

My wife and I are fascinated by current WW2 period dramas: the social mores, make-do-and-mend, the commonality and criminal activity. Above all, the youthful people who fought it.

Currently, I am thinking of the pilots who flew in the Battle of Britain, the commencement of which has its 75th anniversary this month. There is great debate about whether or not the German invasion would have been successful - or even taken place - in the absence of British air supremacy because the RN had supremacy in territorial waters. Indeed, the RAF had advantage anyway in their radar, Hurricanes, Spitfires and a successful workforce producing them.

But that's not what would have been in the minds of those young people climbing into lonely cockpits. Theirs was the prospect of facing a well practised enemy and also the psychological battle of going up against a "master-race."

They overcame the challenges and won a famous victory. Over 500 of Fighter Command were killed. Yet strangely, their victory saved many thousands of the enemy, too: military historians agree that had the Battle of Britain been lost, the RN would have blown the German invasion force out of the water.

Facing up to an enemy in defence of others, with no assurances of the outcome, is Christ-like enough, more so is the sacrifice that brings salvation to they who would try to destroy you. Don't forget, the young men of 1940 did all this simply because they were called upon to do so. The average age of them? 20.

When the push comes to a shove (and it won't just be war - the issues of climate, justice, wealth and health, too), I think young people now can still be entrusted with our future if called upon to do so (it is the young who win victories). Perhaps then, if our expectations of them were not so infantilising, they might well show us what could be achieved to bring God's Kingdom here on earth. Which is the beginning and the end of the Bible's story.