

BBC RADIO ULSTER

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Friday 9th January 2015

Did you ever dream of driving a Delorean? You know, the space age motorcar world famous for being made in Belfast... like George Best, peace walls and the Titanic.

For many years I've dreamed of owning a very special Delorean, with a flux capacitor, to turn it into a time machine. In 'Back to the Future 2' the time travelling Delorean transports Marty McFly forward to an imagined 2015.

And now that we've reached 2015 it's interesting to look at which predictions of the fictional future the film got right, and which ideas were wide off the mark.

Well, in 2015 we do have video telephones, huge flat screen TVs and hi tech video glasses.

But I'm afraid we don't have flying cars, hoverboards or automatic dog walkers.

If I'd been asked thirty years ago to predict what the world would be like in 2015 I too would have concentrated on holograms and robots and missions to Mars.

But the sad reality in this first week of 2015 is the persistent inhumanity of history.

Who would have predicted a massacre of cartoonists in Paris?!

Rather than wonder at the sight of space age vessels we've watched in horror at families fleeing war, exploited for cash and abandoned at sea in rusting cargo vessels. After 4 years of civil war in Syria there are four million refugees.

In Iraq, millions of people are displaced as waves of violence force families to flee repeatedly in search of safety.

And in South Sudan, the civil war has displaced over 1 million people.

The Book of Ecclesiastes speaks of a constant ebbing and flowing through time.

'There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens'

It describes a waxing and waning, from one extreme to the other as time goes by.

Of course in every year of our lives there will be 'a time to be born and a time to die', 'a time to weep and a time to laugh'.

But does 2015 have to be a year when people allow 'a time to kill' to prevent 'a time to heal'?

All of our technological advances seem so meaningless if we can't make progress in 2015 to move from 'a time for war' to 'a time for peace'.

It's hard to see how you and I can make a difference on big global issues, but I believe a good place to start is to simply ask myself, 'What can I do today in my world to make this year 'a time to love' rather than 'a time to hate'?'