

Kingdom Report

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Kingdom Vision Policy : Framing the Climate Debate

Since God created the earth and we are commanded to care for it and be productive and since the Church the family of God will inherit the earth...we need to have a say on the issue of climate change. Here are some guidelines to help frame the debate.

I am going to give you a perspective of the climate debate from Africa. And specifically how do we as the church of Africa the Global South respond to the calls of zero carbon, zero growth because the world is facing the existential threat of human and animal extinction from rising temperatures.

I am not going into the physics of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and how much energy does it retain or radiate. At some point I will address that with the help of top physicists like Prof Happer of Princeton and others. They totally disprove the "science".

What I want to emphasize here is how does this debate affect our Genesis 1 mandate for productive growth, subduing the earth and alleviating poverty in Africa. So let me confess my bias and skepticism. I believe that the Global North is determined to ensure that the vast resources of Africa are never used for the poor of Africa but will be extracted by the Global North for "climate transition". Leaving Africa even more in debt and more poor.

Here some items for your consideration in support of my suspicions....

I make the following observations just for framing part of the debate and it is this:

- The zero carbon and zero growth goals will never be reached and certainly not by the Global North but will be imposed on the Global South.
- The finance needed yearly in the decades ahead to achieve "a just energy transition" from a fossil fuel based economy to "renewable energy economy" is astronomical and will never be financed.
- The sheer amount of critical minerals needed in the form of metals like copper and cobalt and "rare earth" minerals is of such magnitude that all of Africa will be strip mined to just meet a part of the minerals needed by the Global North leaving nothing for Africa's industrialization and poverty needs.

The recent COP 29 international meeting on climate change only reinforced my suspicions. No world leaders of the major economic powers were present and the final agreements were as meaningless as all the previous COP summits.

The usual claims are that unless we reduce to zero net carbon emissions, life as we know it will not be viable within three to five decades. Real decarbonisation that aligns with the UN and COP Summit goals means replacing gigantic chunks of our current economic infrastructures that we currently take for granted. Or at least what the Global North takes for granted and which we in the Global South have yet to attain.

To achieve these goals of whole international changes as to how we do energy and industry will require massive reorientation of world finance. The starting point for any discussion about the reform of the global financial system should be the global estimates of what will be required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — over the years, these estimates have increased.

- Back in 2014, UNCTAD's World Investment Report estimated that \$2.5-trillion per annum was required by Global South countries.
- By 2023, the estimates were getting higher: according to the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism published in 2023, the estimated cost of achieving the SDG is \$3.9-\$5 trillion per annum.

\$3-\$5 trillion per annum for decades? It's never going to happen. Eleven of the biggest European banks own fossil fuel assets worth 95% of their equity. Similarly, 60 of the world's largest banks invested \$4.6-trillion in fossil fuel assets in the six years following the signing of the climate accord in Paris.

In fact the exploitation of the Global South by the Global North will continue under the rubric of no development through cheap fossil fuel energy usage:

- 24-43% of resources extracted in the Global South are consumed in the Global North;
- 20% of all land in the Global South is embodied in goods consumed in the Global North;
- 28-38% of all labour in the Global South is deployed in the production of goods that are consumed in the Global North;
- 10% of energy generated in the Global South is embodied in goods consumed in the Global North
- Consumption is profoundly unequal: 27 tonnes of materials are consumed per capita in the Global North, versus six tonnes per capita on average in the Global South;
- Significantly, 25% of the Global North consumption is effectively procured for free due to structurally determined unfair compensation for Global South resources — or, put simply, paying the Global South less than the real value of the goods extracted in and imported from the Global South.

According to the Report of the Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance, 63% of the climate finance raised for Africa is debt. Only 16% of this debt was low-cost or concessional debt. Equity comprised 32% and only 5% was grants. If African countries are required to borrow at 5-15% to fund climate actions aimed at achieving climate goals that benefit all of humanity, then what that means is that they are being asked to become more indebted, with detrimental socioeconomic implications for their own populations to mitigate climate changes they did not create.

And yet, it is a scientific certainty that if Africa energises using fossil fuels, none of the Paris targets will be achieved. Africa's generation capacity for a population of more than one billion in terrawatt-hours is equal to France and Germany combined, which have a population of 140 million. So Africa needs to be kept poor and absolutely must not industrialize. The minerals and resources Africa has must be left for use by the Global North.

Minerals Needed for Energy Transition....A UK Estimate

Not only will the finance not be there for the great economic energy transition, the actual minerals needed for fossil free or zero carbon emissions are also not there. Here is an estimate of just what the UK needs to meet its EV goals for cars and for PV panels and wind mills to power those cars:

From Prof. Richard Herrington Head of Earth Sciences Natural History Museum to the UK Parliament....

*To replace all UK-based vehicles today with electric vehicles (not including the LGV and HGV fleets), assuming they use the most resource-frugal next-generation NMC 811 batteries, would take 207,900 tonnes cobalt, 264,600 tonnes of lithium carbonate (LCE), at least 7,200 tonnes of neodymium and dysprosium, in addition to 2,362,500 tonnes copper. **This represents, just under two times the total annual world cobalt production, nearly the entire world production of neodymium, three quarters the world's lithium production and at least half of the world's copper production during 2018.** Even ensuring the annual supply of electric vehicles only, from 2035 as pledged, will require the UK to annually import the equivalent of the entire annual cobalt needs of European industry.*

*Challenges of using 'green energy' to power electric cars: If wind farms are chosen to generate the power for the projected twobillion cars at UK average usage, **this requires the equivalent of a further years' worth of total global copper supply and 10 years' worth of global neodymium and dysprosium production to build the windfarms.***

Solar power is also problematic – it is also resource hungry; all the photovoltaic systems currently on the market are reliant on one or more raw materials classed as “critical” or “near critical” by the EU and/ or US Department of Energy (high purity silicon, indium, tellurium, gallium) because of their natural scarcity or their recovery as minor-by-products of other commodities. With a capacity factor of only ~10%, the

UK would require ~72GW of photovoltaic input to fuel the EV fleet; over five times the current installed capacity. If CdTe-type photovoltaic power is used, that would consume over thirty years of current annual tellurium supply.

There are not enough critical minerals for the world transition and most of the needed minerals are due to come from Africa. Meaning Africa kept poor and underdeveloped and strip mined and deeply in debt by international corporations and world finance.

And yet all sorts of arguments are always raised as to why this transition must take place such as.....

Look at all the natural disasters taking place all around the world. Yes but..

That may be true, but it's also true that economic development has made us less vulnerable, which is why there was a 99.7% decline in the death toll from natural disasters since its peak in 1931. In 1931, 3.7 million people died from natural disasters. In 2018, just 11,000 did. And that decline occurred over a period when the global population quadrupled.

What about sea level rise?

IPCC estimates sea level could rise two feet (0.6 meters) by 2100. Does that sound apocalyptic or even "unmanageable"? Consider that one-third of the Netherlands is below sea level, and some areas are seven meters below sea level. You might object that Netherlands is rich while Bangladesh is poor. But the Netherlands adapted to living below sea level 400 years ago. Technology has improved a bit since then.

What about claims of crop failure, famine, and mass death?

That's science fiction, not science. Humans today produce enough food for 10 billion people, or 25% more than we need, and scientific bodies predict increases in that share, not declines. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) forecasts crop yields increasing 30% by 2050. And the poorest parts of the world, like sub-Saharan Africa, are expected to see increases of 80 to 90%.

Nobody is suggesting climate change won't negatively impact crop yields. It could. But such declines should be put in perspective. Wheat yields increased 100 to 300% around the world since the 1960s, while a study of 30 models found that yields would decline by 6% for every one degree Celsius increase in temperature.

Rates of future yield growth depend far more on whether poor nations get access to tractors, irrigation, and fertilizer than on climate change, says FAO.

All of this helps explain why IPCC anticipates climate change will have a modest impact on economic growth.

By 2100, IPCC projects the global economy will be 300 to 500% larger than it is today. Both IPCC and the Nobel-winning Yale economist, William Nordhaus, predict that warming of 2.5°C and 4°C would reduce gross domestic product (GDP) by 2% and 5% over that same period.

The Global North faces far greater problems than what the temperature of planet earth will be in the year 2100. They know all the facts I have outlined about money and minerals are just not there for all these supposed lofty goals to save the earth. Meaning none of these climate goals are going to be met.

The UK and Germany that have the highest percentage of energy from sun and wind are also the two highest electricity costs in the world and even then Germany this year had to subsidize their energy costs with 40 billion Euros. And still their industries are collapsing and the cost of living rising.

Most of the industrial nations just ignore all these rules and mandates. But we in Africa are threatened with no international finance unless we de-carbonize and never in fact develop industrial economies.

And I have purposely not even addressed the actual science of carbon dioxide, sunspot activity on the sun, Malinkovich weather cycles over hundreds of years, ice ages, Maunder minimum, ice cores and tree rings of cycles of high and low temperatures over thousands of years.

Our best strategy is industrialize though all the incredible riches of oil and gas and coal and uranium energy resources we have in abundance. Use that rapid energy uptake to industrialize and take our billion people of Africa out of poverty over a period of 50 years which China did for their billion population in 30 years.

With wealth and energy power we can protect the natural wild life heritage of our continent and mitigate all effects of climate change to feed ourselves, house and clothe our people, pay for education and hospitals and make opportunities for all our families to grow and develop their giftings and callings from the Lord.

And that means we keep our mineral and energy resources for Africa development and let the Global North do their own zero growth fossil free poverty transition without us.

The church needs to be part of the debate. Already we have international environmental groups stopping all development of our vast resources of oil, gas, and coal energy resources. Nobody can industrialize or keep an industrial economy working on sun and wind power. They got to industrialize on fossil fuels and pollute their earth but we must pay the price of endless poverty for their sins.

No thanks. God has a different plan for Africa. We now know how to use fossil fuels and their abundant energy potential to industrialize responsibly and still protect our wonderful ecosystems. They learnt too late.