

Tales
of Cyprus
HOME TRUTHS

NUMBER

6

CONSTANTINOS EMMANUELLE

Home Truths

NUMBER SIX

Ignorance was bliss.

Before I begin, I'd like to clarify that although I believe that 'knowledge is power' - I sometimes wonder if we are bombarded with too much information. There is no disputing the fact that the 21st century is the most technologically advanced with regards to mass communication and mass media. We have access to more information about the state of the planet than ever before. I have always been alarmed at the rate of change and how electronic toys such as 'smartphones' have made it easier to access all sorts of information. Of course, there is the good, the bad and the ugly when it comes to the Internet - but you can imagine my horror when an eight-year-old boy once tried to show me a video on his phone that showed an actual beheading. Even 20 years ago you could access pornography on a computer with a single click of a button.

Don't get me wrong - I love modern technology. I love knowing about what is happening around the world or relaxing on the sofa and watching the odd documentary. I also love bush walks and reading books. Thanks to modern-day communication technology I know so much more about the sorry state of affairs in nearly every country on Earth. Sadly, I also know that a lot of the information I hear and read about may be fabricated or falsified by the prophets of propaganda. In addition to Radio, TV, DVD, newspapers, books and magazines I can also Google any subject I want and chances are I will be spoiled for choice with answers or solutions to all my questions or problems. If I want, I can download any movie, any photo and any song with such ferocity I could entertain myself around the clock for a hundred

years or more. I can learn about anything and everything.

My parent's generation by comparison, were quite innocent, naive and ignorant when it came to matters of the world. Most Cypriots were unaware of events that took place outside of their village, let alone their island. News of the world did reach the village however, through the recollections of the odd traveler or visitor or perhaps hand written in a letter from abroad. The wireless radio and the newspaper (if you could read) were the only other methods of communication back then. Once again, you had no way of knowing if the information that was being communicated was in fact true. Not much has changed in that respect.

Ignorance is bliss if you don't know what can harm you or if you are blissfully unaware that there are dangers lurking in the big bad world. Today's media onslaught is relentless and ruthless sometimes. Think about all the things that can hurt us or affect humanity today. Here is a small sample of the daily news. The terrorists are coming to kill us. The



war on terror will never end. Jihadists. Mujahedeen - and worst of all, suicide bombers. The ice caps are melting, the world is getting hotter, er, make that colder. Oceans are rising. The ozone layer is decreasing. Bushfires, floods like never before. Oil slicks everywhere. Nuclear reactors are melting. Most foods can give you cancer - perhaps, maybe? The streets are becoming more violent. Crime is on the rise. Make sure you don't get kidnapped, abducted, or raped. There are pedophiles everywhere. Lock up your house. Be alert. Home invasions. Lock your car. Be alert. Car-jackings? Drug lords, drug cartels, crazed-up junkies. The Aids epidemic. Gangs, bikies and don't forget those pesty immigrants who want to steal your job, your house and your country. What about the Global Financial Crisis? Banks that steal your money. Nigerian lotteries. Jobs are scarce. Money is scarce. Everybody is getting divorced or dying of some disease. Bird flu is coming. Or is that swine flu. Maybe it's the black plaque. End of days. Armageddon. Road rage. Traffic chaos. All the young people are losing the plot. Depression is on the rise. Anxiety and stress is killing us. Obesity is on the rise. Must remember to watch out for diabetes, skin cancer,

high cholesterol, high blood pressure, prostate...even dementia. Mental illness is on the rise. Cyber bullying - cyber crime. Did I mention suicide bombers? Phew. I need an aspirin. No wait - what if that gives me cancer.

Okay, I think I've made my point. Now let me time-travel back to Cyprus to 1935. I work, I eat, I sleep and talk to people every day in my sleepy, quiet little village. I'm not alone, lonely or scared. I don't know much about the world around me but that's okay. What I don't know - I don't miss. I just hope and pray I will not get too sick, or fall in a ditch or perhaps get kicked in the head by a mule. That's pretty much it. No real dangers in the village I guess. I sleep like a log. Sometimes I sleep on a log. Do people worry more today? Are we better off knowing about everything? I don't know. I can say this about modern technology. The smart phone may be 'dumbing down the youth' of today. As a teacher I am worried that so many young people appear to be in a trance and can hardly string two words together to communicate face to face. I believe cultures based on oral communication had less inhibitions and social anxieties. Interesting!



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