December #205-2026
Author
Dr. Wolfgang Rathmann
Canopy of Prayer



How much of Christianity remains in Europe?

For a long time, Europe was a bastion in which the Church was able to flourish. Monasteries and cathedrals were built, as were churches in every town and village. Christianity also shaped Europe's cultural landscape. Music, literature, art, educational institutions, healthcare and social services – all bear the marks of a long-standing Christian influence. Public holidays and folk festivals have Christian roots. Even the primacy of human rights in the political sphere cannot be explained without acknowledging their roots in Christian ethics. Christianity exerted a lasting influence by developing values that became the cornerstones of European societies. These values are an integral part of culture, to the extent that they are now taken for granted.

Modern Europe is viewed by many as a 'secular continent'. Secularisation describes the shift from a religious to a secular value system, coupled with the aim of reducing the influence of religion in society and in public institutions. In modern Europe, many people take it for granted that they do not believe in God and do not belong to any religious community. When it comes to questions of what is good and what is evil, what is wrong and what is right, religious arguments no longer play a role. When people reflect on the human condition, they often do so without reference to God.

In today's European societies, however, secular and Christian cultural identities remain intertwined in many respects. Christianity has become a 'cultural religion'. Even in highly secularised countries, many Europeans still identify with Christian traditions, rituals and values. Many people retain an inner connection to the Christian faith, but no longer take part in the activities of Christian churches.

Christian Faith in Europe

What needs to change for the Christian faith to be regarded as relevant once again in Europe? The history of the early Christians in the Roman Empire shows how the resilience of today's Christians in Europe could be strengthened in the face of the many challenges. Church history shows that, despite persecution, a small group of believers had the power to transform the mighty Roman Empire from within. Early Christians can serve as a role model for the renewal of the Church in Europe, especially since they are a biblical example for the body of Christ written in the Book of Acts. Like the early church, European Christians should set an example for society today by submitting to God's authority and His commandments, enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

Early Christianity

The early Christians formed a close-knit community whose fundamental beliefs went against the grain of the culture surrounding them. There was a strong sense of commitment within the new congregations. As individuals, the believers were beloved children of God (sense of 'I'), whilst within the community they were the Body of Christ (sense of 'we'). Unprecedented, intense spiritual experiences, miracles and healings characterised church life. Faith in Jesus gave them the strength to develop love for their fellow human beings and to put it into practice.

The early Christians had the courage to be different. A key factor in the success of Christian communities was their openness to people from all walks of life, all professions and both genders. Consequently, women and members of the lower classes (slaves) in particular joined the new communities in large numbers. Unlike those around them, the early Christians did not live according to the whims of unpredictable gods and powers. They were not afraid of death, because they were sustained by the hope of the resurrection, which was nourished by Jesus Christ.

For them, Jesus' death on the cross was not a sad end, but the turning point in world history. The message of judgement and grace, forgiveness and salvation through Jesus' death on the cross transformed their entire way of thinking and living.

Learning from the early Christians

What can Christians in Europe today learn from the early Christians? Above all, the firm inner conviction that Jesus has risen and that his words are meant to shape our entire way of thinking. Amidst many uncertainties, Christians can remain firmly rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ. They can learn to share life with others through their common bond in faith. They learn to love in a world that so deeply longs for an experience of love. These challenges, however, are too great to be overcome by human strength alone. Christians can therefore rediscover the Holy Spirit, who empowers them to love. The Spirit of God gives the courage to speak openly about faith. Christians in Europe may proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Saviour, lovingly, yet clearly and invitingly.

Future of Christianity in Europe

Even though modern Europe differs from the ancient Roman Empire, Christians today once again face challenges similar to the early Christians back then. Through their unity, the early Christians transformed the Roman Empire from within. In the same way, the future of Europe can be shaped by people who do not abandon their Christian faith: becoming a strong grassroots movement that holds to its values, resisting the influence of the majority society and shining like an inviting light.

Prayer

1. Please pray for Christians in Europe, that our faith may be vibrant and welcoming.
2. Pray that God will invite the younger generation in Europe in particular to believe in Him, the Father and the Source of Life.
3. Please pray that unity -with Jesus as the centre- will develop more among the various Christian denominations, as a strong and encouraging sign for modern Europe.

We thank all our readers for your faithfulness in praying together for Europe in 2026. We wish everyone a joyful Christmas in accordance with the angel's invitation (Luke 2:10–11):
"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."
Canopy of Prayer Editorial Team



Photo: Pixabay

Why not press the button and visit our Facebook page to get the latest items for prayer.

TO DONATE: Hebron Europe e.V.,
IBAN DE53 6129 0120 0488 0210 06
BIC GENODES1NUE
Giving your name and address. Thank you!

Donate