



"If we will not be governed by God, then we must be governed by tyrants."

—William Penn

**15-Apr-05**

## **Whither the EU?**

For decades, we have been watching and waiting for Europe to unite under a fierce dictator to form the last revival of the Holy Roman Empire. We have watched the European Union (EU) closely, waiting for an imposing military figure to arise and be worshipped. The sounds coming out of the EU of late, though, have been less like a piercing trumpet blast and more like a toy bugle.

For a couple of years now, various media sources and analysts have been discussing how the EU seems to be languishing—or treading water, at best—while the U.S. continues to surge ahead (see *The Beast and Babylon (Part One)*, *(Part Two)*, *A Growing Divide*, *Europe: Ripe for Change*, *Ich Bin Heide*, *Franco-German Divergence*, *WorldWatch November 2003*, January 2004). This is not to suggest that either of these trends will continue indefinitely; America certainly has much to answer to [God](#) for. But a number of recent events beg the question of how viable the European Union really is.

Columnist Mark Steyn, in *The Strange Death of the Liberal West* (*The Telegraph*, March 22, 2005), puts it this way:

Almost every issue facing the EU—from immigration rates to crippling state pension liabilities—has at its heart the same glaringly plain root cause: a huge lack of babies. . . . [H]uman inventiveness depends on humans—and that's the one thing we really are running out of. When it comes to forecasting the future, the birth rate is the nearest thing to hard numbers. If only a million babies are born in 2005, it's hard to have two million adults enter the workforce in 2025 (or 2033, or 2041, or whenever they get around to finishing their Anger Management, Systemic Racism and Gay Studies degrees). If that's not a political issue, what is? To cite only the most obviously affected corner of the realm, what's the long-term future of the Scottish National Party if there are no Scottish nationals? . . . The hyper-rationalism of post-Christian Europe turns out to be wholly irrational: what's the point of creating a secular utopia if it's only for one generation?

According to a report by the New Frontiers Foundation, Steyn is not merely being witty. Fertility rates in America, India, and China suggest that these populations will grow significantly over the next fifty years. Yet, Europe's population, on its current trajectory, will decline by almost 10%. The working-age population of the Eurozone will have fallen from 203 million to around 160 million. Assuming that the same proportion of the population will be working (62%), this implies a fall in the workforce from 127 million to roughly 100 million. The Eurozone will essentially lose 27 million workers while simultaneously gaining 35-40 million retirees, looking for a government pension that the government may not be able to pay. This is a large part of the reason the governments of the EU favor very loose immigration policies—to help pay into the public coffers. But unchecked immigration has brought on its own crisis (see [Immigration and the Kingdom of God](#)).

Even as the demographics of the EU paint a gloomy picture, the very bedrock of the Union—the EU Constitution—is literally still up for debate. On May 29, 2005, France is scheduled to vote in a referendum on whether to accept the EU Constitution. Five recent opinion polls show that a slim majority of French citizens are planning to vote *against* it. Within the past

few days, French President Jacques Chirac has been trying to throw his weight behind it by publicly campaigning for the *Yes* vote. For it to be accepted, *all* 25 EU members must accept it (via a public vote). If France, one of the strongest supporters of the EU, cannot get its citizens to accept it, it will be scrapped.

Even if a reversal happens, and the *Yes* camp ends up with a majority, what does it mean for the future of an institution when half of the citizens in its leading nation are opposed to it? Given that there is this much opposition in France, what is the likelihood that the other nations will be able to attain a majority vote? Daniel Keohane of the Centre for European Reform summarized it best: "If France votes no, the constitution is dead, and this poll is not good. The momentum is on the No side. It's going to be difficult to regain, and it's worrying."

On the economic front, things are not faring much better. The EU recently agreed to weaken the fiscal rules that underpin the euro, allowing France and Germany in particular to take on more debt without being penalized. While this may help some countries in the short term, the larger issue is that this move demonstrates to the financial world that the EU is not willing to abide by its own rules when it would benefit the more influential nations in the Union. The result is that the euro is seen as slightly less reliable.

In addition, in the first week of April, the European Commission slashed the economic growth forecasts for 2005 from a slow 2% down to a weak 1.6%. This is on top of the low-to-no growth of the past few years.

These factors, taken along with a German unemployment rate unrivalled since the lead-up to World War II, as well as the popular unrest resulting from the myriad immigration issues—particularly the utter failure to integrate Muslim immigrants into a "Christian"/secular culture—make it easy to see why some commentators and analysts are already referring to "post-EU Europe."

None of this is to say that the Beast of Revelation 13 and 17 will *not* arise out of the continent of Europe. However, as with the Axial Period of the

sixth century <sup>BC</sup>, new powers often arise only when the current ones fall. It seems highly probable that, *if* the Beast is to come out of Europe, he will not come from the European Union—but rather from its dust and ashes.

- David C. Grabbe

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## **From the Archives: Featured Sermon**

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by John W. Ritenbaugh

Like our forebears, we can lose our salvation if we live a life of divided loyalty even though we have mechanically and physically gone through the ordinances. Like the Old Testament examples, the Corinthians also developed a careless presumption (having its roots in pride), allowing themselves to be drawn to lust, fornication, tempting God, and murmuring. We need to soberly reflect on these examples, finding parallels in our own lives.

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by Staff

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