

### The Cost of Progress

Since the 1400's, Western Civilization has had tremendous material progress. Today, we have air conditioning, smart phones, cars, and the Internet. Yet, all this progress has come at a cost, a social cost. We don't always acknowledge that cost nor the need to pay for progress. Those people who drive progress forward often have broken rules, committed crimes, and may not be pleasant people to work with. Rarely has progress come from the traditional leaders of society. The price of progress is giving up a stable and secure society and needing police, courts, and punishment systems. Crimes call for wisdom to discern why someone broke the rules and whether or not the person has the character to help society. Balancing justice and mercy is very difficult but needed.

It is extremely rare for social or technological progress to come from today's social leaders. Nearly every progress we have come either from those who wanted to become the social leaders or from movements that overtook the leaders. This is true for both social change and for leading corporations. (That means that the next major social innovation will not be coming from any current leading company such as Apple, Google, Facebook, or Amazon.)

Back in the 1970's, the son of a Syrian immigrant was working for a major computer company. He was stealing parts and using them to steal services. In today's climate, this person would be a clear candidate to be deported. Yet, he received mercy and we all benefited

from what he did next. His name was Steve Jobs and he invented today's smart phone.

Within the corporation, we have the same problem. Many people consider corporate budgets "license to steal" from other departments. Some people push projects not supported by top management which could put the company in a new line of business. Still others use their power and position to take advantage of others.

Within many corporations, we have the same need to police everyone for some behaviors while deliberately overlooking others.

What we police and what we overlook set the corporate culture far more than any nice

statements marketing or HR puts out. The recent revelations regarding high profile media personalities are proof of the need to be aware of activities. The social response to those revelations is also proof that what is acceptable behaviors at one time may not be in very short order.

Likewise, corporations have often broken societal rules and local laws. Uber, Lyft, Airbnb, and others have all broken local ordinances. Several of these have supported campaigns to change those local ordinances in order to keep operating. Still others (such as some of the bike and scooter sharing companies) broke the ordinances and found themselves kicked out of town.

Society has to police corporations in order to prevent anarchy.

Few want to return to the 1400's. That means that we have to pay the price of progress.

### Progress Requires Policing

#### Surviving Our Economic Bubble Burst

Yes, our economy is in a bubble. We have a short-term bubble caused by massive Federal borrowing and spending. We have the 100 plus year bubble based on oil and gas. Some people argue that we have a 400 plus year bubble based on all the fossil fuel use starting with the coal mines of England. At some point, all bubbles will burst. What will people do when the bubbles burst? Every bubble burst results in social upheaval. There are two main strategies for handling a bubble burst; isolation, or trusting others.

There are only two viable strategies for surviving major social upheaval, figure out some way to protect yourself on your own, or to be the type of person that others would want to help and protect.

There are some very high net worth individuals who are trying to find a way to protect themselves, their families, and their wealth against the bubble burst. They fear what will happen in the burst.

The problem with trying to do it on your own is that it is almost impossible to predict all the ways that harm will come. Throughout history, bubbles have nearly always burst in ways and at times that few people could predict. No matter what people have done to insulate themselves from such bursts, nearly everyone has been caught by surprise.

As a rule of thumb, the bubble burst lasts as long as the bubble. It takes that long for people's expectations and attitudes to adjust to the new realities and to find ways of changing the situation. The concepts of wealth and how to make wealth change throughout this process. In such fluid situations, new opportunities arise.

When society is in turmoil, it is far better to be the type of person that others want to help and protect.

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#### Risky World

The island of Sardinia has hidden, unspoiled beaches. Authorities in one province of Sardinia are asking visitors not to rely on electronic maps. The fire brigade had over 144 calls in the last two years to rescue cars and hikers. The tourists followed electronic maps that directed them onto paths totally unsuitable for cars or humans.

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