

Thought for the Day 21st October - John Reed

Read 2 Corinthians 11:1-15

As I'm sure we're all aware, one of Donald Trump's key campaign promises at the last American election was to build a wall on the USA's southern border, to stop undesirables and aliens (that's non-citizens, not Martians) from entering the country from Mexico.

However, one of the biggest problems facing the US is not the *people* that flood into the country from South and Central America, but the *drugs*. For decades now, smugglers have been coming up with ever more inventive ways of smuggling drugs into the country. One of the most ingenious has been "narco-subs," "submarines" which deliver fast quantities of drugs to North America by water. These are not technically actually submarines, they are generally "semi-submersibles" that float mostly but completely below the waterline and are nearly undetectable. They're built out of sight in the South American jungles at a cost of around \$1 million each.

Well, this week it was reported that last year police in Spain caught the first such narco-sub arriving off their coastline, having crossed the Atlantic loaded with roughly three metric tonnes of cocaine, worth some \$141 million.¹ That's a much longer, and more dangerous, journey than from South or Central America to North America. Which goes to show the lengths that the drug producers and dealers are prepared to go to in order to reach a new market and make a profit from their deadly product.

Which made me think on how the devil works to "smuggle" his deadly products into our lives undetected.

There are times in the Bible when he is spoken of as a clear and obvious threat, such as 1 Peter 5:8-9: *"Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith ..."* A roaring lion is hardly subtle or disguised!

But in other places, he is presented as a much more subtle threat. He is "crafty" (Genesis 3:1), he practices dangerous "schemes" (Ephesians 6:11), he is the "the father of lies" (John 8:44). He even disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14), and his servants likewise disguise themselves as "apostles of Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:13) and "servants of righteousness" (2 Corinthians 11:15) in order to deceive us and lead us astray.

The evil one doesn't tend to turn up on your doorstep and introduce himself as the prince of darkness, here to ruin your life. Rather, he goes to great lengths to hide and disguise what he is doing, even passing himself as doing the work of God – all in a massive campaign to corrupt and destabilize us in much dangerous ways than even the worst of the drug trade.

So, as Peter said, be sober-minded and watchful. Just as the Spanish police were on the alert for a submarine arriving from across the Atlantic, be on the alert for the wiles of the devil coming from unexpected directions.

¹ <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/the-wall-street-journal/inside-the-first-narcosubmarine-caught-after-crossing-the-atlantic/news-story/2e1d4263bbc51c44de9efdc2c6eabf0e>