

The world in 2063

Do some things never change?

I've tried to imagine what the world will be like when my oldest granddaughter is my age now. It's the year 2063.

I imagine the United States will no longer be the greatest nation on Earth. Moral corruption within and hate from without has reduced it to a cringing beggar on the world scene. Christianity will likely be a spent force too, having diluted its message by incorporating Buddhism, Hinduism, Mohammedism and all kinds of other "isms" into its teachings and practices. Climate change, pollution, over-populated cities, terrorism and gang wars will still be adding to the general stress of life.

On the positive side, it will certainly be more clear to people that unless the world operates as one, the trends of the last 50 years are on an inevitable course to self-destruction. Inventive, concerned people, therefore, are putting their heads together to reverse the trends before human initiative can no longer sustain the planet.

Some things won't have changed. The divide between the stinking rich and pathetic poor exists as always, as do politicians posturing in public. Technology is still promising a better world while adding to one's daily chores and expenses. People are still being people, doing whatever it takes to survive financially and blaming everyone else for their problems, and the sun still comes up every morning, giving everyone the chance to start and think again as to what life is really all about.

And what is life all about in 2063? Is it about escaping this planet to set up somewhere else in the galaxy? Is it about living until you're 150? Or is it merely the same old routine of good versus evil, struggling to make ends meet, and hoping you don't get cancer? Or is there, perhaps, a worldwide wondering that there's something missing?

Well, why shouldn't there be? Billions of people in 2063 will probably still believe it's a good thing to treat others as you would like to be treated, but as always, it isn't happening. Wars still rage, scam artists still rip people off, banks still make outrageous profits, dictators still slaughter their own people, and relationships still break up in bitterness and anger. The question that will likely be bothering people in 2063, therefore, is the same question that bothers so many people today: "Why - if we know what's right - can't we do it?"

"I just don't understand it," one lady says over coffee at Starbuck's, which in 2063 has 3 billion outlets worldwide, including two on Mars, "we've got religions holding sway over

three quarters of the people on this planet and they're all preaching peace and love, so why haven't we got peace and love then, eh?"

Sybil, one of the few surviving Christians, hesitates to answer. "Well, Mabel" she blinks nervously, "we don't have it in us to create peace and love. We need God's help for that." She winces, knowing the explosion that's about to erupt.

"What?" Mabel squawks, as expected, "God? Who needs him? Christians tried pushing God for centuries and where it did get them? They split into thousands of competing denominations, they fought on both sides in war, killed each other in God's name and damned each other to Hell for not being Catholic or Evangelical. So much for God; he couldn't even get Christians to live in peace and love, let alone the rest of humanity."

"So what would you suggest instead?" Sybil asks.

"We'll find a way," Mabel snaps back.

"But we haven't yet," Sybil replies. "We're no more advanced in our behaviour now than we were back in World War 3 and World War 4. Stupid, greedy people still threaten the existence of our planet. So why can't you accept that maybe the Christians - the true Christians, that is - had a point, that the only way we will ever change is for Christ to live his life in us?"

"Because that's a load of hooey," Mabel replies, taking a large gulp from her medium-sized coffee, which in 2063 is the size of a small bucket. "We've got all we need in us without Christ. We got this far without him, didn't we?"

"But a lot of innocent people died needlessly along the way," Sybil murmurs.

"So what?" Mabel yells, "I'm alive, I've got all I need, and coffee's cheap."

Some things never change. If the end hasn't come by 2063, it's a year like any other.