

Reformation of Europe or the Church?

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Summary

With the end of World War II, the project of unifying Europe started with the goal of avoiding new war conflicts in Europe. The process of building the European system included individual and collective models which were based on cooperation. In relation to other civilizations, the West represents supremacy, but also a civilization that is setting. Euro-Atlantic integrations are faced with the challenges of building collective and all-encompassing systems that can enable stability in political, economic, ecological, religious and other areas of social life. The Christian church has, during its development, experienced various forms of spiritual revival. After the first decade of the 21st century, the churches of Europe are now faced with the great and responsible tasks of achieving spiritual revival as well as spiritual unity, even though their confessional differences represent a great obstacle to the practical application of it. One wonders whether this is a Christianization of secular Europe or a secularization of the Christian church. Does the church need a new Reformation, or was the Counter Reformation sufficient, and the church should be satisfied with its current state?

1. Introduction

The idea of a united Europe has been present for a number of centuries, but the specific project of European integration started only after the Second World

1 The author is expressing only personal beliefs.

War. Its primary intention was to prevent the outbreak of new war conflicts on European territory. Schuman's declaration is considered to be the first political document which encouraged the gradual integration of the countries of Western Europe.² The Declaration was adopted due to the difficult economic, as well as politically uncertain, situation in Europe, taking into account the recently ended Second World War, while the Cold war was threatening escalation of new conflicts. The initiative for an institutionalized integration of European countries started with the organization of two international institutions which played crucial roles in the further process of the integration of the European countries. Those were the Council of Europe (May 5, 1949) and the European Association for Coal and Steel, incurred on the basis of Schuman's declaration on May 9, 1950, and it also represented a core for the later development of the contemporary European Union (EU).

The process of European integration initially started as a sectorial integration of the countries which were members of the European Association for Coal and Steel when six countries – Belgium, France, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands and Germany – signed an agreement in Paris on April 18, 1951 by which the association was founded. After this, the process was enlarged and included other areas. Thus in Rome, on March 25, 1957, agreements were signed to found the European Economic Association (EEA) and the European Association for Atomic Energy. In their foundation, these associations represented the political idea of rapprochement of the European countries, even though their first integration was economic.

By observing of the European system, especially toward the end of the 20th century, it can be said that the main features were the breakup of the bipolar model, the formation of independent countries, and the search for a new political, economic and safety order in Europe.

This begs the question as to what the state of the Christian churches and their foundational call – to declare the gospel – will be in an environment which is oriented toward secularization.

While Europe faces turning points, who will hold a beacon that can show the path, a path permeated with cooperation, solidarity, integrity, acceptance, forgiveness and the correction of mistakes? Do Christian churches, which are

2 Shuman's declaration is considered the first political document to give a basis for beginning the first gradual integration of the western European countries into a geographically larger, and economically and politically more closely connected whole. Shuman's declaration defined the initial core of this integration – the agreement between France and Germany for the unification of the production of the then strategically important products of coal and steel under a new governing body – the European Association for Coal and Steel, see *Dan Europe*, 2002, Ministarstvo za europske integracije Republike Hrvatske, Zagreb, p. 7.

supposed to affirm respect and practice according to God's sovereignty and human dignity, play this role? If the Reformation in the 16th century opened a new page of European history, then the Christian church of the 21st century must set the way of "reformation" within itself. Thus, Christian churches must seek fellowship in Jesus Christ and the evangelical message which is much stronger than all differences.

Contrary to Europe which has firmly stepped into a period of political, economic and social stability after its turbulent times, and the process of European integration becomes more and more the only alternative, Christian churches remain firmly on their poles even though there is a desire to achieve ecumenical unity. Nevertheless, such ecumenicalism remains at a declarative level without any significant results in mutual activities by various Christian churches. On one side, the confessional differences are still an ample obstacle in the practical achievement of unity through Jesus Christ and His mercy, whereas, on the other side, the church has a responsibility to confront the relativization of biblical values, especially under the influence of secularism.

The church is faced with the challenge of integration into a society which tends to marginalize its activity and reduce it down to "protocol" and "occasional". The message of the good news of Jesus Christ must not remain within the "four walls of the church," but this greatly depends on the spiritual renewal of the church and its believers, on the silence or the allocation of the church in society and its problems, as well as on the cooperation of Christians who express their faith about the same things in different ways.

2. The Frailty of Europe

It seems as if Europe has entered an area of "reformation" and changes due to the breakup of the Eastern European political, economic and military association. It is no longer a region of clashes between east and west in the areas of safety, ideology, politics, economy and religion.

It was the existing blocks formed after the Second World War which provided collective safety as well as a balance of forces. However, membership in a block did not secure the members from clashes, as it was in the case of the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia and Hungary, or the conflict in the western block between Greece and Turkey. The main characteristics of stability in Europe were marked by the balance of fear. Practically, there was a global insecurity and a relative regional security.

The "Cold War" was a hostile relationship between the then Communist and non-Communist countries from the end of the Second World War until the breakup of the Soviet Union (USSR), meaning the period from 1945-1991. The

term “cold” represented an interrelationship which was not based on the waging of war between two parties.³

The period of the Cold War was marked by mutual distrust and misapprehensions, and sometimes there was a sense of threat of a third world war.

There were inter-accusations of the spreading of *-isms* (Communism, capitalism, imperialism). Nevertheless, though cases where tensions might escalate into military conflicts were avoided, there was a war between ideologies on both the local and regional levels.⁴

Europe, which falls under the term *west* where other modern, developed countries such as the United States and Canada belong, was organized into two blocks and bipolar politics as a result of the Cold War. Some authors, like Samuel P. Huntington, recognize three parts: “A group of mostly rich and democratic societies, led by the USA, have been involved in a comprehensive ideological, political, economic, and occasionally military rivalry with a group of slightly poorer communist societies, connected and led by the Soviet Union. A major part of this conflict took place outside of those two camps, in the third world and its mostly poor countries, which lacked stability” (Huntington, 1997: 37).

According to Huntington, after the breakup of the bipolar and Cold War system, and after the collapse of Communism in Europe, the nation states still “remain as the main players in world’s happenings” (Huntington, 1997: 44b), but instead of three blocks, there are seven or eight world civilizations which also imply a religious element. This is best presented by the following table:

- 3 The term “Cold war” was initially used by Bernard Baruch, counselor to the American president during a discussion in the US congress in 1947.
- 4 Such cases include the Korean and Vietnamese wars and the war between the USSR and Afghanistan which were usually characterized by local confinement, considering the territorial coverage. War conditions did not only relate to those two ideologies, but also to the instability within the blocks. Thus, from the end of the Second World War until the breakup of the USSR, on the territory of Europe alone, there were civil wars and/or instabilities in Greece (civil war), Hungary (a revolution and an intervention from the USSR), and Czechoslovakia – today’s Czech Republic (The Prague Spring). The leading powers, the USA and the USSR, which did not have any direct conflicts among themselves, competed mostly in the area of armament and military development, especially of military technologies, and one of the main means for gathering information was through spying. One of the most potential dangers of the Cold War was the race in the development of nuclear armament and its activation. Unlike local conflicts, the paranoia related to nuclear weapons development affected all the countries of the world.

Territory under political power of civilizations, 1900-1993.

Estimation of the total territory of the civilizations in thousands of square meters.

Year	1900	1920	1971	1993
Western	20290	25447	12806	12711
African	164	400	4636	5682
Chinese	4317	3913	3936	3923
Hindu	54	54	1316	1279
Islamic	3592	1811	9183	11054
Japanese	161	261	142	145
Hispanic	7721	8098	7833	7819
Orthodox	8733	10258	10346	7169
Other	7468	2258	2302	2718

In the new world order, one of the more serious presuppositions is that the most serious conflicts will not be marked by the class element (rich/poor), but by cultural and religious elements (an ours/theirs model, i.e., Christians/Muslims, Roman Catholics/Orthodox); this will be so regardless of the fact that economic development has sprung from the roots of different cultures in which religion was one of their basic contents and represents one of the foundational traits of the civilizations.

In the next table, available information is presented about the participation of the global population in the main religions, i.e., confessions (Huntington, 1997: 87c).

Participation of the Global Population in the Main Confessions

	1900	1970	1980	1985 (est.)	2000 (est.)
Western Christianity	26,9	30,6	30,0	29,7	29,9
Orthodoxy	7,5	3,1	2,8	2,7	2,4
Islam	12,4	15,3	16,5	17,1	19,2
Non-religious	0,2	15,0	16,4	16,9	17,1
Hindu	12,5	12,8	13,3	13,5	13,7
Buddhism	7,8	6,4	6,3	6,2	5,7
Chinese folk religions	23,5	5,9	4,5	3,9	2,5
Tribal beliefs	6,6	2,4	2,1	1,9	1,6
Atheism	0,0	4,6	4,5	4,4	4,2

Source: David B. Barrett (ed.), *World's Christian Encyclopedia*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1982.

The information in the table above shows an increase, especially during the 1980s, among two monotheistic religions – Christianity and Islam, and shows

a continuing trend of the increase in Islam, whereas in Christianity there is a slight decrease. One fact that must not be neglected in “the long run”, as stated by Huntington, is that “Christianity is expanding mostly through conversion, whereas Islam is expanding through reproduction” (Huntington, 1997: 88d).

Similar tendencies which have resulted in a decrease of the power of the West and a growth of Islam are also seen in the participation of the world’s population under the governing of civilizations where a gradual decrease of the West and Orthodoxy can be seen along with a continuous growth in Islam.

Participation of the World’s Population under the Political Governing of Civilizations, 1900-2025 (in percentages)

Year	1900	1920	1971	1990	1995	2010	2025
Total*	(1,6)	(1,9)	(3,7)	(5,3)	(5,8)	(7,2)	(8,5)
Western	44,3	48,1	14,4	14,7	13,1	11,5	10,1
African	0,4	0,7	5,6	8,2	9,5	11,7	14,4
Chinese	19,3	17,3	22,8	24,3	24,0	22,3	21,0
Hindu	0,3	0,3	15,2	16,3	16,4	17,1	16,9
Islamic	4,2	2,4	13,0	13,4	15,9+	17,9+	19,2+
Japanese	3,5	4,1	2,8	2,3	2,2	1,8	1,5
Hispanic	3,2	4,6	8,4	9,2	9,3	10,3	9,2
Orthodox	8,5	13,9	10,0	6,5	6,1++	5,4++	4,9++
Other	16,3	8,6	5,5	5,1	3,5	2,0	2,8

Sources: United Nations, Population Division, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, *World Population Prospects*, The 1992 revision (New York: United Nations, 1993); *Statesman’s Yearbook* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1901-1927); *World Almanac and Book of Facts* (New York: Press Pub. Co. 1970-1993).

Annotation: The proportional territorial representation is based on the accepted state borders of a particular year.

* Estimation of the world’s population in billions.

+ The estimation does not include the population of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

++ The estimations include the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On the other hand, it is interesting to note the United Nation’s (UN) estimation about the migration of the population within regions in the context of the total numbers from 1950, 1990 and 2150.⁵

5 For more details, see *The Economist*, 1997, *Vodič kroz ekonomske pokazatelje*, Data press, Zagreb, p. 58.

World's Population in Percentages in the Regions

REGIONS	1950. total pop. 2,5 billion	1990. total pop. 5,3 billion	2150. total pop. 11,5 billion
North America	6,6	5,2	2,7
China	22,1	21,5	12,0
The rest of Asia and Oceania	18,9	21,8	24,6
Europe	14,2	9,4	3,7
India	14,2	16,1	16,9
Africa	5,2	12,1	26,8
The former USSR	7,2	5,4	3,6
Latin America	6,6	8,5	9,7

Source: UN

Based on the aforementioned estimations and information, what is the future of Europe, and what is the future of Christianity and the church, which at the beginning of the 21st century still represents the largest religion? After the Cold War era, a new process of integration began which is supposed to determine membership in the West. In the past, its bearers were the United States of America along with the European allies – France, Great Britain and Germany, and “the second echelon”: Italy, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, and Ireland, with the support of Israel, Greece, Turkey, Japan, South Korea and Thailand. But at the beginning of the 21st century, the process of expanding the EU began, and since 2004, the following states have entered the EU: the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Malta, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria, and Croatia and Turkey are at the door step.

After the changes in the geographic, economic, cultural and religious plans in Europe, instead of expanding to a global plan, conflicts and disagreements occurred on the local and regional levels.

While the possibility for a global conflict was reduced, the possibility for regional conflicts and instabilities increased. Europe is still facing numerous challenges, and it is just such local and regional crises that are the elements which charge further European development. The independence achieved in Eastern Europe only strengthened the separatist movements in Western Europe as well, with nations demanding a certain degree of autonomy from their mother countries: the Basque problem in Spain and France, the separatist movements in the Belgian regions of Wallonia and Flanders, separatist movements in Scotland and Northern Ireland regarding Great Britain, in Corsica regarding France, and the movement of the northern league in Italy. Such insecurities hold a definite influence on the possibly negative consequences of the demand for further integration and expansion of the EU.

3. *Quo Vadis, Europe?*

Europe is developing further, and this development is definitely influenced by religious factors. Though these religious factors may not be a priority for building correlations in the 21st century, some authors locate certain areas of risk in the world, (Tus, 1997: 209), such as:

- The Russian Federation with its borders and neighboring countries (Orthodoxy and Islam) – there is a great military potential in that area: nuclear, chemical, conventional and economical. The unsettled international relations represent a major problem.
- South-Eastern Europe (Roman-Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam) – this area still has a number of territorial and ethnic problems which include extreme nationalism and religious fanaticism (i.e., Kosovo and solving the entire Albanian issue interlocking Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, and Greece; solving this issue may have an influence on the possible solution for the issue of Sandzak and Vojvodina, the further development of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a unitary country; and Macedonia represents a potential focal point with the problem of the relations between Macedonians and Albanians, namely, the Orthodox-Islamic relations.
- The Middle East (Judaism and Islam) – the relations between Israel and the Islamic countries, the forming of the Palestinian nation state, the forming of stabile countries like Iraq and Afghanistan, and the stabile and cooperative Iran.
- Caucasus and the Caspian region (influence of Islam) – formation of Islamic countries and ethnic conflicts, an area of significant energy potential, especially for petroleum and gas (especially in the Caspian Basin).
- North Africa and the Mediterranean (Christianity and Islam) – Islamic fundamentalism in Egypt, Libya and in the countries of Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco, Tunis); the instability of the Mediterranean has a direct influence on the stability of Europe – influence of religious fundamentalism, territorial aspirations, refugees, unemployment, migrations, traffic with weapons, persons and drugs.
- Far East, South and South-Eastern Asia (increasing influence of Islam) – especially the issue of the status of Taiwan and their relations with China, relations with North and South Korea, the status of Kashmir between Pakistan and India (both nuclear powers).
- South America (Roman Catholicism and Protestantism) - strengthening of the left wing parties and governments, bonding with Cuba, withdrawal

and creation of additional political-economical tensions in relations with the USA.

The aforementioned areas of risk imply the possible dangers of (Tus, 1997:210c) nuclear and chemical weapons, terrorism, mass migrations, illegal trade, pollution of the biosphere and other ecological problems along with a lack of energy sources, especially oil and water. Relations where a coherence of interests must exist are:

- West – East, which includes the territories of the Russian Federation and the Middle and Far East;
- North – South, especially in the area of reducing economic differences both globally and on a regional level;
- Europe – USA, political-economic and safety balance, and collaboration in the area of open international issues, including issues of global interest;
- Europe – China, Japan, India, an overall cooperation, especially in the economic plan and support of the enforcement of political reforms;
- Europe – Islamic countries, struggle against terrorism, economic cooperation, religious freedom, the problem of migrations.

In order to achieve safety and stability in the Europe of today, and especially in the future, the European Union (EU) member states and the rest of the European countries must achieve among themselves a certain degree in the following areas (Tus, 1997:213c): the common struggle against terrorism, support of the peace and the enforcement of the political-economic reforms in the Russian Federation, a certain degree of US monitoring in Europe, full control of nuclear and chemical weapons, a support of the gradual expansion of the EU and NATO as a warranty for the stability and security of the European countries, support of the initiative for natural increase of the European population, support of the development and the enforcement of stability in the Mediterranean, support of the peace processes in the Middle East, further development in stabilizing energy sources,⁶ support of the enforcement of religious freedom as well as the implementation of ecological

6 An important step was made on the 25th of October, 2005 when the representatives of the European Union and the countries of South Eastern Europe signed the Agreement on the Energy Community of South Eastern Europe in Athens, a first such multilateral agreement. By signing this agreement between the EU, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria and the temporary government in Kosovo, a possibility was opened for making a legal border for the integration of the energy market, presently with electric energy and gas, which services 34 European countries. This document will also increase the safety of providing electric energy.

preservation of natural resources (land, sea, air, atmosphere).

As mentioned in the information about the circulation of the world's population in the regions, a major future problem for the EU, but also for Europe in general, might be the natural increase of the population. This is a possible problem since in Europe, where Christianity is still predominant, this process is in a negative phase, while in Asia and the Middle East, which consist of mostly Islamic countries, it is in a positive phase. Subsequently, the parallel data about the birth rates in the period of 1995-2000 show that the highest rate of live-born babies per 1,000 citizens is in Turkey (24.6), then Albania (21.6), and Azerbaijan (19.3) where Islam prevails, whereas the lowest rates are in Slovenia (10.6), Greece (9.8), Spain (9.8), Italy (9.6) and Germany (9.2) where Christianity prevails.⁷

On the other hand, considering the religious picture, especially among the members of the European Union, it is interesting to note that the results of the Euro Barometer Poll in 2005⁸ confirmed that an average of 52% of the citizens of the EU member states believed in God, 27% believed there is some kind of spirit or life force, 18% did not believe in God or any spiritual being, and 3% refused to answer.

These results revealed by the Euro Barometer Poll in 2005⁹ are interesting in that they show the religious orientation of the European population. The survey encompassed the countries that are members, non-members and candidates for membership in the European Union, and asked about the attitudes regarding three categories of belief:

- Belief in God
- Belief in a spiritual being or a life force
- No belief in God, neither in a spiritual being nor in a life force.

Based on the results of the poll, Christian churches are faced with the challenge and responsibility of preserving and conveying Christian foundational truths and values to the population of Europe.

7 See, *The Economist*, 1997. "Europa u brojkama 1998", *Privredni Vjesnik*, Zagreb, p. 38.

8 Eurobarometer polls should be read carefully because there can be differences between this survey and the national results of the population census. For example, in the United Kingdom, the population census from 2001 showed that over 70% of the population considered themselves "Christian", whereas only 15% confessed to be "without faith".

9 The research was done between January 3 to February 15, 2005, and it was published in *Social Values, Science and Technology*.

Country	Believes in God (%)	Believes in a spiritual being or life force (%)	Does not believe in God or a spiritual being or life force (%)
Turkey	95	2	1
Malta	95	3	1
Cyprus	90	7	2
Romania	90	8	1
Greece	81	16	3
Portugal	81	12	6
Poland	80	15	1
Italy	74	16	6
Ireland	73	22	4
Croatia	67	25	7
Slovakia	61	26	11
Spain	59	21	18
Austria	54	34	8
Lithuania	49	36	12
Switzerland	48	39	9
Germany	47	25	25
Luxembourg	44	28	22
Hungary	44	31	19
Belgium	43	29	27
Finland	41	41	16
Bulgaria	40	40	13
Iceland	38	48	11
The United Kingdom	38	40	20
Latvia	37	49	10
Slovenia	37	46	16
France	34	27	33
The Netherlands	34	37	27
Norway	32	47	17
Denmark	31	49	19
Sweden	23	53	23
The Czech Republic	19	50	30
Estonia	16	54	26

Source: Eurobarometer Poll, 2005.

Certain authors (Altras, 2005: 159) state that through the broadening of common interests, which affects the adoption of new values for creating unity, Europe is dealing with certain spheres of social life. The most notable of them are:

- The creation of a European region of peace and stability
- Economic integration (creating a common open market, unique customs and monetary unions)
- Preservation of the environment

- Foreign politics, mutual security and defense
- The development of the European identity
- The establishment and development of an area of “4 freedoms” – free flow of people, capital, stock and services
- Cooperation in the areas of justice and home affairs
- The creation of a new legal order
- The creation of political unions

As the main promoter of change on the “old continent”, the EU has the most important role. Some authors state (Altras, 2005: 170b) that the Union can go in two possible directions:

- The EU could start a range of new measures and actions, the practice of which would bring it closer to the basic principles it has claimed.
- The EU could organize its current state through legislation and rename its reason for existence in which the political and economic elites become (or remain) bearers of the integrated processes.

4. What Can the Christian Church Offer to Europe?

Subsequently, is there a “new empire” emerging in Europe? Is secularism becoming a new world religion while the Christian faith gets relegated to “four walls”? The Christian church is faced with the challenge of reforming itself anew. Is Christianity subject to some kind of “cold war” in which “three interest groups” participate – Roman Catholicism, which can be conditionally named as western, where another party can get in, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy which can be considered eastern?

Christian churches are faced with the challenges of renewal and reformation, especially on the spiritual plan. It is sufficient for Christians to remember the ways of reformation of the faith on a personal level after the beginning of the Reformation in the 16th century. The intention was that every one, whether an individual or a group, could access the Bible, especially the gospel.

What can the Christian church offer to the “old continent” in the 21st century? Can the European identity continue to build a way for its “most precious treasure” which includes the message of the gospel? Is there a need for some kind of new “Reformation”?

The church and its members, Christians, are part of two societies, as René Coste asserts: “the city of God and the city of men, they belong to each of them completely.” In his prayer in John 17:15, Jesus Christ pleads with God: “My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil

one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. . .”

As emphasized by Cardinal Péter Erdo,¹⁰ the President of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences, ecumenism is not triumphalistic, but it contains the “rigidity of the cross,” and recognizes the new challenges awaiting Christianity and Christians in Europe. According to Erdo, Europe needs Jesus Christ, and Christians are those who need to witness to his love and truth, and there are many ways which Christians can witness together.

Christian churches need a foundation for the purpose of witnessing (Boff, 1987: 153-158) on which they can build faith in people and which is in accordance with the will of God. The spirit of unity and brotherhood is also present in the 21st century, and it represents a part of the foundations of the church. In such relations, the oppressed and those who believe meet together, church communities spring from the word of God, and churches become a means for proclaiming freedom, and celebrating faith and life.

The deliberation instigated by some authors about the characteristics of the ways (Boff, 1987: 160) Christian churches can take is interesting. It is a fact that no Christian church is “protected” or “delivered” from this or that way whose main aim is spiritual reform. Such Christian churches represent God's people and the community of a fellowship of faith and love. In such churches, a dialogue has developed regarding equality, especially among those who lead the church and those who are led, that is, which are part of that community. Priests and pastors are adjusting and listening to the needs of the believers, who, on the other hand, listen while obeying and communicating, horizontally, that is, with one another, as well as vertically, with those who lead the church. Thus the churches will be pervaded with love, and only by listening will they be socially involved, instead of being socially passive.

By building such Christian churches, the building of a new Europe can set out on a different path. However, in a political sense, in the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries, Europe has adopted some new forms, but Christianity has remained in its disturbed positions. It is a fact that Europe has been marked by the Christian schism in the new era, where Roman Catholicism is on the one side, along with Protestantism, and the Orthodox Church is on the other side. Christianity received another strike from humanism, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, where spiritual authorities, especially the Bible, lost predominance.

10 In the Romanian city of Sibiu, from October 4-9, 2007, the Third European Ecumenical Assembly was held (AEE3) under the title “The Light of Christ Illuminates Every Person: A Hope and Unity in Europe,” where around 2,500 participants from European churches gathered together.

Nevertheless, the Christian church remains the messenger to Europe and the entire western civilization with the message of the fullness of life found in the gospel. The unification of Europe, which is projected in a great measure in the “unification” of Christian churches, must not be limited to only two aspects – political/economic and geographical – but should also include the Christian system of values on whose foundations modern Europe was built. The churches need to redefine their priorities and interests regarding the national state with its demographic and geopolitical interests on the one hand, and spiritual personal-church reform on the other hand, because often the former conditions have a more important role than the latter. Regardless, the encounters of the superiors of the Christian churches, the theological symposiums and prayer meetings for the unity of all Christians, and many other non-religious, political factors represent insurmountable obstacles when Christian unity and cooperation is concerned:

- Political misunderstanding
- Lack of compromise and cooperation
- Sincere courtesy and the following of protocols
- The imposition of superiority
- A privileged status of identity

A continual task of the church is to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ which can, and does, change “political borders”. In such a mission, the church should accent two expressions of the dignity of the human person (Coste, 1995: 202-203):

- On the one hand, each person is in the image of God
- On the other hand, it is necessary to observe the conduct of the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, and endeavor to behave like them.

Is there a readiness within Christian churches for a proper revival? On the one hand, there is the danger of secularization and a lost interest in the gospel, and on the other hand, the churches and believers need to attempt to incorporate Christianity into social issues and apply faith in society.

Therefore, the church in Europe is faced with the question: How can the church remain loyal to the gospel? In order to do it, a “double listening” is necessary: a careful listening to the teaching of the Scriptures, and a careful listening to the needs of society.¹¹

11 More can be read about the deliberations on “double listening” and other themes in the interview given by the pastor of the Baptist church in Rijeka, Giorgio Grlj, with the new General Secretary of the European Evangelical Alliance (EEA), Niek Trumper, during the Lausanne Congress 3 in Cape Town in the South-African Republic, from October 16-25, 2010. (<http://baaptist.hr/razgovori/401-niek-trumper-to-moemo-nauti-od-vas>).

5. Conclusion

Europe is faced with the challenge of dichotomous fundamentalism. On the one side, there is religion, and on the other side, there is post-modern fundamentalism. If the first one appeared in waves, beginning with the emergence of the Reformation in the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century, the second tends to roughly place ideas that were initiated in the 14th century and are contrary to any possible religious element, because it places the human and his/her needs in first place. It is characteristic to both of them that they include “fears of something new, different” which results in the appearance of exclusiveness and “the struggle to retain a position, that which is accomplished and achieved.”

However, the events at the beginning of the Reformation movement in the contemporary Roman Catholic Church and the counter-strike and beginning of the Counter-Reformation aimed to move from the existing state and to create something new. Whereas the purpose of the Reformation was, as stated in the *Dictionary of Evangelical Christianity (Leksikon evanđeoskoga kršćanstva)*, a renewal of the teachings and the life of the church, the Counter-Reformation attempted to promote a spiritual renewal and restrain the teachings of the Reformation (p. 320). One action (the Reformation) caused a reaction (Counter-reformation), and the changes began.

Similarly, Europe started to deliberate more seriously about the integration of the European region after the Second World War and the creation of a bipolar system into which some of the European countries were grouped. Here, too, one action (The Second World War and the bipolar system of countries) caused a reaction (the integration of the European countries).

Nevertheless, regardless of the difficulties that it is facing, the EU is very successful, especially in economic integration, and it represents a unique form of super-national community created as a result of cooperation and economic advancement for all of the countries involved. This will affect the development of inter-religious dialogue. It is a fact that economic development represents a necessary need in the process of breaking the expansion of political, as well as religious, malcontent and instability because, in that context, the share of aid from the Union is significant.¹²

Still, the question remains, as stated by Josef Thesing in the text *European Union as a Community of Values*: Can the European Union expand any more without solving the foundational and inner problems of the goal, namely

12 The EU is, for example, a major donor to the Palestinians (more than EUR 1.6 billion in the form of support and loans, and 60% of the international aid). The EU especially insists on regional cooperation as a prerequisite for a closer cooperation with the Union itself.

democratic legitimacy, financing and more effective leadership?

Also, can Christian churches seek and build unity and fellowship in Jesus Christ and the evangelical message which surpasses all differences, or should they remain in religiosity, membership, uniformity of faith, and lead themselves into idolatry (read: ideology)?

What is the foundation of the Christian church? Only on the foundation of unity with Jesus Christ can Christian churches fulfill their mission of spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. It is a quite different subject to discuss the readiness of some individual churches and their leadership to step forward in this mission without being bothered by personal direction; but what is common to all still remains – what is implied by the Christian church. As it is stated in the 2001 *Charta Oecumenica* for the development of cooperation between churches in Europe,¹³ one of the directions for the development of cooperation between European churches is belief in “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church” which is not a privilege of conformism to the Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, or any other church.

The Christian church is one, holy, catholic and apostolic in the spirit of one head, the Lord Jesus Christ, which proclaims the good news of the resurrection without getting into teaching or theology, but, rather, it bears witness to the personal changes that have happened and still happen because of Christ’s resurrection.

Europe can be reformed (read: changed, integrated, disintegrated) with certain political decisions which are the result of compromise, but which are always accompanied by a certain amount of personal interest. Christian churches can begin a reformation (read: spiritual renewal) without “hidden perspectives and personal interests” because God is the one who performs his intention in those who are of a pure heart, in those who recognize their neighbor (read: anybody can be a good Samaritan), and in those who can wash the feet of another (read: the teacher washed the feet of his disciples).

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13 See *Charta Oecumenica*, an ecumenical charter for the development of cooperation between churches in Europe.

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Reformacija Europe ili Crkve?

Sažetak

Završetkom Drugog svjetskog rata dolazi do projekta ujedinjene Europe, s ciljem izbjegavanja novih ratnih sukoba na području Europe. Procesi izgradnje sustava Europe sadrže individualne i kolektivne modele, koji se temelje na suradnji. Slike Zapada, u odnosu na druge civilizacije, predstavljaju njegovu premoć, ali i civilizaciju na zalasku. Pred euro-atlantskim integracijama su izazovi izgradnje zajedničkih i sveobuhvatnih sustava, koji bi trebali omogućiti stabilnost u političkim, gospodarskim, ekološkim, religijskim i ostalim područjima društvenog života. Kršćanska crkva je tijekom svog razvoja doživljavala razne oblike duhovne obnove. Nakon prvog desetljeća 21. stoljeća pred crkvama Europe veliki su i odgovorni zadaci u ostvarivanju duhovne obnove ali i duhovnog jedinstva, iako su konfesionalne razlike velika prepreka u praktičnoj provedbi istoga. Predstoji li kristijanizacija sekularne Europe ili sekularizacija kršćanske Crkve? Treba li Crkvi nova reformacija ili je dovoljna protureformacija i zadovoljstvo sadašnjim stanjem?