

We Have To Suffer, And We Do It So Well

Suffering is programmed into us. Politicians and religious leaders play on that to get our attention, our vote and our money. This article explains how and why they do it, and why they find it so easy. Find the home site of author Bill Allin at <http://billallin.com>

Man has to suffer. When he has no real afflictions, he invents some.
- Jose Marti, Cuban freedom fighter and hero (1853-1895)

When you read the quotation you might be tempted to think that it was written recently. But Marti, Cuba's greatest national hero, lived well over a century ago. In the sense of this quotation, nothing has changed in humankind since his time.

The observation about life applies both to political/national and to personal lives. The USA and the United Kingdom, for examples, have been involved with wars at least once in each generation for hundreds of years. Were these wars necessary?

For the few hundreds of years leading up to and including Marti's time, the world was indeed a violent place. The evolution from tribal states to centralized governments took a very long time. That is, though centralized governments try to avoid wars in most cases (the US, UK, some African and Asian countries excepted), many got involved with wars until a century ago for the same reasons our ancestors did, control of land and resources. That's tribal.

Politically weak leaders in countries with centralized governments, who want to make names for themselves, stir up rumours that another nation is out to get them, that the people had better prepare for imminent attack or all will be lost. As this kind of politicking appeals to our natural sense of caution, fomenting fear within a population is relatively easy. In some cases, simply making up lies is sufficient to get people behind the leader who will defend them in their "time of great need."

Even in more peaceful times, political parties feel the need to devise the appearance of conflict between parties to get votes and between candidates to help one succeed over another. In most cases, the afflictions (conflict) are more imagined than real, as becomes obvious after an election when a new party in power assumes similar policies that it railed against when it was in opposition.

In our personal lives, some people revel in conflict. In business, for example, succeeding through conflict often gets one person the top job in a company over others who see no valid reason for it. Or who lose the battle.

At the personal level, family doctors see many patients every day who have nothing wrong with them except an overactive imagination and a penchant for hypochondria. Some hand out prescriptions which are nothing more than sugar pills, just to satisfy the imaginary needs of these people to be "cured."

Any phenomenon that can be called a bandwagon effect plays on the same need for an affliction even if one doesn't exist.

Is the planet really warming, inexorably and inevitably, as some say? The Arctic ice cap is melting, to be sure, but the ice cap in the Antarctic is increasing in size. That has always happened in cycles. Some parts of the world are getting hotter--more temperature extremes--while others are having colder temperatures in their winter than have been seen since the Little Ice Age.

Oh, that Little Ice Age. It happened roughly between 1450 and 1850. Since 1850, so our records show, earth has been warming. Reason suggests that it is warming naturally, as we would expect after a minor ice age.

Are we truly in danger of warming our own planet to the point of killing off most of its inhabitants? The hubris of that is astounding, that one species believes it has power of that magnitude. Our weather is governed by the sun more than by any other factor. When we learn to control the sun, we can control weather.

But fear over the effects of climate change is our global affliction of the day. I haven't heard of a single coastal

city or even a low island that had to be abandoned because of rising sea levels.

I have heard of many possible causes for the increase of asthma. One primary cause is surely air pollution. We are polluting our air with about half a million chemicals emitted from smokestacks and about half that number of chemicals enter our waterways. That's the stuff we breathe and drink. Why aren't we riding that hobby horse, since it affects the health of almost everyone on our planet?

The air pollution scare tried and failed a few decades ago. Now scientists seeking government grants are ignoring our terribly polluted air that actually kills thousands of people in large countries every year in favour of scaring us into believing in the potential tragedies of climate change.

Meanwhile, several older climatologists who claim that climate change is natural and cyclical have been virtually silenced by the younger ones. The older ones are beyond needing grants, while the younger ones have great careers in fear mongering ahead of them.

It's hard to know what the real facts are because they get obscured by so many who have financial interests and celebrity in mind for themselves.

As Jose Marti said, we need to suffer. There are lots of people around who are well prepared to help us to do just that.

Bill Allin

Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a guidebook for parents and teachers who want children to have the skills to be able to distinguish between advertising propaganda and fact so they can live healthy and safe lives without fear of emotional bullies.

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