

What hope for the UK's future? - The United Kingdom voted to leave the EU

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Yesterday morning my Facebook timeline and Twitter feed were inundated with messages of disbelief, despair and disdain. The United Kingdom had voted to leave the European Union with a majority of 52%, and the other 48% who preferred to remain are in bitter shock. It's been fascinating to glance at some of the commentary around the world about this decision, from within the UK, from across Europe and from the rest of the world. There are many fears abounding: fears about the economy; fears about migration; fears about fairness. In the face of these fears, I wish to respond by offering a call for hope.



Fear is a natural feeling; it is neither good nor bad in itself. It serves to protect the individual from what could be a threat to safety and well-being. New and unfamiliar situations, such as the one being entered by the UK and the European Union, may trigger a fearful emotion, but like all emotions it's how one responds to the emotion that matters, not just the feeling itself.

The people of God ought not be afraid because they have God with them. When uncertainty emerges, they choose to be brave because they trust in God and find courage in God's reassurance for the future. If my identity is rooted in my living relationship with my heavenly parent, I fear no evil, because I trust in God's promises. As long as I live in a way befitting of heaven – for the sake of others – I harmonise with the principles of the created universe and find power from an original source.

My concern, from a pastoral perspective, is that 'people of faith' don't trust God enough in our everyday situations, ironically. We talk about belief in God, but we fail to translate this into faith in God. In times of prosperity and times of peril, our faith can be tested as the temptation arises to betray God. Whichever way you imagine the future, this moment now is a test to remain loyal to God.

If I reflect on the three great blessings as a blueprint for God's plan and hope for a united world of peace and prosperity, the decision to leave the European Union could have positive and negative ramifications:



From the perspective of individual freedom and sovereignty, I believe UK citizens are freer outside the European Union. The head of state, Queen Elizabeth II, in turn serves another king, her Lord Jesus Christ. Does the European Union have a place for God in its institution? No; it is proudly secular and godless. The highest authority in the UK is still God, and so the framework exists for every citizen of the UK to be free under the authority of God.

Turning from the first blessing to the second, I'm less optimistic. The European Court of Human Rights recently declared that gay marriage is not a right, and so nations are not obliged to legalise it. The fact that the UK already has done so – despite no popular mandate to do so – is a reflection that the family is in crisis in the UK. Further, half of all 16 year olds do not live with their

biological parents, especially due to separation of divorce. A lot of work needs to be done to uphold and defend God's vision for marriage, sex and family.

Expanding the second blessing from the family to the society, I see a tension across the world between devolution of power and greater assimilation of power. This is reflected within the FFWPU organisational structure: I have observed recently how True Mother is trying to devolve power away from central headquarter institutions and empower the local field members. In February she announced that there will be no international CARP HQ and that each local chapter of CARP should develop independently and work together freely. There's a real possibility Scotland could organise another referendum on independence from the UK, and Northern Ireland may wish to do something similar. If that is the will of the people, so be it.

Reflecting on the third blessing, I feel that the UK leaving the European Union could overall have a positive effect not only on the UK economy but indeed the world economy. In a speech from 1977, True Father said:

The world should inevitably become one, and do so centring on economy, not on politics. Political systems are based on a governing class and a governed class. The world of peace and unification can only be realised when such things disappear, and the world moves to a system of management based on economic relations.

Currently, our political structures – in the EU and in the UK – are similar to the governing/governed model described here. Career politicians are finding that the political culture they are part of is being exposed by the demands of a population with greater access to petitionary power and greater demand for issue accountability. Rather than paying politicians to do the job of deciding our politics, citizens wish to be involved in the decision making. And this, I feel, is one of the great reasons why many UK citizens voted to leave the European Union, to escape from a system that they felt increasingly isolated from. By releasing itself from a single market and forging the creation of a shared market, I feel the UK will be able to more freely trade not only with other European countries but with the rest of the world, in ways that it previously was inhibited from doing so.

Imagine trying to sell a product, but the only way of selling the product was to sell it in Tesco. (Think Walmart in the USA, Carrefour in France, Aldi in Germany, etc.) If Tesco doesn't want to sell it, or has rules about your product, you will have no other option but to conform to those regulations. In a shared market, any person with a product to sell can set up a stall and freely trade with all the other free enterprises available. Products and services from around the world will be free to enter that market and freely trade. These free economic relationships – based on the principle of living for the sake of others – will be how a world of peace will emerge, according to True Father. That is what the Peace Road initiative is all about, raising awareness to promote the International Highway concept and the Bering Strait project. By facilitating free trade between individuals and communities, people will become more free.

If you are afraid, don't be ashamed of your fears; they are natural. But I invite you to be brave and hopeful. God has a plan for our future, and that future is in our hands. I hope that as a result of this referendum, UK citizens, especially Unificationist UK citizens, will become more politically engaged and aim to influence our political future. If we are unhappy with UK immigration policy, for example, let's offer our disgruntlement to God, listen to God's perspective on the issue, and then campaign to improve it. Likewise, all UK policies can eventually be in our hands.

What the UK needs now is bold leadership. Personally, I am disappointed that David Cameron is resigning as Prime Minister. He should be boldly steering the future of this country, rather than abandoning the problem now that challenges are surfacing. This is reflective, I feel, of his overall weak leadership demonstrating that he has been more of a PR man than a leader of people. On the plus side, his stepping aside will hopefully allow a person of integrity and character to emerge who can boldly lead this country with strong leadership into a brighter future. This is my hope and prayer.