



Evangelicalism in Europe

Unity in Diversity

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Evangelicals in Southern Europe

Sociological Perspectives

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Introduction: Out of the Ghetto?

“Make friends, become God’s athletes, listen to his Word . . . Become missionary disciples.”¹ These are words spoken in Portugal through a video screen by the French international footballer Olivier Giroud, in front of forty thousand young French pilgrims, gathered in Lisbon for the Catholic World Youth Days 2023. Never before had a self-proclaimed evangelical spoken in Portugal to such a young crowd.² Does this mean that the evangelical identity in Southern Europe got out of the ghetto to become mainstream? That remains to be seen. It is easy to connect Southern Europe with Christianity in general, “the world’s largest religion” and the dominant religion on the northern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.³ Just as easy as Southern Europe is connected with olive oil or its Roman heritage. Connecting Southern Europe specifically with evangelicalism is much more difficult. For a long time it seemed as if the

1. “Faites-vous des amis, devenez des athlètes de Dieu, écoutez sa parole . . . Devenez des disciples missionnaires. Assurez sereinement votre foi en Jésus, prenez Dieu dans votre vie. Invitez-le. Travaillez aussi à l’unité de tous les chrétiens.” Olivier Giroud, *World Youth Days*, Lisbon (Portugal), Tuesday 1 August 2023.

2. Olivier Giroud, *Always Believe* (London: Pitch, 2021); French *Toujours y croire* (Paris: Plon, 2020) contains a chapter on his evangelical faith.

3. Gina A. Zurlo, *Global Christianity: A Guide to the World’s Largest Religion from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2022).

Southern European “imagined community”⁴ could not fit well with Born Again Christianity. However, time is changing and at the moment there are almost four million Southern European evangelicals – if we include France. They contribute to the European narrative of the twenty-first century in creative ways, although discreetly and rarely noticed by the wider public.

In order to study this Christian subculture, let us start with two definitions. How do we define evangelicals? These Christians are part of the large Protestant family, rooted in the time of the Reformation and the Revivals. They are often recognized as “hot pros,” which means Protestants with strong convictions and evangelistic zeal. Along with David Bebbington, in his groundbreaking synthesis about Britain, we will recognize them through four characteristics.⁵ Although they are challenged by non-historians,⁶ these criteria are still useful⁷ but they are to be used as Weberian ideal types: they do not work as essences, but as tools. They combine biblicism – the strong, normative authority of the Scriptures; crucicentrism – Christ the only way to salvation; conversionism – no one becomes a Christian by birthright, it is a religious personal choice to commit to Christianity; and activism. This activism of the convert goes through local churches operating as voluntary societies.

How do we define Southern Europe? The main distinctiveness of this part of Europe, apart from being Southern, is that the countries share the Mediterranean shore, either directly or indirectly (like Portugal or Serbia). Three blocks can be distinguished. The first block consists of France, Spain and Portugal with the principalities of Andorra and Monaco. The inclusion of France in this bunch is disputed,⁸ but according to its history and geography, including France in Southern Europe does make full sense: the total length of the French Mediterranean coast is 1694km.⁹ The second block is Italian speaking and includes Italy, San Marino, the Vatican State and Malta. The third block is

4. Cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London/New York: Verso, 1983).

5. David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

6. Matthew Avery Sutton, “Redefining the History and Historiography on American Evangelicalism in the Era of the Religious Right,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 2024, lfae063; <https://doi.org/10.1093/jaarel/lfae063>.

7. David W. Bebbington, *The Evangelical Quadrilateral. Characterizing the British Gospel Movement* (Baylor: Baylor University Press, 2021).

8. Actually, France may be defined as part of Western and of Southern Europe at the same time.

9. Including Corsica, with 688 km.

the Balkan peninsula, including Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Greece, Northern Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia and part of Turkey.

In this European playground, marked by a religious-secular competition,¹⁰ how does the very tiny evangelical minority relate to twenty-first century challenges? Almost ten years after the synthesis provided by Mark Hutchinson, it is time for some fresh reflections.¹¹ After a discussion of three sociological specifics of the Southern European evangelicals, a contemporary overview of these churches and networks will lead us to three main questions ahead.

The Wider Culture. Three Sociological Specifics

Southern European evangelicals did not fall from heaven. The history, economy, culture and politics of Southern Europe have had a great impact on their identity, distinguishing them from their Western, Eastern and Northern European brothers and sisters. From the wider context, three specifics may be highlighted.

Stigma: A Minority Amidst a Catholic/Orthodox Majority

Since the groundbreaking work of Erwin Goffman, we have known the sociological meaning of stigma.¹² Through words spoken repeatedly, in a social context marked by an imbalance of power, we can inflict a negative reputation on a person or group. It is like an invisible mark, which inflicts an inferiority complex on the dominated group. In all European countries, evangelicals have at one time or another been stigmatized, but this stigmatization has been most pronounced in Southern European countries. The main cause is that Protestantism never developed well in these countries. In Central, Western and Northern Europe, Protestant churches have experienced significant growth since the Reformation, but this was not the case in Italy, Spain, Greece, Serbia or Portugal. France is a semi-exception: Protestantism there developed well in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but then came to a terrible halt with the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The lack of a strong and lasting Protes-

10. Jörg Stolz, Judith Könnemann et al. (eds), *(Un)Believing in Modern Society. Religion, spirituality, and religious-secular competition* (London: Routledge, 2016).

11. Mark Hutchinson, "Evangelicals in Southern Europe," in Hutchinson et al., *Evangelicals Around the World, A Global Handbook for the 21st Century* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2015), 378–84.

12. Erving Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

tant presence in Southern Europe has been very detrimental to evangelicals, who are a branch of Protestantism, descended from the Reformation. Protestant counterparts do not always make things easier and it has happened that Reformed Protestants or Lutherans have persecuted certain evangelicals. But in most cases, the proximity of other Protestants was favourable to the evangelicals and allowed them to make themselves better understood. In Southern Europe, the absence of a strong Protestant presence has reinforced the stigma against evangelicals. In these countries, conquering “the right to believe”¹³ has been a long, windy, stormy path, navigating between the accusation of being a “cult” and being a separatist threat.¹⁴ These circumstances make it hard for sociologists and researchers to identify them: when asked about their identity, many of them may not reply “evangelical,” sometimes for fear of stigma. They may reply “Protestant” or “Christian” in order to avoid being accused of being fringe or members of a cult.

Tradition: A Born-again Culture Facing the Roman Heritage

Another sociological specificity Southern European evangelicals have to face is the particularly heavy weight of tradition. The adage “people don’t change their religion” was constantly used against evangelical Protestants in Southern Europe from the eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century. Tradition versus conversion. This phenomenon was not restricted to Southern Europe and can be traced also in other parts of Europe, but its emphasis is particularly strong in the Mediterranean countries due to three causes. The first cause is the dominance of the Catholic (or Orthodox, for Greece) framework. The second cause is the holistic Mediterranean social model in which community traditions are crucial. The third cause goes back to more ancient history: all the countries of Southern Europe were particularly marked by the Roman Empire. This Empire also left its mark on the rest of Europe, but to a lesser extent. The European countries bordering the Mediterranean experienced up to one thousand years of Roman-Latin civilization. One characteristic of this culture was the early appearance of writing. In Sweden, an example from

13. Patrick Cabanel, *Le droit de croire. La France et ses minorités religieuses, XVIe-XXIe siècle* (Paris: Passé Composé, 2024).

14. For the Greek case, see Philemon Bantimaroudis, “Media Framing of Religious Minorities in Greece: The Case of the Protestants,” *Journal of Media and Religion* 6.3 (2007): 219–35; for the French case, see Nancy Lefevre, “French secularism and the fight against separatism. From the 1905 *laïcité* of separation to the 2021 *laïcité* of surveillance,” *International Journal for Religious Freedom* 14.1/2 (2021): 69–84.

Northern Europe, the first written sources date from the eighth century AD. By contrast, in Italy – an example from Southern Europe – the first written sources date from the eighth century BC, introduced by Greek settlers. This very old and lasting historical anchoring has given the countries of Southern Europe a somewhat particular relationship to history. More than in Central or Northern Europe, history is an issue. And sometimes, being able to show historical records works as an identity marker in order to be legitimized. For citizens of Southern Europe, being able to identify the history of a group, especially if it is a minority and little known, is essential. This gives Southern European evangelicals a particular responsibility in relation to their history: being able to transmit this history means being able to better identify themselves and to better fit into the Southern European societies that are so fond of history.

Community: A Close-knit Family System

Thanks to demographers, we can identify a third sociocultural characteristic of the Southern European space: the family models that dominate society, nurturing a strong community culture. The French demographer Emmanuel Todd, a specialist in family models in Europe, argues that Southern Europe is much more marked than the rest of Europe by two dominant family models: the egalitarian nuclear family, on the one hand, and the community family, on the other.¹⁵ The root family (French: *famille souche*), which is unequal, is less represented, as is the absolute nuclear family, defined as liberal and indifferent to equality. The two dominant demographic and family models in Southern Europe both emphasize equality. They historically favoured the rise of Communism, which at one point was indeed very strong: first in the Balkan countries, but also in Spain, France and Italy. These family models challenge the liberal model of individuals detached from their community and family ties. They promote social practices of sharing and conviviality. Thus, according to an OECD survey,¹⁶ the French spend, on average, two hours and thirteen minutes eating and speaking around the table every day. By comparison, in Northern Europe, in a country like Sweden, people on average only spend one hour and fourteen minutes per day eating. It is one hour nineteen minutes in the United Kingdom, one hour thirty-five minutes in Germany. This indicator reveals different ways of socializing.

15. Emmanuel Todd, *The Explanation of Ideology: Family Structure and Social Systems* (London: Blackwell, 1985); Todd, *L'invention de l'Europe* (Paris: Seuil, 1990).

16. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Survey 2016.

Sociologically, Southern Europe tends to favour community and family,¹⁷ which naturally has consequences in terms of evangelical establishment. The individualist model of “giving one’s heart to Jesus” is not naturally familiar in societies where collective experience is valued. Yet other evangelical models, the ones which promote community integration, are closer to the demands of Southern Europeans.

Evangelicalism Today: A Fast-Growing Micro-Minority

In comparison to Western and Eastern Europe, there are few evangelicals in Southern Europe. They remain a micro-minority of less than four million worshippers. However, this is a fast-growing micro-minority. We look at the three main areas.

Portuguese, Hispanic and French Speaking Europe: Evangelicals Spreading out of the Ghetto

Portugal, Spain and France have in common that they once had a huge colonial empire. They also share a common Catholic past and a current phase of secularization that is marked by a tremendous decline in religious practice. Evangelicals, however, appear to be a growing minority, spreading out of the ghetto.¹⁸ Around 1.7 percent of this part of Southern Europe may be evangelical in 2024, with a total number of approximatively 2.8 million believers. It was significantly less twenty years ago. Of the three former colonial powers, the evangelicals in Spain seem to be the fastest growing group. In 2023, 4,259 evangelical places of worship were counted in Spain.¹⁹ The 1.4 million Spanish believers, including immigrants from Latin America and a significant Gipsy minority,²⁰ represent 2.9 percent of the Spanish population of 44 million.

France follows with about 1.2 million evangelical believers, who represent between 1.7 and 1.8 percent of the country’s population, and almost 3,000

17. Francesc-Xavier Medina, “Looking for Commensality: On Culture, Health, Heritage, and the Mediterranean Diet,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 5 March; 18(5): 2605 [2-021]; doi 10.3390/ijerph18052605.

18. Sebastien Fath, “Evangelical Protestantism in France: An Example of Denominational Recomposition?,” *Sociology of Religion* 66.4 (2005): 399–418.

19. David Goodwin, “Evangelical Christian Numbers on the Rise in Spain,” *Christian Today*, 20 September 2023, www.christiantoday.com/article/evangelical.christian.numbers.on.the.rise.in.spain/140777.htm.

20. Manuela Cantoó-Delgado, ed., *Evangelical Gypsies in Spain*, “The Bible is our Promised land” (Lanham: Lexington, 2020).

places of worship, including several megachurches. To give a comparison, around 1950 only fifty thousand evangelicals could be counted in France. Within a strong secularist framework,²¹ the French evangelicals appear to be the strongest example of religious re-composition: from identity by tradition – which is in dramatic decline – to identity by conversion. They probably share their growth rate with Islam; it is boosted by a particularly robust Pentecostal branch.²²

Last but not least, after a difficult time in the first decade of the twenty-first century the Portuguese evangelicals are facing a very significant growth, boosted by many Brazilian immigrants. According to the last census, one hundred and eighty-seven thousand evangelicals could be counted in the country, representing 2.1 percent of the population and an estimate of thirteen hundred worship places.²³

In these three countries the solid growth “out of the ghetto” seems largely to consist of two groups: a flux of former Catholics, joining evangelical circles more and more, and a flux from former colonies.

Balkan Europe: Challenges for a First-Generation Evangelical Movement

With Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Greece, Northern Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia and a part of Turkey, Balkan Europe presents a very different picture. In this part of Southern Europe, often marked by the weight of Orthodox churches, only a maximum of 0.4 percent of the population may be identified as evangelical. The qualification “micro-minority” applies to the full. Of the one hundred and fifty thousand evangelicals who live in Balkan Europe, around eighty thousand believers are in Serbia, many of them connected to wider networks,²⁴ forty thousand – maybe more – in Greece, eighteen thousand in Croatia, where a new society of theologians was created in 2018,²⁵ and eight thousand in Northern Macedonia. In most of these countries, pluralistic culture and democratic

21. Philippe Portier and Jean-Paul Willaime, *Religion and Secularism in France Today* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).

22. Alexandre Antoine, “Une socio-histoire des Assemblées de Dieu en France (1909–1968). Naissance et développement d’un mouvement pentecôtiste de Réveil” (PhD diss., Ecole Pratique des Hautes Études Paris, 2022).

23. Portuguese census, 2021.

24. Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović and Mirolad Djurić, “Transnational Evangelical Networks in Serbia and their Influence on Interethnic Relations,” *Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs*, Working paper July 2023.

25. Stanko Jambrek, “The founding of the Evangelical Theological Association of Croatia,” *Kairos, Evangelical Journal of Theology* 16.2 (2022): 135–43.

practice have not been around for very long. The evangelicals in the Balkans are used to being seen as a cult, almost strangers in their own country.

However, things have been changing since the massive transformations that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites. The growing influence of the European Union and its emphasis on freedom, democracy and pluralism is also part of an opening process. In twenty-first century Balkan Europe there is probably more space than ever before for evangelical witness. In September 2022, Evi Rodemann, chair of groups and gatherings for the Lausanne Younger Leaders Generation and director of the *LeadNow* ministry, released a report on a Balkan tour from 23 July to 12 August 2022. Here is an abstract:

The team was struck by the resilience and faithfulness of the Balkan Christian leaders. Evangelical Christians in the Balkan region are primarily first-generation and many of the churches the team visited are the first evangelical church plants in the country, where growth has been very slow.²⁶

The report mentions Kosovo, among other places: only 24 evangelical churches were counted in this country, 80 percent of which without any children's or youth ministry. With its mostly first generation, micro-minority of evangelicals, the Balkan part of Europe is one of the most challenging mission fields for twenty-first century European evangelicals.

Italian-Speaking Europe: Overcoming Isolation and Gated Identity

Last but not least, 1.2 percent of Italian-speaking Europe may be considered as evangelical, with Italy hosting roughly 1.3 percent of evangelicals, which amounts to eight hundred and thirty thousand evangelicals in 2024. In Malta, 4,516 Protestants were recorded in 2021, including a majority of evangelicals.²⁷ This part of Southern Europe seems to be half-way between the two other areas. The evangelical constituency is less significant than in Spain, Portugal or France, but the Italian-speaking evangelicals do not share the micro-minority status of their Balkan brothers and sisters.

26. Micaela Braithwaite, "A Journey of Encouragement through the Balkans. Traveling by caravan to encourage younger leaders," 26 September 2022, published on the Lausanne Movement website, <https://lausanne.org/about/blog/a-journey-of-encouragement-through-the-balkans>.

27. Malta census 2021. Not all people of Malta speak Italian, but a large majority do.

The Italian evangelicals are sustained by old revivalist branches like the Waldensian Evangelical Church, which was founded in the twelfth century and joined the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and by the Baptists, who started to form local churches in the 1860s. Since the beginning of the twentieth century they have also been strongly reinforced by a powerful Pentecostal revival²⁸ and much later by prophetic and charismatic churches boosted by immigration, like the Nigerian variety, studied by Annalisa Butticci.²⁹ In a very strong Catholic culture, the Italian-speaking evangelicals struggle to overcome isolation.³⁰ While some live in a kind of gated identity, including the many Nigerian believers who have a hard time connecting with existing Italian Christian networks, others engage in the national debate, like pastor Leonardo De Chirico (Breccia di Roma). In an interview in 2015, he said: “There’s also a growing desire to see a shift from the survival mentality of the past to a missional mindset.” De Chirico then quotes his colleague Pietro Bolognesi (*Istituto di Formazione Evangelica e Documentazione*) as saying, “We have three main challenges: (1) identity, (2) unity, and (3) training.”³¹

Three Specific Challenges Ahead

The desire for unity expressed by Pietro Bolognesi does not only reflect an Italian concern. Among the challenges facing contemporary Southern European evangelicals, connecting and networking is certainly not the least.

Networking: Being Heard in Spite of Neo-Nationalism

Since the middle of the 2010s, Europeans are facing the rise of nativist populism.³² In Italy, Georgia Meloni, serving as Prime Minister since October 2022, is leading the Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d’Italia), a nationalist conservative radical right-wing political movement. Another example is found with France, where the National Gathering (RN, “rassemblement national”), an extreme

28. Carmine Napolitano, *I Pentecostali in Italia* (Torino: Claudiana, 2021).

29. Annalisa Butticci, *African Pentecostals in Catholic Europe. The Politics of Presence in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016).

30. Kevin Madigan, *The Popes against the Protestants: the Vatican and Evangelical Christianity in Fascist Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

31. Leonardo De Chirico interviewed by Ivan Mesa, “The Gospel in Italy,” 25 November 2015, TGC US edition website, www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-gospel-in-italy.

32. Eirikur Bergmann, *Neo-Nationalism. The Rise of Nativist Populism* (Cham: Springer, 2020), 1–28.

right-wing movement, won the last European elections, with 31.37 percent of voters in favour of Jordan Bardella, the RN candidate. This conservative and neo-nationalistic movement had double the share of the vote of the candidate of the president's party, Valérie Hayer.

As evangelicals do not appear to be “traditional Christians” in the Southern nations of Europe, the rise of neo-nationalism is bad news for them. From the perspective of national tradition, they may be seen as a foreign threat and be silenced. For the scattered and tiny Southern European evangelical denominations and groups, networking is all the more needed. In Spain, the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities of Spain, created in 1956, gained weight and influence since the beginning of the twenty-first century. In France, the National Council of French Evangelicals (*Conseil National des Évangéliques de France*), formally created in 2010, has to a certain extent succeeded in uniting a majority of French evangelicals and building bridges.³³ Many other Southern European countries have not yet managed to build such a representative body, although many federations and associations are slowly developing. One of the most successful networking efforts since the start of the new century in the field of media is, without doubt, the creation of *Evangelical Focus Europe*. Born in 2003 from a Spanish initiative, *Evangelical Focus* defines itself as a “news website with a Christian perspective on current issues in Europe.” Its aim is to “build bridges between evangelical churches and all of society.”³⁴ Providing a rich amount of content every day, Spanish-based *Evangelical Focus* is one of the best achievements of the networking and unifying effort undertaken by Southern European evangelicals.

Welcoming: Through Local Churches, Opening Arms to Newcomers from the Global South

As a result of their colonial history, Portugal, Spain and France share a common Southern European openness toward specific countries located in the so-called Global South. And because of its geography, Southern Europe as a whole is obviously the closest territory to be reached by migrants coming from the southside of the Mediterranean Sea. A strong flux of population and networks

33. Stéphane Lauzet, *Bâtir des ponts. Regards sur l'origine du CNEF (1995–2010)* (Charols: Excelsis, 2024).

34. “The project,” *Evangelical Focus Europe*, <https://evangelicalfocus.com/about-us>.

link African countries and their postcolonial churches³⁵ with Mediterranean Europe.³⁶ Does immigration lead to a “changing soul of Europe”?³⁷ It leads at least to “new Christian geographies”³⁸ and it poses challenges to existing Southern European churches and networks. At a global level, the European Evangelical Alliance appears to be fully aware of the challenges and undertook many initiatives, like the “Refugee Campaign.” Welcoming instead of rejecting is the main goal, addressing the politics of fear: “Together we can speak out, learn and make a difference. The Hope for Europe Refugee Campaign aims to combine Christians, churches, member- and specialist organizations to be the response to the asylum crisis in Europe.”³⁹ In many transit areas like Greece,⁴⁰ the “moving faith” of immigrants fleeing poverty, hunger and civil war represents a challenge. In the responses of local churches we see two scenarios, depending on the context: either an increased diversity in the local churches, which operate as a melting-pot or a blended family. This diversity may be observed, for example, at the *Iglèsia Internacional de Barcelona* (International Church of Barcelona), a multicultural charismatic church located in the heart of the Catalan capital. The other scenario is that of separate growth of immigrant evangelical churches, with little or no contact between them and existing Southern European congregations. This may be the case of hundreds of Nigerian evangelical churches in Italy.

Inspiring: Raising Hope in the Continent with the Lowest Birth Rate

A current challenge for Southern European evangelicals is to raise hope in the continent with the lowest birth rate. To give a striking example, the tourist image of the “Italian mama” surrounded by a dozen children does not reflect the actual Italian birthrate, which has dropped to an alarming 1.2 percent

35. Sébastien Fath and Cédric Mayrargue, “New Christianities in Africa,” *Afrique Contemporaine* 252.4 (2014): 13–26.

36. This applies also, at a slightly lesser extent, to South American countries.

37. Inger Furseth et al., *The Changing Soul of Europe: Religions and Migrations in Northern and Southern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2014).

38. Mar Griera, “New Christian Geographies: Pentecostalism and Ethnic Minorities in Barcelona,” in *Sites and Politics of Religious Diversity in Southern Europe*, ed. Ruy Blanes and José Mapril (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 225–49.

39. “We believe that hope overcomes fear,” European Evangelical Alliance, www.europe-anea.org/the-refugee-campaign.

40. Darren Carlson, *Christianity and Conversion among Migrants. Moving Faith and Faith Movement in a Transit Area* (Leiden: Brill, 2021).

in 2023.⁴¹ In that same year, the Spanish birth rate hit its lowest level (1.19 percent) since records began in 1941; it dropped almost 25 percent in the last decade.⁴² It appears that the fabric of hope has disappeared from society. Sociologically, hope is related to the capacity to believe and invest in a better future.⁴³ Instead of doom and gloom, Southern European evangelicals could be presented as “hope factories” which relocalize the Good News. But are they *tangibly* relocalizing hope? The significant growth they are experiencing in some Southern European countries (Spain, Portugal, France) may lead, at least in some cases, to a positive answer, although the reasons behind the growth are diverse and not always easy to interpret.⁴⁴ Between tradition and emotion,⁴⁵ roots and wings, nationalism and Christian internationalism, Southern European evangelicals are at the crossroads.

Conclusion in Three Words: Exit, Voice or Loyalty

In a rapidly secularizing Southern Europe, torn between the politics of fear and the multiple offers of a free spiritual market, evangelical believers are facing the classic sociological options of exit, voice and loyalty.⁴⁶ Exit? Leaving the evangelical label is an option, following many Gen Z Christians on the other side of the Atlantic. A choice for “voice” means challenging evangelical networks and churches from within, with the help of many determined evangelical women around the Mediterranean Sea⁴⁷ and a willingness to hear the

41. Giorgia Orlandi, “Italy’s falling birth rate is a crisis that’s only getting worse,” *Euronews* 10 May 2024, www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/05/10/italys-falling-birth-rate-is-a-crisis-thats-only-getting-worse.

42. “Spanish birth rate hits lowest level since records began in 1941,” Reuters, 21 February 2024, www.reuters.com/world/europe/spanish-birth-rate-hits-lowest-level-since-records-began-1941-2024-02-21.

43. Adrian Scribano, “The Sociology of Hope: Classical Sources, Structural Components, Future Agenda,” *Society* 61 (2024): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-023-00888-z>.

44. At least three interpretations are competing: evangelical growth may be mainly due to a recycling of disappointed Catholics, tired of a vertical institution too hard to reform; or it may first be related to immigration coming from less secularized countries; or it is due to the need of a very secularized youth to find meaning and a safe, close-knit community.

45. Jean-Pierre Bastian, ed., *La recomposition des protestantismes en Europe latine. Entre émotion et tradition* (Geneva: Labor & Fides, 2004).

46. Albert Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty. Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

47. Like Valérie Duval-Poujol in France (vice-president of the French Protestant Federation since 2018) or Carolina Bueno, who in 2022 became the first woman to lead the FEDERE (Evangelical Federation of Spain).

“muted voices.”⁴⁸ A choice for loyalty may either mean an obedient passivity or an unflinching and creative faithfulness to the core of the gospel, promoting bloom instead of doom.

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48. Jim Memory, “Hearing the ‘muted voices’ at Lausanne Europe 20/21,” *Vista 40, Networks, Lausanne Europe*, 30 January 2022, <https://vistajournal.online/latest-articles/lausanne-europe-2021>.

What does the evangelical movement stand for? In the twenty-first century the term has become highly contested. In August 2024, the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians met for its biennial conference in cooperation with the European Evangelical Alliance to explore evangelical identity in Europe with particular emphasis on unity in diversity. This collection of essays, and invited additional chapters, was presented by national leaders and experts from across Europe. Addressing pertinent issues for the movement in their diverse contexts, the authors develop an evangelical theology, outline the movement's history and current circumstances, and provide sociological analyses of evangelicals. This timely and important book shapes the future of evangelicalism, reminding its readers that what lies at the heart of it, no matter the location, is faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and rejoicing in the good news that it brings to humanity.

An essential read for anyone seeking to understand the rich tapestry of evangelicalism across the continent. It masterfully captures the unity and diversity within the movement, offering profound insights into its theological, cultural and missional dimensions.

Connie Duart and Jan Wessels

European Evangelical Alliance

It is not the first, and certainly will not be the last, book on the identity and mission of evangelicals in Europe, yet it has all the ingredients and information needed to refresh our interest and to challenge our views on our own form of Christianity.

Octavian D. Baban

Baptist Theological Institute of Bucharest, Romania

This is a remarkable volume. No previous study has covered the European evangelical landscape in such a far-reaching way.

Ian Randall

Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, UK

At a time when the value of an "evangelical" identity is being called into question, here is a volume that demonstrates why and how such failures of confidence should be resisted.

Nigel G. Wright

Spurgeon's College, London, UK

Terms like "evangelicalism" lose or even twist in meaning if they are not redefined in changed historical, philosophical, cultural and theological contexts. This book is a creative and theologically solid attempt to understand European evangelicalism in a changed environment.

Einike Pilli

Estonian Free Church Theological Seminary

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