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Dear praying friends in Europe!

The Apostle Paul urges us to pray for rulers and authorities so that we might know peace and stability, worship freely and live godly lives (1. Tim 2:1-3). Praying for those in authority is part of God's plan for the growth of His Kingdom; when those who rule fulfill their purpose, the gospel can be spread more easily. It seems particularly vital now that there are many challenges to stability and peace in Europe that the Body of Christ should pray together so that God's Kingdom purposes can be fulfilled. Whatever the events of the world, we can be encouraged as we look to God because blessed are those who put their hope not in rulers, but in the Lord their God (Psalm 146:3-5).



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The United Kingdom and Europe

The result of the UK's referendum on EU membership on 23 June 2016 was close. A bare majority of 51.9% voted to leave. It was a very bitter and angry campaign, based on much misinformation and revealing high levels of dissatisfaction. Deep divisions remain between the nations and the regions of the UK, and between young and old. Prime Minister May has now called for a general election on 8 June with the aim of increasing her majority in Parliament, which she says will help her in the Brexit negotiations. These will begin shortly after the election.

This was already a time of much uncertainty for the UK as we grapple with deep questions of identity, and very complex issues in the negotiations. The terrorist attack in Manchester on 22. May 2017 that killed 22, and injured 116, mainly young people further exposes our vulnerability.

Nevertheless, many Christians sense that the UK is in a profound moment of change spiritually. From 25 May-4 June thousands of churches across the nation will take part in a prayer initiative, "Your Kingdom Come", leading up to Pentecost. This time of shaking is a challenge for the Body of Christ to rise up, to be peacemakers and reconcilers, to show friendship and love, and to share the good news

with others, including those God has brought to live in the UK. The Brexit negotiations could have a profound impact on the relationship between the UK and the rest of the EU. Since the referendum the tone of the debate between nations appears to be one increasingly of threat and counter threat: EU leaders talk of serious consequences, even punishment for Britain; British leaders talk of walking away from the EU without any relationship or cooperation. There is a risk that the UK will turn its back on Europe and become increasingly isolated. There is also a risk that Brexit will have a negative impact on the remaining 27 EU nations.

Please pray for:

- Protection from further attack, and for God's sovereignty over the outcome of the elections on 8. June.
- Goodwill between the UK and the remaining 27 nations in the Brexit negotiations; for an outcome that will be just and fair between them.
- A good, peaceful and cooperative future relationship between the UK and the rest of Europe.
- God's people to be ministers of reconciliation and hope.
- Increasing partnership between nations in the work of the Kingdom across Europe.

Please also pray

- For the general election in Malta on 3 June and the parliamentary elections in France on 11 and 18 June.
- Euroscepticism in EU nations has prompted a debate over the future for peaceful and cooperative relationships between nations in Europe. Please pray for leaders and for Christians engaging in this debate.