

## Herbert W. Armstrong and the Gospel in German



*Herbert Armstrong had several meetings with German politician Franz Josef Strauß [UCOG Photo].*

In his autobiography, Herbert W. Armstrong writes about the true Gospel being preached in Europe beginning in 1953: "Some very tremendous leaps of progress were taken with the broadcasting program during 1953. Beginning the first Thursday in that year, which was January 1, 'The World Tomorrow' leaped to Europe. The door of the most powerful radio station on earth swung open. The same gospel Jesus Christ taught His disciples went to Europe with power for the first time in eighteen and one-half centuries ... Looking into the radio log of 'The Good News' for February, 1953, I am reminded that we did not get to start on the medium wave band, known as 208, on Radio Luxembourg at that time. That came later. We started on a long-wave band, and the time was 4:15 to 4:45 p.m., Thursdays. The lead front-page article in that February number was captioned NOW ON THE AIR—ALL OVER EUROPE!"

Mr. Armstrong was convinced that Germany will play an important role in Europe's future. In his booklet "1975 in Prophecy" he wrote: "Most Europeans are becoming distrustful of the United States ... They are thinking more and more about the coming United States of Europe ... Probably Germany will lead and dominate the coming United States of Europe."

With Europe's importance in end-time Bible prophecy and Mr. Armstrong's personal interest in the German people and their language, it was only a matter of time before the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God would be preached in the German language. In the latter half of the 1950s a small group of German expatriates living in the United States began translating

booklets into German, and in August 1960 the first German "World Tomorrow" broadcast – "Die Welt von morgen" – was broadcast over Radio Luxembourg. Erhard Klammer was the broadcaster for the program. Only one year later, in August 1961, the first issue of the German "Plain Truth" – "Die Reine Wahrheit" – was printed, making it the first foreign language edition of the "Plain Truth" magazine to be published.

The subscription list for "Die Reine Wahrheit" grew to 12,000 by 1968. In that year Mr. Armstrong approved a large-scale advertising campaign in prominent German magazines, including "Das Beste" ["Reader's Digest"]. The subscription list quickly jumped to over 70,000. The quality of the "Die Reine Wahrheit" improved gradually, as was the case with its parent magazine, by making a transition over several years from plain paper to glossy stock paper and finally from two-tone to four color. The German-language editorial department, with generous financial assistance from Pasadena, produced many of the booklets that were available in English.

Mr. Armstrong visited the Worldwide Church of God office several times, first in Düsseldorf and later in Bonn. He spoke to German-language brethren from Europe at several combined services in the 1980s. At one of those combined services, Mr. Armstrong started off his sermon by saying "Ich hab' mein Deutsch alles vergessen" ["I have forgotten all my German"] and by quoting from the "Loreley", a poem by German author Heinrich Heine describing mystical maidens who lure ships onto the rocks at the narrowest point in Germany's Rhine river. Mr. Armstrong told the congregation that he had learned German in his school days, but had forgotten most of it from lack of use.

**United Christian Outreach Germany (UCOG)** supports the efforts of the **Gute Nachrichten** magazine, which has been published without interruption since January 1997. "Gute Nachrichten" continues the work begun by Mr. Armstrong of preaching the true gospel of the kingdom of God in the German language.

- Paul Kieffer, President, **UCOG**