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Royal Family Divides Britain

Prince Harry's dramatic announcement has brought culture wars into the heart of the royal family.

- Richard Palmer
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Harry the duke of Sussex and his wife, Meghan, announced on January 8 that they would be stepping down as senior members of Britain's royal family. Their announcement has sparked a public crisis within the royal family.

Harry's announcement laid out what he wanted to do: Give up the money he receives from taxpayers, step back from his role as a "senior royal," and be free to work for whatever businesses or charities he wants.

The trouble is, the money he offered to give up is estimated to be only around 5 percent of his income. He wanted to keep the income his father gives him from his family's large estates in the United Kingdom. He wanted to keep the free home he lives in on the grounds of Windsor Castle, which taxpayers just spent \$3.2 million renovating.

In other words, he wanted the perks of being royalty, but not the responsibility.

The Queen wasn't willing to let him have any of that. Ten days later, she announced that Harry and Meghan would lose their "His/Her Royal Highness" status. No longer "Prince Harry," he would be known as "Harry, duke of Sussex." He would pay back the \$3.2 million used to renovate his house. He would lose all his military posts, including his position as captain general of the Royal Marines. He would no longer represent the Queen in any official capacity. Prince Charles said he would continue to fund Harry, but only in the short term, perhaps for around a year.

The verdict is clear. He's free to go off and do his own thing and make money if he wants. But he cannot do so as a member of the royal family.

Hurt to the Royal Family

The duke of Sussex's decision is said to have caused great distress to the Queen personally. "It is no secret behind palace gates that she has been left devastated by their bombshell statement," wrote the *Daily Telegraph* (January 18).

The duke made his announcement before ironing out the details with the Queen and Prince Charles. He is said to have defied a direct request from the Queen not to go solo on this. Her husband, the duke of Edinburgh, is said to have been left "deeply hurt" by the "lack of respect" shown by Prince Harry and his wife.

The announcement comes at a hard time for the Queen. Her husband was forced to step back from public duties last year because of ill health. He was taken into the hospital over the Christmas period. As Benedict Spence wrote in the *Daily Telegraph*, the duke's decision to retire from royal life "now, at a time when the family, and the monarch, needed the younger members to put aside personal animus, is in many ways unforgivable."

Many have likened Harry's move to an "abdication" or a royal divorce. And it could have a similar fallout.

While the Queen moved quickly to settle the biggest issues, much remains undecided. Who will pay for Prince Harry's security, for example, now that he's living overseas? Will he be able to use "Sussex Royal"—the brand he and his wife trademarked before he quit the family?

More troubling, there is the risk that this could turn into a public and angry divorce battle.

The *Telegraph* reported that Buckingham Palace fears that if Harry does not get what he wants, "He and his wife could go public with damaging accusations."

"I have some idea of what might be aired in a full, no-holds-barred, sit-down interview, and I don't think it would be pretty," wrote Tom Bradby in the *Sunday Times* (January 12).

Such a no-holds-barred interview may not come right away. Harry respects his grandmother, the Queen, and seems ready to go quietly, even if he doesn't get his own way. But his relationship with his father is much more strained. The specter of a public royal split will haunt Prince Charles's future.

The royal family has a privileged position with a lot of money and support from taxpayers. At this point, that is uncontroversial. But a big reason why it is uncontroversial is that the Queen uses that privilege and support in service and duty. She has admirably lived up to her pledge on her 21st birthday: "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong."

The Queen hasn't used her wealth and power to get wealthier or to travel the world to rub shoulders with celebrities. But if Prince Harry uses his royal position for himself and not to serve others, more will question whether Britain should even have a royal family.

Talk of duty and service were largely missing from the Sussexes' statement. "The job of every royal family member is to support the Queen, to play second, third or fourth fiddle," wrote Fraser Nelson in the *Telegraph*. It's not a role Harry is happy to play anymore.

Some of Harry's former colleagues in the Army are angry. James Glancy, a former captain in the elite Special Boat Service, said, "If Harry goes down this route of semi-privatizing his role, I wouldn't raise a toast to him, as he wouldn't have my respect." He said that others in the Army were "very upset, if not disgusted by the disrespect to the Queen by not discussing this." This view from the Army may have played a role in the decision to strip Harry of his military positions.

Culture Wars

Prince Harry and his wife are good friends with important figures on the radical left in America. The *Daily Mail* reported on January 10 that the Sussexes got advice on their break with the royal family from former United States President Barack Obama and his wife. The *Mail* wrote that the Sussexes want to "mimic the way they had managed to build a successful, but dignified, life for themselves after the White House."

"In fact, it is fair to say that their star has soared since leaving the White House, particularly Michelle's, and this is something Meghan admires very, very much," the *Mail* quotes an aide as saying.

President Obama played a huge role in shifting America to the left (article, page 1). His presidency accentuated major divisions in American society. And apparently he and his wife played a significant role in dividing Harry from the rest of the royal family.

Nor is Mr. Obama the Sussex's only connection. Their head of communications, Sara Latham, was a senior adviser on Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign. Mrs. Clinton herself visited the two of them at their home near Windsor Castle on November 12. Later that month, the Sussexes left for Canada for a six-week holiday to consider their future.

The left in America, along with its associated film stars and celebrities, have loudly supported Harry and Meghan's decision. During her November trip to the UK, Mrs. Clinton said that Meghan's critics in the press were "bad guys." Meghan, she said, must "[k]eep going, do what you think is right."

The *Daily Mail* reports that Harry is now so invested in America's political struggles that he wants to move to the U.S.—but will keep out so long as Donald Trump is president. During the 2016 election campaign, Meghan called Mr. Trump "divisive" and "misogynistic." She said she would move to Canada if he won.

Diplomatic protocol has prevented Harry from being too vocal with his opposition to Mr. Trump. Now no longer a royal, he may get more involved in America's political divisions.

Racism in the Royal Family

Others in the radical left have gone much further than merely praising the Sussexes' decision. On January 9, the *New York Times* published an opinion piece titled "Black Britons Know Why Meghan Markle Wants Out."

By dramatically stepping down, the two were sticking “two fingers up at the racism of the British establishment,” the article states—the implication being that the *Times* is calling the Queen racist.

The article triggered an avalanche. “Experts” in race and gender studies flooded the airways to explain that Harry and Meghan’s decision was a reaction to society’s racism. *Good Morning Britain*, *This Morning*, *Newsnight*, *Question Time* and many more programs hosted discussions on the nation’s sins against the part-black duchess of Sussex.

This seems a real turning point for race relations in Britain. Never had the idea that Britain is fundamentally, institutionally racist received so much airtime.

On these programs, when a TV host asks for evidence of racism, he is immediately shot down. If a black person states there is racism, you must take his or her word for it. If you ask for proof, you’re questioning the life experiences of a black person and are therefore racist.

But there is little evidence of any racism. Scour the headlines from Meghan’s wedding to Prince Harry, and you’ll find little but excitement for the new royal bride. The coverage only turned negative as a reaction to Meghan’s own behavior. No one enjoys being lectured on environmental responsibility by a couple that zooms around the world on private jets. But the radical left has decided they can divine the motive behind any criticism of Meghan—and that motive can only be racism.

Meghan herself has never made this accusation, but she has played the victim—and not just the victim of the press. Several months ago, a reporter asked Meghan how she was doing. She said that it has been a struggle, but she also told the reporter, “Thanks for asking, as not many people have.” This public accusation that the royal family doesn’t really care about her shocked many.

Friends and aides of the Sussexes have accused the royal family of having it in for them from the start. But the evidence is hard to see. “People had bent over backwards for them,” said one palace aide. “They were given the wedding they wanted, the house they wanted, the office they wanted, the staff they wanted, and had the backing of the family. What more did they want?”

But evidence is no defense against a left-wing movement that wants to defend Meghan by painting Britain and its royal family as racist.

There has been a public backlash against all these claims, so it is too soon to know where this is leading. But if Meghan’s “abdication crisis” sows seeds of racial division that take root, this could cause huge damage to the country for a long time to come.

Division or Unity

The monarchy was once a force for unity in Britain, an institution that most, regardless of their politics, could get behind. The monarchy, in a real and literal sense, brought the country together. It wasn’t a battle that forged the United Kingdom; it was the king of Scotland inheriting the throne of England that eventually led to the two unifying.

Now the throne has become a force for division. The same culture wars that have fractured our universities, our politics and our media have arrived in the heart of the monarchy.

It is perhaps this that the Queen fears most about an independent Harry. Right now, you have a Brexit-voting, Conservative-supporting country. What if Prince Harry campaigns even more stridently for the other side, taking the stage behind Barack Obama and giving a “woke,” left-wing view. A country that has just shaken off a “deep state” attempt to block Brexit could be faced by a member of the royal family pushing that same agenda. How much division would that create?

The cover article for our September 2017 *Trumpet* magazine was, “The Fall of the British Royal Family.” In it, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry asked, “What is wrong with Britain and the royal family? This issue is far more important than people generally realize.”

That article lamented the decline of the royal family. Many of the royals have had troubled family lives. The family and the country have drifted from biblical morality. Many of the young royals, including Harry, have gotten behind causes that are anti-Bible.

The royal family, Mr. Flurry explained, is in “rapid decline.” “God is already changing the way He deals with the royal family, which explains why 2017 has been so tragic so far,” he wrote.

2019 was a disastrous year for the royal family. On January 17, Prince Philip was involved in a car crash near the royal family’s Sandringham Estate. A few weeks later he was photographed driving without his seatbelt. In the wake of the negative press, he voluntarily surrendered his driver’s license.

On September 24, the Supreme Court set itself up as more powerful than the Queen. The Queen had suspended Parliament for five weeks on the advice of her prime minister. The Supreme Court ruled that the advice was unlawful and nullified the Queen’s actions—effectively setting itself up above the Queen.

On November 18, Prince Andrew gave a disastrous interview about his friendship with the disgraced and now-dead Jeffrey

Epstein. He was accused of showing no remorse or sympathy for the victims. He was forced to step down from royal duties, and could even face legal action, as some girls accuse him of participating in some of Epstein's activities. The prince is said to be the Queen's favorite son. Now his reputation has been destroyed, perhaps permanently.

"The negative headlines and happenings this year were a sharp departure from the usual news of royal marriages, births and fashion that have become standard over the past decade or so," wrote NBC World News (Dec. 24, 2019).

Yet the change God has made in the way He deals with the royal family has happened for an incredibly positive reason. He has plans for a royal family that brings blessings, not curses, to those it rules. A royal family done God's way brings unity.

God has a plan for a throne that unifies people, Mr. Flurry explained in his *Key of David* episode "The New Throne of David." "It is going to unify the entire world," he said. He explained that this throne is "a monumental hope for this world [T]his truth can galvanize your life and fill you with joy and hope, as nothing else can! And I'm not just saying that. This is not a fantasy. You can do that, and it will work in your life" (June 20, 2018).

It is a throne completely devoted to service, and one that does its duty perfectly.

Britain's royal family, far from bringing hope to the nation, is bringing more troubles and division. That throne has been hit with a series of crises that are bringing it rapidly into disrepute, exactly as Mr. Flurry forecast nearly three years ago.

That the royal family should be hit by so many serious, once-in-a-generation-or-more crises just months after Mr. Flurry published an article about its "rapid decline" should cause us to look more deeply into what is happening here.

And it is worth looking. The latest news is not pretty. But behind it, God has a plan full of hope. This subject contains the solutions, not just for Britain's problems, but for the whole world's. It explains why the royal family is suffering from increasing troubles. It also reveals how God has very practical plans, right now, for a throne that brings hope and unity to the whole world.

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