

The Faith that Wins!

Europe is entangled in a war to the death against a relentless enemy out to destroy its precious Christian heritage and bury its liberty. Radical Islam is on the march, manned by tens of millions of immigrants with multiple wives and a massive birthrate. At the same time, most native Europeans have left the Christian faith and fewer and fewer are marrying or having children. The future seems bleak.

What are the known weapons against such a foe? One is the free press which can expose the enemies of liberty. Another is the use of intelligence to rat out terror cells before they act. And when all else fails, there is always the reversion to mass warfare using superior weaponry to kill millions and hopefully break the will of the enemy.

However, these weapons are not sufficient to hold back the tide of Jihad which has been at war with Christianity since the seventh century. There is only one weapon that can defeat the forces of a pagan ideology, whether Nazism, Communism or radical Islam. That weapon is biblical faith. The writer of Hebrews defines this weapon in Hebrews 11. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen." Chapter 11 goes on to detail how this weapon was used by great heroes who by faith, "subdued kingdoms, brought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness became strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Now that is a powerful weapon.

The examples below of three European Christians in the 20th century illustrate the power of the weapon of faith. These men arose at times of great crisis in Europe. Eric Liddell in the 1920s; Winston Churchill in the 1940s; and Christian Fuhrer in the 1980s.

Eric Liddell was an obscure seminary student in Edinburgh, Scotland. But in 1924 Eric rose to fame at the Olympic Games in France. He was considered the

fastest runner in the world. But because of his principled commitment to keep the Sabbath, Eric would not compete in his race, the 100 meters which was held on a Sunday. As an afterthought he was placed in the 200 meter race later that week. He beat the world's best athletes against all odds. He became a national hero in Britain and was offered royal titles and the golden key to success when he returned from France.

But Eric had a larger vision. His faith called him to give his life to the mission field of the forgotten masses of souls in China. So in 1925 he left for China and served there with his father and family, never to return to his homeland. When WWII broke out Eric was warned to leave China as it was being overrun by the Japanese. He sent his family home but felt he must stay with his Chinese friends and was thrown into a prison camp. Winston Churchill and the English offered a huge ransom to get Eric Liddell out of the camp. But as the train arrived to pick him up, he placed a pregnant Chinese woman in his seat. He died of disease in the camp, just 3 months before the end of the war.



Eric Liddell - Olympic hero, Chinese missionary, a martyr of Faith

How does Eric Liddell's story illustrate the power of faith? When Eric died there were fewer than 5 million Christians in China. But the Chinese believers were inspired by Eric's faith and other pioneers of the truth. Eric's faith and sacrifice ignited the torch of faith in millions. Today the number of Christian believers in China is approaching 200,000,000 and China is expected to become the largest Christian nation in the world in our lifetime. The "Back to Jerusalem Movement" in China is training hundreds of thousands of Chinese believers to take the loving gospel of Christ through the Muslim lands of Asia through Pakistan and Iran and on to Jerusalem. "Faith is the victory that overcomes the world." Eric's faith saw beyond the moment all the way to our century.

In the 1940s, another crisis of faith in Europe was solved by a man of faith. Europe was paralyzed with fear of the Nazi juggernaut. They had just come

through WWI which had killed an entire generation of their men. Now they faced Adolf Hitler. Most people in Europe and America were cowering before the Nazi war machine. Millions of the French flocked to the cabarets, drinking their fears away. The English also were living in a dream world of “peace”. Their prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, even signed a “peace in our time” treaty with Hitler just a few months before the Germans started WWII.

It took the Germans only weeks to destroy the French army and trap the English army, 400,000 men, on the coast of Belgium at Dunkirk. During this crisis, with the eminent fall of England and all of Europe at hand, the English called up an old, Christian warrior, Winston Churchill, to be their Prime Minister. Churchill and King George VI called the people of England back to God in a day of repentance and prayer on May 26, 1940. As the leaders and millions of English met and wept in faith that day, God answered their prayers. Through the miracle at Dunkirk 600 little boats ferried 330,000 soldiers back to Britain right under the direct fire of Hitler’s tanks and air force. God had turned the treacherous English Channel into a sea of glass and covered the sea with a blanket of fog, blinding the German planes.

However, within weeks the entire continent fell to the Nazis. England faced a summer of massive bombing attacks by the Germans called the Blitz, in which almost 50,000 people perished. How could a 66 year-old political has-been turn the tide of tyranny against the greatest army in history? Churchill almost single handedly lifted a nation and the entire free world from hopelessness and fear through his example of faith and his powerful words. That first summer when Germany’s eminent invasion of England was looming, Churchill lifted the bar above politics to the real spiritual struggle between paganism and Christianity. He said, “I expect the Battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization.” In another speech before Parliament, Churchill refused to listen to the voices of surrender. He said, “You ask, what our aim is? I can answer in one word, Victory – victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival.”

The premiere weapon that defeated the Axis powers in WWII was not the bomb or America’s manufacturing of war material. It was faith. And, the spark that

ignited that faith was Winston Churchill. He is considered by most historians to be the man of the century. Faith overcomes terror.

In the 1980’s Europe lay divided and on the verge of nuclear holocaust at the hands of the USSR. The Russians had divided Germany with a wall of death since 1960. Into this crisis of civilization stepped an unsung hero. His faith, and that of the East German Christians became the driving force behind the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. His name was Christian Fuhrer, a Lutheran pastor at the Cathedral in Leipzig, East Germany. Christian began the prayer movement in East Germany in 1982. His people gathered to pray for peace and freedom every Monday night at the Cathedral. He and the people were persecuted, beaten and threatened by the Communist government. But the pastor continued and on October 9, 1989, one month before the unexpected fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of East Germany, he led a prayer march through Leipzig and confronted the troops and tanks of the government with a hundred thousand people praying and carrying candles of peace. The government troop refused the order to fire on their fellow citizens and dropped their weapons and joined the rally. Simultaneously that night other East German cities held massive prayer rallies. This show of spiritual courage broke the back of Honacker’s tyranny and led to the fall of the Wall on November 9, exactly one month later.

I privately met with pastor Fuhrer in Leipzig at his Cathedral in 2001. What a man of faith and courage! Last year, on June 30, 2014, just as all Germans were beginning the 25th Anniversary celebration of their freedom, Christian Fuhrer went to be with His Savior. He was the man who by faith had inspired an entire nation to stand against atheistic Communism.

The message here for our time is that enemies against God’s plan of redemption for His world are always on the prowl. But God has His “Ambassadors of Faith.” They see beyond the fear of death brought on by bullies of the evil one. The Nazis failed, the USSR failed and the Muslim extremists will fail to extinguish the light. Now is our time to have faith, to train our children to live by faith and to elect leaders who will trust God to see into the future and as Churchill said, lead us to our “Finest hour.”

-Dr. Marshall Foster