



## Dear Praying Friends

He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” Luke 10:27-28 NIV

God’s common grace to mankind, written in the moral consciousness of all humans and expressed in the Ten Commandments and in the Jewish law expert’s answer to Jesus, will prevail. So we inform ourselves about cultural liberalism, but are not discouraged by it. We take our stand in God’s truth and He will work out His plan in Europe.

Nick Pease

## Cultural liberalism and our response

Secularisation has been going on for ages in Europe, in different forms and at different levels. Nowadays the term usually means the decline of religious practice and church membership. If a worldview or ideology has no room for a transcendent divine being, we speak of secularism. For a long time the secularised population remained indirectly connected to the Christian faith, in the cultural sphere. They had similar social norms and values to religious people and more or less followed the Ten Commandments. The only difference was that they expressed these in secular terms, based on human reason and on what they considered to be ‘natural’.

However, since the 1960’s, we have witnessed a gradual move away from the traditional norms and values connected with Christianity. They have been replaced by ‘new’ cultural values that are unrelated to any religious conviction, e.g. in the areas of marriage and divorce, sexuality, family and education, the beginning and end of life. This is called cultural liberalism. Its followers like to



see themselves as progressive – implying that they are leading historical ‘progress’, compared to the so-called ‘conservatives’ who lag behind and ‘still’ cling to traditional norms and values. Cultural liberalism emerged in the wake of the socio-political and sexual ‘revolution’ of the 1960’s, when many young people of the baby-boom generation began to extend the idea of freedom to the area of lifestyle. The watershed year was 1968 – the student revolts in Paris and elsewhere.

A new paradigm emerged, where the ideal is to live an ‘authentic’ life. The church, the social environment and the state should give ‘me’ the freedom to live and act according to what ‘I’ feel and desire. Hence the constant push to ‘liberalise’ legislation in all kinds of ethical issues. However, followers of the new paradigm are strongly against

paedophile acts and sexual aggression, because this is domination by a stronger person over a weaker person. People claim the right not to be dominated by anyone, especially in the areas of individual lifestyle and morality.

Cultural liberalism is inherently relativistic, saying that cultures, personal opinions and norms, even foundational values, evolve over time as society ‘progresses’. What was unacceptable yesterday can be acceptable today and people assume that ‘progress’ in these areas leads towards more liberty and human flourishing. However, while cultural liberalism spreads in the West it meets more resistance in the East of Europe, encouraging us that cultural liberalism may not be the inevitable future of our society.

We Christians are challenged to remain faithful to God’s commandments laid down in the Bible and to the principles that the Church has always taught. Meanwhile, we have good arguments to critically expose the weaknesses of cultural liberalism and to defend the basic structures of family and parenthood, and the dignity of human life in all its stages. We have the enormous power of prayer – that God will touch the hearts and minds of our fellow Europeans who are captivated by this ‘new’ paradigm’, that He will give us clarity of mind, and that he will help us speak up for the truth in the public sphere. There we will find allies among non-religious people, because God has written certain principles in the moral consciousness of all humans. This ‘common grace’ is our common ground. It is still operational, despite the efforts of cultural liberalism to erase it or change it. In the end, moral truth will prevail.

1. Pray for all church and youth leaders as they guide believers in the ethical issues that confront them, and for theologians as they teach future church leaders on current ethical issues
2. For Christians in politics and civic organisations as they stand for a Christian understanding of norms and values in society.
3. May we all have the courage to be faithful to the Biblical revelation and may we find the right words to explain to secularised people what we stand for.

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## Christmas

We would like to thank you for all your support and prayer during the past year, which has been a year of continued challenges in prayer during the ongoing pandemic, bringing many health issues for family and friends. As we take a short break over Christmas, we in the editorial team would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas, trusting in the hope that Jesus brings for a year filled with promise.

### Additional Prayer Points:-

1. Tensions are rising between the different nationalities in Bosnia & Herzegovina and there is a risk of violent incidents leading to broader conflict. Pray for this volatile situation, that the country will continue the path of reconciliation and stability.
2. Following the Biden-Putin talks about the Russian military build-up on the Ukrainian border, let’s pray that the dialogue might continue and channels remain open and that war can be avoided.

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