

How I will vote in the European Referendum - Should the UK leave the EU

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With a week to go before UK citizens vote in a referendum about leaving or remaining in the European Union, I wanted to share some thoughts about it. But before I do so, I feel it necessary to offer recognition to MP Jo Cox: I'm heartbroken by her murder, but I'm afraid I see no wider meaning in her death. And that is why it hurts all the more.

No public servant should fear for their life, especially one who was so bold in her altruism. It's important to state, however, that I see no broader significance in this crime. Please don't misunderstand my heart, as I sincerely wish to be respectful to Jo Cox and her family, but using her death to make a political point would be an act of disrespect. This tragedy is just that, a painful tragedy, and I see no providential significance in it. Did God mean to attack the remain campaign by killing one of its supporters? Or was God trying to damage the leave campaign by inspiring the murderer to do what he did? The answer to both questions is obviously no. I suggest that those who search for meaning in the timing or significance of this crime may better spend their mental energies simply mourning and grieving this mindless loss. I offer a prayer for the peaceful ascension of Jo Cox and for the comfort of her family, who have been robbed of a daughter, wife and mother. Amen, Aju.



Many years of campaigning are bringing the United Kingdom to a moment of historical importance next Thursday. Even though the campaigning has abruptly been halted out of respect to the senseless death of Jo Cox, the importance of the referendum should not be understated.

I'm writing this blog entry from France, since I'm currently on the Eurostar on the way to a meeting in Paris. It feels appropriate, sharing some thoughts and feelings about the European Union referendum from the land of my Gallic neighbours. While in the waiting area at Ashford International, I bought a coffee from a Polish lady (the lanyard around her neck had a traditional Polish floral design and

POLSKA written on it) and I shared a few words of Polish with her. (I don't speak much at all unfortunately, despite being half-Polish, but my attempted phrases brought a smile to the face of the lady serving me.) I love Europe, and I love the variety of countries, languages and cultures that populate this relatively tiny landmass on the western peninsula of the Eurasian continent. I therefore find the debate surrounding the UK's relationship with the European Union to be a fascinating exploration of not just politics and economics, but of history and identity.

As well as analysing the past, there has been a lot of crystal ball gazing on both sides of the campaign. Whatever predictions have been made, I think it's fair to say that overall nobody has the luxury of knowing exactly how things will develop in the years to come. Some folks might take this uncertainty and assume that the outcome of the referendum will have little effect in the future of the UK and Europe; I disagree. It is my opinion that the decision next week will have consequences of global importance. All those eligible to vote, therefore, should consider their democratic duty very seriously.



Campaigns built on fear and uncertainty about the future are, I feel, shallow and disrespectful to the intelligence of the electorate. Insurance companies make their business preying on the uncertainties that haunt our lives, not always justifiably so. As a person of faith, with hope in God's plan for the future, I'd like to bet on a future that God can bless, a future built on God's principles. So in making a decision about this issue, I must ask myself what is the most principled thing to do.

And so I invite you to approach your decision in this referendum in a prayerful way:

prayerful, because you don't just tell God what the 'right decision' is, but you offer your suggestions and listen to God's response;

prayerful, because you actively seek God's perspective by studying the holy scriptures with a humility that allows you to be transformed by what you read;

prayerful, because you don't just consider "What is the best scenario for me/my family/my nation/my continent?" but you consider the wider world, and how God might be able to bless all people through this decision, even if sacrifice is required.



As the director of a religious charity, I would not feel comfortable suggesting which way you should vote. And for the same reason I'm not going to reveal which way I will vote either. You might feel that I've been misleading, introducing this post as "How I will vote in the European Referendum". OK, maybe on some level I was being cheeky with my words just so that you would read this. But, it's not entirely dishonest, because the way I will vote will be prayerfully:

I made up my mind about this issue quite some time ago based on prayerful preparation. Based on my study of God's word's I offered my decision to God, and that's the way I will vote next week. But I will continue to pray, especially praying for God's will to be done. I hope and pray that the UK

population will vote for the result that God can bless the most, and that subsequently God can indeed bless the result, whichever result it may be.

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