STORM WARNING

The Perfect Storm of Change and Disaster in the Years to Come and How to Prepare For It

By Jim Jones, CHCM, EMT

In the Twentieth Century, we put in less and less and took more and more.
In the Twenty-first Century, survivors will be the ones who do more and more with less and less.

The twentieth Century was the time of waste and consumption and luxury.
The Twenty-first Century will be the time of conservation and self-reliance.

In the movie “The Matrix” agent Smith (a virtual being) says, “Humans are the only mammal that acts more like a parasite, moving from one area to the next while growing exponentially until all of the resources in one area are gone and the area is dead and then moving on to the next area”. In fact, archeological and anthropological data supports this assertion. The arrival of humans always correlates to extinctions of animal, vegetable and mineral resources. In cases such as islands where the human population was unable to move on, they fought with each other over the little remaining resources and then died out or lingered in misery and poverty. In the twentieth century, America has populated and consumed itself into a dead end. We were the last place to go. There is no place to move on to. The entire world is now populated beyond the remaining resources. We have a fast growing population seeking higher living standards on a nearly used up planet. There are as many people alive now as there were during the whole of recorded history combined and that will double in the next 40-years. Windmills, hydrogen power, solar power and better farming will buy a little time, but this is a race that humanity cannot win. The use of corn for fuel has instantly caused a food shortage. Many stores in the US are rationing rice and other staples. Africa is starving and there have been food riots in Egypt, the Philippines, and Mexico. 37 countries have declared being in a food crisis. Some countries have banned exports of grain to assure local supplies. The falling value of the dollar has resulted in more of them being needed to buy the same amount of oil. The drive for biofuels is leading to less food crops and massive deforestation in third world countries. Grain reserves are at a 30-year low. A bad harvest anywhere could be catastrophic. Massive legal and illegal immigration from “have not” to “still have” nations is generating instability, crime and unrest throughout Europe and the US. This will only get worse. In some cases food is the new drugs. Criminal gangs known as “boosters” are beginning to steal food and resell it on the streets. The “black market” and government price controls will be more and more evident over the next 5 to 10 years.

Water is the new oil. There are already legal conflicts developing between states in the United States and between many foreign nations over access to water. Water is currently classified as a “resource” belonging to everyone, but that could change. There are motions afoot to classify water as a “commodity” to be owned, bought and sold like oil. Think about the consequences of that! Even freedom from thirst may not be a human right. Urban sprawl is eating up farmland. When I was a boy, I lived on the edge of
Chicago at 97th street south. There were open marshes, wood and farms nearby. Now, 60-years later I have to go out to 225th street to see similar areas, and that is being developed fast. With exponential growth, Chicago’s sprawl could reach the Mississippi by the end of the Century. The oceans are no longer international territory. As resources dwindle nations are reaching out for the ocean and the ocean floors. The Russians recently planted their flag on the sea floor at the North Pole to claim any mineral resources that may be there. Other nations are trying to extend their boundaries or are disputing current limits. There is no doubt that in the future, every inch of the Earth’s land, ice and water area will be claimed by someone. This will of course result in serious border conflicts and probably wars.

Americans once lived the “American Dream” with one working parent, good vacations and benefits while buying with cash and saving regularly. Today it takes two working parents taking few vacations with few benefits and high debt to desperately hang on to a vanishing dream. As the late George Carlin said, “we spent money we didn’t have on stuff we didn’t need” and know we are broke with a lot of junk. The politicians will continue to try to fool the public with smoke and mirrors to get reelected and since false hope gets more votes than hard choices, the issues will not be faced. So there will be an ever-increasing series of ups and downs, but the downs will always be greater than the ups. The elite will thrive, the unprepared will perish and the prepared will survive and stay free.

What Will Happen?

In essence, the entire social, economic, political and environmental structure of the planet will be progressively stressed to the breaking point. Virtually everything we consider “normal” will be subject to change.

- Cuts in police, fire and medical services will put every family in growing danger. Trauma centers in cities and suburbs are closing at an alarming rate.

- The aging infrastructure will continue to degenerate faster than it can be maintained, causing failures in power distribution, water service, sewer systems, bridges and roadways.

- Natural disaster will become more and more lethal due to the increased population densities, a more dependent population and declining emergency services.

- Climate changes will kill hundreds of thousands. Climatologists agree that heat waves of weeks with temperatures of 110°F – 120°F will be common in cities like Chicago and New York by the end of the century. Don’t even think about Arizona or California! Recent heat waves in Chicago and Paris killed thousands. As the population doubles and the sources of water and energy for air conditioning diminish, heat alone could be enough to bring down civilization. The fire season in California was a few months in the 90’s, but is all year now. There is a clear water path through the North polar cap.
No doubt, epidemics and pandemics will occur, with or without terrorist involvement. It is simply a natural phenomenon when populations become too dense. There are millions of viruses that could mutate and spread quicker than they could be controlled. Bubonic plague hit India as recently as 1994. Influenza killed millions in the last century and mutate constantly. Antibiotics are becoming less and less effective and resistant viruses are multiplying every year. Experts agree that a world-wide pandemic is inevitable within the next 10 to 20 years,

The power of gangs and international criminal organizations will grow dramatically as they begin to control access to food, medications and other vital needs. The so-called “black market” will return. The gangs will often be able to offer better protection than the state. This is already a fact in poorer communities and third-world countries. Citizens may have a choice between being a ward and slave of a corrupt and oppressive state or a member of a brutal gang.

Prices will continue to rise faster than income. This will dump the lower income people and smaller businesses into bankruptcy. Service jobs such as landscaping, waiters, cleaners, general labor will be the first to go. Then semi skilled jobs will go. Being poor is a bad survival plan.

Shortages of just about everything will result in rationing, price gouging, increased theft, violence and the rise of the “black market” as in “I know a guy that can score you some cornmeal”.

Massive legal and illegal immigration will occur as people flee from countries where the economy, food supply and water sources are already inadequate. These people will flee towards any adjoining country where prospects are even a little better. This trend will result in increased border conflicts and civil disorder.

State and national governments will greatly increase regulations and confiscation (laws and taxes) in an attempt to sustain programs and authority. They may well attempt to institute socialist economics and unconstitutional laws. Hungry and desperate people will accept false promises of security in exchange for their (and your) freedoms. Even the Constitution and Bill of Rights will be at risk of being scrapped.

When things get tough, those who seem to be doing okay will be regarded with suspicion and even anger. We are talking about the folks who stayed out of debt and were better prepared to survive. The politicians will gladly blame them for hording, conspiring and hurting the economy. They will do this to deflect blame from themselves and their associates. This is what Hitler did to the Jews (they know about survival) in Germany.

Demigods and fanatics of all kinds will rise out of the chaos to offer solutions that will involve hate, violence, obedience, and the surrender of freedoms and
property. They will be more dangerous to survival than any of the man made or natural disasters that may have occurred.

- Local governments are closer to the people and will struggle to cope with changing conditions. Some may collapse, some may become corrupt, but some may restructure to involve citizen volunteers, local food co-ops and other innovations to maintain and secure their communities.

This will all work out in one of three ways:

1. There will be one or more population reducing events such as wars, pandemics, famines or other disasters that will bring the population to a sustainable level where “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” can still exist.

2. The entire society will degenerate into a constant state of conflict on a local and world basis. In this scenario, the wealthy elite and the gang leaders will live well, while the masses obey, pay and struggle to survive.

3. The world population will exist in a regulated, pacified, crowded and meaningless subsistence existence under the rule of a world state.

What, exactly will happen, how it will happen and how soon it will happen is hard to predict, but grim and dangerous changes will happen. There will be three groups of people involved in these struggles.

- **Predators** exist on the bottom and top of society. They believe they have the right to take the property, freedom and even the lives of others. On the top end, we have the politicians, bureaucrats, ultra rich and corporate executives. Of course they are not all evil conspirators (some may be), but as a culture they tax, price, exploit, manipulate, regulate and confiscate. On the bottom we have the “criminal class” that steals, intimidates, drugs, destroys and murders. When things get tough, these people thrive and multiply like rats. The rules and natural inhibitions that kept them in check tend to breakdown. They will steadily fight over the decreasing resources of the general population. They have always survived at the expense of the welfare and safety of good and hard working people. But in the hard times to come they will survive at the expense of the very survival of those people.

- **Victims** are the great majority of the world population that remains in denial of reality and dependent on others for survival. In the poorer communities and countries, it is people that even now are barely able to obtain enough food, water and shelter to get by from day to day. They exist in dwindling resources and the excess of the better off. These resources and excesses will continue to diminish with predictable and horrible results. In the richer nations it is the middle class that works harder and harder for less and less in the face of increasing debt, crime
and taxation. They have more time, but are on the same road to losing life, liberty and property.

- **Survivors** are people that are not dependent on exploiting others or being supported by others. They take full responsibility for the sustenance and security of themselves and their families. While they are hard working and productive members of society, they have not become fully dependent on that society. While they enjoy life, they avoid waste, unnecessary consumption and debt. They tend to live a bit below their means and have at least some reserves and backup systems if things get bad. Their sense of responsibility makes them good citizens and good neighbors who are often involved in volunteer work. In the gravest extremes most of them will manage to stay alive without harming others or surrendering basic freedoms.

Predators will say “let me save you”. Victims will say “who will save me”. Survivors will say “let’s save ourselves together”.

**What Can We Do?**

To quote yet another movie (Terminator Three), “We were not intended to prevent the catastrophe, just to survive it”. You must survive without becoming predators or victims or slaves. You and your children have the mission of surviving physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. Compassion, knowledge, responsibility, freedom and hope must survive with you. The past belongs to those who took more and more while giving less and less back. The future belongs to those who can do more with less and fight those who would take what is not theirs. The past was the age of dependency and waste. The future must be the age of self-reliance and efficiency. You and your children must be ready and able to adapt to painful and deadly changes. You and your children must be ready to outlast, outsmart and even outfight the predators and opportunists that will victimize the unprepared. While it may or may not be necessary to “take to the hills” or drop off the grid entirely, you must consider that possibility. Meanwhile, you need to change your habits and take serious steps to improve your survivability before it’s too late.

1. Reduce your “needs” and consumption. There is a big difference between what society calls “needs” and what you really need. Society says you need golf, Starbucks™ coffee, Gap™ cloths, every new DVD that comes out, and bottled water. Most tap water exceeds bottled water in safety; beats bottled water in blind taste tests and is 240 to 10,000 times cheaper. Stop using credit cards to buy everyday items. Cash makes you think and visibly see what you are spending. Resist fast foods. Brown bagging or home cooking is much cheaper and healthier. You do not need to go to a health club to get exercise. Walking, home exercise, gardening and other activities along with a good diet will do the job, but you need to have will power. Leave the Starbucks™, health club, designer labels, fast food, and credit card rip-offs to the future victims. And of course you don’t need to smoke. That eats up your money and endangers your life.
2. I am not advocating that you adopt an Amish life style. Treat yourself occasionally, go out to dinner from time-to-time, but think and stop wasting your resources. They are not endless and what you waste today you cannot get back for what you may really need later.

3. Stop wasting. Use real plates and cups instead of paper plates and cups for everyday meals. Use washable rags instead of paper towels. Use all the contents of containers of food and household cleaners. Turn off lights in rooms you are not using. Plan “right sized” meals that leave a clean plate without an overfull stomach. This will save money while you lose a little of that extra weight. Here’s a good weight loss tip, “You do not need to eat every time you feel hungry!” Rain barrels on downspouts can catch thousands of gallons of water you will not have to pay for. Yes, water will be the new oil. If you do not have one, install a fireplace or wood stove in your home now. Dry your clothing on a clothes line or at least get clothesline and pins so you will be able to. Buy fans and use them as much as you can in place of A/C. If things get tough you will have fans that can run on less power. Learn how to can, dry and vacuum pack foods.

4. Learn to do more with less. Instead of making several trips to stores, plans a loop trip that gets the most done in one trip to save gas. Plan menus carefully to avoid throwing out leftovers. Swap books and CDs with friends to save money, close off unused rooms in your house so you do not need to heat or air-condition them. Remember; survival is 50% what you can do with and 50% what you can do without.

5. Build your reserves. Put real needs and future needs first. The first step in build reserves is to get out and/or stay out of debt. While there are some opportunities where limited, short-term borrowing is justified, you need to get on the positive side by accumulating property, assets (equipment, tools, trade goods) and life supplies in place of debts for luxuries, expendables, and services you could do for yourself.

6. Think smaller. While you may be able to “live large” (big refrigerator, whole house A/C, big SUV, light on in every room) today, you must have the ability to downsize your need quickly. Electric bills and fuel bills could quickly become unaffordable. Have a small refrigerator. You can use it for cold drinks in summer, but it could replace your big one if things get tough. At least half of what you now keep in that big refrigerator (bread, cheese, soft drinks, water, pickles, etc.) does not need to be there. Have enough fans and small heaters to keep a few rooms comfortable if you cannot run that big furnace and A/C unit. Replace all your incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents. Another benefit of these steps is that you will be able to get by better with a portable generator, solar or wind power if the need arises. Unless you need it for business, trade in that big SUV for something smaller. If you must have that big SUV to “make a statement”, you
are already a victim of the system. Consider getting a bicycle for short trips in good weather. Save gas and get exercise. That’s a win-win. Bicycles are also the ideal survival escape vehicles. You can carry more, move faster and go almost anywhere. Bikes are actually more efficient than walking. The Vietcong used them to move and supply a whole army in Viet Nam.

7. Buy durable and simple stuff. If you need to, spend a bit more on tools, generators, vehicles, tools, weapons, electronics, etc. Do some research? When possible, buy military surplus equipment that is specifically designed for hard use and easy maintenance. Be sure to buy essential spare parts, tools and manuals for all essential survival and self-reliance items. You may not be able to afford or even access a replacement part or a repair shop when you need it most.

8. Stock up on essentials like non-perishable foods (e.g. pasta, honey, sugar, vinegar, molasses, rice, corn meal, etc.) and essential supplies such as toilet paper, soap, toothpaste, light bulbs, batteries, LP gas cylinders, water filters, socks, underwear, ammunition, candles, clothesline and clothespins, matches, over the counter medications*, canned equipment, how-to books, and don’t forget a spare sump pump.

9. Stock up on tradable goods such as batteries, toilet paper, ammunition, over the counter medications*, cleaners, lubricants, disinfectants, salt, kerosene (does not evaporate, less flammable, used for heaters and lanterns), vegetable seeds (vacuum packed), insecticide, tools, anything that would be badly needed and hard to get. Actually, just about any necessity bought today will be worth more later if you can safely store it. There are still lots of well-built World War Two bolt-action rifles in new or like new or good condition (e.g. Mosin-Nagant 1938, Lee-Enfield 303, Gewehr 43) that can be had for less than $150.00 and ammunition is cheap and available. What will a good rifle and say 500 rounds of ammunition are worth in trade to unarmed survivors in the future?

10. Maintain a stock of bleach. It will be essential for water purification, sanitation and decontamination. Rotate the supply because it will lose strength over years. Soap and Listerine ™ for decontamination and insect repellent are other things to stock up on.

11. Buy crank powered and solar powered radios, lanterns and flashlights and any other devices that work independently of batteries or plug-in power sources.

12. Take up gardening. Until the late Twentieth Century almost everyone raised vegetables for their own use. Even chicken coops were common in the city. During World War Two they were called “Victory Gardens”. Big lawns, swimming pools and supermarkets became part of the lazy and dependent life after the war. It is time to turn some of that grass back into food. These would be truly “Freedom Gardens” or “Survival Gardens”. You save money, eat better, get exercise. No down side!
13. Consider adding solar or wind power systems. Generators are great for short-term emergencies, but how much fuel can you store and how much will there be in a future economy.

14. Arm yourself. If you have not already done so, consider purchasing at least one firearm and at least 500 rounds at ammunition. At the very least, have a 22-caliber handgun (revolver or automatic) and a rifle of the same caliber. These will give you some deterrent against predators, animal and human. Much better, get yourself a reliable (e.g. Glock, Colt, Ruger, SIG, S&W) 9mm, 40 or 45 caliber auto loading handgun that will stop any home invader or looter. Even if you lock them up in a safe place for now, you should get them. Their value will increase faster than just about any other investment and when and if you really need them, they will be worth more than any amount of money you spend.

15. Consider taking up hunting and fishing. These hobbies could have real value in tough times. Not only could fish and game supplement your own food supplies, but also you can use them as trade items. Consider also learning to dry and smoke the meat and fish that you get.

16. Always be prepared for an emergency. While you can’t go around carrying a pack and wearing a protective suit, you can keep items on your person, in your locker, at your desk and in your vehicle that will give you an edge in an emergency. Wherever possible, carry a pocketknife. A good quality single blade or the ubiquitous “Swiss Army™” knife will be invaluable in a number of situations. Carry a folding N95 respirator in your pocket for when smoke, dust and perhaps biological hazards fill the air. One of those tiny LED flashlights can go on your key chain. Include some painkillers and Band-Aids™. Large plastic bags can become rain, wind and chemical protection. A water filtration straw (available at sporting good stores could come in handy) and a whistle may be something to consider. If concealed carry is legal and practical, a small firearm may be your choice. If not, go with a small pepper spray. Wear sensible shoes that you could run through debris in if necessary.

17. Develop alternative income sources. Don’t give up your day job, if you still have one, but do start to develop a backup source or sources of income. If you have skills, consider developing them into a home business. Accumulate the tools and supplies you may need to make money in a desperate economy. Auto repair, home repairs, gun repair, reloading, food preservation, clothing repair, shoe repair, and many other skills will be in high demand. Gathering and rehabilitating broken and discarded appliances, tools and furniture could be a good business. Surplus sales and the sale of survival and self-reliance products would surely be a good choice.

pairs of glasses. Once good medical care becomes unavailable or unaffordable, it will be a bad time to discover that you have a problem that could have been treated or prevented earlier. Learn first aid and stock up on basic first aid items such as gauze pads, tape, bandages, splints, antibiotic cream, disinfectants, etc.

19. Prepare for serious disaster. Kits, caches, plans, packs. While “slow disaster” of climate changes, economic decline, shortages and crime (by the criminals and the state) will challenge survival for most, “fast disasters” such as riots, epidemics, floods, storms, etc. will be more frequent and more devastating in many areas. With less and less help available, it will be critical for every home to have the capacity to sustain itself for weeks or even months without outside sources of water, food, sanitation services, heat and power or even police, fire, medical services. In addition, each person (including children) should have a “survival pack” that is light enough to carry, but contains all of the necessities (necessities only) to survive in any weather for several days in the event that you are forced to evacuate. There should be a small quantity of water and a water filtration device, non-perishable foods, shelter and warmth (sleeping bag, blanket, tent, and plastic sheets), a first aid kit, spare socks, underwear, medications, weapons, fire starters, a knife and everything you would need. There are many sources of lists on how to put together a “survival pack”, but don’t wait. Any pack is better than no pack.

20. Have emergency plans. Consider what we have said about the future. Consider the various emergencies (fire, assault, flood, epidemic) that could happen in your area. Think “what if”? Make basic plans for each situation. Think “If this happens I will do this”. Consider what skills you need, what supplies you need, who you can work with, priorities, routes, alternate routes, communications. When others (family and friends) are involved, passwords and rendezvous locations are necessary. Remember that many emergency situations may develop while you are not at home or while you are asleep. Where will you be? Where will you loved-ones be? If you are one of those people that thinks “I don’t want to think about it” then you are already a victim and so are those you care about.

21. Be Prepared 24/7. Do not go out into the world prepared to be a victim! Carry a pocketknife (were you can) a firearm when conditions require, a small respirator, matches, a mini-flashlight, a whistle, extra medication (if you need it). A few Band-Aids™ are advised. A large plastic bag if there is room. These pocket items will be a big help in the unexpected emergency. A more complete survival kit should be in your vehicle, brief case or locker.

22. Network and team up. There are a lot more self-reliance, self-defense, survival ready oriented people than is generally visible. The media and the governments generally discourage independence and self-reliance. Practitioners are often low profile and disinclined to share their ideas with others. Even though self-reliance is essential, family, community and group support (not dependence) is critical to long-term survival, greatly enhanced potential and recovery. Self-reliance does
not require isolation. Self-reliance means you have a choice as to who, when and how you support and are supported by others. In the short-term, the capacity FOR individual self-reliance is critical. In the long term, the option and capacity exist for mutual voluntary support.

23. Teach the children to survive and value freedom. A recent study indicated that many young people become stressed if they lose their cell phones. They are no longer individuals. They think and act as part of a network of cell phones and websites. They may confuse reality with computer games. Their grasp of history is so shallow that they are truly “doomed to repeat” the errors that ruined and enslaved past societies. It is the most important parental responsibility to assure that their children have the will, knowledge and capability of taking care of themselves in emergencies and through hard times. The cruelest thing you can do to your children and grand children is to set them up for disaster by over protecting and under preparing them. It is the duty of every responsible parent to empower children with a sense of self-reliance and independence. This is the gift of life and freedom.

24. Use technology, but do not become dependent on it. The Internet, computers and cell phones are great tools for gathering information, networking, communicating, ordering equipment and books, and making some extra money, but these tools will be the first to fail or be used against you when you need them most. So use them, but don’t need them. Keep hard copies (books, papers, tapes) in a safe place. Develop direct communication systems based on those used by the underground and spy crafts of the pre-computer age. Set up things so that at any point things (emergency plans, organizations, teams and business) can go on without regular communication.

25. Don’t let your guard down. The recent Supreme Court decision to support at least part of the Second Amendment, a temporary drop in the price of oil or a slightly improved economy does not mean that all will be well. The UN (United Nations) wants to ban small-arms on an international scale and over-ride the US Constitution. The weakening dollar guarantees that fuel and everything else but your pay check will go up as your living standard goes down. Those in power will use every trick to disarm you and render you poor and dependent. You will have to fight for your freedoms and struggle for survival. Hold on when you must. Advance when you can. Know your friends and your enemies.

27. Above all, don’t give up and don’t doubt yourself. Those who live in challenging times have the opportunity to make a profound difference in the future. You will be the ones that decide if your children and grand children survive to be free, creative and happy.

* A Department of Defense study found that most medication last far past the expiration dates on the labels.

Conclusion
Live Free has been fighting for freedom and self-reliance for over 40-years. We have seen the threats of the Soviet Union, Red Dawn, Y2K and many others come and go. We have also seen a lot of panic peddling by various groups trying to promote products or sell fear and hate. We have seen dozens of so called survival organizations come and go. We have never been a big organization and we have never received a large contribution or grant, but we have endured and retain a reputation for responsibility and integrity. We have never claimed to know exactly what will happen, when it will happen or who to blame. What we do know is that changes and disasters will happen and they will happen to many of you. We also know that only through emergency preparedness, self-reliance and a steadfast determination to hold on to every inch of personal freedom and survival capability is there any hope for the future. If you have not seriously thought about changing your life style to a prepared, self-reliant, freedom first mode, do it before it’s too late. If you already call yourself a “survivalist” or a “self-reliance practitioner”, redouble your efforts and reach out to friends and neighbors now. If you do not happen to things, things will happen to you. You can happen to the future before it happens or you can chose to be a future victim.

Sources
Here are a few sources for the items you may need in your move to preparedness and self-reliance. Send for their catalogues or shop online.

**Emergency Essentials**
Be Prepared.com
1-800-999-1863
653 N. 1500 West
Orem, UT 84057

**Campmor**
Campmore.com
1-800-226-7667
P.O. Box 600
Mahwah, New Jersey, 07430-0680
Cheaper Than Dirt
CheaperThanDirt.com
1-800-421-8047
P.O. Box 162087
Fort Worth, TX 76161

Golden Nugget Surplus
GoldenNuggetSurplus.com
1-800-942-8769
215 Glob Street
Radcliff, KY 40160-9504

Brigade Quartermaster
BrigadeQM.com.
1-800-338-4327
1025 Cobb International Dr.
Kennesaw, GA 30152

Cabela’s
Cabelas.com
1-800-237-4444
One Cabela Dr.
Sidney, NB 69160

Paladin Press (survival books, etc.)
Paladin-press.com
1-303-443-7250
Gunbarrel Technical Center
7077 Winchester Circle
Boulder, CO 80301, USA