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The Queen

By David Robertson

I have been trying to catch up on Australian culture, so this Christmas watched the 2002 Australian film – Crackerjack – a film about bowling which became the no. 1 film that year, grossing some \$8 million plus dollars. It was surprisingly good – and to some degree informative. Not least when at the bowling club AGM, they drank a toast to ‘The Queen.’ That is something I cannot ever recall happening in my old country, Scotland.

I have a confession to make – I am politically more inclined towards republican tendencies than I am towards monarchy. The Lord’s warning to the Israelites about what a king would do (1 Samuel 8) still applies for me! But I love the Queen. She has been my Queen for all of my life, and I cannot imagine the UK without her. In fact, I can, but what I imagine is more of a nightmare than a dream.

It was a tradition in my home, as in many others, that after our Christmas lunch we would all sit down to watch ‘The Queen.’ Her Christmas address is a firm part of the Christmas tradition in many UK and Australian households. We know that her script is written by others – although she has considerable input and that shows most of all in the Christian content she brings to it. But this year it appeared to be different. The BBC report of the speech did not mention Jesus once. I was quite surprised when I read that, as I had not at that point seen the speech. But thankfully it is now on YouTube and so I watched to see what she had actually said.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZbCRN3C_Hs

She started with Jesus being the light of the world. She mentioned the teachings of Christ, the parable of the Good Samaritan, gathering to worship, the star in the sky and Jesus bringing joy to the world. The song at the end was about Jesus the Saviour reigning. Here was a monarch acknowledging a greater King. For the BBC to refuse to acknowledge that was telling – telling of an ignorance, prejudice and hatred which has now become deeply ingrained in much of the BBC. The Queen spoke of the ‘Unknown Warrior’ – the BBC wants us to have an Unknown

Saviour.

What about Australia? Does the Australia portrayed in Crackerjack still exist? In a decreasing number of quarters – probably. I wonder how many Australians drank a toast to ‘the Queen’ on Christmas Day? What about Christian faith in public leaders? In my view Australia is far better off in this regard than the UK – where Alister Campbell’s ‘we don’t do God’ – has become the unspoken rule in politics. In the UK it would be unthinkable to have a Scott Morrison type leader, one who openly acknowledges his evangelical faith. Greg Sheridan’s God is Good For You gives a fascinating account of just how many Australian politicians from different sides of the political divide, profess Christian faith (which is in itself a useful reminder not to fall into the trap of equating Christianity with one particular political position or party).

What about the media? The ABC seems more open than the BBC (although that is not a high bar!), the Australian has writers like Greg Sheridan (his article on Christianity in China this Christmas was superb), and the Sydney Morning Herald can barely hide its contempt, and the contempt of its decreasing readership, for biblical Christianity.

This New Year those of us who are Christians need to be thankful that we live in countries where political leaders like the Queen, the Prime Minister and many others can openly profess their faith. We need to be thankful that we still have freedom of the press and freedom of religion. But we need to be watchful. There are those, who just as the editor of the BBC article tried to take Christ out of the Queens Speech, are trying to take Christ out of any aspect of our public life. For them ‘secular’ means much more than just a separation of church and state – they want God to be taken out of everything and our countries to be governed by their atheistic philosophies.

If you want to know how far down that particular rabbit hole Scotland has gone this true story is a perfect illustration. A friend took an African Children’s choir to sing at the Scottish



Parliament. As they rehearsed one of the officials told them that they should not sing songs about Jesus. They told him they didn't have any other songs and went ahead anyway. How did Scotland move so quickly from being the land of the people of the Book, sending missionaries all over the world to being a country where when the fruits of those missionary labours return, they are told not to sing about Jesus?! Australia, take heed.

As we enter the New Year – let us be vigilant. Especially in prayer. (1 Timothy 2:1).

David Robertson.