

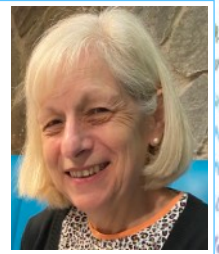
Canopy of Prayer

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Dear Prayer Partners in Europe

'He chose David his servant... to be the shepherd of his people Jacob, of Israel his inheritance. And David shepherded them with integrity of heart; with skilful hands he led them' (Psalm 78:70-72).

At the outset, David did not appear to be a likely candidate to be king but *"the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."* (1. Sam 16:7.) During his reign, David demonstrated 'integrity of heart', the most important characteristic of a leader. When he made mistakes, he humbly went back to his God to repent and be redirected back onto the right path again. He also demonstrated great skill in leading his nation, transferring his good shepherding practices to his leadership of the people. God described him as "a man after my own heart". This is the high challenge for anyone elected to high office - to maintain their integrity before God, to serve skilfully and show humility.

Angela Merkel - the end of an era

In September this year, Angela Merkel will step down at the end of her 4th term as Chancellor of Germany after more than 16 years in office. She has been ranked "the most powerful woman in the world" ten times by Forbes magazine and is recognised as one of the world's most successful and trusted political leaders. However, far from embracing the trappings that go with the top job, she has chosen to continue living in her own private apartment rather than in the official residence, to share the household chores with her husband, do her own shopping when possible and to wear the same simply-styled business clothes frequently. In other words, to live humbly.



In times of crisis, a leader with a calm and rational approach is often the best, not rushing into hasty decisions which might be regretted later.

Keeping the channels open for dialogue with difficult neighbours helps to maintain peaceful co-existence in a volatile world and debate with other world views is also important, giving an opportunity to talk about our Christian heritage while respectfully listening to those of other faiths and none.

This time of stability for Germany (and Europe) under Angela Merkel's chancellorship has not happened by chance; many Christians in Germany have prayed

consistently over the years for their nation and leaders, as shown by the large number of subscribers to such groups as the "Wächterruf". Keeping a watchful, prayerful eye on the current state of our nations and offering up regular prayer for our leaders is the responsibility of us all so that we may live "peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Tim.2:1-2)

Let's pray

- For Angela Merkel as she prepares to leave office; for God's blessing on her as she makes this change and that she would continue to be a voice of reason and Godly wisdom in the world.
- For Germany's choice of a new Chancellor, that the person elected would be open to the Lord's leading as they take up this important office.
- For our own leaders, whether they have pleased us or disappointed us in the past, that our continent would be led by men and women of integrity.
- For more national prayer movements in Europe to follow the example of prayer movements like the "Wächterruf" in praying regularly and consistently for those in leadership in all the countries of Europe.

Many other prime ministers and presidents have come and gone during her time as Chancellor and, as she prepares to leave office, she continues to enjoy popularity at home and abroad. In a recent Pew Research Centre survey in fourteen nations, four out of five Germans expressed trust in her leadership and affectionately call her "Mutti". In the other nations, three out of four had confidence in her handling of world affairs - more than other world leaders. Her high popularity ratings and longevity in a democratically elected office show that she is regarded as a good leader.

What makes a good leader?

As with King David, the key asset is integrity. In the case of Angela Merkel, she is often described with such words as 'steady', 'straightforward', 'reliable' and there have never been any reports of erratic or corrupt behaviour to taint her image. She has drawn on her Christian faith in acting in ways which are morally right rather than politically expedient and has stated in the past "We as Christians should not be afraid of standing up for our beliefs."

A steady hand at the helm has resulted in a time of stability, which is something many nations crave. Some policies may be unpopular but necessary for the ultimate benefit of the country.

Watchmen on the Wall



The summer holidays have arrived and the Canopy of Prayer will take a break for a few weeks. However, let's remain watchful and prayerful during this time. Many summer evangelism projects are taking place, such as a recent campaign in Greece where over 40,000 gospels and copies of the Jesus film were distributed to homes, many being received gladly. Each person turning to Christ is one more towards the faith goal of 100 million proclaimed by the Europe Shall be Saved movement. God is still at work!

Additional Prayer points:-

1. Pray for the Prime Minister Janez Jansa and the government of Slovenia, now holding the presidency of the EU Council for the next six months.
2. Pray for the preservation of precious forests, essential for the wellbeing of us all, but now being destroyed by fire, drought or mass deforestation by irresponsible governments.
3. Let us also pray for all those effected by the serious flooding across Europe.

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