



Dear Praying Friends in Europe,

I was challenged by the following verses in the context of praying for elections around the world. "Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." (Matt. 24:12-14) Even as wickedness increases in the world, let's be found by Jesus persevering in prayer and spreading the gospel, while our light can shine brightest in the midst of darkness.

Elections, elections, elections!

This year, an unprecedented number of elections will be held around the world. Elections will take place in 66 countries, meaning that half the world's population – 4.1 billion people – will have the opportunity to participate in choosing their country's leaders. This has never happened on such a scale before in one single year. What could this mean for the world? And how should we be praying?

16 countries in Europe will be holding elections for their President, Senate or Parliament and, in addition, the elections for the European Parliament will take place from 6-9 June.

If we look further afield, Russia has already held its presidential election with the expected outcome. Voting has begun this week in India, the world's most populous country, one of the fastest growing economies and a sought-after trading partner for western nations. The result of the presidential election in the USA, due to take place in November, could change America's stance on issues affecting not only the USA, but many other countries. If we look at the bigger picture, could there be a shift in global power at the end of this momentous year?



It has been less than three hundred years since any nation has had the right to participate in an election to choose those in authority over them, but is there a risk that we take our democratic system for granted? Conversely, if our electoral system is not to our liking, or we live in an area which is dominated by one party or group, are we tempted not to vote at all, thinking that our vote will make no difference?

When we pray, how seriously do we take the exhortation from 1 Timothy 2:1-2 "that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."? I confess that I do not always have this at the forefront of my mind when turning to prayer!

But this year provides us with an opportunity; let us take seriously our responsibility to be watchmen over the nations and to watch and listen to what the Lord may want to show us or tell us about His strategy, His plans and how He is at work in our world. We know that we have an enemy who seeks to destroy and whose hand can be seen in various ways: for example, the corruption of good government and electoral practices, policies which attack healthy family life (same-sex couples, abortion), or the persecution of Christian values and freedom of religion.

Material is available to help us to pray. Many of you will no doubt have access to prayer ministries in your own nations who give up to date information on dates, candidates and policies as well as guidance on how to pray effectively for your national elections.

On a European scale, the Evangelical Alliance has produced a prayer pack for the European Parliamentary elections, which is available on their website

<https://www.europeanea.org/resource-pack-for-election-time/>

Prayers for any elections may include:-

- for Godly candidates to be on the ballot paper
- for the wellbeing of candidates and their families
- for fake news or misinformation to be exposed and thwarted
- for the election process to be free of fraudulent behaviour
- for a good voter turnout, especially among Christians
- for a growing support for Biblical values including love, justice, freedom, truth, righteousness, forgiveness, integrity, respect, service and generosity

for the success of politicians who will

- preserve and strengthen democracy and freedom,
- fight injustice and work for the good of all, including the weakest and most vulnerable,
- be a blessing to their nation and all its inhabitants, but also work well with politicians from other nations.

Looking forward

As the European Parliament finishes its last plenary of the 2019-2024 session and the USA passing legislation for increased funding for the war in Ukraine, what will be the issues facing Europe in the 2024-2029 session?

Yesterday the French President Emmanuel Macron spoke at the Sorbonne saying that Europe must escape from its self-imposed naivety or face the risk of dying.

He suggested that Europe needs to react quicker to the changing world, stating that the era of energy and fertiliser from Russia and the relying on the USA for security or the outsourcing of Europe's production to China are over. He suggested that Europe's biggest risk was its own demoralisation and urged Europeans to reconnect with the values that made our continent different.

Further Prayer:-

1. As the UK once again pass legislation to send migrants to Rwanda and the EU considers forging a deal with Beirut to prevent Syrian refugees crossing to Cyprus. Let us continue to pray for equitable solutions to the ongoing Migrant and refugee problems facing Europe.
2. Let us not give up praying for Ukraine, as with the release of funding from the USA, Russia's response is increased bombardment of vital energy infrastructure in Ukraine.

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