

# Occasional Thoughts 4

December 2015

**Democracy? World War threat. Revelation vs. emotionalism.  
The Paris attacks. Attempted destruction of the church.  
Suffering versus sovereignty.**

The UK has just decided to bomb Syria. Think about this for a minute. It matters nothing what sort of internal insurgency there is, or isn't, or what terrorists abide there. Syria is a sovereign state that elects leaders by a common vote. It has elected Bashir al Assad, who happens to be a popular leader. Despite humanitarian concerns, Syrians prefer him to radical Islamists. No one in the last British election voted for war on a sovereign nation.

Syria, compared to other Arab states, is a fairly progressive society. Its basis in Ba'athism is a form of socialism that enables differing religions to live together (Druze, Christian, Muslim).

First the western powers, led by America, funded, trained, supported, armed and resourced IS in the hope of toppling Assad since an elite plan had been established to sponsor Sunni extremists to work against Shia nations (notably Iran and Syria) where the US wants to impose its influence or even take over with a proxy leader.

This plan involved the constant smearing of Assad as a cruel dictator, when at the same time having the closest of relations with Saudi Arabia whose leadership is far more repressive. The Saudis beheaded far more people in recent years than IS. They have a shocking record on human rights; they behead women in public arenas; they flog people for the smallest of crimes, sometimes to death, and they are currently trying to destroy Yemen without the world caring at all.

The west loves the Saudis but hates Assad because he stands in the elite's way; most notably in refusing a gas pipeline from Qatar; a decision that secures the Russian gas exports to Europe.

Standing on the supposed principles of democracy and humanitarianism, and standing in the seat of western democracy in Westminster, David Cameron urged Parliament to vote on airstrikes in Syria, and whipped his party to concur.

Thus humanitarian Britain is now bombing targets in Syria that will inevitably kill thousands of innocent civilians, especial if they bomb Raqqa as planned.

Democratic Britain is also illegally interfering in a country thousands of miles away that poses no threat to the UK.

Now imagine that the warplanes of a foreign nation started to appear on bombing runs along the South Coast Downs. Sortie after sortie dropped hundreds of bombs, killing innocent people, killing animals and livestock, destroying homes and villages and ruining the ecology for decades. Wouldn't you be furious? Would not the local inhabitants have cause for hatred and demand reprisals? Would you call that foreign nation a democracy?

Needless to say the notion of Cameron that bombing Syria will make us more secure is a very sick joke; a claim that only morons would make. We know from academic study that western aggression and illegal wars further radicalise Islamists and engender new recruits for radical jihadists. It is a policy beyond stupid.

But further, this is not democracy in action.

It is widely known that the majority of the country does not want to bomb Syria. This has been made clear in survey after survey, demonstrations, protests, debates and so on. Parliament is supposed to be the voice of the people and the people do not want war (which the US is pushing for). For Cameron to engineer a vote for bombing is cynical and undemocratic.

Worse, Labour party members were elected to represent the voice of Labour Party supporters. The overwhelming decision of these members is against military activity in Syria. This was even made clear in the decisions of the last Labour Party conference. It is a disgrace that Labour Party MPs voted for airstrikes in significant numbers, enabling Cameron to succeed. Tony Benn must be turning in his grave at the actions of his son Hilary. A bravura speech is pointless if the point made is wrong. Labour MPs that voted for airstrikes ought to be deselected by their constituents.

There is nothing democratic about Britain escalating a potential war with Syria. There is nothing democratic about bombing a sovereign nation because there is internal turmoil. Even worse that the turmoil and insurgency was created by NATO in the first place, instigated by an undemocratic desire to oust Assad.

Britons should be disgusted that their representatives have ignored the will of the people and are currently pursuing plans made by Jewish Neocons in America many years ago in order to achieve globalist elite goals.<sup>1</sup>

England has never been a true democracy, indeed such a thing is impossible; however, the level of despotic cynicism displayed by Cameron in his desire to pursue bad ideological strategies that actually harm Britain<sup>2</sup> is becoming increasingly shocking.

## **World War Threat**

I have spoken of the planned Third World War for some time but we are seeing the likelihood of this in the near future beginning in the Middle East. On one level the reason for this is just plain stupidity; the actions of the west have been utterly foolish. On another level, however, it appears that these decisions were not folly but planned madness.

Here is a concise summary of what is happening in the Syrian region right now; it could not be a bigger mess.

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<sup>1</sup> See my paper, 'Who created ISIS?'

<sup>2</sup> The NHS is gradually being destroyed from within and privatised from without against the wishes of the populace. The austerity measures of George Osborne are not only wicked, in that they harm the old, sick and the poor most, but are counter productive and increase debt rather than reduce it. Reducing taxes for the Tories' rich friends at the same time as lowering the quality of life of the poor is sickening. The Tories have doubled the national debt in five years.

**Syria**

Syria is led by a government that is a form of Shia but it is politically progressive and tolerant of other religions. Its government is virtually under siege as a result of fomented insurgence (mostly financed and resourced by the west). There are many jihad factions fighting Assad and each other.

**Iran**

Iran, which is Shia, has sent in resources and troops to assist Assad in fighting Sunni rebels and IS.

**Russia**

Russia responded to Syrian appeals for help and is fighting IS and rebel groups with airstrikes and troops. It has capability of launching cruise missiles into Syria from Russian territory. It has warships in the Mediterranean. It now has submarines in the Mediterranean with nuclear missile capability and has threatened to use them. The shooting down of a SU-24 fighter by Turkey has brought increasing tensions between Russia and Turkey that could have already led to war between Russia and a NATO member. In fact, as I proof-read this paper, a Russian frigate warship has fired warning shots above a Turkish fishing vessel that came too close and refused to respond to various forms of hailing.

**Jordan**

Jordan has been used to site bases for training of IS fighters, trained by the US, UK, France and Israel. Yet IS leaders have threatened to kill the Jordanian king.

**Iraq**

Iraq is exceedingly angry with NATO states. Turkey has sent troops into Iraq on the pretence of being invited. Iraq is approaching the UN to get them removed. Airstrikes have supposedly been underway in southern Iraq for over a year by the US, UK and France. These would be illegal. However, one Iraqi government source said that there has been no airstrikes and Iraq did not want any. IS, the creation of the US and allies, has invaded Iraq and gained certain strongholds which the Iraqis are fighting within 50 miles of Baghdad.

**Britain**

Britain has supposedly been bombing IS targets in Iraq, but this is denied by Iraqis. Britain has, however, been supplying IS positions with airdrops of equipment. Britain has even had two jets downed by Iraqi military for dropping supplies to IS in Iraqi territory. Britain recently decided to also use airstrikes in Syria supposedly against IS; an illegal action.

**USA**

The US has been supplying IS and other rebels for years. IS has received tons of equipment and weapons, including heavy weapons, tanks, trucks and other gear, plus massive amounts of money. The US used airstrikes to assist IS and to bomb Syrian government positions. Its foreign policy is dominated by the desire for regime change and get rid of Assad, who is resisting global elite plans in the Middle East. The US now has 3,500 troops in Syria, despite Obama saying earlier there would be no boots on the ground.

**France**

France has been conducting airstrikes for some time but recently, after the Paris attacks, these have been ramped up.

## **Turkey**

Turkey has been playing a very dangerous game and has now overplayed its hand. It cannot come out of this well, and this is at a time of impending economic collapse in Turkey. Its leadership is also venal, despotic and corrupt. Turkey has been supporting IS for years and is benefiting from IS supplies of oil, artefacts and wheat. During the period that NATO was supposedly at war with IS, Turkey (a NATO member) was IS's biggest supporter and beneficiary. Its illegal and stupid shooting down of the Russian warplane has put Turkey into a head on collision with Putin, who will not back down and is determined to punish Erdogan.

## **Israel**

Israel is playing everyone against each other. Its key goal is the removal of Assad and annexation of all the Golan Heights. Despite being the greatest ally of the US, Israel has been supporting IS for years. Wounded IS fighters have been treated in Israeli hospitals. However, Israel has made a formal deal with the Kurds, who are the most effective threat to IS. Israel has also made airstrikes within Syria illegally, even dropping bombs near the Damascus airport. Instead of bombing IS positions, it bombed Syrian positions opposing IS. Israeli jets have been called the 'ISIS air force'.

## **The Kurds**

The Kurds are hated by Turkey, which has been persecuting Kurds within Turkey and also part of Iraq for years. Turkey is terrified that the west will give Kurdistan official recognition and secede from Turkey, so Turkey arms and helps IS to fight against the Kurds. Turkish airstrikes, supposedly against IS, were in fact, dropping bombs on Kurdish positions. Yet the Kurds have been the only effective ground fighting force against IS.

## **Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States**

These have all been supplying IS directly and acting as conduits for the transfer of money and arms. While supposedly being allies of the west they have directly funded and resourced IS for years because they are Sunni, as is IS.

Meanwhile Saudi Arabia is also bombing Yemen illegally and acting to establish an IS stronghold there.

## **Economics**

We must remember that when a country's finances tank, a war is often used as a means to stimulate the economy.

The US dollar is now in terrible trouble and the US economy is on the verge of complete collapse. Janet Yellen at the Federal Reserve has got the nation into a state where increasing interest rates or doing nothing will both bring disaster. The Fed has got itself into an invidious position. All the indicators of economic progress in America are nose-diving; graphs of every single one show plummeting figures. Talk of economic stability or growth is baloney.

There is no doubt that a war would be a good way of covering up the economic mess and massive debt that America is in. But other countries are in a similar state. Britain's debt is now over £1.5 trillion, double what it was five years ago and the deficit is currently increasing. As many of us predicted, austerity measures worsen the economy and cannot fix it; talk of economic success is pure lies. The Euro is also in trouble and the economies of many EU states are also deep in debt. The exposure of the main German bank to debt explosion is many trillions of pounds. None of this is sustainable and a world war would clean out the decks and bring a new order.

## **Conclusion**

This is an enormous and very dangerous mess. On the ground in Syria already we have Syrian troops, Russian troops, American troops, Iranian troops, UK SAS advisors, international jihadi rebels and Kurdish troops. In the air we have Syrian warplanes, Turkish warplanes, Israeli warplanes, UK warplanes, US warplanes, Russian warplanes, and French warplanes.

The very best thing that could happen immediately would be for all the western powers to disengage and remove themselves. Instead we see the preparations for a ground war. The US Congress has passed a bill allowing such a war to be legal (not internationally) and various hawkish Senators, such as John McCain, have been calling for 100,000 troops to be sent in, despite there being no public mandate for this.

It only takes one small event to spark a war between NATO and Russia in this mess, such as a US F-35 taking down a Russian plane (unlikely) or troop positions or convoy. If such a war were declared it could be very possible that Iran and even Iraq would side with Russia.

Then there is the possibility that China would also feel compelled to join in and side with Russia for economic reasons and also due to tensions against the USA in the South China Sea.

If the balloon went up it is very likely that a currency war would also be initiated with the BRICS block versus the US dollar. In such a case it would be the currency with the hard collateral that would win, and this would be Russia and/or China that have thousands of tons of gold while America has comparatively little. The Chinese economy has already become the largest in the world and the Yuan could end up as the world's default currency.

The First World War began with much less military mess and provocation. To be honest, it is amazing that war has not already been declared. Make no mistake, the fact that Putin has just announced the presence of submarines in the area with nuclear capability shows how serious he is about this; he is like a dog with a bone. If war erupts, it will almost certainly be nuclear. What we don't know is how limited nuclear strikes will be; will they be small bunker busters, obliterate villages or destroy whole regions? We don't know.

It amazes me that, in Britain, so few people in the media seem to be aware of all this and political analysts support Cameron's position on airstrikes. The media is also castigating Corbyn for his involvement in the Stop the War campaign. Here we have the only political leader with some common sense that wants us out of Syria and not bombing countries illegally, yet he is lampooned and denounced. What does that tell you?

## **Revelation rather than emotionalism**

There is a troubling phenomenon seen in the western church world. It is that bright young children, that have been brought up in a Christian homes, regularly attending a modern church (usually Charismatic) and exhibiting zeal for God, are going to university and by the end of their course have left the church and abandoned faith in God. We are losing generation after generation of kids. I seem to remember one study that showed 80% of American Christian teenagers doing this.

This ought to be one of the most worrying statistics ever heard; yet rarely is it a subject talked about by UK church leaders and I know of no sensible programme that seeks to deal with it.

As with any problem, the important matter is finding out what the cause of the problem is and fixing that first.

Now this is an entirely subjective, unproved viewpoint but I have a gut feeling that I am right. The real problem is the changes that have occurred in the church world in recent decades, particularly as a result of the impact of the Charismatic movement.

Now we have listed many of the failings of the Charismatic church model in multiple papers, such as: being a Trojan Horse for multiple heresies and aberrations; introducing paganism into the church; developing authoritarian leadership; centring on emotionalism and mysticism and many more.

It is the last mentioned item that I wish to centre upon here.

The great facet of Charismatic church experience is emotionalism based on the stirrings of the flesh. This is what attracts many people to the movement. Ask a hundred Charismatics why they joined a Charismatic church and 95% will tell you it was because of the worship system.

Now young teenagers are particularly affected by emotional Charismatic worship; that is why Charismatic churches have so many young people. Between the ages of ten and 18 it will be the worship, where rock bands dominate the platform providing fleshly entertainment, coupled with the mystical stirrings induced by passivity and adrenaline stimulation, that provide excitement for kids. Added to this the sham of supposed healings and speeches that whip up enthusiasm like a political orator, and kids are enthralled.

Now when such teenagers go to college and university they experience a new kind of stimulation. They get their brains exercised. The point of university education is to train people to think through challenges and learn new things, adapting them for life. Good education should give kids wisdom as well as knowledge. Perhaps being so stimulated for the first time changes the way that these kids think.

Now I know that there are many challenges to faith in college and university – meeting lots of exciting new people and being challenged by their ideas; the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse; fornication; partying and so forth. However, I believe that the greatest impact is that these kids use their brains to a greater degree than ever before. The level of numbers of older teenagers that fall away outside of college and university is not as great, yet these have the same exposure to parties, sex, alcohol and drugs.

The excitement and stimulation of learning is a powerful thing to develop character.

What I am saying is that the church has lost its way by centring on emotionalism and mysticism, which in the end is not satisfying because it is superficial. In addition many of the fruits of emotional worship (e.g. claimed healings) are proved to be fake over time.

However, this is not what the church was called to be. In fact it is nowhere stated in the NT that the reason church gathers together is to worship; never. However, it is affirmed over and over again that the purpose of gathering (after centring on the Lord's Supper) is edification and learning doctrine – gaining understanding, knowing God, being wise in salvation.

[I] do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Col 1:9-10

Now I am not going to do a long study on this but will only mention a few verses that make the point.

**Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rm 12:2**

After giving a long exposition of what salvation is, in Romans Paul begins his final section on practical matters by telling us to consecrate our bodies to God and renew our minds, with a view to knowing what God's will is. The key thing for Paul is the mind.

**The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know. Eph 1:18**

Paul says that his great prayer for saints is that they may 'know'. Saints need revelation and understanding not enthusiasm and excitement.

**Be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Eph 4:23**

**[You] have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge. Col 3:10**

In explaining the basis of practical sanctification Paul reveals the importance of knowledge and renewing the mind.

**Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge. 2 Pt 1:5**

Second only after righteousness is that saints must add knowledge to their experience. It is a command that must be obeyed.

I will avoid the temptation to list further verses; there are very many indeed.

The key issue in developing in the Christian life is being edified, and this means growing in knowledge of the things of God so that you understand God's will and who he is. Saints who grow in knowledge are those who persevere and survive. Supposed Christians that do not bother with growing in learning the things of God do not survive. The church is supposed to be the place where we learn together the things of God.

The basis of faith is knowledge – knowing God's word. There is no faith without the word. Faith cannot develop if there is no renewing of the mind. This is why Satan is so centred upon stopping saints developing in knowledge. Mysticism and emotionalism are but two means of distracting saints from what is important.

Teenagers that have grown up in a Charismatic setting that was based upon mystical worship and superficial emotionalism fall away when they begin to get their mind properly stimulated and grow in wisdom. Sadly this is worldly wisdom and they react against their church experience.

Being more discerning, they also see all the problems with their church experience that is hidden when you are immersed in the culture but exposed when you are away from it. Thus they see the oppressive authoritarian leadership control; the cult-like status of the organisation; the superficiality of worship; the lack of true spiritual experience instead fellowship is based on social stimulation, and so forth. Seeing the house of cards, there is no grounding for their faith and they apostatise. It is tragic.

Now I lay the blame for this entirely at the feet of church leaders who will one day have to give an account of why they did this to God on the Last Day. There are many sins committed by leaders who have destroyed the local churches with their man-made, pagan and worldly ideas, but failing to care for the proper spiritual development of children is one of the greatest.

Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Matt 18:6

## The Paris attacks

We have seen it all before. Stage a false flag atrocity (e.g. the Twin Towers destruction), induce panic and fear into the population and then use this to bring in despotic legislation to curb civil rights that would never otherwise have been accepted.

There is no doubt that France has brought in very radical martial law statutes that have seriously curtailed the freedom of French citizens. Guess what? The first enactment of these new emergency measures was to block the websites of alternative news outlets that were critical of the government.<sup>3</sup>

Now I cannot definitively prove that these attacks were a false flag, but one never can; however, I want to draw to your attention some observable problems with the media and government narrative.

### The miracle passports

In 9/11 we had a miracle passport<sup>4</sup> that survived intact despite being supposedly in an exploding plane immersed in a burning building where steel columns melted to rubble. In Paris we have two passports found intact that were on the bodies of suicide radicals at the Stade de France event. One passport was Syrian the other was Egyptian. Their bodies blew up to smithereens but their passports survived intact so that they could be read and immediately found by agents.

Then we have to ask, 'Why would a suicide terrorist take his passport with him?'; making sure that his identity would become known would be the height of stupidity. This would ensure that his family and friends were rounded up and interrogated or worse. No sane terrorist would do this and an insane terrorist wouldn't bother.

### Crisis actors

In other USA false flags we have observed the phenomena of 'crisis actors'; staged 'witnesses' planted to tell a story to the conveniently sited media. On some films you can even see the secret service agent handlers in black suits close by directing the witness.

In the case of the Paris attacks there seems to be evidence of a professional 'crisis actor' whose image has been observed in the Sandy Hook event, the Boston Bombing and now the Paris attacks. Either she is a very unfortunate person who accidentally travels to crisis events at the right time or she was parachuted in to do her performance.

### Lack of evidence of bomb damage

Then the news reports of a café that had supposedly been bombed showed no signs whatsoever of bomb damage.<sup>5</sup> A couple of chairs were knocked over but there was no damage to ceilings, no destruction of walls or even windows, no smashing of tables and chairs and there were even cups still on their saucers. If you compare such a scene with real bombings occurring in the Middle East (that are rarely shown in the west), there is

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<sup>3</sup> For details on all this see my paper, 'Who created ISIS?'

<sup>4</sup> Of Satam al Suqami, conveniently found by an FBI agent.

<sup>5</sup> RT News; YouTube, 'France: Forensic experts inspect suicide bomber in an attacked café in Paris', 14 November 2015.



complete carnage and restaurants are smashed to pieces with gaping holes in the roof and all windows broken.

News films showed no one walking aimlessly in shock. No one in pain from wounds, such as burns or gunshots. No bomb-blast injured.

### **No blood on the streets**

Then we have the pictures of bodies or body markers in the streets. However, there was no blood on the roads or pavements to be seen at all. How can people be blown up or shot multiple times and there be no blood on the street? If you have ever seen even a minor accident on the roads that involve penetrative body trauma, there is always a large blood pool. Even road accidents that just cause nosebleeds leave large blood pools. Perhaps one or two shot people may leave little blood on the street, but all of them leaving no blood signs?

### **Miracle phone**

Then we have one witness who says that he was next to an explosion at the Stade de France but survived intact because the shrapnel hit his Smartphone.<sup>6</sup> He displays it to the camera; it just has a small dent in the back and side and a smashed screen. He displays his T-shirt under a top shirt. The T-shirt has some reddish purple colour on it supposed to be blood (it doesn't look like blood) but there is no tear in his T-shirt or top shirt. How was his skin cut? After showing that his chest was protected by the phone, he later says that the phone stopped his head from being '*blown to bits*'. Clearly he had not properly remembered his script.

Apart from anything else, is it possible that a piece of plastic a few millimetres thick could stop shrapnel from a nearby explosion?

Furthermore, this actor, in his explanation to camera, bluntly states that the media were there at the time to witness it. He says, '*That's when you guys saw me. You were already there*'. How is that possible? How did a news camera crew<sup>7</sup> just happen to be at the exact event spot at the right time?

### **Government emergency exercise at the same time**

As in many other false flag attacks there just happened, by complete chance, to be an emergency military drill going on at the same time. As a result the emergency services could be on hand immediately. The SAMU of Paris was organised for a multi-site attack exercise so that police, fire-fighters and EMS were mobilised and ready to confront the event.

### **Prior warnings**

There is growing evidence, from a variety of sources, that many people in France knew this attack was coming that day. There are examples of this on twitter that mention it days before. These appear to be pre-planned media releases that were accidentally sent out early. Unless these are clever fabrications, one from PZFeed Ebooks reads: '*BREAKING: Death toll from Paris terror attack rises to at least 120 with 270 others injured*'. This was sent on 11 November 2015.

Patrick Pelloux, of Charlie Hebdo, revealed on a radio broadcast that Paris hospitals and emergency services had been warned of an impending attack on that very morning by the

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<sup>6</sup> See CNN report, 'Attack survivor: Cell phone saved me', 12.33 am, 14 November 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Itele / Reuters.

authorities and told to prepare. He directly accused the government of staging a false flag event.

### **Confusing films**

There are many odd news videos. One shows a line of police confronting some premises. Behind this line is a single policeman firing a handgun directly into the line of policemen in front. You can see smoke form the cordite. However, it appears that he must be shooting blanks. Other films show very unprofessional and almost comedic actions of SWAT teams.

Other films show supposedly injured people being dragged in a rough and ready way that suggests the bodies are dummies. One 'victim' has legs crossed.

News anchors in America gave incredible accounts. One major presenter (Geraldo Rivera) explained how his daughter was present. He first says that she was at the concert hall and then says that she was at the football stadium!

### **Testimony**

Political author Gearoid O'Colman appeared on Russia Today International<sup>8</sup> explaining that the attacks were a propaganda exercise to make people scared of Muslims and to create antagonism with them. He avers that the attacks were terrorist proxy groups of the global elite, funded and trained by the US and allies. He then accurately predicted that there would be a clamp down on dissidents and critical websites.

### **Conclusion**

Now I do not have enough hard evidence to make any certain assertions. I was not there and I can't trust news reports. Then I can't trust all the anti-government ranting accusers either. I can't say if the claimed injured and dead are fake or not. I cannot determine exactly who perpetrated these attacks.

However, what I can say is that there are numerous questions that are not being answered about the attacks and multiple contradictions. I can also say that they were extremely convenient for the French government in order to bring in a raft of draconian new laws clamping down on civil liberties.

## **The attempted destruction of the Christian church**

Since Satan hates God he also hates the sons of God present in the church, the body of Christ. Throughout history he has initiated programmes to try to eradicate the church through violent means. The ten Roman persecutions come to mind, but also other persecutions throughout church history.

These initiatives did not work. Indeed, the church always got stronger through persecution and, amazingly, became a greater witness so that more people were converted as a result. There were many cases in the British persecution under Bloody Mary where burning men preached the Gospel and witnesses in the crowds were saved as a result. One burning man could lead to dozens of conversions.

Even with the tools and technology of the modern world to kill greater numbers easily, persecution of the church was never successful. Possibly the worst modern attempt at this was the planned destruction of Russian Orthodox Christians by Jewish financed and led

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<sup>8</sup> RT, 'Political author Gearoid O'Colman discusses the Paris attacks with RT International', 14 November 2015.

Soviet agents in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Millions of people were killed; tens of thousands of church leaders were tortured and killed; thousands of church buildings were destroyed. Yet the church did not vanish and is now stronger than ever with the Russian President being a devout Russian Orthodox believer.

After centuries of using violence Satan has been far more successful at damaging the church through subtler means.

Since the post evangelical revival satanic plans to ruin the church through liberalism, modernism, scientism and atheism did not work between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and 1960,<sup>9</sup> Satan tried new techniques (or old techniques dressed up in new forms). This was to attack the church from within through various methods based upon a single entity, a Trojan Horse, if you like. This was the Charismatic Movement, which became the host for a plurality of damaging influences. Heresy after heresy, aberration after aberration suddenly was able to find roots within the institutional churches.<sup>10</sup>

For example: the appalling heresies and utter pagan nonsense of the Latter Rain Movement was outlawed as unorthodox even by the Assemblies of God Pentecostal churches in the late 1940s. This was at a time when the Pentecostals themselves were considered as heretics by UK evangelicals. Today the errors of Latter Rain are front and centre of many Charismatic churches; some of the errors are now considered as general orthodoxy by many churches (such as the need for Christians to be delivered of evil spirits).

I will just list a few of the errors that the Charismatic Movement introduced into the churches:

- The doctrine of a second blessing baptism of the Holy Spirit as a mystical experience.
- Apostles that act like authoritarian archbishops.
- Tongues of gibberish as a supposed gift of the Spirit.
- Automatic healing to be expected by Christians with enough faith.
- The idea that God wants Christians to be prosperous, wealthy and well all the time.
- The concept of large churches in big buildings.
- The word of knowledge as prescience instead of teaching.
- The introduction of multiple forms of pagan mysticism.
- Inducing passivity to inculcate a mystical experience.
- The demonisation of believers.
- The acceptability of being 'slain in the Spirit'.
- Praying for the healing and blessing of unbelievers.

We could go on for page after page but this is enough.

As well as outright doctrinal errors, lies, and practical aberrations, what the Charismatic Movement did was to make the church more and more like the world. This meant that the

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<sup>9</sup> After the early 20<sup>th</sup> century attempts to kill the church with liberal theology and modernism, the church actually grew and got stronger in some countries.

<sup>10</sup> By 'institutional churches' I mean those which are observable to the world though dedicated buildings and a public presence. They have a known leadership, a leadership hierarchy, a clergy-laity split, a public meeting and formalised conventional meetings. These are opposed to small churches that meet in homes led by a small team of elders leading meetings that have no set pattern, except to break bread.

ethics and social expectations of church members became more and more worldly. In spiritual terms it allowed pagan ideas to infiltrate into the minds of folk.

For example: the idea of being slain in the Spirit for blessing is a pagan innovation that has been present in Hinduism and witchcraft for thousands of years and has no place in the Bible. Centring on money, which is very prevalent in Charismatic churches that have expensive overheads and leadership, leads members to become more fixated on getting money than giving it away. The affluent lifestyle of church leaders influences members to seek a similar affluence. The use of worldly forms of entertainment in worship (rock bands, ambient lighting, professional presentation etc.) inculcates worldliness and idolatry. The continual use of worldly methods to achieve goals (e.g marketing, advertising, business organisation and methods, big promotions and celebrations etc.) made worldliness more attractive and normal. As a result, the Charismatic Movement led people to become more and more worldly as well as being in doctrinal error.

In summary what the Charismatic movement did was to:

- Introduce many doctrinal heresies and dubious teachings.
- Introduce many aberrant practices in meetings.
- Introduce an unbiblical leadership system.
- Inspire completely unattainable aspirations (such as continual healing or wealth).
- Develop a thorough worldliness.

Now since 1960 when the Charismatic Movement took hold and began to spread the errors of Pentecostalism into evangelical churches, we have seen a gradual worsening of errors over the years. Things that moderate Charismatics of the early 1970s would have considered as abhorrent have become mainstream axioms today.

Over the period of the Charismatic revival taking over all in its path we have seen a corresponding decline of many facets of church life. Giving to missionary societies plunged. Social welfare projects nose-dived. Smaller churches were either absorbed by a large Charismatic church or disappeared. Christian bookshops vanished, unable to compete with the large bookstalls within big Charismatic churches.<sup>11</sup> Charismatic songs, with their superficiality and errors, dominated church hymnbook collections. Christian ethical influence in society has declined to rock bottom. Social mores have become utterly non-Christian and laws have been passed to make Biblical sins legal.

Significantly, after an initial surge in church membership at the beginning of the Charismatic revival, since the late 1980s there has been a continual decline in church numbers. In fact, we have seen two decades where paganism is the official fastest growing religion. Many churches died as a result of large numbers of members joining the local big Charismatic church. Over time entire denominations diminished to the extent that they are expected to become extinct within 20 years. But now we have the factor that Charismatic churches themselves are bleeding members as more mature folk see through the nonsense and leave. Census statistics have shown that, at times, Britain has been losing 2,000 church members every week. In this paper we have already discussed the loss of huge numbers of university graduates.

At the same as this rot ruined many churches, many local churches of various denominations that had tried to keep up a valiant testimony also began to disappear.

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<sup>11</sup> At one point Brighton had four Christian bookshops. After the largest Charismatic church in the UK in Brighton started its bookstall, all four of the bookshops closed.

Some churches formed alliances to survive but ended up becoming unorthodox and spiritually dead. Most Congregationalists joined with the liberalised Reformed Church to form the Unified Reformed Church; within a few decades this became almost completely unorthodox and sterile. Independent churches joined various alliances, which helped them succumb to Charismatic ideas, become infected with ecumenism and become more unbiblical.

Most Baptist Union churches had already succumbed to liberalism but the Strict Baptist churches and Particular Baptist Churches that stood apart diminished to the point of a few old ladies keeping the movement going (in the main). Reformed Baptist churches and Reformed Presbyterian churches that had stood for two centuries vanished completely, with old Baptist chapels becoming homes for the rich. Within walking distance of my house are at least two former Baptist chapels that are now posh homes; one has a Masarati parked in its drive. Brethren Gospel halls went the same way so that it is now almost impossible to find an active Brethren congregation anywhere. In the 1970s there were several active Brethren Gospel halls in my county; I now know of none at all.

Everywhere you can see Methodist, Salvationist churches, and other larger church buildings that have closed down. A large Methodist church on Brighton's London Road is now a theatre. The famous Lanes Elim church in the centre of Brighton closed forty years ago but moved to a smaller new building further north. That church closed about 15 years ago, showing that even Pentecostal churches are suffering. There may be a growth of Black Pentecostal churches in London fuelled by immigration, but this is not representative of the whole country, which is in decline

We now have the situation where a House of Lords Peer of the Realm has stated that Britain is no longer a Christian nation (not that it ever was in reality).

What we are seeing, all in all, is the destruction of the British church as an objective, public reality. If the current situation continues there will be no genuine Christian testimony visible to the public. But this is a good thing!

The church was never meant to be a public facility. It was to be a gathering place for local believers to meet and do each other good away from the world. The church is a mystery to the world and should not strive to be like the world.

If the real people of the Lord drift from established, institutional churches as they become more corrupt, then we have a good opportunity to build new, Biblical house churches and start to properly edify one another as God intended. Furthermore, if violent church persecution arises again, as the book of Revelation certainly implies, then churches that are hidden away from the world that meet in house after house will be the best way forward.

Some of the brightest periods of church history were when the church was in hiding and suffering persecution. To prepare for this eventuality today, we need to finally ditch the established, public concept of churches in a dedicated building and return to the apostolic precedent of meeting together in homes. At least the structure will be Biblical.

## **Theodicy revisited: suffering versus sovereignty**

Theodicy, in the simplest terms, is the doctrine of the vindication of divine providence in view of the existence of evil. The origin of the word is late 18<sup>th</sup> century, from the French

Théodicée, the title of a work by Leibniz, originating from the Greek *theos* ‘god’ plus *dikē* ‘justice’.

I mentioned this in a paper that exposed the fallacy of Stephen Fry’s vehement and misguided attack on God, itself based upon a similar attack by David Attenborough. The fact that these two beloved and popular TV personalities are using human and animal suffering to denounce the idea of God today is very telling regarding where British society is heading. This view would not have been entertained on mainstream media until recent years. Now the door has been opened, the Theodicy problem is ramping up in the media.

I have just been listening to a radio interview between Jeremy Vine and a female author on this topic where a large audience would be affected by the discussion.<sup>12</sup> The lady in question explained her personal experience as a former evangelical Christian. She went through significant emotional suffering in caring for her extremely sick husband who became more and more incapacitated until he could not even speak. He was slowly dying over a long period of time. She explained how her needs and stress needed comfort and she found this in the arms of a lover, with whom she became intimate over a period of time. She was thus committing adultery while her husband died.

Now with these bare facts it seems obvious that this is wrong. However, the interview and the story was told in such terms that the audience would sympathise entirely with the woman and her behaviour was even set out almost as an example for others to follow in order to have some sort of comfort in similar situations. Her book explains this journey away from faith as a result of pain.

The suffering of her husband, plus the counsel of Christian friends not to commit adultery, led her to abandon her faith, stop attending church and even to deny the normal understanding of a personal God, whom she now terms ‘the divine’ as a sort of heavenly presence of some amorphous kind. She even described a moment when she felt the presence of Jesus during her affair, which was non-condemning and sympathetic.

While the world would be full of sympathy for this woman and hail her as a model of caring and sensibility, the Bible condemns such behaviour out-of-hand; but this is not the purpose of this essay. Here I want to examine the problem of suffering and our reaction to it.

The way the world reacts to suffering, of any sort, is to try to ameliorate the pain. The focus is entirely upon the sufferer and suffering is viewed as an enemy to be vanquished. Problems are thus encountered when there is long-term suffering that cannot be overcome, whether physical, mental or emotional. Some sort of palliative care and methods to deaden the pain are sought and this becomes a losing battle against a formidable enemy. Thus suffering can completely topple a person whose only answer is to vanquish it or be vanquished.

Now when supposed Christians adopt this mentality they have a problem. If the suffering is an enemy to be fought, and if God is in control of our circumstances, then we end up fighting against God. Asserting the sovereignty of God over all things, including human suffering, means (for them) that God is cruel and to be shunned. This woman is not alone; I have seen many former ‘Christian’ church people fall away as a result of suffering (either of themselves or of loved ones).

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<sup>12</sup> BBC Radio Two, 10 December 2015.

The worldly response to suffering today is really the result of the idea, a fairly modern idea, that life should be wonderful, pain-free, and happy. Indeed, everywhere the world screams at you that you have a right to self-fulfilment and personal happiness, achieving all your dreams. Of course, life isn't really like that. In the history of the world there are few that lived such a life. Neither does money buy you this sort of existence, as the suicide of many rich people demonstrates.

What should be the Christian response to suffering?

### **Suffering is normal in life**

The first point is that life involves all sorts of suffering and no one escapes it. Some have more suffering than others and some have intense periods of suffering, but everybody suffers.

It has never been a sustainable goal that everybody can be always happy, fulfilled, satisfied, and free of suffering based upon worldly foundations. But even Christians are not promised earthly happiness without problems and suffering. They are given the ability to be content in all things, to have hope through all trials and have divine comfort during suffering; but they cannot escape tribulations (Acts 14:22).

The promise promulgated by the world today, through the media, movies, seminars, books etc. that self-fulfilment, success, complete happiness and satisfaction can be found through this or that is a lie. Worse, this lie feeds a number of damaging avenues, whether it be false religions, fake psychotherapy, pseudo philosophy, drugs and other items.

The reason for suffering in the world is human sin. Until sin is removed from the world after the Day of Judgment and the new creation, there will always be pain and suffering. Trying to gain happiness without dealing with the fact of sin is futile.

### **Be grateful**

We that live in the modern age should first be grateful for what we have already, rather than demanding perfect happiness and self-esteem.

Up till a hundred years ago it was commonplace for parents to have a dozen children of whom only four or five survived infancy. Imagine burying seven of your children before you were 45! Yet this was common. The main causes of modern longevity are: far better hygiene due to technological advancements and greater knowledge; better availability of safe drinking water; more abundant and varied food; better homes; antibiotics and better medical services (when they work right).<sup>13</sup>

In modern Britain infant mortality is pretty low by historical standards. Furthermore, we eat more than our ancestors, we have longer vacation opportunities,<sup>14</sup> we have cleaner water (this is now deteriorating however), we have better shelters and homes, we have less arduous work; we have means of heating the home that are effective. On top of these life necessities we have all forms of additional extras: washing machines, tumble dryers, cookers, and all sorts of technological equipment. We also have much better national security than previously. At some points in England's history people in the North East,

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<sup>13</sup> In America the third biggest cause of death is due to doctor mistakes because the health care system is based upon money rather than care or prevention. This is due to: doctor mistakes, bad pharmaceutical drugs, wrong diagnosis, hospital-acquired infections and wrong procedures.

<sup>14</sup> Peasants and serfs in the Middle Ages did have many holy days but they worked on Saturday and could never have two weeks off work.

East Anglia, East Midlands, Kent and Sussex could be invaded by foreign attackers at any time.

We should be grateful for what we have.

### **Embrace suffering with trust**

The Christian believes that God is in control of all things, and that includes our personal suffering. We must, therefore, trust in God that he knows what he is doing even when we are mystified. This can be very hard, but it must be done.

After having done all the responsible things possible to get rid of your suffering, if nothing has changed then you must be faithful and submit, just as the Lord himself submitted to God's will in Gethsemane.

It is right to try to alleviate suffering, whether by medical aid or praying for healing during physical suffering; counselling for emotional suffering; practical assistance for social suffering and so on. However, if the problems persist or worsen, having done all that you could, you must resign yourself to God's providence and be patient.

In fact, this attitude of patience in suffering has a Biblical name; it is a fruit of the Spirit to be confident in God and patient in sufferings; it is called 'longsuffering' (Gal 5:22).

'Longsuffering' is the Greek word *makrothumia* meaning: patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs, a state of emotional quietness in the face of unfavourable circumstances and patience under trial.

It is an evidence of the Spirit in a Christian when he suffers long. Now this suffering can be many things: persecution, sickness, rejection, slander and so on. The world's reaction to these is to do everything possible to remove the problem, but the Bible explains that being patient while in the problem is a divine fruit in the personality.

You see, the Bible does not show that our problems are enemies but opportunities.

Throughout Scripture history we see example after example of godly men who suffered. However, their suffering was necessary for them to grow in faith and they persevered. Sometimes their problems were alleviated, but sometimes their problems remained. Jacob never recovered from his hip being put out of joint and must have been in pain the rest of his life. At the end he is seen still leaning on a staff; but he had become a man who could bless kings – meaning that he was accepted as superior to the king. We do not see Jacob complain about being crippled, but we do seem him change after this event from being a devious supplanter to a patient, godly saint with spiritual power.

Many OT saints demonstrate that growth in spiritual power came after suffering in some way rather than some mystical single experience. It would be a valuable exercise to study the lives of OT saints and isolate their crucial suffering experiences and demonstrate what spiritual growth followed.

### **Conclusion**

The worldly response to suffering (worry about it, view it as an enemy and try to get rid of it as quickly as possible) is not the Scriptural view. The fact that the woman mentioned earlier abandoned God as a result of suffering emotional distress means that she was never a Christian in the first place. That distress was a potential means of her growing closer to God and staying faithful to her dying husband.



The world sees suffering purely in physical terms. It is an enemy to be fought at an objective level by any means possible. Christians, however, should see suffering as a divine gift. While first seeking God's providence to remove the cause, if it remains they should seek grace to be longsuffering.

Is this simplistic? No it is very practical.

Let us take physical pain as an extreme example of suffering in life. I know an elderly woman (who lives alone) who has suffered from Trigeminal Neuralgia for twenty years. This is listed in the medical records as the most excruciating pain suffered by man, and there is no cure. Even the drugs used to alleviate the pain do not work properly and morphiates don't touch it at all. On her worst days this woman is unable to speak, eat or sleep. She is in severe pain standing, sitting or lying down. In addition she has other serious ailments typical of her age (including heart disease). Yet this woman, who is a genuine Christian, does not complain and moan. She tries to get on with her life as best she can even though she has no real local help. She prays through her pain daily and does what she can. Yet she has never blamed God, never abandoned her faith; indeed the affliction has strengthened her prayer life. This is an example of longsuffering in an extreme case. It is do-able.

Now it seems to us that some people have experienced a tremendous amount of intense suffering, or have suffered for decades without relief. Yet God has promised us that we will not be tempted more than we can bear.<sup>15</sup>

The word 'tempted' here means: to try, to make a trial of, to test for the purpose of ascertaining quality, to inflict evils upon one in order to prove his character and the steadfastness of his faith, to prove, and also to tempt to sin. The prime meaning here is not just being tempted to sin but being tested and proved by God as a metallurgist proves silver. The testing involves suffering.

So, God's word promises us that we cannot be tested by suffering more than we have grace to be longsuffering. Some testing, especially during times of persecution, seems unbearable, but we must hold true to God's word. If the old lady mentioned earlier could stand 20 years of unbearable face pain and still love God, then I think that many lesser forms of suffering can be tolerated.

The Christian hope is not an earthly experience of happiness and fulfilment, but an eternity of absolute blessing and peace in a new heavenly world. The claims of the advocates of happiness and success now are lies; life on this sinful earth is a vale of tears; but it passes in a moment. Our hope is in the new world where Christ rules and God dwells with man.

**And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Rev 21:4**

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<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor 10:13, 'No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.'