

Pastor Letter March 20, 2020

Has the BIG Explosion Hit Yet ?



OR Just a Smaller One?

This month we have witnessed several unprecedented events:

- 1) The partial collapse of the U.S. Economy*
- 2) The partial collapse of the World Economy*
- 3) The coronavirus Pandemic*

Is this the end of the end or just the beginning of great changes in this world?

Cannot Be a Surprise

All of the attention-getting events that recently have happened cannot be a surprise to brethren worldwide. For years we have admonished ourselves to watch current events as well as examine ourselves spiritually. As we know, things can change in a hurry, but usually not without previous warning.

Mt. Pelée

A solid parallel to the waves of end time events can be related to the public indifference of residents on the French West Indies island of Martinique in 1902. Its capital city, St. Pierre, was considered “the Paris of the Caribbean” and at a population of 30,000 was the largest city in the West Indies. 1400 meters above the city was a towering and active volcano, Mt. Pelée, that occasionally would release small clouds of gas but otherwise was viewed by the public as innocuous and of no potential threat to St. Pierre below.

Then in April, 1902, the volcano began to creak and groan with a series of earth tremors yet the inhabitants remained unmoved. After that a large and poisonous gas cloud came out of the volcano and drifted perilously close to the city but caused no harm. This alarmed a few people.

On May 2, with another earth tremor, a 10-foot tsunami wave was generated in the harbor of St. Pierre that smashed into docked boats and sea walls, creating some havoc. Many fish in the sea were killed from this tsunami/shockwave and suddenly were floating in the harbor. Now more people felt anxiety

Also the nearby river’s water level fluctuated wildly. The river would overflow its banks and a few minutes later be an empty river bed and then suddenly fill up only to suddenly disappear. Most people now were nervous. Authorities endeavored to calm down residents from over reaction to all of these things. Finally a few people wanted to evacuate but local authorities said no.

On May 5 there was a sudden explosion in the volcano and a river of searing hot lava began moving down the mountain to the sea at 70 m.p.h. dangerously close to St. Pierre. The lava destroyed a sugar plantation and pushed into the sea, creating large clouds of steam with boiling sea water in its wake. Additional residents viewed this as a bad omen.

On May 6, people could see blue flames of fire shooting out of the cone of the volcano. The mood and disposition of the volcano by now was a hot topic among the people. Authorities were further reassuring the people that everything was under control.

On May 7, on the nearby island of St. Vincent, a volcanic explosion killed 1500 residents, but authorities in St. Pierre again reassured its citizens that all would be ok. The city’s newspapers echoed these reassurances...but then the inevitable happened:

I wish to quote Julia Rosen in her article Benchmarks: May 8, 1902: [The Deadly Eruption of Mt. Pelée](#)

There’s debate about exactly what happened on May 8 — Ascension Day — but one thing is certain: In the course of a few short minutes, an infernal blast of hot gas and volcanic debris obliterated St. Pierre. Moments later, all but a handful of its nearly 30,000 residents were dead, including the governor, who had come with his family to reassure the population. Most of the victims perished from suffocation and burns that scorched their skin and lungs. (Subsequent analyses based on burnt wood yielded temperature estimates suggesting the gas cloud was between 350 and 400 degrees Celsius.)

One witness, Victor Albert, watched the explosion from his field and described the ensuing events to the French newspaper *La Croix*: “A flash more dazzling than a lightning happened ... At the same time, a cloud that formed on the summit of Montagne [Mount] Pelée literally fell on Saint-Pierre with such rapidity that it was impossible for anyone to escape.”

The explosion leveled the town, hurling massive stone statues several meters from their perches — implying the cloud reached speeds exceeding 100 meters per second — and sparing only some walls oriented parallel to the blast. For days afterward, St. Pierre burned. Ships in the harbor smoldered and sank. When rescuers eventually did enter the ruins, they pulled from a jail cell the most famous survivor of the disaster, Louis-Auguste Cyparis, who later toured with the Barnum and Bailey Circus.

But as the smoke cleared, scientists began to wonder what exactly happened on Mount Pelée. Geologists had only a rudimentary understanding of volcanology at the time, based almost entirely on the historical eruptions of Italy’s Mount Vesuvius, according to the French geologist Jean-Claude Tanguy. In a [1994 paper](#), he argued that this may explain why no one thought to evacuate St. Pierre in the days before the eruption — **the impending calamity was simply beyond comprehension**

In less than a minute, the eruption of Mt. Pelée wiped out the entire city.



A view of the shoreline at St. Pierre after the 1902 eruption, which killed 30,000 people. Credit: Tempest Anderson Photographic Archive at York Museums Trust.

The impact of the coming Great Tribulation parallels the sequence of events that occurred on Martinique in the spring of 1902. Events became increasingly worse, starting with the early warnings on April, 1902, “the beginning of sorrows”.

Like many today who have studied church literature to know what is prophesied to occur in the future (barring a miraculous repentance of the populace), they still cannot fathom this happening because **this is their world, their everything with all of their thoughts and hopes invested in this world only.** To again quote Jean-Claude Tanguy, “The impending calamity was simply beyond comprehension.”

This explains why the vast majority of people remain home when we invite them to Beyond Today public presentations. BUT, as more “tremors” occur in waves *with frequency and intensity*, several will probably decide to seriously re-connect with God; especially from the past WCG. However, time waits for no one. None of us should interpret lulls before each successive wave of problems as a sign that life will continue as it always used to be. That would be like an arriving woman in labor in the ER reaching a quiet lull between the first and second pang of pain deciding that life is normal again and that she should leave the birthing room of the hospital.

To answer the question raised at the opening of this letter, the biggest “explosions” have not yet hit. Exactly when they will, no man knows. What we likely will see are series of smaller “explosions” of negative events followed by occasional spaces of calm with danger ever present and boiling under everyone’s feet.

During these lulls of calm we must ignore the foolish claims of the naïve whom the Bible quotes in II Peter 3:4 as claiming that “all things continue as they were”, implying that we need not make any spiritual course corrections in our lives. But claiming that would be tantamount to spiritual insanity.

This is not the time to be frozen in fear. Some are. Perfect love in God should cast out fear.

We must not spiritually fluctuate like a yo-yo. Our walk with God should not have to hinge on “off again-on again” connections with God. As all of us know, our connection to God should be well established in good times as well as bad times.

With shockwave events such as Wall Street crashes, worldwide epidemics, rumor of war with China or North Korea, divided governments and threats of gun violence we cannot allow all of these things to preoccupy us or distract us away from what is most important – our relationship with God. While all of us know that, we must be reminded of Matthew 7: 21 ... “not everyone who says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that DOES the will of my Father which is in heaven”. I speak to myself on this as well as to anyone else.



It is good to remind ourselves that God soon will raise the quality of life with peace and universal obedience to God. Harmony of man and nature will restructure the future of this earth Acts 3: 19-21)

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DIRECTIVES FROM CINCINNATI HOME OFFICE

Upcoming Dates and Plans

- **March 21, Sabbath:** Webcast from the home office at 2:30 p.m. EDT (we would like all members to tune in this Sabbath, if possible).
- **March 28 and following Sabbaths:** Webcast from the home office at 2:30 p.m. EDT. Local pastors will originate their own webcasts for their congregations (where technology allows), preferably at a time that does not conflict with the home office webcast for members wanting to connect to multiple services.
- **April 7, Passover:** Service at sunset, observed at home. Local pastors will originate their own webcasts (where technology allows). Members can either connect to a local webcast, watch the [video on the Members website](#), or follow [written instructions](#). The Cincinnati

congregation will webcast a Passover service at 8:15 p.m. EDT, but for those living west of Cincinnati, the service may not be appropriate due to the timing of sunset.

- **April 8, Night to Be Much Observed:** Home gatherings.
- **April 9, First Day of Unleavened Bread:** One service webcast from the home office, at 2:30 p.m. EDT. Some local pastors will originate their own webcast (where technology allows).
- **April 15, Last Day of Unleavened Bread:** Two services webcast from the home office, at 9:30 a.m. EDT and 2:30 p.m. EDT. Some local pastors will originate their own webcast for either one or two services (where technology allows).

LOCAL INFORMATION

AT THIS POINT IT IS MY INTENT TO CYBERCAST A SERMON EACH SABBATH (BEGINNING MARCH 28) TO THE MEMBERS OF ALL 4 CONGREGATIONS. DETAILS ON THIS WILL COME LATER

ON A FINAL NOTE, ONE OF THE INMATES WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY VISITED IN THE PAST 5 YEARS WILL BE SET FREE ON APRIL 19 OF THIS YEAR. HE SERVED 8 YEARS FOR A CRIME HE DID NOT COMMIT. I BAPTIZED HIM 3 YEARS AGO AND HE IS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING. IF YOU HAVE ANY SHOES YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE FOR HIM, SIZE 11 ½ - 12, LET ME KNOW. ALSO PANTS, SIZE 34 X 34 AND SHIRTS MEDIUM – LARGE.

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