The Fight for Europe

Shaun Brauteseth 20 August 2025



If he were still alive, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche would want us to believe that Europe is done with the idea of God, like a grown-up smirking at children's fairytales. "God is dead," the German wrote in the bracing Alpine air of the nineteenth century. "God remains dead. And we have killed him… Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?"

Across Europe today, countless stone church buildings are little more than monuments—museum pieces from a different era. To the broad population, they either represent a naïve religious past or an oppressive religious present, but the state of mind on the streets is clear: society has moved on. In truth, though, it hasn't, because despite its dramatic post-modern enlightenment, the West has simply built new cathedrals, observed new sacraments, and kneeled at new altars of worship; the God of the Bible has been replaced by the false gods of autonomous self-governance and escapist technologies. Today, some are in the habit of saying, in an echo of Nietzsche's bold declaration, that Europe is irreversibly post-Christian.

But Nietzsche was wrong. God is not dead. It turns out that He is alive and well; in fact, Nietzsche seems to be the one who is dead. That's why we'd do well to ignore him and rather heed the words of another European, GK Chesterton, who also lived in the intellectually unrestrained West at the same time as Nietzsche: "Christendom has had a series of revolutions and in each one of

them Christianity has died," wrote Chesterton. "Christianity has died many times and risen again; for it had a God who knew the way out of the grave."

God is not afraid of the so-called post-Christian generation in Europe or anywhere else, because to Him there is no post-Christianity. There is no post-anything. He hasn't been left behind; he is far ahead. He is not a passive observer; He is an active saviour. He is always at work. His brow is not furrowed with perplexity at the state of our rebellious planet. He is not wondering what He should do. No, our God is a saviour in every way, and He knows exactly how to save. Europe may think of itself as post-Christian, but in some way, it is pre-Christian: people have sped away from the gospel so thoroughly that they've simply circled back to the starting point. In a time of the greatest spiritual blindness in living memory, God is ready to show Himself.

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And that's where the people of God come in.

We carry a gospel that we can be confident in. It is a gospel that can be thoroughly investigated (Luke 1:3) and intellectually defended (Acts 18:28). The Christian can apply reason to explain their faith and to engage in debate about the futility of an atheistic worldview. Indeed, through many godly YouTube ministries, we are being given insight into the thinking of the sharpest Christian minds and taught to robustly defend the gospel against its attackers, presenting truth in a simple and powerful way. We really are in an age of unprecedented access to apologetic tools and strategies, but amid these genuinely helpful tools, there is something increasingly important to take note of: people are not argued into the kingdom of God. They might be reasoned with or engaged intellectually, but when a Christian sets out to win a debate, he might be in danger of losing more than he gains. Because everywhere we go, we are called to love.

The people of God are not, first and foremost, professional apologists. We are not debaters. We are not arguers. We are not presenters. The people of God, above all else, are people of love. We are friends. We walk the streets with smiles. We are people of compassion. Our hearts are deeply moved by the plight of others. Like Paul in the sprawling European city-state of Athens, we are greatly distressed to see the idols that fill our cities (Acts 17:16). And, just as importantly, as we are told Paul did in the very next verse, we simply try to engage with anyone, because we love people. Sometimes we'll end up in front of the influential elite (Acts 17:19), and most times not. It doesn't matter, because we're not trying to build our profiles and gain access to important people—we are trying to love someone, anyone, everyone. This is how the gospel will go out in

the sceptical West. This, this is how we evangelise.

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I've found that when we begin to put pressure on ourselves to meet someone and share the gospel, we often tighten up with the tension of self-expectation, requiring instant results from short conversations with strangers. But we shouldn't tense up; we should dial down. Our goal, of course, is to speak God's truth, but love is the great battering ram that cracks open the castle doors of people's hearts. When we regard every single person in front of us as an object of affection, whether on the subways of London or in the coffee shops of Peel, a way is paved for the gospel. If we do not visibly love the people of the world—all of them—we have no message at all. Fiery YouTube debates and sidewalk showdowns with atheists aren't the way we live our lives; they aren't what we aim at. Rather, we set our course on openness, graciousness, and humility. After all, we're just trophies of God's grace who long to show the same compassion and mercy to others that we ourselves have received.

And so, in England, in Northern Ireland, in the Netherlands, in Switzerland, in Ireland, on the Isle of Man, in Spain, in France and across the continent, we will fight the good fight of the faith, but we will fight with open arms ready to hug, open hands ready to comfort. We will sing songs, songs to the world around us, songs of hope and grace and peace and life and Jesus. We will pray with tears. We will speak to all people as though they are our friends, because Jesus came as the friend of sinners—for goodness' sake, He even called Judas His friend (Matthew 26:50). We will laugh with people we meet on the streets. We will compliment their dogs, because everyone loves speaking about their pets, and who knows? Maybe we could become friends and speak about Jesus. We will sincerely thank service providers, asking them with compassion how long their shifts have been, because who knows? Maybe we could become friends and speak about Jesus. We will help elderly people carry their heavy bags home, because who knows? Maybe we could become friends and speak about Jesus. We will actually, dare we say, enjoy people, because God enjoys people. We will live in our cities bright-eyed, watching, noticing, approachable, alert, ready to show kindness. This is the grand strategy. This is the great fight. We're not geniuses for Christ—we're fools for Christ.

In centuries past, countless godly Europeans carried the gospel to the ends of the earth. I only live in my home country because my ancestors, who were Norwegian missionaries, sailed to the bottom of Africa to proclaim Jesus. Today, the gospel must be carried back onto the continent, because much of Europe may have forgotten God, but God hasn't forgotten Europe. And as we

love and reach out, day by day, person by person, one life at a time, He knows exactly how to save.