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The Crisis in Europe: An Examination of Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Vision

By *Ambrose Ih-Ren Mong, OP*

Unlike many theologians in the post Vatican II period, Joseph Ratzinger was not “principally a globalist.”¹ His primary concern was and still is the decline of Christianity in Europe. In fact, long before Ratzinger spoke out against aggressive secularism and the dictatorship of relativism threatening the fabric of European society, he had written about the decline of the West and the need to regain its Christian roots and identity, in order to survive the crisis and make itself relevant to the rest of the world. He believes that modernity has denied religion any influence in the public sphere and thus, is responsible for promoting aggressive secularism, consumerism and hedonism in Europe.

Ratzinger believes that the origins of most problems in the world can be traced back to their European roots. James Schall summarizing Ratzinger's position, states: “Scratch a world problem and more often than not a European thinker will be involved.”² The root problem originated in Europe before it became global and it became a world problem because it was an “unresolved European problem.”³ Thus, resolving the European problem could be the beginning of saving the world.

This essay attempts to examine critically Ratzinger's writings on the crisis in Europe, which is characterized by the clash between Christianity and radical Enlightenment thinking that excludes God from the public sphere. In modern times, Western Europe has become one of the most secular societies in history. Since Ratzinger believes in the powerful and universal influence of Western culture, he fears that the aggressive secularism and the decline of Christianity in Europe may affect the ordinary faithful in other parts of the

world. This essay proposes an alternative way of understanding the role of Christianity in the face of growing pluralism in European societies. It calls for a separation of Christianity from the influences of Christendom that are still present in Europe.

It is understandable that Ratzinger is distressed about the decline of the Christian faith and the church's influence in Europe. However, this paper will present the argument that Christian faith has the ability to adapt itself to modernity and also to renew itself in different forms. While Ratzinger has written positively about multiculturalism, he has failed to acknowledge the flourishing immigrant churches among Africans, East Asians and Latin Americans in Western Europe. His theological vision remains restricted to the future of Christianity in Europe and may not be adequate for the advent of global Christianity.

Clash of Cultures

The crisis began when Europe developed a culture, previously unknown in the history of humankind, that excluded God from its public life.⁴ A breakdown between the two interdependent cultural foundations ensued. Since the age of the Enlightenment, Europe's rational philosophical tradition has taken a destructive turn: a radical Enlightenment against Christianity. By developing “autonomous reason that is

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Rev. Dr. Ambrose Mong Ih-Ren, OP is a Dominican priest and a professor at The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of St. Joseph in Macau.

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honed to the strictest Enlightenment demands” and excluding religion, Europe has in fact turned against the finest tradition of the Enlightenment.⁵

Thus, we have witnessed, in Western Europe, a conflict between Christianity and Enlightenment thinking. Ratzinger explains: “Although, on the one hand, Christianity found its most influential form in Europe, we must also say, on the other hand, that Europe has developed a culture that most radically contradicts, not only Christianity, but the religious and moral traditions of humanity as well.”⁶ In other words, a culture has developed in Europe in which God has disappeared from public awareness as a result of denial or privatization of religious belief.

This modern godless culture, according to Ratzinger, is defined by the rights of freedom: “Its starting point is freedom, which it takes to be a fundamental value that measures everything else: the liberty of religious choice, which includes the religious neutrality of the state.”⁷ This freedom that is meant to avoid intolerance becomes strangely contradictory to itself – it becomes, paradoxically, the intolerance of political correctness. Such political correctness seeks to impose its own view as the absolute one and is intolerant of other opinions.⁸ Ratzinger believes freedom that comes from a godless culture is no freedom at all. When reason is cut off from its roots in the divine, it loses its sense of direction. The notion of freedom developed by this radical Enlightenment in Europe also cannot co-exist with God because it views God as limiting and enslaving.⁹

In contrast to Joseph Ratzinger’s negative attitude towards the legacy of the Enlightenment, Werner Ustorf stresses that the Christian faith is always in “constant conversation” with the past and in the European context, this refers to the Enlightenment. We can only work within the bounds of the culture which we belong.

Thus, Christianity, in this cultural context, must deal with the influences of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment. Ustorf makes the interesting point that other forms of Christianity, in Africa or Asia, for example, have been able to flourish and develop outside the influence of the Enlightenment. He rightly asserts that the challenges posed by the

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Enlightenment and post-modernity are not crucial issues in most forms of Christianity, and issues like poverty, war, marginalization and environmental problems are much more urgent. The Christian discourses nowadays are very diverse, but not mutually exclusive. They help to “critique and correct one another.”¹⁰ What this means is that different forms of Christianity are taking shape in various cultures and at different times.

Ustorf also points out that the Enlightenment provided a new perspective from which to understand Christ, in the West – “an indigenization of Christianity in Western terms.” He meant, by this, that the Enlightenment introduced new cultural and religious elements into the Christian narrative and thus, like any other form of Christianity, syncretistic. Unlike Joseph Ratzinger, Werner Ustorf thinks that what is important “is not the religious and cultural content of the faith, but its direction towards Christ.”¹¹ This means that there is no fixed or static pattern of Christian life and thought and therefore, we cannot expect to return to the form of Christianity that the West had previously experienced.

Place of Christianity in the European Constitution

As evidence of this conflict between religious conviction and secularism, Joseph Ratzinger explores the public debate regarding the place of explicit references to God and Christianity in the proposed new constitution of the European Union. The debate reveals Western Europe’s reluctance to acknowledge God publicly or to affirm its Christian roots. He claims that this exclusion, this wish to be open to Europe’s present-day multiculturalism, is based on a mistaken notion of tolerance. He assures us that mentioning Europe’s Christian

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roots is not offensive to non-Christians, since it merely represents a reference to an historical and normative fact. Muslims are not offended by references to the Christian moral foundation of Europe, but rather, by the secularist denial of God. Jewish citizens will not be offended either because Europe's Christian roots go back to Mount Sinai.¹²

Sharing Ratzinger's concern, Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, the first female, Muslim cabinet minister in Britain, claims that the voice of faith is somehow not heard and people of faith do not have enough courage. She asserts: "Aggressive secularism is pushing faith out of any public place. Europe would not try to erase the church spires on our horizons; then why would you try to erase our religious history or the role of Christianity in the development of values of our nations? Europe needs to be more in tune with its Christian identity."¹³

Furthermore, Ratzinger laments that the majority of Europeans naively believe that Europe can sustain itself, solely on the basis of a culture of rationalism, science and technology. These Europeans "presuppose the idea that only radical Enlightenment culture, which has reached its full development in our time, is able to define what European culture is." Beside this rationalistic culture, other religious cultures are only allowed to coexist as long as they subordinate themselves to this Enlightenment ideology.¹⁴

The banishment of Christian roots from Europe has not led to a greater tolerance with respect to other cultures. In fact we are confronted by an absolute expression of a mindset and lifestyle that "stands in radical contrast ... to the other historical cultures of humanity," Ratzinger argues.¹⁵ The tension that characterizes our modern world is not the conflicts between different religious cultures: it is between those who deny that God is the root of life and the great religious traditions, "the clash between this radical emancipation of man and the major cultures of history."¹⁶ It follows that the refusal to mention God in the draft of the European Constitution is not the expression of a tolerance for non-theistic religions and agnosticism, but the expression of a mindset bent on erasing God from the public sphere of life. Ratzinger writes: "Relativism, which is the starting point of all of this, thus becomes a dogmatism that believes itself in possession of the definitive knowledge of reason and of the right to regard everything else as a mere stage of humanity's development that has been fundamentally superseded and that is best treated as a pure relativity."¹⁷

Louis Dupré, a native of Belgium and professor of philosophy of religion at Yale University, has also been critical of the failure of writers of the proposed preamble to the European Constitution to acknowledge Christianity as a European heritage. Agreeing that the past models are no longer appropriate for the future, Dupré recognizes that "the foundation of the new Europe needs a more inclusive base.

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Yet if Europe's spiritual identity is to be preserved, it must remain firmly attached to the principal values of its tradition."¹⁸ These values include the "care of the soul" or a "high respect for the inner life." Dupré, however, admits that "as for the common Christian faith that forged such a strong bond among Europe's peoples, many Europeans have lost it and most recent immigrants never had it."¹⁹ He also argues that Europe must not be satisfied with just political, economic and scientific integration:

Europe's political and economic unification must be accompanied by a strong awareness of a distinctive cultural and spiritual identity. This is the reason why the dispute over Europe's Christian heritage is so important. In writing the preamble to the EU Constitution, the most significant element in the European tradition must not be erased.

Today Europe needs a strong spiritual reintegration as well as a political-economic one. The former requires that it assimilate essential parts of its spiritual heritage: the Greek sense of order and measure, the Roman respect for law, the biblical and Christian care for the other person, the *humanitas* of Renaissance humanism, the ideals of political equality and individual rights of the Enlightenment.²⁰

Dupré views this European heritage in terms of a single cultural body with different dimensions, a "unity of spirit in a variety of expressions," which he wishes to see explicitly mentioned in the European Constitution.²¹ Like Ratzinger, Dupré recognizes the need for a more inclusive cultural base for the new Europe in view of multiculturalism, but at the same time, he still advocates a sort of spiritual identity that will unite the people.

Dialectic of Enlightenment

Interestingly, Ratzinger's severe criticism of the radical Enlightenment ideology finds support in the works of two Marxist philosophers: Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno. In *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno speak about the total self-destruction of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment aimed at liberating humankind from fear and yet the "fully enlightened earth

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radiates disaster triumphant.”²² According to the dictates of the Enlightenment, “whatever does not conform to the rule of computation and utility is suspect” and thus, “Enlightenment is totalitarian.”²³ Hence, whatever cannot be reduced to numbers becomes illusion – “modern positivism writes it off as literature.”²⁴ Enlightenment is like a dictatorship in which the dictator manipulates people as far as he can. Consumerism is promoted and consumers’ needs become the excuse for manipulation and domination by technology: “No mention is made of the fact that the basis on which technology acquires power over society is the power of those whose economic hold over society is greatest.”²⁵ In other words, the rationality in technology entails domination and control through standardisation and mass production, thereby sacrificing individuality and creativity.

The Enlightenment absolutizes itself and places importance only on things that are calculable and measurable. In Ratzinger’s opinion, such an agnostic and material society cannot survive for long. He summarizes the dissolution of the moral realm as the “privatization of morality” and its reduction to the “calculation of what will be successful.” This dissolution will make society immoral because it attaches no value to what gives human beings dignity.²⁶ A symptom of this, in our modern society, is the pathological concern for the protection of our “physical integrity” coupled with a “diffused indifference to the moral integrity of the human person.” For Ratzinger, this results in a negation of human beings as human beings, and the “negation of freedom and of human dignity.”²⁷

The Death of God

In a prophetic manner, Joseph Ratzinger has written: “The Islam that is sure of itself has to a large extent a greater fascination for the Third World than a Christianity that is in a state of inner decay.”²⁸ Such an assertion reminds us of Friedrich Nietzsche, a philosopher Ratzinger often cites and criticizes. Nietzsche wrote about the lukewarm faith of Christians in Europe. Clearly Ratzinger is worried that the Christian faith in the West is moving in this direction. He is greatly influenced by Henri de Lubac, whose writing on atheist humanism finds echoes in many of Ratzinger’s critiques of contemporary Western culture. In his *Memoirs*, Joseph Ratzinger recalls the impact of Henri de Lubac’s book, *Catholicisme: Aspects sociaux du dogme* (1938), on his own thought. He also cites it in his encyclical *Spe Salvi*.

God, according to Nietzsche, is “nothing more than the mirror of man”; in certain rare moments, a person becomes aware of certain intense feelings such as love and power, and he ascribes them to a “superhuman being.”²⁹ He divides his nature into two spheres: the “ordinary weak” man and the rare powerful God. Thus, through his own making, he is cheated of his best qualities: “Religion is a matter of adulteration of the personality.” Therefore, according to Nietzsche, we

need to “regain possession of those lofty and proud states of the soul” that we have mistakenly given to God. He believes this process of “self-despoilment and self-debasement” is carried out, to the extreme, in Christianity. Nietzsche believes that God is an “undesirable guest” who can live only in the mind of man. In order to get rid of him, we need to trace the origin of this idea in the human mind. It is this “historical refutation” that will carry weight.³⁰ Man alone can free himself from the idea of God, “by an act of will.” Faith in God as taught by Christianity, serves to discipline the human person. It therefore follows that the human being needs to get rid of faith so that he can exalt himself and proclaim “the death of God.”³¹

The expression “the death of God” is a fundamental category in Hegel’s philosophy. Hegel applied it to Christ who died and rose again and also, to human reason, “which must pass through the moment of negation in order to join the universal spirit.”³² However, for Nietzsche, “the death of God” means that we must make a decision – “it is our preference that decides against Christianity – not arguments.” “The death of God” is something willed by the individual himself. Nietzsche adds, “It is we who have killed him.” “We are the assassins of God.”³³

Henri de Lubac recognizes the noble principles and sound intuitions behind the modern thoughts of these atheistic philosophers whose criticism and analysis of society have been insightful and accurate. These atheistic humanists were able to grapple with social and spiritual problems that people faced. However, the world they present can no longer be called Christian in any sense and “the God they reject is ... a mere caricature of the God we worship.” According to De Lubac, many people who were attracted by these atheistic philosophies did not comprehend their real significance – they have an “imposing grandeur” that “masks the horror that were their purchase price.”³⁴ Few people were able to see the final outcome of these godless movements to which they were attracted. De Lubac warns that the denial of God is a threat to humankind. We can either retreat back to the barbarism of the middle ages or we can rediscover God in the church which “sets before us, the living God who made us in his own image.”³⁵

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De Lubac laments that forms of atheism like “critical atheism, liberal atheism, atheism resulting from laicism” are still with us. These varieties of atheistic philosophy have preserved a number of original Christian values, but having been cut off from their original source, they are powerless to sustain them. Virtues like justice and liberty, without divine backing, do not constitute true humanity. These virtues become unreal when no longer seen within the context of faith in the living God; they become “empty forms” without God’s sustenance. De Lubac says, without God, even truth and justice become idols.³⁶

Faith and Reason

In spite of the decline of Christianity and the emergence of new moral values in Western Europe, Joseph Ratzinger is hopeful of a spiritual regeneration because the Christian vision of reality is still a potent force in the West. He admits that the relationship between the two visions of reality – religious and secular – is close and tense, at the same time. Although Christian and secular cultures are non-universal, these two great Western cultures exert a powerful influence on the world and on every other culture.³⁷ Ratzinger believes that faith and religion still have many things to teach people in our modern scientific age. There is a “necessary correlation between faith and reason ... called to purify and heal one another.” They need each other and must acknowledge one another’s roles in human existence.³⁸

The affirmation of the correlation between Christian faith and Western, secular, rational thought is not a “false Eurocentrism” because, according to Ratzinger, “these two determine the situation of the world in a way unparalleled by any other cultural forces.”³⁹ Christian and Western secular cultures must also engage in a dialogue with other cultural traditions so that they will be open to learning from the “Western complementarity of faith and reason.”⁴⁰ He believes that reason given by God can retain its “evidential character” only when the entire culture maintains its Christian tradition. Therefore, when reason is severed from the religious faith of its historical culture, it becomes blind.⁴¹ Such an isolation of reason from faith leads to cynicism and the destruction of humankind. Consequently, the real problem we have today is reason’s blindness to the spiritual dimension of life.⁴² Tracey Rowland puts it this way: “From Benedict’s perspective the suicide of the West began when people stopped believing in the Christian account of creation and started to sever the intrinsic relationship of faith and reason.”⁴³

Ratzinger believes that the Christian faith is the “most universal and rational religious culture ... it offers reason the basic structure of moral insight which, if it does not actually lead to some kind of evidential quality, at least furnishes the basis of a rational moral faith without which no society can endure.”⁴⁴ However, reason that severs itself from God, loses

its sense of direction and is susceptible to the powers of destruction. Without this “absolute point of reference,” human beings become the “hopeless prey of the forces of evil.” Christians must also fight the temptation to reduce reason to the “rationality of production.”⁴⁵ This means that we do not order our lives solely according to the dictates of the market, focussing only on our material well-being. Finally, we can have a healthy religion only when our reason is open to God and when we do not push morality into the subjective realm.⁴⁶ Besides this mutual ordering of faith and reason, Ratzinger calls for a rebuilding of Europe based on Christian values.

Construction of Europe on Christian Ethos

Joseph Ratzinger claims that the Christian ethos which is the “ethos of purified reason” must form the basis of political realism. According to him, politics is more than just practicality; it is a moral issue and the aim of politics is justice and peace using the law to regulate the exercise of power.⁴⁷ The basic principles for establishing justice, valid throughout the ages, are to be found in the Ten Commandments and the teaching of Christ in the New Testament. Ratzinger writes:

The emergence of Europe after the collapse of the Greco-Roman world and the mass migration of peoples was the work of Christianity. It is indisputable that it was Christian faith that give birth to Europe in that period. In the same way, the restoration of Europe after the Second World War has Christianity as its root, and this means that it has responsibility before God as its root.... If we wish to build up Europe today as a stronghold of law and of justice vis-à-vis all men and cultures, we cannot withdraw to an abstract reason that knows nothing of God, a reason that itself belongs to no culture but wants to regulate every culture according to its own criteria....⁴⁸

Ratzinger claims that, even now, Christian truths and values must be the foundation on which Europe is to be constructed. This means that we have a responsibility before God because Europe is not just an economic entity, but a “community of law, a stronghold of law” for all humanity.⁴⁹ Christian values allowed reconciliation to happen after the injustices that took place during the Second World War. This shows that we must create a space for God if we are to remain humane.⁵⁰

Europe’s fundamental spiritual foundation has been shaken due to “the dissolution of the primal certainties of man about God, about himself, and about the universe – the dissolution of the consciousness of those moral values that are never subject to our own judgment – all this is still our problem. In a new form, it could lead to the self-destruction of European consciousness....”⁵¹ Ratzinger suggests that a concrete way to rebuild Europe on Christian values is to guarantee human rights and dignity, now and in the future. There must be laws

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to protect the value and dignity of human beings and to guarantee freedom and equality, in addition to the basic principles of democracy and the rule of law in society. These fundamental principles must be guaranteed in the European Constitution.⁵²

In European culture, the good is received from a higher tradition: Judaism and Christianity received from God, the Ten Commandments from which the modern concept of human rights was formulated. If Europe exports only its technology and rationality without logos and ethos, it will destroy humanity's great ethical and religious traditions as well as the foundations of human existence, including Europe itself. For Ratzinger, this is "Eurocentrism" in the negative sense. He calls upon Europe to teach the world the "inner origin of its rationality" – "the recognition of the Logos as the foundation of all things, a glimpse of the truth that is also the criterion of the good." Then, through a "process of giving and receiving," Europe can unite all the great traditions of humanity so that "no one is a stranger to anyone else."⁵³

In the same vein as Arnold Toynbee, Ratzinger believes that the fate of a society always depends on "a creative minority." As a creative minority, Christians can "help Europe regain the best elements of its inheritance. It will allow Europe to serve the whole of mankind."⁵⁴ To accomplish this, Christians and non-Christians must ensure the creation of a moral foundation based on Christian principles. Establishing common convictions will be possible "only if we live our own inheritance vigorously and purely. This will make its inherent power of persuasion visible and effective in society as a whole."⁵⁵

As Christianity is no longer the dominant force in Europe and autonomous reason has taken over as the measure of all things, Ratzinger urges Christians, non-Christians and even non-believers to live as if God does exist, to live as if there were a higher authority and to accept a basis for measuring things that is greater than human reason. This may help Europe to regain its soul. The Enlightenment project attempted to present a world without God, resulting in disaster.⁵⁶ Just as Pascal challenged his non-believing friends to assume the possibility that God existed, so must Christians.⁵⁷ Thus, Ratzinger concludes that, just as the notion of *est Deus non daretur*, even if God did not exist, served as an ethical base for peaceful coexistence at a time of religious conflict, it is

possible to hold the notion of *si Deus daretur*, as if God existed, to realize the same goal.

The construction of a society based on Christian values is related to Joseph Ratzinger's understanding of democracy. Democratic societies in Europe reveal that rationality and freedom require a moral foundation that cannot be self-generated. While democracy represents the best system in governing, it is not a value in itself, not even an ideal. This is because majority decisions, in a representative democracy, can be detrimental to minorities.⁵⁸ Ratzinger writes: "The state is not itself the source of truth and morality. It cannot produce truth from its own self by means of an ideology based on people or race or class or some other identity. Nor can it produce truth via the majority."⁵⁹ Thus, in Ratzinger's opinion, the crisis in Europe has to do with its distorted understanding of the meaning of freedom, democracy and rationality. Freedom has been reduced to individual self-determination, democracy means the protection of this freedom by the majority and rationality can be defined as functionality and effectiveness.

Theological Vision

Joseph Ratzinger is determined to build up a counter-cultural church in opposition to the secularising trend in Europe. He also places his trust in the church that he believes is the guardian of truth, capable of reviving the European spirit. This theological vision of Joseph Ratzinger has to do with his understanding of St. Augustine and St. Bonaventure. Influenced by Augustine, Ratzinger sees the world in dualistic terms: conflict and contrast between Christian notions of truth and freedom and contemporary Western culture. This means that faith must be presented as "countercultural, as an appeal to nonconformity." Ratzinger believes that only the gospel will save us, not philosophy, science or even scientific theology.⁶⁰

The model for this task, according to Joseph Komonchak, is "the effort to preach the gospel in the alien world of antiquity and to construct the vision Christian wisdom manifest in the great ages of faith before philosophy, science, and technology separated themselves into autonomous areas of reflection and activity." This "Bonaventuran" theological vision refers to the final stages of Bonaventure's intellectual journey when he responded to the cultural challenge of his times with an anti-intellectual, anti-Aristotelian kind of piety.⁶¹ Ratzinger is, thus, combating modernity with this anti-intellectual and anti-secular vision.

With such a theological vision rooted, not only in Bonaventure, but in Augustine and Plato as well, Ratzinger has never been enthusiastic about *Gaudium et Spes*, a document of Vatican II. It is an optimistic text, on the church in the

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modern, world based on an “incarnational approach” inspired by the Dominican theologian, Marie-Dominique Chenu, who emphasized reading the “signs of the times” so that the church could proclaim the message of Christ meaningfully to the world at large. Ratzinger found this text, *Gaudium et Spes*, conceding too much to the world. He criticized the draft for not stressing the reality of sin in the world, for confusing the natural and supernatural, and for its ambiguous notions of “world” and “church.”⁶² He was afraid that, in *Gaudium et Spes*, dialogue was taking the place of the proclamation of the faith.⁶³

According to Komonchak, Ratzinger favors the Augustinian distinction between science and wisdom that offers “a deeper epistemology than that of Aquinas, and greater emphasis on the Cross as the necessary point of contradiction between church and world”⁶⁴ This suggests that, when analysing the European situation, Ratzinger tends to see things in black and white: Christian faith versus the godless Enlightenment ideology. Ratzinger’s opposition to theological dissent and his reluctance to accept theological pluralism had its roots in this theological outlook. Komonchak writes:

Ratzinger wanted the church again to be able to pose as a real alternative, a set of meanings and values that can stand at a critical and redemptive distance from contemporary culture. It is the importance of their being an ecclesial – not simply a theological or intellectual – response to today’s challenges that led him to insist on internal unity. It is the church, and not theology, that would provide a real alternative; and theologians were often perceived as in fact and, because of their defense of public dissent, in principle preventing the unity that is required for the church’s effective redemptive service in the world.⁶⁵

Such a position means that Ratzinger is sceptical about having a genuine dialogue with the world, fearing that it might compromise the church’s proclamation of the gospel. Apart from this reluctance to enter into dialogue with the world and the harsh treatment given to dissident Catholic

theologians, Ratzinger’s perception of the decline of Christianity in the West is one-sided in that he focuses only on white people of European stock without taking into consideration the influx of Christian immigrants from developing countries. Besides, has Christianity really been banished, almost to the point of extinction or is Europe really as godless as Joseph Ratzinger seems to imply?

Christianity Vanishing in Europe?

Philip Jenkins argues that Christianity has not disappeared in Europe. In fact, there are signs of its growth within secular society. He writes: “the recent experience of Christian Europe might suggest not that the continent is potentially a graveyard for religion but rather that it is a laboratory for new forms of faith, new structures of organization and interaction, that can accommodate themselves to a dominant secular environment.”⁶⁶ Although multiculturalism is positively assessed by Joseph Ratzinger, he does not mention the growth of immigrant churches among Africans, East Asians and Latin Americans in Western Europe. Jenkins says that even if we accept the pessimistic view that most Westerners are turning away from Christianity, these new immigrant churches represent a kind of religious revival. European Christianity is neither dead nor dying. We have seen new movements within churches and also flourishing immigrant churches.⁶⁷

The idea of Christian Europe now becoming secularized has prompted Anton Wessels to ask: “Is Europe Christian?” and to “what extent it has been de-Christianized today?”⁶⁸ A balanced response comes from Delumeau: “*the God of Christians was much less alive in the past than has been thought and today he is much less dead than is claimed.*”⁶⁹ Recent conflicts with Islamic extremism have forced secular-minded Europeans to realize that many of their values are rooted in Christianity. In fact, Jürgen Habermas, the “purest secularist,” has said that “Christianity, and nothing else, is the ultimate foundation of liberty, conscience, human rights, and democracy, the benchmarks of Western civilization: ‘To this day, we have no other options. We continue to nourish ourselves from this source. Everything else is post-modern chatter.’”⁷⁰

An Essentialist Approach

By reducing a diverse continent like Europe to two fundamental features – the Christian faith and Western philosophical tradition – Ratzinger takes an essentialist approach in his analysis of a reality that is highly complex and dynamic. His definition of Europe suggests a “cognitive ‘filtering out’ or abstraction of certain aspects of a much broader cultural dynamic.”⁷¹ This essentialism, as well as the “grand narrative” it implies, has been rejected by postmodernism in favour of a “multiplicity of localized histories.”⁷²

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Richard King argues that the grand narrative “involves the ascendancy of secular rationality of an ideal within Western intellectual thought, a concomitant marginalization of ‘the mystical’” East.⁷³ In other words, if Christianity and Hellenistic thought are fundamental to European identity, non-Western countries are seen as the “other.” Refuting essentialism by citing Derrida, Patrik Fridlund writes:

The dominant Western discourse... works from an idea of a hierarchical axiology in which values are ranked in dichotomized pairs like normal/abnormal, full/empty, proper/parasitic, serious/non-serious, literal/non-literal, centre/periphery, and essence/addition. There is a desire to find the original pure, proper, normal and essential, and only then – afterwards – to see the deviations and the complications in what is held to be the impure, parasitic, and abnormal....⁷⁴

Of course, Joseph Ratzinger is not comparing Europe with the rest of the world in an “Orientalist discourse.”⁷⁵ However, his essentialist position regarding the identity of Europe does overlook other historical, cultural and religious changes in Western society, like the influx of immigrants.

Most people would acknowledge the Christian heritage of European culture, but the idea of promoting the “myth of a Christian Europe” in order to exclude other religious and secular traditions is something else. Since the time of Constantine, political and church leaders have found this myth useful in furthering their personal agendas. I am not saying that Ratzinger is promoting the myth of a Christian Europe in order to exclude others, but his vision of Christianity in Europe comes close to recreating a church that is authoritarian and intolerant. I concur with much of his analysis of the crisis in Europe, but his approach towards the core identity of Europe seems to be exclusive and even dangerous, for it does not take into account the growing religious and cultural pluralism in the West.

Myth of Christian Europe

While Joseph Ratzinger seeks to debunk the myths of nationalism, technological civilisation and human progress, Werner G. Jeanrond seeks to unmask the myth of Christian Europe. In contrast to Ratzinger’s understanding of Europe, incultural and historical terms, and his insistence on its Christian roots, Jeanrond understands the European Union as constituting “a community of law, and not a community of views of life.”⁷⁶ He sees Europe, not so much as possessing a soul but rather, as offering “a constitutional space to all its citizens, and legal protection for the development of their respective religious or humanist convictions.”⁷⁷

In view of the growth of Islam in Europe and the intention of Turkey to join the European Union, Jeanrond argues that it may not be appropriate to define contemporary Europe in Christian terms. Europe is characterized by a plurality of

Most people would acknowledge the Christian heritage of European culture, but the idea of promoting the “myth of a Christian Europe” in order to exclude other religious and secular traditions is something else.

religious movements and traditions. All these different religions will shape the structure of a united Europe. The religious future of Europe will not be Christian, but “radically pluralistic.” Jeanrond thus claims that the myth of a Christian Europe has been revealed as “a dangerous project.”⁷⁸ Aylward Shorter also warns that there is a dangerous tendency, in official church documents, to equate Christian patrimony with Western culture: “it is a multicultural phenomenon which assists the Church in passing ‘from one kind of clarity to another’ in its developing understanding of the faith. It is a naïve over simplification to identify this patrimony with the culture of Europe, even if that culture is seen to be what it is in reality, a complex phenomenon of astonishing diversity.”⁷⁹ Nonetheless, this myth continues to be a powerful force in European culture and politics. Many people still consider Europe a Christian continent, at least historically, in spite of aggressive secularization since the Enlightenment.⁸⁰

Jeanrond claims that the myth of a Christian Europe has been used against Islam, Judaism, Communism and secularism which are considered to be dangerous “others.” If this is so, it follows that Christianity, as a common religion, has been employed by its supporters to give the “European project a strong internal identity.” This myth suited the church hierarchy as well as politicians, at various times.⁸¹ The result of such an “integrationist Christian Europe” meant *others* were excluded or marginalized. Besides, this project of a united Europe sought to organize “the faithful into a monist system of one ruler, one religion and one people, a system which in its secularized form even inspired Hitler’s political vision for Germany and beyond.”⁸² Today, however, Europe is characterized by a religious plurality with great diversity even within Christianity itself. Europe has a flourishing Jewish community and a growing Muslim population. This new religious landscape thus, calls for interreligious dialogue and cooperation in various social fields.⁸³

Europe is not a “Christian property” or an exclusive “Christian space,” Jeanrond insists.⁸⁴ The future of Europe is the concern not only of Christians, but of others who are living in the continent. Since we are aware of the danger of nationalism, as predicted by Joseph Ratzinger, any attempt

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to embrace a religious myth or ideology, in order to unify Europe, is inappropriate. Christianity should not be used to fill the gap created by the collapse of ideologies after 1989. Jeanrond insists that Europe does not have a soul, but a space where people of different religious traditions and secular =beliefs live and work together.⁸⁵

In Europe, the three Abrahamic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – have their own political visions and ethical systems, and Christianity is no longer the most dominant force in Western society. Present day Europeans are rather sceptical about religious beliefs and the church has been weakened by sexual scandals and corruption. Furthermore, Christianity is no longer seen as a religion that promotes peace and understanding.⁸⁶ Consequently, it is not surprising that contemporary Europeans will seek sources, other than churches, to satisfy their spiritual needs. They will not be content to accept religious traditions and doctrines handed down by religious authorities, although they will still seek religious services when required. In trying to satisfy their religious needs and aspirations, Europeans will practice “syncretistic selection” based on their “individual insights.” But one thing is clear, according to Jeanrond, the future of Christianity in Europe will be “more colourful, more diffuse, more pluralistic than its past.”⁸⁷ At the moment, he thinks it is important to expose the dangers of the myth of a Christian Europe. Jeanrond’s argument highlights the differences between Christianity and Christendom.

Christendom versus Christianity

Emperor Constantine proclaimed Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire in 321 and thus, Christendom was born. After three centuries of periodic persecution by the state, Christianity finally allied itself with secular forces. Later the Roman elite as well as the masses, became Christian and other religions were banned. From then on, a strong relationship between church and state, as well as between church and society, was forged. For the next 1500 years “Christendom” became the context in which Christians lived out their faith. According to Hugh McLeod, “they lived in a society where there were close ties between the leaders of the church and those in positions of secular power, where the laws purported to be based on Christian principles, and where, apart from certain clearly defined outsider communities, every member of the society was assumed to be a Christian.”⁸⁸ The downside to this marriage between altar and throne was that the church lost its freedom.

In trying to satisfy their religious needs and aspirations, Europeans will practice “syncretistic selection” based on their “individual insights.”

There have always been Christians who saw the partnership between church and state as detrimental to Christianity itself. Christendom meant that the church was under the control of the state. It also meant that the church had to compromise by approving customs and values that were against Christian principles. Since the Reformation in the sixteenth century, there have been people in Western Europe who have wanted the church to remain independent of the state and Christians to refrain from forcing their beliefs on others.⁸⁹ Since the nineteenth century, religious tolerance has been advocated for practical reasons and on the grounds that everyone has the right to follow their own conscience.⁹⁰

Hugh McLeod asserts that Christianity and Christendom can be and must be separated. For three centuries Christianity was able to flourish before it became Christendom. In China, there are many Christians, but there has never been a Christendom. Although Christendom was just a phase in European history, it lasted for more than a thousand years. We are still under its influence.⁹¹ Many people would be happy to see the end of this particular era, but some, like Joseph Ratzinger understandably lament the decline of Christian values in Western Europe. What Ratzinger has witnessed in Europe, namely the decline of Christianity as a dominant influence on society, is an inevitable process of history due to the nature of the Christian faith itself. Christianity has adapted well to modernity and even at times allowed itself to be neutralized. According to Yves Lambert, Christianity, in the beginning, succeeded in becoming an autonomous religion, but later became “the instrument of symbolic legitimisation of the socio-political order.”⁹² This shows that Christianity was able to adapt to changes in society, probably because Christians are taught to render “to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (MK 12: 17).

Following Bellah, Lambert asserts that our present situation represents a stage of religious development which is very different from that of “historic religion.” Gordon Melton writes:

During the twentieth century, the West has experienced a phenomenon it has not encountered since the reign of Constantine: the growth of and significant visible presence of a variety of non-Christian and non-orthodox Christian bodies competing for the religious allegiance of the public. This growth of so many religious alternatives is forcing the West into a new situation in which the still dominant Christian religion must share its centuries-old hegemony in a new pluralistic religious environment.⁹³

What we have today, is a transformed landscape: it is accepted that one cannot prove or disprove the existence of God by means of reason. New conflicts like genetic manipulation and euthanasia have arisen, but they do not seem to affect the faith itself. Individual freedom has led people away from God, but it has also given rise to the adoption of a more personal faith and new religious practices.⁹⁴

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Perhaps the greatest challenge that Christianity now faces is globalisation and religious pluralism. Yves Lambert claims that the impact of modernity on religion is the “loss of the monopoly of religions in the symbolic field” such as “conceptions of life and the world.” These conceptions are now influenced by other religions and secular sciences.⁹⁵ Due to the pluralistic nature of European society, not everyone shares the same Christian values. We are now witnessing the transformation of Christendom into Christianity in Western Europe, resulting in Christians becoming the creative minorities. Perhaps this minority status will enable Christians to be united and to live the gospel more faithfully.

The crisis faced by mainstream Christianity may be a sign that Christendom is dead and that we are witnessing a spiritual revival. Jonathan Bonk argues that “Christendom from its earliest days found it impractical to follow the *ways* of Jesus – to actually reflect the mind of Christ – as demonstrated by its violent politics, aggressive and self-centred economics, and fierce militarism.”⁹⁶ In fact, the conversion of the pagan world to Christianity took place first, on the battleground. Christianity has its origin in war – *Christus victor!* The Christian God has revealed himself as a “God of war” and a conqueror.⁹⁷

It is generally agreed that a people is defined primarily by shared memory. Bonk, however, thinks that the mere recollection of its Christian roots and identity will not be sufficient for the salvation of Europe. Perhaps Europe has never been “saved” in the gospel sense. Bonk makes this cutting comment:

Old Christendom was violent, and powerful neo-Christendom still prefers violence as an effective means of insisting that its will be done on earth. While old Christendom, since World War II, has enjoyed a relative moratorium on war, time and circumstance will doubtless change that situation, perhaps in the not-too-distant future. As for neo-Christendom, it is disheartening to observe how utterly reliant on violence and its terrible instruments this great society and its institutions have become.... Neo-Christendom is no mere victim, but the primary beneficiary, of violence around the word.⁹³


Many would agree with Jonathan Bonk and desire to see the end of Christendom and its influences. But how can we transform the violence of Christendom to peaceful living according to the gospel? Lamin Sanneh, taking his inspiration from the poet, T.S. Eliot, advocates a Christian state in which “the church can have the sort of relation that is not a concordat or a reciprocal one.” This is possible only when the rulers have received a Christian education, so that they can act in a Christian way without imposing their beliefs on others.⁹⁹

Sanneh thus calls for the creation of a Christian community that recognizes the “primacy of ethics and a code of Christian conduct.” It could be achieved only with “a sense of moral accountability to God.” The community of Christians would

have a “composite and cumulative effect” on the pluralistic society which includes people of exceptional ability from different religious traditions.¹⁰⁰ It follows that Christians, with their common belief and system of education, can influence each other and collectively form the conscience of society. Sanneh’s idea of a Christian state may find support from Joseph Ratzinger, who believes that a creative minority should include Christian leaders capable of helping to revitalise Europe through the establishment of a Christian, moral foundation in society.

Beyond Christian Perspective

Due to Joseph Ratzinger’s Augustinian background, he tends to see things in stark contrast: the church versus the world. But I argue that faith and the church are not always in opposition to the world. They actually participate in influencing the world and are, in turn, influenced by the world. Worldly processes have religious and human significance in that God saves us in our particular historical context.¹⁰¹ Lieven Boeve has argued that “while his [Ratzinger’s] critique of radical Enlightenment thinking is likely to disturb some observers, it is not likely to convince the majority on account of its massive oppositional character.... The socio-cultural evolutions that have taken place in the West would seem to be too complex to be captured by a simple opposition: ‘belief-unbelief.’”¹⁰² In other words, according to Boeve, Ratzinger simply reduces the problem of European identity to the ancient debate between Christianity and the atheistic ideology of the Enlightenment.

The real situation in Europe is more complex than Ratzinger’s black and white analysis because the relationship between the Christian faith and the modern world is not just polemical but reciprocal. Europe cannot simply be understood, in its totality, by just looking at things from a Christian perspective. No single tradition, not even modern secular culture, can survive forever. Furthermore, today’s European society is characterized by the ascendancy of cultural and religious pluralism as a result of massive immigration from Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. The situation demands that the future of Christianity in Europe be evaluated. It is incumbent upon Christians to respect others and be open-minded towards their beliefs while remaining rooted in their own tradition. They can afford to be critical of others whose religious convictions run contrary to theirs without imposing their views on the rest of society.¹⁰³ This means that Christians can contribute to the future of Europe along with non-Christians, including those with no religion. 

Notes:

1. James V. Schall, S.J., Forward to the Second Edition in Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *A Turning Point For Europe* (San Francisco: continued on page 13

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2014

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Homily “Has *Christ* Been *Divided*?”

By Paul Teresa Hennessee, SA

Now I appeal to you brothers and sisters by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and same purpose. For it has been reported to me (by Chloe's people) that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided?

1 Corinthians 1:10-17

Paul understood what Jesus was asking his Father and what he was asking of us at Jesus' last meal with his disciples... those who would come after him and who would learn better through these who would become the first teachers, the first evangelizers. Through us, even after all these centuries.

As evangelizers, we too have come to understand better what Paul was asking his brothers and sisters who were acting as if they were indeed divided. They had lost focus of their true source, their sense of belonging.

The theme from 1 Corinthians 1:13 for our 2014 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was chosen by the Ecumenical Committee of the Churches of Canada. Canada which has such diversity of cultures, religious traditions and practices, as does the United States and every other nation in the world these days has chosen well Paul's first letter to his dear sisters and brothers in Corinth. Faith and Order Commissions have much to do everywhere.

Does diversity mean division? Has Christ been divided?

Later, St. John the evangelist quoted Jesus from the final supper with Jesus' Apostles:

I am not asking you take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one...I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they all may be one. As you, Father, are in me.

Neither Paul, John, nor anyone could have said these except that he understood the heart and mind of Jesus when he prayed. Then we pray following as did Jesus' disciples... "That they be one as you, Father, and I are one that the world may believe that you have sent me."

How else is the world to know that God truly sent his son to let us, his followers, his disciples, his evangelizers know how much God loves us and how, as his followers show our love of God by the way we love and relate with

each other? There is no other way but how we relate... interrelate... with each other?

Has Christ Been Divided?

We are among those who have come to believe through those first followers of Jesus. We have become, we pray, the bringers of the Good News, evangelists of Jesus, who is not divided.

As Christians, we certainly want to respond with a resounding "no" to this question of Christ being divided. However, we must also give a resounding "yes" to the fact that *we*, Jesus' followers, his evangelists, bearers of the "Good News" have been and still are, divided! Jesus prayed for our unity, at his "Last Supper" because he already knew how we would be individually and communally.

Answering Paul's question points in reality to our own disunity. Even a few years ago, even some planners of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity asked why special place was given to Reverend Dr. King, Jr in the middle of the "main event", namely the Week of Prayer, when Dr. King already had "a day of his own." We are acting in the same way, today. Exclusion is still one of the orders of the day. There is as well the racism, classism, pride of place, etc.

Paul, in writing to his "beloved brothers and sisters" might well have been writing, as did Martin Luther King, Jr, to his "Beloved Community"...his brothers and sisters in the Lord. St. Paul wanted to avoid factions.

The term, "Beloved Community" was first used in the early 20th Century by Josiah Royce, the philosopher-theologian who founded the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., also a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation made the term more popular and gave it a deeper meaning affecting people of good will all over the world.

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Sister Paul Teresa Hennessee, S.A. is a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement. She worked nine years with the Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute serving as an Associate Director working primarily with the African American community. Sister was appointed by Cardinal Walter Kasper to the World Council of Churches' Education and Ecumenical Formation Commission and served seven years in that position. She also served as Interim Director of the Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches. Presently Sister's ministry continues in ecumenical spiritual direction.

If ever there needs to be what is now being called the New evangelization now is the time!

If ever there needs to be what is now being called the *New evangelization* now is the time! Aren't we evangelists supposed to be concerned with the way we treat our fellow brothers and sisters and that we show our love for God our creator, savior and spiritual guide?

I had considered using the subtitle, "Cry the Beloved Community", after that famous book by South African Alan Paton, *Cry the Beloved Country*. However, my dear friend and colleague, Reverend Dr. Angelique Walker-Smith recalled to me that while *Cry the Beloved Country* is known by many African and African American brothers and sisters, this book is not widely known outside the Black Community. I reconsidered but highly recommend the reading of this classic book, *Cry the Beloved Country*.

For those not familiar with the book it is about two South African Episcopal priests, one Black and one White, and terrible events surrounding the lives of their sons.

When the question was posed, as to why Alan Paton chose this title one explanation was that South Africa at that time was facing a lot of problems and so the country had to cry so that it could be heard in order for the world, including the church, to see the problems, face them and try to restore justice and reconciliation so badly needed. We know the changes that have taken place in South Africa now, but *Cry the Beloved Country* is still worth the read.

Can it be that the divisions and disputes that Paul is writing his brothers and sisters about are the same as we are still experiencing... suffering... today?

Favoritism and boldly stating to whom they "belonged"... for whatever reason... because probably of what Paul, Apollos, etc. believed and lived thereby teaching the followers to live and behave in the same matter. There was probably pride of place and station, classism, etc. Their certainly must have been racism because we have the words about slaves being obedient to their "masters".

Still we have not learned how to live well with each other. How to accept our diversity. But God still lets it be! It is not Jesus Christ the second person of the Trinity who is divided. It is us, and there is of course nothing wrong with the diversity. It is how we live with it and try to make it a whole... to integrate it in order to show the beauty and diverse attributes of our Trinitarian God. There is but one body and many parts; there are many gifts but one Spirit.

Has Christ Been Divided?

Paul asks, in his usual manner... rhetorically... so that we would, think, pray and finally come to understand that Christ is not divided. It is our lot to seek the unity which Jesus the Christ desires of us and wants us to live for.

Just a short few years ago some planners asked why the homily for Reverend Dr. King, Jr. is still inserted in the middle of the planning for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. If there is any more proof that prejudice, racism still exists among Christians, this query is proof of that.

Martin Luther King, Jr. is the *Inheritor of the tradition of Paul*. We are of the same tradition. We are to be the evangelizers in God's world today to pass on the "Good News" which Jesus came to tell us.

This is not a theological treatise but rather a writing which hopefully as an evangelist, myself, who has learned through the teachings passed on to me. So that I can help in some way to pass on the "Good News" which Jesus came to tell us. Which Jesus told us how we are to live and be with each other so that the world... even unbelievers... live to show that God truly did send his Son and that our way of being with each other will show the world what God wants of us.

As St. Paul wrote to his devoted followers, Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote to and for his followers whom he considered not followers but co-workers.

What Paul wrote to his Corinthians might be comparable to Martin's writings to the "*Beloved Community*".

So as we think and pray about our divisions... not Christ's being divided, we see the similarities in the two men looking at the wholeness of *Jesus* and the attempt of us as we continue our prayer for unity because we are aiming at that integrated-ness, that integrity, that unity for which Christ prayed and asked us to pray and work for. As he was not and is not and never shall be divided, he however knew *we* would be and he wanted us to live in the harmony as community, as brothers and sisters, so that unity which would prove that it was from God that he came to us.

What else can prove to the world... to all humanity... that God sent his only son to show his creatures how to dwell in peace with each other?

Can it be that when the day comes when all the world and humanity can dwell in peace and harmony that God will come to us with that great cloud of witnesses who had tried with all their might and with their faith and hope and love and mercy and justice to live as Jesus showed us that God will come?

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May we, too, inherit the mantle of evangelization from both Paul and Martin to help eradicate injustice, pride, prejudice, racism and the other evils in the world so that we may live for peace, justice and reconciliation so the world may see in our unity as true brothers and sisters that God sent his son Jesus the Christ to show us how to live.

Might Paul have been writing this to the *Beloved Community*?

May we, too, inherit the mantle of evangelization from both Paul and Martin to help eradicate injustice, pride, prejudice, racism and the other evils in the world so that we may live for peace, justice and reconciliation so the world may see in our unity as true brothers and sisters that God sent his son Jesus the Christ to show us how to live.

His closure in this letter to his dear brothers and sisters in Corinth:

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus. – 1 Corinthians 16: 23

In jail because of his fight for justice, Martin Luther King's closure to his brothers to whom he who wrote the *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*:

I hope this letter finds you strong in the faith...
Yours for the cause of Peace and Brotherhood.

May we close with the prayer for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, 2014:

We give you thanks, O God, for you bless the Church with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Help us support one another, to be respectful of our differences and to work for the unity of all those throughout the world who call upon Jesus as Lord. Help us by your grace to continue praying the prayer of your Son that we may be one, that we may draw ever closer together and recognize our unity is that of yours, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.



THE CRISIS IN EUROPE: AN EXAMINATION OF JOSEPH RATZINGER'S THEOLOGICAL VISION, from page 10

Ignatius Press, 1994), 12. Assessing his role as pontiff after he has announced his resignation on 11 February, 2013, *The New York Times* reports, "Benedict himself had a mixed record in dealing with cultures outside his own, triggering fury among Muslims with a speech critical of Islam in 2006 and angering many in Africa by opposing the use of condoms to combat the scourge of AIDS," <http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2013/02/11/world/europe/11-reuters-pope-resignation.html?src=un&feedurl=http%3A%2F%2Fjsn8.nytimes.com%2Fpages%2Fworld%2Feurope%2Findex.jsonp>.

2. James V. Schall, S.J., Forward to the Second Edition in Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *A Turning Point For Europe* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 12.

3. *Ibid.*, 13.

4. Joseph Ratzinger, "Europe in the Crisis of Cultures," *Communio* 32, Summer 2005, 347.

5. James Corkery, S.J., *Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Ideas: Wise Cautions & Legitimate Hopes* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), 113.

6. Joseph Ratzinger, "Europe in the Crisis of Cultures," *Communio* 32, Summer 2005, 348.

7. *Ibid.*, 349.

8. Joseph Ratzinger and Marcello Pera, *Without Roots* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 128.

9. James Corkery, S.J., *Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Ideas: Wise Cautions & Legitimate Hopes* (New York: Paulist Press, 2009), 116.

10. Werner Ustorf, "A Missiological Postscript" in Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf, *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750 – 2000* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2003), 224.

11. *Ibid.*, 224.

12. Joseph Ratzinger, "Europe in the Crisis of Cultures," *Communio* 32, Summer 2005, 348 – 349.

13. The Tablet Interview, "Slaying the secular dragon," *The Tablet*, 18 February 2012, 4.

14. Joseph Ratzinger, "Europe in the Crisis of Cultures," *Communio* 32, Summer 2005, 349.

15. *Ibid.*, 352.

16. *Ibid.*, 353.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Louis Dupré, "The ties that bind us," *The Tablet*, 24 April 2004, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/article/2521>.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*

22. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, translated by John Cumming (London: Allen Lane, 1972), 3.

23. *Ibid.*, 6.

continued on page 14

24. *Ibid.*, 7.
25. *Ibid.*, 121.
26. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *A Turning Point For Europe* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 175.
27. *Ibid.*, 176.
28. *Ibid.*, 174.
29. Henri de Lubac, S. J., *The Drama of Atheist Humanism* (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Co., 1963), 18.
30. *Ibid.*, 19.
31. *Ibid.*, 20.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, 22.
34. *Ibid.*, 34.
35. *Ibid.*, 35.
36. *Ibid.*, 33.
37. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 41.
38. *Ibid.*, 43.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, 44.
41. *Ibid.*, 65.
42. *Ibid.*, 66.
43. Tracey Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 122.
44. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 69. Claude Geffré also asserts that "... the gospel become the good news of every man and woman beyond his or her race, language, culture, and even religious belonging." Claude Geffré, "Double Belonging and the Originality of Christianity as a Religion," in Catherine Cornille, ed., *Many Mansions?* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 103.
45. *Ibid.*, 111.
46. *Ibid.*, 112.
47. *Ibid.*, 125.
48. *Ibid.*, 125 -126.
49. *Ibid.*, 126.
50. *Ibid.*
51. *Ibid.*, 145.
52. *Ibid.*, 147 – 148.
53. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *A Turning Point For Europe* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 146.
54. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 150.
55. *Ibid.*, 115.
56. Joseph Ratzinger, "Europe in the Crisis of Cultures," *Communio* 32, Summer 2005, 354.
57. *Ibid.*, 355.
58. Lieven Boeve, "Europe in Crisis: a Question of Belief or Unbelief? Perspectives from the Vatican," *Modern Theology* 23, no. 2 (April 1, 2007), 214.
59. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 67 – 68.
60. Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Church in crisis: Pope Benedict's theological vision," *Commonweal*, vol. 132, no. 11, 3 June, 2005, 13.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*, 12.
63. *Ibid.*, 13.
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Ibid.*, 14.
66. Philip Jenkins, "Godless Europe?," *International Bulletin Of Missionary Research*, vol. 31, no. 3, July 1, 2007, 115.
67. *Ibid.*, 118.
68. Anton Wessels, *Europe: Was it Ever Really Christian?* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1994), 3.
69. Quoted in Anton Wessels, *Europe: Was it Ever Really Christian?* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1994), 5.
70. Quoted in Sandro Magister, "The Church Is Under Siege. But Habermas, the Atheist, Is Coming to its Defense," <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/20037?eng=y>.
71. Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'* (London: Routledge, 1999), 10. Richard King holds that the "process of abstraction" in defining religion is based on the Enlightenment's presuppositions. King is referring to the problem of definitions regarding religion. I see the same problem in Joseph Ratzinger's analysis of Europe.
72. *Ibid.*, 170. According to O' Leary, there is no need to conceive our religious tradition in an essentialist manner so that it would not be contaminated by other traditions. This is because religious identity "is made to be reborn, modified but recognisable, in diverse situations and relationships in which it has to construct itself." Joseph Stephen O' Leary, *Religious Pluralism and Christian Truth* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 2 – 3.
73. *Ibid.*, 4.
74. Patrik Fridlund, *Mobile Performances: Linguistic Undecidability as Possibility and Problem in the Theology of Religions* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 117.
75. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 1 – 28.
76. Werner G. Jeanrond, "The Future of Christianity in Europe," in Werner G. Jeanrond and Andrew D.H. Mayes (eds), *Recognising the Margins: Developments in Biblical and Theological Studies* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2006), 184.
77. *Ibid.*, 185.
78. *Ibid.*

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79. Aylward Shorter, *Evangelization and Culture* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 93.

80. Werner G. Jeanrond, "The Future of Christianity in Europe," in Werner G. Jeanrond and Andrew D.H. Mayes (eds), *Recognising the Margins: Developments in Biblical and Theological Studies* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2006), 185.

81. *Ibid.*, 185 – 186. Regarding the disappearance of religious homogeneity in Europe in recent times, Jeanrond argues that "The political-religious program of *cuius regio eius religio*, promoted both by the Augsburg Peace of 1555 and the Westphalian settlement of 1648 as a means for overcoming interconfessional warfare, followed the old Roman conviction that a state could survive in the long run only if it was built on a unitary religious formula. The breakdown of this conviction and resulting political projects has given rise to new anxieties. In Christian churches, in debates on the future of European integration ... critical voices ask how to deal with religious pluralism, religious identity, and religious otherness." Werner G. Jeanrond, "Toward an Interreligious hermeneutics of Love" in Catherine Cornille and Christopher Conway, eds., *Interreligious Hermeneutics*, (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2010), 44.

82. *Ibid.*, 188.

83. *Ibid.* According to Peter Phan, the "proselytizing efforts" of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam have spread to the West. Peter C. Phan, "Doing Theology in the Context of Cultural and Religious Pluralism: An Asian Perspective," *Louvain Studies* 27 (2002), 39.

84. *Ibid.*

85. *Ibid.*, 189.

86. *Ibid.*, 192.

87. *Ibid.*, 193.

88. Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf, *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750 – 2000* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2003), 1.

89. *Ibid.*

90. *Ibid.*, 2.

91. *Ibid.*

92. Yves Lambert, "New Christianity, Indifference and Diffused Spirituality," in Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf, *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750 – 2000* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2003), 76. Christopher Dawson believed that "Christianity maintains within itself the seeds of its own renewal," thus it can "remain independent of secular culture and can draw on its own internal resources when challenged." In other words, Christianity has the capacity to resist those who wish to make the religion a tool of the state or to abolish it altogether. Gerald J. Russello, ed., *Christianity and European Culture: Selections from the Work of Christopher Dawson* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998), xi.

93. Quoted in Yves Lambert, "New Christianity, Indifference and Diffused Spirituality," in Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf, *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750 – 2000* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2003), 66. Brad Stetson and Joseph G. Conti believe that even though Christianity has lost its religious and cultural dominance in the West since the Enlightenment, Christians should not see this phenomenon as undermining God's work: "the omnipotent, omniscient, personal, infinite, creative God of the

Judeo-Christian tradition will not be thwarted by human societies set against him. The message of the cross of Christ does not require cultural privilege or social affirmation in order to flourish." Brad Stetson and Joseph G. Conti, *The Truth about Tolerance* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 108.

94. Yves Lambert, "New Christianity, Indifference and Diffused Spirituality," in Hugh McLeod and Werner Ustorf, *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750 – 2000* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2003), 67.

95. *Ibid.*, 77.

96. Jonathan J. Bonk, "Europe: Christendom graveyard or Christian laboratory?," *International Bulletin Of Missionary Research* vol. 31, no. 3 (July 1, 2007), 113.

97. This refers to the decisive battle at the Milvian Bridge in Rome on 28 October 312 AD. Anton Wessels, *Europe: Was it Ever Really Christian?* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1994), 51.

98. Jonathan J. Bonk, "Europe: Christendom graveyard or Christian laboratory?," *International Bulletin Of Missionary Research* vol. 31, no. 3 (July 1, 2007), 114.

99. Lamin Sanneh, Can Europe be saved? A Review Essay," *International Bulletin Of Missionary Research* vol. 31, no. 3 (July 1, 2007), 121.

100. *Ibid.*

101. Edward Schillebeeckx writes about *extra mundum nulla salus* – outside the world there is no salvation – in contrast to the church dogma, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, which means outside the church there is no salvation. Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Church: The Human Story of God* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 5 – 15. See also Ambrose Mong Ih-Ren, "Crossing the Ethical-Practical Bridge: Paul's Knitter's Regnocentrism in Asian Perspective," *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 63, no. 2, July 2011, 187 – 188.

102. Lieven Boeve, "Europe in Crisis: a Question of Belief or Unbelief? Perspectives from the Vatican," *Modern Theology* 23, no. 2 (April 1, 2007), 222. Tom Greggs puts it this way: "Added to the fact that de-Christianization has taken place simultaneous to the growth of religious plurality, it is not simply the case that now less people are going to church: more people are now attending mosques, temples and gurdwaras in societies once divided only by which form of Christian denomination one chose to worship on a Sunday." Thus we ask, "what do a church, a community, a sermon, a liturgy, a Christian life mean in a simultaneously de-Christianized and religiously pluralist society?" Tom Greggs, *Theology Against Religion* (London: T & T Clark International, 2011), 124 – 125. O' Leary is more positive in his observation when he writes: "The great world religions lose their appearance of permanence when one treats them as human institutions born of function of the needs of an epoch ... and now, to a sceptical observer, nearing the exhaustion of their resources. Yet as they broach a new millennial threshold the religions seem in better shape than had been foretold, their mighty engines purring, their rich traditions reluctant, despite – or rather because of – critical contestation and pluralist dispersion. Perhaps the greatest challenge they face is that of assessing, rationally and responsibly, their status and function, so that in addition to arousing faith and devotion they will also continue to illuminate human minds questing for what is not only meaningful but true." Joseph Stephen O' Leary, *Religious Pluralism and Christian Truth* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), 10.

103. *Ibid.*, 223.