

BERLIN – Europe’s Future Political Capital?

*British correspondent Gerhard Marx visited
the German capital in mid June.*

Here is his timely historical and prophetic analysis.

A visit to Berlin, which has now been politically united for 15 years, is very revealing in its contrast with the formerly divided city. Many of the old and dilapidated buildings have disappeared from the East Berlin landscape and have been replaced by attractive new buildings, often rebuilt in the original pre-World War II architectural style.

My personal experience with Germany’s capital began in late 1944 when, as a young child aged seven, I was returning with my

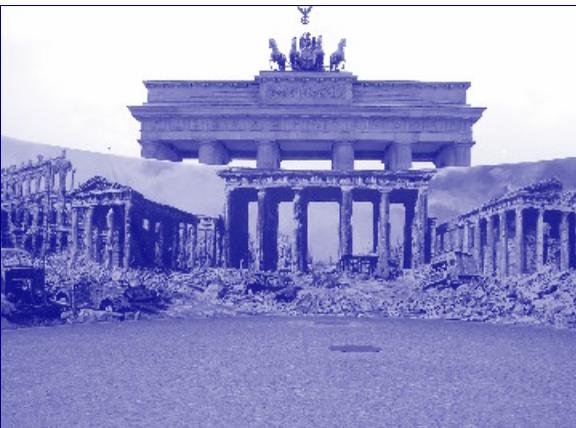
brother and sister to our parents. We had earlier been evacuated to the Eastern part of the Reich, and now we and the group we were with were desperate to keep ahead of the Russian troops heading for Berlin. The train from East Prussia to Westphalia took us through Berlin, which had already been thoroughly devastated by Allied action.

As our train meandered slowly through the vast expanse of rubble, I saw a man holding a brick in his hand, as if to say, this is all that is left of Germany’s once-glorious capital. Surrounded by all the utter devastation, he, as well as millions of other Europeans equally devastated by war, had to start all over again – to rebuild, to begin afresh amidst acute political and social instability. This scene is vividly impressed on my mind to this day.

A sad chapter in history

That is the sad experience of man’s rule, declaring war on other nations and then paying the dire consequences – the tragic story of Europe and of the world in general. The biblical prophet Jeremiah was inspired to write over 2500 years ago, ‘O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps’ (Jeremiah 10:23). How tragically accurate a prophecy of the inability of man to rule justly without guidance from a Higher Source.

Now travelling to Berlin again from the East some 60 years later, my wife Diana and I took the train from Dresden through the eastern part of Germany (the misnamed former German Democratic Republic). As we had previously travelled into East Germany during the moribund days of the Cold War period, it was interesting now to notice the extensive construction and the renovation of buildings taking place in all of Berlin, but more noticeably in the eastern part.



The Brandenburg Gate
with images of WWII damage superimposed.

Although many buildings are unfinished on account of Germany's high rate of inflation (presently at 10.5 percent), the building programme continues.

Of special interest was the recently renovated *Reichstag*, the German Parliament building, which was heavily damaged during the war but still remained standing. With the addition of Sir Norman Foster's glass dome, it looks impressive, with long queues lining up to view the building.

The vast space to the southwest of the Brandenburg Gate, on the former border between East and West, is being used to construct buildings for foreign embassies as well as housing the impressive offices of the German chancellor and president. A few hundred yards away, construction of Berlin's new main train station is in full swing. It will be a colossal building which will connect directly to Parliament and *The Reichstag* as well as providing quick access to foreign embassies.

It might be that at some time in the future the

historic city of Berlin will become the de facto capital city of Europe, at least in terms of political influence. It is highly conceivable that in the future Germany may assume the political leadership of Europe, with religious leadership in Rome and possibly many bureaucratic functions in Brussels.

Another revival of the Roman Empire

The biblical book of Daniel speaks of four great ruling empires, the last of which can be identified as the Roman Empire. Then in the book of Revelation we see that the

last revival in the end time will bring a government that does not recognise the power and authority of Almighty God. It will meet the same fate as King Nebuchadnezzar for initially failing to recognise that God rules supreme. Notice first the king's words: 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honour of my majesty?' (Daniel 4:30). This arrogant statement resulted in Nebuchadnezzar's downfall.

Likewise, in preparing a new Constitution where the name of God isn't even mentioned, the governments of the EU are openly declaring that they feel they have no need of God. Prophecy shows us that God sets the destiny of nations according to His will and often works behind the scenes in bringing about His purpose. This is equally true with the last revival of despotic human rule (Revelation 17:17), that 'fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong' (Daniel 7:7).

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The recently renovated *Reichstag* – German Parliament building.



The River Elbe near Dresden, which city the author also visited.



The giant new Berlin railway station under construction. (All photos by the author.)

‘Of His Kingdom There Will Be No End’

Some human kingdoms have proven long lasting, others transitory. What characteristics predispose some kingdoms to last and others to fail – and why will God’s Kingdom last forever?

Some long-gone kingdoms are looked back on fondly, while some present day regimes the world could well do without!

Why kingdoms fail

An article called ‘Collapse’, from the Annenberg/CPB web site, states: ‘The history of humankind has been marked by patterns of growth and decline. Some declines have been gradual, occurring over centuries. Others have been rapid, occurring over the course of a few years.’

It goes on to list ‘factors which alone or in combination have brought about the collapse of civilisations’. These include war, drought, natural disasters, inappropriate irrigation techniques, disease, overpopulation, economic disruption, political struggles and over-farming.

In higher education, this subject is studied in detail to see what lessons can be learned. Other studies look at present-day governments and societies and try to assess the likelihood of their collapse through the lessons of history. (Please continue this theme by reading the sidebar at right.)

Prophecies of God’s Kingdom

In Christian tradition, the message brought from God by

the angel Gabriel to a young woman named Mary concerning the birth of Jesus Christ is often called the Annunciation. That announcement in Luke 1:31-33 included seven marvellous promises from God the Father Himself.

These summarised the majesty of His plans for mankind and the centrality of His Son, Jesus Christ, of whom Luke records, ‘Of His kingdom there will be no end’ (verse 33). This statement is

unconditional and definite.

Other parts of God’s Word also confirm that God’s Kingdom will be without end. Isaiah 2:2 states, ‘The mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills.’ The word ‘mountain’ in this context is being used to represent a kingdom or government.

The prophet Micah continues with this theme of a mountain and adds that at that time the nations

What a Successful Society Must Do

Scientists have identified the following conditions that must be present for a society to continue.

- Every society must be able to answer the basic biological needs of its members: food, drink, shelter, and medical care.
- Every society must provide for the production and distribution of goods and services.
- Every society must provide for the reproduction of new members and consider laws and issues related to reproduction.

- Every society must provide for the training (education, apprenticeship, passing on of values) of an individual so that he or she can become a functioning adult in the society.
- Every society must provide for the maintenance of internal and external order (laws, courts, police, wars, diplomacy).
- Every society must provide meaning and motivation to its members. ‘No activity in society is possible unless people are motivated to participate, can relate to other members of that society and follow the rules.’

will be at peace with one another. 'Everyone shall sit in safety, unafraid. And God's people will walk in the name of the LORD their God, forever and ever' (Micah 4:4-5).

This Kingdom will of course be from God, which will be the main reason it will last forever. In this, it will be unique.

Luke's Gospel

In the opening verses, Luke tells us clearly why he wrote his Gospel. He wrote an *orderly* account, that we might know the *certainty* of what we believe (Luke 1:1-4).

Luke gives us some pointers as to why there shall be no end to the Kingdom of God. Christ's coming to earth in human form brought glory to God, and will ultimately bring peace on earth towards men of goodwill (Luke 2:13-14). It will be a Kingdom of peace and goodwill.

Shortly after Christ's birth, Simeon saw Him when His parents brought Him to the temple. Simeon knew that He would be a light to bring revelation to the gentiles and glory to God's people Israel. The

enmity between the two would disappear (Luke 2:25-26, 32). A divided kingdom, Israel and gentile, would never stand.

When tempted by the devil, Christ knew that the temporary kingdoms Satan offered were a poor choice (Luke 4:5-6). These worldly kingdoms of men were not the proper model for the everlasting Kingdom of God.

Another reason the Kingdom will last is because most people will then be motivated by humility, not vanity or pride (Luke 6:20). No one need be dissatisfied with their nation's government, so there will be no reason for internal opposition (Luke 9:26).

The Kingdom of God will value all its citizens, bringing physical healing and spiritual education to those human beings who voluntarily submit (Luke 7:22). Its King, Jesus Christ, comes to save people, not destroy them (Luke 9:56). It will be the Father's pleasure to give the Kingdom to His people, as it is now (Luke 12:31-32).

Luke records that the Pharisees

wanted to be able to measure the Kingdom of God and to know its timing (Luke 17:20-21). But to measure the Kingdom would be to limit it, and it will be without limit. The Kingdom of God will be a limitless spiritual reality.

Further references

Daniel, when explaining King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, prophesied that God's Kingdom would not be destroyed by any enemy, internal decay or natural disaster. God's Kingdom would not be left to others. God will be its active leader forever (Daniel 2:44).

Daniel saw more of this Kingdom in a vision recorded in the seventh chapter. He writes that the dominion given to 'One like the Son of Man' by the Ancient of Days is an *everlasting* dominion – it won't pass away. It will never be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14).

A key Old Testament passage

Perhaps the most famous passage on the subject is Isaiah 9:6-7. This section of Scripture, which was directed primarily towards Judah (see Isaiah 1:1), confirms Jacob's prophecy concerning his son Judah that the sceptre – a symbol of kingship or government – shall not depart from Judah (Genesis 49:10) and that it is from Judah that the prophesied *Deliverer* would come. There will be no end of the increase of His government and peace.

What is 'government' in this context? Why would more of it be a good thing?

- It is the government of God Himself, upon the shoulders of His Son, Jesus Christ, reigning on the throne of David over God's Kingdom.

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Characteristics of God's Kingdom

How will the conditions for a society to continue (given in the sidebar on page three) be manifested in God's Kingdom?

- God Himself will have answered the basic biological needs of every member: food, drink, shelter, and health care.
- God Himself will have created a society that will provide for the production and distribution of goods and services, effectively and with fairness.
- God Himself will have provided for the addition of new

members to His family.

- God Himself will have provided for the training (education, apprenticeship, passing on of values) of every individual so that he or she can become a functioning part of the society of His Kingdom.
- God Himself will have provided for the maintenance of internal and external order.
- God Himself will have provided meaning and motivation to the members of His Kingdom.

Who Are We and Who Could We Be?

'The contemporary British have discovered they don't know who they are, and so they keep asking the question.' – Brian Appleyard

People feel British, and yet the very concept is intrinsically difficult to define and express. As noted author and journalist Brian Appleyard put it: 'There is some grain, some texture, some flavour in our lives that is distinctively British and that cannot be reduced to economics, politics or any other macrocategory. I feel British even when I don't want to, but what is it exactly that I feel?' (*The Sunday Times*, 19 June).

These words are being written outdoors at an open garden in Bushey, Hertfordshire (north of London). One feels very comfortable with about 50 people milling about. To me, this form of opening private gardens to visitors on a couple of days in the year seems a uniquely British experience.

Anxious to address the question

But where do our peoples come from? Who are they and how do the various ethnic groups make Britain what it is today? So anxious are we as a people to address these and related questions that a number of books and magazine articles attempt answers from time to time. One of the latest books about the subject is titled *The Tribes of Britain* by David Miles, a compendious

historical and archaeological study of our island story.

The United Church of God and other Sabbatarian groups have also looked into this question from a biblical and historical standpoint. Our contribution is called *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*, and it addresses the question of Britain's historic identity in great detail. The Anglo-Saxon peoples are identified in its pages as descendants of the two sons of the biblical patriarch

But who are these special people? Who is the Israel of God? The New Testament apostles define who composes the Church.

Joseph, himself one of the sons of Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. To obtain the whole fascinating story, please request your free copy of this substantial full-colour, fully illustrated publication.

This understanding has great implications and imposes many duties and responsibilities upon our peoples. Ancient Israel constituted the first nation to experience God's efforts to deal with a wayward mankind (see Jeremiah 2:3). He said through Hosea, one of the 12 Minor Prophets, 'You only have I

known of all the peoples of the world' (paraphrased).

The Pentateuch assigns great importance to the historic role of Israel in the world. God instructed Moses to tell the children of Israel that if they would obey Him they would be 'a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exodus 19:5-6, emphasis added throughout). Israel was further told that their nation was to be an example to other nations and peoples by their righteous behaviour (Deuteronomy 4:5-9).

Ancient Israel was the Old Testament 'church in the wilderness' (Acts 7:37-38). Today the New Testament Church is called 'the Israel of God' (Galatians 6:16).

Who we could be

Who we were and who we are is nowhere near as important as who we *could* be. The Bible shows how dear the Church, the Israel of God, is to our Creator. The apostle Peter tells the Church: 'As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby . . . Coming to Him [Christ] as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, *you also as living stones,*

are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ' (1 Peter 2:2-5).

Undoubtedly with Exodus 19 fully in mind, this apostle goes on to describe the Church in generous terms: 'But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people, but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy' (verses 9-10).

But who are these special people? Who is the Israel of God? The New Testament apostles define who composes the Church.

We begin with Peter's testimony in regard to the gentiles: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever hears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him' (Acts 10:34-35).

The apostle Paul picks up the baton and depicts the composition of the Church in more detail: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ' (Galatians 3:28).

All the distinctions that are humanly so important to us pale into insignificance compared to our magnificent calling. The true Israel of God transcends all national and ethnic differences as well as distinctions in economic and social status. Paul further told the brethren at Colosse: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all' (Colossians 3:11).

Paul also strongly affirmed that the Church was built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). It is being fitted together by God as a holy temple in the Lord (verse 21).

The testimony of John

The 24 elders (exalted angelic beings) sang a new song about the essential role of Jesus Christ. 'For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God, and we shall reign on earth' (Revelation 5:9-10).

So the apostle John, who penned the book of Revelation, delivers the same basic witness as Peter and Paul. Putting the apostolic testimony together from these three apostles, no one can be excluded from membership in the Church on the basis of differences in colour, nationality, ethnic group, gender, or economic and social status.

We should, nonetheless, understand that God is *not* calling everyone today. It is 'as many as the Lord our God shall call' (Acts 2:39). None can come to the Son unless the Spirit of the Father draws him or her (John 6:44, 65).

Since you are actively reading *The Good News* and this Supplement, we have good reason to believe that God may be calling you into membership of His Church. This is a subject that merits serious study on your part. In the long run, nothing else is as important (Matthew 6:33).

Much more understanding on this topic may be obtained by requesting our free booklets *The Road to Eternal Life* and *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*.

John Ross Schroeder

God's Kingdom

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- Its king is a *Wonderful Counsellor* – a description of the Messiah as a great King who plans and carries out a programme of action that will cause the entire world to marvel.

- Its King is a *Mighty God* – who will exercise His divine power as a warrior.

- Its King is an *Everlasting Father* – He will act as an ever-present and compassionate provider and protector.

- Its King is a *Prince of Peace* – whose wise and benevolent rule will bring healing and wholeness to individuals and to society.

This is the character of the One who will be King – Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Saviour and Redeemer. This Kingdom will be ordered and established on *judgement and justice* – for all, without the favour or special interests or political manipulation so common in today's world. This is why more of this government will be a good thing! (Further understanding is available in our free booklet *The Gospel of the Kingdom*.)

This is the reality of the everlasting Kingdom of God. This is indeed *good news* for this Earth.

The God of whose Kingdom there will be no end has put eternity into the hearts and minds of His people, so that each of us can be motivated throughout our lives by the vision of that 'Great Mountain' that is His Kingdom (Ecclesiastes 3:11). In verse 14, we read the majestic and encouraging words, 'Whatever God does, it shall be forever'. God's Kingdom will last and will increase – forever – because God will accomplish it.

David Fenney



View of the Berliner Dom, a Protestant cathedral which is the resting place of Prussian nobility.



Riverside view near the Reichstag in former East Berlin.

Berlin: Europe's Future Capital?

(Continued from page 2)

Revelation 17:8-18 mentions seven resurrections or revivals of this end-time empire. Six are behind us and all the indications are that the creation of a United Europe without the acknowledgement of God is prophesied to ultimately turn into a powerful bloc led by the 'Beast' of Revelation, which constitutes the last resurrection of the fourth beast in Daniel 7:15-27 and 2:37-45.

A sure prophecy

The present European Union is experiencing political difficulties and a degree of disunity and divisiveness among its leading member states. But any talk of

the EU completely falling apart is unwarranted as far as Bible prophecy is concerned. Of course the EU will face difficulties on the way to becoming a greater European superpower. Some members might even opt out of the European Union.

But at the end of the day, the Bible prophesies that a European superstate will become a reality, but only for the briefest of time (Revelation 17:12). Member states will relinquish their own sovereignty in order to be part of this end-time European power. 'These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast' (verse 13).

For more than half a century, God's Church has proclaimed the certainty of a United States of Europe. Half a century ago no one else proclaimed that prophecy

on a worldwide scale. Today many journalists are able to see it developing.

But God's Church with its revealed knowledge of Bible prophecy was there first, and we shall continue to highlight that all-too-often neglected part of the message of Jesus Christ. Please continue to watch for articles in our publications which will give you a clearer understanding of these prophecies. These events will herald the return of Jesus Christ.

Gerhard Marx

Recommended Reading

To further understand the significance of this prophetic picture in Central Europe, please request the following free booklets: *How to Understand Bible Prophecy*, *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* and *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*

How our literature is funded

The United Church of God *British Isles* is registered as a charity in England and Wales (number 1079192). The publication of this Supplement and other literature is funded by the generosity of members of the Church, coworkers and our readers. Following Jesus Christ's instruction (Matthew 10:8), it is supplied free of charge so that His message can be made available to all. We are grateful to those who assist financially in the work done by *The Good News*.

Donations may be sent to: *The United Church of God, PO Box 705, WATFORD WD19 6FZ.*



Letters from Our Readers

The Church Jesus Built

Just recently I was given one of your booklets entitled *The Church Jesus Built*. I think it is wonderful and I felt I was really receiving spiritual food. I know that the Church Jesus founded would be alive somewhere in the world. Now after reading your booklet I feel I have found it again.

Mrs J D, Wirral

Who Is God?

Thank you very much for the publications I received last Monday. I can only reiterate my appreciation for the enormous work these publications have involved. They give me a sound approach on how the Bible explains the world as it seems to unfold in front of us today. The booklet *Who Is God?* is a jewel.

E G, Hayes, Middlesex

The Good News

I have found your magazine most enlightening and helpful in this time of growing worldwide malaise. Christ is our only hope!

B V H, Sweden

I find your magazines very informative and very interesting. I show them to a workmate who is an evolutionist.

K B, Newton Aycliffe

Your booklets and magazines make very interesting reading. I always read them from cover to cover whenever the postman brings them. I am also encouraging others to read them by asking my friends to subscribe to *The Good News*.

D O, Thornton Heath, Surrey

Please continue sending me *The Good News*. It is a good read giving knowledge of God plus belief and faith. What a great gift!

Mrs A M R, Dublin

It has been really wonderful reading all the different articles about what God has planned for us all. Thank you and God bless you.

Mr A D, Eastleigh

Real life examples

I appreciate the wide perspective on global concerns that you bring into my home. I would also like to see more real life examples of being a parent to young adults in this often mixed-up world. Career choice is such a minefield. Church life and friends are so important.

Mrs V S, Londonderry

• *Our free booklets Making Life Work, and Successful Parenting may be helpful in this regard.*

The only time of salvation?

I really enjoy receiving my copies of *The Good News*. I feel that you are bang on target about the moral issues of today and how our world is shaping up. However, I don't share all your theological ideas such as the belief you hold that most will be saved. My personal belief and understanding of the Bible is that few will find the way. Yet it is my firm belief that you are doing an excellent work in bringing the message of salvation to many.

*Mrs M S R, Holywood
Northern Ireland*

• *We are glad you are benefiting from the magazine. The Bible plainly says that, 'All Israel shall be saved' (Romans 11:26) and that Christ's sacrifice would draw all peoples to Himself (John 12:32). Also it is not the Father's will that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). Certainly it is true that few find the way in this present age of man, but this is not the only day of salvation. It is true that those who are truly converted now and then fall away will not have a second chance, but those billions of people whose minds were never really opened will be given their first chance to know God as He really is. To understand the vital details, please request our free booklets God's Holy Day Plan and What Happens After Death?*

Bible Study Course

Thank you for sending me the Bible Course. I really enjoyed studying it and learning more about God's Word. I found the course so far interesting and encouraging. It has helped me to think more about my life and feed on God's Word at a pace which I find not only enjoyable but digestible.

A W, Lisburn

Small donation

I am very pleased to send a small donation. Hopefully I shall soon be able to send a donation on a more regular basis. Many thanks to you and all the members of the Church for sending me *The Good News* magazines and the booklets. The work of the United Church of God is doing extremely well.

Mrs A C, Carlisle