

**Reynolds C.L. (1990) “Redefining the Enemy”, *JOURNEY*, May, Australia p. 49.**

The demolition of the Berlin wall has paved the way for the reunification of Germany. At the same time, it has become symbolic of the dawn of a new political era for Europe and the disappearance of the “iron curtain”.

Europe is currently exploring the means of incorporating East Germany into the European Common market (EEC) and the consequences of such a move.

While trying to ensure that things are done in order, the USSR faces the formidable task of permitting Germany to unite while holding other Soviet states, like Lithuania, within the federation.

The changing profile of European politics, however, has not come about by accident. The commitment of Mikhail Gorbachev, as president of the USSR, to institute beneficial change for his country has created opportunities for political and economic development all across Europe. Russia's objective is to rebuild the historical and economic associations which it had with the rest of Europe before the advent of communism.

One of the biggest obstacles Gorbachev faces is the attitude of the Russian people. The Russians have a saying; “We pretend to work and they pretend to pay us.” Any initiative to improve domestic productivity is likely to be met with resistance principally from within. And, in fact, this could cause Gorbachev's downfall.

Still, the world is now witnessing a crisis-of-progress for Europe as countries reassess the value of aging defense alliances and the possibility of new markets. In the current context, NATO has become an alliance with little promise for the future.

This crisis-of-progress for Europe, however, has created a crisis of a different kind for the United States of America. America's crisis is one of relevance. Apart from the political issues, the fundamental crisis is one of philosophy and more specifically one of theology.

When President Reagan took office in 1980 he spoke in uncompromising terms of Russia as an evil force at work in the world likely to bring us all to Armageddon. Ye, ten years later, Russia leads the greatest political reform in Europe since World War II. Theological premises which led Reagan to perceive Russia as evil and to view the world in the simplistic confines of democracy conflicting communism have now become obsolete.

American politics, since the inception of the Declaration of Independence, has been based upon theological principles. Its notions of representative government, judicial process and human rights all stem from an understanding of God's relation to humanity, and people's relations to each other.

In recent decades, Washington's political theology has been dominated by the political right who perceive the world as an arena for the conflict of good and evil. This dualistic theology sees these equal and opposite forces at work in everything. Dualism, then, has fueled American foreign policy by depicting an enemy (Russia and Communism) as evil and at the same time asserting America's right to defend a ‘God given way of life’.

Washington thrived on the emotional energy this political theology created and set to work to build everything from highways to spacecraft in the name of protecting America's right to defend freedom.

In the past, the strongest elements of conservative Christianity have sponsored the continuation of such political and moral dualism and have been responsible for developing this perspective in American foreign policy. But changes in Russia's political position and relations to Europe over the past eight months have left Washington scrambling to maintain its position of authority in world politics and to redesign a foreign policy that is reasonable and relevant.

The Soviet threat not only drove the creation and maintenance of American political theology, it gave Washington – the symbol of American power strategic importance as a superpower capital.

As the Cold War wanes, Washington powerbrokers, who thrive on the adrenalin of conflict, are wondering where their next fix will come from. In fact, inside Washington property development magazine, "Regardies", the cover story theme was, "Can Washington afford peace?"

In the wake of radical and international political change, the White house has had to re-ask the fundamental question to its foreign policy, "Who is the enemy?" it could no longer be Russia or communism; it could no longer be an evil force or devil opposing God's will. Thus, President Bush in March this year, refined the enemy as "unpredictability".

While these terms may seem to lack substance they are, in fact, a restatement of one of the essential principles of US foreign policy: To encourage environments of political and economic stability in order to allow American companies to invest overseas and be guaranteed of a reasonable and predictable profit margin. Outside of Europe, little will change as America's defense force continues to be used to ensure predictable and stable economic environments.

In theory, this new emphasis in political approach should provide enough impetus for the rest of Washington to redefine its role and go back to work.

But the damage is done. The development of relations within Europe has meant a realignment of values in twilight of power. In its continuing effort to keep a seat at the negotiating table, America has found itself in the ironical position of having to define itself as a "European" power.

All this by implication must have an effect on the theology of the conservative church responsible for America's dualistic perspectives. On the political front, at least, their notions of life and world affairs as a conflict of good-and-evil will fall on deaf ears. With the absence of a political evil one can only hope that they will also see the need to question the premises on which they determine personal morality. Political activity cannot somehow be seen as beyond human ethics and in the realm of spiritual conflict.

It is quite possible that the world is witnessing a maturation in politics as the USSR chooses negotiation rather violence as a means of political process. This crisis-of-progress for Europe, and America, is an opportunity for the whole Church, including the politically conservative, to seek involvement in the formation of what may well be described as a new Europe and to give up its adherence to a simplistic social dualism of good and evil.