

Canopy of Prayer

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contributor

Ian Jeal



Dear praying friends in Europe

Certainly at times like these it is even more important to understand the significance of these verses. 1 Tim. 2:1-4 "I urge, then, first of all, 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. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth."

Perhaps this prayer, which is said in the Westminster Parliament before each sitting, will help us: "Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our Queen and her government, to Members of Parliament and all in positions of responsibility, the guidance of your Spirit. May they never lead the nation wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but laying aside all private interests and prejudices keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all mankind; so may your kingdom come and your name be hallowed. Amen."

Ian Jeal

'Brexit'



When we plan the individual topics for each Canopy edition, we don't know what the significance might be. The 31st October has come and gone and the UK now faces a general election on 12th December.

But could Brexit be a symptom of the wider issues that are facing our continent, if not the whole of western democracy? When as a society we turn away from God-given principles and values, we risk making our wants and desires our idols. In the UK, as in many of our nations over the past few decades, our countries have sought to make individualism a priority. Whether that be through reliance on self and pursuing selfish desires like more wealth, or not

wanting to take responsibility for the consequences of our actions, or sexually immoral expressions, or perhaps as a nation we think we are better than others or have some given right to be great. Of course there is nothing new in these attitudes but we give in to them at our peril. The Old Testament is full of warnings to society as we seek to follow our own desires.

So as the UK heads into the election campaign we need to ask, is this election simply another Brexit referendum or are there deeper issues that we need to focus our prayers on? At present the UK is a deeply divided country, divided by remain or leave, young or old, rich or poor and even divisions within families. We know that division and confusion is never God's plan for a nation but neither is it His plan for society to turn its back on His ways and His values.

One of the saddest elements of Brexit is the breakdown of trust in our political system. Many observers looking from across the channel cannot understand how a nation which has been known as the 'mother of democracy' could have got itself into this mess. Even now we hear people and political parties avoiding saying that this election is about Brexit because the election is unlikely to deliver a clear decision on the Brexit issue. So we increasingly hear about issues like 'climate crisis' or moving the power away from Westminster or it's about social reform and protecting the National Health system. This is because no political party has the answer to a nation divided over this subject and they know that within their own parties they reflect those same divides. So it may be easy for us to look at this election as being only about Brexit but that would be a mistake.

But both the UK and the rest of the EU need an answer to the question of Brexit. For the UK it's about repairing division and for the EU it's more about protecting the integrity of a trading block that faces the complexities of a changing world of competing global powers.

The real question is "what is God's plan for the UK?", a plan that will heal divisions and restore His values to the heart of a society broken by self interest. Now is the time to pray for all those who are putting themselves forward as candidates in this election. If elected they will need to humbly come together and look for solutions and perhaps they will need to listen and recognise that they too are under a higher authority. The prayer that is prayed in the Parliament at Westminster, before each day's sitting, may be a good place to start. Let it be a guide to them individually and collectively as they seek to find resolution to the question of Brexit and the wider needs of the whole country and the whole continent.

Please Pray:

- For the safety and security of the candidates during the election on 12th December, remembering that Jo Cox MP was murdered in the lead up to the EU Referendum in 2016.
- Let us pray for integrity, honesty and moderate language between the political parties and clear agendas during the campaign.
- That the electors fulfil their responsibility to consider all aspects of what is being proposed by the candidates and parties before deciding on who to vote for and that they do go to vote.

Update

Blessings on the backstage negotiations between Egypt, Hamas and Israel against the Jihadists.



Additional prayer points:-

1. Pray for refugees and migrants in severely overcrowded camps in Greece and often inadequate shelters in Bosnia Herzegovina particularly as the winter weather approaches.
2. Pray that the withdrawal of troops by Ukrainian and Russian backed forces continues in eastern Ukraine so that the proposed peace talks in Paris can take place soon.

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