



The State of Europe: time to write an obituary or imagine a new beginning?

Writing a book about Europe is not the best way to boost your pension contributions in the current climate. It seems that precious few people care anymore about the European Union.

Of those that do care, a growing number are likely to be unemployed and therefore unable to afford the high cover price of limited print-run titles. Comedians might joke that future European-focussed titles will be shelved under 'esoterica'.

However, a high-volume of sales may not always be the main goal for authors writing about Europe. Indeed, many appear to be fleshing out their individual or collective versions of the European project. They are attempting to create a future rather than reporting on the past, or even narrating the present. Their goal is maximum impact among political leaders instead of maximising sales to the general population.

Catching the current range of European titles being published highlights a range of central concerns driving the current discussion about the state of Europe. Some appear to be writing obituaries for the European dream whilst others remain committed to the sense that Europe still has a future, albeit a potentially rather different future.

Europe in crisis

Jim Memory's excellent article in an earlier edition of Vista has already very helpfully outlined this perspective. His continuing attention to this area is justified in light of the fact that the greater majority of books written about Europe in the last few years deal with the ongoing European 'crisis'. Jurgen Habermas's *The Crisis of the European Union: A Response* (2012) is a good example of a book that responds to a debate that is framed largely as an economic or socio-economic crisis. He

...CONTINUED INSIDE

EDITORIAL

Problems with your vision? You should've gone to Specsavers

As the optician's now famous catchphrase makes clear, our present predicament in Europe has much to do with impaired vision.

This edition of Vista deals with two different problems related to vision. In the first Darrell Jackson gives a sort of "State of the Nation Address" by means of an overview of recently published works on Europe. It is clear that a compelling and united vision for Europe is singularly lacking at the moment and the visions put forward by the major European partners are quite divergent ones. What part will Christian politicians, activists and voters play in forging a new vision for Europe?

The second collection of articles deal with another visual impairment: a *scotoma* or blind spot. These are truths about ourselves that we are unable to perceive but that are obvious to others.

Often the only way to remedy our blind spots is to ask a friend to make us aware of them so we have asked a set of friends from around the world to give their "outsider" perspective on Europe and European mission today.

George Brown (North America), David Ruiz (South America), Darrell Jackson (Asia-Pacific) and Tertius Nieuwoudt (South Africa) have each written short articles outlining very different perspectives on Europe which reveal some "home truths" that us Europeans might not see. We thank them for their contributions. The next edition of Vista will continue the theme of this with a more missiological reflection on the State of Europe today.

As always we encourage you to check out our back issues and encourage others to subscribe to Vista on the blog.

Jim Memory

argues for increasing the process of democracy and participation in Europe, described by reviewers as an 'influential European reflecting on their predicament'.

It is undeniable that the last sixty years of post-war European experience seems to have left its institutions impotent and unready for the economic crisis that still threatens to overwhelm Europe. That may be so, but it would be foolish to overlook the fact that the EU's unreadiness was shared with many of Europe's national governments, their central banks, and their respective financial institutions. Commentators on all sides of the debate seem agreed that a way out of the current crisis will only occur as the community of European nations finds shared solutions that offer mutual benefit.

A vision for Europe?

There have been virtually no books published in the last five years that use the word 'vision' in their title. Visions, it seems, do not sell books! Authors who outline their visions for Europe generally wrap these up within discussions about the 'future of Europe'. The greater majority of the discussions are generally political in character, including recent works such as Jean-Claude Piri's *The Future of Europe: Towards a Two-Speed EU?* (2011). Guy Verhofstadt's *For Europe: manifesto for a post-national revolution in Europe* (2012) and David Marquand's *The End of the West: The Once and Future Europe* (2011) are examples of this approach.

The European Commission understands the need to confront the current crisis with a new vision for Europe. In itself, this is telling. If the current crisis is purely economic, why must it be confronted with a new vision? Surely, it would be more effective to develop a new or improved economic theory? This tension underlies the under-reported speech 'Confronting the crisis: New vision for Europe', delivered by Commission Vice-President, Maroš Šefčovič, in February of 2013. Ultimately Šefčovič

proposed economic reforms but these, he argued, will only be possible with "more Europe". Central to his vision is a more transparent Europe in which member states and European voters place greater trust, a move towards the deeper political union that a common monetary policy requires, and a Europe with a more co-ordinated approach to fiscal and financial matters.

This contrasts sharply with the British Prime Minister's alternative vision of a leaner and less intrusive Union. Most commentators interpreted this as politically self-serving but many of these concede that there are constructive proposals contained within the wrapper designed to appease the Conservative party's Eurosceptic wing. Federalist visions of Europe seem to be giving way to multi-speed visions, given recent momentum by threats from Mr Cameron and others that greater federalism will be actively resisted and is likely to result in increased, rather than decreased, fragmentation of the Union. Whilst the notion of a two-speed Europe is spearheaded by political leaders like the British PM, even the most enthusiastic federalists are beginning to concede that it may be politically necessary to permit multiple modes of belonging in order to keep the greater European dream alive. Despite this narrowing vision, Cameron remains committed to securing Britain's access to a European single market free of unnecessary regulations. The bottom line seems to be ultimately what is in the best financial interests of the UK.

Jeff Fountain's book *Deeply Rooted* (2010) outlines the Christian vision underlying the contribution of Robert Schumann to the creation of the European Union. One of Schumann's allies, Jean Monnet, once made reference to the biblical text "Where there is no vision, the people perish" in discussing the European project. Schumann and Monnet are good illustrations of the fact that all visions, especially those that inform public policies, are rooted in particular worldviews. These may be political,



ideological or philosophical, among others. Worldviews may also be religious in nature. Christian versions of what makes for harmonious, righteous and good government (national and European) are not lacking and continue to drive the energies of a number of committed European politicians.

Of on-going concern to European Christians should be the question as to whether the re-nationalisation of decision-making is divisive and erodes the credibility of existing European institutions. Key to this debate is whether there is a Christian worldview that allows space for an emerging European identity to sit comfortably alongside national identities without either of these identities subverting the primary loyalty that followers of Christ must declare in Jesus as Lord of all.

Religion in Europe

The relevance of such a question is underlined by the fact that publishers seem to remain convinced that books dealing with religion in contemporary Europe still have a reasonably wide appeal. Lorenzo Zucca's *A Secular Europe: Law and Religion in the European Constitutional Landscape* (2012), Lavinia Stan and Lucian Turcescu's *Church, State, and Democracy in Expanding Europe* (2011), and the range of titles written by Grace Davie and Peter Berger suggest that the contribution of Europe's religious communities in general, and Christianity in particular, continue to play an active part in shaping a future for Europe.

Europe's Christian activists, politicians, and lobbyists may not always capture the headlines, but they are active in praying for and outlining a future for the people of Europe that benefits all. They will not always agree among themselves about the best political programme to achieve those ends, but few will be content to let the story rest with a finale stuck on a note of 'crisis'. The Gospel always requires more of God's people, marked by the hope of redemption, resurrection, and restoration.



Photo: Daily Telegraph

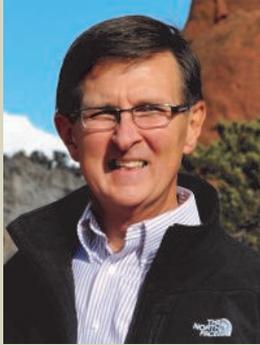
Darrell Jackson

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE FROM OVER THERE?

George Brown, David Ruiz, Darrell Jackson and Tertius Nieuwoudt provide four visions of Europe “from the outside” and reveal some of Europe’s blind spots.

EUROPE as seen from NORTH AMERICA

George Brown has been involved in cross cultural ministry for nearly 30 years and was a missionary in France for 7 years with Greater Europe Mission. For the last five years he has been the National Director for ECMI USA.



Euro and its impact on the US economy if it were to collapse. However, many Americans consider that the European economic model chokes individual initiative. Much was made of the move of Gerard Depardieu to Russia to avoid abusive tax rates in France. It appears that there is an assumption in Europe that personal wealth is evil. In the US you see many people with personal wealth being very generous, helping society in ways the government cannot. The government cannot do much and what it does, it often does poorly or in excess. Help in society is best left to philanthropic individuals or organizations. Volunteerism is very strong in the US as measured by the number of hours volunteered and money given to charitable causes. So generosity and individual initiative could be encouraged more in Europe.

“There is a growing awareness that Europe is a mission field.”

In addition to the economic arena the US also tries to influence Europe in other ways. The US government has worked hard to get other countries on the same page with respect to global threats - for example, the enrichment of uranium in Iran. At another level Hillary Clinton tried to address with the UN the issue of women’s rights across the world. But how does that influence the significant Muslim population in Europe? I don’t know. What is clear is that human rights issues are a bit of a hot potato. America is seen as something of a hypocrite in this area. Some Americans would celebrate the EU social agenda of homosexual rights and drug laws. Yet, we are puzzled by France’s stance on wearing the *burqa* or the cross. It seems culturally appalling that the country of liberty and free expression would censor such things.

The majority of Americans still view Europe as “Christian”. There is still a widespread ignorance as to how secular Europe has become, unless of course they have visited. Most who do visit Europe comment on how empty the churches are. When I speak to Roman Catholics in the US and I say the Pope has declared France to be a mission field, they find that surprising, if not shocking.

With regards to attitudes among evangelicals concerning mission to Europe, it is certainly the case that the “10/40 window” agenda of prioritizing unreached people groups reduces the sense of urgency in reaching Europe. The tacit question seems to be: since Europe has been reached, why do we have to reach it again? Mission agencies like ECM and GEM sometimes find it challenging to justify themselves.

At the same time there is a realisation that the US is also becoming quite secularized. I found *The Next Evangelicalism*, a book by Korean missiologist Soong-Chan Rah’s, really challenging. He highlights the changing demographic in the US, and cites studies that predict minority populations in the US will become the majority by 2042, and 54% by 2050. The Latino, or Hispanic population will make up nearly 30% of the US population by 2050. He argues that the current growth of evangelical immigrant and minority churches will be the salvation of evangelicalism in North America.

The increasing importance of Latino Christianity is even being picked up by the popular media. The cover story of the April 19, 2013, issue of TIME Magazine is entitled “The Latino Reformation: Inside the new Hispanic churches transforming religion in America.” As a mission agency we need to face up to this missiological reality and think very carefully about how we can mobilize Asians and Hispanics for mission in Europe and around the world.

In conclusion, there is a growing awareness that Europe is a mission field. Among many there is still something of a romantic appeal of going to Europe. The younger US generation are ready to go anywhere and there is a great deal of interest in short-term mission trips to Europe, partly because it is perceived to have the comforts of modern, Western society. However, we must be careful that such mission trips to Europe don’t become a sort of glorified vacation. The call and cost of Christian discipleship is the same as it was 2000 years ago, that of taking up our cross daily and seeking to serve rather than be served.

While I certainly wouldn’t consider myself an authority on Europe, what follows are my own perceptions that come from many years of involvement in mission in Europe. They may not reflect the view of most North Americans but reflect my own exposure to Europe during my years with GEM and ECM.

At the moment the economic problems of Europe dominate the news in the US media. The economic problems of Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain have introduced us to a new acronym for these countries – PIGS. In much of the media there is clear critique of socialism: “See this is what socialism has done”. Europe is often introduced into arguments as an example of the dangers of government intrusion. The US is split down the middle between conservatives and liberals and media outlets that tend to cater to one or the other so Europe is often used as a political football.

At the same time, the press also recognizes the economic power of Europe. There is a degree of fear due to the problems of the



EUROPE as seen from LATIN AMERICA

David Ruiz is Vice-President of Global Ministries for Camino Global (formerly CAM International) and as part of the leadership team of the WEA Mission Commission is responsible for developing movements of national missionaries in Central and Eastern Europe.



The Macedonian Cry is ringing in our ears... again!

If you recall from Acts 16, during his second missionary journey, Paul was visiting the churches planted by he and Barnabas during their first journey. During that time, they realized that those churches were strong in their faith, so they decided it was time to continue advancing into new areas and territories to expand the light of the Gospel. The neighbouring territories of Phrygia, Galatia and Bithynia looked like the natural places to go, so Paul started moving but, as we read in the Bible, the Holy Spirit forbid them to speak in Asia and to go into Bithynia. So Paul came to the edge of Asia and waited...

During the night, he had a vision, and he saw a Macedonian man urging him: "Come over to Macedonia and help us." What a cry Paul heard in Acts 16. It was a loud cry, an urgency call to those missionaries to raise their eyes and see the needs in Europe, and to decide to do something about it.

Almost 2000 years later, we can see again the same urgency to go and preach the Gospel and to plant churches in Europe. Europe is moving very rapidly toward a spiritual bankruptcy. Looking back once again in history: the result of the time, that Paul spent in Europe in response to this Macedonian Cry, caused the gospel to start spreading all over Europe.

We the Latin Americans believe that the last four decades of the gospel in Latin America might contribute to igniting the passion and to sharing hope for the church in Europe. The reality of the church in Latin America has been transformed in less than 40 years, the church has been growing to become a vital and vibrant church and a growing

number of missionaries have been sent out to everywhere. Latin Americans are beginning to join hands with Europeans to see churches in Europe recovering the passion for the gospel and for global missions.

Latin America and Europe have been linked for more than four centuries. Since Columbus sailed for first time our lands both continents have been on a journey together. Conquest and colonization left deep marks on our history, our culture and our blood. Famine, war and intolerance in Europe led to the establishment of many European communities in our lands. The descendants of these colonists are ours now, and part of our history and heritage.

"For so many years we were hearing and almost believing that the church in Europe is about to die. Now we are learning that the church in Europe is only sleeping and that the Lord is about to awaken it."

For many Latin Americans, Europe is an obligatory destiny. Some have tried to return to their roots. Others want to discover places with which we share a history in common. Now many go in search of promises of a better life and to escape difficult economic struggles in Latin America.

A growing number of Latin Americans are migrating to Europe, A one-way ticket and a lot of dreams in their backpack leaves a family, a history, and a country behind.

Seeking promises that they hope to fulfill they take with them the church and their Christian faith ready to be put to use whenever the opportunity presents itself in Europe.

For some Latin American Christians, Europe is the new Dark Continent. The place that took the gospel to our lands now needs missionaries! Where once missionaries were sent to plant the church in many places of Latin America, the church is now declining very fast. We suffer when we see that those who shared the knowledge of God with us have now forgotten that they forgot God!

For so many years we were hearing and almost believing that the church in Europe is about to die. Now we are learning that the church in Europe is only sleeping and that the Lord is about to awaken it. And, in Latin America there is a growing interest and passion to send missionaries to Europe and to intentionally prepare those who are migrating to Europe to become unintentional missionaries.

The Macedonian Cry is still ringing in our ears. We are in pain looking at the urgently need of Europe to experience the power and the hope of the Gospel. We are committing ourselves to be part of the answer. We are praying that the Lord will allow us the privilege to be there when He awakens the church.

David Ruiz



EUROPE as seen from ASIA / PACIFIC

Darrell Jackson is Senior Lecturer in Missiology at Morling College, Sydney. Since moving to Australia at the beginning of 2012, Darrell has been a keen observer of Asian mission and how Europe is viewed from that part of the world.



Asian-Pacific goods and raw materials. Of course it is also a trade competitor: Australian mining companies have a vested interest in seeing how coal and oil futures are developed in Europe, for example. Equally important, Europe is a rival customer for global fuel supplies. The decline in industrial activity in the EU reduces demand for carbon fuel supplies and helps drive a downwards spiral in fuel prices, to the benefit of Asian buyers. At the same time, reduced industrial activity in the EU reduces its carbon emissions. In turn this reduces the financial benefit that countries in the global south can derive from selling their surplus carbon emission allowances to the industrialised nations of the north.

“Missionaries from Australia and New Zealand often have to battle to overcome the misconception that Europe is a Christian continent.”

Having the EU as a trading partner does not simply impact the economy of the region; social and political conditions are also influenced. Supporters of social democratisation and liberalisation in the Asia-Pacific region welcome the fact that the EU and the USA use their FTAs to export the greater liberalisation of the markets. The EU is particularly valued for its commitment to environmental and employment standards. In this respect it is seen as being somewhat different to the USA and is lauded for regulating the power of US-based technology titans and for

promoting consumer rights. Agreements concluded by the EU, in the area of healthcare, for example, are seen as prompting the need for reciprocal advances in medical technology in countries such as the Philippines.

At the same time, concerned voices argue that a clear EU identity needs to emerge and overcome political utopia (on the one hand) and political paralysis (on the other hand). Political leaders in the ASEAN bloc still tend to regard the EU as a model for its own global aspirations and Europe's response to a country such as North Korea is seen as key for the other countries of the region. Europe remains more than just an exporter of high quality TV programming or (currently) a cheap holiday destination!

What is the general view in your region of European Christianity? How do your Christian community(ies) assess European secularity?

Korea remains a major source of missionaries in the region and beyond, including Europe. Despite the gradual decline in the number of Korean missionaries being sent over the last five years or so, the secular countries of Europe remain of concern to some of the churches of the Asia-Pacific, including the many Chinese Christians who have moved to Europe to conduct business and who have formed large and vibrant Chinese church communities. It remains to be seen whether these Asian churches are able to do the necessary work of contextualising their understanding of the Gospel and making it relevant to western, post-Christian citizens. Ironically, Australian Christians with a European heritage are frequently less able to raise support for mission initiatives in Europe. Missionaries from Australia and New Zealand often have to battle to overcome the misconception that Europe is a Christian continent.

The assessment of Europe from the Asia-Pacific region is far from being uniformly dark or depressing. Cautious optimism may be a reflection of the economic fortunes within the region but this can extend outwards and will hopefully continue to reach and bless the shores of Europe.

Darrell Jackson

How is Europe currently portrayed in the Asia-Pacific media? What images and themes tend to capture the headlines?

It doesn't take more than a cursory glance (and I took more than a cursory glance) at the regional English-language papers to notice that the primary interest in things European is an economic interest. Here in the Asia-Pacific region, most commentary on the current crisis assumes it is substantially an economic crisis.

This is hardly surprising. The EU and the USA have since 2000 been intensifying efforts to conclude multiple Free trade Agreements (FTAs) in the region. If the European single market collapses, this will be bad news for the Asia-Pacific region as Europe is one of two major trading partners and provides a major market for



EUROPE as seen from AFRICA

Tertius Nieuwoudt has been in full-time ministry since 1998 and served as a director on the board of Life Christian Foundation focusing on leadership and community development. He recently moved to a new position as a pastor to work with emerging leaders and serve at a local assembly in Klerksdorp in Central South Africa.



The perspective on Europe from Africa must begin with an economic emphasis because it determines many other factors. Although Africa is very complex due to the cultural challenges, the one denominator that still cuts through some of these complex challenges is “money” and the other is the basic need to belong.

The other day I overheard a missionary who has been in the mission field of Africa for over 25 years say “I don’t want to plant one more church or hand out one more Bible if I can’t help them economically to be sustainable”. Whether you agree with this approach or not that is besides the point - Africa can no longer wait on the western world to provide.

Besides the African post-colonial sentiment towards Europe, in major parts of Africa,

the European standard was still the standard to live up to. In the last few months Africa has seen Europe struggling with its own financial demons, which not only has a direct impact on aid to Africa from out Europe but also trade relations between these two continents.

The other factor that influences the perspective on Europe is the economic interest in Africa from countries such as Brazil, Russia, India and China who together with Europe are courting this African maiden for her unspoiled resources in agriculture and mining. It is evident that there is a huge economic interest in Africa, especially the southern African region (SADC), because of its stability and strategic location in terms of trade infrastructure like ports, airport and shipping lanes.

Growing up in Africa, and to be more specific within a Christian milieu within Africa, a lot of effort was put into evangelism and church planting over the last two decades. Over this period, we have seen some remarkable transformations and testimonies coming out of the mission field. South Africa itself is a global testimony of a new African democracy going through transition of power without a civil war in 1994.

The African people have journeyed through major economic challenges and had to pioneer the Christian faith in a continent that still have strong ancestral worship and Muslim influences. The fact is the African continent has a lot to offer to European Christianity due to these struggles.

I also feel that the EU has a lot to offer in the following areas: good governance practices, education, healthcare, education, communication and technology but contextualised for an African mindset.

Just this week the U.K government announced that it will cease aid to south Africa in 2015 because it sees South Africa as a “financial powerhouse” of the region and would rather see S.A as a trade partner that a aid partner. This maybe a precursor of things to come not only in the private sector but also within relation to European and African Christianity partnering to trade recourses to the benefit of the kingdom of God.

“The fact is the African continent has a lot to offer to European Christianity”

I don’t think there are shortages of people from Africa wanting to go and help in European missions; however there might be a lack of awareness of the reality of the Christian faith in Europe within African perspectives at this stage.

This being said I also do feel that it might be situation of confidence “what can we offer to EUROPE” and coming to a place of realising we actually can learn from and contribute to the European context, we need processes that can help facilitate this move north and skill transfer to further God’s agenda.

Tertius Nieuwoudt



A UMINS photo by Mike DuBose



Editorial Team: Darrell Jackson, Jim Memory and Jo Appleton



Redcliffe College
Horton Road
Gloucester, GL1 3PT

Telephone: 01452 308097

europeanmission.redcliffe.org