

We The People
Program 209 June 27, 2016
We the People Build on the Rock



Good day to you.

The recent severe storm that hit the Gold Coast and eastern Australia reminded us of the power of mother nature. It is indeed a country of droughts and flooding rains. The media went into action with television news broadcasting dramatic pictures of flooding and wind damage and most spectacularly the beach-front erosion as the swell and waves pounded the beach-side suburbs of Sydney. The Gold Coast in one sense dodged a bullet in that overall the damage here was not as severe but none the less terrifying. Those images of homes and swimming pools falling into the sea were a dreadful reminder that the sea will take back the land no matter what we do. Once the superficial grass and vegetation is gone we see in profile just how frail and futile the foundations are, when built on sand. Our constructions look strong while there is calm but once exposed the fragility of mans creations stands ready to fail very quickly.

Now I believe there are two lessons to be learned. The first is that we should not build close to the ocean and the second is a metaphor for making decisions based on a weak foundation. This is what I saw in the storm and it's not just the physical destruction but the financial ruin for some as well. Who would insure such dwellings and what bank would lend again to the next buyer. The rush for the best home with the best views in paradise ultimately turns to a nightmare as the waters surge into homes and smash everything. Why do we do it. Do we mentally set aside the risk and hope the storm will never come.....but it does.

The planet is heating and science predicts sea levels will rise and more severe weather events will occur through the warming of the ocean. Melting ice sheets add to the rise. When sea levels rise rapidly, even a small increase can have devastating effects on coastal habitats. As seawater reaches farther inland, it can cause destructive erosion, flooding of wetlands, contamination of aquifers and agricultural soils, and lost habitat for fish, birds, and plants. When large storms hit land, higher sea levels mean bigger, more powerful storm surges that can strip away everything in their path. In addition, hundreds of millions of people live in areas that will become increasingly vulnerable to flooding. A two degree rise would warm the Earth closer to the Pliocene climate, a time when sea level was in the range of up to 25 metres higher than today. *Mayor Tate might be pleased as his cruise liner terminal could be a reality above the Council chambers.* This calamitous process we are in is largely the fault of humans making poor decisions. In other words the whole of society is built on an unsound fragile 'sand' base.

Now, the other compelling lesson is that which is recorded in the Bible at Matthew 7 and the story of the man who built upon the rock and his house survived the storm, while the man who built upon the sand lost the lot. We sang about it at Sunday school and the lesson is that we should build life on solid foundations. We aren't doing that as we over populate the Gold Coast and Australia and indeed the world. More people means more pollution and more warming of the planet and more storms yet we believe that a greater population means greater prosperity no matter what we do to the environment. No it doesn't for an array of reasons yet we push on down the same foolish track. Voltaire's definition of insanity is *"to keep doing the same thing over and over and expect a different result"*. Put simply, we are nuts if we believe infinite growth in a finite world is possible. More storms will come and more homes will be washed away and eventually productive land will succumb to the tempest and then we might say.....what happened and who is to blame..... but too late my friends. The politicians and the banks and the local Council do not listen and do not care and so their wisdom is flawed as they worship the twin gods of money and power. ***"But everyone who hears these sayings and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."***

Until next time this is Kent Bayley