

Canopy of Prayer

March #61-2019
contributor
Jeff Fountain



Dear praying friends in Europe

May all the peoples praise you! (Ps 117:1)

The psalms are striking in their adoration of God and call for his ways to be known among all peoples. Israel's calling was as a royal priesthood both to intercede for the peoples (vs 2-5) and to declare God's glory among the peoples (Ps. 96:3). The temple was to be a house of prayer for all peoples (Is 56:7), so that all peoples would adore the true God. Let us adore him for he is mighty and loves justice (Ps 99:4). Let us adore him for the message of the Cross in shaping Europe, still to be seen in many European flags. Let us adore him for he still reigns in the midst of Europe's crises and confusion. Let us adore him for his Kingdom endures for ever (Ps 136).

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God's timing and strategy

God the Creator is always worthy to be adored, whatever our circumstances, including a Europe facing Brexit and rising populism. He is the creator and lord of time. The Bible is the only sacred book which takes history seriously. History matters. God the Son is the Alpha and Omega of history.

We must hold on to these truths in times of crisis and confusion, and choose to worship and adore the only true God when we are tempted to be distracted by false gods of nationalism, prosperity or even collective security.

Much of the Biblical story unfolds against political backdrops: for example, in Egypt, Babylon and Rome. Joseph chose to adore the God of his fathers over against Potiphor's wife's seductive advances. Daniel and his friends chose to adore the God of Israel over pagan idols and rulers. Paul, in a Roman prison, chose to adore Christ and preached the kingdom of God, unimpressed with the glories of Caesar and his empire.



Like Joseph, Daniel and Paul, we too must choose to adore the only true God and trust in his unshakeable kingdom even when God's presence is hard to discern. Remember: God triumphed in Egypt, and Israel was liberated; Babylon was captured overnight, during Belchazzer's feast; Rome too fell, but Paul's message triumphed.

Over and again, the psalmists poured out their hearts to God in the midst of dire straits: "I will praise you O Lord with all my heart...though I walk in the midst of trouble..." (Ps. 138:1,7). This should be our orientation: praise and adoration because of God's unchanging worthiness, in spite of our current circumstances.

The Bible reveals God to be sovereign over history, despite the freedom he gives to humans to rebel and mess things up. Yet man's crises are God's opportunities. The crucifixion was incomprehensible for the disciples – only later could they realise how God had turned Satan's evil plan into triumph.

Understanding can wait. Obedience can't. Let us choose to adore and worship the God of history whose wisdom and strategy is far above our's. Let's choose to align our lives with his purposes. May his kingdom come in greater measure here on earth, here in Europe. God has not finished with Europe yet.

Pray:

1. for God's people all across Europe, especially in the UK, to remain faithful to God's purposes, as did Joseph, Daniel and Paul;
2. for God's people to be agents of reconciliation as the Brexit deadline approaches; (29th March)
3. for God's people to find new creative ways to declare God's glory among the peoples of Europe.



Anti-Semitism

(issue 49)

Continue to pray for Jews in Europe, in the light of more antisemitic incidents, especially in France, where a Jewish cemetery was desecrated and a memorial marking the site of a synagogue burned down in World War 2 was overturned.

Additional prayer points:-

1. **Candidates of character** and principle to be elected in the upcoming European parliamentary elections in May.
2. **The emptiness of secularism** to lead to new spiritual hunger and interest in God's Word.

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