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Connections

The Journal of the WEA Mission Commission

SPECIAL EDITION

Europe

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Europe...from the heart and mind of the editor

We re-affirm our high calling as the WEA Mission Commission to focus on the ever-expanding extension of the Kingdom of God. We want to respond to cutting-edge concerns of the missional people of God—the church on the move in all of its forms and empowering by the Spirit; serving within cultures and cross-culturally; near and far; local and global; evangelizing and discipling; proclaiming and serving; praying and missiologizing; weeping and sowing.

And with those passions we focus on Europe—a singular missional experiment and challenge.

Europe evokes such a diversity of responses—ancient and modern, Christian/post-Christian/anti-Christian, western branch of ancient Asia, rich heritage, emigrations and immigrations, multi-cultural, Renaissance, Reformation, Counter-Reformation, cradle of democracy as well as Fascism and Marxism, extreme nationalisms, two world wars, declining birth rate, beauty of peoples, cultures and geographies, hope and despair, secular and spiritual and neo-pagan, growing its Eurabian and Islamic face, declin-

ing Christian presence and vibrant Christian advance. All of this and so much more.

It was Christian anthropologist Paul Hiebert who first gave me the insight of Europe as the western edge of ancient Asia. In that light we study the impact of the Christian faith which bifurcated Asian history. While the Gospel in those early Centuries traveled both East and West, it was the Western thrust which permanently changed history, cultures and worldviews. Perhaps today we will witness the revival of the Eastern thrust of the Christian faith, for Asia has more practicing disciples of Christ there than in the totality of greater Europe.



William Taylor is the Ambassador at large of WEA and its Mission Commission. Born in Latin America, he and his wife, Yvonne, served for 17 years before a move to the USA. He is the father of three adult GenXers born in Guatemala.

So we rightly ask a few salient questions, and surely you have more:

- Why has Europe slipped to a lesser missional category in recent decades? Who labeled it so "Christian" that it moved into the shadows? What happened to Europe in a useful (though perhaps disproportionate) focus on the limited architecture of the 10-40 Window?
- What does it mean to be the missional citizens/people of God in Europe, and for those who have moved to Europe for the sake of Christ...or employment?
- Does any Christian group have a monopoly on church growth in Europe? What is the track record of the charismatic/Pentecostal sector compared to that sector which would not share that theology?
- What might it mean to be empowered Evangelicals in Europe today, with a robust and thorough Trinitarian theology and missiology?
- What lessons come for European Christians from the church in other geographies, especially the Global South?
- Will immigrant Christians (whether legal or not) become a new beachhead for vital evangelism and new churches in Europe, or will they focus primarily on their own populations in Europe?
- What dimensions and models of the emerging church have something to teach European Christians? Is God finished with the ancient/future, historical model seen in Anglicanism?
- What will be the diverse faces of the new churches in Europe? Will God the Spirit revisit Europe with another revival?

The Mission Commission of World Evangelical Alliance is deeply committed to church and mission to, within and out of Europe. We commit to serve the national mission movements—older, new and emerging—in their task. We also commit to serve the missional networks existing and emerging in Europe. We long to see vibrant, vital and viable mission movements in the nations where they do not exist.

And thus we commend to you this special European Connections issue. It's actually our second European focus (see the October 2004 issue). But in this case we are thankful to Greater European Mission for their commitment to co-publish this special issue, and for Anton Smeele and his publishing vision. We are deeply grateful to Redcliffe College and Encounters, their E-zine, for the rich content which we pass on to the global MC readership. We hope to feature a country or region each year in the future, with the 2007 focus set on China.

Meanwhile, may this issue encourage and challenge you and may it provide fruitful reading and response to our fellow reflective practitioners with a heart for Europe. <<

In this article Rev. Darrell Jackson uses stories from all over Europe to describe Europe's spiritual situation. It makes us wonder if its religious context can be described at all.

Europe the religious context

Stories

- Gabor Kovacs is a bright, engaging and articulate Hungarian in his mid 30s. He laments the lack of religious education in his youth. He is influenced by the secular atheism of his youth and the secular capitalism of his early career. He feels sure that religious belief and practice will probably help but he is too busy to take it too seriously.
- The National Synod of the Church of Norway met during November 2005. The main theme of the Synod was 'En misjonerende kirke' (A Missionary Church) and the tension between being an 'open' (or volksskirke) and a 'missionary church' was acknowledged for the first time in such a public way.
- The Conference of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE) recently finished its report 'Evangelising – Protestant perspectives for the Churches in Europe 2004'. Dismissed by some as too pragmatic and practical (= not sufficiently systematic) it is nevertheless an interesting departure for the paedobaptist Churches in membership of CPCE.
- The Czech Republic is statistically the most atheist of all European countries (only 39% believe in God) yet has the second highest rate of belief in telepathy (73%, only surpassed by Lithuania at 79% - 'the Lithuanians are 'God-believing telepaths') Source: EVS 2001

- Roman Catholicism in Poland contributes to the highest reported rates of church attendance (78%) and belief in God (97%). In Spain and Italy the situation is not quite the same, due to the perception that the Roman Catholic Church has supported too closely successive Right Wing Governments.
- In 'secular' France, a 2003 survey revealed that 32% of people who described themselves as 'Christian' had recently returned to the faith. Ten years previously that figure had been only 13%.¹ Jean-Claud Gillebaud is a leading French intellectual whose critically acclaimed book, *Refounding the World: the western Testament* begins with a quotation from the Psalms and has a chapter on the Apostle Paul. In essence the book is a plea for France to re-examine its Judeo-Christian roots. The French equivalent of Forbes or Fortune magazine published an article in August of 2003 titled, 'God – the stocks are rising' noting the surge of interest in religion and spirituality and its impact on the business and educational worlds as it displaces secularism.
- In October 2005, the head of the Reformed Church of France, the Rev. Marcel Manoel told people gathered in Switzerland for the executive Committee of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, that the decline in importance of traditional family ties to membership in his Church had been replaced by numbers of disillusioned

Catholics and Evangelicals. "Without doubt there are fewer people but they are more active," he reported. "We are beginning to see a new way of being the Church which is less about organising members and more about helping them to witness in contemporary society."²

- Most Britons describe themselves as Christian despite not attending church regularly, a BBC survey has found. More than two-thirds of the 1,019 respondents said they were Christian, but only 17% regularly went to church. Almost 75% of the respondents said the UK should retain Christian values - including 69% of Jews, and nearly 50% of Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. (Source: BBC IMC Faith Poll 14th November 2005)
- The tragic death of Theo van Gogh is a reminder of the power of religiosity to stimulate both a strong aversion (van Gogh's work) as well as strong sympathies (van Gogh's assailant). I would also draw attention to the launch of the new Dutch version of the Bible. I visited the Netherlands two days after its launch on the 27th October, 2004 but could not obtain a copy in the local bookstore in Amersfoort. They had already sold out.³ As a part of the launch the Queen read Genesis 1:1-10 on prime time national TV, featured in a five hour feature on the Bible. A friend, standing in line to buy his copy, asked other purchasers whether they would be reading it. The most

- common response was, 'No, I just wanted to own a copy!' A survey conducted at the same time revealed that only 33% of the Dutch population regards itself as Christian.
- I visited a trendy clothes store and on entering were surprised to be greeted by a bleeding heart Jesus, a Madonna and Child, and a Crown of Thorns. Not as religious icons, but as style icons, borne on the sleeves, chests, and quilted padding, of jackets, t-shirts, and other items of clothing.⁴
- Consider French fashion designer MFG who, in March of 2005, displayed the highly provocative advert featuring a female 'Last Supper' on the billboards of Neuilly, near Paris. French Courts considered the advert to have insulted, 'the religious feelings of Roman Catholics' and banned it from public display.
- In the May 2005 edition of Sourozh, the

quarterly journal of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sourozh, Bishop Basil refers to the increase in the numbers of citizens of the Former Soviet Union living in the UK, and the corresponding increase in attendance at Liturgy at the Cathedral in London. The Liturgy is now more likely to be celebrated in Russian than in the English that was commonly used for Russian émigrés until the collapse of the Soviet Empire.

- The Chinese church in Helsinki is a first generation congregation of those who came to faith since arriving in Helsinki. Awareness of the Chinese situation is not particularly relevant for them. Their church reflects the social strata of the Chinese community in Helsinki, particularly the 'waves' of immi-

Rev Darrell Jackson

- grants. Mandarin and Cantonese are used by the USA trained pastor.
- Frej is a French-speaking Algerian academic who has taught with Michel Foucault and others. Since 9/11 he has felt the need to reconnect with Islam as a way of working for moderation and reform. As a 'cradle-Muslim' with only nominal convictions he feels in some small way responsible for the radicalisation of Islam. He connects with colleagues who feel similarly in London, Paris, and elsewhere.
- Iranian refugees are regular worshippers at the Church of Scotland in Budapest. Several of them have been baptised, having gone through the baptismal preparation course. Possessing a baptismal certificate is a useful step along the way to a residency visa but



some still attend the weekly Bible Study and free lunch. There is evidence that for some, conversion is genuine.

- Evangelical optimism. An evangelical congregation has been established in France every eleven days for the last thirty-five years.³ Peter Brierley suggests that the evangelical churches are those that are more likely to be growing in the UK.
- For the last two or three years the European Missionary Councils & European Missionary Alliances have met together as a gesture of solidarity and a desire to seek deeper co-operation. An EMC member is helping fund an EMA programme. The Conference for World Mission and Evangelism invited the full participation of Evangelical and Pentecostal mission leaders in 2005.
- Religious Trends⁶ shows that France overtook Kenya last year as the leading destination for British mission agencies. Operation World estimates some 3,690 cross-cultural missionaries working in Europe. 69.4% of US & Canadian funded mission personnel working in Europe are either North American citizens or non-nationals in the country of operation. This leaves 30.6% who are indigenous mission workers.
- Religious Trends notes the increasing numbers of denominations in the UK since 1977. There were 97 in 1977, by 2005 there were 270. In 26 European Countries there are a total of 81 different Reformed Church Denominations, the UK and the Netherlands manage 31 between them.
- Europe's churches are networked in multiple ways. The EEA, CEC, CPCE, CCEE, are just a few of the acronymic organisations that networks churches within Europe.
- The Alpha phenomenon is Europe-wide. By 2005, 6,336 courses had been run in 41 European mainland countries with a further 7,234 in the UK. Some European evangelicals remain wary of charismatic elements, and some may incorrectly perceive it as Roman Catholic, for example in Croatia.
- The Czech Republic is one of the most atheist European countries whilst Slovakia is one of the more religious.



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- Following the arrival of missionaries from a major US mission agency, to work in the established Baptist congregation of Skopje, Macedonia, the missionaries felt the Macedonian leadership was not adequately stressing doctrinal Calvinism. The controversy provoked a split and the Mission Agency notched up its first church plant; Skopje now has two Baptist churches!
- In Moscow 2004 I visited the Director of Going Together, a youth organisation that some have described as Putin's Komsomol. The Orthodox Patriarchate co-operates with the organisation because it stresses the importance of culture for the proper education of young (elite) citizens of Russia. Its three catchphrases are, "Professionalism", "Morality", and "Patriotism". Culture in Russia (Dostoyevsky, Pushkin, etc.) is influenced by Orthodox Christianity and young people are taught to respect Orthodoxy. The programme has a secular basis and it appears that the main agenda is the political education of young people.

Analysis

- There is widespread evidence of decline in Church attendance
- There is widespread evidence of decline in patterns of 'orthodox' Christian belief
- European religious identity appears to demonstrate the greatest resilience when it is understood as a component of cultural identity.
- There are a number of crises within the historic Protestant 'volkeskirke' within Europe, with decreasing revenues from Church tax, decreasing numbers of people willing to pay voluntary Church tax, and a reassessment of historic Church-State relationships. Within these churches, the Church of England's 'Mission-shaped Church' report is being reasonably widely read and appreciated. In some quarters there exists a refusal to face facts and the declining revenues is leading to financially-driven mission audits.
- Within the nations of Europe, the complexity of multi-culturalism is matched by the complexity of multiple variations on a sacred-secular spectrum. Simultaneously, as a continent, Europe can be described as pre-secular, secular, post-secular. Some countries are experiencing 'La revanche de Dieu' in rather obvious ways.
- Christians committed to inter-faith dialogue need to recognise that contemporary Europe may demand a dialogue that is inter-ideological (for example, between faith and secularism) rather than inter-faith.
- There are a myriad of Churches of the

diaspora (from all continents) that suggest the need for Christians with a deep appreciation and understanding of working across cultural boundaries, to engage with diaspora churches on behalf of national churches.

- This has an obvious relationship to the presence of non-European missionaries working in Europe
- There are significant populations of 4th world European peoples (Sami, Roma, Ingrians) often not widely known outside of their national context.
- There are signs that Eastern Orthodox Christians are able to appreciate the spirituality and missionary zeal of Western Christian missionaries (and vice versa) but this requires a deep commitment to humble and mutual learning. This is an important pre-requisite for more effective evangelisation/christianisation of parts of Central and Eastern Europe.
- There are signs that a renewal of Ecclesiopraxis is being led by the need to engage more effectively in mission in the complexity of contemporary Europe.
- There are increasing number of religious freedoms being won in former communist countries although this will continue to require monitoring carefully for some time to come.
- The implication of determining 'Spiritual security' to be synonymous with 'National security' in Russia is likely to have considerable bearing upon the impact of Christian mission. <<

ENDNOTES

- 1 Tennant, A. 'The French reconnection', in Christianity Today March 2005, p29
- 2 ENI-05-0791 'French religion faces new future 100 years' Ecumenical News International email News service, 18th October 2005
- 3 ENI reported that 200,000 copies were sold in four days. ENI 10th November 2004
- 4 See the fashion website www.g-sus.com
- 5 Ditto, p30
- 6 Halman, L. & Riis, O., Religion in Secularising Society, Brill: Leiden, 2003 p11

The story of Jesus has been the single greatest influence in shaping Europe's past. Why should we not expect it to be the single greatest influence in shaping Europe's future?

Living as People of Hope

This is the bold and unconventional notion of 'Living as People of Hope', a book of grand themes with practical and local application relevant to much of the western world. Primarily the book aims to offer biblical reasons for hope for Europe, our lands and our towns and cities.

PART ONE sketches the challenging situation of Europe at the start of the new millennium.

PART TWO responds to the question: how can we recover faith, hope and vision for the future?

The following is based on excerpts from Part One.

WHILE TRAVELLING to the Balkans in the summer of 1999, I had a bizarre and provocative encounter with a woman named Danica whose worldview was very different from my own. Frankly, she 'rattled my cage'.

If men are from Mars and women from Venus, well, this woman seemed to be from Pluto! Describing herself as a 'pagan, Jungian, feminist, archetypal psychotherapist', Danica was urbane, articulate, sophisticated, well-read and self-assured. Yet she was deadly serious about everything she was telling me: about the Mother Goddess, a golden age of matriarchy free from gender-bias, and Europe's pagan

substream in history. What sort of woman was she? What sort of mystic, fringe movement did she represent?

And what I was doing listening to her gobble-de-gook?! Maybe I should politely excuse myself from this conversation, I wondered. I was out of familiar territory and should play safe. Danica was challenging some of my deepest beliefs about God and reality. Besides, evangelical mission leaders didn't usually meet in hotels with pagan feminists, did they?

This encounter, which I describe in several chapters, led to our discovery of an underground labyrinth in Budapest. We embarked together on a journey together through the different phases of European history in those subterranean corridors, phases representing the basic worldviews that Europeans had adopted and then discarded in turn: animism, theism and materialism.

In so doing, Danica opened my eyes to realise that our journey towards tomorrow's Europe may well be a turbulent ride - back to the future.

Jeff Fountain

Tomorrow's Europe will be shaped by the basic beliefs of tomorrow's Europeans. Max Weber's dictum, 'ideas have consequences', implies that lifestyle flows out of worldview. Our ideas about ultimate reality, about God, nature, the supernatural, human personhood, our origins and the afterlife, all shape our lifestyle, our priorities, our values, our morals and our relationships, all are products of our worldview.

What belief systems could shape tomorrow's Europe? In broad categories, the options are surprisingly few. In fact, we Europeans have already dabbled in virtually all of them. What are these options? And how have they shaped Europe over the past 2000 years? What options are we Europeans likely to choose for the immediate future? What sort of Europe could result from these options?

Vacuum

Over twenty years ago, Francis Schaeffer warned his audience at the Amsterdam Free University, 'If we fail to root western society back into biblical values, the easy days for Christianity are over.' I still feel the sense of foreboding with which those words struck me, for I was sitting in that lecture theatre.

In the early nineties, euphoria and optimism still lingered in Europe after the fall of communism when Sir Fred Catherwood described Europe as 'a house swept clean'. This veteran statesman of the British and European political scenes, a former vice-president of the European Parliament, was addressing fellow evangelical leaders on the first occasion of what has since become the annual New Europe Forum. The ominous implication of this biblical phrase was not lost on his listeners. Not only did Europe face the promise of a new future free of communism; it also faced the prospect of 'seven other spirits' re-possessing the house. A spiritual vacuum could not be sustained.

Books

In the months following my cage-rattling

encounter in Budapest, exposing my unpreparedness to engage with pagan spirituality, I embarked on a reading programme of books new and old.

The Bible itself assumed new currency as I realised in a fresh way how much God's self-revelation unfolded against an animistic, pagan background. No, God was not caught off guard by paganism. However new it may be for me or for the modern western Church, it was nothing new for the God of the Bible, the Lord of history.

Thomas Cahill's *Hinges of History* series reminded me of the role played by two monotheistic minorities, the Jews and the Irish Celts, in shaping Europe's values and worldview as it emerged from polytheistic pagan cultures. Celtic monks joyfully transmitted the good news from one pagan people to another,

and evangelised much of medieval Europe. What attracted pagan Europeans to their message then? How could it happen again?

For the first time in my life, I began to read the Greek myths. As well as catching glimpses of what it would mean to live life in the belief that gods and goddesses controlled one's fate, I was fascinated to discover some parallels to the story of Jesus.

C. S. Lewis saw in pagan Greek classics communication bridges for the gospel of Jesus Christ. So a natural choice to read was *Till we have faces*, his 'pre-evangelistic' adaptation of the myth of Cupid and Psyche.

I returned with fresh motivation to Anton Wessels' *Europe: was it ever really Christian?*, a study not only of how Christianity had influ-

enced the Graeco-Roman, Celtic and Germanic cultures of Europe; but also of how European Christianity had embraced many old pagan practices. David Burnett's *Dawning of the pagan moon* had been sitting on my shelf unread for several years, until my return from Budapest. With whetted interest I read of how this book about modern pagan culture in Britain resulted from his meeting with a white witch on a BBC panel discussion.

Burnett set out to understand the beliefs and practices of the pagan community. He submitted his manuscript to some leading pagans for their comment. They said he was the first non-pagan who had really understood them. They asked if they could use his book themselves!

Danica's beliefs were reflected in many of these pages.

Options

I found my dog-eared copy of Schaeffer's *He is there and he is not silent*, unopened for many years. At university I had struggled to find a framework to integrate my personal Christian faith and experience with my academic studies. Schaeffer's books had been lifesavers for me. In this modest volume, Schaeffer answered the basic philosophical questions of life with the biblical revelation of a personal, infinite God.

I read again Schaeffer's oft-repeated statement that, while there are many possible details, there were only very few answers to any of the great questions of life.

My thoughts drifted back to the labyrinth in Budapest. I imagined walking again through those corridors, reliving those worldviews that had shaped the lifestyles of earlier Europeans: animism, theism and materialism.

The options, while with variations, indeed were few: Everything either had an impersonal or a personal beginning. Ultimate reality was either finite or infinite.



Jeff Fountain has been director for YOUTH WITH A MISSION EUROPE since 1990, and is one of the initiators of HOPE FOR EUROPE, an evangelical initiative promoting networks and platforms across Europe. Originally from New Zealand, he and his Dutch wife Romkje have three adult sons, and live in Heerde, the Netherlands. He authored the book *Living as People of Hope*, released in Holland this September 2004. Further information see www.initial.nl. It is also available in Dutch: ISBN 90-74319-40-8

For I know the plans I have for you,
declares the LORD,
plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.

Jeremiah 29:11



We have this hope
as an anchor for the soul,
firm and secure.

It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain,
where Jesus, who went before us,
has entered on our behalf.

Hebrews 6: 19-20

Reality Matrix

I began to visualise a matrix based on these two statements, with vertical and horizontal axes intersecting to create four quadrants: the impersonal-finite; the impersonal-infinite; the personal-finite; and the personal-infinite.

There you have it, I thought: four basic options. What worldviews did these four quadrants represent? What answers did they each give to life's basic question about meaning? About a moral framework for life?

The first option, the personal-finite quadrant of polytheism: 'a pantheon of gods and goddesses'. We are familiar with this option from biblical story backgrounds, for the deities of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome controlled the affairs of men and women.

This was Old Europe's worldview, the view of reality shared with variations by the Celts, the Angles and Saxons, the Franks, the Slavs and the Vikings. Some of the days of the week are still named after such gods (Wednesday from Woden, Thursday from Thor, etc.).

The great dilemma with finite gods, however, is that they are not big enough. Plato, Schaeffer points out, understood the need for absolutes, or nothing has meaning. Without absolutes, no sufficient basis for morality exists. But the gods were finite, and their behaviour reflected human foibles writ large.

The panoply of gods may answer the need for diversity, but cannot meet the need for unity. Some New Age teaching also belongs in this quadrant. Often however, New Agers tend to 'mix-and-match' between the personal-finite and the impersonal-infinite, between polythe-

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personal	
<p>polytheism many gods</p> <p>Babylon Greece Rome Celte Vikings</p>	<p>monotheism one God</p> <p>Judaeo-Christian Islam</p>
finite	infinite
<p>atheism no gods or God</p> <p>Enlightenment Rationalism</p>	<p>pantheism everything is God</p> <p>Eastern</p>
impersonal	

The Reality

ism and pantheism. Danica on the one hand talked of personal dieties like Artemis/Diana, and a personal spirit guide, while on the other hand talked of a pantheistic Mother Goddess, spirit of the universe.

Ultimate reality under polytheism is the spirit world.

The second option, monotheism, is the view that ultimate reality is found in one personal-infinite Divine Being. The character and person of God is the moral absolute of the universe. The Triune Godhead answers both the need for unity and diversity.

Here we can find answers for the basic questions of meaning, significance and morals. Both men and women are made in God's image, and hence have a personal beginning, and infinite significance.

Ultimate reality under monotheism is a Personality.

The third option moves us into the impersonal-finite option, materialism: This is the option of atheism: there is no God nor gods. This is the option of rationalism, and of the secular society that had dominated the western world in the twentieth century, as a logical outcome of the Enlightenment.

But talk of meaning, significance and morals becomes meaningless when our starting point is impersonal, when humans can be reduced simply to 'slime plus time'. How do the particulars, individual objects or beings, have any meaning or significance? No answer has ever been given to that.

When materialistic westerners have talked about morals, they have been living off the memory of the Christian past, plucking the fruit of the fruit of the fruit of biblical values, as Schaeffer often expressed it. If we begin with the impersonal, we can only talk about preferences, but not rights and wrongs.

Only matter matters. Non-matter doesn't matter.

Ultimate reality under atheism is physical matter.

The one remaining option is that impersonal-infinite quadrant is that of pantheism: 'everything is God'.

The ancient Eastern religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as much New Age

teaching, express this worldview. Schaeffer notes that the use of the root 'theism' in 'pantheism' falsely connotes a personal deity. He calls it 'pan-everything-ism'. The starting point is still impersonal, and thus can give no meaning or significance to the diversity of reality. Morals also have no meaning, as everything in 'pan-everything-ism' is finally equal.

When we start from the impersonal, we arrive quickly at the human dilemma: why should there be any meaning? Humankind is lost. Humankind remains a zero. Personality is reduced to the impersonal.

What ultimately matters under pantheism is feeling and consciousness. Whether through mind-bending drugs, meditation, spiritual ecstasy or sexual experience, objective reality is denied and experience and consciousness elevated.

Ultimate reality under pantheism is consciousness.

The polytheism/pantheism diagonal in the matrix represents the traditional eastern worldviews. We could lump these together, as New Agers themselves seem to do, and call the combined category animism, using that word in its broadest sense. We learnt earlier that this was the belief that the physical or natural world was 'animated' by the spiritual or supernatural world.

Correspondingly, we can note that the monotheism /atheism diagonal reflects the predominant western thought over recent centuries. This is the axis where we in the church have felt most at home. Most of the evangelistic efforts and apologetics of the European church have been directed towards the unbelieving materialist, attempting to prove the reality of the spiritual realm and of God.

Yet very little attention has been given to the 'eastern' diagonal in Europe. New pagans, like Danica, are not 'unbelievers'. They believe passionately in the spirit realm. Pagans are not unbelievers in the reality of the spirit world. They are not atheists. 'Signs and wonders' will not necessarily impress them about the spirit world any more than Pharaoh's magicians were impressed by Moses - at least, in the initial stages! Somehow they need to be convinced of the truth of that spiritual reality.

This shift of perception of ultimate reality to the 'eastern diagonal' among Europeans will require major changes in the way we conduct our evangelism and engage with pagan spirituality.

The future of Europe will depend on which view of ultimate reality prevails as the twenty-first century unfolds. Europeans have most recently rejected the materialistic view of reality. That is what post-modernity is all about. Post-modern Europeans are open to spiritual reality. That leaves a choice between

biblical spirituality or non-biblical spirituality, theism and animism. Which will it be?

Could it be that post-modern rejection of Enlightenment values may be leading us back to Pharaoh's court and a confrontation between the God of Moses and the pagan gods of new age and new science?

Ready or not?

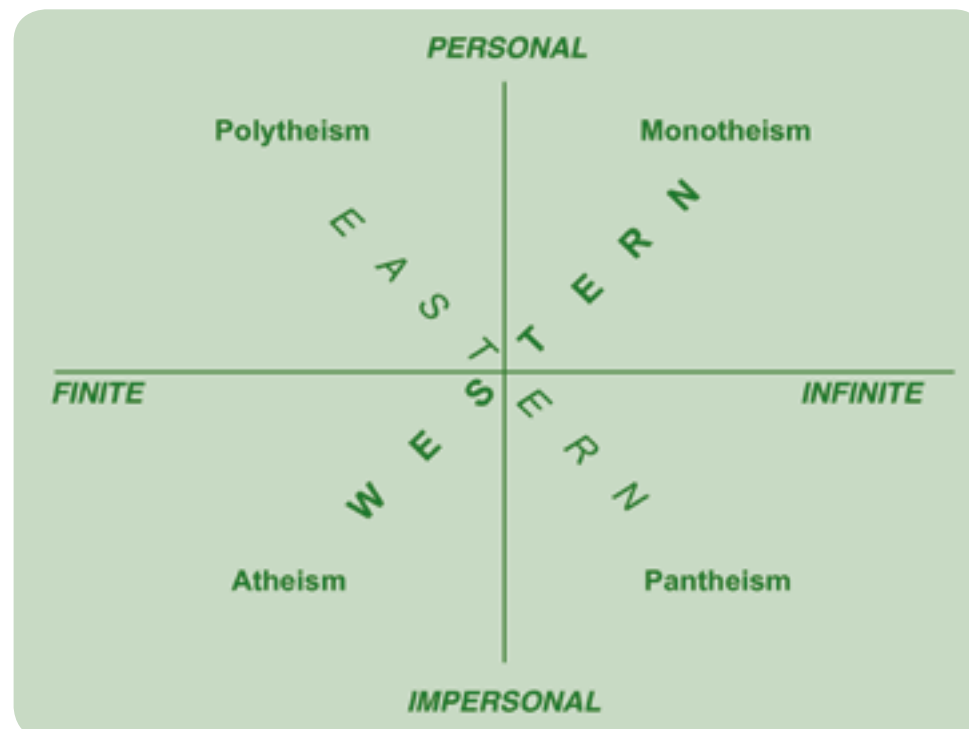
Remember the Y2K scare? The question then was, are we ready for the new millennium? January 1 2000 has long since passed. But the question still remains: "Is our enterprise – the church – ready for the new millennium? Are we really ready for the major shifts happening in European and western society? Or will we remain stuck in a time warp, back in the twentieth century?"

In the light of everything we have said thus far, is there hope for Europe in the twenty-first century?

I believe there is. In Part Two of Living as people of hope, I posit ten imperatives for God's people to follow and apply that can help us recover faith, vision and hope for Europe tomorrow.

- if we dare to dream boldly about God's will for our town, our country, our continent of Europe;
- if we dare to be honest about the sins and mistakes in the church past and present, rejecting the Wormtongues of pessimism and despair;
- if we dare to remember what God has done in the past, and look to see what God is up to today;
- if we dare to allow the fullness of the gospel of the Kingdom to radically change our lifestyle;
- if we dare to embrace and accept our responsibility for the future of our communities;
- if we dare to be open for changes in the church both biblical and relevant to twenty-first century culture;
- if we dare to begin working together – locally, nationally and over the borders – so that the church of Jesus Christ will be as 'an arrow sent out into the world to point the way to the future'.

...then we will be living as people of hope. <<



The years which bridge the 20th and 21st centuries mark a turning point in global relations. Mass communication, the wide-spread influence of multinational company money, unprecedented acts of terror and new movements of immigrants are all part of the changing way in which we think about ourselves as civilizations, as nations, as communities and as individuals. The slow and constant transformation of how we see ourselves affects the patterns of communication with others, and the metamorphosis of our communication patterns impacts the concept we have of ourselves

Mega-trends Europe

1999-2004

Not unlike its role as the birthplace of Reformation and Renaissance, Europe plays an integral part in these waves of change. Due to the impact of globalization, many influences affecting the European continent are found in other Western cultures and, in a lesser way, (Ester et al. 1993:110, in Robinson 1999:5) in many other cultures around the globe. (For the purpose of this discussion, the “West” will be defined by the national boundaries and cultures of North America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and partially, South Africa; the West is basically a “European-American civilization.”) (Huntington 1996:47)

Though many young people in other nations, including Japan, India, Brazil and Argentina, are taking on the trappings of a globalized culture of music and fashion, the deep-rooted values of these “non-Western” societies are not yet experiencing the great upheavals that are felt rippling through the societies of the West.

Among the striking global influences which are reshaping Western society and value systems, we find the following:

- individualization (Ester et al. 1993, in Robinson 1999:2)
- an increasingly fragmented and lonely society (Ester 1993:165, in Robinson 1999:5) (Whelan 1994:6, in Robinson 1999:1)
- the myriad of personalized choices for individuals (though “in a society wherein the

individual is so valued, the individualism that really characterizes us is of a very standardized and impersonal character.”) (Giorgi, Liana. “Constructing the xenophobic subject,” in Pohoryles 1994:235)

- the privatization/individualization of religion, with the individual choosing from a smorgasbord of options (Dobbelaere 1993:26) (Hervieu-Leger 1998, in Robinson 2000:13)(Sandstrom and Herberts 2000, in Robinson 2001:30)
- a consistent appreciation of, and interest in, the supernatural (though church attendance is down in major, traditional denominations) (Bryant 2002, in Robinson 2004:65) (Chu 2003, in Robinson 2003:57) (Bruni 2003, in Robinson 2003:60)
- a move by governments toward secularization (Whelan 1994:31) (though civilizations tend to group around religious affiliations as they define their unique identities) (Huntington 1996)
- a tendency by these same leaders toward nationalism (though ideals of regional cooperation are encouraged) (Naim, Gonzalez and Moisi 1999, in Robinson 1999:6)
- a belief that there are no longer moral absolutes linked with a post-modern pluralism of values (Young 1997:480, in Robinson 1999:3)
- the liberalization of laws controlling medical-ethical issues (such as a lifting of the ban on human cloning, the legalization and “redefining” of euthanasia and lowering the

legal age limit for a girl having an abortion) (Gorman 2000, in Robinson 2000:21)(Daley 2000, in Robinson 2001:29)(Bryant 2003, in Robinson 2003:59)

- the disintegration of respect for the institution of marriage (Ester et al. 1993:98, in Robinson 1999:5)
- acceptance of same-sex unions (Graff 2004, in Robinson 2004:72)
- the redefining of the work place through more “by contract,” short-term positions, offices at home and the wide use of long-distance collaboration by way of the Internet (The Irish Times 1999, in Robinson 2000:15)
- increased urbanization (Burtenshaw 1991 and Quilley 1999, in Robinson 2000:8)(Pile et al. 1999, in Robinson 2000:14) (though a plague of “shrinking-city syndrome” is projected to sweep the world as urban birth rates continue to drop) (Theil 2004:58)
- inter-generational conflict partially due to the rapid rate of societal and technological change (Szakolczai and Fustos 1998, in Robinson 2000:8)
- a “West versus the rest” global polarization (with the U.S. playing a perceived “unilateral” role) (Huntington 1996:36)

These influences are striking at the heart of Western civilization across the globe and effectively remoulding the contours of its mores. Europe, originator of this particular brand of civilizational ideals and an active member in the group which currently is on the give and take of

Western societal values – as both initiator and imitator – is in a unique position.

In conjunction with these forces, but particular to Europe, are two major trends which squeeze the population and its organizations from two sides. These two major players are, first, the unprecedented scope of immigration of non-European Muslims, and, second, the demographic reality of a shrinking population. (Pipes 2004, in Robinson 2004:68)

The influx of peoples is not new, but the realization that the flood will greatly affect the population mix is a more recent phenomenon. In France, where the second religion in the country is now Islam, sociologist Farhad Khosrokhavar reports that:

“The problem of a French Islam only started being posed in the late 80s. Until then, Muslims were geographically part of France but in every other respect they remained foreign.” (Le Quesne 2000, in Robinson 2001:23)

There are an estimated 12 million Muslims living in the mainland European Union¹ area today: (“EuroIslam” 2004, in Robinson 2004:66) 2.5 million in Germany, 5 million in France and 1 million in the Netherlands. There is no question that the balance of the population in Europe is shifting slowly but surely away from one traditionally of European heritage and toward a majority of those who are of non-European descent.

As we discuss the issue of a changing demographic in Europe, the dividing quality of religion must be mentioned. This element of societal value systems cannot be ignored as we talk about immigration, enlargement of the European Union¹ and the success or failure of integration within the peoples of Europe.

As this process unfolds, the inexorable link between culture and religion is one of the elements which makes this population shift and the arrival of thousands of non-Christian immigrants so volatile. (The thesis of this paper does not ignore that hundreds of immigrants from Europe’s former colonies are bringing back with them a Christian fervour and revitalization of the Church.) Though Europe, as a whole, seems to have rejected its Christian roots, even the “religion” of secular-

¹ This region is the wider definition of Europe including UK & Ireland, Russia as far as the Urals, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Romania, the Balkans, etc., and into the east with Ukraine and Belarus.



ism adhered to by European governments and populations is not compatible with an arriving people group which does not, traditionally, recognize any separation of Church and State. (Ford 2005, in Robinson 2005:74) This collision of political expectations will be particularly explosive in France, where the right to practice secularism and religious neutrality is historically “sacred.” (Sabatini 2003, in Robinson 2004:65)

The degree to which Europe succeeds or fails to deal with the challenge of integration of its variant peoples will define its future. There are hundreds pouring into Europe, literally packed into boats, some embarking on fatal voyages in an effort to reach its shores. (Ratnesar 2000, in Robinson 2001:28) Though not all of these newest immigrants are from a Muslim heritage, those multitudes who are, and the second- and third-generation Muslim families already settled in European countries, will create Europe’s greatest societal upheaval in the coming decades. (Huntington 1996:36)

These streams and waves of immigrants, both legal and illegal, can be divided into several unique groups, but are typically seen to flow from east to west and from south to north. Those coming from the former Soviet Union arrive in Eastern Europe. Sometimes they stay; more often they keep moving west. Schlesinger writes, “nervous eyes are cast to the Southern Mediterranean and towards the east of the German frontiers...” in reaction to “Europe’s current demographic panic.” (Schlesinger, Philip. “‘Europeaness’ – A new cultural battlefield?” Pohoryles 1994:47)

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Granted, the arrival of non-European, Muslim peoples is much more evident in Western Europe, but will continue, as well, to impact the ten newest members of the EU to the east (as of May 1, 2004). Central and Eastern European countries will not experience the pressures of immigration in the same fashion as the West. In fact, at times, events and population shifts within these mostly former-communist countries may actually be the source of pressure exerted on Western Europe. (Power 2001, in Robinson 2001:25)

The new eastern border of the EU, falling between the Baltic countries and Russia, between Poland and Belarus, between Slovakia and Ukraine, between Hungary and Romania, between Serbia & Montenegro and Bulgaria and between Greece and Turkey, lies down what Huntington calls “The Eastern Boundary of Western Civilization,” dictated by “the logic of civilizations,” those invisible borders stemming from affiliation with one of the world’s major religions. (Huntington, 1996:161) National boundaries decided upon at the conclusion of the First and Second World Wars sometimes cut right through the middle of a cultural people group. At times, and especially in former Eastern Europe, artificial, geographic, national borders have been outlined on a map, creating a new conglomerate of people groups from very different cultural and religious backgrounds.

Immigration, the major transforming factor affecting Europe today, is complicated by another factor: that of falling birth rates among typically European families. The arrival of immigrant workers has been suggested by some to be the “answer” to the problem of a declining

European population by filling the employment void. But, at the same time, it becomes the great “problem” without a ready answer. Existing European peoples, though they may not want to fill the job vacancies which the mass of immigrants are filling, also may not care to live side-by-side with those of non-European origin who do not learn the local language and are clearly not assimilating into the mainstream of a traditionally European society.

The tension created by the presence of large groups of immigrants whose own birth rates tend to be high, usually choosing to live in cultural enclaves amongst themselves, certainly fuels anxiety and anger in the existing, more traditionally European population, and adds urgency to the finding of solutions to the challenge of integration in Europe. Data show Muslim families are growing at a much faster rate than are existing, European families. In fact, excluding all immigrant numbers, Europe’s birth rate figures, on the average, are in the negative. (Drozdiak 2000, in Robinson 2000:7)

A natural consequence of negative population growth in an era in which life expectancy is rising, is the general shift away from a youth-dominated society to one which is “top heavy,” with increasing numbers in the over-65 slice of the population. Chisholm writes, “By about 2010, those aged over 60 will outnumber those aged under 20[...].” (Chisholm 1998:153, in Robinson 1999:2) This, of course, is causing shortfalls in the pension coffers, tightening the screws on the continent’s national social systems and increasing the sense of tension felt amongst the continent’s peoples.

The movements of people onto the continent of Europe from without are also affected by other political changes from within. The issue of integration of non-European Muslims into traditional European society is related to that of European Union enlargement to the east and the integration of the “new 10”: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus (Greek portion). Muslim populations within the enlarged “Europe 25” will also

shift and influence each other in new ways not experienced before.

European enlargement is causing and will continue to cause ripples in employment distribution and unemployment, waves of disension over farm subsidies and an outright tsunami of discussion over just how these 25 historically and culturally disparate nations will decide on a common future.

Following the acceptance and signing of a European Union constitution (which has yet to be ratified by the various populations and governments), upcoming, European Commission agenda items include: the power of the presidency, national sovereignty, a common security force and/or foreign policy, economic cohesion, tax reform and the viability of continent-wide, EU services directives. (Schmid 2000, in Robinson 2000:19) (Carter 2005)

Treading water in this transitional sea which is Europe, how can we cull out what are some of the complicating factors involved in the challenge of integration and multiculturalism? Is Europe’s experiment at multiculturalism bubbling out of the confines of the original structures within which it was meant to stay? Some have come to the conclusion that the task is too complicated and that the experiment is a failure: that multiple cultures cannot coexist. (Kubosova 2005)

In his essay on “Constructing the xenophobic subject,” Giorgi comments that, “...the process of unification [within the EU] keeps stalling as a result of the diversity of views and approaches.” And in the same way, he says, “multiculturalism... is proving problematic.” (Giorgi in Pohoryles 1994:228)

The primary factor stalling unification and integration (and at times a debilitating one) is the fact that two major world religions, that of Islam and Christianity, along with their conflicting ideologies, are coming head-to-head. (Sancton 2000, in Robinson 2001:23) Michel writes that religion,

“serving especially as the most indicative feature of the presence of tensions at work in society, appears as a formidable vec-

tor of re-ideologisation. (Michel, Patrick. “Religion, democracy and change,” Pohoryles 1994:117)

In view of this wide variance in world views and accompanying tensions between these two historical enemies, whose “indicative feature” is religion, a relevant question is, “Are Europe and Islam compatible?” (Whether Europe sees itself as basically secular or Christian, the question is still applicable, as the effect of Christian traditions and values are engrained in the laws of the land, including those basic values of democracy, freedom of speech and human rights for all.)

A current discussion, which highlights some of the issues related to this question of whether Europe and Islam are compatible, is that of the possibility of Turkey joining the EU. Though accession talks have begun for Turkey, controversy is raging in the Union. “The unacceptability of Turkey for EC [EU] membership because of its Muslim character periodically resurfaces” in the context of discussions on the “assimilability of Muslims.” “This,” Schlesinger says, “links into the much broader issue of the position of Islamic minorities in Europe and obviously poses the question of the relations between being Muslim and being European”. (Schlesinger in Pohoryles 1994:45)

Cardinal Ratzinger, (now Pope Benedict XVI) whilst still the Pope’s trusted spokesman, said in an interview with Le Figaro magazine, that Europe is a continent bound by both culture and geography and, in this sense, is representative of a continent which is completely “other” to that of Turkey. What reasons are given by the Vatican? The wars and evidence of history, alone, should point to the fact that “melding the two continents would be a mistake,” says Ratzinger. Turkey, he says, thinks of itself as a secular country, but still “rests on Islamic foundations” and should consider coalescing with other, neighbouring nations in their own region with whom they would be compatible in the foundations of their identity. (de Ravinel 2004, in Robinson 2005:74)

History speaks to fundamental differences between Islam and all other religions, not unlike the conflicts between Christendom and all other religions. This meeting of people groups within the geographical boundaries of Europe is not only a collision of religions and cultures (both heralding claims of exclusivity), but is also a confrontation of religious fundamentalism found within Islam butting up against the rise of secularism in the West. This confrontation, acted out in many ways, is at the heart of the

challenge of multiculturalism in Europe.

Daniel Pipes writes in his New York Times article, “Muslim Europe: Ready or Not Here It Comes” in August, 2004. “As Christianity falters, Islam is robust, assertive, and ambitious,” (Robinson 2004:68) (Spencer 2004, in Robinson 2004:71)

Part of the challenge, in practical terms, is the very concept of authority which a religion has over its adherents, whether or not they see themselves as being particularly religious. In fact, religion and cultural identity often become interrelated to the extent that one cannot be extricated from the other. For example, saying one is Catholic in Ireland does not necessarily mean he or she believes what the Church seated in Rome teaches; along with other values, it means that you are loyal to a united Ireland and that you are not pro-British (or Protestant).

One element of this authority which a religion can hold over those of a certain cultural background, is that of the concept of right and wrong: the enforcement of the statutes of the religion, otherwise stated, the law. In North America, as Canada prepared to enforce Islamic law, or Shari’a, in late 2003, Canadian judges planned to give legal sanction to disputes between Muslims. (Wente 2004) Among Muslims, the concept of a body of laws which governs the practical issues of life is an accepted reality. But theocracies do not exist in “Christian” Europe. (Flood and Frey 1998, in Robinson 2000:14)

The very negation of ties to Christianity at the governmental level in Europe, noticed in the blatant and controversial omission of any mention of Christian influences or roots in European history in the text of the new European Union constitution, sheds clear light on the fact that the impact of the meeting of two cultures is not only one of Christian vs Islam, but is rather one in which the very question of whether Europe sees itself as Christian has to be tackled.

In the “Christian West,” Muslim leaders are horrified by the decadent, godless style of dress, advertising and male/female relations from which they want to protect their children and young people. They are clearly in favour of putting into practice Muslim standards of modesty. In the extreme, in some notable instances, male-dominated Islamic communities in low-income, high-rise buildings have become a law unto themselves, punishing girls who choose to wear Western clothing and associate with European boys through gang rape or immola-

tion by burning. (Crumley and Smith 2002)

In light of recent tides turning to the political right, what will be Europe’s continuing response to the growing challenge of dealing with the immigrants knocking at her doors and with those already living on the continent? Second- and third-generation immigrants now enjoy the right to vote and will certainly have considerable political influence in the coming elections.

After the brutal and dramatically pro-Islamic killing of filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands late last year, this small but progressively influential country (with 6% of its population Muslim and with some 30,000 new Muslims arriving every year) hardened its soft line on entrance of non-European immigrants. (de Borchgrave 2004, in Robinson 2004:72)

But as some governments are tightening their borders, others, like Spain’s new leadership, are granting amnesty to thousands, handing out legal residency and work status to those already living in the country. There is no consensus “across the board” in EU decision-making circles on how to handle the challenge of the immigrant wave. Not only are the numbers daunting, the not-so-simple logistics of processing the applications are a miniscule hurdle in comparison to the huge task of integration of these peoples into the European society. (“Spain’s Amnesty Program” 2005, in Robinson 2005:74)

Some German politicians want to take the route of “tolerance,” which, according to the Chief Executive of the huge German publisher Axel Springer AG, should be labelled “cowardice.” In a recent commentary in Die Welt, Dapfner writes,

“A substantial fraction of our (German) Government, and if the polls are to be believed, the German people, actually believe that creating an Official State “Muslim Holiday” will somehow spare us from the wrath of the fanatical Islamists.” (Dapfner 2005, in Robinson 2005:73)

In an effort to allow unique cultures to flourish within the host culture, there has not been a push by European governments to demand that imams and other Muslim religious leaders learn the local language, which could help pave the way for open dialogue within their local communities. The impact on the host society of letting the minority, immi-



grant groups grow in parallel to the existing, traditional culture, looms large as the numbers of immigrants keep climbing and as the values of the “new majority” start to take precedence in certain police “no-go” areas in Europe’s burgeoning, urban areas.

Though the populist reaction has generally, in the past, been a tolerant one, it is now characterized as one of rising dissatisfaction which feeds on isolated cases of outright discrimination and persecution. The reaction of a minority cross-section of the existing, traditional European population has swung wildly towards racism. A EuroBarometer survey reports that “41% of respondents are of the opinion that there are too many people from minority groups in terms of race, religion and culture living in their country.” (“Racism and Xenophobia in Europe” 2001:44) Giorgi provides what he sees as the logical link: he writes that the rise in racism across the continent suggests an “incompatibility of life-styles and traditions.” (Giorgi in Pohoryles 1994:230, quoting Balibar and Wallerstein 1991:92)

Right-wing, nationalistic political parties are gaining seats in the law-making bodies of the continent’s nations. (Wallace 2000/2001, in Robinson 2001:25) Their xenophobic agendas reach past immigrants with non-European heritage into settled communities of Jews within their midst. (Cohen 2000, in Robinson 2000:16) There is a general feeling in many countries in Europe that “immigrant ethnic identities ‘threaten’ or ‘challenge’ national identity.” (Rex, John. “Ethnic mobilization in a multicultural society,” Pohoryles 1994:214) Those who are “other” – not like us – are to be contained, to be set aside as second-class citizens, if we let them be citizens at all.

This confusion over its own identity, then, is at the root of a general unease Europe has about the possibility of integrating those whose identity is radically “other.” Ford says, “Buffeted by the crosscurrents of secular-



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ism, Christianity, and Islam – and mindful of a history of religious violence – they [Europeans] are wrestling with their values and identity as never before". (Ford 2005, in Robinson 2005:74)

As the inhabitants of Europe try to sort out their identities and nations attempt to define themselves in light of the influx of thousands of immigrants becoming citizens, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, has identified the extension of links between different religious communities as a priority for the next millennium... between Christians, Muslims and Jews in particular. (The Daily Telegraph 1999, in Robinson 1999:2)

One certain key to the outcome of the continent's dilemma has to do with dialogue. The ability to be in dialogue with those unlike ourselves, to try to see another way of thinking, to attempt to let the identity of "Europeanness" change, will be the key to whether integration and/or multiculturalism will work for Europe. Listening, taking the time and energy to clearly communicate opinions and points of view, reigning in racism and discovering national identity in the process, will all be paths on the road toward finding creative solutions to the immense task ahead. The steps we take in this direction of dialogue, as Evangelical leaders, will hopefully be bold and outspoken ones.

Islamic leaders in France are talking with French Jewish leadership. Racist attacks have plagued both communities. Perhaps they have more in common with each other these days than either group has with the existing French culture in which their peoples are trying to survive. But as was the case with European reaction to the invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, the populace can be pulling in a diametrically opposed direction from those who create public policy, in that case specifically, the heads of state of Britain, Italy and Spain. Just because the leaders are talking does not mean the general population of either the Muslim or the Jewish (or the traditionally European community) will be willing to listen to a point of view other than their own.

The immigrant communities themselves are dealing in their own ways with the challenge of integration though, typically, immigrants from North Africa and Turkey arrive in disadvantaged circumstances. World Pulse reports that many in the Islamic community "suffer marginalization, unemployment and poverty." ("EuroIslam" 2004, in Robinson 2004:66)

It seems that a first priority on arrival, as is the tendency of many immigrants, is to find

a sense of identity within a group that is most like themselves. Rex says, "...they are the better able to defend themselves collectively if their pre-migration identities are preserved." (Rex in Pohoryles 1994:215)

Reactions within the immigrant communities, more or less unorganized, range from the militant to the political with a middle ground attempting to be forged by a hybrid of "EuroIslam," a reaction to the radical fundamentalist response by some of Europe's Muslim leaders who feel the need to "distance themselves from militant Islam but not wanting to abandon their faith, a faith that supports Western democratic values but is less dependent on Middle Eastern doctrines." ("EuroIslam" 2004, in Robinson 2004:66)

Cardinal Ratzinger in his interview with *Le Figaro*, linked the rise in fundamentalism among Muslims in Europe with the "unrelenting secularism" found on the continent. He suggests that Muslim fundamentalism is actually "provoked" by secularism. He said: "This is all about a certain rejection that this world has chosen, one which refuses God and respect of that which is holy, a world which feels totally autonomous and which no longer knows the innate laws applying to the individual human being, a world which has reconstructed man according to his own mental schema. This loss of a proper sense of the sacred and of the respect of others provokes an auto-defensive reaction in the heart of the Arab and Islamic world. A profound mistrust is expressed here in the face of such a loss of the supernatural, which is perceived as being a great decline for the human race. Forced secularism, therefore, is not the proper response to the terrible crisis and challenge of religious fundamentalism..." (de Ravinel 2004, in Robinson 2005:74)

How do these divergent paths, these various expressions of Islam in Europe, cross or meet or veer off in completely differing directions? Are certain elements within the European, Islamic community, and in particular the more radical side of Islamist extremists, making use of their presence in "democratic" Europe? Some worry that the extreme elements and those purporting Islamic instruction in the public schools are taking advantage of the freedom of a democratic society to spread their ideologies. (Mulrine 2005, in Robinson 2005:73)

The bustling immigrant communities are rich in their own expressions of their inherited culture, mixing traditions, cuisine and clothing styles with their adopted ones. As second- and

third generation immigrants struggle to find new identities, some group together around what is familiar; many become religiously oriented in new ways in the face of a challenge to their sense of a cultural identity. Mosques are not only places of prayer but have also become cultural centres for the teaching of the Koran.

At times, in some quarters of Paris, cars are blocked as the narrow streets fill with prayer rugs, and hundreds of shoeless, Muslim men facing east touch their foreheads to the ground in the direction of Mecca. It is said when visiting the area surrounding the *Sacré Coeur* on one of Paris' prominent hilltops, that one could mistake the place and think they were in North Africa: no French heard spoken, no Western dress seen, fragrant spices and colourful cloth swirling in foreign mystery.

Muslim immigration, particularly originating in North Africa and Turkey, and the dwindling/aging of Europe's population are inextricably interrelated trends. We read that in order for Europe to sustain economic growth and fuel beleaguered pension packages, it must let thousands of immigrants into the work force. But, ultimately, it is this one issue, that of the integration of Muslim peoples into European society, felt as a "clash of civilizations," which has become, and will continue to be, the major spur prodding the continent into social upheaval. (Naim 1999, in Robinson 1999:6) (The *Wall Street Journal Europe* 2000, in Robinson 2000:7)

One thing is certain. The integration dilemma facing Europe is not going to disappear, and neither are all the non-European-looking faces which have become ubiquitous reminders.

Confronted with a volatile mix of cultures, religions and languages, those finding themselves living in Europe in the 21st century will need to be part of discovering what it means to be "European." Whether they take an active or passive role, each one will influence the road ahead. As Schlesinger writes, "Like it or not, Europeans are both observers and participants in the present transformation of their continent." (Schlesinger in Pohoryles 1994:33)

My thesis, then, is in keen agreement with Rex when he writes that,

"Arguably the most important problem in the political sociology of Europe today is that of the relationship which develops between the various nation states and the immigrant communities which have settled within their boundaries." (Rex 1998:121, in Robinson 1999:2)

The forces of societal upheaval and change in Europe will move forward with or without the consent of its population, that is certain; however, the participation of those on all sides of the debate and from all perspectives can, in some way, shape the outcome.

As we consider the future direction of Europe, various approaches to multiculturalism which have developed across the globe can be highlighted, here, through the use of several analogies. With each unique social ele-

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ment and cultural grouping in mind, we see contrasting ways in which Europeans and its immigrants could react to each other. These disparate people groupings may end up

- like vegetables in a soup whose greens, reds and yellows get mashed into a rich, brown stew
- like multi-coloured threads in a rug with interwoven pieces of rug wool dipped in varying dyes
- like beads on a necklace, beads whose hard

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edges keep separate any blending but which compliment each other

- like an explosive, chemical reaction, the violent consequence of acidic attitudes of racism and xenophobia
- like pigments in a van Gogh self portrait whose distinct hues blend in subtle shading as one moves away from the subject...

Only in retrospect will we see what path the people of Europe have taken. <<

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"Ambassador's briefing" is a regular e-journal review of trends, attitudes and changes in European society, with a view to their impact on ministry. Current and archived editions are available through www.gemission.com. Ruth Robinson, editor.

Vision verses:

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." 2 Corinthians 5:20

Men "who understood the times and knew what Israel should do"—200 chiefs, with all their relatives under their command": these were the men of Issachar, volunteers armed for battle with David. 1 Chronicles 12:32

Contrary to fears on both sides of the Atlantic, integrating Europe's Muslims can be done.

The West and Islam

Tales from Eurabia

THIS week George Bush was in Vienna, doing his best to mend relations with his allies. The list of disputes between the United States and Europe remains long and familiar: Guantánamo, Iraq, Iran, the common agricultural policy. Less easy for Mr Bush to talk about, let alone fix, is the equally long list of different attitudes from which so many transatlantic tensions seem to spring—opposing prejudices on everything from capitalism and religiosity to Mr Bush's "war on terror".

These underlying emotions—what a British historian, Sir Lewis Namier, once called "the music to which [political] ideas are a mere libretto"—occasionally converge around a particular issue, such as Guantánamo Bay or Hurricane Katrina. This can be unhelpful: Katrina made America look like a failed state, Guantánamo is not a typical example of American justice. Now a similar carica-

ture—this time about Europe—is forming in America. It is known as "Eurabia", and it represents an ever-growing Muslim Europe-within-Europe—poor, unassimilated and hostile to the United States.

Two years ago, the White House's favourite Arabist scholar, Bernard Lewis, gave a warning that Europe would turn Muslim by the end of this century, becoming "part of the Arab West, the Maghreb". Now there is a plethora of books with titles like "While Europe Slept" and "Menace in Europe". Stagnant Europe, goes the standard argument, cannot offer immigrants jobs; appeasing Europe will not clamp down on Islamofascist extremism; secular Europe cannot deal with religiosity (in some cities, more people go to mosques each week than to churches). Europe needs to study America's melting pot, where Muslims fare better.

Londonistan calling

Such advice gets short shrift from European leaders, who often blame Muslim militancy on American foreign policy. But something similar to Eurabia scares many Europeans too. Terrorism is part of it, thanks to the Madrid and London bombings (as well as September 11th). But it goes wider than that: the past two years have seen riots in France's banlieues, the uproar about Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, the murder of Theo van Gogh, a Dutch film-maker, and now the virtual exile (to America) of his muse, Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

Fears about "Londonistan" and so on have helped Europe's far right; on the other side of politics, a bizarre alliance has sprung up between the anti-war left and Islamic hardliners. But the respectable centre is split between France's strict integrationist approach (banning Muslim children from wearing head-scarves in state schools) and the more tolerant multiculturalism of Britain and the Netherlands. The debate about Turkey (and its 71m Muslims) joining the European Union is increasingly a Eurabian one. Meanwhile, at the centre of all this fuss Europe's Muslims are themselves riven by inter-generational arguments on everything from whether there is a European version of Islam to which cricket team to support.

Is Eurabia really something to worry about? The concept includes a string of myths and a couple of hard truths. Most of the myths have to do with the potency of Islam in Europe. The European Union is home to no more than 20m Muslims, or 4% of the union's inhabitants. That figure would soar closer to 17% if Turkey were to join the EU—but that, alas, is something that Europeans are far less keen on than Americans are. Even taking into account Christian and agnostic Europe's lousy breeding record, Muslims will account for no more than a tenth of west Europe's population by 2025. Besides,

Europe's Muslims are not homogenous. Britain's mainly South Asian Muslims have far less in common with France's North African migrants or Germany's Turks than they do with other Britons.

Arguments about alienation are also more complicated than they first appear. Many European terrorists were either relatively well-off or apparently well-integrated. The Muslims who torched France's suburbs last year were the ones who seldom attend mosques. First-generation immigrants (with the strongest ties to the Muslim world) seem to be less radical than their European-educated sons and daughters. And the treatment of them is far from uniform either: for all the American charges of "appeasement", the FBI is a downright softie compared with France's internal security services.

Give us jobs, education and a seat on the city council

Given these subtleties, perhaps the most dangerous myth is the idea that there is one

sure-fire answer when it comes to assimilating Europe's Muslims. In some cases, integrationism goes too far (France's head-scarf ban was surely harsh); but multiculturalism can too (Britain is now reining in its Muslim schools). America's church-state divide and its tolerance of religious fervour are attractive, but its fabled melting pot is not a definitive guide either: many American Muslims are black, and many Arab-Americans are Christian. In some ways, a better comparison (in terms of numbers and closeness of homeland) is with Latinos—and nobody in Europe is (yet) talking about building a wall to keep Muslims out.

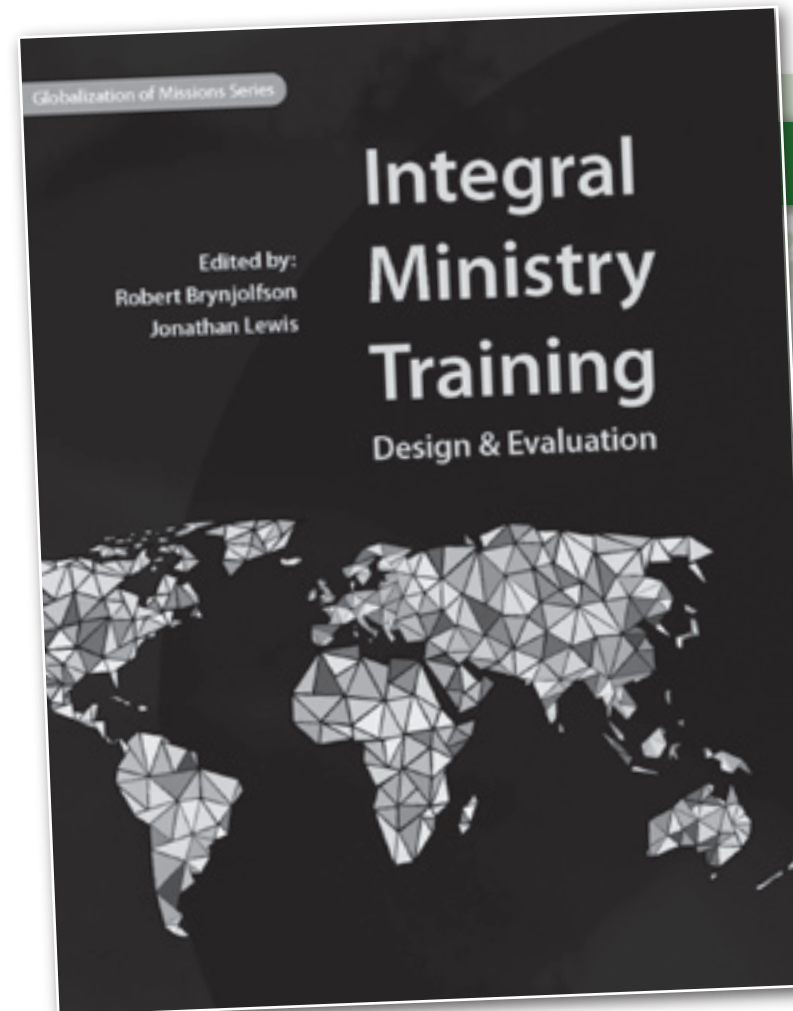
Yet amid all this hyperbole, two hard realities stand out. The first is the importance of jobs. In America, it is easy for a newcomer to get work and hard to claim welfare; in Europe the opposite is true. Deregulating labour markets is a less emotive subject than head-scarves or cartoons, but it matters far more.

Second, the future of Europe's Muslims, no less than that of America's Latinos, lies with the young. For every depressing statistic about integration—France's prisons hold nine times more young men with North African fathers than ones with French fathers—there are several reassuring ones: a quarter of young Muslim Frenchwomen are married to non-Muslim men; Muslims are flocking to British universities and even popping up in white bastions like the Tory party. In 50 years' time, Americans may be praising this generation of European Muslims for leading the enlightenment that Islam needed.

Europe's Islamic experience will be different from America's: geography and history have seen to that already. Integration will be hard work for all concerned. But for the moment at least, the prospect of Eurabia looks like scaremongering. <<

Jun 22nd 2006.
From *The Economist*

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Publications news from the Mission Commission

The Mission Commission is proud to announce the release of its newest book, **Integral Ministry Training Design and Evaluation**. Edited by Rob Brynjolfson and Jonathan Lewis, this volume is the product of work by the Mission Commission's, International Missionary Training Network and its global cadre of associates. Building on the MC's 1995 publication, **Establishing Ministry Training**, it includes re-editions of some of these original chapters as well as several new ones.

The book is scheduled to be published December this year. Anyone interested in receiving a pre-print promotional offer of this book for a highly discounted cost, should contact the editor at: robb@worldangelical.org.

Europeans, including the British, have long gazed wonderingly (and some would say enviously) at Americans, convinced that they are that tricky phenomenon, the neighbour who is like us but, at the same time, somehow very different.

Europe, Britain and America:

extracting a European voice from the historical debate about mission

Ever since the young American nation emerged, we Europeans have been busy analysing 'American exceptionalism'.¹ And we are amazed that a society which had its origins, generally speaking, in European culture, has been so changed by its experience of the New World. Also we are not quite sure what the relationship between us should be. Are we friends, or rivals or just plain incompatible?

The issue that this essay wants to raise is whether these questions have any importance for the way we think about and conduct mission today. Is there a European way? Is it different from an American way? Are two voices better than one, and has one obscured the other? Another question might be: is there any sense in which Europe speaks with a unified voice? Are the British, for example, while so obviously part of Europe geographically, more akin in their thinking to their American cousins than their European neighbours? In the past, as we shall see, many Continentals spoke of the 'Anglo-Americans'² as if they were one constituency and Europe was another.

As a way in, I am going to make an appeal

to history. I do this because, despite its contemporary flavour, these are not new debates. Particularly if we think of the history of the modern missionary movement as predominantly one which has little to do with Europe (Britain excepted), then immediately we need the corrective that Continental historians of mission have been trying to apply ever since the nineteenth century. Also, in striving to be heard, these historians have often voiced their concern precisely in terms of a critique of Anglo-American missiology. So let me set the scene.

The most obvious gap in the history of the modern missionary movement, at least as told by the Anglo-Americans, is the virtual silence that surrounds the Pietist and Moravian missionaries. I shall not try to tell their story here (another case of silence perhaps!) but William Carey, often called the 'Founder of Modern Missions', reached India almost a century after the first Pietist missionaries, Ziegenbalg and Plütschau, had been sent to India from Halle in North Germany. Furthermore the science of mission, a scholarly study of its history and theology, began on the Continent, and its proponents, men like Karl Graul (1814-64),

Gustav Warneck (1834-1910) and Hendrik Kraemer (1888-1965)³ produced work which (with the exception of the output of David Bosch – not an Anglo-American either) has not been equalled since. It has not been equalled but it has been ignored. It is not a coincidence that Gustav Warneck's work on missiology, *Evangelische Missionlehre*, has never even been translated into English.⁴

This marginalisation of Continental European mission is a long story but I want to pick out Gustav Warneck as somebody who directly confronted the issue in his day. He added the important question: is there a significant difference between mission as done by Anglo-Americans and Continental Europeans? There were, perhaps two 'big issues'. Warneck was suspicious of the thought of the two most influential figures in Anglo-American nineteenth century missiology, Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, and their disciples such as John Nevius and Roland Allen. He felt that they had over emphasised the issue of church autonomy at the expense of a more thoroughgoing indigenisation of the gospel., and that this led to churches gaining a premature independence based on what he called 'liberal and republican'⁵ ideas. If there were no long-term and painstaking indigenisation of the gospel then there would be no 'rooting in the life of the people'.⁶ The other (related) issue was the dispute with John Mott and his followers over the ethos of the Student Volunteer Movement with its slogan 'the evangelisation of the world in this generation' and its accompanying eschatology. Now, there is much to be said on

both sides of each of these issues. What I am at pains to point out is the depth and quality of the debate and its antiquity. Warneck raised these issues at the Missionary Conferences in London (1888), in New York (1900) and at the great Edinburgh Conference (1910). Though he did not attend any of these conferences he did make his views felt, and by a variety of means. (His non-attendance was partly in protest. English was the only official language at the Conferences and Warneck was not wrong in believing that Continental missions would find it hard to have their voice heard.) Always you sense that he and his colleagues were fearful that they would be sidelined and their viewpoints misunderstood or ignored.⁷

This may all sound like the beat of a 'a very distant drum'. Perhaps. But something was afoot here that we need to be aware of. There are plans, I gather, for another Edinburgh Conference, a hundred years after the first one. It would be sad if the same issues surface in 2010 still unresolved. So let me try to pinpoint what I think those issues were. Not all of these come from the Warneck era, but all of them, I believe, are still relevant to mission today. And let me try to express them in terms of a European 'voice'. This is what they (the Europeans) have wanted to say to us (the Anglo-Americans).

- The Anglo-American approach, following Carey and the BMS, has always favoured the missionary society,⁸ and indeed many Continentals have followed Carey's example. On the whole, however, this has provided the wrong framework; church based mission is to be preferred. This over emphasis on the role of the missionary society stems from a defective ecclesiology. (This debate has re-surfaced in our day. I am not saying, of course, that there were no Continental missionary societies, but that the foremost Continental missiologists 'continued to consider missionary work as a task for the church'.⁹)
- Anglo-Americans have not taken indigenisation sufficiently seriously. Consider, by way of contrast Karl Graul, who was passionately committed to what he called *Volkskirche* i.e. churches which adequately expressed the spirit of a particular people.¹⁰ While this may sound a little suspicious in the light of his proximity to later Nazi theories, the issues raised have never gone away.
- An impatient desire for closure – to see the missionary task completed 'in our generation' – leads to a wrong eschatology and vice versa.
- Proclamation cannot be promoted as an end in itself. This is to confuse proclamation and 'making disciples' (Matthew 28:19).

- The Kingdom of God must not be given an emphasis which excludes the church. It is worth recalling that between the World Wars, Hendrik Kraemer, in particular, was highly critical of the tendency of many American missionaries to equate the Kingdom of God with American ideals. (Karl Barth was even more scathing about German attempts to equate the Kingdom of God with German culture.)
- We need to fear the attitude which might be called 'the managerial mind'. This favours commercial and administrative models, perhaps even sociology and management theory rather than theology. It is based on 'idealism, optimism, activism and pragmatism'¹¹ (those great American virtues) which, by themselves, are no recipe for realistic mission praxis.

A number of issues still cluster around the famous missionary slogans such as 'the evangelisation of the world in this generation'. Was this little more than superficial propaganda? More seriously, did this sort of fizzy (sic) enthusiasm preclude the possibility of solid, careful work? Were the sloganeers merely impatient people who could not wait God's time, and was not God's purpose seen much more clearly in the historical process than in men's preconceived ideas? Did all this lead to an unhelpful diffusion of effort, to a search for quick results and to an unhealthy reliance on numbers instead of a realisation that slow growth is often healthy growth. Is something of the same spirit still at work today?

I have couched this comparison between Anglo-American and Continental European thought largely in terms of the European critique of Anglo-American methods and models. I realise that much could be said on the

other side and that my approach may sound rather negative. So, at risk of being somewhat repetitive, I thought I would try to express the European attitudes in a more positive way. They are characterised by:

- An acceptance of the often slow, long-term nature of mission, a sort of 'I planted, Apollos watered, God gave the increase' approach.
- A concern for the planting of churches which are not just 'independent', but also genuinely representative of the local culture.
- A mission practice which is based on a sound mission theology, along with a careful relegation of the other sciences to their proper place.
- Mission societies which are working together with churches and not independently of them.
- A definition of the kingdom of God which avoids 'culture Christianity' and gives due weight to ecclesiology.
- An avoidance of an unduly managerial approach, bearing in mind that 'successful' models of human enterprise are not always the best for the practice of mission
- A more 'peaceful' state of mind; less dramatic emphasis, less excited enthusiasm, less 'hype'.

My own feeling is that we need to hear these voices. Of course I may not be hearing them correctly myself, but this article is not intending so much to expound Continental missiology, but rather to set the scene in Encounters in such a way that its voice can be heard! The rift between Anglo-American and Continental missiology was not helped by two world wars. Nor has American hegemony since then, both in world politics and in the practice of mission, made it any easier to close the divide. All the more reason then that we find a space where European Continental missiology is free to express itself. <<

ENDNOTES

- 1 The earliest and still classic text is Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* which was published in 1835.
- 2 My own opinion is that 'Anglo-American' is a useful term, but more so at some times than others. The historical period under review includes a number of episodes (for example the Edinburgh Conference) in which there was something of a united front between the Americans and the British.
- 3 For further information on Graul, Warneck and Kraemer in the context of European Continental missiology see Jan Jongeneel, *European-Continental Perceptions and Critiques of British and American Protestant Missions*, a paper published by the North Atlantic Missiology Project in 1998. I owe a great deal to this paper for the historical section of this essay.
- 4 Jongeneel, p. 9
- 5 Ibid p. 11
- 6 Timothy Yates, *Christian Mission in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994 p. 21. Yates writes very perceptively about the American-European debate.
- 7 Jongeneel, pp. 9-11
- 8 See e.g. Andrew Walls, 'Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church' chapter 18 in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1996
- 9 Jongeneel pp. 5,6
- 10 Ibid pp. 8,9
- 11 This is the language of Hendrik Kraemer. See again Jongeneel p. 13

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"Europe, a peninsula of peninsula's on the western edge of the Eurasian landmass. A region, long referred to by historians, writers and politicians as a set of shared histories -conquest by the Romans, Christianity, Enlightenment and democracy. Most of these categories are constantly in flux."

Issues facing mission to Europe from a colonial perspective

The Welcome Project

A statement taken from TIME magazine, October 9, 2006. Although true in essence the expanding efforts of several European countries leading to colonisation certainly should be mentioned in this list as well. What is the 'counter-flux' when we consider the missional efforts both from Europe to the rest of the world as well as vice versa?

European colonialism and mission

As much has been said and written about this topic a few remarks will do: we all are aware of examples like the Spanish and Portuguese dividing their territory in Latin America, the British doing the same in Africa and the Dutch way of doing business in the Far East, just to mention a few. All of them



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brought clergy as well, reasoning that the pagans needed civilization. One might wonder which role 'the love of Christ compelling us' played in all these efforts.

A very good summary of this epoch can be found in 'Missionare aus der Zweidrittel-Welt für Europa' where is written:

"First the Latin speaking and catholic nations travelled to new, undiscovered, countries. Then the Anglo-Saxon countries followed. They all got involved in an imperialistic adventure. In this way 300 years of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism was followed by 150 years of protestant invasion. Attracted by geographic discoveries and new trade opportunities which opened to the South and the East,

the colonialists were convinced that they were bringing civilisation to the 'backward pagan people'. They became the masters of far countries, exported their manners and customs to these countries and forced the people to speak their language. And, of course, under the mask of aid they misused the very cheap local wages to obtain large profits for themselves."

Thucydides (an Athenian aristocrat at the time of Peloponnesian War) describes the relationship between states as

"a world in which the strong do what ever they like and the weak suffer what they should suffer. Power and domination are the basis of that system."

The described relationship between states prevailed during the so called colonial time, but can still be seen for instance during one of the present WTO summits. Only the clergy is no longer present.

Kees van der Wilden

Berlin (1884) had the 'honour' to be the meeting place of the leaders of the great (read powerful) countries of the world. These leaders met in order to divide the power of these countries over 'their' colonised regions. No representatives of the colonised countries were present to make their voice heard. New borders were drawn as still can be seen at a map of Africa for instance, where many borders are sharp straight lines from A to B. Sometimes though an exception to this rule can be seen, a sudden curve, as in the border between Kenya and Tanzania. A deviation due to the family ties between the British and the German people in power. As a birthday present the queen of England decided to give Mount Kilimanjaro to her German relative, thus the exception.

It is obvious that people in the Southern hemisphere even today are affected by this European attitude. Also Christians from these regions carry this historical knowledge and thus it is part of the luggage they bring with them when coming to Europe as missionaries.

The screenshot shows the homepage of 'the welcome project'. At the top, there are navigation links: Home, Mission, Training, Support, and Research. Below that, there are links for Members (Login, Register) and Languages (English, Français, Español, Português). A site search bar is also present. The main content area features a map of Europe with several red dots indicating mission partners. To the right of the map is a search panel titled 'How to use this map' with instructions and a search form. The search form includes filters for 'Welcome Partners from...' (Any), 'Working in...' (Europe), 'Denomination' (All), and 'Type of Ministry' (All). A 'Search' button is at the bottom of the form. At the bottom of the page, there is a small text block: 'site sponsored by Church Mission Society and endorsed by the World Evangelical Alliance (Missions Commission) and the European Evangelical Missionary Alliance'.

Unfortunately also the receiving party proves not to be free from their colonial background. Both aspects will be looked at in the following paragraph.

The perspectives from the South and the West

Since the 1960's many critical reactions could be heard from Africa and Latin America about their observations of how mission was performed among them. Their experiences caused comments like:

- First the white man came with the Bible, then he came with rifles, then with chains; finally he build a prison and forced us to paying taxes.
- When the Europeans came they had the Bible and we had the land. Now we have the Bible, they have the land.
- The Ethiopian emperor Theodorus II already said in the end of the 19th century: "I know how the British work: First arrive traders and missionaries, then ambassadors. A little later they arrive with guns.
- Orlando Costas about mission to South America: "The mission movement is tied indissolubly with the colonial and neo-colonial system. Because of this, Christ

Himself is seen as a white liberator, the great European 'conquistador', the justifier of the rich and the 'deafener' of the consciousness of the oppressor"

The experience shows to be a tied relationship between colonial activities and missionary efforts. As Ruth Tucker in her book 'From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya' states: "The strong critics of African leaders on the European mission efforts are caused by the relationship between mission and colonialism and by the export of European civilization."

Of course we also need to realise that not all what was done in the cooperation between colonial powers and missionaries had a negative effect.

J.D.Y Peel in his book 'Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba' explains both the advantages and disadvantages of this collaboration. His research reveals as well that among the missionaries themselves different opinions were held when speaking about the (in)dependency of the mission, in the end though it becomes clear that the disadvantages prevail over the advantages.

But not only missional efforts directly related to colonial activities have its effect on the Christian community of the Southern hemisphere. It appears that the colonial attitude also has rooted on the hearts and minds of the European mission leadership.

Half way the 19th century the intention of the European mission groups working in the Southern hemisphere was still to respect the presence of Christians in that part of the world and to just be initiators for further growth of Christianity in that part of the world. The decisions made by the political leaders in Berlin though, whether or not voluntarily, changed this intention.

The above became obvious during the Edinburgh conference 25 years later.

Edinburgh (1910) showed a rather simple view of 'the missional flow': The Christian West should Christianize the rest of the world, a view fully compatible with the colonial experience. The same attitude is reflected by the very small number of delegates from the rest of the world attending this conference. This notwithstanding the fact that statistics showing a figure of almost 100% Christianity in Europe were far from correct while, on the other hand,

the presence of active Christianity in the South was almost totally neglected.

It took until Lausanne (1974) before the eyes of the worldwide mission community were opened for reality. And even then it took a decennium or more before this reality was converted into real efforts to respect each other and establish appropriate cooperation between the so called South and the West.

Until this very day though the mentioned cooperation is mainly seen among those mission leaders involved in mission work worldwide. Several agencies, focussed on a specific region in the world, still seem to follow the old, colonial paradigm. Church leaders in Europe apparently are even more caught in this paradigm.

In order to bring a change in this situation the Welcome Project was initiated.

Welcome Project

The Welcome Project is meant to be a Code of Good Practice for European church and mission leaders on the one hand and non-European missionaries to Europe on the other. It tries to build a bridge between the old and the new paradigm, between the tradition of the Old Sending Countries and the missional eagerness of the New Sending Countries.

This Code was accepted by the members of the European Evangelical Missionary Alliance (EEMA) during their annual meeting in October 2004 and is endorsed by the Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA-MC).

Although this Code covers much more than the effects of the historical past, it does pay attention to these matters. Regularly the European church leader or the non-European missionary does not recognise his attitude as being a result of history. For example when the eagerness of answering Gods calling surpassed the need for preparation and training for the missionary, the Western churches were quick to call them 'bible and toothbrush' missionaries. Still that condescending attitude is present even though nowadays however the missionary from the Southern hemisphere is very much aware of the need for training and the contextualisation of the Gospel focussed on a post Christendom Europe.

Also the attitude of the European churches against a new, other, livelier, culture of worship was greatly underestimated by the Southern missionaries. The mind-set of the European, again,

is one of "knowing for much longer how worship should be done", but remarkably enough the missionary feels either insecure: "Isn't he after all the servant?" or –as an escapist of the old rule- he tends to overrule by "doing it his way", refusing to listen to counsel even when this counsel was given with good intentions.

Clearly this leads to mutual frustrations. The Welcome Project tries to involve both parties in a program helping them to get acquainted with each other and to understand the background of felt sensitivities.

Conclusion

K. Rajendran, director of the India Missionary Association and chairman of WEA-MC wrote lately:

"we must be sensitive for different areas of the world, as the new Christian world is trying to figure out what is Christianity for them in the region without breaking the basic doctrines. So there has to be caution. The churches and the traditions of the traditional Christianity will become different, especially in the future as there is a tremendous reaction to the colonization and westernization of the last hundred or two hundred years."

Caution is needed. Caution on the one hand to understand the reaction of the non-European missionary against presumable Western domination, but still showing an enormous eagerness to preach the Gospel to a secularised Europe and on the other hand the stance of the European Christian: although in the political and economical realm the Western supremacy still continues (at least in the hearts and minds of the Westerners) European Christians still need to come to terms with the fact that European Christianity is a minority movement. Within Europe itself, but also when looking to the Christian and mission developments in the South. That's why the European church is faced with a contradiction between 'feeling, or sensing' and 'reality'. Until this very day Europeans wonder what help the South can give at all. Should Europe not be their helper?

Unfortunately the relational gap between coloniser and colonised still exists.

Our non-European brethren do come to Europe though in spite of their own sensitivities towards Europe and the European hesitance to welcome them. That's a fact. According to Comibam, the Latin American Mission Movement, more than 1000 Latinos work as missionaries in Europe. Africans and

Asians show similar figures, not always though directly send as missionary to Europe, but frequently as a Christian immigrant who takes up his or hers responsibility as a witness for Christ.

The vision of Jean Monnet (1888-1979), the 'founding father' of the European Union, was to unite. In the 1950's he wrote:

"The six European countries (the founding countries of the EU, KvdW) did not start the huge undertaking of tearing down separating walls in order to erect even higher walls against 'the outside world'. We do not connect states, we unite people"

That vision appears to be at the mercy of politicians and thus resulting not in a new wall but in a 'silver curtain' around the 25 countries that form the European Union. Protectionism seems to be the key word. The European Christian needs to be cautious not to repeat its mistake when adapting to the colonial attitude by now accepting this protectionist standpoint.

Especially as Christians we are expected to unite people, to tear down walls and curtains and above all they have to realise and accept that the West has to deal with its pride of historical (and false) leadership. The brethren from the South should balance their urgency to preach Jesus with the same eagerness to unite. Only that is the testimony the world is looking for. <<

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Europe is in need of mission. But what exactly does mission mean in the European context? This question has been intensely discussed in the European mainline churches and the European Lausanne Committee between 1980 and 2000. From this debate basic models for a contextual theology of mission in Europe have emerged, which provide a basis for further discussion.¹

Towards a Contextual Mission Theology for Europe

From the perspective of God's mission (missio Dei), Europe has always been a mission country. But recently the fact has become more obvious. Indian Christian leader Francis Sunderaraj describes what he sees looking out of the 10/40 Window from India towards Europe: 'spiritually bankrupt churches, total indifference to Christ and the principles of the kingdom, moral degradation and ever increasing adherence to the gods of secular humanism, materialism and tribalization and to movements such as New Age'.²

1. The Church is the Soul of Europe: an ecclesiocentric-inculturational model

In 1980 the Polish worker's union 'Solidamosh' (Solidarity) caused the first cracks in monolithic communist Eastern Europe – with the support of the Catholic Church. At the same time, Pope John Paul II initiated his career promoting the new evangelization of Europe. Jacques Delors, former French president of the EU-Commission, agreed. We have to give a soul to Europe. When the communist system in the East had finally collapsed and Western Europe didn't have much to offer apart from economic concepts, it became even clearer: the new 'House of Europe' needed a

spiritual and ethical foundation. The theme of 'New evangelization' consequently turned into the central topic at the Symposia of the Roman Catholic European Council of Bishops (CCEE)³, leading up to the 'Special Synod of Bishops on Europe' in Rome 1991.⁴

The center of John Paul II's vision is the inculturation of the Gospel in present day Europe on the basis of its Catholic-Christian past. His goal is a new creative synthesis between the Church and post-modern European culture. The Pope's vision for Europe is inspired by his conviction that Europe is intrinsically Christian since its Catholic baptism in the early medieval times. Thereby he personifies European culture and history and treats it according to Roman Catholic sacramental doctrine. Present-day Europe continues 'under the sacramental sign of its covenant with God'. European unity, too, is interpreted from a mystical point of view: medieval Catholic Europe is pictured as the 'seamless coat of Christ' (cp. John 19:23), which was torn into pieces first by the break with the Eastern Orthodox Church, then by the Protestant Reformation and finally by secularist atheism. The goal of new evangelization therefore is to recapture the reality of the one (Catholic) Church being the mystical soul of one Europe.

Three ways of missionary involvement develop from this vision: (1) Socio-ethical involvement on the various political and cultural platforms and levels of European society. (2) Personal spiritual and sacramental renewal.

In Ireland, for example, a movement which calls itself 'Evangelical Catholics' emphasizes the importance of the Bible and evangelism – within the framework of the parochial system.⁵ (3) Ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue in order to re-establish the "seamless coat of Christ" which in the last analysis is also a picture for the Church's exclusive soteriological inclusivism: the full truth of Christ can only be found in the Catholic 'mother-church'.

This ecclesiocentric missionary vision is not shared by all within the Roman Church. Pluralist Catholic theologians reject the notion that Europeans should be brought back into the Church and its theology. Rather, they argue, the Church should meet people where they are and encourage them in their own spiritual journey.⁶

2. Discovering God in Europe: a cosmocentric-pluralist model

A similar view is presented by the Conference of European Churches (CEC)- the WCC-related forum of Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches in Europe. The full assembly in 1986 Stirling, Scotland, resolved to give top priority to 'the mission of the Churches in a secularized Europe'.⁷ Different aspects of this mission are studied in succeeding consultations in Switzerland, Sweden and Crete.⁸ The model which emerged in these conferences represents almost a reversal of the ecclesiocentric concept. The church is not the soul of Europe. Europe does not need such a soul, since the missio Dei is directly taking place in

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all of European society. This model combines orthodox theosis-theology and the ecumenical kosmos-christology (WCC Assembly New-Dehli 1961) which asserts that with the coming of Christ a salvation-historical transformation process of all creation was inaugurated. This is combined with Paul Tillich's post-modern interpretation of the Christian justification doctrine: God is not only justifying the sinner, but also the doubter and modern European despair as such. In this way Europe and the European experience itself are 'holy ground' and a 'sacrament', where God and man meet.

The European Enlightenment is especially interpreted as a period where Europeans were liberated from the dogmatic pressures of ecclesiastic inculturations. Mission in Europe therefore must not propagate the institutional Church, but the opening up of Churches to the Holy Spirit's immediate work in post-modern and multi-religious European societies. Dialogue is the way of the discovery of God's presence in secular Europeans and ethnic minorities.

Pluralist mission theologian W. Ustorf, Birmingham UK, goes further, pleading for a new European Christology from a psychodynamic perspective. In contrast to the biblical witness he thinks that the admittance of shadow sides in Jesus Christ (chaotic, disintegrative, disturbed, guilty) will help Europeans to identify with Jesus. Ustorf concludes: 'It seems that the disestablishment of Jesus Christ is generating ... new space to inherit the treasures of other religions ... and to overcome the heritage of anxiety and aggressiveness. This would alter very much the format and structure of Christian mission ... to a new form of a composite, bi-religious, or pluri-religious awareness'.⁹

Not everyone at the CEC-Consultations went along such lines. Romanian theologian Dimitru Popescu affirmed a New Testament based Christology 'from above' as basis of a truly liberating mission in Europe. Raymond Fung, former Secretary of Evangelism at the WCC, emphasized the 'missionary koinonia' in the fellowship of the Triune God as the basis for mission in Europe which consists of both: patient waiting for lost European sons to experience the love of the Father as well as active running towards them in the crossing of frontiers.¹⁰

3. Communicating Christ to Europeans: a Bibliocentric-holistic model

Close to these latter views we find the model which emerged during the conferences of the European Lausanne Committee (ELC)

in Stuttgart 1988, Manila 1989 and Bad Boll 1992.¹¹ In Manila and later in Uppsala, Os Guinness pointed to the deep spiritual challenge of mission in Europe: 'The ultimate factor in the church's engagement with modernity is the church's engagement with God'.¹² Therefore, according to the ELC conviction, the renewal of biblical spirituality forms the beating heart of missiological reflection and involvement in Europe today. 'The only way to be delivered from Euro-pessimism is to catch a fresh vision of Christ!' (John Stott in Stuttgart 1988). The ELC is convinced that Christ can neither be directly discovered in European history nor be confined to a mystical Catholic-European connection. Only the historically and theologically authentic witness of the New Testament together with the present work of the Holy Spirit is the basis on which Europeans can personally encounter Jesus Christ as their Liberator and Lord.

European history and cultures are interpreted in the creative tension between creation and sin, grace and judgement. Europe therefore offers bridges as well as barriers to the Gospel. European history, economic union, pluralist, post-modern and post-Marxist realities are always both—a chance and a challenge. The goal of mission in Europe includes cultural and political renewal on the basis of the Gospel as Public Truth (L. Newbigin). The heart of mission in Europe are local churches crossing cultural, social or religious barriers with the biblical message of Jesus Christ to reach the neighbourhoods and give them a holistic witness through 'the proclamation and the demonstration of the love of God in Jesus Christ'.¹³

Local churches and the local church, understood as 'all believers in that place', are the plausibility structure for evangelistic witness: 'we will give ourselves in a servant spirit to meet material, spiritual ... and cultural needs of as many people as possible in our neighbourhoods'.¹⁴ This mission can happen in traditional parochial structures as well as through independent mission and church planting movements. The ELC therefore affirms ecclesiological plurality within the unity of the Gospel.

4. Evangelical conclusions from the debate

So what does mission mean in the European context? As an evangelical (who identifies self-critically with the last model), I think we can also learn from the other models. The Catholic inculturational model

helps us to understand the importance of Christian community, tradition and its relevance for culture. The Protestant-pluralist model reminds us that God has provided points of contact in every society. It challenges us rightly to listen carefully to and learn from secular Europeans. But both models also represent some form of European religion which needs to be thoroughly challenged from a biblical point of view. Here are some further perspectives.

First, European Religion or Missio Dei?

Hope for and mission in Europe are based on the conviction that God became Man in Jesus Christ - for everyone on earth including all Europeans. His Holy Spirit is active in Europe 'to convict of ... sin and righteousness and judgement' (John 16:8), and to cause Europeans to turn and follow Jesus Christ. But if European Churches undermine this biblical missio Dei by substituting it with a missio Europae and by submitting the missionary text of the Bible to ecclesiastical or to pluralist philosophical and societal norms (and thus confusing text and context), they deprive themselves of the hope which comes from the fact that God is not a prisoner of European history and culture, but the living and almighty God, who has spoken and laid down his promises in the creative and normative text of the Bible. In this respect the Biblio-centric model can show the way forward.

Second, Mission in Europe has deep roots and a wide scope

This kind of Bible-centered and holistic mission in Europe is not new. It took place when Martin Luther challenged the mighty Roman-Catholic inculturation in 1517 with his solus Christus, sola scriptura, sola gratia and sola fide; when William Booth started his mission to the marginalized in industrial London in 1865; when Francisco Paula y Ruet planted evangelical churches in Spain in the 1860s; when Dietrich Bonhoeffer died in 1945 in resistance to the Nazi-regime and when Francis Schaeffer discussed European philosophy and arts with agnostic students in Switzerland after World War II – just to mention a few examples. Today, new missionary movements are forming in the older denominations and in new independent church-planting movements. The Hope-for-Europe-Network initiated in 1994, co-sponsored by the European Evangelical Alliance and the European Lausanne Committee, was a courageous attempt to express and encourage this complex 'unity in diversity'.¹⁵ Mission in Europe needs

to know and study its own history and the diverse missionary landscape in Europe today; this will provide encouragement and insight for future planning.

Third, Gospel Communities

It is a myth that Europeans are no longer interested in truth. Yet their search for truth is hidden within the search for identity and community. Local missionary churches as visible communities of the Kingdom of God consisting of women, men, youth and children trusting Jesus Christ in their daily lives are the plausibility structures for the uniqueness of the Gospel and its mission in pluralist Europe today. They will function as a semeion (Greek: sign, symbol) woven into the texture of European culture and pointing to the hope found in the sure promises of God. Europeans need Christian friends and communities that can show them how the Gospel works in real lives.

Fourth, Narrative Truth

'This generation will ... become converted to the Christian community. However, we need to make sure they are converted not only to the community but to the King of the community, Jesus Christ'.¹⁶ Mission in Europe therefore is the challenge to tell Europeans the biblical story of the Living God and his Son. The less people know this true and transforming story, the more evangelism needs to be narrative and not one that immediately calls for decisions. In a Europe filled with imaginary media-stories it is decisive to affirm that the biblical story is true as well as life-transforming. This stresses the importance of missionary apologetics. Contemporary Europeans hunger for a truth that they are convinced cannot be found – because history and science seem to show that everything is relative. Mission in Europe needs to show why relativistic pluralism does not make sense and why Jesus Christ is the one and decisive Word of God in a world of so many words.¹⁷ This is real good news for Europeans, who need to encounter the truth about themselves and discover the truth of Jesus Christ that will set them free (John 8:36).

Fifth, Gospel, Plurality and Pluralism

Mission in Europe needs to distinguish between plurality and pluralism. While pluralism (relativism) is the greatest apologetic challenge, religious freedom and plurality are a consequence of and a chance for mission. Plurality is a consequence of mission history

in Europe, since only the biblical view of man creates respect and tolerance in spite of differing religious opinion. Even the Enlightenment emphasis of religious freedom has gospel roots. Religious plurality is a chance for mission since it provides freedom of religious choice and makes possible the presence of people of non-Christians faiths. The present pluralist ideology in Europe will not be able to maintain a basis for religious freedom and plurality in the long run. Thus, Christian mission in Europe increasingly has important public dimensions.

Sixth, World Mission in Europe

Mission in Europe is part of God's world mission. The strong growth of evangelical churches in the Two-Thirds World is an encouragement for mission in Europe: 'God has not finished with our continent. God can step in again to reveal his power!' Europeans can learn from the missiological experiences of churches in the non-western world in non-Christian contexts. European missionaries that have worked in other cultures will also have a lot to contribute to the missiological challenge in Europe. People from all continents and

world religions are living in Europe. Many of them have never heard the Gospel. But many of them are also coming as mature Christians, immigrants, workers and missionaries, to reach out to ethnic minorities and secular Europeans. What does that mean for local churches, denominations and partnership in mission in Europe?

Finally, a Spiritual Challenge

Mission in Europe is a spiritual challenge which transcends human strategic thinking and planning. The heart of contemporary European culture is suffocated by the 'deliberate locking-out of genuine transcendence'. Mission in Europe can only rely on God's Word and Spirit to open up this 'iron cage'. When God speaks, not even the worst or best of our hermeneutics and strategies can hold him down.¹⁸ The centre of mission in Europe therefore is found in a Bible-centred multi-denominational and –cultural missionary community praying the prayer of Moses: 'Show me your glory' (Ex. 33,18) and the prayer of Isaiah: 'Here am I, send me' (Is. 6,8). <<

ENDNOTES

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Beyond the Preamble: searching for God in a secularising Europe

1. The Challenge of Europe

The absence of any reference to God or the Christian faith in the Preamble of the European Constitution and the manifest failure of the European Churches to change the minds of the politicians highlights the extent to which current European policy making takes place in a secular vacuum. The Constitution guarantees the Christian churches a permanent consultative role within the European institutions but even this fails to assure individual believers that European policy makers take sufficiently seriously the motivating ability of the Christian faith. This is strange given the most recent work of Jürgen Habermas, the German neo-Marxist philosopher who suggests, persuasively, that Europe may be seeing a 'return to the religious', and uses the term 'post-secular' to describe this latest phenomena in the career of religion within European history.

Yet, the fact remains that the complexity within Western Europe is reflected in the equally complex situations found in the post-Soviet societies of Central and Eastern Europe. Reflecting on this, the call for Papers at the 2004 International Society for the Sociology of Religion (ISSR) Conference highlighted the barriers that remain to be bridged in the attempt to understand religion at a pan-European level. The invitation for papers not only made reference to the diversity of religious experience across these countries, but also pointed to the diversity of methodological approach to the study of religion.

Let us take one example. The Slovakian National Census in 2001 revealed a 10% increase since 1991 in the number of people who self-describe as 'Christian' from 76 to 86%. Are we to understand the increase as a reversal of secularisation? To understand such phenomena fully it is necessary to understand something of the immediate post-Soviet historical situation. In Hungary in 1956, with the relaxing of restrictions, many previously underground groups (the Scouts, Christian groups, etc.) emerged to draft letters requesting permission to start up new groups. Their letters are displayed in the House of Terror in Budapest. Many letter writers were rounded up and punished following the collapse of the Hungarian uprising. Asking Slovaks in 1991, only eighteen months to two years after the 'velvet revolution', to indicate religious affiliation was always likely to generate anxiety among a certain percentage of the population. Such stories, and others like it, contribute to the complexity of understanding the situation of religious belief and practice in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989.

There are also significant developments within Western Europe that require careful reflection by those with an interest in the Christian research and study of religion. I mention merely two here. The first is the presence of large numbers of migrant and ethnic minority congregations and significant numbers of those from Muslim backgrounds undergoing Christian baptism. Perhaps more significant

is the rising tide of scholarly voices being raised against the classical theory of secularisation. Its power to monopolize the manner in which religious discourse is framed in Western Europe is waning, as the sociological and philosophical consensus begins to break down.

Rob Hay

I want to turn to a discussion of these shifting trends at the outset of this paper before I begin to take a more detailed look at the current situation in Europe with regards to the study of Christianity and other religions in Europe.

2. The ebb and flow of secularisation

There can be little doubt that any serious student of contemporary European religiosity has to give an account of secularisation. The debate has raged for nearly fifty years. However, more recent contributors to the debate, including several former secularization theorists who have since recanted, offer evidence that the consensus surrounding classical forms of the secularization theory is beginning to break down. New possibilities and approaches to the questions raised by European religiosity and secularization are being suggested. Sociologists and theologians within Europe¹ and North America are enlivening the debate that has focused on the inevitability of religious decline in modern societies. Sociological mantras learned during the heady days of the sixties and seventies are no longer felt to be adequate in this rapidly moving

debate. Church and Christian leaders who wish to engage with contemporary European societies must do so with a greater awareness of the sacred and secular diversity that exists across Europe.

Equally, there can be little doubt that secularism and secularisation continue to provide significant numbers of the citizens of Europe with a framework for shaping ethical decisions, priorities, actions, worldview, 'beliefs', and their attitudes towards other individuals, social groups, and institutions, including the Church. Further, as Raymond Fung reminds us, "In talking about our secular neighbours, we are also talking about ourselves."² Within such a framework religion has little or no value in the public realm and is considered to be a purely private matter. As a result, the privatisation of religion has tended to accelerate the degree of nominal religiosity. Consequently church members demonstrate an attendant lack of spirituality accompanied by a widely reported suspicion on the part of the wider population towards the church as an institution. Churches are accused of exercising undue power and influence over individuals and society and promoting mission merely as a means of extending their influence. One thinks of the recent reaction to the statements by the Italian candidate for the European Commission, Rocco Buttiglione, who contends that:

"I have the right to think that homosexuality is a sin, but this has no effect on politics, because in politics, the principle of non-discrimination prevails, and the state has no right to stick its nose in these situations."³

How one responds to this statement is likely to reveal to what extent one feels Europe is, or should be, a continent of secularizing nations.

To gain a picture across Europe requires an examination of the constituent countries that make up the whole. The European Values Survey (EVS) is probably the most compre-

hensive grounding for any attempt to begin detailed research at a national level.⁴

The surveys pose questions about church attendance and religious beliefs and deploy a similar methodology to that used by Gordon Heald through the UK-based Opinion Research Business. His work has returned consistent figures (between 70-72%) for people who describe themselves as 'Christian', figures borne out by the UK Census 2001 when a religious question was included for the first time in nearly 150 years.

The response to the question, 'Do you believe in God?' ran from 97% in Poland to 39% in the Czech Republic. The contrasts within Europe sometimes appear to defy explanation. The former Czechoslovakia not only divided politically during the events of the 'Velvet revolution' but the divide remains in terms of religious belief. The percentage of those who describe themselves as 'Christian' in Slovakia, between 84-86%, is over double that of its close neighbour. A similar contrast in Germany, between former East and West, has also been widely reported. The EVS is most helpful in deploying a common methodology for determining levels of church/mosque/temple attendance, belief in God, religious practice and religious affiliation.

Despite the cautions suggested by the findings of the European Values Survey⁵, the trends across Europe should make sobering reading for leaders of the European Churches that are seen to have decreasing relevance to the everyday lives of Europe's citizens. However, as I have travelled I have begun to feel that a more nuanced understanding of secularisation and its impacts may be called for. In their work *Religion in Secularizing Europe*, summarising the findings of the European Values Surveys of 1980, 1990, and 1998 the report's editors write,

Secularization has not proceeded at a similar pace all over Europe.⁶

For many citizens of Central and Eastern Europe, 'doubly secularised' may be a more appropriate description. For them, soviet atheistic materialism has been followed rapidly by a western, capitalistic form of materialism. The story of Gabor is instructive in this regard:

Gabor Kovacs is a bright, engaging and articulate Hungarian in his mid 30s.

He is English and German-speaking and learnt English in his spare time to enable him to improve his career prospects with the multi-national companies that have been relocating offices to Budapest over the last fifteen years or so. He has worked for various multi-national offices in Budapest over the last seven or eight years and although he recognises the economic advantage of working for the western multi-nationals, he is very aware of the social cost to the individual employees and feels this personally. He speaks of being a 'slave' of western multi-nationals and complains that the higher than average salary brings with it a higher than average set of expectations. He laments that he is unable to give more time to his family commitments. He complains that colleagues in London, Paris, or Frankfurt have highly unrealistic expectations. He suspects that they sometimes tell him that his allotted tasks should only need eight hours in the working day when in fact they know that eleven are needed. His working day is typically eight to eleven hours long, a fact he resents.

He readily suggests that the Soviet education of his youth offered no religious education but reveals that he is very interested in religion as an alternative to capitalism's inhuman processes. He thinks that it might provide a way of achieving inner peace, harmony and a way of dealing with the stresses of modern life. He also wonders whether religion can provide an alternative ideological or value base.

He suggests that Hungary and other EU accession states are likely to pay a high social cost for entry into the EU and believes that many of the accession states are in the pockets of the larger Western nations. Perhaps somewhat ironically therefore, he aspires to be a world citizen, or at least a European one (although he hesitates to tie this too closely to the European Union), and enjoys travelling. He is fearful of nationalisms and is fearful that such factors may be de-stabilising in the enlarged EU. He asks whether the EU knows what it is doing by inviting potentially unstable nations into enlarged membership.

His interest in religion extends particularly to eastern, esoteric, religions, including Buddhism. He readily admits that he has little



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time for the study and devotion required by most religions. His understanding of religion is fairly individualistic and he rarely talks of religious 'groups', 'communities', or even 'churches'.

My encounter with Gabor reveals, I believe, that there are Europeans who, though carrying the burden of double-secularisation, instinctively believe that religious belief may in some way provide a way towards deeper personal integration and possibly a way to resist the de-humanising tendencies of the western multi-nationals that have recently arrived in Central and Eastern Europe.

Metropolitan Daniel of Iași, Romania, argues persuasively that in the face of such a predicament,

"Secularization obliges the Church to renew its spiritual life, to become more responsible in the world, more sensitive to the presence of Christ in the "signs of the time", in the social struggle for justice, freedom and human dignity; even to experience often the situation of being mar-

ginalized, in order to better understand those who are marginalized or forgotten in different societies. Secularization calls paradoxically for more holiness of life, for a deeper spirituality."⁷

Resisting the de-humanising tendencies of the western institutions and corporations, in some instances, is given institutional expression. In countries such as Russia, for example, the Orthodox Church is widely seen as an important ally in resisting the inroads being made by less desirable elements of western individualism and secularization (although in some versions, this seems to give way to extreme ideological expressions). In such countries, perhaps ironically, where minority churches feel themselves disadvantaged by the dominance of a majority Church, the attraction of a secular State as the only apparent means of securing religious freedoms is difficult to resist.

Grace Davie has put the case well for an understanding of 'European exceptionalism' but she would be the first to admit that her analysis fails to give an adequate account of the complex social and historical realities of Central

and Eastern Europe.⁸ Further work is needed in these areas to understand more precisely the interaction between Gospel and culture.

The increase in the reporting of forms of contemporary spiritualities in the UK, informed in part by the work of David Hay and Kate Hunt, contributes to the developing sense that all is not well with the classical understanding of secularization. Work currently underway in Britain, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden (and possibly, Ireland) is attempting to understand and learn how best to respond to those people with no formal religious affiliation but who describe themselves as 'spiritual'.

Attendances at the film 'Passion of Christ' suggest a significant level of popular interest in the person and story of Christ. I do not want to offer a theological or artistic evaluation of this film(!) but simply to draw attention to the appeal of the Gospel narrative and the corresponding failure on the part of the churches of Europe to engage its peoples with it. The churches continue to empty at an alarming rate across Europe and their attempts to mediate the Gospel narratives seem less convinc-

ing, less appealing, and more institutionally demanding than handing over eight euros for a night at the movies. However, eight euros is obviously considered good value for the many within Europe who are constructing individualized ways of making sense of religious narrative, symbolism, and ritual.

In the Netherlands, the tragic death of Theo van Gogh is a reminder of the power of religiosity to stimulate both a strong aversion (van Gogh's work) as well as strong sympathies (van Gogh's assailant). I also note the launch of the new Dutch version of the Bible. I visited the Netherlands two days after its launch on the 27th October, 2004 but could not obtain a copy in the local bookstore in Amersfoort. They had already sold out.⁹ As a part of the launch the Queen read Genesis 1:1-10 on prime time national TV, featured in a five hour programme on the Bible. A friend, standing in line to buy his copy, asked other purchasers whether they would be reading it. The most common response was, 'No, I just wanted to own a copy!' A survey conducted at the same time revealed that only 33% of the Dutch population regards itself as Christian.

How the famously tolerant Dutch will handle questions of integration in their multi-religious society will doubtless continue to interest the rest of the Europe. In France, the banning of religious symbols in public schools is a timely reminder that secular public policy is not exercised consistently within Europe. In a perverse contrast with the French experience, Muslims who wish to own a passport in equally irreligious Denmark¹⁰ are required, as loyal Danes, to carry an image of the crucified Christ on the inside front cover.

Moving on from the Dutch bookshop we visited a trendy clothes store and on entering were surprised to be greeted by a bleeding heart Jesus, a Madonna and Child, and a Crown of Thorns. These were not seen as religious icons,

but as style icons, borne on the sleeves, chests, and quilted padding, of jackets, t-shirts, and other items of clothing.¹¹ Religion may have lost its institutional power base but, in this instance, it has not disappeared, just been captured and subverted by the fashion houses, including G-SUS Industries. Are we to understand by this that the secular is being sacralised or can we interpret it as evidence of the unstoppable appetite of the secular spirit: a mutant form of secularization that is unafraid to invade the private sacred space, previously negotiated over several hundred years of Enlightenment history. The private domain of religion is, it seems, no longer territory respected by advocates of secularization. In essence, we can see this response to Christianity paralleled by the work of van Gogh and his response to Islam.

Finally, it might be suggested that a further complicating factor is likely to be the presence of increasing numbers of migrant and ethnic minority churches across Europe. Their forms of Christian faith are vibrant and vital, often charismatic, and require high levels of personal commitment from their members.¹² The interaction of such congregations with traditional forms of the western church, as well as civic authorities, political leaders, and local

communities, will remain an area of relevance to the discussion of secularization over the coming years.

Conclusion

In short, we can say that a more careful understanding and account of secularization will need to take account of these European realities, before we too readily conclude that Europe's peoples are on an unstoppable journey towards religious anomie.

Halman and Riis again:

"All age groups show increasing levels of general religiosity when they get older, but as soon as institutional aspects are evaluated, all age groups show declining levels of religiosity. There is indeed an institutional crisis, but not necessarily a religious crisis."¹³

So, the challenge for our churches remains: to engage with both the sacred space and the secular space. How may we make sense of both the marketplace and the cathedral precinct? How may we speak the name of Jesus in both places, in worship and in witness, with equal relevance and conviction? <<

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ENDNOTES

- For an accessible treatment, see Paul Avis, *A Church Drawing Near: Spirituality and Mission in a Post-Christian Culture* (London: Continuum, 2003). For American sociologists, the context of a highly modern and highly religious society has provided a sharp contrast to their observations of European societies; similarly modern but secularised. The most recent assaults on secularization theories have come from the 'rational choice' school of sociologists of religions. See, for example, Stark and Finke *Acts of Faith: explaining the Human Side of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000)
- R Fung 'Evangelising a Secular Society' in *Proclaiming Christ in Christ's Way* Samuel, V. (Oxford: Regnum 1989) p146
- Frances D'Emilio, 'Italian Minister Withdraws as Candidate for E.U. Commission' in *The Washington Post* Sunday 30th October 2004 pA30
- The datasets for the 1981-1984, 1990-1993, 1999-2001 surveys are available via national social science data archives (the latter dataset is also available for purchase on CD ROM). To analyse changes in political and economic orientations, family values and religious norms, their impact on economic growth, political party strategies and the prospect for democratic institutions, the first comparative value surveys were started in 1981 under the leadership of Jan Kerkhofs and Ruud de Moor. They collected data on ten West European societies. These surveys earned so much attention that they were soon replicated in fourteen additional countries with Gordon Heald coordinating the fieldwork outside Europe. To facilitate cross-national research, the data for the World Values Surveys were integrated and documented by Ronald Inglehart. See www.european-values.nl for further information.
- Religiosity in Iceland is surprisingly higher than in all Northern European Countries, Poland and Ireland are far less affected by secularization and individualism than other countries. In Spain, levels of trust in the Church are increasing and in Italy, religiosity is increasing (though not institutional religious activity).
- Halman, L. & Riis, O., *Religion in Secularizing Society* (Brill: Leiden, 2003), p9
- Metropolitan Daniel Ciobotea *Confessing the Truth in Love: Orthodox perceptions of life, mission and unity* (Iasi: Trinitas, 2001)
- Davie, G *Europe the Exceptional Case* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2002), xi
- ENI reported that 200,000 copies were sold in four days. ENI 10th November 2004
- Halman, L. & Riis, O, *Ibid* 'in both 1981 and 1990, the French and the Danish are the least religious people.' p11
- See the fashion website www.g-sus.com
- Members of London congregations have been told that they are being sent to plant congregation in another country.
- Halman, L. & Riis, O., *Religion in Secularizing Society*, Brill: Leiden, 2003 p11

Europe is seeing the arrival of South Korean, Latin American, Caribbean and Sub-Saharan African missionaries. One of the largest churches in Europe (The Embassy of The Blessed Kingdom of God for All Nations, Kiev) and Dublin's St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral are both led by Nigerian clergy. How can we begin to understand this shift?

Europe's Spiritual Journey

Whatever happened to "Christian" Europe?

In Europe today, Christians (defined here as those who attend evangelical and charismatic churches, not those who are simply culturally affiliated with a Christian label) average only around 4 percent of the total population (*Operation World*, 2001). Worldwide, statistics show that growth rates for Christians in the southern half of the African continent exceed those of Europe, as do those in the Americas, in China and on the Indian sub-continent. The spreading branches of the original organized Christian Church have extended far beyond her European roots, and the fruit is now returning to renew the source.

Why are most Europeans uninterested in attending church? A general disillusionment with Christianity due to deep historical factors is a core cause of European societies' resistance to following Christ. There have been signposts along the path of Europe's spiritual journey; influences that have led to a pervasive sense that the Church and religion are outdated and irrelevant. Several markers stand out.

The relationship between Church and State in Europe has complicated its journey. These two entities, joining forces during the time of Constantine, often chose to march against their enemies while brandishing the cross. Though most European countries have since severed Church-State ties, history has

left its vivid imprint on European minds. "Religious wars," writes Wollhard Pannenberg, professor of systematic theology (University of Munich, Germany), "are historically behind the secularization of Europe."

Bloody battles continued on European soil into the 20th century. Shaken by the tremendous human toll of World Wars I and II and by the barbarity of the Holocaust, Europe's masses turned toward other ideologies: socialism, communism and fascism, among others.

Even massive religious reform did not bring a reign of peace or reconciliation for Christianity or for European society. Those looking in on Europe's history may interpret the impact of The Reformation as one that spawned a widespread reawakening to the Gospel message. But in fact, though it transformed individual rights for the underprivileged and underscored that salvation is based on "faith alone," this movement also stirred up social unrest and division in the Church.

While Luther's and other reformers' rich faith heritage greatly influenced Christianity in Europe and across the globe, most Europeans did not accept the personal call to follow Christ. And though The Reformation led some to study biblical texts and challenged institu-

tional Church abuses, protesters were persecuted, chased out and martyred.

Europe has been both the seat of higher criticism of the Christian scriptures and a hotbed for secular theorists. For centuries Europeans have searched for meaning through "enlightened" rational philosophies ranging from Marxism to Freud's psychoanalysis to nihilism. Now, in their rejection of rationalism in post-modern Europe, many find themselves stranded, ignoring any tie to even institutionalized Christian moorings and values. Though some admit European values are based on the "Christian" tenants of human rights, individual choice and the rule of law, most governments and constituencies do not openly honor God.

Claire Berlinski writes that Europeans use "vapid and unexamined clichés," avoiding a truly critical analysis of attitudes and values. These clichés, the author states, are "the clandestine ideology of our time... clandestine because no overt, passionate adherence to ideology is now socially permissible" (*Menace in Europe*, 2006: 32).

Pope Benedict XVI says Europe is moving toward "a dictatorship of relativism." In fact, students and observers of societal change across the continent are saying that Europe is no longer Christian. Jay Tolson writes that we are witnessing the effects of a "spreading 'Christianophobia'" coupled with an "aggressive form of secularism – what the British religion writer Karen Armstrong calls 'secular fundamentalism'" (*European, Not Christian*, *US News & World Report*, May 30, 2005).

Christianity's rituals, garments and ceremonies have surrounded Europeans for nearly two millennia. But because the majority of Europeans have not experienced the Gospel's

transforming effects, they have unknowingly become immunized against its message. Since most Europeans' dominant experience with Christianity has been that of the institutionalized Church, they may think they already know what Christianity represents. Therefore, they think they know what they are rejecting – without ever having experienced a relationship with Jesus.

Only a fraction of European society attends a religious service or believes the teachings of the Bible, even though church buildings are present everywhere in Europe. Many of the centuries-old sites stand empty except for jostling tourists who come to see the artwork. For the majority of Europeans, churches have become museums: monuments to a former era.

In the midst of this spiritual darkness, are any lighthouses shining in Europe? Yes. Throughout history there have been fellowships of Christians – both within and outside the traditional church – who have kept their lamps alight. In the midst of a secular society, God has called out believers who are communicating grace and hope in an engaging dialogue with their culture. Creative expressions of worship are multiplying. Renewed faith is flourishing.

Some in government leadership and the media are becoming more vocal in their call for a return to Europe's Christian roots. "German head of state Angela Merkel... renewed calls to include a specific reference in the EU constitution to Europe's Christian heritage. George Weigel, an American biographer of Pope John Paul II, and the author of *The Cube and the Cathedral: Europe, America, and Politics Without God* (2005), says, 'Germany is a place where one can imagine a rethinking of this stultifying secularism and the moral relativism prevalent in much of northern and western Europe today'" ("Germans Reconsider Religion," *The Christian Science Monitor*, September 15, 2006).

But other forces are also at work across Europe that actively influence people's search for foundations. In the quest for a sense of purpose in life, many discount a strictly rational, scientific solution. Those "answers" have failed them. Other "answers" are readily available: the occult, animism and neo-paganism. The rise in popularity of these practices is evidence of a hunger for spiritual answers among Europeans today. This post-modern, "post-Christian" continent is, none-the-less, clearly not a post-spiritual one.

Our challenge, as bearers of the supernatural power of our Creator, is to build bridges to connect with those who are seeking an experience with the spiritual world. We can build these connections; we can be these bridges in ways that do not alienate the spiritually hungry from the message of reconciliation with God. An open climate for discussion and experience has been created in a society that is spinning in the un-tethered, values-free ambiguity of post-modernism.

Though surrounded by Christian symbols, European societies have been confused in their spiritual journey by the detours of organized religion, religious wars and secular ideologies. Jeff Fountain, author of *Living As People of Hope* (2004), writes that "Christian Europe of all continents is particularly guilty of deliberately suppressing the knowledge of God, and has become a desperately needy mission field."

Europe has lost its way on the path to peace with God. Let us be "people of hope" who will be part of Europe's discovery of The Way. <<

Ruth Robinson

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HOPE Magazine is a publication of the Hope for Europe movement, an umbrella of networks, partnerships and alliances aiming to promote the hope of Jesus Christ in European life and society.

HOPE Magazine aims to share news from Hope for Europe affiliated networks and to offer biblical perspectives on European issues.

HOPE Magazine is distributed through the various networks to leaders and professionals in churches, missions, politics and business in Europe and beyond.

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Mission strategy in recent decades has focussed on the importance of church-planting rather than just doing evangelism, that is, combining Christians in new communities for worship, teaching, fellowship and mission.

Evangelical Christians are fond of their statements of faith, yet we frequently work for a far more visible method of calculating orthodoxy, that is, consistent and frequent attendance at church on Sundays, and mid week as well if possible.

The End of the World as we know it:

Church-planting in postmodern Europe

At the church which I attended after first becoming a Christian, the minister had a favourite saying: "What does the story of doubting Thomas tell us? Never miss a meeting; you don't know what might happen!"

Catholic professor and Dominican Edward Cleary comments on this: "Latin American Pentecostalism shares characteristics of religion in the United States. Specifically, it places exceptional emphasis of congregational participation and worship attendance as a measure of religious involvement." (IBMR 28/2, April 2004, p51)

But have we ever in fact stopped to consider why evangelicalism functions in this way?

"I have sometimes felt that the real pur-



Richard Tiplady is the UK director of European Christian Mission

pose of church services is to enable clergy to count the congregation. This is probably a little cynical, but churches often find their main sense of success in the number of people who attend on a Sunday. Regular church attendance is seen as being a significant test of spiritual health, and church growth is measured in the size of congregations. The importance of Sunday attendance and congregational size can never be underestimated for solid church." (Pete Ward, Liquid Church)

Across Europe we find a massive interest in spirituality. In a continent that is generally prosperous, and where even its poor can generally not be said to be starving, there is a desire for something beyond material possessions. People are searching for meaning, for transcendence (something beyond themselves), for identity. But they are generally not looking at churches for this. It is not uncommon to hear people say of themselves that they are "spiritual but not religious", with the church being included in the latter category. All too often, we have created communities where spiritual experience is tied to meetings and membership, as well as participation in a whole host of other institutional activities. The spiritual seeker looks at the social price tag, and looks elsewhere.

Richard Tiplady

And this is not an issue that is reflected only in those outside the church; it can be found in Christians too, and even in missionaries:

"Problems arise when younger missionaries are expected to plant churches according to a model that they themselves find boring and irrelevant. It is not uncommon to find young missionaries whose only motive for attending church is a latent sense of Christian duty, and who come away each week wondering why they bothered to go. Such a situation causes problems at three levels: the personal spirituality of the younger missionary whose faith is weakened, not strengthened, by church attendance; the ineffectiveness of the missionary as evangelist and church-planter (after all, why draw people into a church where you rarely meet God?); and tension and division in the missionary team itself"

(Peter Stephenson, I still haven't found what I am looking for, Postmission)

So what are the roots of this change, and what should we be thinking and doing about it?

Part of the reason for this is that our understanding of community is changing.

Community and church in pre-modern, modern and post-modern societies

In pre-modern societies, communities were based around land and a sense of place. The parish system served well across Europe as a way for the church to reach all those, rich and poor alike, who owned, lived or worked on the land in a given place.

The modern era was characterised by a significant change, which affected the way that churches were organised. Emigration, urbanisation and industrialisation meant that the land and the parish became less important. Community was reconstituted in the expanding industrial cities on the basis of shared culture and shared experience. Class, not place, became the most important signifier of identity. Churches emerged with an emphasis on congregation and club, where people gathered to worship with those who were like them, rather than those who lived in the same village. Working-class and middle-class denominations arose.

The postmodern era changes our ideas of identity and community again. Identity is not based on a common sense of place, since we are all more able to be highly mobile now. Nor is identity based on common experience or common class. In his book "Bowling Alone", Harvard professor Robert Putnam shows that across all types of social association, such as religious affiliation (church attendance), union membership, participation in parent-teacher associations and the number of volunteers for civic organizations such as the Boy Scouts and the Red Cross, involvement has declined in the last fifty years. The title from his article came from the discovery that, while more Americans go tenpin bowling than ever, participation in organized bowling leagues fell 40 per cent between 1980 and 1993. This is not a trend that affects America alone. Putnam shows a decline in the level of social engagement is also evident in Europe. People are meeting together less frequently in organised groups.

The very concept of personal identity is more fluid and changeable in a postmodern context. Our identities are more complex, more changeable and less certain. The post-modern world creates new forms of fragmentation and dispersal. In modernity, human identities were kept securely in place by clearly-defined class and gender roles. Now we have the freedom to choose our identity, to change it, to succeed or fail alone.

Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman comments:

"What emerges from our fading social norms is naked, frightened, aggressive ego in search of love and help. In the search for itself and an affectionate society, it easily gets lost in the jungle of the self. Someone who is poking around in the fog of his or her own self is no longer capable of noticing that this isolation, this solitary confinement of the ego is a "mass sentence" to which we have each been individually condemned."

In such a context, many churches base their outreach strategies on the offering of community and identity to those adrift in an uncaring world. These strategies usually take one of the following two forms:

1. Church as heritage site

In the premodern era, the worship of the church was part of a commonly-owned culture. In the modern era, the church was closely related to the aspirations and experiences of different social and ethnic groups (or 'people groups', as we now call them). As living expressions of a past era, church has for some taken on a historical character. This is not a turn-off for some - the weekly visit to church becomes attractive precisely because its historical flavour. The church is valuable because it preserves the traditions of the past and makes them accessible to new generation. Its music, architecture, and literature are prized for being artistically significant. In effect, the church becomes part of the heritage industry (like the National Trust), and the emphasis lies in preserving for future generations that with which we have been entrusted.

2. Church as refuge

The fluid, ever-changing environment of postmodernity offers little support of shelter in the face of overwhelming change and almost unlimited choice. In these circumstances, people look for safe and welcoming places where they can find a sense of togetherness and safety. When a wider sense of community has all but eroded, churches develop into places of refuge where we can retreat for a while. In home groups, Sunday school, youth ministries and social activities we can meet people who share our values.

The bigger the shelter, the more comfortable it becomes, and more people it can accommodate. Some churches have turned from being a refuge into being a resort, no

longer a place for emergency help, it becomes an attractive place for a vacation, or even to live in all year round (Christian schools, Christian business directories, etc.) And so people retreat from the wider world and wonder why they have no appreciable impact upon it whatsoever.

The problem for both of these models is that while they have responded to some small degree to the postmodern society around us, they do not take it seriously, nor do they consider how they can express the gospel fully within that culture. They are throwbacks to an earlier age, and look like ill-fitting imports from another place. They degrade the full implications of the gospel, which is that every culture, including postmodernity, can be inhabited and transformed by Jesus Christ, and they confuse the practice holding on to past structures and practices with faithfulness to the living God. The possibility of engaging effectively in mission with our surrounding culture is reduced, because by becoming a heritage site of refuge, they have become (and are perceived) to be separated from ordinary life.

So what might a postmodern church look like?

1. Communication, not congregation

If congregation was the normative model for the church in a modern era, then communication will be the dominant theme for the church in postmodernity. The growth in fragmentation and individualism leads some to conclude that community is dead. But I think that this is wrong. It is not dead - it is just different. People still want to be with each other, to find significance in relationships, and to make a difference in other people's lives. But in our postmodern context this is not expressed so much in organised meetings; it is expressed through constant communication. Cell phones, email, instant messaging, photo and video messaging - millions of European young people have developed new forms of connectivity. It is community based on communication rather than meeting. But it is more than a virtual community, since these young people also meet face to face regularly. The network church needs to take this form of communication seriously.

2. Leadership by example

Modern churches ordain those who are safe and steady, and who will lead from the front (of the meeting). Postmodern church will not be able to rely on meeting, on visibility



first time round; we won't do it for the second time in our lifetimes. And we don't really know which approaches to church-planting will work best. Michael Moynagh, co-director of the Tomorrow project, writes "churches in the New Testament seem to have been diverse. Indeed, diversity is one of the hallmarks of the Holy Spirit". He quotes retired Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey, "the Spirit never leaves identical finger prints", and adds "God has built experimentation into the fabric of creation. It is part of being human. It will be part of successful church-plants as well".

Creating postmodern network churches in 21st century Europe

In this paper I have set out a vision for the future of the church in Europe - a network church, not a congregation, based on the reality of contemporary postmodern community, not the nostalgic communities of refuge that many of our churches become.

So I leave you with a question, which I hope also doubles as a vision; can existing mission organisations and churches make their expertise available to a new generation of Christians, helping them to communicate the true spiritual life in Christ with their peers, to build new forms of Christian community based on communication rather than congregation, and to allow a new generation of charismatic leaders to emerge who will have the kind of impact on postmodern young people that we can only dream about? <<

of attendance, and on authority. People who are free to shop, and will gravitate towards those who they perceive as enlightened, who are something special that is worth hearing or learning from - these people will be the real leaders, regardless of their position. Leadership will be by influence rather than control. Those who are perceived to have met with God, and who have been changed by him, will be the guides, the teachers who lead into holy and passionate living for Christ. Already we see congregational leaders being supplanted in influence by spiritual directors, those who will guide into a spirituality that goes beyond the safe confines of the congregation.

4. Experimental diversity

The "one size fits all culture" is dead. We expect tailor-made products and services in many parts of our lives today, and this corresponds to the postmodern celebration of diversity. It took 800 years to evangelise Europe the

Some of the articles in this journal were originally written for the 'E-zine' "Encounters". This is a short description of this E-magazine:

Encounters is a missions magazine published on the web every two months and has now been running for more than two years. (Edition 15 is due at the beginning of December, 2006.) Its chief purpose is to provide a space for reflection on issues and trends in mission today. Its target audience is mission leaders, church leaders interested in mission, academics in the appropriate discourses and engaged laypeople. The founding editors felt, and still feel, that many of these are necessarily men and women of action, but that the danger is that none of us are doing enough thinking.

A number of features make Encounters user friendly. It is in an easily printable format; its web-based character allows for tight deadlines and consequently an up-to-the-minute feel (we produced a response to the Asian tsunami in quick time, for example) and it is an ideal forum for ongoing reflection through its discussion board.

Encounters makes a deliberate attempt to be European (in this instance that includes the UK!). There are more than a few US mission journals, but the European voice can seem somewhat muted. Of course, the magazine looks at global mission issues, but the perspective is European.

To date we are much encouraged by the response to this initiative and feel we can confidently commend it to the missions community as a useful resource.

3. Integrated or separate?

This is an interesting question (hence the question mark). In "Mission Implausible" Duncan McLaren suggests that it is the more sectarian form of religious belief that are thriving in Europe at the moment. Yet a different approach is endorsed by a recent letter-writer in Christianity Magazine (February 2005). Writing about football chaplaincy, Steve Goddard writes, "I would like to see informal fans chaplains appointed (wearing 'Revaldo' on the back of the team shirt?) who travel with the faithful to away matches and become a seamless part of what are vibrant, caring communities."

The 2006 HOPE Awards were presented on October 17 this year at the Novotel Airport Hotel in Warsaw. Special guest of honour was the EU Commissioner for regional policy, Prof. Danuta Hübner from Poland. The occasion was the annual Hope for Europe Round Table, combined with the General Assembly of the European Evangelical Alliance and the annual meeting of the European Evangelical Missionary Alliance.

The 2006 HOPE Awards

HOPE Awards are presented annually for the promotion of partnership towards transformation in European society through Christian witness and action.

The following are the recipients of this year's awards:

The New Reformation Movement in Belarus



Founded in 2001 by pastors and activists from Baptist, Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations, the NRM aims to promote unity and vision among church leaders, to foster Biblical thinking among the Belarusian people, and to equip the churches for reformation in society. This movement has initiated seminars, concerts, sermons and lectures to promote awareness of the impact of the 16th century Reformation on Belarus, and to call Belarusians to true patriotism by living out Reformation principles today.

Since 2002, the New Reformation School has helped to equip almost 1000 church ministers. In 2003, the National Organizing Committee for Celebrating the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation in Belarus included representatives of the academic and cultural elite of Belarus, and representatives of all Protestant denominations in the country. This celebration became the largest-scale cultural project of the last few years to be carried out without state support.

Daniel Szabó, Hungary

Pastor Szabó served throughout the communist period in the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH), and has held many leadership responsibilities, including the presidency of the Hungarian EA. Now in his seventies, Pastor Szabo was faithful to Christ despite arrest and persecution from the communists, and still continues to serve faithfully. Dr Geza Kovacs writes: "He is a man who can be poor with the poor and rich with the rich. He can be a good Reformed but he can be united with a no name Christian "brand". He helps the last gypsy individuals to get food and he helps first bishops to start universities. He gives his last bit of food to a street man, and he has something to say to presidents of countries. He frequently sleeps on the floor at the EA and he feels himself at home at royal homes, too. But every time and place he lifts up Jesus, the crucified Son of God."



The first HOPE Awards were presented during the HOPE.21 Congress in Budapest in 2002.

Henryk and Alina Wieja, Poland



Founders and directors of the Life and Mission Ministry, and of a private medical centre in Ustron, southern Poland, the Wiejas are also engaged in marital, family and counselling work, lecturing, teaching and holding seminars together in theological seminaries and bible schools across Poland. Together they have written a book on marriage 'Malzenstwo o jakim marzymy' ('The Marriage we dream about'). Henryk has written books on complex health issues 'Tajemnice pełnego zdrowia' ('The mysteries of complex health') and 'Bog ktorego potrzebujemy' ('God that we need'). Alina has written 'Powrot kobiety do harmonii ze Stworca' ('Return of a woman to Creator'), and five volume text book 'How to Effectively Help Others'. Married for over 25 years, the Wiejas have two adult children.

The EU's origins lie in Europe's centuries of conflict. After World War II, many felt a strong desire to avoid war, especially conflict involving France & Germany again. Konrad Adenauer, the German Chancellor & Robert Schumann (the French Foreign Secretary), both committed Roman Catholics, had each dreamt of uniting Europe since the 1920s. Adenauer regarded uniting Europe as "not only a political and economic aim worth striving for, but as a real Christian obligation." The search for permanent peace was at the heart of this "Christian obligation."

The European Union

EEA perspectives: September 2005

A brief history of the European Union (EU)

Frank Buchman and the Moral Rearmament Movement in Switzerland provided a neutral meeting place for German & French political leaders, where friendships were formed, and forgiveness & reconciliation sought. Adenauer & Schumann met and learnt to trust one another. Meanwhile, Jean Monnet had come up with a plan to avoid war. By countries pooling the means of producing coal & steel, conflict would be impossible. It would also make Western Europe stronger, at a time when there was growing fear of the Soviet threat.

The Monnet Plan was accepted. All Western countries were invited to join the European Coal & Steel Community. Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, Germany & Italy did so in 1951. Just 6 years after World War II, the process of forgiveness and reconciliation had reached the point that Germany could be accepted as an equal. We tend to forget what a remarkably Christian act this was. In the West, we also forget what it must have been like for those who were left on the other side of the "Iron Curtain".

In 1957, the same countries signed the Treaty of Rome, the founding treaty for European integration. It envisaged "ever closer union". Economics would be the driving force drawing the peoples of Europe together, but union was the goal right from the start. How close that union would be was not defined. Over time, more countries joined. European

cooperation continued relatively successfully and quietly until Jacques Delors, another committed Roman Catholic, became Commission President in the 1980s. He remembered the original vision of "ever closer union" and dramatically accelerated the pace of development, culminating in the Single Market being completed at the end of 1992. Soon afterwards, plans for monetary union became the focus. A drive towards Common Foreign & Security Policy and Justice & Home Affairs cooperation followed. From November 1989 onwards, plans for Enlargement began to emerge.

What is the result of these origins & history?

For 50 years, the institutions have worked in a certain way, generally a centralised bureaucracy, modelled on the French political system, and designed for just 6 nations. 50 years of legislation now have to be accepted by new members, and there is great debate about the ultimate goal. "Ever closer union" is a moving target. How close? With what end in mind? Should the EU be an economic superpower or a political superpower as well?

A Biblical framework for political engagement

Belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible implies a duty not to manipulate it for our own ends. Our framework needs to reflect the teaching of the whole Bible, understood in its

historical, cultural and literary contexts, not single verses wrenched out of context.

The creation passages portray human beings as social beings¹ with God-given responsibility to care for his creation². Men and women are different but together bear the image of God. The pattern is one of unity within diversity.

European Evangelical Alliance

The fall spoiled the outworking of the creation pattern. Human rebellion distorted the divine image, distorted human relationships with him, with the land, with each other and with ourselves.

The Apostle Paul saw the constraining hand of Government as part of the answer to this problem.³, though he was under no illusions about the Roman authorities who eventually put him to death. We are to obey Government because it is God's agent; when it systematically acts contrary to God's revealed will we are no longer obliged to obey it.

Jesus was obviously not a politician, but strands of his teaching have major political implications. The salt and light metaphors in the Sermon on the Mount⁴ suggest that Jesus expects his disciples to penetrate society to deter corruption and the beatitudes indicate the sort of people he had in mind.⁵

The parable of the Good Samaritan, Luke 20:20-26 and 1 Timothy 2:1-3 also have political implications. Christians who never bother to vote or to pray for those in authority should ponder these verses.

Matthew 25:31-46 paints a picture of the final judgement. It encourages us to work out the implications of our salvation by living a life worthy of the Gospel. Whilst there is much we can do through our political endeavour to tackle particular sins, only Christ can eliminate sin altogether, when he returns. There is no room in this framework for utopianism but when Jesus returns and finally triumphs over evil, we shall all have to give account for what we have done with our opportunities.

Democratic politics is one way in which a society decides the values by which it will be governed. Alternatives are totalitarian government of one form or another, or war. Democracy is not an explicitly biblical idea but it fits well with the biblical view of humanness. Made in the image of God and having God-given care-taking responsibilities, all of us should play a modest part in choosing the values of our democratic societies. At the same time, because we are all affected by sin and temptation, power should be dispersed as widely as possible.

Political engagement with the EU

Historically, nations have been identified by a common language, ethnic and cultural affinity, and in some instances by a common religion. Increasing globalisation has blurred many of these differentiating factors. Today nations are also differentiated by their different tax systems, currencies and foreign exchange rules, and by legal rules about citizenship and immigration. What does the Bible have to say about such matters?

There is no mention of nations in the first nine chapters of Genesis. This leads such theologians as Karl Barth to conclude that, "we cannot deduce a true command of God the Creator, or a distinctive obedience owed to it, from the mere fact that there are nations and that man lives in them."⁶ Nevertheless, in Acts 17 we find the Apostle Paul telling the Areopagus that, "from one man he (God) made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live." Moses said something very similar in Deuteronomy 32:8.⁷ In the same vein Genesis 9:19 underlines the unity of humankind in that all people were descended from the three sons of Noah. But we should also note that "humanity is reconstituted after the Flood into a manifold world of nations not into a homogeneous multitude."⁸ Genesis 10 identifies groups of people organised by land, language, family and tribal units and nations. Following the Babel incident we find these

divisions serving to restrain fallen humankind's full potential for evil (e. g. Genesis 11:1-9).

So nations are, at the very least, used by God for our good. Nowhere are they condemned in the Bible, though specific nations are judged for their idolatry and savage conduct towards other nations.⁹ One nation, Israel, was clearly formed, nurtured and blessed by God to serve his salvation purposes, but punished when it worshipped idols and failed to honour and obey God. It is true that super states or empires such as Assyrians, Babylon, the Medes and Persians, and Rome were also used by God, to punish Israel for its apostasy, but the Bible does not tend to present them in a positive light. Can we conclude, then, that though the Bible sees humankind as one, national divisions based on geographical, linguistic and cultural differentiation are also part of the biblical worldview? The only qualification is that national arrogance and idolatrous nationalism are seen as evil and will be judged.

If the EU is a community of nations working together to resolve their differences through politics rather than conflict, then Christians will want to actively support it "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God", taught Jesus.¹⁰ Indeed, the end of war will be one sign of God's coming Kingdom, according to the prophet Micah.¹¹ If, on the other hand, the EU is an embryonic 'super-state', then the biblical principles identified in the "framework" above may cause us to be concerned about the risks associated with the concentration of power in the hands of fewer fallen people.

God is sovereign over every dimension of life so "all Christian thinking must begin not with man but with God".¹² That applies not only to national politics but also to the EU Constitution and all EU Directives and policies. Evangelicals will want these to reflect biblical values and principles. As Christians we have to ask what forms of European integration will most foster biblical values in the political and economic system.

Evangelicals have not reflected as much as the EEA feels we should, about Europe and the future shape of Europe. The EEA is committed to encouraging such reflection.

How does the EU operate?

The EU-Commission proposes and ensures implementation of European law, the EU-Parliament debates, and the European

Council decides. All three were established in the 1950's by the EU's founding treaties.

1. The EU-Council

The Council is the EU's main decision-making body. It represents the member states: its meetings are attended by one minister from each of the EU's national governments.

The Presidency of the Council rotates, so that each EU country in turn takes charge of the Council agenda and chairs all the meetings for a six-month period: promoting legislative and political decisions and brokering compromises between the member states. In 2004 it was Ireland and the Netherlands, in 2005 it was Luxembourg and now it is the UK. Next year 2006 it will be Austria and then Finland.

The subjects on the agenda determine which ministers attend which meeting of the Council. For example, when the Council is to discuss environmental issues, the meeting is attended by all the Environment Ministers and is known as the 'Environment Council'.

Each minister in the Council is empowered to commit his or her government. Each minister in the Council is answerable to his or her national parliament and to the citizens that parliament represents.

Up to four times a year the presidents and/or prime ministers of the member states, together with the President of the European Commission, meet as the "European Council". These 'summit' meetings set overall EU policy and resolve issues that could not be settled at a lower level (i.e. by the ministers at normal Council meetings). Given the importance of European Council discussions, they attract a lot of media attention. The Council has six key responsibilities:

1. To pass European laws – jointly with the European Parliament in many areas.
2. To co-ordinate the broad economic policies of the member states.
3. To conclude international agreements between the EU and others
4. To approve the EU's budget, jointly with the European Parliament.
5. To develop the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)
6. To co-ordinate co-operation between national courts and police forces

The controversial question is how many decisions can be made by "Qualified Majority" voting and how many ought to be unanimous.

2. The EU-Commission

The EU-Commission represents and upholds the interests of the EU as a whole. It drafts proposals for new European laws, which it presents to the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission is independent of national governments.

The Commission is also the EU's executive arm – responsible for implementing the decisions of Parliament and the Council. That means managing the day-to-day business of the European Union: implementing its policies, running its programmes and spending its funds.

The term 'Commission' is used in two senses. First, it refers to the team – one from each EU country – appointed to run the institution and take its decisions. Secondly, the term 'Commission' refers to the institution itself and to its staff.

The appointed Members of the Commission are known as 'Commissioners'. They have all held political positions in their countries of origin, but as Members of the Commission they are committed to acting in the interests of the Union as a whole and not taking instructions from national governments.

A new Commission is appointed every five years, within six months of the European Parliamentary elections. The present Commission's term of office runs until 31 October 2009. Its President is José Manuel Barroso, from Portugal.

Parliament has the power to dismiss the whole Commission by adopting a motion of censure. Individual members of the Commission must resign if asked to do so by the President, provided the other commissioners approve.

The Commission attends all the sessions of Parliament,

to clarify and justify its policies. It also replies regularly to written and oral questions posed by MEPs. (Members of European Parliament)

The European Commission has four main roles:

1. To propose legislation to Parliament and the Council;
2. To manage and implement EU policies and the budget;
3. To enforce European law (jointly with the Court of Justice);
4. To represent the European Union on the international stage, for example by negotiating agreements between EU and other countries.

The Commission's staff is organised in 'Directorates-General' (DGs) and 'services' (such as the Legal Service). Each DG is responsible for a particular policy area and is headed by a Director-General who is answerable to one of the commissioners.

A Commission with too many members will not work properly. There is at present one commissioner from each EU country, that is 25 commissioners, of whom 18 are men and 7 women. When Bulgaria and Romania join in 2008, the EU will have 27 member states. At that point, the Council - by a unanimous decision - will fix the maximum number of commissioners. There must be fewer than 27 of them, and their nationality will be determined by a system of rotation that is absolutely fair to all countries.

3. The EU-Parliament

The European Parliament (EP) is elected by the citizens of the European Union.

Elections are held every five years, and every EU citizen who is registered as a voter is entitled to vote. Parliament should therefore reflect the democratic will of the Union's citizens (more than 455 million people), and it represents their interests in discussions with the other EU institutions. The present parliament, elected in June 2004, has 732 members from all 25 EU countries. Nearly one third of them (222) are women.

Members of the European Parliament do not sit in national blocks, but in seven Europe-wide political groups

The European Parliament has three places of work: Brussels (Belgium), Luxembourg and Strasbourg (France). Meetings of the whole Parliament, ('plenary sessions'), take place

in Strasbourg and sometimes in Brussels. Committee meetings are also held in Brussels. Luxembourg is home to the administrative offices (the 'General Secretariat').

Parliament has three main roles:

1. Passing European laws – jointly with the Council in many policy areas. Direct elections of the EP helps safeguard the democratic legitimacy of European law.
2. Parliament exercises democratic supervision over the other EU institutions, and in particular the Commission.
3. The power of the purse. Parliament shares with the Council authority over the EU budget and can therefore influence EU spending. At the end of the procedure, it adopts or rejects the budget in its entirety.

What happened with the Constitutional Treaty this summer?

Two of the original member states rejected it! In France almost 55% of the population, and almost 62% in the Netherlands voted against it. European leaders were in shock, though most member states have ratified (in national Parliaments) or voted YES in referendums. This whole situation leaves the EU with a lot of questions at the time being.

The Dutch Prime Minister, Jan Peter Balkenende, called this a "wake up call", which may be used to the advantage of Europe. He suggests taking time for reflection about how to profit from this development. Other European leaders agree with him.

Jean Claude Juncker of Luxembourg (President of EU at the time) said that the crisis is about a confrontation between two different visions of the EU's future. Some only want the EU to be a free (common) market, and others want integrated political cooperation in Europe. Which group is going to win?

The EU was established to promote peace, security and stability, but to those born after World War II this is not enough. As the EU has got bigger, people have felt that it is even further away from them, and needs to prove its own legitimacy.

Having said that, most of the "No" votes had little to do with the text of the Constitutional Treaty. The results of the referendums are more a sign of frustration with national leaders and/or with the EU as such than a "No" to the Treaty itself.

What happened with the budget this summer?

Right after the referenda in France and the Netherlands, the leaders of the member states met in Brussels for their ordinary summit meeting in the European Council in June.

This meeting was not a happy family-get-together this time. Some media wrote that it should have been held in Waterloo outside Brussels, because the attitude at the meeting was a genuine Waterloo attitude. Some wrote "It was rude, personal and not beautiful. But it was honest, when the leaders of EU after the failure of reaching an agreement gave voice to their frustrations"

What they disagreed on was among other things the EU's budget for the next couple of years.

The UK wanted to keep its rebate, which the country has had since Margaret Thatcher said "Give me my money back". She got it. But now other countries think that the time is up where every country ought to contribute to the budget of the EU according to what they are able to give, or according to the population, the GNP, and the economy of the country. Mr. Blair was willing to discuss this, if the other countries were willing to discuss a minimizing of the subsidies for farmers in the EU.

He wanted a discussion about reform of the budget, so that most of the budget every year should not go to the agricultural affairs and regions in the rich countries. Instead he wants to modernize EU and focus on future investments on research and development, to strengthen the EU's global position.

This is a very critical point in the UK's relationship to France: because French farmers receive the biggest part of the subsidies for farmers in Europe. And the French farmers are not willing to give this up. President Chirac does not dare to give in on this point, instead he still insists that the UK give up its rebate.

At the end of the meeting some of the new and poorer EU-countries agreed to give up some of their subsidies to create a consensus, but this proposal was not received positively by the rich countries.

Chirac is very unpopular, and Blair is leaving 10 Downing Street at the next national election in UK. At the time of writing, the post-election uncertainty in Germany makes it difficult to predict what

the country's future relationships outside the country will look like.

Many possibilities are open. But one thing is sure – a break for reflection is very wise – and we may add – a break for prayer, because we know that God changes the world in answer to prayer!

The possible future of the EU

The 25 member EU has become a strong fellowship of rich and poor countries. This fellowship must be developed as the world changes: for example, in relationships between rich and poor.

A whole new era developed in Relief and Development in 2002, when the EU Solidarity fund was established because of dramatic flooding. The EU thereby acquired an instrument with which to express its financial solidarity with Member States and candidate countries that fall victim to exceptional natural disasters.

Also in 2002, the EU fund "Water for life" was set up: to fund water to the poorest areas of the world, especially in Africa, but also Caucasus and Central Asia. EU has given 1 Billion Euro for this initiative.

Humanitarian aid for 500 million Euros a year still goes through the office of ECHO, which has given help to situations and crises in more than 100 countries.

In the future the EU will also focus on securing the fundamental rights of European citizens. In the future EU will work even more than before on liberalizing the market for goods and services and will give underdeveloped countries better possibilities to export their crops and goods to the EU.

EU also strengthens the resources to battle terrorism, organized criminality, human trafficking, money laundering, drug-dealing and other cross-border problems.

These plans and thoughts for the future harmonize in some ways with the aspirations that the EEA has for the European fellowship

The EEA believes that the EU principle of "Competencies" (i.e. areas of responsibility that fall within the Commission's remit) is an important one, which also needs further reflection, within a coherent biblical framework. The EEA believes that EU citizens should engage in debate about which decisions should be reached together (at EU level) and

what should be decided nationally, regionally, or locally. The EEA is committed to playing its part in that debate, and has its own views about what should be highest on the shared agenda at this stage of history.

EEA's vision of a values-driven EU

We have a dream of a vibrant 21st Century Europe, in which variety is valued, and in which each culture makes its own unique contribution, in an atmosphere of mutual respect. A Europe committed to reconciliation, peace, liberty of conscience and religion, and the European Convention of Human Rights.

A Europe marked by respect for every individual, the sanctity of life, and the institution of the family. A Europe committed to the poor and disenfranchised: a Europe in which the voiceless have a voice, opportunities are created for the disadvantaged, and redemptive possibilities are fostered for both victims and perpetrators.

A Europe with a strong identity, whose self-definition nevertheless actively encourages Europeans to take their place as partners with the rest of the world, humbly recognising that Europe has a lot to learn as well as to give. A Europe that resists all attempts to become a new 21st century Empire, but which rather engages in partnership with the rest of the world.

In short, a Europe shaped by those timeless values that have played such an important part in shaping the past: a forward looking Europe committed to overcoming historic animosities, and to making a generous contribution to the welfare of the wider world. <<

ENDNOTES

- 1 Genesis 2:18
- 2 Genesis 1:28
- 3 Romans 13:1-7
- 4 Matthew 5:13-16
- 5 Matthew 5:1-12
- 6 K.Barth, quoted in O.R. Johnston, 'Nationhood: towards a Christian Perspective' Latimer Studies 7 1980, page 21.
- 7 "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of God." (Masoretic text)
- 8 O. R. Johnston, *ibid*, page 16.
- 9 See, for example, Amos 1-3.
- 10 Matthew 5:9.
- 11 Micah 4: 1-5
- 12 Michael Schluter, 'Christian in a Changing World', Harper Collins 2000, page 172



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The Cube and the Cathedral: Europe, America, and Politics Without God

George Weigel. New York: Basic Books. April 5, 2005. 202 pages.

*The cracks in the divide that separates the U.S. and Europe appear more poignantly as the “war on terror” progresses. Yet the fissure between the two continents existed long before the tensions in the political relationships filled the newspapers. With perceptive insight George Weigel addresses the underlying reasons as to why this divide exists and may be growing. At the same time **The Cube and the Cathedral** cautions the U.S. not to follow the same trajectory as Europe despite the common intellectual heritage of the two continents.*

Wiegel uses the metaphor of La Grande Arche, an almost perfect “Cube” completed in 1989 for the celebration of the bicentennial of the French Revolution and all for which that revolution stood: life apart from God. In contrast to this, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, another French landmark, is positioned at the other end of an axis shared with the “Cube”. Together they postulate in poetic architecture the polar opposite: life informed by God. Wiegel clearly defines the God he has in mind, the God of orthodox Christian faith. Europe stands at a crossroads and as evidenced by the preamble to the European Union’s constitution, appears to be choosing life apart from God, life represented by the “Cube”. Yet Wiegel argues that this indeed is not only the wrong choice, but a choice suicidal for Europe today.

Although the proposed EU constitution contains 70,000 words, one word stands out as missing: “Christianity”. For Wiegel this absence means that the moral and spiritual foundations that support, sustain, and foster a future for the Continent have eroded almost to the point of non-existence. Even more so he laments European high culture’s refusal to acknowledge not just the Christian Faith as a major shaper of Europe’s history, but arguably

the most significant, durable and hope-filled. The “Cube”, or atheistic humanism under the French model, appears to have won the day since, in the minds of the European elite, it promises a “tolerance” that might provide peace but not recognizing that it is really an endorsement

*Doug Mitts,
GEM missionary*

of indifference. That indifference minimizes the celebration of the fall of communism into just a statement of “it didn’t work” instead of rejoicing in the defeat of one of the world’s worst totalitarian systems. Wiegel argues for a democracy that sustains and promotes true human freedom for all, but this can only grow out of an adequate moral foundation. For Europe, even with its current conceptualizations of democracy, Christianity, and in particular Western Christianity, once formed that foundation. Without that understanding of Europe’s heritage, the current EU government has little promise of sustaining a future free for all. The moral “why” is lost in the supposed protection of freedom for all. In reality, the pursuit of “tolerance” has bred an unrecognized “intolerance” for Christianity, so much so that it must be actively excluded from the EU Constitution. Yet Wiegel’s point goes deeper than constitutional democracies. He sees a malaise that touches not only Europe but its citizens, and that

malaise can only be comprehended through a theological analysis of the problem. European aspirations have been dampened because the imagination, or rather, the moral imagination has been lowered to the level of boredom. The imagination that saw transcendence, beauty, virtue and grandness as pictured by the “Cathedral” has mutated into the “Cube.” The hope Weigel holds out as a solution focuses on a return to Europe’s primogeniture, Christianity, applied to contemporary society with an understanding of current issues. The Cube and the Cathedral, reads well, reflects the author’s familiarity with the subject, and contains many insights concerning humanity, political communities, freedom, and the moral framework necessary to support and sustain constitutional democracies. Wiegel is a Catholic theologian and a leading commentator on issues of religion and politics who argues ably from that perspective and is well qualified to do so. Yet evangelicals would also endorse his thesis and agree that America too needs to heed this warning. The book touches on all the salient concepts to make his case, and many of those ideas as fully developed alone could fill a book. However, the work addresses the influence of Christianity at only the institutional levels of democracies and the foundations that undergird them. Yet faith at the institutional level does not suffice since the European sees the church as irrelevant to life. For hope to return to the European people, individual transformation must occur which can only be accomplished through a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Only as Europeans, both of “high and low” culture, choose to follow Christ, will the malaise affecting them and the political systems of their continent be cured. For Europe to have hope for her future and to once again capture the moral imagination, she must return to the “Cathedral”, at the personal as well as the institutional level. <<

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