

The New Roman Empire: European Envisionings and American Premillennialists

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A unified Europe – the economic and political powerhouse of the world – looms just over the horizon. All that is lacking is a strong personality to galvanise and unify the various factions on the continent. And that person is coming!

Charles Dyer, *World News and Bible Prophecy* (1993, 206)

The subject of Europe, its history, politics, and integration, is an important area of study across a range of academic disciplines and professional spheres. Theorists and policy-makers alike have made European developments, particularly the elements of union, a key area of inquiry. This article seeks to explore a somewhat neglected field of analysis – the influence of religion in shaping understandings of Europe. In contrast to much work on Europe, my focus here is on the European perspective of a particular group of outsiders: conservative, premillennial Protestants in the United States.

Conservative, premillennial Protestants,¹ particularly in the United States, have long been fascinated by Europe. Theologically, premillennial belief is based primarily upon interpretations of the Revelation of John – the last book of the New Testament.² The Revelation is seen to mandate that the Roman Empire will revive, that it will likely be led by the Antichrist, and that this new Empire, and its leader, will meet their ends in Israel at the hands of the returning Christ and his saints. Mid to late

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¹ I use the term “conservative, premillennial Protestants” to refer to those Protestants who believe in the literal truth of the Bible (biblical inerrancy), and a particular end-times scenario that I describe in more detail below. On Catholic apocalypticism, see Thompson (1996, Ch. 8). For useful feedback on earlier drafts, I would like to thank: Kenneth Armstrong; Davina Cooper; Carl Stychin; and the *Journal of American Studies* reviewers.

² Other important texts are found in: Ezek. 37.38.39; Dan. 7.12; and Mark 13.

twentieth-century developments, such as the emergence of the EEC (heralded by “The Treaty of Rome”), followed by the more highly integrated EU, proved these prophecies of Revelation.

In this article, I intend to explore how, and why, American conservative, premillennial Protestants envision Europe in the way that they do.³ While this topic might seem obscure and even trivial, I would argue, for two key reasons, that it is neither. First, many millions of Americans subscribe to conservative Protestant theology, and writers in the apocalyptic genre, for example Hal Lindsey whose 1970 book *The Late Great Planet Earth* sold 10 million copies, have influenced premillennialist communities around the world.⁴ Any real understanding of anti-European sentiment, both within and without Europe, must come to grips with its important religious dimension.

Second, conservative Protestantism itself, particularly its US variety as advanced by the Christian Right movement, is increasingly influential on the global political scene. As Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose (1996) have argued, conservative Protestant theology is fast becoming the dominant world religious orthodoxy. Grasping the significance of this transnational movement requires analysing its world-view, as well as its actual geopolitical engagements. Understandings about Europe are one part of that.

To begin to map out US premillennialism’s European visions, I have examined the following source material: the prophecy-writing genre; premillennial fiction; internet sources; and interviews with Christian Right activists I conducted during previous research on a different, but related, topic (see Herman 1997). Drawing upon this material, I make three key arguments.

First, I suggest that premillennial belief is resilient, malleable, and capable of providing its adherents with a wealth of knowledge about world affairs. Conservative premillennialists, despite a fundamental religious orthodoxy, are able to shift their interpretations in response to new developments while at the same time remaining “true” to their prophecy belief-system. American premillennialists are also extremely well informed; they know far more about European political developments than many Europeans.

Second, I explore the ways in which premillennial belief resonates with the wider culture, and also responds to peoples’ real concerns and anxieties. I argue that conservative premillennialism provides its

³ A further study I am currently undertaking concerns the British Christian Right’s relationship to Europe – I will make some preliminary references to this material later in the article.

⁴ See, generally, on these points: Hunter (1987, 1991).

constituents with reasonable explanations about frightening phenomena. Like the politically orthodox, who can respond to concerns about control over technology, economic centralization, and so on, by promoting conspiracy theorising and “last stand” isolationism, so premillennialists, interpreting their sacred texts, achieve similar ends.

Finally, I consider the importance of religious belief in forming political opinion. While there are many socio-political reasons to explain euroscepticism, none of these, in my view, are sufficient in themselves. I argue that existing understandings about peoples’ response to Europe must also be informed by a knowledge of the role prophetic belief plays in the world-view of its many adherents.

The article proceeds as follows. I first briefly give an account of conservative premillennial end-times theology. I continue, again briefly, by tracing the history of the Antichrist figure in conservative Protestant discourse – a figure encountered frequently in premillennial European envisionings. The main part of the article then analyses how American premillennialists construct Europe, focusing on two recurring themes. First, how integration at the political, economic, and technological levels is viewed by premillennialists as heralding the coming of the “one world government” which they believe portends the descent into Armageddon. Second, that the Antichrist, the figure destined to lead the world to its end, will in all likelihood be a European.

PREMILLENNIAL BELIEF ABOUT THE END-TIMES

Over 60 per cent of Americans have no doubt that Christ will return (Gallup and Castelli 1989, 66). Of these, many millions are premillennialists – they believe that the Bible prophesies the end of the world, followed by the second coming of Christ and the arrival of the “millennium.” A smaller number are postmillennialists: Christ will not return until God’s Kingdom rules on earth for one thousand years. Postmillennialism is not an eschatological perspective espoused by many Christians in the US today. Premillennial understandings largely (although not entirely) animate the Christian Right and its potential constituents and are the subject of my analysis here.

Premillennialists find the predominant authority for their eschatology in the final book of the New Testament – The Revelation of John. Most historians view The Revelation as an inspiration to believers during intense persecution by Roman tyrants at the time of writing, 81–96 CE (see, e.g., Gager 1983). However, orthodox Christians have for centuries

considered it a prophetic blueprint for the earth's end, Christ's return, and the ultimate rule of the saints over the world as heaven (Boyer 1992). That these things will happen is beyond question; many millions of Americans believe it deeply, the disputed matter is when, not if.

As Paul Boyer (1992) has shown in his study of the apocalyptic genre (see also Bull, ed. 1995; Thompson 1996),⁵ versions of the end-times scenario have flourished throughout the history of Christianity.⁶ Apocalyptic eschatology has been both populist and radical; early white settlers in the "new world" brought a mix of pre- and post-millennialist perspectives of many centuries duration (see also Lippy 1982). By the early 1900s, "new world" optimism (see e.g., Glanz 1982) had given way to doomsday forecasting and premillennialism had become the dominant theology – that continues to be the case today.

Historically, there have been various versions of the endtimes scenario, all based on readings of biblical prophecy. Generally speaking, in order for Christ to reappear, a series of events will occur. The Gospel must be preached around the world and, as a result of this Great Commission, as it is known, many new adherents will be brought into the fold. At a certain point, this task will be complete, and "true believers" will be "raptured" – they will literally ascend to heaven to sit with Christ and watch the horrors unfold. This period will also see the rise of the Antichrist – the charismatic leader who will unite huge regions of the world behind him in an antichristian drive for global power.

The earth will then be plagued by terrible disasters – floods, fires, earthquakes, wars, and so on. Many millions of people will die horrible, excruciating deaths. At this point, thousands of Jews will see the light and convert (however this is far too late for Rapture and most of them will perish in the disasters and final battles). As regional power blocs engage in war, including, importantly, for my purposes here, a "ten nation confederacy," Christ and the saints return. They kill all non-believers, including the Antichrist, and usher in the peace and harmony of the millennium. During this period, according to Billy Graham for example, "Jesus Christ will be the King over all the earth in His theocratic world government" (1983, 227).

⁵ Klaus Koch (1983) has provided a useful definition of the genre. Characteristics he identifies include: urgency of expectation; cosmic catastrophe; presence of angels and demons; new salvation possible; and the ultimate enthronement of God and his Kingdom (1983, 21–44). For further discussion of the rhetorical dimensions of the genre, see Brummett (1984).

⁶ On the Jewish apocalyptic genre, and its influence on Christianity, see Collins (1984).

At the end of one thousand years, Satan rises again, only to be defeated by Christ once and for all. The earth is then no more; only heaven exists. In addition to Boyer's (1992) exhaustive study of the apocalyptic genre, the details of this scenario have been analysed, critically and otherwise, by a range of theologians, historians, sociologists, journalists, and others.⁷

Popularly, speculation about the end-times has generated a wealth of best-selling literature aimed at predicting and representing the end of earth. Historically, the Antichrist was argued to be embodied in the Ottoman Empire ("the Turk"), and in the Pope himself (Boyer 1992, 61–2, 153). In the first half of this century, signs were seen in the ascendancy of fascist dictators, the expansion of Soviet communism, the creation of the Israeli state (according to Revelation, the Second Temple must be rebuilt), and the nuclear-arms race.

In a popular 1970s and 1980s scenario, the USSR, together with its allies Iran, Libya, and others – Revelation's the "Kings of the North" – would invade Israel. There, they would do battle with the "Kings of the East" (China, Japan, and so on) in the final Tribulation (see, e.g., Robertson and Slosser 1982, 213–22). In the 1990s, many premillennialists believed the Gulf War signalled the coming end (see Jones 1992). In the latter part of this century, in the United States, the imminent apocalypse has also been associated, intimately, with cultural degeneration: secularization; sexual immorality; worship of the state; crime; drugs; and so on (see Herman 1997).

Apocalyptic visions also form part of the fiction oeuvre of conservative Christianity (as they do for other belief-systems as well). One example is Paul Meier's *The Third Millennium* (1993). The story concerns a Jewish family living in California, in 1995. A new president, corrupt, calculating, and intent on world domination and the obliteration of Christianity, is in the White House. As he plunges the United States, and the world at large, into greater and greater chaos, Christian believers suddenly disappear, and the Jewish family slowly begins to realize that salvation for them can only come through accepting Jesus. The novel culminates in a series of catastrophic events centred in Israel – most of the world's population (including all those who have refused to accept Christ) perish in a range of horrific holocausts. At the very end, Christ rides down from heaven, with the saints, to usher in the millennium.

Many readers of this article may find these ideas fanciful at best. However, it is too easy to dismiss them as silly and unimportant. As I

⁷ These include: Chandler (1984), Henry (1971), Lienesch (1993), Pieterse (1992), and Wilson (1977). See also Norman Cohn's (1970) classic work on medieval millenarianism.

noted above, many millions of Americans, including political policy-makers (see Barkun 1987, 168; Boyer 1992, 141–44) read *The Revelation* for signs, buy prophetic literature, and believe fervently in the scenarios. The premillennial world-view embodies both what Hofstadter (1966) has called a political “paranoid style” (meaning very imaginative, rather than mentally unbalanced), and a fear of conspiracy that runs deep in American culture (Davis 1971; Johnson 1983). It also helps to shape, in important ways, the stances and understandings believers take on social and political issues generally (see also Lienesch 1993).

Conservative premillennial eschatology informs many of the political positions adopted by the Christian Right (CR) in the United States. For example, the CR’s enthusiastic support for Israel (see Mouly 1985), particularly in light of its continued anti-Semitism,⁸ makes little sense without an understanding of the role Jewish people must play at the world’s end (see Henry 1971; Pieterse 1992).⁹ Similarly, the CR’s pro-defence and patriotic stance is, for many, linked to the pre-ordained role the United States is destined to play in the final days (see Boyer 1992, Ch. 7; also Cassara 1982). Understandings about Europe, as I will come to shortly, are also importantly shaped by end-times belief.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ANTICHRIST

As I noted above, in order for Christ to return, his “opposite” must first emerge. The Antichrist has a long history in Christian discourse (see McGinn 1994) and, more particularly, in the American apocalyptic genre (Fuller 1995). I have no intention of tracing the Antichrist’s representation historically; here, I simply wish to note four issues raised by Antichrist discourse that will inform my subsequent analysis.

First, the Antichrist must be distinguished from other key figures. The Antichrist is not Satan. He is a Satanic force, furthering an antichristian satanic agenda, but he is rarely considered the literal embodiment of Satan. There are also two other characters associated with the Antichrist who are important to premillennial belief – the False Prophet, and the Beast. The False Prophet is, in many scenarios, a kind of envoy for the

⁸ Pat Robertson’s writing reflects this sort of pro-Israeli anti-Semitism, e.g. (1990, Chs. 11, 12). See also, “Antisemitism: Its prevalence within the Christian Right,” *Freedom Writer* (May 1994), 1–8.

⁹ For a fascinating account of how premillennialists interpret the Holocaust in terms of their eschatology, see Ariel (1991).

Antichrist, a precursor who is similarly evil, but who is not destined to achieve the Antichrist's glory. The Beast, on the other hand, is sometimes understood as a collectivity of regional power (usually Asian) that will do battle with the Antichrist during The Tribulation. Frequently, however, the Beast and the Antichrist are viewed as one and the same.

Second, the Antichrist is usually depicted, within premillennial Protestantism, as fully human. While he seems to possess strange and fantastic powers, he is not a demon.¹⁰ In premillennial novels, for example, we often learn a great deal about the Antichrist's family background as well as other factors shaping his character and talents. The Antichrist, within Protestantism, is perhaps best understood as a truly evil man, whom Satan has invested with supernatural powers.¹¹

Third, the Antichrist is intent on amassing political and economic power. He will accomplish great deeds in his quest for power, leading more and more people, and nation states, to follow him. Historically, various Jews and Muslims were viewed as potential Antichrists, as well as many Popes and monarchs. As Bernard McGinn has suggested (1994, 3): "The history of the Antichrist can be conceived as one way of writing the history of Christianity or at least the history of the hatreds and fears of Christians."

This century, conservative, premillennial Protestant belief about the Antichrist has coalesced around the idea of "one world government."¹² The Antichrist, it is thought, will successfully unite large swathes of the world under a superficially appealing philosophy of global unity. The emergence of the United Nations, and its subsequent growth and empowerment, have played a crucial role in confirming the truth of this scenario (see Fuller 1995, 160–63).

Finally, it is worth noting that, during The Tribulation, true Christian believers (e.g., those who turn to Christ following the Rapture) are able to see through the Antichrist's lies and deception. It is their job to create a resistance and, ultimately, for those who survive, to stand with Christ at Armageddon.

¹⁰ Though see Hagee (1996, 118) who describes the Antichrist as "the devil incarnate," the "son of Satan."

¹¹ Catholicism's Antichrist is somewhat different, see, for example, McGinn (1994, 226–30).

¹² This resonates with older "Jewish conspiracy" theories of the nineteenth century, partly based on the forged document *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

ENVISIONING EUROPE

Throughout the centuries, from the earliest Christian texts, the area of Europe was seen as key to the Second Coming (see McGinn 1994). The Revelation of John suggests that the Roman Empire, in the shape of a “ten nation confederacy,” will play a huge role in the final battles. As conservative premillennialists are biblical literalists, it subsequently became important to envision scenarios in which the Roman Empire was revived. Historically, various Popes and European monarchs were seen as potential new Roman emperors.

During the twentieth century, from the first stirrings of European integration, conservative Protestant prophesiers in the United States became both intrigued and horrified with European developments. European union both seemed to fulfil prophecy, creating the potential for the “ten nation confederacy,” and played on old, evocative, and, in many respects, anti-Catholic beliefs about Roman power. In the second half of the twentieth century, the “new Europe” began to figure more prominently in premillennial writing.

EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Premillennial interest in European integration is primarily focused upon the perceived centralisation of power. For the Roman Empire to revive, a block of co-ordinated, centrally controlled, and regionally amalgamated power must arise in Europe. Europe must, in effect, become the overarching superstate feared by eurosceptics generally. According to US premillennialists, this development is well on its way to occurring.

One of the most influential thinkers on Europe is Hal Lindsey, a prophecy writer, whose multi-million selling book *The Late Great Planet Earth* was published in 1970. The text is in essence a guide to understanding how the world will end, given events at that time, and Lindsey’s view, then, was that it would end soon. He discussed a number of trends, giving specific attention to European developments.

Lindsey notes that Hitler had made an unsuccessful attempt to revive the Roman Empire, “but God had other plans” (1970, 83). According to Lindsey, recent developments were more ominous: “We believe that the Common Market and the trend toward unification of Europe may well be the beginning of the ten-nation confederacy predicted by Daniel and the Book of Revelation” (1970, 83). Lindsey believed European integration was taking place for several reasons, including: the inability of the US to

stop the spread of communism; the huge economic power of the US in the world; and the desire of “pan-nationalists” to create a “world system” with control centred in Europe (1970, 85).

Interestingly, Lindsey’s focus on Europe, even during periods of intense cold war hostilities, emphasises the importance of understanding the significance of religious belief in shaping political response. For although the former USSR was an important subject for prophecy writers, their world view was not simply shaped by exterior political ideologies. In other words, premillennialists did not simply construct “America’s enemies” as their own. They were as concerned with the threat posed by America’s allies in NATO and their moves towards integration, as they were with communist expansionism. Both movements, for premillennialists, were fundamentally antichristian and, at the same time, inevitable developments foretold in prophecy.

Following the so-called “collapse of communism” in the early 1990s, Hal Lindsey updated his predictions in 1994 with the publication of *Planet Earth – 2000 A.D.* In a chapter entitled “The Rise of the Roman Empire II,” Lindsey’s view of Europe, and the truth of prophecy, received further confirmation in such developments as the Maastricht Treaty, the growth of the single market, the move towards a common currency, and so on. According to Lindsey (1994, 220): “In the 25 years since I authored *The Late Great Planet Earth*, there has been a dramatic move towards that kind of one-world political system – toward globalism. The European Community is at the center of all such activity.”

In a rising crescendo of alarm, Lindsey alerts us to the “EC Game Plan,” which includes the following (1994, 227–28):

NATO must be destroyed. The defense of Europe will be handled by the Western European Union. ... the powers of Europe will attempt to impose their will on weaker member states... The president of the EC – currently Delors – will automatically become the president of Europe. ... The right to veto will be scrapped ... this will be a real shock to the people of Great Britain ... Europe will adopt a Kruggerand-style gold coin as its standard of currency.

Grant Jeffrey,¹³ in *Messiah* (1991), also devotes a chapter to “Europe: The Fourth Reich, Kingdom of the Antichrist” (71–81). By 1 January 1993, Jeffrey tells us, the “EC” will have one citizenry, one high court, one central bank, one common currency, one passport, and one centre of economic control (1991, 74). And, in a more recent work, Jeffrey identifies

¹³ Jeffrey is actually Canadian, not American. However, his books are indistinguishable from the American genre, and, as he speaks often of Europe, I have chosen to use his work here.

the Council of Europe, and the Club of Rome, in a long list of “secret globalist groups” (1995, 84) planning the “coming world government” (1995, 74).¹⁴ The centrality of Europe in the American premillennial worldview is reiterated by many other writers in the genre.¹⁵

For the prophecy writers on Europe, one issue is of ongoing concern. As Revelation is read to predict a *ten* nation Roman confederacy, the question of how many member states belong to the EU has been an important one. Hal Lindsey, for example, in writing an update to *The Late Great Planet Earth*, is slightly perturbed by the fact that, in 1994, there were twelve not ten, EU states (1994, 223). However, he confidently predicts that two will withdraw from the Union, or that there will be mergers.

Like Lindsey, Grant Jeffrey is somewhat concerned that Europe is not currently showing the correct number of nations to fulfil prophecy. However, he confidently states that, “I am certain our Sovereign God is quite capable of rearranging the membership of the final European Superstate to fulfil the prophecy to the precise letter and number” (1991, 76).

But Jeffrey also does not balk at performing some rearranging of his own. Like others, he shows his continued responsiveness to changing circumstances with a prophecy update. In his 1995 *Final Warning: Economic Collapse and the Coming World Government*, he accounts for the fact that there are now fifteen EU nations by stating that there will be an “inner core” of ten that will hold the real power (1995, 58). He notes that European politicians speak of a “three tiered” Europe, and he interprets this as guaranteeing the coherence of the ten nation confederacy (1995, 58).

Interestingly, Pat Robertson implicitly welcomes the expansion of the Union into eastern Europe. It is in the east, according to Robertson, that real Christian faith continues to flourish. Perhaps, he suggests, the “hedonistic” and “anti-Christian” west can be re-Christianized as a result of eastern influence (1990, Ch. 5). Perhaps more important, sociologically, is an analysis suggesting that conservative Protestantism may facilitate economic change in eastern Europe (see conclusion below).

There is also an irony here in that EU expansionism, towards eastern

¹⁴ Other groups include: The Council on Foreign Relations; The Trilateral Commission; The Bilderbergers/The Alliance; The World Federalist Movement (Jeffrey, 1995, Ch. 5).

¹⁵ For example: Pat Robertson’s 1990 book *The New Millennium* contains a chapter entitled, “The Unification of Europe”; Charles Dyer, in *World News and Bible Prophecy* (1993), writes of Europe in Ch. 12: “The EEC and European Unity.”

Europe or elsewhere, ought to be read, in the premillennial view, as signifying the drive towards final European world domination. However, the prophecy writers insist that the new Roman empire can only comprise ten nations. “Inner core,” or “inside track,” theory, therefore, allows believers to have it both ways. The Union can expand *ad infinitum* without disturbing Revelation’s blueprint.

Another theme running through the prophecy writing on Europe is a concern about where the “real” power within Europe lies. Hal Lindsey, in his 1994 text, points to an anxiety not present in his earlier work – the dangers of German power. He argues, for example, that Germany and Russia have signed secret deals to carve up European influence. The war in Bosnia, for instance, is viewed by Lindsey as part of a “geo-strategic plan between Berlin and Moscow” (1994, 224–25). Helmut Kohl is called the “boss” of Europe – though Lindsey acknowledges he lacks sufficient charisma to be the Antichrist (1994, 226).

Lindsey’s focus on Germany is echoed by several other prophecy writers. Grant Jeffrey, for example, particularly notes that “a new generation of Germans has taken the levers of control in the fatherland as well as in the European Superstate organisations” (1991, 73). So long as Margaret Thatcher was in power, according to Jeffrey, this drive towards German domination was doomed: “However, Prime Minister John Major wants to solidify his relationships with Europe and will now remove all obstacles to the total reunification of the ancient Roman Empire” (1991, 74).¹⁶

Fears concerning German domination are echoed by others (e.g., Dyer 1993, 188–89; Robertson 1990, Ch. 5) and are perhaps not surprising. Anti-German rhetoric evokes powerful feelings about past German expansionism, and, in this century, the Antichrist figure itself seems partly moulded on the personal characteristics of Adolf Hitler. However, there is a tension in the prophecy literature between those who locate the EU’s centre in Germany, and those (an apparent minority) who locate it in the Vatican (see discussion of the Antichrist below). Interestingly, Hal Lindsey, who is deeply concerned with German power, takes pains to depict the present Pope as a friend to true believers (1994, 231).

Fears about German aggression also find strong resonance in Britain, and, perhaps, most particularly in England.¹⁷ At several levels, English

¹⁶ Thatcher receives similar praise from Hal Lindsey, who describes her as “a great Christian leader” (1994, 229).

¹⁷ I use “England” here as the relationship between other parts of the United Kingdom and Europe is, arguably, somewhat different. In Scotland, for example, there appears

eurocepticism is often directed towards the perceived ambitions of the German state. In the 1997 general election, for example, a controversial Tory poster depicted a tiny Tony Blair sitting in the German Chancellor's lap. On the premillennial front, however, at least two authors prefer the anti-Catholic genre, suggesting that, "we should be wary of aligning ourselves with a Europe that might come once again under the domination of Roman Catholic teaching and practice" (Denton and Slennett 1997, 139). In England, anti-Catholicism is still a very potent political force, and an important factor in shaping elements of eurocepticism (see also Herman and Cooper 1997).

Premillennial interest in political centralization is matched by their fascination with integration at the economic and technological levels. According to Pat Robertson, for example (1990, 215):

Even now in Brussels, the headquarters city of the European Economic Community, a giant computer system – an interbank transfer computer – makes it possible to give every person in the world a number and allocate credits and debits on the basis of that number. It could be implanted in the skin by means of a chip or laser tattoo in the forehead, perhaps concealed in the hair fringe, or on the hand.

Similarly, in *Beginning of the End*, John Hagee picks up the theme of "one world economy," common to much of this genre. Hagee echoes Pat Robertson in suggesting that Europe has the means to exert a central computer control over every individual in its goal to create a cashless economy (1996, 119). Often, in this literature, writers argue that this will be accomplished through the implantation of the 666 mark. These themes and others are reiterated by Jack Van Impe, who alerts us to the world computer and 666 marks centred in Europe in *2001: On the Edge of Eternity* (1996). In a chapter entitled "World Events That Signal the End Times," Van Impe is clear that European monetary union is one of these (1996, 147).

EUROPEAN ANTICHRIST

Turning away from integration, and towards the Antichrist, there is no question in Hal Lindsey's mind, for one, that he will "come up out of the culture of the ancient Roman Empire" (1970, 113) and emerge as a leader of the European 10 nation confederacy – Lindsey refers to him as "the

to be far more pro-European sentiment than in England. Scottish nationalism, in the form at least of public SNP utterances, seems far more able to adopt a "European citizenship" model than its English counterpart.

Roman dictator” (1970, 94). The Antichrist will perform miracles, including recovering from a seemingly fatal wound, he will have immense charisma, be stunningly attractive, and will come to control more and more of the world. He will also persecute Jews, a recurring theme in Antichrist discourse (along with the theme that the Antichrist *is* Jewish), and he will lead Europe into the final battle (1970, Ch. 9). In his 1970 book, Lindsey vaguely suggested possible candidates for the Antichrist at that time, one of whom was Jean Monnet, the French economist often referred to as the “father” of European integration. In his 1994 update, Lindsey insists, with no reference to past predictions, that the Antichrist “is alive today” (1994, 232–33).

John Hagee agrees that the Antichrist will “probably come from the European Union” (1996, 117). According to Hagee, it is the Antichrist who will order everyone to be “marked” by the central computer (1996, 120). And it is the Antichrist who will lead Europe into one-world government (1996, 123), and one-world religion (1996, 128). Hagee traces a scenario in which a European Antichrist makes a security treaty with Israel, the Second Temple is rebuilt in Jerusalem leading to an Arab invasion of Israel, with Russian support. While the European Antichrist betrays Israel by doing nothing, God intervenes to destroy the invading armies. As Jews begin to convert to Jesus, the Antichrist and his European Federation march into Jerusalem and begin a world-wide persecution of Jewish people. As the final battles of Armageddon take place, the Antichrist meets his end at the hands of Christ (Hagee 1996).

Grant Jeffrey’s *Messiah*, published in 1991, also endorsed the European identity of the Antichrist. However, his predictions at that time did not quite bear fruit, particularly his suggestions about former EU President Jacques Delors who was described as “powerful, brilliant and fanatical” (1991, 74) – Antichrist codewords used often in premillennial literature. Less charitable to Jews than Hagee, Jeffrey states that many Jews will follow the Antichrist who will, himself, be Jewish (1991, 77). As he consolidates his power, and, “once the technology is in place,” Jeffrey suspects that “the Antichrist of the Revived Roman Empire will simply give everyone in his dominion a short period of time to report to some government place to swear allegiance to his worship” (1991, 81). In his 1995 update, Jeffrey states again that the Antichrist will be European; oddly, however, he now remarks that the Antichrist “will hate the Jewish people because they bear God’s Holy Name” (1995, 108–09; see also Dyer 1993, Ch. 13). Clifford Denton and Paul Slennett, two British premillennialists, also warn of the coming European Antichrist (1997, 95).

Premillennialists' continuing focus on a European Antichrist complicates notions that Americans will always demonize the racial "Other." I in no sense wish to deny the pervasiveness of racism in the United States, directed within and without its borders. However, in the prophecy genre, premillennialists' most formidable enemy is a European, and not an Arab or an African. While some writers suggest that the Antichrist may have a "dark complexion," for others, such as Hal Lindsey who put forward Jean Monnet and Jacques Delors as possible candidates, He is clearly white. Given that Christ himself is envisioned as white (by whites), it is perhaps not surprising that his opposite number, who appears like Christ in many ways, is similarly coloured.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In premillennial fiction, many of the themes I discuss above are brought together. One novel, for example, written by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins (1995), opens as *The Tribulation* begins. There are just three world currencies. Europe and Russia, for example, deal "exclusively in marks" (1995, 9). An alliance consisting of Russia, Libya, and Ethiopia has just been thwarted, by a firestorm from heaven, in their attack on Israel. Without warning, millions of Christians around the world suddenly disappear.

Then, a charismatic young man from Romania, who we are told has "Roman" ancestors, suddenly rises to prominence on the world stage. He is appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations as millions around the world look to him for leadership. In the United States, true Christians, those who have turned to Jesus since *The Rapture*, begin to see through the Romanian, to identify the Satanic agenda beneath his façade of peace. A growing cadre of Christians establish an underground resistance outfit – the "Tribulation Force." As with other similar novels in the genre (e.g., Meier 1993; Meier and Wise 1996), a sequel is no doubt forthcoming.

While, to many, this story might seem fantastic and/or ridiculous, I would argue that dismissing premillennialists as marginal and deluded results in the neglect of a significant dimension to world politics. While premillennialism may not be a key social force within Europe today, England, for example, does have a quiet, but healthy, premillennial Protestantism animating current conservative thinkers and activists.¹⁸ There is also, many argue (see, e.g., Cotton 1995), a religious revival

¹⁸ Denton and Slennett's *Earthquake in the City* (1997) is an example of this.

occurring in England today within which premillennialism plays an important part. And Britain was, after all, premillennialism's birthplace.

Furthermore, the religious views of millions of Americans are relevant to those interested in Europe and its future as American public opinion is an extremely important influence on the character of US foreign policy. Indeed, as others have argued (e.g., Barkun 1987, 168; Boyer 1992, 141–44), US politicians and policy-makers themselves often rely on a religious world-view to guide their actions at home and abroad.

Finally, it is worth emphasising that fears (fears are also expectations, in the case of premillennialists) about political, economic, and technological integration, and also about demagogic, evil leaders, also find resonance in the wider culture of Europe itself, echoing peoples' genuine concerns. For example, that there is an "inner core," or inside track, of power in Europe is something often discussed in European theory and politics. Similarly, fears to do with the implications of monetary union run deep throughout the European political spectrum. Even the technological capacities of a European "superstate" have been relayed, in an alarmist fashion, in the mainstream media.¹⁹ In other words, premillennialists are not out of touch with peoples' real anxieties. On the contrary, the premillennial worldview places these fears and concerns in a religious context that, to many, creates order, reason, and hope, out of what at first engenders feelings of helplessness and despair.

Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose (1996), partly drawing on Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930), have argued that American Christian fundamentalism has mass appeal today partly because it can provide some spiritual sustenance starkly relevant to (post)modern globalisation. "The spread of the new Christian fundamentalism as a global mystery religion can proceed unabated because it tacitly accepts the multinational hegemony of economic capital as a realm that cannot be understood or challenged" (1996, 255). Although Brouwer, Gifford, and Rose's study primarily concerns American Protestant incursions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, their analysis may be as relevant to developments in eastern Europe where economic change has caused massive dislocations within communities. Thus, the receptiveness of eastern European populations to American conservative evangelicalism is an important issue for all those interested in the future of Europe.

There can be little doubt that conservative Christianity is a transnational

¹⁹ See "No more passports: Technology takes over Border Controls," *The Guardian*, 20 April 1997. The graphic accompanying this article contains images showing how eyes and hands will be scanned electronically and data translated "into a unique barcode."

movement of substantial proportions (see Rudolph and Piscatori 1997). Premillennialism dominates the theological stance of this movement, and it is therefore important to consider the ways in which religious ideologies impact on popular and political decision-making. In this article, I have tried to explore just one aspect to the conservative, premillennial worldview in the United States – visions of Europe. But, within this perspective, Europe does not exist in isolation. Rather, developments in Europe are seen to coincide and conspire with “world government” moves elsewhere, particularly at the United Nations level. It is here that American conservative Protestants have a more direct influence in shaping actual policy outcomes – but that is another story.²⁰

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²⁰ See Doris Buss and Didi Herman, *Globalizing Family Values* (University of Chicago Press, forthcoming 2001).

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