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A GNOSTIC GOSPEL ?

Today there is a growing menace comprised of loosely linked groups with a common theme. They refer to themselves in many ways. They use Biblical sounding titles such as "Overcomers", "The First Fruits", "Manifest Sons of God", "The Elect", "A New Breed", "Son of Man Company" and even "The Manchild Company". These groups can be involved in a wide spectrum of teaching from anti-Semitism, Prophets and Apostles, Restoration, Kingdom Now Theology and most sinister of all - The New Age philosophy.

As this teaching permeates the fiber of the Church, there is a gregarious attempt being made to squelch anyone who opposes the status quo! Labels are handed out freely if you question what is happening. The most popular label is: "heresy hunter". Anyone who does not "go with the flow" for unity is considered "divisive". Whatever happened to the ability to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints"? I have noticed that many pastors who are "going with the flow" refuse to even read an article that will question some of the popular practices posing as "new revelation" and "deeper truths."

When asked if they have read a book or an article documenting some of the heretical thoughts being propagated, pastors will invariably have several excuses among which are: (1) the author only wants to sell books, (2) "I'm too busy", or (3) "I'm not really interested". In the meantime the hole in the dike has given way to an avalanche of false teaching and heretical thought.

MINISTRIES TODAY (July/August 1991) recently attacked "heresy hunters" in a totally unbelievable article. The article holds to the contention that "most Christian truths were formulated and defined in response to heretical half-truths. Thus, heresy comes before orthodoxy - and may in fact be a precondition for orthodoxy." The article also says that, "The critics have tragically misunderstood how the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work in instructing, reminding and moving the body of Christ into truth. From a biblical and historical

perspective, the process is plain: The Holy Spirit sovereignly uses both heathen and heretics to move the church from a status quo of theological laziness and conventionally accepted error to a position of corrected, renewed and invigorated truth." So the author actually says that: "The idealist cults understood the critically important role that the mind, acting in faith, had in prayer and the miraculous - especially in healing. Christian Scientists, regardless of their heretical view of sin and evil and their muddled view of God, did have successes in their healing ministry. . . . it was semi pagan, but persistent enough to channel God's healing power." He continues by saying that New Thought leaders "moved steadily closer to biblical reality." Among these he included Emmet Fox and Glenn Clark, yet he admitted they never separated from their Gnostic origins. In mentioning Agnes Sanford he said that: "Her healing theology might best be considered a second-level 'Bible filtration' by which the half-truths of Christian Science were discerned, separated and amplified in a biblically valid form for the Christian community." So the delightful conclusion is that: "the church has experienced heightened power for ministry and evangelization – all because God chose to repeat the ironic heresy-before-orthodoxy process that has occurred many times before in the life of the church." This is pure "Gnosticism" and it was in response to the impact of Gnosticism in the early church that the church decided on the "Canonicity of Scripture" and the "Apostles Creed". Most of the heretical trends in the church can be traced to the ancient religion of Gnosticism. Benjamin Walker writes: "There are few unorthodox, schismatic or heretical movements in Christian history that cannot be traced back to Gnostic sources." (Benjamin Walker, GNOSTICISM, 'Its History and Influence, The Borgo Press, 1983, p. 163)

Another astonishing event was a recent outburst by Paul Crouch on the world's largest Christian TV network as he denounced anyone who would speak out for sound doctrine and against the "Gnostic" trends in the church today.

". . . that old rotten Sanhedrin crowd, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. . . they're damned and on their way to hell and I don't think there's any redemption for them. . . the hypocrites, the heresy hunters that want to find a little mote of illegal doctrine in some Christian's eyes. . . when they've got a whole forest in their own lives. . .

I say, 'To hell with you! Get out of my life! Get out of the way! Quit blockin' God's bridges!' (CIB Bulletin, Vol. 7, No.7, July 1991)

The issues at stake are serious. It is not merely a "cosmetic" problem. The "roots" are not only being threatened, they are being "chopped off". As this dreadful surgery is being carried out, the life is slowly sapped and in its place is another gospel. This is a gospel that puts man on the throne. A gospel that does not need the cross, the blood or even acknowledge the deity of Jesus Christ.

"The more you get to be like Me, the more they're going to think that way of you. They crucified Me for claiming that I was God. But I didn't claim I was God; I just claimed I walked with Him and that He was in Me. Hallelujah. That's what you're doing." (Kenneth Copeland prophecy during a three-day Victory Campaign held in Dallas, Texas, VOICE OF VICTORY, February, 1987). This "divine utterance" is given in the first person. We must take this as Jesus Himself speaking to the Church. But, if Jesus wasn't God, who was He? Who is this then speaking through Kenneth Copeland? Are we to sit by and let this type of thing happen without a word? Must we just ignore what is happening and smile passively in agreement without a protest?

The more vociferous the participants become in, proclaiming useless verbalization of nonsensical half-truths, the more the cry goes out, "do not name names." In other words, you can freely quote the heretical statements, but just don't let anyone know who is preaching the error!

I do believe we have to use caution and not lump many names together and paint with a single brush. If a name is quoted, then we very clearly have to substantiate our claims. In writing this particular article, I allude to the Latter Rain Movement. I grew up during this time and knew many of the people involved. I also know that there were many sincere children of God who remained true to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. However, many more started out well, but along the way were influenced by "strange" fires that has brought the church to accepting so many different teachings today.

The Latter Rain Movement

Most Pentecostal history books date the historic Pentecostal revival of the Latter Rain movement to 1948 and attribute its geographical origin to North Battleford, Canada. Its beginning was explosive among the Pentecostals and like a wild fire spread quickly "throughout North America and many places around the world.

"The movement was characterized by many healings and miraculous phenomena . . . There was an emphasis on spiritual gifts which, were to be received by the laying on of hands." (DICTIONARY OF PENTECOSTAL AND CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS, Zondervan Publishing House.) Leaders felt that God was giving the Church, in these last days, great insight into the mind of God by prophetic revelation and manifestations. With the outburst of the revival the "ministry" of an "apostle" and a "prophet" was elevated to the rank of an "Office". "The ministries were not restricted to penetrating the mysteries within the Bible but included the unveiling of people's lives and heart." (Ibid). New revelations into the spiritual world emerged - communication with angels - divine visitations and out- of-body experiences.

Inherent Latter Rain Dangers

Revealing a "new thing" or things either by allegorizing the Scriptures or by personal prophetic revelation was the spirit of absurdity that overtook what really seemed to be a move of God. Though the records show that the revival started out well, unfortunately in certain major respects, ended in abuse and apostasy. (Showing the need for the teaching of true Biblical doctrine).

The Latter Rain Movement had a notorious reputation of imparting an assortment of strange teachings. The origin of these teachings, which have no thread of Scriptural foundation except where the Scriptures have been twisted, can be traced beyond any reasonable doubt to the occult. These teachings are invariably accompanied by what seems to be supernatural manifestations, which when examined, are characteristically descriptive of the occult. There is evidence that with the Latter Rain revival came a blaze of subjective theology that centered on man, his senses, imagination and intuition above the objective and scriptural knowledge of truth. This new emphasis - started a paradigm shift. The orthodox perspective of Christ changed, causing Christians to be receptive to subjective impressions of Christ, experiences

and ideas. To maintain the interest of .followers, new ideas and new revelations were and are continually in the making. Yet, we are not to question these subjective experiences and new teachings that do not line up with Scripture.

Most people who have had any history in Pentecost at all have been influenced at some time in their lives by the Latter Rain Movement. There have been many sincere people who felt they were part of the "move of God" for the LAST DAYS and were earnestly partaking of the fruit that was offered. Since 1948 the Latter Rain influence has permeated "the churches, Bible Colleges, evangelism and Christian television broadcasting networks. The overall magnitude of its influence makes it more difficult to warn of the inherent dangers that are involved. As a result of the Latter Rain influence in the Pentecostal-Charismatic movements two basic streams of thought exist side by side. Sometimes it is hard to distinguish the one from the other. Like the tares and wheat they have grown up together. Only through God's written Word can a true separation be discerned. The first stream is "Gnostic" thought - the inspiration to many masquerading as apostles and prophets. The second is "Christian orthodoxy" thought based on the Holy Scriptures. It is this Gnostic stream of thought that divides the Church into a dichotomy.

Apostate Tangents

Here are some of the subtle doctrinal concepts the Latter Rain fraternity have come to popularize:

1. Positive Confession
2. Prosperity Message
3. Restoration – Apostles, Prophets and the "Inner Voice"
4. Shepherding/Covenantalism
5. Kingdom Now Theology
6. Manifest Sons of God

In spite of the erroneous teachings, many souls around the world have come to receive Jesus Christ as Saviour. However, through these aberrant doctrines, many Christians have or are being swept into a form of religion that too often fits the description of the cults and occult. This is a perturbing trend.

The New Order

Today, as never before, with the rise of new prophets and apostles, we are hearing terminology that is clearly unscriptural. Yet enough Scripture is used to make the teachings palatable to the average Christian. "The elevation of prophets and apostles obviously made way for individuals to abuse Scripture. It allowed some to give the 'Spoken Word' equality with Scripture. 'There could be no greater error,' denominational leaders warned. . . [The Assemblies of God] General Secretary J. Roswell Flower cautioned, 'Predictive prophecy resulted in untold disaster wherever it had been given free course.' Flower was well-versed in

the history of Pentecostalism and recalled numerous prophecies that had come to nothing. The New Order of the Latter Rain in fact was nothing new. The ground had been covered before, with lessons learned through costly mistakes. Now a new generation seemed to want to repeat it all. ("THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism" - Vol 2 - Edith Blumhofer). The NEW ORDER has survived and has influenced the course of Pentecostal history. All along there has been interaction among the salvation/healing revivals and the Charismatic movement for the past 40 years. Now another generation later, we are facing the same situation that our forefathers faced, only this time it is exacerbated because of the mass media, telecommunications, huge conferences and a strong interlocking network.

When the terms "Illumination," "New Revelation" and "New Order" are used, immediately the imagination is titillated into wondering, "What does God have new in store for me?" Promises of a "New Anointing" and a "New Thing" keep the conferences filled and the tape and book sales rolling! When the term "New Thing" is used, the following are some of the thoughts behind the term:

1. New "mysteries" revealed
2. New "knowledge" of the Christ within - self consciousness;
3. New "form of godliness" that will be the light of the world;
4. New "power" that will do marvelous new things;
5. New "Law of Love" without Scripture;
6. New "Inner Voice" above the Scriptures to guide and govern;
7. New center of divinity - the soul;
8. New ministries that exceeds even those of the prophets and apostles of old; and
9. New consciousness - self potential - self-esteem, self-immortalization; and self - the temple of illumination.

The Rosicrucian Order

There is a clear link in modern trends, and the above teachings to what is known as "The Rosicrucian Order." (A Gnostic religion). This seems like a bold drastic statement. However, in 1925 there was a book written entitled "THE SONS OF GOD". It was "A Foreshadowing of the Coming World of the Messenger of The New Age" (R. Swinburne Clymer). Note the similarities to the above in the following quote:

"In each life is a spark, a germ of the Divine Nature. This spark is the potential Christos or the potential individual Soul or that 'light which lighteth all the world of man's consciousness.' When man becomes conscious of this light within, his own being and recognizes and obeys it's 'still small voice,' he has reached a state bordering on Illumination of soul or Immortalization. When he has found within himself the CENTER whence cometh the LIGHT, Soul Consciousness is attained. This is the beginning of Initiation; the first

revelment of the Divine Mysteries. The Divine Spark in each individual may be developed into a center or globe of pure white fire; it may become a dynamic nucleus of living fires - the Fire of Love and Immortality. This fact gives the key to the significance of the term 'Temple of Illumination.' Man in toto, is the nucleus of Illumination, the Temple of the living, radiating Christos. . . . 'God in me and I in you.' Thus, by obedience to the Divine Law, man attains unto Christhood, becomes the Son of God."

Out of Gnosticism a variety of religious cults and "orders emerged, one of which was Druidism that spread rapidly during the medieval era throughout Europe including Britain. It became a prime factor in the direction of all European culture, religion and society. From Gnosticism and Druidism evolved what has come to be known as the Rosicrucian Order that openly admits to having originated in Gnosticism. We can date the Rosicrucian Order back to 1379. According to their own writings, a Rosicrucian is one who has learned, or is learning, a philosophy of life - a path to confident living. Among famous people who were known Rosicrucians were to name a few: Gottfried Leibnitz 1646-1716, Francis Bacon 1561-1626 and Benjamin Franklin 1706-1790. The Rosicrucians boldly advertise "Become united with enlightened minds everywhere." The tragedy is that men who were great "thinkers" and spiritual leaders in their day became influenced by the Rosicrucians just as the same thinking is influencing the church in varying

The book, "Ancient Wisdom and Secret Sects" by TIME-LIFE BOOKS not only seems to confirm the fact that Freemasonry in part owes its existence to Rosicrucianism but, also substantiates the fact that Gnosticism is at the core of Freemasonry. With reference to the enormity of Freemasonry influence on North America, the aforementioned book says, "Today of course, the fraternal service group known as the Free and Accepted Masons is a secure strand in the social fabric of the developed world. In the United States alone, some 16,000 lodges welcome several million member Masons, and the leading citizens of many a town consider it a privilege to belong. In some ways, however - in the observance of hidden rituals, the profusion of symbols and honorary titles and high-flown ceremonial language - the Masonic order remains the secret society it has been for centuries untold."

Needless to say, a great portion of Freemasonry membership comprises of the Christian clergy and to some extent accounts for the strong Gnostic influence in the Church.

According to the same book - "Rosicrucianism's spread in seventeenth-century Germany may have gained impetus from a Gorlitz cobbler named Jakob Boehme. Boehme reportedly had his first spiritual "illumination" in 1600 when, at the age of twenty-five, he sat gazing at the light reflected from a pewter dish. The revelation led the shoemaker to abandon his trade for mystical studies." It was William Law's introduction to Jakob Boehme which poured light into Law and inspired him to write "The Spirit of Love" and "The Spirit of Prayer". People who love William Law's writings and respect his teachings can not believe he was influenced in any way by Rosicrucian thought that was basically Gnostic. The founder of INTERVARSITY, Norman Grubb, testifies in his biography, ". . . from Boehme, most difficult to read because he could not easily put the depths of his illuminations into readable form, I got my answer, and to this day know no writer to match him. . . He is the last word to me. . . . I am saying that everything is a form by which He manifests Himself, much as my body is not exactly I, but an outward form of the inner me. This fact, gleaned through Boehme, confirmed through the writings of many others, with the

foundations in Scripture, has given me my anchor." (ONCE CAUGHT, NO ESCAPE, Norman Grubb, Intervarsity Press)

Norman Grubb, and he is not alone, confessed to receiving more from mystic writings than from studying the Bible. Apart from Boehme and William Law, other great mystic writers that proved a spiritual help to him were as follows: Santa Teresa, Meister Eckhart, Henry Suso, John Tauler, John of Rusbroeck, Walter Hilton, Plotinus, Angelus Silesius, Richard Rolle, Lady Julian of Norwich, Evelyn Underhill, William Kingsland and Rufus Jones. These names are well known for their Gnostic ideas. With reference to some of the mystic writers he said, "These are out of bounds to the orthodox; but I have often got more from them than from normal Bible exegesis." According to his own testimony, during a time of severe despair and doubt as to the existence of God, he desperately sought for answers amongst the writings of mystics. "My answer came through the mystics and has been widening ever since," he writes. Norman Grubb, a man of unquestionable integrity and character, is a typical example of countless others, who, for whatever reason struggled to walk by faith and unfortunately turned to Gnostic ideas (Mysticism) to experience a sense of spirituality and a feeling of belonging to God. Like Norman Grubb, numerous Pentecostals and Charismatics, in spite of all of their experiences, are floundering in doubt for lack of faith in God's Word and instead are searching for answers in mysticism - the spirit of Gnosticism. No wonder the masses are receptive to the modern Gnostic apostles and prophets.

GNOSTICISM

An abundance of information on Gnosticism is readily available. Many books and articles on the subject have been written. Old manuscripts with reference to gnosticism dating back to the early Church are not only available, but provide great insight into the teachings and influence of gnosticism on the world and in particular, the Church. W.H.C. Frend writes that "in the second century Gnosticism was a world-wide movement." (W.H.C. Frend, THE EARLY CHURCH, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1965, p. 62). Gnostic sects sprang up all over the world. Jacques Laccariane says, "No sooner was Gnostic thought born than it began to be disseminated along the great routes of the Orient." (Ibid). Since that time Gnosticism has entrenched itself in the major religions of the world and not least of all Christianity.

Hopefully the following attempt to set out some of the basic Gnostic thoughts will at least help some Christians to be on guard against the "winds of doctrine" blowing through the Church. The great need in the Church is to discern between Gnostic thought and Christian thought.

Gnosticism is basically a form of mystical religious philosophical doctrines the early Christian sects spread and which the early Church vehemently rejected as heresy. Believers in Gnosticism are called Gnostics. The word "Gnostic" is derived from the Greek word "gnostikos" or "gnosis" (inner mystic knowledge). The Gnostics believe that "gnosis" is subjective knowledge of the divine element or spark in every man that needs to be discovered to be known. They believe the divine spark originally came from the "realm of light" (totally alienated from the world and the flesh, and is resident in the soul of man and is held there in captivity by the flesh a product of demons). And the only way to release the divine spark is through divine revelation knowledge experienced in the spirit. Also they believe that only when the unconscious spirit in man is awakened by revelation from the "realm of light" can he come to know his real self - the god within.

SIX THOUGHTS THAT CHARACTERIZE GNOSTICISM

1. Man is Co-Substantial with God

As soon as man by "gnosis" (self knowledge) discovers and releases the imprisoned divine spark (spirit), he then starts on a mystic ascent to divine substance and on into the "realm of light". Through divine revelation knowledge experienced in self, man becomes conscious of his origin with God, his essence as God and his transcendent destiny - all God. The unconscious self of man (the unawakened inner spirit) is co-substantial with the Godhead, e.g. having the same substance or essential nature. This is the kernel Gnostic thought that has led to the creature being deified, worshipped and served more than the Creator who is blessed for ever.

2. For the Elite only

The mystic "gnosis" is only taught to the elite - those who have a special capacity beyond the force of reason and the flesh. According to Gnostic writings, this special capacity was imparted by a messenger bearing a "spark" of light from the "realm of light" even before the creation of the world. The goal of the Gnostic is the release of the inner man by virtue of gnosis (inner knowing) and his return to his native "realm of light". There seems to be a special "place" for a special "people" who are "especially" called out or chosen. That is how the spiritual elitism comes forth. (It is this Gnostic thought that is behind much of the aberrant teachings of the Latter Rain Movement.)

3. The Intuition of the Mystery of Self

The Gnostic concept of God is determined by the depth of illumination and revelation subjectively experienced "about God". The concept rejects faith in God the Person. The reference point for godhood is in self. Gnostic revelation must be distinguished from Christian revelation because it is not rooted in history and transmitted by Scripture. It is rather the intuition of the mystery of self. The dark cloud of mysticism that overshadows the Church can readily be traced to the Gnostic's "intuition of the mystery of self".

4. Redemptive Quality

The Gnostic believes that gnosis (self knowledge) is redemptive and as such needs to be discovered and known. As a result of gnosis, man subjectively discovers, as a creature, the reality of his lasting unity with the transcendent God, that his life is immortal and that he is an ongoing manifestation of the light and the god that dwells in his inner self. This knowledge, it is believed, has a redemptive quality that takes the spirit in man to the ultimate realm of light such as the fulness of God,

5. The New Birth and It's Source

Love and salvation are reckoned obvious consequences of "gnosis". Pure knowledge without subjective reality provides intellectual enlightenment that comes from force of reason and must be avoided because it suppresses the gnosis of Divine Reality. The only substantial evidence of Divine Salvation comes from within the self-consciousness of man. It is in the experience of the inner gnosis that the Gnostic is "born-again". The redemptive quality in man

must not be sought in the incarnation of God in Christ, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Holy Scriptures or in faith through grace, but rather in the self-conscious seat of his own divinity. In other words, the fulness of divine self-consciousness is the source and evidence of the Gnostic's "New Birth".

6. Divinity is Sought Within

To the Gnostic the mystery of God was already unveiled (at least in secret) long before the birth of Jesus Christ and even before the Scriptures were written. In fact, they say it was revealed and buried in man before the creation of the world. Therefore, the only way for man to know about God is through gnosis (self knowledge). As a result, he will experience and know the Divine Spark within himself and know he is a member of the Elite - a Manifest Son of God. "He who exalts and prizes above everything else, the Divine Spark within himself and sincerely believes that eternal life is found only in the Divine Element will be certain to come into harmony with all of life and thereby bring into consciousness the Spark of Divinity and so immortalize his soul. . . by obedience to the Divine Law, man attains unto Christhood, becomes the Son of God." (Jacques Lacarriere, THE GNOSTICS, Peter Owen, London, 1977, p. 43). The Gnostic strives to find God in the creation, i.e. in "self" rather than in the Person, Christ, who is the Creator! This pursuit winds up in pantheism.

Perturbing Trends

Unfortunately, Gnostic trends are developing at an alarming rate within the Church. As early as the Second Century, Gnosticism infiltrated Christian theology. Since that time, it has gradually saturated the Church and is now, in these last days exploding not only within the Church, but also within secular institutions. The world is being prepared for a predominant Gnostic religious form, a New Order that will govern a great part of the world before Christ returns.

Because certain popular theological concepts are not being measured and subjected to strict Scriptural scrutiny, Gnosticism is gaining a stronghold. As a result of new theological thought, even fundamental orthodox doctrines are being grossly changed into seed-beds for Gnosticism.

<u>Fundamental Orthodox Christianity</u>	<u>Gnostic/New Age Thought</u>
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Based on:	God's Word	Man's word
Acknowledges:	Deity of Jesus Christ	Deity of man
Believes:	Man is basically sinful, and only God can Correct the evil in him.	Man is good and getting better.
Gives glory to:	GOD	SELF
Born Again:	Spiritual rebirth that takes place when an individual chooses to believe by faith the DEITY of JESUS CHRIST, recognizes the SIN in his life and chooses to follow Christ and turn from his sin according to the Scriptures.	Enlightenment: Spiritual awakening that comes when an individual experiences "his own divinity".

Faith based on:	The Word of God	Experience
The Answer:	Jesus Christ – according to the Scriptures	Finding the “self” or “god” within & striving with “works”.
God:	Believe in a PERSONAL GOD who is all good.	Belief in a God or a great force or energy or One Mind. An impersonal God with both good and bad.
Christ:	Jesus Christ, the one and only fully God and fully man.	A position of status held by all deserving members. Arrived at by “self”, “experience” and “works”.
The Bible:	NOTHING should be added and NOTHING should be taken away from the Bible. It is the COMPLETE WORD OF GOD. Inter-literally and literal meaning received.	They pick and choose Scriptures to suit their purposes. They say the Scriptures can be “interpreted” in many different ways. Spiritualized to say whatever they want.
Commitment:	To the Lord Jesus Christ – according to the Scriptures.	To self – or God through a passive or emotional experiential form of religion.

(adapted from WHICH JESUS DO YOU FOLLOW? by M. Dauer:)

World-Class Catastrophe

**An aboriginal fire ceremony; the invocation of the spirits of the dead; a sexual attack on a female delegate; pornographic drawings in the foyer...
What was this - a Psychic Festival? NO! IT WAS A SUPPOSED CHRISTIAN GATHERING OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES!**

What an example we gave to the public. The secular press of Australia came out with the headline - "All Faiths are One With God" - and reported (truthfully) that *"the World Council of Churches took ecumenism to its furthest limits at the weekend, suggesting Muslims, Hindus and others achieve salvation in the same way as Christians, and warning the latter against narrow thinking."*

They had the same sort of fun with the story of & woman delegate who claimed to have been beaten into performing a sexual act with one of the male religious leaders. A sanctuary was then set up in the grounds, a refuge tent where female delegates could seek safety.

What a shameful carry on! At how many secular conferences do we hear of these things?

The WCC meet every seven years, and their seventh assembly gathered in Canberra in February 1991. Over four thousand attended from some 360 member churches, including the

Church of England, Baptist Union, Methodist Church and United Reformed Church. Thirteen guests from non-christian religions were made welcome.

On the opening night, there was an aboriginal fire ceremony and tribal dance, and participants passed through the 'purifying smoke' before the ancient spirit of Canberra was invoked. The Great Spirit, or Rainbow Serpent was honoured.

This Rainbow Serpent, in fact, appeared on the front cover of the WCC brochure, and recalls the decision of the 6th WCC assembly in Vancouver to issue a document entitled "*Between the Flood and the Rainbow; Covenanting for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation*".

The above document calls for 'revolutionary struggle' by covenanting acts between churches and movements of all ideologies and religions to achieve a new economic order; demilitarization; and the protection of the Earth.

Environmental protection (or, integrity in new-age-speak) narrow segment is now a major plank of the WCC mission. At the 7th assembly, one presentation, Churches in Solidarity with Women, was built around the 'greening cross', a cross with a shrub in its centre. This suggests that Jesus died to save the environment.

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

A standing ovation was given to one of the WCC speakers, who made invocations to the spirits of the dead. She was Dr Chung Hyun-Kyung, a feminist Professor of Theology from South Korea.

Dr Chung called the spirit 'her', and invited people to take off their shoes and dance to prepare the way of the spirit. (Her own transcript deliberately used the lower-case spelling).

Then she made invocations to 18 spirits, including Hagar, Uriah, Gandhi, Steve Biko, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and many other freedom fighters. She said that the spirits of the dead are "*agents through whom the Holy Spirit has spoken HER compassion and wisdom...without hearing the cries or these spirits, we cannot hear the voice or the Holy Spirit.*"

The WCC calendar continued the theme by presenting a picture of Maori ancestral spirits for its January page.

The Assembly was also a triumph for inter-faith dialogue. The Council's Director of Interfaith dialogue, Dr Wesley Arirajah, said it was inconceivable to him that God listened to christian prayers but ignored those praying to their particular versions of God.

He went on, "*It is beyond belief that other people have no access to God or that God has no access to other people...It is inconceivable to me that a Hindu, Buddhist, or anybody is outside God. My understanding of God's love is too broad for me to believe that only this narrow segment called the Christian Church will be saved.*"

An Islamic scholar, Prof Ishaq Oloyeda, delivered a speech to the assembly without opposition. He said Christians and Muslims worship the same God.

ONE WORLD CHURCH

The Assembly has now issued a letter addressed to "all churches, christians and peoples" (ie: everyone on earth) which summarizes the united beliefs at all religions. Its purpose is UNITY. The letters says:

"The Spirit calls the churches to a commitment to seek VISIBLE UNITY...The presence or representatives of other world religions as guests in the assembly reminded us of the growing need to respect the image of God in all people, to accept each other as neighbours and to admit our common responsibility with them for God's creation, including humanity."

Can we doubt, from this, that the quest of the WCC is for one united world superchurch?

Now there has been a call for the Church of England to withdraw its membership of the WCC. This may have come about in part through the comments at George Austin, Archdeacon of York, who was shocked by a display of pornographic drawings surrounding a feminist book at a stand in the foyer.

Mr. Austin removed the drawings, but they were handed back to the irate stall-holder by WCC officials. He said, *"I returned from the WCC Assembly convinced that the Church of England needs to take stock of its membership...I seriously doubt if a non-participatory jamboree of this kind can ever be justified again,"*

Perhaps you can add your voice to these protests and make WCC membership an issue at your church.

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