**Europe and Our Prophetic Message**

The Good News, Oct-Nov 1979 (vol 26 no 9)

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Do we in the Church of God really grasp how swiftly and dramatically the many prophecies Mr. Armstrong has taught for several decades are now being fulfilled? Many highly significant trends and developments have begun to radically alter the lives and attitudes of millions of Europeans, drawing them inevitably closer to becoming the beast power described in Revelation 17 and 18. We must not be lax in "discerning the signs of the times" (Matt. 16:3).

   In the past few years, many of God's people have begun to drift away from a clear understanding of prophecy and its implications for our time. Very clear Bible truths concerning major upheavals in the Middle East, centering around Jerusalem, coupled with the emergence of a formidable superpower in Europe, have been taught faithfully by Herbert W. Armstrong and this Church for well over 40 years, and they are coming to pass.
   The Europe I first saw in 1961 is totally different from the Europe I lived in with my family last year. The speed with which certain prophesied realities have come together in a few short years is positively breathtaking! Never have the nations of Europe been closer to fulfilling the prophecies that speak of an economic, spiritual and political union than they are today!
   One of the chief signs of the times is the coming fusion of the European Community into the revived Roman Empire predicted by Daniel and the book of Revelation. We'll leave the exact time element up to God, but Scripture does tell us much about the ultimate outcome and the events and trends leading up to it.

**New European prosperity**

   In the past several years, I have noticed several basic factors contributing to the evolvement of this prophesied federation. The first trend we'll analyze is the unbelievable new prosperity in Europe. However, it has also resulted in negative side effects, such as debt, inflation, the development of the "get" mentality and alienation of the young.
   Until only recently, many Europeans would wag their fingers rather disdainfully at Americans and say: "You Americans just think about things — big cars, fancy houses in the suburbs, clothes, raw materialism. Here in Europe, we may be poorer than you, but we place our emphasis on higher values, on culture, not on materialism as you do." Brethren, that mentality is fast disappearing.
   Millions of Europeans have tasted the sweet fruit of prosperity in the last few years, and they have decided they like what they've found. Things are fast becoming just as important to them as they are to us.
   And though we can expect temporary setbacks in their economy and growth potential because of inflation, the energy crisis and other factors, the overall trend is ever onward. They are destined to become more and more productive until some day, not only will they have become far more prosperous than the United States, they will be the economic giant of the whole world! In 1979 they are visibly on their way.
   In their mind's eye, many North Americans still picture the average European housewife doing her weekly shopping in a quaint open market, carefully placing her prized possessions in a wicker basket, which she dangles from her arm while she rides slowly home on her bicycle. While it is true that. in some of the smaller communities in Europe that scene can still be found, it is becoming less and less commonplace.
   In the suburbs of Brussels, Belgium, where we lived last year, most housewives drove to the supermarket once or twice a week in their family car. After pushing their basket (the kind with four wheels) up and down the aisles, piling up the groceries and listening to the ever-present recorded music, they checked out at the cash register and stacked their purchases in the trunks of their cars, just as Americans do.
   The finest, most impressive indoor shopping malls that I have ever seen a•re in France, Belgium and Holland. Suburban "bedroom" communities, replete with neighborhood swimming pools, tennis courts and other frills are springing up around many large European cities, and the housing industry is booming. Many younger Europeans are no longer happy to spend their lives in antiquated, cramped apartments in the core of the city.
   Many want a home in the suburbs with a couple of bathrooms, a private garage, modern plumbing and a yard for the children to play in. And they will often pay twice or even three times as much as Americans would to purchase such a home. Everyone seems to be up to his neck in debt, a sharp contrast with the Europe of 20 years ago, when it was socially unacceptable to have debts of any kind.
   In 1967, when I first began to preach to our congregations in France, telling them that their nation (in union with the rest of Europe) would someday bypass the United States in economic clout, some brethren scoffed. One European member said to me, "If I hadn't seen it in the Bible and read it in our literature, I could not believe it."
   Of course, in 1967 Europe was still struggling with a much weaker economy. In 1979, however, our European brethren no longer have to strain their minds to envision what prophecy says their part of the world is to someday become. In just a few years, they have made dramatic economic gains, and the upward trend continues.

**A prophetic description**

   In Revelation 18, we are given a graphic description of Europe at its future economic peak. Remember this prophecy occurs after the United States, Canada and other Israelitish nations have been conquered and brought into subservience. Europe is still growing, burgeoning. Suddenly, the time comes for God's intervention:
   "After these things I saw another angel come down from heaven having great power... and He cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the Great [describing Europe religiously and politically as it evolves over the years] is fallen."
   In verse 3, some of the reasons are given for her demise: "For all nations [no exceptions] have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication and the kings of the earth have committed fornication [spiritually], and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies [goods, exports, manufactured commodities]."
   Then, verse 9, notice again the heavy emphasis on economic power, "And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication with her and lived deliciously [lavishly] with her shall bewail her, when they see the smoke of her burning."
   In verse 11, Europe's coming economic wealth and scope is described as John sees it, shortly before the final crisis (to occur at Christ's coming) takes place.
   "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood and all manner vessels or ivory and all manner vessels of most precious wood...
   "And cinnamon and odours and ointments and frankincense and wine and oil and fine flour and wheat and beasts and sheep and horses and chariots and slaves and souls [remember, this pictures a time after the fall of the United States and other Israelitish nations], and the fruits that thy soul lusted after. are departed from thee... for in one hour is so great riches [the future wealth of Europe] come to nought.
   "And every shipmaster and all the company in ships [the import-export people, the leaders of world trade and commerce] and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city... Alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness" (Rev. 18:1-19).

*Momentous events in the final years of this age will create a revival of traditional, conservative religion, accompanied by strong leadership whose goal will be to, recreate past European subservience to one great "mother church." It will be successful. The present economic union — though it does' and will have some political overtones — will not be galvanized into full, complete and aggressive political union until religious revival of an apostate variety has reached a point of frenzy across Europe.*

   It is clear that an economic giant is being described. The future United States of Europe is destined to become the major trading block on earth, and, in context, it is clear that those who refuse to become tributary to her economic and religious system will be reduced to poverty, unable to buy and sell. Thus, her present economic strength can be expected to continue,

**New cooperative spirit**

   A second factor leading to the creation of a European superpower is the fast-developing new feeling of oneness, solidarity and pan-European unity, based on these new economic gains Europeans now wish to maintain. This new willingness by Europeans to cooperate (to some degree) and to work together for the common good flies in the face of their basic tendencies (usually nationalistic and hostile to most concepts of union) over the past several hundred years.
   This new spirit of cooperation has materialism as a bottom line, With time, prophecy tells us that economic union will give rise to spiritual union (directed by a mother church) and then will come final complete political and military union.
   However, now the drive for unity has an essentially economic base. Europeans realize that fiscal unity and economic stability (perpetuating the new materialism they all basically want) depends upon a certain concerting of efforts. They are therefore willing to set aside their age-old antagonisms and pull together for the sake of the pocketbook,
   Beginning with the Reformation, Europe had gone through a period of nationalistic emphasis, with antagonisms heightened by colonial expansion, creating jealousies among themselves, the rivalries often escalating into war. Bitter national envy and open hatred among Europeans carried over into the 20th century and had a real share in precipitating World War I and II. This was especially true of Germany and France (War of 1870, World War I and II).
   When I first went to Europe in the middle 1960s, I preached on European unity in my sermons, because it was in the Bible, and I knew it had to occur. At that specific time, though, it still sounded totally unrealistic from a carnal poil1t of view, Europeans were still terribly divided and suspicious of one another.
   Of course, we did understand that there would be a religious factor involved, and the final emotional frenzy, leading up to the complete political union, would be induced by the working of Satan and the "lying miracles" of a great false prophet (Rev, 13, II Thess. 2:1-10).
   It took a few more years for the economic element to become another obvious contributing factor, specifically in this initial stage of unity. Now for the first time in many hundreds of years, most Europeans do have a common denominator that transcends their linguistic, cultural and character differences. Consequently, they are willing to set aside their antagonisms and hang together to maintain (through economic union and cooperation) a new, consumer-oriented life-style.
   After centuries of enmity, galling pain and distrust of Europeans by other Europeans, this is nothing short of a miracle! As late as 1960, such a possibility would have been scoffed at. Now the groundwork has been laid, and Europe is moving swiftly toward the other stages of unity (religious and political) described by Daniel and John in Revelation.

**A fragile union**

   Of necessity this European union will never be a natural federation. Their inherent differences will weaken the fiber of unity. Even those leaders who are now furiously trying to push a United States of Europe realize that their arguments, based on economic realities, create at best a superficial tie. Daniel described this fragile union clearly:
   "And the fourth kingdom [the revived Roman Empire] shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things... shall it break in pieces and bruise [dominate other nations, to begin with economically, then spiritually and politically].
   "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and part of iron [does this refer to character and cultural differences?], the kingdom shall/become] be divided [not really united, indicating a fragile union] ... and whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay [different areas of Europe coming together], they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men, but they shall not cleave to one another" (Dan. 2:40-44).
   The union described is both strong and fragile. Economic survival and growth has forged the Europeans into an impressive new entity, but their national rivalries and the memories of their many wars will never permit "cleaving together" in the totally cohesive way that could lead to long-term political union.

**Religious factor necessary**

   This is why the Bible explains there must also be a religious factor that will provide a spiritual impetus toward full political union. In Revelation 17, John describes a "great whore" (i.e., a large, powerful false church, headquartered in Europe) who sits upon (dominates) the beast (the revived Europe).
   We are told that 10 kings (European leaders) are to be given "power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind [not now the case], and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb [Christ at His return], and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of Lord and King of Kings" (Rev. 17:12-14).
   Verse 17 is also significant: "For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom [political authority] unto the Beast [a pan-European leader], until the words of God shall be fulfilled." This indicates the complete political unification of Europe will be fairly short-lived.
   Momentous events in the final years of this age will create a revival of traditional, conservative religion, accompanied by strong leadership whose goal will be to recreate past European subservience to one great "mother church." It will be successful. The present economic union — though it does and will have some political overtones — will not be galvanized into full, complete and aggressive political union until religious revival of an apostate variety has reached a point of frenzy across Europe.
   The seeds of such a revival have been sown. The spiritual hunger of millions of Europeans is evident, and their vulnerability to strong, charismatic, traditional leadership is clear. Thus, stage two — apostate religious revival — could begin soon.
   Dramatic events are transforming the face of Europe and the entire world. Rejoice that God's Church has given us insight into the future and hope to sustain us in these end times.