

Dear Friends,

Well, what a month it's been, someone said the other day that the only person who hasn't resigned this month is the queen, even Chris Evans has resigned from top gear! It was certainly a surreal feeling waking up in Germany on Friday the 24th June to hear that Great Britain had voted to leave the EU. As the day wore on and I watched the news sink in across the various media I realised that Britain is a very divided country with many people happy and rejoicing others shocked and hurt and others angry and feeling unwanted. As time has gone on it feels as though our future as a untied country has become more uncertain.

To be honest my gut reaction to the result of the referendum is don't panic! Because actually my hope is not in the European Union, it's not in the leader of any particular political party, my hope is not even in our nation. My feet are planted on the rock of Jesus Christ and if I am following him then actually, on one level, it doesn't really matter, what really matters is am I loving my neighbour as myself? That should be what is driving anything and everything we do as individual, churches, communities and as a nation.

Throughout the day on that Friday the words of a hymn we going around and around in my head.

All my hope on God is founded;  
he doth still my trust renew,  
me through change and chance he guideth,  
only good and only true.  
God unknown,  
he alone  
calls my heart to be his own.

Pride of man and earthly glory,  
sword and crown betray his trust;  
what with care and toil he buildeth,  
tower and temple fall to dust.  
But God's power,  
hour by hour,  
is my temple and my tower.

God's great goodness aye endureth,  
deep his wisdom, passing thought:  
splendor, light and life attend him,  
beauty springeth out of naught.

Evermore  
from his store  
newborn worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth the almighty Giver  
bounteous gifts on us bestow;  
his desire our soul delighteth,  
pleasure leads us where we go.  
Love doth stand  
at his hand;  
joy doth wait on his command.

Still from man to God eternal  
sacrifice of praise be done,  
high above all praises praising  
for the gift of Christ, his Son.  
Christ doth call  
one and all:  
ye who follow shall not fall.

Words: Robert Bridges (1844-1930);  
based on the German on Joachim Neander (1650-1680)

The hymn calls us to trust God rather than "mortal pride" or "earthly glory." It reminds us that "sword and crown betray our trust." It calls us to praise the one whose "great goodness e'er endureth" and it promises that "ye who follow shall not fall."

It seemed to me that on that Friday and during the weeks since, God was calling me to focus on God and what God can do.

Paul writes in his letter to the Philippians that "our citizenship is in heaven" (Philippians 3:20) At the time of writing citizens of the Roman Empire were expected to promote the interests of Rome and maintain the dignity of the city. Paul was saying that this should be true of citizens of heaven. We should be promoting the interests of heaven on earth. If we are citizens of heaven, then it seems to me that we should be getting on with the job of loving our neighbour with our eyes firmly fixed on God.

What do you think?

Blessings,

*Rev Jan*