

December 2, 2016

Dear Brethren and Friends,

At the end of each year, it is customary for the media to look back over the previous twelve months but, in recent memory, 2016 will turn out to be a time of extraordinary events that have happened around the world, with many of these surely having an impact that doesn't bode well for humanity.

Peter Hitchens, a regular Daily Mail columnist, made these observations in his column on the 13th November 2016 when talking about the liberal elite in society today: "On they ploughed with their mass immigration, their diversity and equality, their contempt for lifelong, stable marriage, their refusal to punish crime, their mad, idealistic foreign wars, their indulgence of drugs, their scorn for patriotism, their schools and universities, turning out graduates with certificates they can barely read. And on they went with their destruction of real jobs, promising a new globalised prosperity that never came. Millions have just had too much of this."

Mr Hitchens was commenting on the extraordinary (humanly speaking) victory of Donald Trump in becoming the President-elect of the USA with his tenure of office due to commence next month. Mr Norbert Link, in our monthly letter last month, made some very interesting observations even though the letter was dated 9th November just after the election result. Since that time, Mr Trump has made comments about what he intends to do when inaugurated as the new President of the most powerful country on earth.

The President-elect of the USA has also been busy meeting many people and making appointments to his team that will help him in his tenure. It appears that some of them, like Mr Trump himself, have made controversial remarks in the past about matters that they will now have to deal with, and it will be interesting to see how this all turns out.

Within days of his victory, Mr Trump confirmed that the USA will round up illegal aliens in their country who have criminal records, stating that this could be 2-3 million people. They would be returned to their nation of origin or incarcerated together with building a wall to keep out those who constantly stream over the Mexican/American border. In the Guardian newspaper, dated 12th November 2016, an article entitled "Donald Trump, pragmatist? President-elect's stances seem to shift after win", it made these comments (amongst many others): "Donald Trump appears to be backing away from several campaign promises, raising hopes that he could be more pragmatic in the White House than expected, but risking the wrath of his vociferous army of supporters – and, as he has done for months, refusing to commit to any one option. In the days since his victory in the electoral college, the president-elect has suggested that he could retain some elements of Barack Obama's healthcare reforms, and his advisers appeared to tone down a pledge to 'rip up' the Iran nuclear deal. As for Hillary Clinton, whom Trump had threatened to jail for unspecified crimes of corruption, he called her "very strong and very smart".

Since then Mr Trump has reneged on his promise to prosecute Hillary Clinton over the e-mail scandal. Many politicians promise, but rarely deliver, as they see the enormity of the tasks that confront them and the complexities of high office, and those are yet further reasons why a true Christian cannot vote for any of the candidates on view; otherwise, they are complicit in their deception. Of course, such promises are not seen as deceit but just as campaign rhetoric.

Piers Morgan, in his newspaper column shortly after Mr Trump was voted into the office of President

of the USA last month said that "a £5 accumulator bet on Leicester City winning the Premier League (this unlikely team became football (soccer) champions of England's top league in 2016 with odds of 5,000 to 1), Brexit and President Trump would pay out £12.5 million today!" That is how remarkable this year has been throwing up jaw dropping results many of which will help end-time prophecy events to be accomplished as God uses people and events to bring about His will.

Amongst many other notable events in 2016, we have seen the ongoing mayhem in Syria and continuing atrocities in different parts of the world; Brussels terror attacks in March; a failed military coup in Turkey; North Korea claiming to have successfully undertaken H-bomb tests; the Zika virus and Hurricane Matthew. There have been earthquakes in Italy, New Zealand, Ecuador, Indonesia, Japan, Bolivia, China, the USA, Russia, Antarctica and other places, all clearly showing the difficult times in which we live and which are shown as end-time activity (see Matthew 24:7).

In fact, this month, there is an Italian referendum which might cause further problems for the European Union. On December 4th Italy will go to the polls in an historic referendum on constitutional reform. The question was asked about whether the result could cause untold problems for the EU, and Maria Paola Toschi, global market strategist at JP Morgan Asset Management, told CNBC: "The upcoming Italian referendum this December may create volatility across markets as the year draws to a close." On November 17th 2016, Time magazine asked the question "Can Italy avoid a populist uprising in crucial referendum?" This is just one of many issues that will continue to happen in an increasingly restless world.

One newspaper article last month highlighted further countries in Europe where charismatic populist leaders could upset the status quo. These were Austria and Romania (December 2016), the Netherlands (March 2017), France and Serbia (May 2017), Norway (September 2017), Germany (September/October 2017) and the Czech Republic (October 17).

The Church of God has long understood the significance of Europe in end-time events and so we shouldn't be surprised at what is happening. With the UK voting to leave the European Union and the dramatic controversial change in leadership in the USA last month, things are moving in the direction that has been anticipated for a long time. We must also continue to watch the Middle East where many end-time prophecies will occur.

We are sure that there will still be many twists and turns in the prophetic path towards the Kingdom of God, and there will, undoubtedly, be those who continue to set dates, some quite specific, not really understanding that only the Father knows such dates as it states in Mark 13:32: "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." We would all do well to recognise this verse and what it means rather than "knowing better" and specifying dates which, when they fail, give ammunition to those who mock Christianity, as well as disappointing those who have foolishly held on to such predictions.

We are also warned in Matthew 24:12 that "lawlessness will abound, and the love of many will grow cold." This is referring to the Church of God and so we must make sure that this does not apply to any of us. In fact, the following verse sums up what we are to do: "But he who endures to the end shall be saved." We know what we have to do, and we must do it, in order to have the wonderful future that awaits God's faithful people.

With Christian love,



Brian Gale  
(United Kingdom)