

Tuesday, 26 May 2015

Pentecost & Xenophobia

In an audio message recorded for Pentecost, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba has linked the celebration of the beginnings of the Church to the creation of a society that is "neither Afrophobic nor xenophobic."

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Speaking against the backdrop of recent attacks by South Africans on migrants from other parts of Africa, the Archbishop likened the diversity of languages spoken at Pentecost, as recorded in Acts, to the languages spoken by migrants in South Africa today.

He said in the message:

"To grasp what Pentecost means for us, here and now, imagine if in South Africa today, we found ourselves able to speak, not in our mother tongue but in one of the hundreds of other languages of Africa. Not only would we be hearing all the languages of South Africa: we would hear the languages of recent migrants to South Africa: kiSwahili, Kirundi or French; we might hear Somali or Arabic; isiNdebele or chiShona; xiRonga or Portuguese."

The archbishop went on to ask: "Would we be called *amakwerekwere*? No! We would need to be reminded, as Peter told the crowd, 'These men (and dare I add women) are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!' We would need to be told, rather, that we have received the Holy Spirit."

Among the migrants who have settled in South Africa in recent years are citizens of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

He added: "Pentecost tells us that right from its inception, the Church broke down barriers between people: linguistic barriers, geographical barriers, the barriers raised by the notion of nation states, even religious barriers.

"In other words, from our inception as Church, the Holy Spirit birthed a nation set apart, a nation that is neither Afrophobic nor xenophobic, a nation comprised of people of all faiths and none, all listening, hearing and all transformed into witnesses by what Jesus tells us in the Gospel of John is the Spirit of truth who will guide us into all truth."

Posted by [Anglican Media Office, BishopsCourt](#) at 17:40