# THERE WON'T ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND!

*Posted on July 24, 2019 by Eddie*

As Christians, we have a responsibility to pray for our governments and to work for the best for our homelands. However, this should never compromise our first loyalty to the church and to Jesus. We might have the desire to make our land great again, but if this means putting others down, then as Christians we must stand against it. We are Christians first and foremost and our fellow citizens are in every country of the world, not just in the one where we happened to be born.

**Category:** Observations

I know that this might sound strange at this time of political turmoil, but I love England. I hope that my Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish friends won't be offended; I've nothing against their countries and thoroughly enjoy visiting them. However, it is one corner of these obscure islands off the coast of Europe that I call home and that I love dearly.

Please don't take me for a "little Englander". A part of my heart will always be captured by a small village in Ivory Coast. I loved the views and the countryside around Valence, when we lived in France and I reckon that the Isle of Skye may be the most beautiful place in the world. But England is my home - specifically the North - and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else. I realise that the weather can be lousy and there are significant economic and social problems; but this is my bit of the world above all others.

However, this doesn't mean that I believe that England is, in any way, morally or culturally superior to the rest of the world. I expect that people from other countries love their homelands just as much. And while I want the best for my country, I don't believe that it has the right to thrive at the expense of other nations. Yes, I wan't us to win at cricket, rugby and football, but I don't believe that we should "win" at trade if that means other countries lose. I take no pleasure in the way that trade rules are biased towards the UK and other developed nations while discriminating against the poorest in the world.

What has this got to do with world mission?

The thing is, being English is not my primary identity; much more important is the fact that I am a Christian. The Bible pictures conversion to Christ as a radical reshaping of our lives, our relationships and our identities. We often think of it as simply repenting of our sins and being forgiven; it is that, but it is much more. Yes, I am saved from sin, but I am saved into the worldwide community of the church. The dividing wall between Jew and Gentile has been broken down and with it the wall between British and French, Americans and Iranians and Indians and Pakistanis. In Christ we have a new set of relationships which transcend mere nationality. When Paul says that our citizenship is in heaven, the picture is not of an individual clutching a shiny new heavenly passport, but of a whole nation, a community who owe allegiance to Jesus. We have stepped out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light; we have a new king, a new ruler and a new set of priorities. When the early Christians were sent to the arena for confessing that Jesus is Lord, it was not because they had adopted a new religion, but because their confesson was a threat to the political powers of the day.

I haven't stopped being English because I am a Christian - but in the radical transformation that is conversion - I have been incorporated into a bigger and more significant community. My first loyalty is not to the Queen and her government, but to the church and her King. I am a fellow citizen with Christians from around the world, whatever language they speak or passport they carry. They are my people.

As Christians, we have a responsibility to pray for our governments and to work for the best for our

homelands. However, this should never compromise our first loyalty to the church and to Jesus. There will be times when we have to break the law, or to call out our leaders for injustice and wrongdoing. Nor can our love for our homelands be used as an excuse to hate or discriminate against other peoples or countries. We might have the desire to make our land great again, but if this means putting others down, then as Christians we must stand against it. We are Christians first and foremost and our fellow citizens are in every country of the world, not just in the one where we happened to be born.

My citizenship should impact the way I do mission; I should want to see the Kingdom expand across the globe, growing more diverse as it does so, but it also impacts my politics.

*With tongue firmly in cheek, I couldn't resist posting this song.*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4zyfwtDIHE