

The Fire at Notre-Dame in Paris, France on April 15, 2019

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A supporter of Hyung Jin Moon



The fire at Notre-Dame, 15th April, was the most shocking event to happen to France since the French government surrendered to Hitler and the evil, boastful power of Nazi Germany in 1940. General De Gaulle fled to London and raised the flag for Free France, France libre. He was not smiling, but he promised that France would become free again.

This time, as President Emmanuel Macron walked with his prime-minister, Edouard Philippe, towards the frightful conflagration, they were caught on video-film, smirking. The video can be seen on internet. The prime-minister was saying something behind his hand. The president was finding it difficult to suppress his smile. Macron, a while later, took on the role of saviour of France, and said that he would restore Notre Dame in five years. The French minister of the interior, Christophe Castanaer, explained that "Notre-Dame n'est pas une cathédrale, c'est notre commun," "Notre-Dame is not a cathedral, it is our common (asset)."

The first part of Castanaer's comment sounds ridiculous, but it is true. Notre-Dame does not belong to the Catholic Church. It has belonged to the French state since 1905, like other French cathedrals. The French state is officially non-religious. So from the point of view of the French government, Notre-Dame is not a "cathedral," a place of worship; it is just a common asset. The second part of his comment is typical government hypocrisy, claiming that state property belongs to the common people.



It has to be explained that secularism, or *laïcité*, is woven deep into French conceptions of democracy. Ever since Louis XIV, in 1685, revoked the Edict of Nantes, which had given protection to the Huguenots (Protestants), French thinkers found they were denied the opportunity to follow the path of biblical Christianity, and chose instead the way that led to agnosticism and atheism. By the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Louis XIV metaphorically signed the death warrant of his descendant, Louis XVI, who was beheaded during the French Revolution. The English are mocked for having beheaded their king, Charles I, in 1649, after a civil war. The French not only beheaded their king, but also his wife and children, and thousands of aristocrats and members of their families, as well as priests, and tens of thousands of

common people, who chose to reject the atheistic state, were massacred. The French Revolution became the model for the Communist revolutions of the 20th century, which killed countless millions of innocent people.

Thankfully, France steered away from the path of violent revolution, and chose to fight for the cause of freedom in two world wars. She lost colossal numbers of casualties in the First World War. However, the anti-Christian thread still remains in the French body politic. One strand of it is the secret power of freemasonry. The origins of freemasonry lie at the time of the Reformation, hundreds of years ago, when European people were starting to reject the control of the Catholic Church over religion and the power of despotic kings over the state. In Protestant countries, freemasonry allied itself with Protestant kings and the Protestant churches. In Catholic countries, freemasonry became a breeding ground for revolutionaries. For instance, George Washington, a man of prayer, was a freemason. Tolstoy described his fictional hero, Pierre, in *War and Peace*, as being a member of the Scottish Lodge of freemasons in Moscow. On the other hand, Trotsky, Lenin's accomplice in the Bolshevik Revolution, was also a freemason, and contributed the five-pointed star, or freemasons' pentagram, to the symbols of Communism.

Freemasonry in Britain has generally been considered, humorously, as a rather childish pastime, with men going around in aprons and performing rituals in cathedral vaults. It is a secret society, but it exists rather as a gentlemen's club for mutual support and for support of the Protestant monarchy. In France, it is a secret society for the upholding of the non-religious, or atheistic, state. It is useful to be a freemason in France, if you want to get ahead in government. In 2016, Emmanuel Macron is said to have become a freemason, apparently introduced to freemasonry by his mentor, President Hollande. Macron became president of France in 2017.

With regard to the burning of Notre-Dame, there must have been a cause. No fire breaks out without a cause. With our memories full of the terrible destruction of the Twin Towers in New York on September 11 in 2001, we might think that militant Islamists were behind it. It is obvious that Al Qaeda hijacked planes and directed them into the Twin Towers. Conspiracy theories, however, implicate big business interests and even the US government itself as being the culprits, in weakening the structures of the buildings in advance. Such a disaster provoked the allied attack on Iraq, a major producer of crude oil, in 2003. Yet Afghanistan was the base for Al Qaeda, not Iraq. Saddam Hussein's regime was undoubtedly tyrannical, as it affected the people of Iraq, but the allied attack on Iraq was unprovoked, from the point of view of international law.

What would militant Islamists gain by burning down Notre-Dame? Maybe the pleasure of seeing a Christian monument falling. But how would they gain access to the roof, where the fire started? The teams of repair workers would surely be severely screened for security reasons. It was easier to get into a public music-hall like Bataclan, in 2015, or drive a lorry down the street in Nice in 2016. Anyhow, militant Islamists are more interested in killing large numbers of 'infidels' than in demolishing buildings. The recent suicide attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, claimed by ISIS, killed about 360 people, mostly Christians.

Another suggestion is that the Pope or the Catholic Church was behind the burning of Notre-Dame. The building was old and was a tremendous financial liability to keep up. Better be rid of it. Maybe it would inspire renewed interest and fervour in the Catholic religion. However, we have learned that Notre-Dame does not belong to the French Catholic Church, nor to the Pope. It belongs to the French state.

A second video, which I have seen, has been made by someone who is an architect, and who comes from a family of architects. Apparently, a confidential report to the government was made in 2016, on the state of the fabric of Notre-Dame, and the risk of fire was especially pointed out. Nothing was done. About the same time, a builder's model of Notre-Dame, made in the context of planned redevelopment of the cathedral area, was seen not to include the spire. It was the spire that fell first, in the great fire. Just a few days before the fire, statues of the twelve apostles and four evangelists, were taken from their niches, deliberately decapitated, and taken to Périgueux in the south-west of France, for 'restoration.' Pictures were also taken out of Notre-Dame. It was loudly proclaimed that, during the fire, important artefacts were rescued. Already some had been taken out, before the fire ever happened. The stone apostles and evangelists, with their heads at their feet, waiting to be shifted, are shown on the video-film.

For the roof to burn, the beams supporting the roof would have to catch fire. It is assumed that the 800-year old oak beams must have been worm-eaten and rotten. The architect says, to the contrary, that oak beams harden in just thirty years to become like steel. After eight hundred years, they would be just as hard. They would not have been affected by damp, because they would have been well-aired just under the roof. They would not have caught fire easily. The problem would have been to get them to catch fire at all. For that, they would have to be covered with a solution which would have ignited.

A report went out that the beams were growing champignons, 'mushrooms' or fungus. A company was brought in to spray the beams all over with a liquid to combat infestation. That liquid, in itself, would not make the beams catch fire. For that to happen, a substance had to be added. The architect suggested that

something like 'nano-thermite,' an explosive composite used in missile fuel and for demolition work, could have ignited the fire. Nano-thermite causes metal debris, which should be looked for in the ongoing investigation of causes of the fire. The architect noticed the strange colour of the flames coming out of the roof of Notre-Dame, and also saw the sign of an explosion high in the building behind the scaffolding. After the explosion the fire spread rapidly.

What reason would anyone have to burn Notre-Dame? Plans have been afloat for some time to make a large commercial area and supermarket under the extensive parvis, or paved piazza, in front of Notre-Dame. Macron says that Notre-Dame will be restored in five years. It is impossible to rebuild Notre-Dame with anything like its original materials in such a short time. Even the oak beams take many years to season. More likely it will be rebuilt with steel girders, concrete, and acres of glass on the roof. Only the outline will resemble old Notre-Dame, from a distance. Tourists will get an excellent view of Paris from all around the glass roof. It will be Paris' answer to the Millennium Wheel in London

The supermarket or mall under the parvis will satisfy all the material needs of tourists. Jesus expelled the money-changers and merchants from the temple. They will get back in, with a vengeance, in the new Notre-Dame. Religion will be minimal. The France of King Saint Louis and Joan of Arc, which led Europe in the faith during the Middle Ages, will be well and truly forgotten, as the remade Notre Dame becomes infested by modern commercialism and corruption.

Why should the work of restoration only take five years? It happens that the Olympic Games will be held in Paris in 2024. All ambitious heads-of-state take glory in hosting the Olympic Games. What more appropriate than a great old symbolic building, restored in modern materials, and saved by the country's president, to mark the event? The building will, however, be empty of faith and the holy spirit, and France, and the world, will still be sorry.

The two videos, in French language, can be found online on these links:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ID5ptuC65Cs

www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPm70GeTLHg