



Je suis...

Have the events of January left you in a different place?

I am conscious of an increased anxiety in our society, even of distrust, especially in the context of occasions such as the recent Holocaust Memorial ceremony I attended.. The risk is that in a refusal to deny or to forget atrocities, that we continue to hold grudges against people who are somehow associated. It is important to be clear

that today's Germans are not responsible for the Holocaust, and the Muslims down our street are not responsible for the attack on Charlie Hebdo.

Living through the earthquake

I asked if you were changed. Two people who I know have been changed are in the picture above. Maisie is a friend of ours, an Australian who has been working in Paris for the last couple of years. Simon is her boyfriend; they have been together for 18 months. Simon worked at Charlie Hebdo; he



was not killed in the attack, but he was shot and I am told he is now paralysed from the armpits down. Both their lives are going through an earthquake; they will never be the same. Amazingly, they seem to be seeing the positives at the moment: "at least he is alive". We are fortunate if we have not been scarred by this sort of event, but it is worth looking for the positives and trying to be changed for the better by it.

Freedom of speech

One of the immediate public responses has been the championing of free speech. Perhaps another time I will be brave enough to talk about my reservations on that, but for now I want to pick up a play on words.

Ambiguity?

I understand that the originator of the slogan "Je suis Charlie" created it as an art work to express his fear and sense of being personally targeted by the attacks. But my school-girl French tells me that 'Je suis' could mean either 'I am' or 'I follow' - with both the same meanings as in English. My question is, whom do you 'follow'? Whose judgements and stance do you promote in society? Who do you identify with publicly? I hope no-one will misunderstand me when I say, "Je suis Jesus".

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