

Saving Afghanistan by C. Donald Cole

Since retiring, so to speak, I have more time to watch television, which is both good and bad. *I leave it to the current lineup of radio preachers to inveigh against the bad stuff, as I did when preaching regularly.* Here, I refer to two good things that television has brought: first, the news; second, information about medical problems and available treatments. *Television gives the real skinny about chic diseases and medicines especially OTC things.*

The news commands most of the time I allot to television. *Still, it's helpful to know what not to take if pregnant or about to become pregnant, or what to do about high blood pressure and/or liver irregularities.*

The news is more than a listing of people and events; the news includes vast amounts of historical and cultural aspects of life in the country or countries where things are happening. Nearly all I knew about Afghanistan before the current unpleasantness was gleaned from Rudyard Kipling's stories, such as "The Man Who Would Be King." Now, thanks to several news sources I know a bit more. But knowing more does not make our foreign policy in Afghanistan easy to understand.

The question that troubles policymakers in Washington and other capitals of the West is why remain in Afghanistan? Is victory possible, and is it worthwhile? Should we send more troops to Afghanistan? I do not know the answer to those questions, and I struggle with the temptation to say No and do the Russian thing: to quit, and to fold our tents like the Arabs and steal away. Afghanistan will never become Democratic.

Last month, the Daily Herald published a report about opium addiction in Afghanistan.¹ The information is appalling – how that whole villages become addicted to opium, almost from birth. The author writes, "In dozens of mountain hamlets...opium addiction has become so entrenched that whole families -- from toddlers to old men –are addicts. The addiction moves from house to house, infecting entire communities cut off from the rest of the world by glacial streams. From just one family, years ago, at least half the people of Sarab, population 1,850, are now addicts."

Afghanistan produces most of the world's opium, and its neighbors – Iran and Pakistan – buy the crop and produce heroin. There must be a spiritual element to drug addiction in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Middle East. The Greek words translated sorcerer and sorcery in the New Testament are "pharmakos" and "pharmakeia." See how they are used in Galatians 5:20 and Revelation 21:8.

One's inclination is to write them off as a nation with whom we can never have much rapport. One thing is certain: Afghanistan has nothing to offer us – nothing but destructive chemicals and, politically, instability.

That is my opinion, and I am Don Cole for Prime Time America.

¹ Rukmini Callimachi, "Village of Addicts," Daily Herald, August 10, 2009, Section 1:1,5.