



# CANOPY OF PRAYER



March #125-2022

Author  
**Jeff Fountain**  
Schuman Centre



## Dear prayer friends in Europe,

A Kyiv-based pastor friend of mine preached in a bomb shelter from **2 Corinthians 6** via a zoom service last Sunday. *Paul talks of 'dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.'* May the Lord let the Ukrainians also have these amazing experiences of the Apostle Paul. With Churchillian resolve, Ukrainians are bravely standing for truth and justice against tyranny and deceit. **This is their finest hour!**

## How the world has changed in the last two weeks!

This has been wake-up time for the West to the deadly messianic pretensions of the Russian dictator, mimicking the last German dictator, to unite all Russian-speakers in one renewed Russian empire.

Largely lost on the western secularist mind, there is much more involved than just political, military and economic factors. A long-standing religious tension stretching back many centuries has contributed significantly to the current Russian invasion.

Two historical events, both deeply religious and civilisational, shed light on the current violence.

Firstly, the Great Schism in 1054 turned on an argument about the Holy Spirit, when the Catholic and Orthodox Churches excommunicated each other, breaking relations for nine whole centuries! 'Did the Spirit proceed from the Father, or from the Father and the Son?' 'Big deal!' we think, wondering what the issue really was. Shamefully, it was a power struggle between the eastern and western church leaders which has left a thousand-year legacy of mistrust and misunderstanding. Only at Vatican II (1962-1965) did the rift begin to heal.

This split has left a spiritual fault line that became a civilisational boundary between western Catholic/Protestant Europe and eastern Orthodox Eurasia. Starting on the Finnish-Russian border, it snakes down through the heart of Ukraine, bisecting the Balkans through Bosnia. It's no accident World War I was catalysed on this faultline, as was the Bosnian war. This faultline remains a key factor in the current crisis.

Secondly, when Constantinople (the second Rome) fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, Ivan the Terrible took on the imperial title of the fallen Eastern Caesars and authority over the traditional Byzantine Empire. From this era onwards, Moscow assumed the role of the Third Rome; and the Moscow Prince that of supreme ruler of Christian Eastern Orthodox nations and defender of the Church.



Last summer, Putin posted his own 5000-word version of this story on his official government website, arguing that Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians were one people, 'descendants of Ancient Rus'. In his version, 'Moscow became the centre of reunification, continuing the tradition of ancient Russian statehood'. The idea of the Ukrainian people as a nation separate from the Russians had 'no historical basis', wrote Putin. Back in 2008, Putin flatly told George W. Bush that Ukraine was not really a country, with which millions of Russians would agree.

Yet Ukraine has been separate from Russia for far longer in its history than it was ever united, as most Ukrainians would counter. Putin sees himself playing an historic and heroic role to 'right the wrongs of the past' and rebuild the empire of the Tsars.

We are witnessing the tension between a vision for a distinctive Russian civilisation with Orthodoxy as 'an inseparable part of the all-Russian historical, spiritual and cultural heritage', versus a more pluralistic, independent, multi-confessional, multi-ethnic, western-leaning, liberal Ukrainian society, which was what the Maidan protests were about, eight years ago.

This is the latest act in a long drama that has played out on the borders of western and Russian civilisations over many centuries.

### Pray:

1. that the outcome will be decisive, enabling not only Ukrainians but all slavic peoples to be freed from the mad pretensions of a false messiah;
2. for the Ukrainian churches to stand fast, upholding the soft powers of love, truth and justice against bombs, hatred and propaganda;
3. for the veil to fall from the eyes of the Russian people to recognise the true nature of their leader, and to throw off their shackles.

### Additional Prayer Points:-

We will not specify any additional prayer points this time, but ask you to meditate on the words of Rees Howells (below) and be guided by the Holy Spirit.

'The intercessor must become responsible for the prayer that the Holy Spirit gives them. They must 'pray through' until the prayer is answered.' **Rees Howells**

You will not be surprised to learn that this is not the scheduled subject for this Canopy issue. But when events in Europe change dramatically we need to respond. Jeff Fountain has given us an insight into the history of what is happening in Ukraine and that helps us to look beyond what we see on our TV screens and in our media. Each of us will have a different view of the situation depending on where we are and what we see and read. Let us earnestly seek the God of truth and remember our prayers are powerful. At the moment I am in Wales writing this and I am reminded of the Welshman Rees Howells who, during a similar time of war, prayed and was guided by the Holy Spirit. Today he is acknowledged, along with those who joined him, as being one of the most important influences on the outcome of WWII. Let us earnestly pray with faith and power.

**TO DONATE:** Hebron Europe e.V.,  
IBAN DE53 6129 0120 0488 0210 06  
BIC GENODES1NUE

giving your name and address. Thank you!

**Donate**