

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Phil 4.8.

3 September this year marked the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. We look back now from the position of victory, but many people do not realise how close Britain was in fact to defeat. Max Hastings' recently published book on Churchill brings this out brilliantly. When the British Expeditionary Force, the cream of the professional army, landed in France in 1939, our troops found themselves encircled, with the German Army proceeding to annihilate them. The position was so serious that it was estimated that a mere 20,000 would be rescued. Almost the entire British Army was about to perish. Britain would be utterly defenceless. There was no human solution to this crisis: the end of the British way of life had come - or so it appeared.

In sheer desperation King George VI called for a National Day of Prayer to be held on 26 May. In a national broadcast he instructed the nation to plead for divine intervention. Together with members of the Cabinet the King attended Westminster Abbey whilst literally millions of people across the British Isles flocked to churches to pray for deliverance. Nothing like this had ever been seen before. People were actually queuing to get into church. What happened next was the most timely deliverance ever to occur in the history of our nation with two great phenomena following this Day of Prayer, and anyone who doubts the power of prayer should take heart from this. The first was a great storm which broke out

over the area on 28 May hindering the assault of the Luftwaffe, and the second was a miraculous calm which settled on the English Channel, the like of which had not occurred for decades. This incredible calm enabled an armada of boats to rescue 335,000 men. The heartfelt prayers of the nation had led to what became known as 'The Miracle of Dunkirk'.

During the war there were so many instances of divine assistance at crucial moments that in October, 1942, Churchill, who was not a particularly religious man commented:

I sometimes have a feeling of interference. I want to stress that. I have a feeling that some Guiding Hand has interfered. I have a feeling that we have a Guardian because we have a great Cause, and we shall have that Guardian so long as we serve that Cause faithfully.

We are at war today. Churchill's words, though written nearly 70 years ago, still challenge us. Are we as a nation shewing ourselves worthy of that deliverance? The British Empire fought for a great Cause - for freedom from terrible tyranny, for deliverance from an exterminating hatred. But what great Cause does the UK stand for today? Greed, immorality, blasphemy and unbelief? Is our society setting an example to the world by our beliefs and moral standards? Churchill said that so long as we have a great Cause, we would have a divine Guardian. Now, students just urinate on the wreaths at a cenotaph. Is this what we have come to?

When Johannes Rau was elected as President of Germany in May, 1999, he was asked what his message would be for his five-year term. He quoted scripture (*Prov 14.34*): 'righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people'. Chancellor Schröder, who had not wanted to swear on

the Bible, was seen to squirm. I wonder which of those two really represented the German people. People in the Muslim world love TV. When we sailed up the Nile, you could see satellite dishes even on the most wretched mud huts. The Cairo skyline is littered with TV aerials, and they all know our British comedies and soaps. So their view of British society is derived from East Enders, Corrie, and Del Boy. So to them, we're all drunk, all on drugs and all our women our slags. No-one ever goes to church. All our men are gay, and our politicians are thieving, lying rascals. Even we might sometimes think that that is the state of British society.

But is it *true*? I have had a pretty varied ministry these past 30 years, from inner-city Bradford, rural NI in the Troubles, and now lovely Harrogate. But in all my travels I keep coming across masses of decent people, who are quietly getting on with their lives, much more sympathetic to the things of Christ than you would imagine, and utterly disgusted at the filth and blasphemy in public life, the dishonesty in our politics. But who speaks up for us? Who represents us, the thousands of the 'little platoons'? We constantly complain about bad language on the TV, and we are swept aside.

As an Army Padre I cannot *force* Junior Soldiers to take a NT, but when I offer them, 95% take one. When I walk down the street with my clerical collar on, I am always treated with respect. When I visit the police at the Convalescent Home, I am always welcomed. Are we really such heathens in GB?

My point is that the media, the politicians and all those who make up our liberal elite (including some of our church

leaders who have been hopelessly compromised) present a quite different view of our nation from the one I meet every day. They are seeing what they would *like* us to be - a hedonistic, materialistic, atheistical people living in a moral-free zone.

The people of GB are badly represented in the media. Countless people are aching for moral and spiritual leadership, and praying for the day when we throw out the degenerates and liars. Countless people would shout Amen to President Rau of Germany when he quoted the OT, 'Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people'.

This is still a great country. We *do* stand for something great. At the AFC we teach the 6 Core Values: CDRILS = Courage, Discipline, Respect for Others, Integrity, Loyalty, Selfless Commitment. All those values are derived from the Bible. Didn't Jesus display them all? When he went to the Cross didn't he shew Selfless Commitment? Jesus said: Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Today we remember those who in two world wars, and today in Iraq and Afghanistan who have laid down their lives for their friends. L/Cpl Matthew Croucher, RM, recently won the GC for throwing himself on a grenade to save his mates. Our values don't just come out of the air. They come from Christ. And Christ *is* the answer. He is our great Cause, and we need to learn again to be proud of him, and to stand up for him as a nation. Whatsoever things are true, honest, just; pure, lovely and of good report, think, Britain, on *these* things. When we find Christ, our great Cause, again, God will be our Guardian and our Guiding Hand, just as Churchill found 70 years ago.