

young couple, by their enthusiasm and commitment to a life in Christ, drew to themselves those seeking truth. They had none of the facilities we deem so necessary for preaching: pamphlets, varied audio-visual presentations, hired halls or own meeting rooms, advertising through the media, arrangements organised by a preaching committee, etc. They had their Bibles, their faith, prayer and a desire to witness at every opportunity.

Imagine the difference it would make to our public meeting if each individual or family brought one contact to such meetings, let alone six! Do you think there would be any discussion then about the need to find alternative forms of

preaching? When we visited again some fourteen months later a small ecclesia of six brethren and sisters existed, with a Sunday School of four children. A room on the plantation in a disused railway station now bore a sign, 'Christadelphian Meeting', and more contacts were undergoing instruction. The problem for many of our ecclesias is that their own members are often missing from the Sunday night meeting, so is it likely that visitors will be there in abundance? Perhaps the problem with our preaching lies closer to home—our homes! Next time someone says, 'It's a waste of time', 'It's too expensive', 'We've tried it before', 'We need some new ideas', think of the calabash tree.

Echoes of the sixth trumpet in Kosovo

Nigel Bernard

A fourteenth-century victory by the Ottomans against the Serbs has ever since helped to define the identity of Serbia. This defeat relates to the sixth trumpet period, and it is also having ramifications today as Nebuchadnezzar's image continues to form in the last days.

IN REVELATION 9 it is written, "And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men" (vv. 13-15).

The Turks and the Serbs

The "four angels" which are loosed represent the Seljuks, the Mongol hordes led by Ghengis Khan and later Timur, and finally the Ottomans. These came against the Byzantine Empire from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries. This prophecy culminates in the overthrow of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453. However, before this date, the Ottomans had already progressed further west, achieving significant victories in battle against those who opposed them. One such battle was the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, in which they defeated the Serbs.

Although the Serbs were defeated, the Battle of Kosovo has attained mythic status amongst Serbs. The Serbs were led by a man called Tsar Lazar,

who refused to surrender, but fought to the death. The journalist Kim Sengupta wrote, "The spirit of Tsar Lazar, a medieval Serb leader who died fighting the Ottoman Turks in the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, is never far from the Serbian psyche. The defeat

has metamorphosed in folklore into a manifestation of the Serbian nation with Kosovo as its cradle".¹ Laura Silber and Allan Little wrote in their account of the break up of Yugoslavia that "on 28 June, 1989, a million Serbs flocked to Kosovo to worship at [the former Serb leader] Milošević's feet, during celebrations to mark the six-hundredth anniversary of Serbia's defeat by the Turks".² At the current time, Serbs continue to draw on the legendary heroics of Tsar Lazar.

Recently, a paramilitary group has been formed by Serbs called the Tsar Lazar Guard. This has the aim of achieving, as they see it, the liberation of Kosovo. Although only a minority group within Serbia, and without official sanction, it is indicative of the Serbian attitude towards Kosovo, and the historical claim it has on its territory.

Kosovo independence?

Kosovo is a province of Serbia. However, ninety per cent of its population is Albanian. At the end

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1. Sengupta, K. (2007), "We are defending Europe against Muslim aggression", *Independent*, 7 Dec., p. 2.
 2. Silber, L. and Little, A. (1995), *The Death of Yugoslavia*, London, Penguin, p. 75.



Map showing the divisions of the former Yugoslavia.

of the last decade, the Serbs sought violently to crackdown on the Albanians, but in 1999 NATO launched a bombing campaign against the Serbs in defence of the Albanians. Since then, although a Serbian province, it has been under United Nations (UN) administration, enforced by 16,000 UN troops. The Albanian majority would like Kosovo to be an independent state. Serbia, however, including the minority of Serbs living in Kosovo, oppose such a move, regarding Kosovo as very much a part of Serbia. Sengupta quotes a member of the Tsar Lazar Guard as saying: "Kosovo has always been part of Serbia and

we are not prepared to see it become a part of a greater Albania".³

A deadline of 10 December 2007 had been set by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, for a deal to be made between Kosovo and Serbia. However, despite the efforts of the European Union (EU), the United States (US) and Russia, no agreement was reached. Meanwhile, the Albanians have threatened to declare unilateral independence.

3. *Op. cit.*

The Albanian desire for Kosovo independence has the support of the US and the EU, although Cyprus, Greece, Slovakia, Spain and Romania fear that it would set a precedent which may lead to problems in their own countries. Kosovo independence is opposed by Russia, which has traditionally supported the Serbs. At a meeting of EU leaders held on 14 December 2007 it was decided in principle to send 1,800 personnel to act as a security force in Kosovo. However, whilst advocating eventual Kosovo independence, it did not support the intention of Kosovo to declare unilateral independence.

Groups such as the Tsar Lazar Guard do not appear to have the support of moderate Serbian politicians. However, these leaders argue that a declaration of independence by Kosovo would radicalise Serbs towards nationalist groups such as the Tsar Lazar Guard and also drive Serbia further towards Russia. There is also concern that the minority Serbs in Kosovo, living mostly in the north, would be driven out, sparking a refugee crisis.

Nebuchadnezzar's image

The significance of Kosovo in the light of Bible prophecy does not simply lie in historical connections to the sixth trumpet. It connects directly to Nebuchadnezzar's image in Daniel 2.

The image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream is shown to exist as a whole at the time of the end, for all the metals are broken together: "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (v. 35). The two legs of the image relate to the beast and dragon of Revelation 16:13. The

beast is the European western leg and the dragon is the Russian eastern leg.

Former Yugoslavia marked a point where these two powers meet. The break-up of Yugoslavia was a sign that the legs of the image were beginning to emerge. The tensions in Kosovo show that this process is ongoing. Serbia has leanings towards Russia but it is also keen to join the EU. The issue of Kosovo is serving to bring these somewhat contradictory positions to the fore.

When Armageddon takes place the kingdoms of men will be united against Christ, but in the meantime the process which leads to the image fully standing on its feet may yet see violence erupting in Europe. The Serbian prime minister, Vojislav Kostunica, is reported as saying that recognition of Kosovo's independence by the EU and other countries would be "the most dangerous precedent after World War II".⁴ Such warnings are not to be lightly dismissed. After all, it was the action of a Serb nationalist that triggered the First World War, when Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip.

Conclusion

The western leg of the image has been further strengthened by the new EU treaty, which, if ratified, will see, amongst other things, the appointment of a new EU president and a High Representative on foreign affairs. The late arrival in Lisbon of the British prime minister, Gordon Brown, to sign the treaty is a sign of the tensions which exist between the European beast and Tarshish. This, together with developments in Kosovo, show that the nations are continuing to be gathered and prepared for Armageddon.

4. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7143817.stm>.

In our view, the Russians would actually welcome a crisis [over Kosovo]. Putin wants to demonstrate that Russia is a great power. That would influence thinking throughout the former Soviet Union, sobering eastern Central Europe as well—and Poland in particular. Confronting the West as an equal and backing it into a corner is exactly what he would like. In our view, Putin will seize the Kosovo issue not because it is of value in and of itself but because it gives him a platform to move his strategic policy forward. The Germans have neither the resources nor the appetite for such a crisis. The Americans, bogged down in the Islamic world, are hardly in a position to deal with a crisis over Kosovo. The Russian view is that the West has not reviewed its policies in the Balkans since 1999 and has not grasped that the geopolitics of the situation have changed. Nor, in our view, has Washington or Berlin grasped that a confrontation is exactly what the Russians are looking for.

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