

A Global Vision of the Gospel

A scenic view of a Swiss village at sunset. In the foreground, a dark wooden building with a white tower and a steeple is visible. The background shows snow-capped mountains under a bright, hazy sky. The sun is low on the right side, creating a warm glow.

- The Strategic Importance of Europe
- The Vision and Strategy of the European Leadership Forum

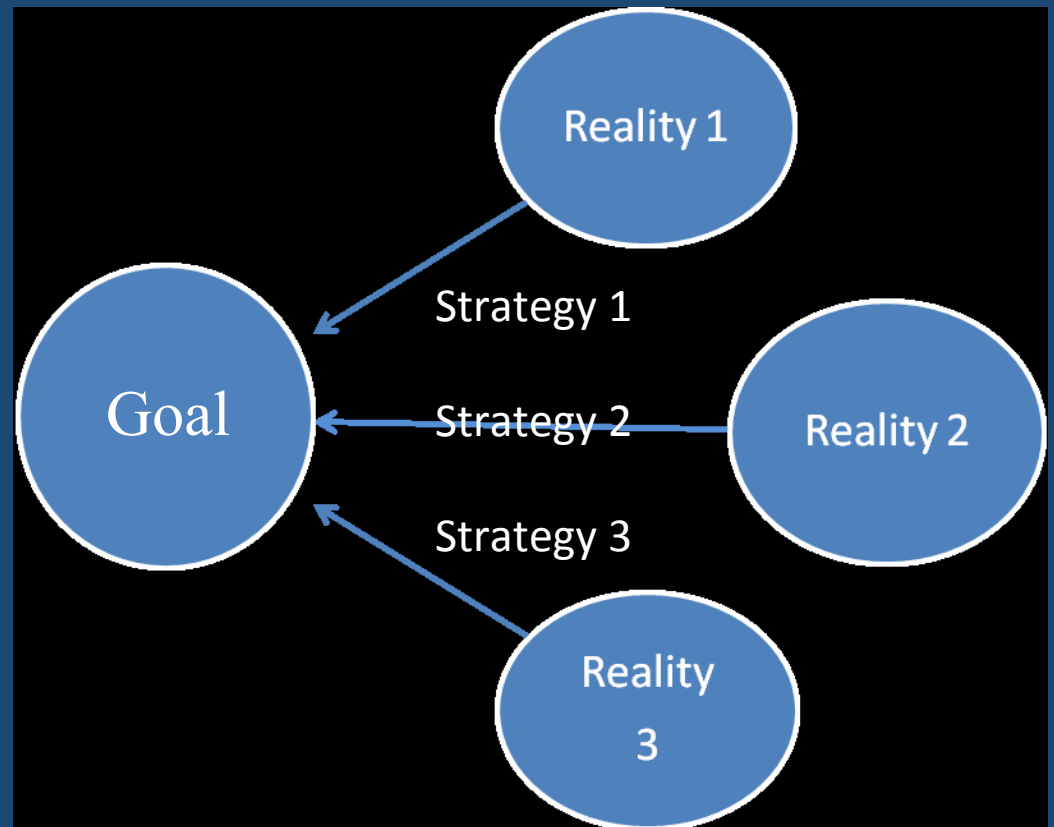
A presentation by Dr. Greg Pritchard
Director, European Leadership Forum

Introduction -- - *“The Ultimate Secret:
A Pentagon Report its Author can’t
see”* (Wall Street Journal Article)

1. Global Gospel Trends
2. Europe’s Strategic Importance
3. The English 18th c. Great Awakening
4. The European Leadership Forum as
a global strategy in response

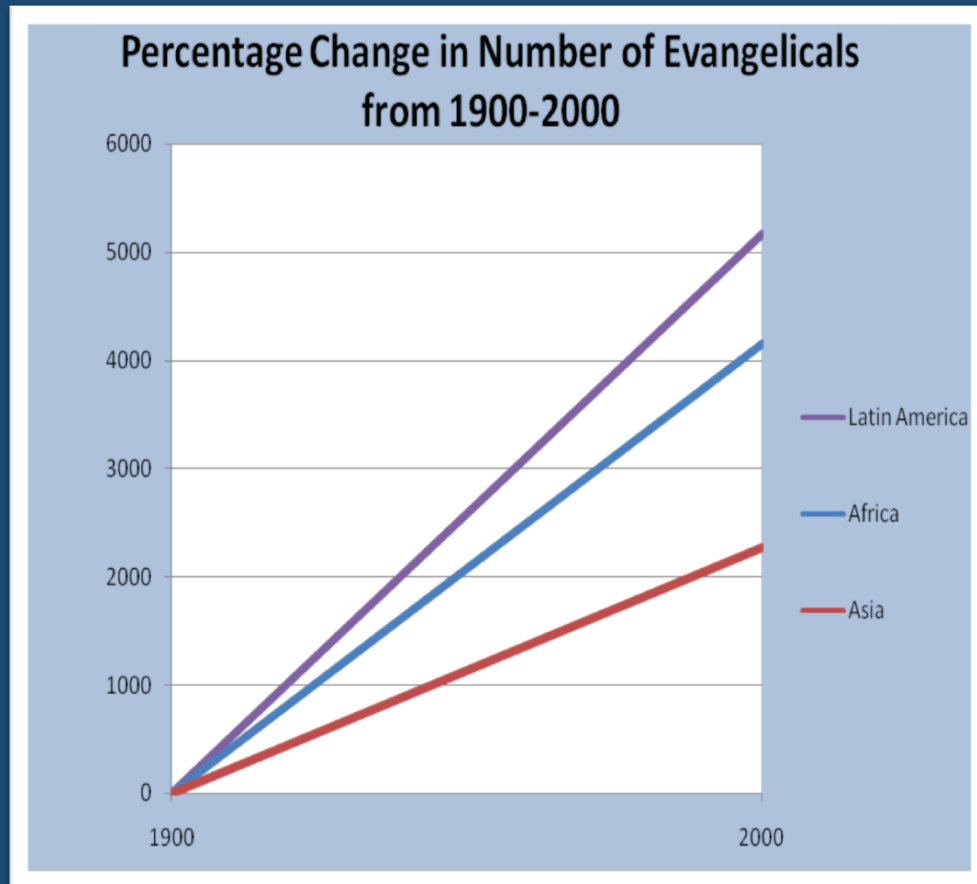
Defining Reality

A leader needs to define reality before determining what to do and how do it. A strategy has to change depending on the reality the leader faces.



Christianity in the World Today

Christianity today is growing at a rate unparalleled since the Early Church.



Over the last century, the evangelical church has grown in:

- Latin America by 5000%
- Africa by 4000%
- Asia by 2000%

This growth is genuinely exciting.

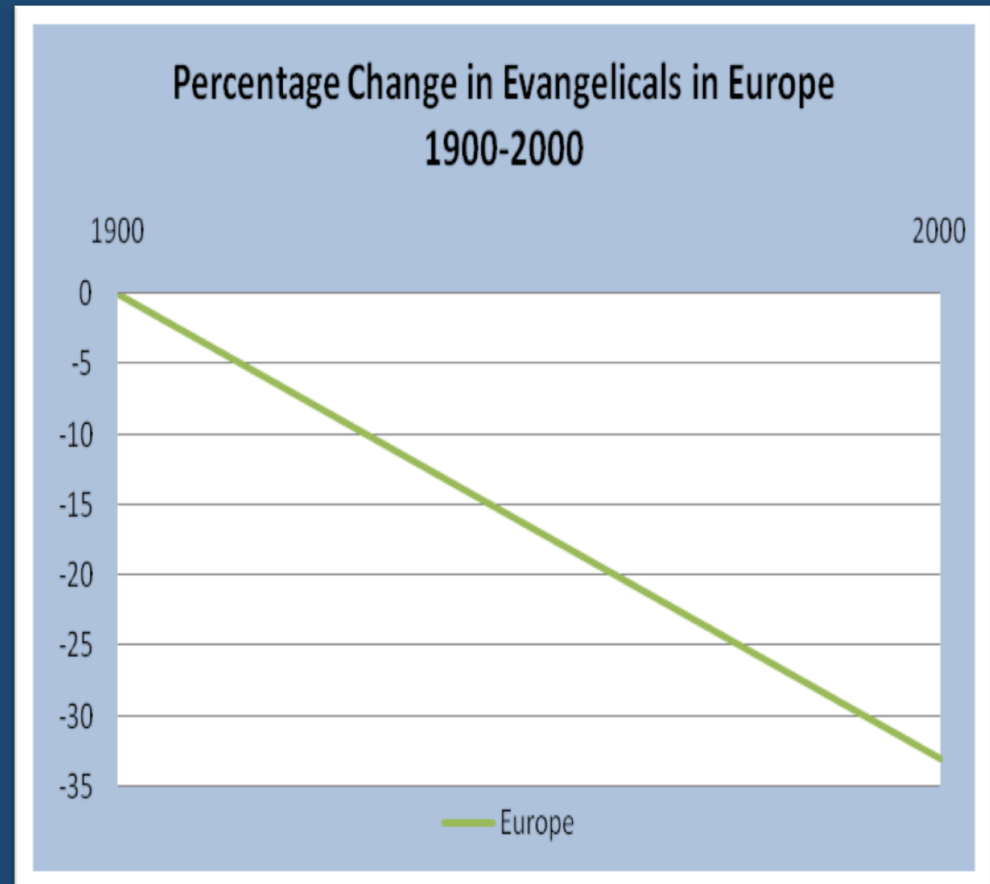
HOWEVER...

Christianity in Europe Today

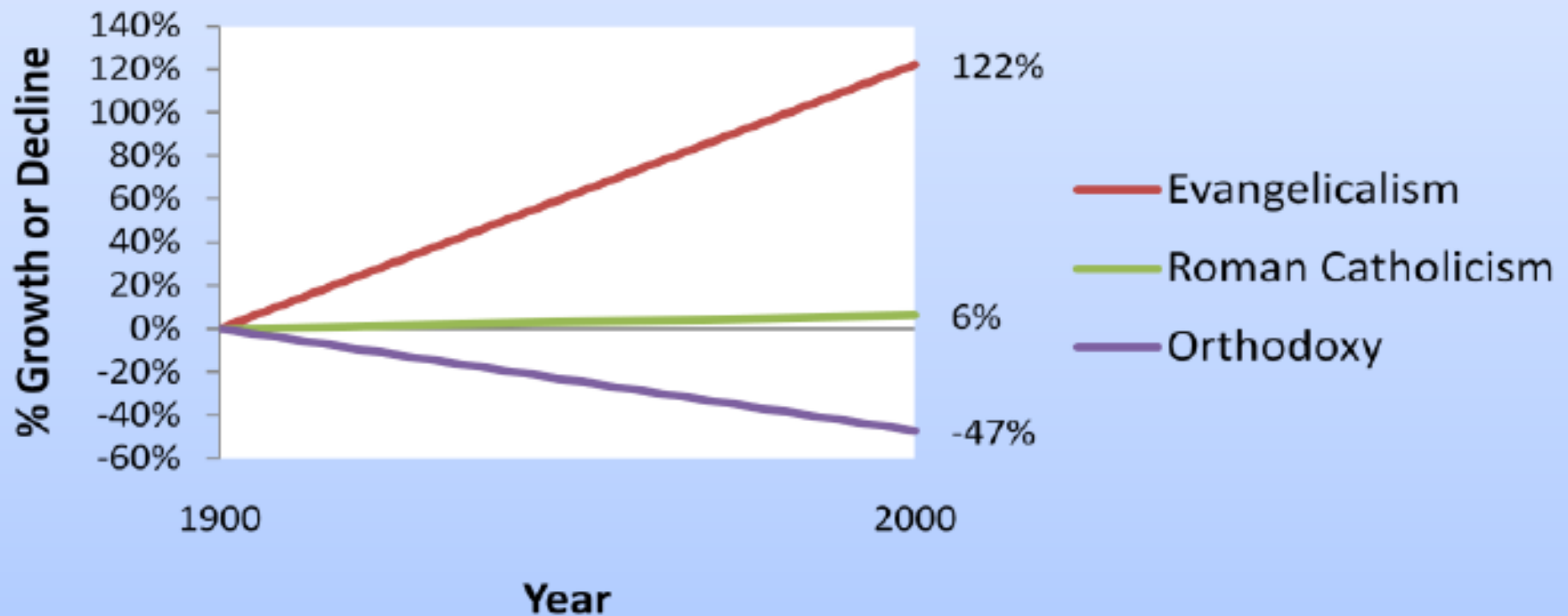
Europe, the very heart of historic Christendom, has experienced a hemorrhaging of the faithful.

World Christian Encyclopedia notes on its first page the startling news of the devastating de-Christianization of Europe in the 20th century:

“No-one in 1900 expected the massive defections from Christianity that took place in Western Europe...and later Eastern Europe.”



Worldwide Growth of Evangelicalism and Roman Catholicism and Decline of Orthodoxy, 1900 - 2000



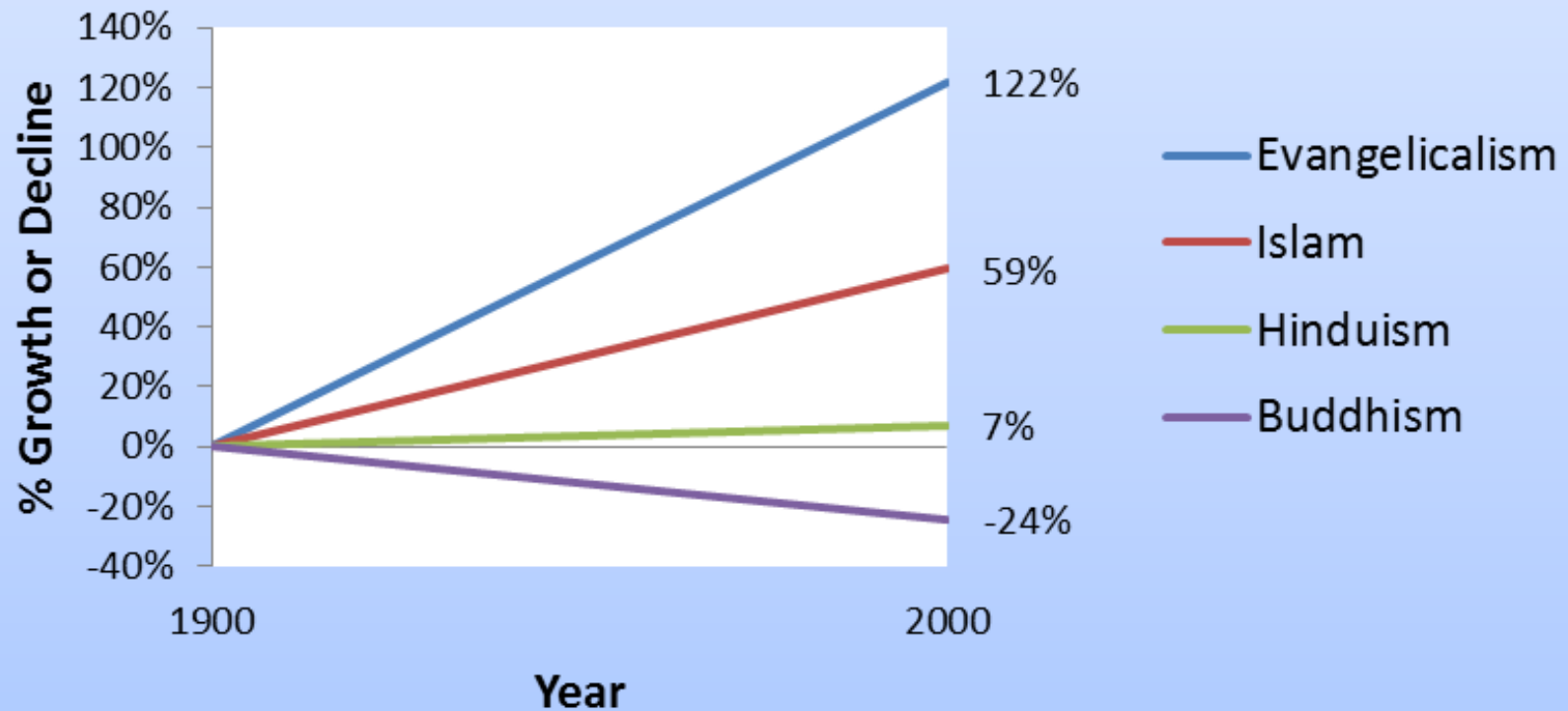
Source: David B. Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 4

“The geography of Christianity has changed dramatically in recent times, and is in the process of changing further. *Faced with a new form of Christianity, which is spreading with overpowering missionary dynamism, sometimes in frightening ways, the mainstream Christian denominations often seem at a loss.* This is a form of Christianity with little institutional depth, little rationality and even less dogmatic content, and with little stability. This worldwide phenomenon – *that bishops from all over the world are constantly telling me about* – poses a question to us all: what is this new form of Christianity saying to us, for better and for worse?”

ADDRESS OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

*Chapter Hall of the Former Augustinian Convent, Erfurt
Friday, 23 September 2011*

Worldwide Growth of Evangelicalism vs. Worldwide Growth and Decline of Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, 1900 - 2000

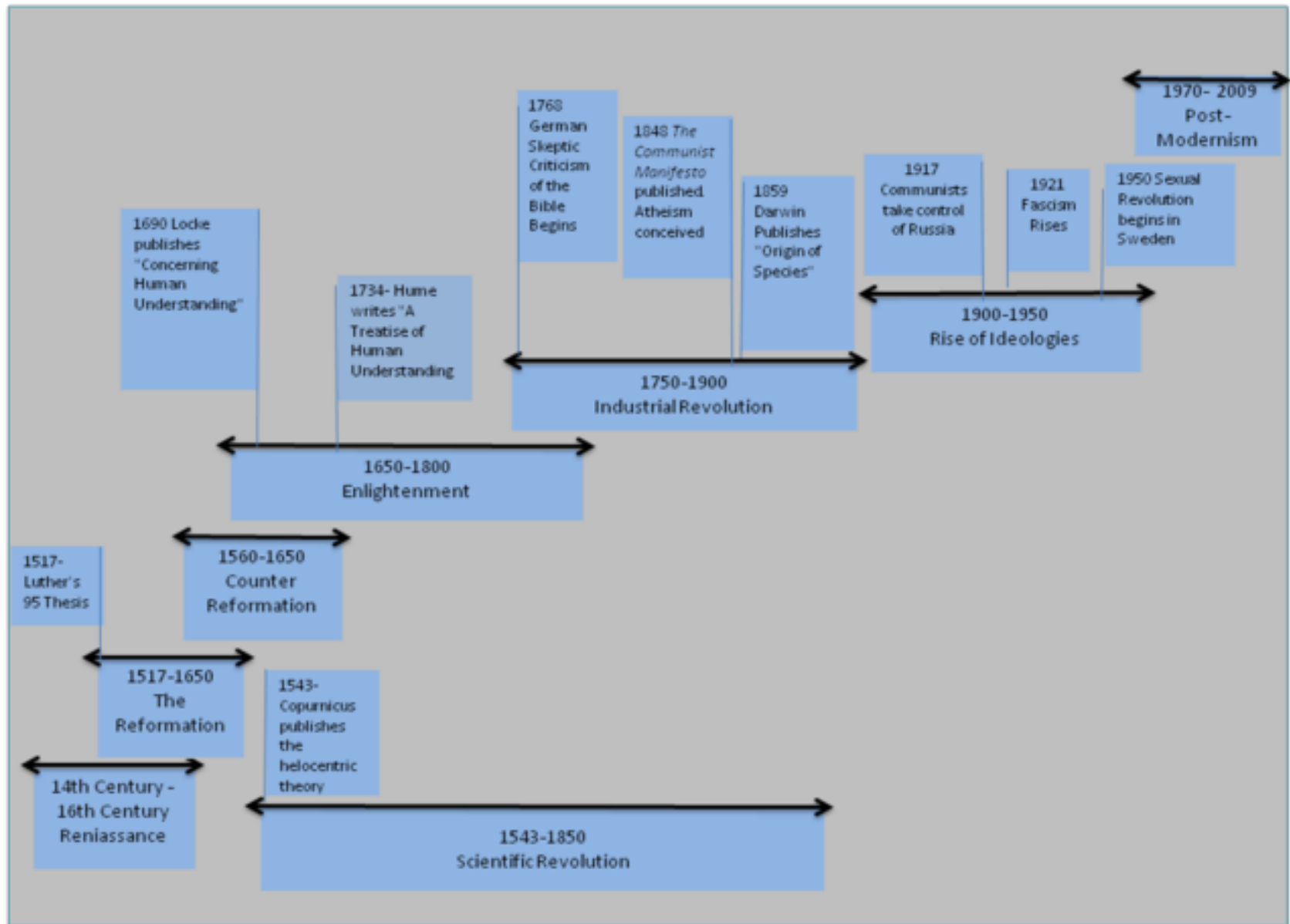


Why is Europe strategically Important for the Gospel?

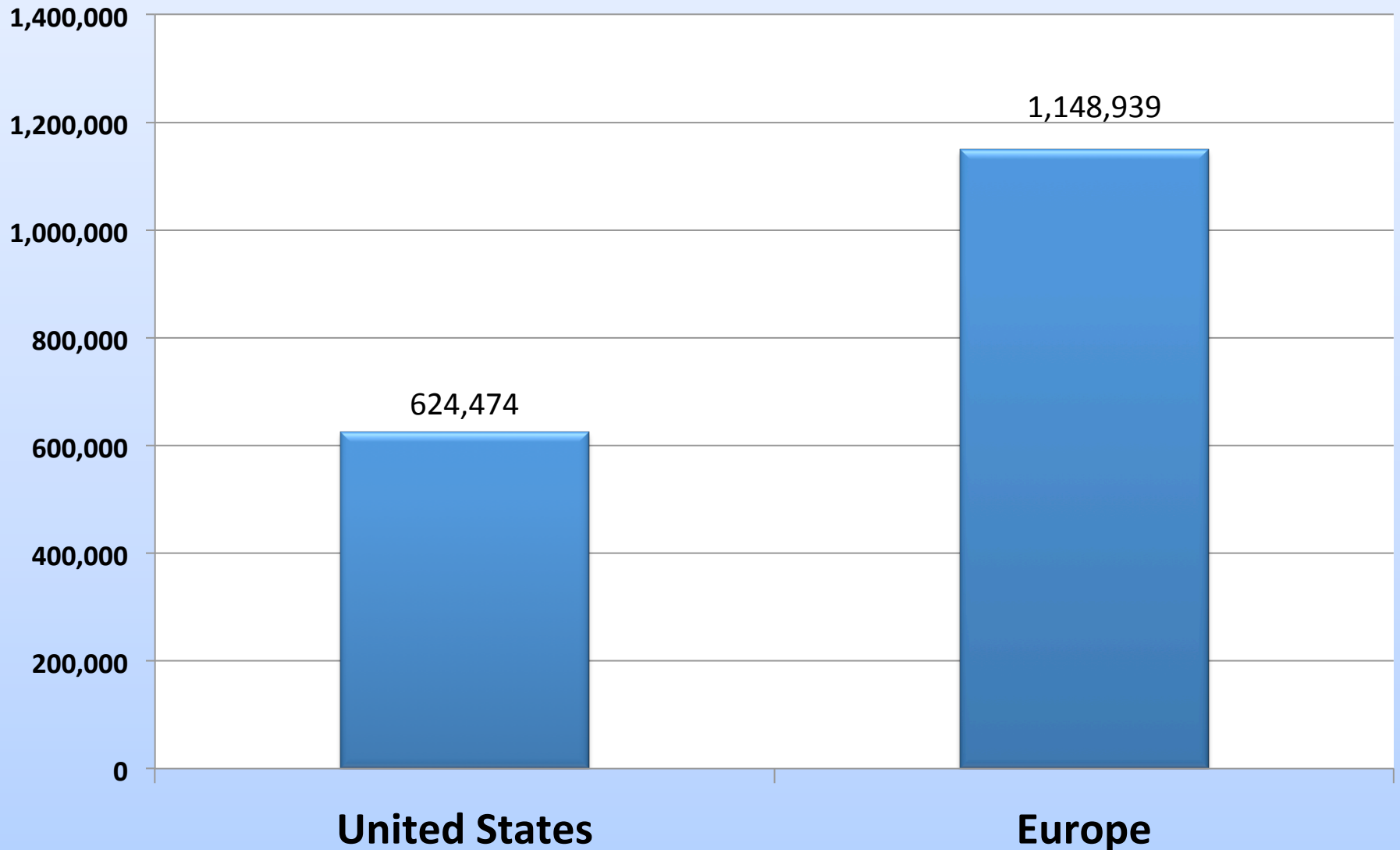
- 1) Europe's Historic Intellectual Influence
- 2) Europe is educating the world
- 3) One of Europe's religions is the fastest growing religion in the world. If the world wide church is to learn how to communicate to this religion, it must learn how to do this in Europe.
- 4) Europe is the global battleground for the Gospel

INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENTS ORIGINATING IN EUROPE

1400-2009



Number of International Students Enrolled in Universities in the US and Europe in 2008



A Worldwide Pandemic: The European Disease of Unbelief

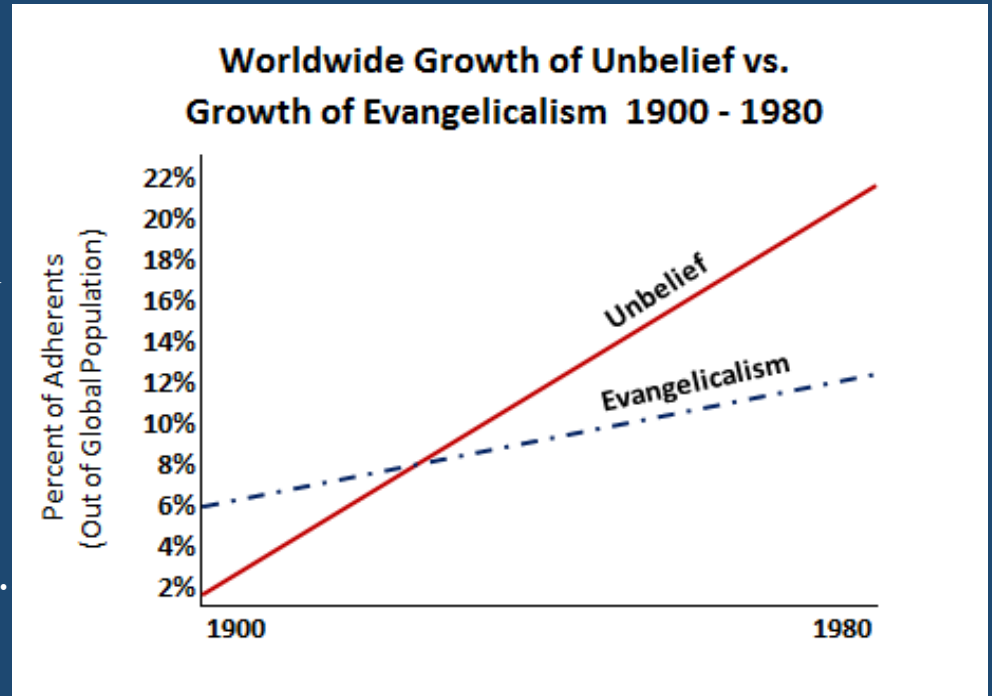
According to the World Christian Encyclopedia:

“Two immense quasi-religious systems have emerged at the expense of the world religions: agnosticism and atheism...

“From a minuscule presence in 1900, a mere 0.2% of the globe, these systems have mushroomed to 20.8% of the globe..

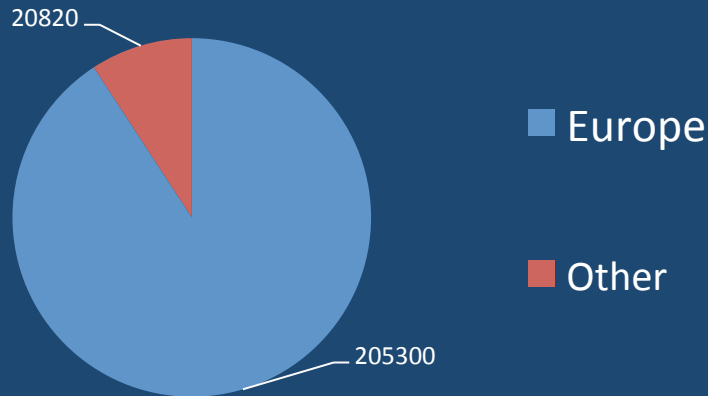
They are today increasing at the extraordinary rate of 8.5 million new converts each year, and are likely to reach one billion adherents soon.”

It is alarming to compare this rate of growth with the rate of growth experienced by evangelicalism. According to the World Christian Encyclopedia, evangelicalism grew from 4.5% to 11.4% over the same time period.

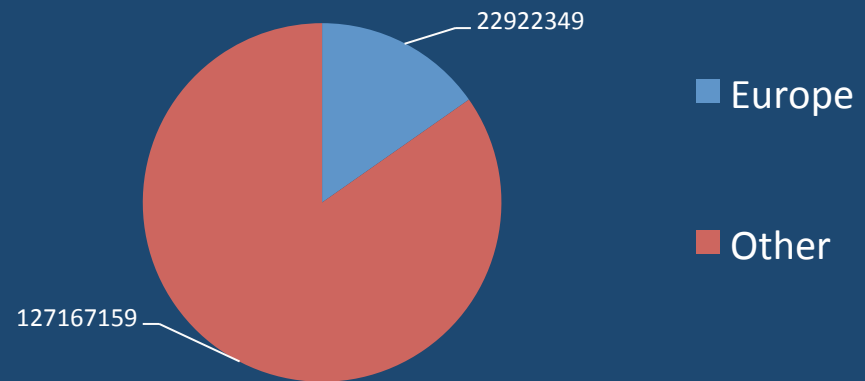


European Atheism is now a global movement.

Distribution of Atheists 1900



Distribution of Atheists 2000



In 1900, 90% of the world's atheists were found in Europe.

By 2000, nearly 90% of the world's atheists are found outside Europe.

While we are rightly excited about the growth of Christianity, in truth, unbelief is the fastest growing “religion” of our day. It is growing rapidly across all areas of the globe.

Europe is the battleground for the Gospel worldwide:

- Intellectually leading the world
- Educating the World's leaders
- Source of Unbelief's leading ideas

*The example of U.S. Centers for Disease Control:
To find an antidote for Europe's growing virus
of unbelief-- we need to address it in Europe.*

Learning From History



When attempting to make sense of the present, it is always wise to look to the past. As the old adage goes, *“those who don’t learn from history are doomed to repeat it.”*

Is there a period in history when the church faced challenges or opportunities that parallel our own?

John Wesley and the English Great Awakening can be particularly instructive for world evangelicalism in the 21st century.

John Wesley and the English Great Awakening

John Wesley ministered in England 270 years ago during “the Gin Age,” an era which was characterized by:

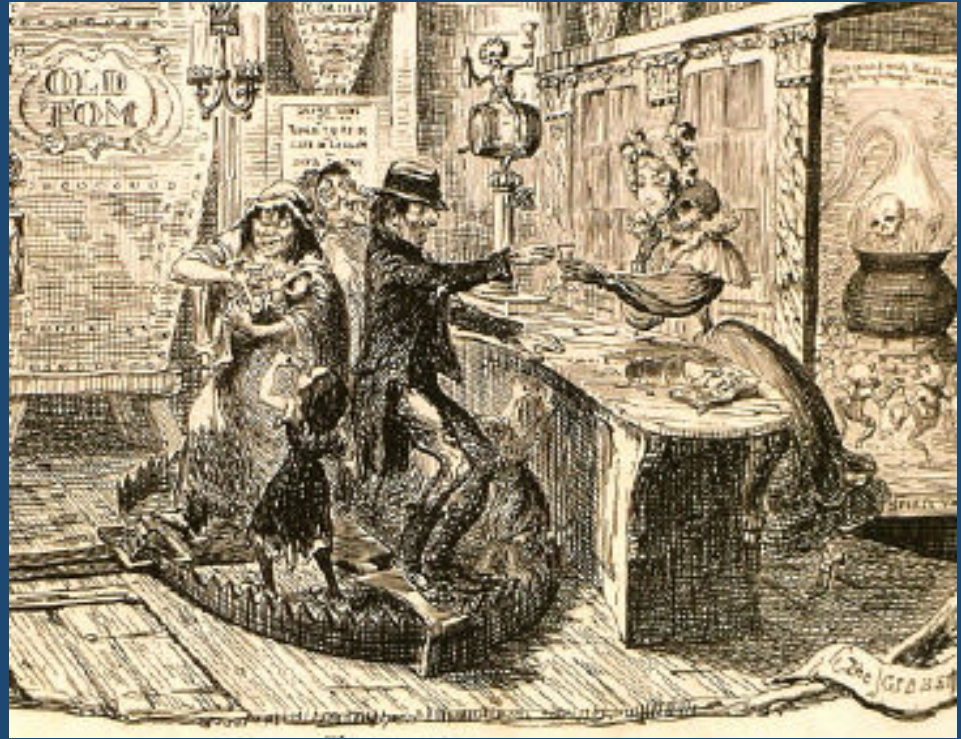
- Aristocratic indulgence
- Lower-class poverty
- Religious compromise
- Widespread immorality

God used Wesley in a powerful way to communicate the truth and lead a renewal movement.

By the end of Wesley’s life,

100,000 Wesleyans were meeting

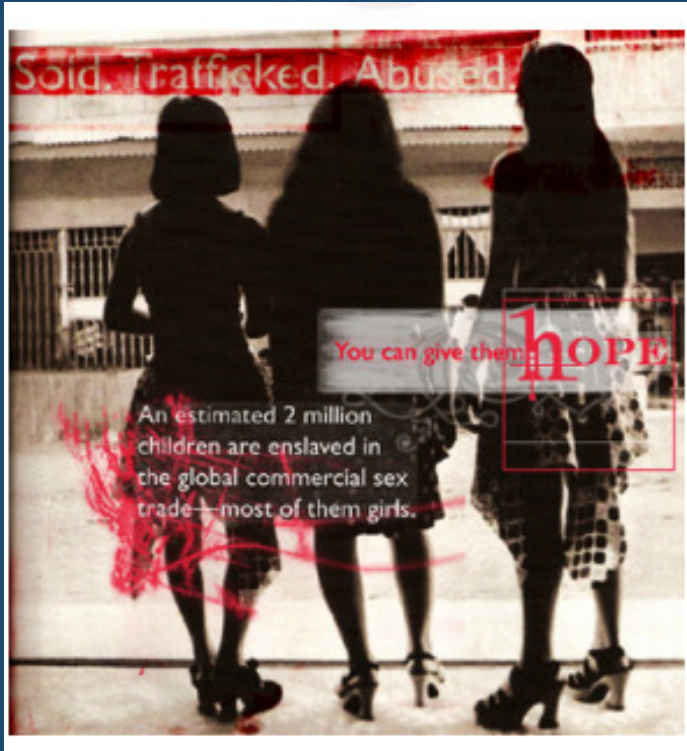
in small groups and spearheading a growing movement to eliminate slavery and transform English society.



Wesley: A Model for the Developing World

It is clear that God has raised up many contemporary “Wesleys” in today's Developing World. These individuals are:

- Communicating the Gospel effectively
- Planting churches by the hundreds
- Leading thriving national movements
- Developing lay-leadership training initiatives
- Confronting cultural evils like sex trafficking, prostitution, etc.
- Leading political initiatives to reflect Christ's character



These are the very issues that Wesley addressed in his day, and due to his great success, Wesley is a valuable model for the Developing World to study.

But Wesley is even more important to study – because of his great failure.

The Failure of John Wesley

Wesley's goal was to “spread scriptural holiness throughout the land,” and he was very effective in this. Like spiritual ivy which spread quickly, the Gospel took root and grew widely in the lower classes of English society.

But by 1850, difficult challenges to the Gospel began ripping up the “evangelical ivy.” Just as quickly as the ivy had spread, it was also torn from its shallow roots. Within a very short time all the growth of the Gospel was lost.

By focusing solely on popular evangelism, spiritual growth and societal change, Wesley had failed to prepare the church for the challenges that eventually destroyed it.

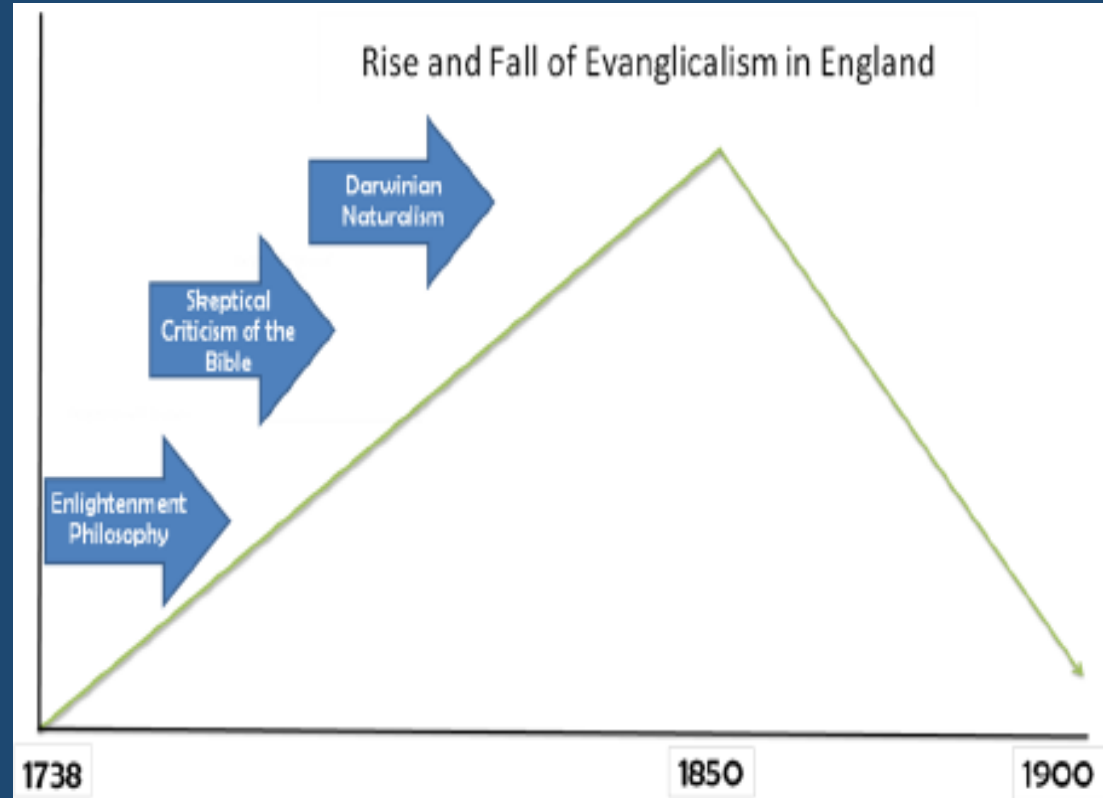
WHAT WERE THESE CHALLENGES?

Post-Wesley England

Evangelical Christians were confronted with the new and complex challenges of:

- Enlightenment philosophy
- Higher biblical criticism
- Darwinian naturalism

Beginning in 1850, the exponential growth that the English church had been enjoying since 1738 (not unlike the growth in today's Developing World) experienced an unexpected and steep decline.



WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR THIS?

The Church's Response to Challenge

Because many Christians were unequipped to find satisfactory responses to the challenges posed by enlightenment philosophy, higher biblical criticism and Darwinian naturalism, they responded in one of three ways:

- They became agnostics.
- They became liberals, seeking to keep the Christian language, but without its historic content.
- They remained orthodox but withdrew from the world in private huddles in their attempts to remain faithful.

Consequently, the amazing growth that the church had experienced for over a century came to a screeching halt.

Is the church in today's **Developing World** in danger of encountering the same fate?

Europe as a Lesson for the Worldwide Church



- As the worldwide church, faces the growing challenge of unbelief, it would be wise to learn a lesson from the English church.
- Instead of only cultivating spiritual ivy, which can be quickly pulled up by its roots, we must focus on nurturing “spiritual oak trees,” evangelical leaders who are firmly rooted in the truths of orthodox Christianity.
- **BUT HOW?**

The Example of The Early Church

We are fortunate to have a model in our quest to grow spiritual oaks: the Early Church. Like Wesleyan England, the Early Church experienced remarkable growth; unlike Wesleyan England this growth endured for more than 300 years.

Why?

One historian summarized the Answer this way: *“The early Christians out-thought and outlived their contemporaries.”*

In essence, the Early Church grew spiritual oak trees. We, like them, must prepare the next generation of evangelical leaders to persuasively communicate the Gospel through their lives and their words.



The European Leadership Forum

Europe's Need

The European Leadership Forum has identified a two-fold need in Europe:

- The re-evangelization of the “Dark Continent”
- The renewal of the biblical church

Europe's faithful evangelical leaders are besieged by unbelief, as well as dire shortages of resources, training and relationships with other leaders.



The Forum Vision

The European Leadership Forum seeks to serve and equip national Christian leaders to renew the biblical church and re-evangelize Europe. The Forum's vision is to identify, unite, mentor and resource evangelical leaders so they can:

- 1) Present the Gospel confidently, lovingly and persuasively
- 2) Share and implement the best strategies for reaching their own countries for Christ
- 3) Develop their gifts and abilities in their unique vocations and callings
- 4) Mentor the next generation of evangelical leaders
- 5) Lead their churches or other organizations faithfully and with godly wisdom
- 6) Plant new churches and renew local churches

The Forum Strategy



The Forum is a coalition of evangelical Christian groups seeking to do what no single organization could do alone: provide a bridge between God's global resources and local leaders from all over Europe

The Forum is Like...

- An **Iceberg** (where the annual meeting is only the tip)
- **Medieval Guild** (a place for training leaders with specific callings)
- A **Bicycle Wheel** (where the annual meeting is the hub, with hundreds of spin off events each year serving as the spokes)
- A **Spawning Ground** (a place for collaboration and partnerships on new projects)
- A **Funnel** (to channel resources to key leaders)
- A **Spider Plant** (creating initiatives with an eventual global reach)



The Forum Networks

The Forum hosts nearly 20 Networks designed to meet the unique needs of Christian leaders serving across a variety of disciplines. These Networks include but are not limited to:

- Apologetics (Foundational and Advanced Seminars)
- Artists
- Bible Teachers (Foundational and Advanced Seminars)
- Christian Counsellors
- Disciple-Making Leaders
- Evangelism (Foundational and Advanced)
- Leaders of Organisations
- Media Communicators
- Organizational Development and Fundraising
- Politics and Society
- Scientific
- Theologians

Each Network aims to provide access to best practices and mentoring both at the Forum and throughout the year.




The Forum Throughout the Year

While the Forum strives to offer quality resources, it is more than just a place for information download. Forum attendees network with Forum speakers and each other—forming relationships that are not only personally encouraging but also catalysts and support structures for effectively impacting local contexts for Christ.

Each year between Forums, over 350 evangelistic, apologetic and discipleship initiatives, partnerships and events were hosted across the European continent as a direct result of relationships formed at the Forum.

Vo VjRe
KEDY 20.2. 2010
KDE Nadácia Polis (nad Guinness)
Mariánske námestie 31

Ellis Potter



PROGRAM

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 08:00 - 08:30 | registrácia + privítanie + chvály |
| 08:30 - 10:00 | E. Potter: „Aká hudba sa páči Bohu?“ |
| 10:00 - 10:30 | prestávka |
| 10:30 - 12:00 | E. Potter: „Tanec, zábava vs. kresťan“ |
| 12:00 - 14:00 | obed |
| 14:00 - 16:00 | M. Moylé: „Staré pravdy s meniacich“ |
| 16:00 - 16:30 | prestávka |
| 16:30 - 17:30 | diskusia |
| 18:00 | záver |

Ak máš záujem zúčastniť sa konferencie, prosím zaregistruj sa na [www.vjre.sk](#)

Počet účastníkov je kapacitne obmedzený!

Organizuje: ODDM CB (Odbor pre deti, dorast a mládež v Cirkvi bratskej)
Kontakt: Eva Myjavcová tajomník pre mládež v C.B., eva.myjavcova@cbza.sk

“The Forum is the best initiative I have seen in Europe in the last 20 years...it will continue to have a significant impact, especially in continental Europe, in years to come.”

-Lindsay Brown

International Director,

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism



“Come Triune God who lives
and shake this world again.”

-Francis Schaeffer

In December of 2010, a group of evangelical European leaders met in Frankfurt, Germany to ask the following question:

What strategic principles have been most effective in the contemporary European Church?

1. There is a need for a Solid biblical Foundation

- Over the last 200 years, many Christian leaders have lost confidence in the full truthfulness of God's Word.
- Why?
 - Enlightenment gave birth to skeptical philosophies and biblical criticism, and scientific naturalism which undercut many Christians' faith .
- In every discipline and field of thought, in every calling and level of Christian leadership, a solid biblical worldview needs to serve as a foundation upon which to build all evangelistic, discipleship and leadership development initiatives.

2. Persuasive Evangelists

- A new generation of Apostle Pauls (Persuasive Evangelists) need to be identified, equipped and resourced across Europe
- Paul as a persuasive evangelist in the Bible:
 - Paul explained why the Gospel was true, in a way that made sense to the hearer and in a manner that gave them opportunity to discuss and raise objections. It is this understanding of Persuasive evangelism that needs to be revived in Europe.

3. Centrality of Bible Teaching and Preaching

- Our minds are shaped by the Word -- or the World. The Bible is our lens and filter that gives us a Christian world view or we are unknowingly being shaped by the culture around us.
- The solution is in recovering a biblical understanding in all that we do. How do we do this?
- Obviously we need to become passionate students of God's word personally. But as a people, the Bible needs to be taught regularly and systematically in all our churches and organizations.

4. Disciple-Making Leadership

- God commands us to:
 - Love God with all our heart, soul and mind
 - Love your neighbor as yourself
- Any Christian leadership that is not explicitly oriented towards this goal of maturity falls short of this Biblical vision and must be judged insufficient.
- Disciple-making leadership is the intentional, relational involvement in the lives of others to help them grow to spiritual maturity.

5. Mentoring Emerging Young Leaders - “Calebs”

- **Problem:** In Europe there is often a clash between many older evangelical leaders and a new generation of young leaders “Calebs” who have a vision for re-evangelizing Europe.
- There is a need to create training strategies and structures of support for young “Calebs” who have the potential for leading new innovative ministries.
- Mentoring and relational support from other like-minded international leaders is extremely important for Calebs to be equipped and developed.

6. Church Planting

- One of the most effective strategies to re-evangelize Europe is to plant new churches across Europe.
- Most church planting leaders don't have mentors and resources in their denominations and organizations.
- Church Planting Greenhouses are needed:
 - To mentor key national leaders
 - To exchange best practices
 - Develop local and national church planting strategy and tactics
 - Establish year round education and resources

7. Working in Partnerships and Strategic Alliances

- There is a need for more Europe-wide partnerships and strategic alliances.
- Lindsay Brown, International Director of Lausanne, is an example of someone who identified a problem and started a new Europe-wide initiative to identify, network, equip, and resource university evangelists from across Europe.
- What are the characteristics of this initiative?
 - Europe-wide leadership and strategy
 - A wide variety of organizations and leaders are working together in a partnership
 - Best practices are identified and shared
 - Experienced leaders mentoring emerging leaders

8. Outreach to Young People

- *“...We have not seen a single person come to faith in 35 years in our church. ... We are an old church and have almost no young people in the church.”*
(Pastor and Vice President of an Evangelical Denomination)
- Many European local churches or ministries struggle to have relevant and effective ministries to young people.
- European youth need young leaders who can persuasively and relevantly explain the gospel and disciple young believers
- The church needs to identify, network, mentor and resource keen young leaders to do effective youth ministry.

9. Educational Resources

For leaders to grow to maturity and use their gifts effectively they need:

- Access to Teachers and Mentors
- Educational Resources
- Networking and Relationships
- Scholarships and Financial Support
for additional training