

„Europe for Christ!“

Möllwaldplatz 5
A-1040 Vienna
Tel: +43/1/2749898
office@europe4christ.net



Dear Friends!

The subject of this letter for Europe is an old question which has recently been updated. Does human co-existence need religion? Do effective ethics need the anchoring in accountability before God? One of the fathers of the “Frankfurter School” Max Horkheimer asked himself in the last century, “Why shall I be good if there is no God?” And about hundred years before that, Dostojewski made his answer even more pointed, “If there is no God then everything is allowed.”

In a couple of European countries an advertising campaign for a “Life without God” may be a cause for confusion. The monthly German magazine “Cicero” spent some time on this debate and political scientist and publicist Andreas Püttmann piped up to clarify. In his text, here in our shortened version, you will find interesting details and arguments for an ongoing important issue.

Europe needs the “Life with God” for our citizens in order to protect its future and it needs our prayer and commitment to overcome a wide-spread callousness.

Your Europe for Christ Team!

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Humane Society without God?

Empirical findings of the social profile of atheists and christians.

By Andreas Püttmann

“One doesn’t have to believe in God, to be an ethical person”, Jon Worth said in an Interview with the German magazine *Cicero*. Who disagrees? But still, this man wouldn’t have to agitate against faith on the advertising space of Londoner busses. Because what’s undeniable for the individual, can be wrong when it’s assigned to the whole society and can bring confusion. In his book “The Left After Socialism”, 1992 Joschka Fischer, who has no personal interest in defending religion, had already come back to the old insight; “Ethics, that are not based on a deeper, normative power of an authoritative religion (...), will find it hard, to prevail in society and be of permanence. Responsible Ethics without any religious foundation (...) simply don’t work”. In March 2005 German left-wing politician Gregor Gysi was even clearer on the Lutheran academy of Tutzing; “Even as a non-believer I fear a godless society”. The German institute for opinion polls in Allensbach found that three quarters of German’s executives in economy, politics and administration agree upon this opinion; “When religious ties get weaker in a society, important values and standards get lost as well” and only 22 percent didn’t believe this.

As a matter of fact religious beliefs and its practise are no isolated part of living, but impact - aware or unaware - personal existence in all dimensions: as family member, friend or partner, father or mother, as employee, club member and neighbour, as subject of economy and as a citizen. Religious beliefs influence our thoughts, feelings and actions, customs and morals, awareness or unawareness of values, consumption and voting decisions. (...)

World views and morals of atheism

The empirical social research about the spiritual profile of nondenominational and explicitly atheistic citizens wasn't very flattering. Atheists are on an average more materialistic, egoistic and hedonistic. A representative poll for Allensbach's Media-Analysis 2005 asked 14-29 years old Germans about "What's important in life". Young people that admit to be "religious" named the following values to be important significantly more often; "good, versatile education" (72:55 percent), "always learn new things" (69:54), "social justice" (69:52), "help others that happen to be in need" (69:46), "having children" (69:42), "taking responsibility for others" (43:26), "Dealing with the question of purpose in life"(45:19), "Experience in nature" (38:22) and "active participation in politics" (14:7). At two possible answers irreligious were up front, "high salary"(49:37) and "having fun and enjoy life" (76:67).

(...)

In the USA, members of churches and synagogues said much more often than non-members (80:55 percent), that they were donating money for charitable purposes and took on volunteering(51:33). And 89 percent of the people, who said to have a deep religious faith, had the opinion that it is very important to support people in need, whereas only 52 percent of the people who didn't believe said so.

(...)

Already with the principle recognition of ethical standards there is a gap. According to an Allensbach poll from May 2005, 50 percent of regular church attendees compared to only 32 percent of nondenominational people acknowledge "clear standards of what's good and what's bad. They apply to every human being no matter what the circumstances are" opposed to the view; "There can't be absolute standards for what's good or bad. This is always dependent on given circumstances". Whereas 49 percent of the nondenominational population supported this opinion, but only 18 percent of regular Catholic Church attendees and 29 percent of Lutheran Church attendees.

(...)

"What we experience as being evil, is the result of unjust systems in which we are living", think 44 percent atheists but only 12 percent of believers. "The so called evil is in truthful aggression and that we need to hold our own in this life" believes every third Atheist, but only every fifth believer. Through these two forms of spiritual and psychological stands, the way towards anger against others, politicians and the "system" or society is paved.

(...)

Less frustration, drugs, divorces and suicides, better sex

Isn't it primarily the macrostructure of society and not the microstructure of personal living conditions in the family, school and work, which make young people political radical? The Christian faith is then really a source of mastering personal survival and through it an element of political satisfaction. It offers hope, comfort and meaning of life and by its deeply rooted tradition contributes to social orientation. Since Christian families show greater emotional stability and culture, this was proven in *Allensbachs* "Generation-Barometer 2006", there are less fractures in young people's lives concerning socialization, their conformity of standards is greater, their trust in their personal future more distinctive, their attitude towards vocation and the description of their own health more positive and lovesickness "doesn't happen so often, which means, relationships are taken more seriously and probably more faithful". In short "The attitude towards life tends to be more positive" (Youth researcher Gerhardt Schmidtchen). In Western- as well as in Eastern Germany according to *Allensbach*, believers feel freer in their lifestyle than nondenominational, in spite of supposedly only suffocating commandments and rules.

The monthly magazine "Psychology Today" reported already ten years ago that faith in a gracious God goes along with a higher degree of psychological health, makes it easier to cope with stress, sorrow, loss and existential crisis and speeds up the recovery (healing) processes. "Believers consume much less drugs and alcohol than non-believers, commit fewer suicides, have a lower divorce rate and, maybe surprising, have better sex". The

divorce rate of regular church attendees in the USA, for example only lies at 18 percent compared to 34 percent with people who are distant from church. (...) How Jon Worth could have gotten the idea to connect his appeal "Stop worrying and enjoy your life" while turning away from God, in face of all these reports, can only be explained by saying he didn't research good enough, but has mistaken clichés of faith with the reality.

The full Version of this Text and the Interview with Jon Worth: "["Man muss nicht an Gott glauben, um ein ethischer Mensch zu sein"](http://www.cicero.de/97.php?item=3376) you find on www.cicero.de/97.php?item=3376 (only German)