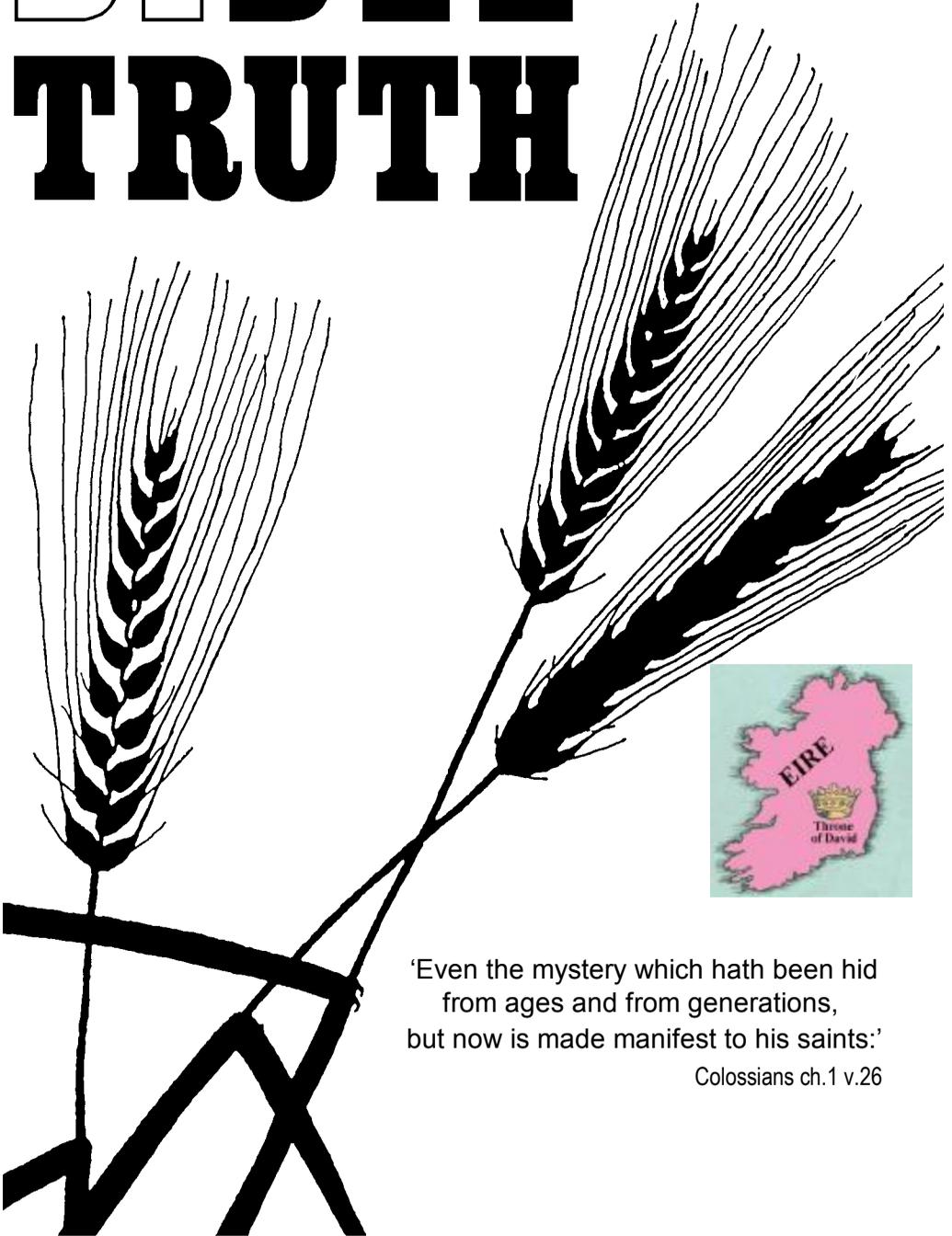


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'Even the mystery which hath been hid
from ages and from generations,
but now is made manifest to his saints:'

Colossians ch.1 v.26

WHY WE SHOULD REMEMBER

by Pastor Jonathan Willans

Recently I conducted the funeral of a lady who had died in her eighties. As a child she had been knocked down by a car and critically injured. Surgeons fought to save her life which hung in the balance and after much effort she recovered.

Although this accident took place long ago the consequences from it, namely that she survived, lasted the rest of her life! The important thing was not 'when the event occurred' but rather 'the consequences' of that event. Happening decades earlier never changed the fact that the outcome of this event meant she lived a long full life. The timing of it was completely irrelevant. You could say that she lived the rest of her days 'on the back' of the efforts of those who struggled to save her. This example reminds us that its the consequence of an event which is the important thing not its timing.

September 3rd 2009 marked the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War and more than ever some argue 'well its so long ago, why remember the past?' Or 'its just for the elderly to think about'. When I hear comments like this I really wonder at how uninformed and naive some people can be. The fact that the events of the Second World War took place 70 years ago is irrelevant, but the real issue is that the consequences of those events being so profound, are still with us today. If the outcome of the war had been different, quite literally you might not be alive to read this and I may never have been born to write it. We should regularly reflect on and remember the enormity of this truth. Present lives need to be set in the context of the past.

Many people also seem to have forgotten just how close we came to defeat and national annihilation. This country was in such a terrible state we were brought to our knees, quite literally.

At first when war was declared nothing much happened, but within a few months France and Belgium fell to the Germans. The only port from which to evacuate the British Army was Dunkirk where they were trapped against the sea. Our troops were encircled and the German Army was proceeding to their annihilation. The position was so serious it was estimated that perhaps only 20,000 men might be rescued. The whole root, core and brains of the British Army was

about to perish. There was no human solution to this crisis; the end of the British way of life had come, or so it appeared.

When it became clear how serious the situation was, King George 6th called for a National Day of Prayer to be held on 26th May. In a national broadcast he instructed the people of the UK 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 join in prayer seeking deliverance. Nothing like it had ever been seen before in our country or indeed in any country with people queuing to get into churches pleading for help.

What happened next was the most miraculous and timely deliverance ever to occur in the history of our nation with two great phenomena following this National Day of Prayer. The first was a great storm which broke out over the area on the 28th May hindering the murderous work of the German airforce, and the second was the great calm which settled on the English Channel the likes of which hadn't been seen for decades. This calm enabled an armada of boats to rescue no less than 335,000 men! Four years later of course, this deliverance further meant that Britain was able to provide a 'launch pad' for the liberation of Europe. If the British Army had been destroyed at Dunkirk the UK would then have been occupied and the liberation of Europe would never have happened.

The violent storm and Channel calm immediately following this Day of Prayer made possible what people began to call 'the miracle of Dunkirk'. Sunday 9th June was appointed as a Day of National Thanksgiving. There had been no human solution to this national crisis; it had been solved by Divine Intervention alone. There were so many other instances of Divine Assistance at crucial moments in the war that in October 1942 Churchill was moved to comment,

'I sometimes have a feeling of interference. I want to stress that. I have a feeling sometimes 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'.

As we go through a series of 70th anniversaries during this time let us remember just how differently it could have been and nearly was. We are living our lives 'on the back' of a series of deliverances and miracles as well as the sacrifices made by countless individuals

in the field of conflict. It is 'no small thing' that we are remembering, and as we do so let us also ask 'are we showing ourselves worthy of such deliverances? Is our nation and society setting an example to the world by our beliefs and moral standards?' Churchill stated that while we stood for a great 'Cause', we would have a 'Guardian'. But what 'Causes' do we stand for today; greed, selfish ambition, immorality and unbelief? Such 'Causes' have no Guardian!

In Psalm 107 v.34 it warns that the LORD shall turn,

'A fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein'.

This is an apt description of the state of our country today. There are no human solutions to the problems our nation faces; only a Divine Solution. God will exalt and bless any nation or any society anywhere which stands for righteous truth, justice and peace, so let us put God back at the heart of our country and once again we will see miracles of deliverance.
