

Time for the great reset?

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Dear employees, dear business partners,

At the end of this unusual year, I would like to thank you all for the good cooperation and the trust you have placed in us.

Since the company was founded in 1992, I have never felt the urge to express myself politically; I don't even know how some of my closest leaders think politically and have never been interested in it. Now 2020 was a very unusual year and many things have changed, and so has my reluctance to talk about politics.

Germans have written world history in many areas, such as philosophy, science and economics. And as it was in the past, so it is in the present: one of the most influential think tanks of our time was founded by a German. The chairman of the World Economic Forum, Klaus Schwab, published the book "COVID-19: „THE GREAT RESET" with Thierry Malleret in summer 2020. The authors explain that an economic collapse is very likely as a result of the pandemic, and that there is only one alternative to averting this scenario, namely a political-economic reset on a global level. How much this topic polarizes Western society can be seen from the star ratings on Amazon. The vast majority rated either the top or bottom of the five-point scale: 50% gave the book five stars and 28% one star. The evaluations of the German edition "DER GROSSE UMBRUCH", published in autumn, are similarly divided. Schwab's compatriots seem to be more critical of his vision than the English-speaking readers, because only 35% gave five stars, but 43% gave it one star. This snapshot from December 19, 2020 is certainly not representative of the political situation in Germany, but it shows how deep the social rifts are between right and left positions.

Certainly there are similarly controversial opinions among us on explosive topics like this. In times of crisis, people who have never spoken about politics before come out of the cover of political neutrality. Today it is my turn. When laypeople politicize, there are diverse positions and often excited tempers - a stress test for company and social cohesion. For example, the implementation of our corporate company statement "Arriving cooperatively" could in future require a higher level of social competence than in the past. I believe I speak for everyone when I say: We would like to face this challenge in the interests of our country, company, industry and ourselves.

Of course, the point is not that we all have to come to the same conviction. In Germany, we are happy to have passed those times when we or our ancestors - first from the right and later from the left - were decreed a state program for political conformity. Different opinions are allowed and desired! In order to cope with the crisis of which a great deal still lies ahead of us, we should get involved in what could be called "to disagree favorably". There is no corresponding verb for "disagree" in German, but that shouldn't prevent us from treating others with favor and respect when we disagree on political and other issues. Of course, this is not meant to be a license for radical ideas. I think we also agree that there should be a tolerance limit with regard to political positions. I would say this limit is exceeded when someone manipulates, intrigues or explodes.

With this political statement, I don't want to encourage heated discussions during the lunch break or say that everyone has to come out now with his political views. I want to encourage people to stand up for convictions in an open manner and to defend these convictions calmly and objectively, because I have the impression that the general political discourse is losing its dignity in our day.

Thereby I don't mean the title "THE GREAT RESET". But it certainly has a provocative connotation. This title certainly does not evoke enthusiasm among conservatives, because the desired reset would be a step towards a more liberal society. Conservatives already feel that their positions are being held back by the government and the press. A few years ago, when conservative protesters proclaimed that opening the border for multitudes of middle-eastern refugees would be overwhelming, they could not prevail; when they protested against the program of the colorful gender movement, they achieved nothing; when they called the green climate policy alarmism, they did not find a majority and if one of them is spotted at a protest march against corona measures, it could happen that neighbors take him for a confused person who is labeled a conspiracy theorist.

In Germany a language committee annually votes for a "non-word of the year", which means the worst word. Probably some whose political heart beats on the right side would like to choose the term "conspiracy theorist" as the "non-word of the year", but the heart of the committee for non-words beats on the left side like in the human body. Many conspiracy theories circulate today. I remember conversations where I was confronted with theories that seemed to fit exactly into this category. All of these people were harmless contemporaries, but as we all know, there are also those in the radical camps who endanger democracy and the rule of law. It is unfortunate when people believe any fairy tale without bothering to get to the bottom of the facts. Still, I don't like the way the term "conspiracy theorist" is broadly generalized to gain political capital. Incidentally, that also affects me personally. To explain what I mean by that, I'll break a taboo and talk about a very dark topic in the second next sentence.

It will hardly surprise anyone when I, as a Christian, identify with conservative positions, nor should it be surprising when I profess to believe in the existence of God. So far so good, or maybe not so good for some, but anyway: If I now add that I also believe in the existence of Satan, I am breaking a taboo for some, even though the same Bible through which I learned of the existence of Jesus also speaks about the existence of Satan. What ignites this thought: Now it emerges from the Bible that Satan is the great conspirator against God. It follows from this that the large number of Christians who believe in the Bible could be described as "conspiracy believers". This term is suspiciously close to our word or non-word just discussed. With its claim to absoluteness, the gospel is in stark contrast to the pluralistic worldview of our day, which is also represented by the proponents of "THE GREAT RESET". A Bible that only says "Submit yourselves to God" and "Do good" would not be offensive today. But because it also teaches "resist the devil" and "turn away from evil", it is in danger of being placed in the corner of the conspiracy theorists along with the believer who holds it under his arm.

I'll tell you something else: Assuming I were an American, I would not have been a supporter of Donald Trump in the last election despite my tendency towards conservative positions. He wasn't acting like the statesman I would have liked to vote for. Yet I would have compromised and voted for the Republicans because, from my perspective, a vote for the Democrats would have been a potential support for „THE GREAT RESET“. But that doesn't mean that I couldn't get positive things from „THE GREAT RESET“: In fact, a lot of what is described in it is exactly my cup of tea: Enjoying and preserving nature, caring for healthy diet and physical balance - like the authors, I believe such living is a better strategy for contentment than excessive consumption of status symbols. The book also speaks out in favor of supporting the needy and the disadvantaged and against the rule of money and ego - all positions with which I can identify very well.

As if it had collided with an iceberg, the debt-financed luxury steamer of our global economy has got into distress due to contact with viruses. One cannot blame the authors as leading economists if they ponder about the course on which the battered world-ship might escape the fate of impending doom. And it sounds noble when a well-known business manager like Schwab campaigns for a more social and ecological world and wants to implement this vision very consistently through global leadership and laws. He sees "re-globalization" as the greatest obstacle on the way to the safe shores of the better world. He sees that the pandemic has increased the trend that individual countries are putting their national interests before the concerns of the international community. As a counterbalance he calls

for the strengthening of international institutions and intensified cooperation at government level. The current crisis provides plenty of good reasons for this course. Nevertheless, I hope I will not be called a conspiracy theorist, if I say "No, thank you" to the idea of a global reset. During this pandemic "One world" and "One goal" are good arguments for "„THE GREAT RESET", but a next logical step could be "One People". Not many talk about this today, but who knows, maybe the journey will go exactly in that direction. Globalization has written a success story in the past and reached economies, societies and cultures. Politics is now on the agenda as the next step. It would not be inconceivable that afterwards the "globalization of identity" could come at some point. A bizarre idea!

The idea of creating a fairer society based on liberal ideals is not a novelty. The novelty about the current project is: In the heat of the COVID-19 battle, it must now be implemented with great haste. Incidentally, this idea has had powerful supporters for many years, not only in Brussels and Washington, but above all in Silicon Valley. Our brave new – connected, global, and digital - world could be described as the joint venture of various governments, institutions and corporations whose political convictions harmonize well with Schwab's vision of the reset. The Big Five of global tech companies are supporters of the ideas of the World Economic Forum. As visionary companies, they are at the digital circuits of the globe; not only to save the earth from the viral meltdown, but also to lead humanity through its technology into a new harmony with Mother Nature and brother human. The representatives of these corporations are among the richest in the world, but some have an exemplary social attitude. However, I am astonished that capitalism and consumerism are now being declared obsolete and that a new age of modesty and social justice is proclaimed. Why were all these participants so enthused to be part of a system which enticed its customers with all sorts of tricks to more and more unnecessary consumption and trivial distractions, causing human relationships to degenerate and rubbish heaps to expand? In the old economy advertising used to speak of (at least in Germany) "customer is king" - today in the new economy we experience a tendency towards "customer is slave". In the beginning we were made grandiose promises of a digital journey into a better world of freedom and unlimited possibilities. Today, more and more passengers feel overwhelmed by the speed of digitization, no longer understand technology, are lost in complexity, have no time or patience to read the small print, are asked to cash up everywhere and in the end feel compelled to just swim along with the crowds. Now the next stage of the digital journey to global adventure land is already being advertised - everyone is advised: "If you want to keep your life in balance, there is no alternative but to entrust yourself to the captains of the reset, you can quickly check a few boxes and then please give your legitimization for the global reset by clicking on the OK button".

Why I am not worried in spite of this threatening prospect has to do with the one who was born in Bethlehem, we might call him „THE GREAT RESETTER": Jesus Christ, the protagonist of the Bible, does not fit into any political scheme: His teaching of moral was conservative, his teaching of God was progressive, and from the perspective of the radical Pharisees he was quite liberal. When he arrived in the Holy Night, a heavenly choir greeted him with the words: "Glory to God on high, and peace on earth to men". He became the voluntary and at the same time victorious victim of the most famous conspiracy in world history. After they nailed him to the cross, he gave them the ultimate example of how to overcome disagreements with those who think differently. He said, "Father, forgive them because they don't know what they are doing". His life, words and work we call the gospel. Here is a current short version:

Mankind lived with God in paradise. After their sin, God ordained them an uncomfortable new beginning on the fallen earth - "THE ANCIENT RESET". People believed in themselves and said: "Let's build our own paradise – yes we can! – and if it doesn't work, then we just press reset". They built and built, but lived through centuries of discord, wars and epidemics. God knew their lostness and their incapacity for peace. He revealed his eternal plan to them and sent his own righteousness in the form of an infant. They called him "Christ Child". A better summary we read in John 3:16: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that all who believe in him should not be lost, but have eternal life"*. In other words: To him who believes God's words and entrusts himself to Christ, God gives the reset of his life and makes him fit for the future day of judgment - "THE FINAL RESET".

As a book tip for the New Year, I recommend the Bible as long as it is available in its current format. Should the vision of the great reset become reality, the day of great revision might have come for the Bible, in which all offensive passages might be removed. It would be regrettable for anyone who would then be ignorant of the content of the original, which also contains interesting predictions about the last times, for example about "One world government and one world currency and one world order", which feels a little reminiscent of "„THE GREAT RESET". So why not taking this piece of world literature and learn about it. To put it in the words of Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor during the fall of the Iron Curtain: "Those who do not know the past cannot understand the present and cannot shape the future".

Do you agree with me? If not, this is a great opportunity for a practical application: I am simply assuming that you are prepared to accept me as I am, just as I would like to appreciate and accept you, regardless of the political or religious views you hold. If we can succeed in this, it would be a very good start to the uncertain year 2021 that lies ahead.

With best regards

Stefan Höchsmann