
- Polio has been 99 percent eradicated since 1988.
- Global life expectancy has gone from 29 in 1770 to 71 today. (It’s falling in the US.)
- Literacy has gone from 10 percent in 1820 to 80 percent today.
- In 1820, 1.5 percent of the world lived in a democracy; today it’s more than half.
- Since 1990, 2.5 billion people have gained access to clean water. It’s now 91 percent of the world’s population.
- Child labor has gone from 246 million to 107 million, just since 2000.
- US: Disposable income spent on food has gone from 14 percent to 6 percent since 1960.
- People in poverty in the US have more square feet of living space than the average European.
- In seven hundred years, the homicide rate in Western Europe has gone from about forty per 100,000 to almost zero.
- Globally, 86 percent of all one-year-olds have been vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis.
- The last decade has been one of the most peaceful in history.