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# Christianity Vanishes in Europe — America, Too?

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William Murchison takes a good look at the tragic collapse of Christian belief in Europe, describing Europe's vanishing faith in poetic terms: "Centuries of Christian belief swept away in a great cosmic sorting-out; history stood on its head." The evidence is irrefutable, and the future of European civilization is very much in doubt. After all, the population growth in Europe is not coming among secularists, but among Europe's fast-growing Muslim population. These are not secularists looking to build a post-Christian Europe.

Nevertheless, Murchison's gaze also falls upon the United States, where Christian belief often appears more substantial than it really is. Consider these words of analysis:

*Meantime, it seems necessary to advise against Americans' giving themselves pious airs. Ours is a culture that puts more trust in supernatural religion than does Europe's—but not that much more. On the way to church, my wife and I sometimes joke about the comings and goings on the road: joggers, bicyclists, the lounging crowds at Starbucks. Guess they're getting a quick refill for the ride to First Methodist, we might say with a wink, well knowing the patrons to be occupied with latte and laptops rather than Bibles.*

*The legacy of the Enlightenment weighs upon us, as upon our European co-religionists: religion as claptrap and show, churches and cathedrals as places you repair not for physical and spiritual connection to Reality itself but for the satisfaction of habits or social needs or goodness knows what else. Anyway, how to present Christian realities in the context of a culture wedded to choice, change, and the satisfaction of personal wants? The immediate satisfaction, I should add: not deferred to some Better Time. Now. And preferably with as little pain and inconvenience as possible. Christianity—we should admit it—is un-modern. Or, rather, it is modern in the sense that it encompasses all eras: past, present, and future. What we might call the "modern spirit" is in fact detached from the Christian spirit.*

See "[Vanishing Sea of Faith](#)" in the October 2005 issue of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*.

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