

Canopy of Prayer

Dear Prayer Partners in Europe

Romans 12:17-18 says: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Well, you may ask, what do these verses have to do with international trade? But these verses precede Paul's exhortation to 'be subject to the governing authorities'. Let us remember that what applies to us as individuals should also apply to the ways in which our governments deal with each other. But too often the way in which governments deal and trade with each other are based on our individual (or national) self interests. Can we break this mould in a post-Brexit world?

USA-UK-EU Trade in a post-Brexit world

Trade can be seen as the cover of a book that binds us together as nations, so what is found inside is important to the way in which we all can live together. It was the basis of what the founding fathers of the EU understood in the aftermath of the Second World War. If they could make the elements that go to make the weapons



of war a common resource, then maybe that would create an environment of cooperation. So between Germany and France (also including Italy and the Benelux countries) the Coal and Steel Community was born.

Today, perhaps in part thanks to those men of faith who understood the need for that agreement, most of the world does not resort to armed conflict to resolve issues. However trade itself has become weaponised and the negotiations can be long, difficult and perhaps even fail. For example, the US and EU have been in some form of discussions since 2007 to work on 'transatlantic economic convergence' or TEC for short. In 2013 the famous TTIP negotiations started but ended without agreement in 2016, and in 2019 an EU council decision declared 'negotiating directives for the TTIP are obsolete and no longer relevant'.

Brexit has brought its own challenges to the relationship between the UK, EU and USA. A trade deal was negotiated at the eleventh hour between the UK and the EU and on 1st January this year it came into effect. As I write this, already tensions are rising between the EU and UK over the arrangements agreed for the movement of goods between the rest of the UK and Northern Ireland due to its border with the EU through the Republic of Ireland. Remember, these arrangements were aimed at protecting the Good Friday peace agreement, negotiated and upheld jointly by the US, UK and EU. To add to these tensions, we hear that the leader of the US

senate, Nancy Pelosi, has said in the past that there is no chance of a US/UK deal if EU/UK arrangements for Northern Ireland lead to a breakdown in the Good Friday agreement. Earlier this month the US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, said that any agreement would take "some time". So an imminent trade deal between the UK and US remains unlikely.

So why is this all so important? Here are a few facts taken from the EU Commission's own website:

- Total US investment in the EU is three times higher than in all of Asia.
- EU investment in the US is around eight times the amount of EU investment in India and China together.
- The transatlantic relationship also defines the shape of the global economy as a whole. Either the EU or the US is the largest trade and investment partner for almost all other countries in the global economy.
- The EU and the US economies account together for about half the entire world GDP and for nearly a third of world trade flows.

(When this was written, it included UK trade and remain broadly the same since Brexit.)

Let us Pray

1. That in these times of pandemic, nations and continents will work together and remember the lessons of the past to create a fairer, more equitable world.
2. For our leaders, that they would look to the authority above all authorities for guidance and submit to the King of kings and Lord of lords.
3. Pray that the EU, UK and USA would honour all agreements made in the past, now and in the future.

Additional Prayer points:-

1. Let us pray that rising Anti Semitism in Europe would not escalate because of the recent fighting in the Middle East between Israel and Hamas.
2. Let us pray for Israel as it navigates the power struggle between prime minister Netanyahu and a new opposition coalition with a rotating leadership initially under Naftali Bennett.
3. Let us pray for France as tensions rise over proposed new legislation to quash radical Islam which could harm religious freedom for all - French Evangelicals are particularly concerned.

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