

# EUROPEAN YOUTH ABANDONING CHRISTIANITY

Catholic League president Bill Donohue comments on a new survey of European youth:

Catholic sociologist Stephen Bullivant has issued a detailed report on the state of Christianity in Europe. It is not encouraging. Bullivant, who teaches at St. Mary's University, outside of London, is director of the Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society. The report, "European Young Adults and Religion," measured religious practice and affiliation in 22 countries; the data were taken from a survey of those aged 16-29.

The proportion of young adults with no religious affiliation ranges from a high of 91 percent in the Czech Republic to a low of 17 percent in Poland. Following the Czech Republic are Estonia, Sweden, and the Netherlands; between 70 percent and 80 percent of young adults in those countries have no religious affiliation. The next most religious country to Poland is Lithuania; Austria and Ireland also post respectable numbers.

Conditions in the United Kingdom have changed markedly. More young people there identify as Catholic (10 percent) than Anglican (7 percent), with Muslims (6 percent) coming on fast.

Attendance at religious services has fallen off dramatically, as has the proportion of young people who pray. Poland is the least affected by the secularization of Europe; Estonia, the Czech Republic, and the Scandinavian countries are the most secular.

What does this mean? Bullivant maintains that "Christianity as a default, as a norm, is gone, and probably gone for good—or at least for the next 100 years." He adds that "In 20 or 30

years' time, mainstream churches will be smaller, but the few people left will be highly committed."

What does this forebode? Douglas Murray, author of *The Strange Death of Europe*, points out that "Europe today has little desire to reproduce itself, fight for itself or even take its own side in an argument." Speaking of European elites, he says, they "seem persuaded that it would not matter if the people and culture of Europe were lost to the world."

Who saw this all coming? Pope Benedict XVI. He saw the effects of multiculturalism as clearly as anyone, showing how a contempt for moral truths that adhere to the Judeo-Christian ethos has led to "a peculiar Western self-hatred that is nothing short of pathological."

The de-Christianization of the West has yielded such fruit as record high levels of abortion, out-of-wedlock births, homosexuality, divorce, sexually transmitted diseases, pornography, prostitution, drug abuse, depression, and suicide. This is the natural outcome of a civilization that has allowed moral relativism to triumph over Christianity. Just as Pope Benedict XVI said it would.