

Why Experts Blame Zika Virus Explosion on Christians

NPR calls him an expert, but the reality is David Vanderpool is a Christian missionary doctor on the front lines of the Zika virus in Haiti.

The Live Beyond director told NPR the Catholic Church's view on contraception can actually enable the spread of the Zika virus among the poorer populations in Central and South America.

"People assume that women in Haiti, you know, would have the same access to birth control that American women would, and it's just not true. The Haitian woman may not have a choice in sex. The sex may not be consensual at all. And so just enjoining people not to have babies is probably not going to be very effective," Vanderpool tells NPR.

Vanderpool is referring to government pleas for women to delay pregnancies for months, even years. He isn't the only one concerned.

"I've never seen this advice before, and when you hear it, you think, 'What are the bishops going to do?'" the Rev. John Paris, a bioethicist and Catholic priest at Boston College, told CNN.

"It's going to present a lot of problems for the bishops to sort out," Daniel Ramirez, an assistant professor of history and American culture at the University of Michigan and an expert on Latin American religious culture, also told CNN.

According the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Zika virus is a mosquito-transmitted illness that typically results in rash, fever, joint pain and red eyes. If a mother is infected, scientists suspect she can pass the virus on to

her child in-utero or delivery.

The disease is easily treated for those in developing worlds, but the effect on pre-born children is microcephaly, or abnormally small heads.

To avoid this, government leaders told women to merely avoid pregnancies, but it's much easier said than done.

"It's easy to wax philosophical when we're in an air-conditioned building in the United States surrounded by all the food and water that we need, but when you go into the reality of these people's lives, the philosophy sort of goes out the window. We have so many examples of women who had to prostitute themselves because their children were starving to death. Well, you know, that's not a philosophically discussed question, but that is a real question; that's a reality," Vanderpool said.