I've just finished reading Laurence Smith's The World in 2050. It's a sober, non-sensationalist look at how current trends are projected to play out over the next four decades. Of course, there's uncertainty, but the projections do give us some basis for thinking about the world's future. Here are some important 2050 demographic projections:

- Two-thirds of the world's population will live in cities.
- Asia will be nearly as urbanized as Europe. By 2025, nearly all if the world's biggest cities will be in developing countries.
- A quarter of the world's population will live in Africa. In contrast, the population of Japan will decrease by 20%.
- Almost half of all Japanese will be over 55. Other rapidly graying nations include Korea, Russia, and China. The median age in Mexico will go from 27 to 43.

These demographic trends will interact with economic growth (I'll post about this later) and climate change to place very heavy demands on food supply and water supply. Together with climate change, growth patterns will also place an increasingly large number of people at risk from flooding.