REFLECTIONS ON THE DEATH OF A MONARCH

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Category: Observations

The last few weeks in the UK have been rather strange. We've said farewell to a long serving and well loved Queen and welcomed a new King. Even the words of our national anthem have changed. The outpouring of grief, affection and respect for Elizabeth was massive and even a republican like me could not fail to be touched by the silent queue of all ages and ethnicities lining up to say their various farewells.

However, social media and certain football crowds made it clear that not everyone viewed the monarch or the monarchy in the same positive light. We must not allow the wave of emotion generated by Elizabeth's death or our pride in the dignity and pomp of her funeral to blind us to the concerns that others have about British history and the way in which these negative aspects are represented by the institution of the monarchy.

Paul Ayonkule a pastor and theologian who ministers in Liverpool has written a very thoughtful piece reflecting on the nature of global mission in the light of Elizabeth's death. It is far from comfortable reading for British Christians, but it is absolutely essential reading. If we are to truly take our place in God's global mission, we need to rethink a lot of our unspoken attitudes and prejudices.

> *In addition, to aid healing and allow the Church in the West to enjoy the gifts of diversity from the African Christians, the Western Church must do more to challenge the anomaly of White superiority and racial discrimination. An honest evaluation is a wise and helpful start-point. The Church must admit its complicity and constantly call out the sin of white supremacy and racism within its institution and society. However, condemning evil is not enough. The Church must also set up a system for quickly identifying and dealing with the ungodly attitude to provide a welcoming atmosphere forÂ the otherÂ who encounters it. Of course, a sustained conversation would be helpful in this regard, where both parties listen to and learn from each other. This way, there will be greater productivity in cross-cultural missions, leading to the revitalisation and growth of the Church in the West.*

> *The implication of the above is that Christianity will become World Christianity indeed. Yes, every race will have the respect, patience, and humility to share and learn about Godâ€™s revelation to each group without prejudice against the otherâ€™s theology. In other words, the often-dismissed contributions of non-Western Christians to the global Church because of their inconsistency with Western modes of theologising will receive attention and validation. The Western Church will remember that â€œwe were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form*

> *one bodyâ€"whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or freeâ€"and we were all given the one Spirit to drinkâ€ (1 Corinthians 12:13). In essence, collaboration for missions and cross-cultural ministry will happen more effortlessly.*

Just a note in closing. You may wonder why I have chosen to refer to the late monarch simply as Elizabeth rather than giving her a fuller title. This isn't my republicanism showing; the last hymn at her funeral closed with the lines "till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder love and praise". Elizabeth is no longer a queen, she has finally taken off the heavy burden of the crown and laid it at the feet of the King of Kings. I rejoice for my sister, who after a lifetime of service has entered into the rest of her Lord.