



In the end, Queen Elizabeth II's passing occurred more quickly than the public foresaw. After all, the Queen Mother had lived until 101, and despite the loss of Prince Philip and the modest changes to her schedule, the Queen was on course to reach a century and, perhaps, to outlast her mother. *(Photo: The Queen's Christmas Broadcast, 2018.)*

But great age is frail. Having publicly committed herself at the age of 21 to a life of duty, Queen Elizabeth surely gained much satisfaction from reaching 25,000 days of public service and by reigning seventy years—the longest reign in British history. Grief, though, takes its toll. Beside the loss of her “strength and stay,” there was the stress of Prince Andrew's dubious friendship with the disgraced Jeffrey Epstein, and of Prince Harry's swapping of his royal duties for the shallow glitz of Hollywood's elite.

HOW MOST KNEW THE QUEEN

For all the hordes who caught glimpses of Her Majesty around the world, most got their best sense of the Queen from her Christmas broadcasts. Initially transmitted by radio in 1932, they began to be televised during her reign, in black and white from 1957 and in color from 1967. For a few moments each Christmas Day, the Queen came into our very own living rooms and we got a feel for hers.

Admittedly, as children we found it boring, an imposition on our self-indulgent preoccupation with our brand new Christmas gifts. Evidently, the broadcasts were important to our parents, who recollected that our grandparents had stood in their living room for the national anthem at the close of the broadcasts.

By our teenage years, we had become more aware of the weight of history and of the special place of the British

monarchy on the world stage. Ignorant, though, of constitutional convention, it was perplexing that the Queen said so little at Christmas. A few remembrances from the past year and fleeting sentiments about the birth of Jesus seemed somewhat trite to those of us who grew up with the Christian faith at home and in church. Yet, maturity and a realization of the need of God's grace afforded a greater interest in what the Queen had to say.

WHY MANY MOURN THE QUEEN

The mourning was limited neither to Britons nor to monarchists. The world over, those of high and low estate remember Queen Elizabeth with great respect. But why?

First, in a world of such change and turmoil, Her Majesty was a constant face and feature of life. On stamps, on currency, on the news, there she was. When every fad was coming our way, she was a steadying, abiding presence.

Second, as head of state and out of the political fray, she was one who didn't have to prove her point, finagle the facts, campaign for our votes. Yes, the monarchy and its unrivalled pageantry is costly, but the British have a head of state around whom all can unite. Indeed, how grey the United Kingdom would be without the monarchy.

Third, the monarchy has sustained its lustre amid days of televised scrutiny, in large measure because of the Queen's integrity. She, like the rest of us, had her flaws and missteps, with questions raised about her responses to the Aberfan disaster (1966) and the death of Diana (1997), and her acquiescence in Vatican expectations that Protestant monarchs wear black to visit the Pope. Yet, who can deny that as “Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England” she sought to follow consistently the teaching, call to service, and example of Christ. This set her apart from many world leaders.

Fourth, despite Her Majesty's wealth and status, people related to her, for the Windsors also experienced dysfunction: an embarrassing uncle, a troubled sister, and children with broken marriages. Very different from us, she knew human tragedy beyond the norm: a terrorist atrocity and a car crash fatality. We shall miss her compassion this Christmas, but the memory of Her Majesty remains vivid.



THE QUEEN'S FAITH

Different sectors of society shared interests with Queen Elizabeth. The horse-racing community could count on her passion for horses, while the Christian community, irrespective of denomination, took heart from her gentle counteracting of today's unbelief. Indeed, her talk of Jesus brought to mind the words of John Newton (1725–1807): “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear! It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fear.”

THE CONTEXT OF HER MAJESTY'S FAITH

It is worth recalling, though, that Queen Elizabeth was a monarch and not a theologian. It was her upbringing and position rather than her training which made her Defender of the Faith. As such, she was exposed to different influences within what, sad to say, has become a severely weakened Church of England.

In the history of the Anglican Church great biblical truths have been taught. These are summarized in the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1563/71) and have been proclaimed in and from the Anglican Church by some great saints—from the sixteenth-century reformers of the church to eighteenth-century preachers during revival, and on to twentieth-century expositors of the Bible. The Queen had access to some of them, notably her longstanding honorary chaplain John Stott (1921–2011). Yet, she also gleaned from American evangelist Billy Graham (1918–2018). His son Franklin Graham wrote on her passing: “I'm especially grateful for the Queen's



friendship with my father . . . He cherished their friendship that was built on a shared love for Jesus Christ and belief in God's Word.” (www.pinterest.com)

However, alongside this Bible-based evangelical, “low church” influence, there exists within the Anglican Church “high church” (Anglo-Catholic) and “broad church” (liberal) influences. The latter interests us here, for Her Majesty's Christmas messages have emitted a curious mix of theological orthodoxy and theological liberalism. Such an observation requires substantiation.

THE CONTENT OF HER MAJESTY'S FAITH

Contrary to theological liberalism, Queen Elizabeth held to the reliability of the Bible as the revealed Word of God. She believed that the Jesus depicted therein supplied ample evidence of being the Son of God, and that he alone came to be our Saviour: “Although we are capable of great acts

of kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves—from our recklessness or our greed. God sent into the world a unique person—neither a philosopher nor a general, important though they are, but a Saviour, with the power to forgive” (2011). Yet, it was in regard to the basis of forgiveness that Her Majesty's statements become somewhat hazy. Christ came, she said:

- **To dispel darkness.** Not, fundamentally, by way of the cross (Genesis 3:15; John 12:31-32; I John 3:8), but by calling us to love one another (2015).
- **To teach.** He taught, Queen Elizabeth aired, not of first importance a penitent faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14) but a love of neighbor: “For me, as a Christian, one of the most important of [Christ's] teachings is contained in the parable of the Good Samaritan, when Jesus answers the question, ‘Who is my neighbour?’ It is a timeless story of a victim of a mugging who was ignored by his own countrymen but helped by a foreigner—and a despised foreigner at that. The implication drawn by Jesus is clear. Everyone is our neighbour, no matter what race, creed or colour. The need to look after a fellow human being is far more important than any cultural or religious differences.” (2004)
- **To serve.** Not first and foremost to make atonement for sin but to set an example. On the cross, Christ “showed the supreme example of physical and moral courage” (1981). He was “often in circumstances of great adversity, [but] managed to live an outgoing, unselfish and sacrificial life . . . making it clear that genuine human happiness and satisfaction lie more in giving than receiving; more in serving than in being served” (2008).

How do we explain this haziness—the placement of the proverbial cart (love and good deeds) before the horse (repentance and faith in Christ)? Several theories may help. First, her Christmas broadcasts, focusing on the birth rather than on the crucifixion of Christ, inevitably spoke more of his life than of his atoning death.

Second, she wasn't so much telling the populace how they may become Christians but what Christ meant to her: “For me the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life” (2000).

Third, like many Christians, she struggled to communicate to a secular nation what she knew of the way in which her audience could become Christians.

Whichever theory is closest to the truth, it is vital that we not confuse the way Christians are to live—following the teaching, service, and example of Christ—from the way we become Christian. Salvation is always by God's grace alone!

A LETTER TO HER MAJESTY

Integral to Christian ethics is the endeavor not to say of someone what you would not be prepared to say to them. It was for this reason, and out of a burden for Her Majesty and for her subjects that a letter was sent to her on May 11, 2020 clarifying the good news of Jesus Christ. There follows an extract of the letter (slightly amended). It received a reply from Her Majesty via her Lady-in-Waiting, with assurance that the letter was well received.

Madam,

As your subject, belated congratulations are due you on account of your remarkable achievement in becoming, by the providence of God, the longest-serving monarch in British history. Your subjects take great pride in your representation of our country. We laud your example of dedication to duty, and esteem the wisdom and stability you have exhibited over many decades as head of state, in pleasant and unpleasant circumstances. In particular, the Christian community is heartened by your boldness in affirming publicly your Christian faith. Yours has been a welcome voice amid the unbelief of our day and encourages us to pray for the revival of the church in the United Kingdom and the spiritual enlivening of British society. We also laud Prince Charles for being among the first public figures to speak out on behalf of persecuted Christians in the Middle East. Know then, Your Majesty, that your witness to Jesus Christ does not unnoticed. We praise God for it.

As a minister of the gospel, it is thrilling to have heard you, over many television broadcasts, point your subjects to Jesus Christ. He is indeed the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords (Philippians 2:1-11). Yet, in his own words, from which you often draw, “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45).

Jesus was referring to how he was establishing the good news of salvation. On the one hand, by living in complete obedience to the law of God he attained for us the perfect righteousness we need to be able to stand boldly before God (2 Corinthians 5:21). On the other hand, by going to the death of the cross, Christ voluntarily submitted to the righteous anger of God that was due us (Isaiah 52:13-53:12). In this submission, which had been eternally agreed within the Godhead, our Lord taught us the non-negotiable truth that we are saved from our sins not by our faulty service to God but by Christ’s perfect service to us.

To receive this salvation we rest our full weight on Christ. Only in doing so are we assured that his life has become our perfection before God and his death the atonement for



The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England are chiefly the influence of English church reformer, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556), and were written “for the avoiding of controversies in opinions.”

our sin. The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1563/71) explain all this in three articles:

XI. Of the Justification of Man: We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort . . .

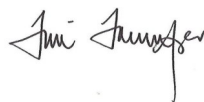
XII. Of Good Works: Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith, and follow after Justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith; insomuch that by them a lively Faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit.

XIII. Of Works before Justification: Works done before the grace of Christ, and the Inspiration of the Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or . . . deserve grace of congruity [harmony with God]; yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

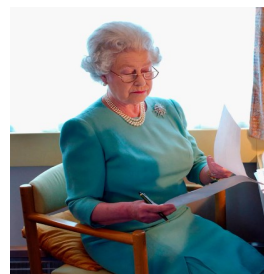
Accordingly, my prayer for Your Majesty, as you look to finish strongly your life and your reign, is that your hope for eternal life lies not in your outstanding service to our nation but in the all-surpassing service of Christ for our salvation. May the endearing inspiration you draw from Christ’s example arise from your prior resting in him and his death for your salvation. As the apostle Paul teaches us, we are saved not by works, but unto them (Ephesians 2:8-10).

To keep this straight, we often pose in our pastoral work the question: “If you were to die today, and God were to say to you, ‘Why should I let you into heaven?’ what would you say?” Speaking personally, my sole hope for heaven is that Christ has both lived and died for me. I pray that this hope is yours, too, and that God would use it to comfort you and Prince Philip in your latter days, strengthening yet further your witness to Jesus Christ throughout the world. (Photo: www.news.com.au).

In all said here, I have the honor to be Your Majesty’s humble and obedient servant.



Rev. Dr Tim J. R. Trumper



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LONG LIVE THE KING!

It will feel strange and yet reassuring for many Britons and citizens of the fourteen lands wherein the British crown remains head of state, to hear King Charles' Christmas broadcast. While he has vowed, as did his mother, to be Defender of the Faith, he reigns over those of all faiths and none. Thus, in a multicultural and multireligious society he wants space for all, that none be persecuted for their beliefs. In itself, this is admirable. Said Sabastian Castellio (1515–63) at the time of the Protestant Reformation: "To kill a man is not to defend a doctrine, it is but to kill a man."

Yet, we seek a way of tolerating without relativizing the good news of Jesus Christ. Did, for instance, Queen Elizabeth accommodate too much in 2011 in describing Jesus simply as a "unique person." Her funeral hearteningly proclaimed Christ to be "the way, the truth, and the life" and yet the rest of Jesus' words were omitted: "No man comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). Given this, may God greatly enable King Charles and the Queen Consort to embrace unashamedly the uniqueness of Jesus Christ *as Saviour and Lord*. Both their salvation and ours depends on this glorious truth.

Whether the Queen's legacy of speaking of Christ gets louder or quieter under Charles, let it wash over us this Christmas that only in God's Son do we have a monarch who will never let us down and a kingdom that shall never wane. To the contrary, the number of Christians on earth has quadrupled over the last century as men and women, the world over, have found in King Jesus a leader who died for our sins and is raised to defeat them. Salvation is obtained, then, not by dedicating ourselves to his teaching, service, and example, but by repenting of our sins to God and trusting wholeheartedly in the service Christ offered us unto his death on the cross. Only in possession of salvation have we the desire and enabling to copy his ethic.

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE KING?

This Advent season you have a wonderful invitation to draw near to King Jesus. Recall, he first came to us that we may come to him. His invitation surpasses, then, anything the best of monarchs can offer. Forlorn unemployed Londoner, Michael Fagan, found this out very well.

He had no invitation to visit the Queen. He just took it on himself to intrude upon her. The first time he tried, June 7 1982, he was simply looking in Buckingham Palace for a place to relieve himself. He quickly left, stole a car, was arrested, and spent three weeks in Brixton Jail. On release, still hurting from his wife's desertion, he went back to the Queen's residence early one morning. Although possessing 775 rooms, 52 royalty and guest bedrooms, 188 staff bedrooms, 92 offices, and 78 bathrooms, Fagan stumbled on the Queen's bedroom. Finding her asleep, he awoke her by opening the curtains, seeking not her help but the opportunity to slit his wrists before her. They talked, but the Queen eventually obtained help, running past Fagan once it arrived.

Jesus, by contrast, never sleeps. His ears are forever open to our cries. He does not call the alarm bell. Rather, he says, "Come unto me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Be assured that Jesus will neither run from you, nor will your approach to him occasion a Scotland Yard investigation. Rather, as Fagan discovered, there is no charge for intruding. Quite the contrary! Those who, in acknowledging their unworthiness, approach Jesus, are gladly received into God's royal household (Ephesians 2:19). Is it not time, then, to go in search of the King?

(Image: www.esquire.com.)



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