



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

### The blame game!!

Increasingly our news reports are taken up with representatives of various government agencies, media spokesmen and women, armchair 'experts' of every shade and the voices of critics in profusion - all busy pointing fingers in various directions as they seek to apportion blame, where they feel it belongs, in the wake of the startling and frightening extent of the Covid-19 plague becoming known.

Doubtless, mistakes, many mistakes, have been made in the battle against the virus. Very often, petty professional and political jealousies have lain at the heart of the inefficiencies which seem to have marked the responses to Covid-19. An example of this was seen in the media reports of the infighting and jockeying that went on amongst Cabinet ministers as a number sought to take the place of Boris Johnson the Prime Minister, when he fell ill with the virus.

Where such an atmosphere is present mistakes will most definitely ensue.

As I have listened to the 'blame game' being played in News programmes, I must say I have grown somewhat 'heated' and sought to take part in the debate by irately addressing the broadcasters (to no effect)!

What I wanted the 'blame-layers' to do was simply consider a little history!

We have only to go back to the history of the conduct of WWII by our leaders, and there you will find a myriad of mistakes and errors that were very costly indeed.

The old saying is: "To err is human!" This is sadly very true. There is no one who possess perfect wisdom or knowledge or anything like it!

Decisions, even those made with the most unselfish of motives and with the high desire for the good of others, have resulted in great tragedies.

I confess to loving history and I have read quite a bit about the conduct of World War II and its impact upon the British people, especially in the early months.

I think that one incident, if it may be called that, which illustrates what I wish to press home, is that of the employment, utilising and final fate of the British Expeditionary Force, a military wing of the British Army sent to France at the outbreak of the war. It consisted of well over 300,000 men.

However well intentioned was that military tactic, it is a fact of history that it ended in a dreadful defeat.

But it was a defeat that was turned into an event of national honour which lives on in the nation's memory.

I am speaking of course of Dunkirk, that small town in France to which the retreating ranks of the BEF were driven by the much better armed and better led German Wehrmacht.

The British political and military elite had refused to see that Hitler was preparing for war and building a war machine far more powerful than that possessed by either Britain or France.

Consequently, that foolish thinking, though warned against by the likes of Winston Churchill, caused a very under-prepared Britain to go to the aid of France at the beginning of the war with a military force heavily outmatched by Hitler's forces. Sadly, a very heavy price in lives and machinery was paid as a result of that folly.

Thousands of men perished. The bravest of men fought a rearguard action to enable their fellow soldiers to be evacuated off the beaches of Dunkirk. Many of those engaged in the rearguard action ran out of ammunition and were forced to surrender to the German forces. To the eternal shame of the German army, many of those who were thus forced to surrender were taken out and summarily machine-gunned by their captors, in complete contravention of the conventions of warfare!



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

Such is but one of the many stains upon Germany which remains to this day!

It is now celebrated nationally how the political military leadership reacted to the disaster that was taking place on the sands of Dunkirk. Winston Churchill, who had become Prime Minister on May 10th, the very day Germany began the invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, ordered the instigation of 'Operation Dynamo' and the great evacuation of the trapped soldiers began.

In one of the most debated decisions of the war, the Germans halted their advance on Dunkirk. Contrary to popular belief, what became known as the 'Halt Order' did not originate with Adolf Hitler. Colonel-Generals Gerd von Rundstedt and Günther von Kluge suggested that the German forces around the Dunkirk pocket should cease their advance on the port and consolidate to avoid an Allied breakout. Hitler sanctioned the order on 24 May with the support of the High Command of the Wehrmacht. The army was to halt for three days, which gave the Allies sufficient time to organise the Dunkirk evacuation and build a defensive line. While more than 330,000 Allied troops were rescued, British and French military forces nonetheless sustained heavy casualties and were forced to abandon nearly all their equipment. The British Expeditionary Force alone lost some 68,000 soldiers during the French campaign.

As a result of the decision to halt the advance of the German forces, many thousands of men were brought safely to Britain though the cost was high.



By the end of the eighth day of the evacuation, 338,226 had been rescued by a hastily assembled fleet of over 800 vessels. Many troops were able to embark from the harbour area of Dunkirk on to 39 British Royal Navy destroyers, 4 Royal Canadian Navy destroyers, at least 3 French Navy destroyers, and a variety of civilian merchant ships. Others had to wade out from the beaches, waiting for hours in shoulder-deep water. Some were ferried to the larger ships by what became known as the Little Ships of Dunkirk, a flotilla of hundreds of merchant marine boats, fishing boats, pleasure craft, yachts, and life-boats called into service from Britain.

As already stated, the BEF lost 68,000 soldiers during the French campaign and had to abandon nearly all of its tanks, vehicles, and equipment. In his 4 June, 1940, House of Commons'speech, Prime Minister Churchill reminded the country that 'we must be very careful not to assign to this deliverance the attributes of a victory. Wars are not won by evacuations.'

He also said: "We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land, and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be."

I feel that I will have to wait a long time before I hear a British politician use the words: "with all the strength that God can give us." I have no assured view of Winston Churchill's eternal state, but I honour him for saying that and bringing before the British people the need they had of God's strength!

It should be remembered by every Christians that Britain had a good king on the throne at that time. Seeing this situation developing, King George VI requested that Sunday, 26th May, 1940, should be observed as a National Day of Prayer. In a radio broadcast, he called the people of Britain and of the Empire to commit their cause to God. Then, together with members of the Cabinet, the King attended Westminster Abbey, whilst



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

millions of his subjects in all parts of the Commonwealth and Empire flocked to the churches to join in prayer.

There has not been such an acknowledgement of the Lord or of our need for His mercy in today's crisis. Inane, fatuous piffle and nonsense are all that have come forth from the so-called religious leaders of the nation!

It must be stated that what tempered the mood and criticism of the nation at the mistakes that resulted in the shameful deaths and defeat at Dunkirk, was the acute awareness that God in mercy had delivered the nation from the loss of its entire army on the beaches. There was criticism and black despair but, as I say, restrained public reaction was a consciousness of God's providential mercy toward the nation.

The decision by the German army may still be debated by 'military minds' but to millions of ordinary British people back then and indeed ever since, the decision came about as a result of the overruling and merciful providence of a sovereign God! Likewise, the success of the whole 'miracle of Dunkirk' is to be credited to God alone, praise His great name!

It is this spirit which I see to be very much absent in the discussions taking place today in the midst of what may well be called the shambles of our Government's handling of the Covid-19 crisis, and their failure to prepare adequately for it even though, as it has now become evident, they were given ample warning of the approach of this crisis.

No one appears to see the mercy of God in successes that have been experienced, in the recovery of ever so many from the virus and the apparent decline in the advance of the disease. Instead bitter recrimination is heard everywhere.

If there was an awareness of the mercy of God, we would see that despite the manifold failures of men, God in His kindness overrode the dreadful outcome that loomed before the nation and spared us from a very far greater calamity.

The loss of Bible knowledge and the blindness which that brings about have resulted in the nation being caught up in bitter recrimination rather than in humble thanksgiving for God's sparing mercy.

How low has sunk down the nation of Knox, Cranmer, Latimer and their glorious companions, of Whitefield and Wesley, of Cooke and Spurgeon!

I submit that our nation is ailing terribly from that disease which springs from ignorance and rejection of God.

Isaiah portrays well just such a time of sickness.

*"Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah," Isaiah 1:4-9.*

Christian, pray earnestly for your offspring who will be called upon to live amongst even greater degeneracy as the darkness deepens in our land!

What was said of sinful, rebellious Israel must likewise be the experience of all who follow their path of defiance.



## **The Burning Bush - Online article archive**

*"And I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them; and ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them. And I will make the land desolate, because they have committed a trespass, saith the Lord GOD," Ezekiel 15:7-8.*

Christian awake to what is coming upon the land!!

Rev Ivan Foster (Rtd)

29th April 2020.