



# CANOPY OF PRAYER

October #117-2021

The author has lived in China and loves the country

*Dear Praying Friends in Europe,*

**Pray “for kings and all in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives” 1 Timothy 2:2**

“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:10 (NIV)

These two contrasting verses apply well to China. We should pray for the Chinese and European governments, that we may all live in peace. We should also stand with our brothers and sisters in the Chinese church, in the persecution they are suffering and in their mission inheritance to take the gospel to other nations.

## China/Europe Relations

“China is a sleeping giant. Let her lie and sleep, for when she awakens she will astonish the world.” Napoleon Bonaparte

“Don’t pray that the persecution stops, instead pray that we can stand up under the persecution.” Chinese house church leaders

## How to Understand China

China is no longer a communist country, but the Chinese Communist Party still rules and its security control is stronger than ever. It won power through a civil war in 1949 and is not democratic. Like every authoritarian government it is paranoid about holding on to power.

China has always had either strong rulers or chaos and war, so they respect strength. They have been governed by dynasties of rulers for over 2000 years, and the communist party government is the latest dynasty. Previously, it based its legitimacy on bringing the ‘utopia’ of communism, now it justifies its rule by raising living standards and making China great again.

For 2000 years they were the centre of their known world. Then in the middle of the 1900s Westerners started arriving and pushing China around, until the communists came to power. They call it the hundred years of shame and they are still quietly angry about it. So in their rise now they see themselves as regaining their rightful position of dominance in the world. They know they cannot ‘chinese-ify’ the whole world, but they want to be rich and powerful.

There are now over 100 million believers in China. It is difficult to get accurate figures but that’s a good estimate. Right now they are going through a really terrible persecution that is as bad as during the Cultural Revolution under Chairman Mao. However, they have a big inheritance in mission and Chinese missionaries have started taking the gospel to other countries.

## China and Europe in the World Today

Current President Xi (“See”) has gained complete power and is taking China in a more authoritarian direction, limiting innovation and increasing state control of business and industry. This will make it less efficient and will

reduce growth. In addition, some sectors of the economy have enormous debt, for example the Evergrande property company which has been in the news. This is a drag on the economy and will also reduce growth in the future. So China’s rise may not be so inevitable, but it is clearly a force in the world and every country needs to decide carefully its relationship with this powerhouse.



Last year the USA changed its position on China and concluded with sadness and anger that China had taken advantage of the USA’s help and friendship and has no intention of becoming a responsible and constructive member of the world order. The USA now sees China as a challenge on all levels and is taking action accordingly to defend its interests.

By comparison, Europe has a history of interacting with eastern powers and is taking a more nuanced (and divided) approach. The UK is generally following the USA’s approach, but even the EU has decided that China is “a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance”. However, the EU has difficulties taking a tough line with China, because Chinese investment in some EU countries is so great that their governments are unwilling to criticise Beijing.

**As Christians, it is important that we love China and its people, as well as being wary of its current government. Here are my suggestions for how to pray:**

- Wisdom for our governments in being tough but continuing to interact with communist party-led China
- Pray that Chinese Christians will stand firm in their faith under the current persecution, especially the younger generation who did not experience the previous persecutions
- Chinese believers for over 100 years have been praying for China to be transformed by the gospel. So let’s pray with them for that
- I invite you to pray a crazy prayer with me - that a future Chinese government will be favourable to the gospel and that Chinese

## Appointment of Judges at European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)

After a [report](#) by the European Centre for Law & Justice (ECLJ) in February, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) is making changes to the way new judges are appointed. Among the last 100 judges appointed, at least 22 were former employees of 7 foundations and NGOs, causing a real conflict of interest and calling into question their impartiality. Give thanks that, due to the publicity given to the ECLJ report, the ECHR have been obliged to act.

## Additional Prayer Points:-

- Pray for the world leaders who will be meeting in Glasgow for the COP26 climate summit.
- Pray for the Bulgarian elections on 14th November, the third this year, that this time a strong and representative government will be elected.
- Pray that the fishing dispute between France and the UK will not escalate into an all out trade war.

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