



## Dear Praying Friends in Europe,

*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.* Gal 6:9  
 At the start of this New Year, I want to challenge us all with this verse. Firstly, is prayer 'doing good' and secondly, are we weary or tired towards Europe? It would be easy to feel as if prayer doesn't seem to have much effect on what is happening in our continent; war, moral decline and corrupt government to mention just a few of the issues. But the second half of the verse tells us to expect a harvest. The question now is, will 2023 be the 'proper time'? Let us not give up.

### Combating weariness towards European issues

*'Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?*

*The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, "Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles."* (Psalm 2:1)

I was recently struck by these words, seeing them as a reflection of the state of our continent. Is this not a description of our society at present, believing that God's ways are like chains and shackles?

As society shouts for freedom and human rights, our selfish nature is revealed. Is it no wonder that our governments and European institutions seek to placate our desires with new legislation making it easier to live sinful lives with an increased sense of impunity. Even some church denominations seem to be looking for ways to not stand out from society. All this in an effort to be more acceptable and, dare I say, more loving. However, blending in was not Jesus' way and it's not the way of the Gospel and biblical truth.

As the body of Christ over the last few decades we have remained largely silent, perhaps intimidated by vocal minorities who have not been afraid to use media and intense lobbying to get their message across. This has been relatively easy as it often appeals to both our human and society's sinful nature; "if it feels right it must be right" and "as long as it doesn't hurt anyone".

The irony is that if we look for those societies that do seem to display what we call Christian values, we often find them under oppressive regimes. So is it impossible to have a free Christian moral and value-based society? It is easy to look at our elected democratic governments and European institutions and see only corruption and a lack of integrity and to then disengage from any interest in them. However if we do that we leave space for evil and for those who seek to manipulate the agenda to rule and reign. But Jesus gives us hope and a way forward in John 8:31-32, *'To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my*

*teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

The truth of the Bible is 'God is love' and Jesus is 'the way and the truth and the life' and it is this truth that will set us free; this must be our message as the body of Christ. We must be willing to speak it out into society. To encourage us, I recall when a Christian organisation was invited into a parliament to talk about persecution. They were so well received that they have been invited back each year to share their annual review of worldwide Christian persecution.



If we don't speak out, the reality will be a society in Europe becoming less free. We already see moves to make it illegal for individuals to seek help to turn away from unhealthy sexual desires or attempts to silence those wanting to

renounce mistaken gender decisions of the past and we read in Canopy 139 about attempts to legalise euthanasia as an "easy" way out of complex issues. These are not the answers and certainly not the way of freedom or dignity. This is slavery to sin and we must mobilise against the moral malaise in our continent.

At the start of this New Year let us pray

1. For the courage to become bolder in our witness and to be willing to speak out the Truth in God's love.
2. For our church leaders to stand firm for faith and biblical truth.
3. For Christians in government to be supported in prayer and armed with the information they need, so that the lies of the enemy will be exposed.

### Update:-

Let us not become weary in praying for Ukraine. It has now been 11 months since the Russian attacks began and we have regularly seen the effects reported in our media: cities and towns devastated by bombing, many deaths and serious injuries among both fighters and civilians, families separated after fleeing the conflict and essential services severely curtailed during the coldest months. Let us continue to pray for an end to the fighting and the way to peace to be found.

### Additional Prayer Points:-

1. Pray for the Swedish government to lead with wisdom as they take the presidency of the Council of the EU from January to June 2023.
2. Pray for all those involved in our health services, doctors, nurses, paramedics etc, as they face their busiest season, often with a lack of adequate resources.

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