

Kingdom Report

Week of 6 April 2019

The 2020's: The Decade of the Endgame

There comes a time in God's historical timeline when it becomes evident what is built on sand and what is built on the rock and will last. I see the decade of the 2020's as such a time...these are the things to watch for...the good news and the bad news.

There is an interesting parable of our times in Charles Dickens' novel "Bleak House". The book starts and ends with the endless court case of Jarndyce v Jarndyce and in between the lives of those affected by this courtroom drama.

Dickens as always in his novels gives a moving account of the travails of the oppressed working masses of Victorian England. In this case the futility of the chancery court system of England with only lawyers and the legal system benefitting from a court case that drags on for decades.

But there is an interesting background to this fictional court case that everyone knew of in England at the time. A real case of a rich man who in late 1700's left an enormous estate in trust for his heirs in a hundred years. The enormous amount of money was mostly invested in what was then known as "Consols" which were perpetual government bonds of no termination date which were introduced in 1751 to consolidate all English government debt and trade it on the stock exchange. Common people could buy some of this debt at good interest rates and pass it on to their heirs.

The problem was this. The financial establishment could work out the effects of compound interest over 100 years. If left to compound it could bankrupt the Bank of England. And so they set in motion a court case to fight the will that by the time Dickens wrote his novel had been on for 35 years...all the time eating up the interest and capital....eventually there was nothing left for the heirs.

The parable for our times is this:

Mammon is a hard taskmaster. Compound interest on money is what Einstein describes as the 8th wonder of the world. Simple interest is when you get your monthly interest paid into your account by the bank and you spend it into the economy. Compound interest is when you don't spend the interest but let it compound with the capital month by month, year by year, interest earned on interest...it will either make you very rich or very poor depending on which side of the trade you are on....borrower or lender.

Jesus famously said you cannot serve God and Mammon. You serve Mammon by spending your life and earnings paying Mammon...the borrower is servant to the lender.

Here is our situation at present in South Africa and all over the world....

It does not matter really that I am personally debt free, which praise the Lord I am. My reality and the reality of every South African is this...we collectively stand guarantee for the accumulating debt of our nation. I am bound as a citizen and tax payer to this. What has become obvious to all of us as the Eskom electricity debacle unfolds is that this financial and technical debacle will sink us economically. There is no way we can pay off the accumulating debts of government and the sinking state owned enterprises. We as a country are borrowing R1,2 billion rand every working day to finance the government over and above our taxes we pay.

But don't feel alone in this. This is what is happening all over the world. There are now more than \$270 trillion dollars of worldwide debt denominated in US dollars among nations and corporations. Everyone is scrambling for dollars to pay their rising interest payments on this debt.

Apart from the world dollar debt there is of course the Euro debts of nations like Italy that are so enormous that if not paid by Italy will take down the major banks of Europe and that without factoring in the Greek, Portugal and Spain debt crises.

But that is not all....we have demographic crisis that is going to make all those debt instruments unpayable in any case.

The demographic crisis is so simple to understand that I was thinking of including some scary charts but will just forego that. Here it is:
Across all developed nations of either Europe, Asia or Americas the elderly over 60's are increasingly rapidly but there are for decades now not enough babies being born to replace the aging population.

Those missing babies are supposed to grow up form families and work to pay taxes and consume products and make debts and pay debts to keep the financial system circulating money and credit. But the millennial generation are not doing this. The crisis is this...for every worker between 21 and 64 you have dependents such as children and elderly that are not working that need to be taken care of. This centre group are what keeps the world functioning. They must care for children and the elderly and they must pay taxes to support growing government bureaucracies (who are not really working much) and they must also pay taxes to pay the interest on the enormous accumulation of debt handed to them by their previous generations. And then of course in America these millennial generation themselves are entering working life with \$1,5 trillion in student loan debt.

Now add the resource crisis to the mix....

Every trading nation of the world knows it is playing a game of musical chairs...there are many players but limited chairs and my projection is that the music stops in the decade of the 2020's.

The major resources of the earth in the form of oil, fish stocks, water, arable land, food, space, and too many others to mention are seeing their limitations. Nations are scrambling to assure themselves of resources and markets.

This is what is behind most headlines in the flashpoints of the world:

Venezuela: China and Russia have made billions of investments there. The biggest oil reserves are there as well as not well known the large Orinoco mineral arc is enormously rich in minerals and at least 7000 mt of gold.

Afghanistan: Little known to outsiders there is a good reason why everyone from the British to the Soviets to America to Pakistan and India want to invade this place. Like South Africa's famous Bushveldt Igneous complex of rich mineral deposits, Afghanistan has one of the greatest mineral complexes in the world. Just about everything including rare earths are there.

China and the Spratly Islands: These island groups are actually very close to the Philippines but China has now claimed them and built bases on them...why? Because there are rich fishing grounds and oil and gas there.

And then there is the issue of trust....

Francis Fukuyama the political intellectual in his two major books "The Origins of Political Order" and his follow up book "Trust" makes the point that world order and political order especially is based on Trust. That people must trust their political system, their legal system and their financial system, if nations are to function.

It is now obvious as we see the common people voting out established political parties and take to the streets in demonstrations the common people have lost trust in their political elites. Next to go and even now increasing is the trust of the people in their financial systems.

Here in South Africa this glue of trust that holds a society together is already eroded to breaking point. The people are in the streets. There was a time when the politicians could blame all problems on apartheid, or white monopoly capital. But people are now waking up. The lights are visibly going out and across our media the revelations are coming out of the deep-seated corruption of the political elite over the past decades. The corruption in South Africa is endemic from municipal level all the way to the top structures.

And not just the politicians...the white collar crime of the corporate world is also in the billions as the Steinhoff saga unfolds.

The broken trust of the people in the political and economic elites will next move to the legal system. The people see that nobody is going to jail. 18 months ago we had the largest bank heist in our history...R1,8 billion stolen from VBS Bank by the management of the bank...everyone knows who they are we even know where the money went....and still no arrests. And that goes the same for our oil reserves stolen and sold by the managers and on and on. This week another book on endemic corruption in the government of the Free State province "Gangster State"...over R30 billion stolen over 10 years by the politicians.

We are seeing right before our eyes and splashed across our media the total corruption of our political, financial and legal systems and with it the destruction of the trust of our people in those institutions. The decade of the 2020's that lie ahead for South Africa are going to be very desperate times.

But this is no different to what is happening in other nations of the world. At least here in South Africa we now know that the crisis is upon us and is unavoidable. Most other places whether America or Europe or Asia still think they can print up money or trade their way out of problems or that a new political party will be the answer. We have no such illusions available to us.

And that is my reason for hope....

We Christians of our generation have been called to the Kingdom for such a time such as this. As the trust or glue that held our nation together falls apart there is only one group who still trust and care for each other across all racial groups...the evangelical Christians of Southern Africa. We are the majority of the population and we know how to work "as unto the Lord" and not for Mammon but for a higher calling.

There is a tremendous testimony available to us for the nations of the world. God wants to do something miraculous for all nations to see. You see God still loves the world...that is why He gave us His son. We need to believe this. We need to believe that the Lord has not abandoned the world and He will not allow us to abandon the world and take us out of the world!

And that is the other "end game" that will become obvious in the decade of the 2020's...the evangelical church's obsession to abandon the world and escape through the rapture. We here in South Africa can become a great catalyst for a new "end times" narrative. The real end times is the end of everything built on sand so that the Lord can build a Kingdom here on earth that will grow forever.

Nobody believed a man can run a mile faster than 4 minutes until Roger Bannister did it,,,then everyone started doing it. I have no real expectation that our evangelical family in most of the world are suddenly going to change their theology about the end times just because I am writing a better eschatology. They are still obsessed with a Jewish kingdom with Jesus returning to come and live in Jerusalem.

But what if somewhere in the world we can show that in the midst of a collapsing social, political and economic tragedy God's people can come together to rebuild the waste places of our nation and not only our nation but the whole Southern Africa region that includes Zimbabwe and Mozambique that are already devastated. We can change the course of world history!

Here is what gives me further cause for excitement about the coming decade:

There are really great technologies now being developed that will greatly aid us in our nation re-building vision. Here are some of the tech developments I am following:

Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk both have private space launch companies, Blue Origin and SpaceX. Both have applied for and have received permission to put thousands of satellites in orbit for planet wide high speed internet. And then there are three other companies also planning on doing this.

This is going to happen over the next 10 years and it will be an incredible game changer. No more asking governments for permission for data access. Low cost high speed internet covering the entire planet. That means we can connect all Christians everywhere even in persecuted countries or closed nations like Muslim nations. It means we can communicate, trade, set up educational systems freely without asking any government permission anywhere in the world.

I am also keeping in touch with the tremendous advances in blockchain technology that is exploding everywhere. It started with Bitcoin as a public distributed ledger system that is secure and unbreakable. But now the applications are way beyond e-currency. Now you can do contracts on blockchain, you can do sales and agreements, you can do finance. The key idea here is that before you needed a trusted third party like a bank or government to adjudicate who has the money or who has legally paid a bill...with blockchain the system is the secure ledger keeping track of all exchanges in the public sphere. There are enormous implications here for not only private money issue but also private legal arbitration agreements as well as private accounting adjudication.

Then there are great advances in material sciences that are greatly increasing battery storage density meaning off grid electricity generation and storage for communities is now practical...meaning more independence for local communities.

There are great advances in biological sciences with genetic manipulation becoming cheaper and more effective in medicine but in my area of interest...the manipulation of yeast genome for making every conceivable organic molecules from glucose which will allow us to replace the Hydrocarbon Economy with the Carbohydrate Economy and with the vast potential of Africa for cassava production from which to make our glucose, Africa will be the next Saudi Arabia of the world with this exception....while the oil will run out, the cassava starch biomass of Africa will never run out while the sun still shines. We can not only feed the world but we can provide the world with a multitude of organic chemicals when the oil runs out.

Our great advantage of Africa is that we have no legacy systems to overcome, no old entrenched industries to fight. We can start from the ground up picking and choosing the best tech options for the new world of tomorrow and the ages to come.

The decade of the 2020's is going to be the end game for a collapsing world system. As the decade progresses increasingly the world will see that politics and economics as usual is not working. We here in Southern Africa will have a head start over the rest of the world in the collapse of the system...but also the head start in the rebuilding a new Kingdom of God system. We are going to use the best of the tech that the world has to offer and as Revelation 21-22 shows us, the kings of the earth, the tech giants, the entrepreneurs, the artists, the scientists...they are going to bring their glory into the New Jerusalem to help us build the new world.

The decade of the 2020's I also predict is the end of the old model of church. We are going to follow in the footsteps of the Apostolic companies who built a new world with their monasteries after the empire collapse of the 400's AD. Barbarian looters on one side, Roman empire looters on the other side,,,they prevailed with the preaching

of the Word of God and a life of work and discipline to lay the foundation for Western Civilization. Our task now is to build the new Kingdom Civilization.