

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

August 11, 2010 at 8:44pm

New evangelization needed?

by Heidi Schlumpf

NCR Today

I have to agree with English Bishop Kieran Conry, who recently questioned Pope Benedict's creation of a new evangelization council because it seems to imply that secularization--rather than the church's own failures--is at the heart of declining numbers of Catholics in Europe and elsewhere.

"My own personal opinion ? I would stress that this is a personal opinion ? is that I am not entirely convinced by this secularization argument. It suggests that the church's problems are external, in other words society has gone wrong, but the church is fine," he told the BBC on Sunday.

Evangelization, or spreading the Good News, is the whole point of the church, he said, but the church isn't doing it very well. It needs "to become a little more tolerant, accessible, welcoming, compassionate. All the things that, for many people, it is not."

The story was reported by the Catholic Herald in London.

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