



Volume 5, Number 3 May/June 1994

ICHABOD or GLORY?

by Jewel van der Merwe

There once was a white wooden church with a quaint steeple in a small town in Illinois. The pastor was from Scotland and spoke with gently rolling R's. . . as charming and debonair a gentleman as you could ever hope to meet. Many warm summer nights of my childhood were spent in this idyllic church nestled near the Fox River. The young ladies of the church would sit in the front two rows on the left side, and the young gentlemen similarly on the right. The singing and praise would waft throughout the neighborhood as joyful hearts were lifted in praise to God. There always was an air of expectancy in this little church, and it was a delight for even a child to attend, and enjoy long services! After a service, there was always time set aside to spend at the altar. A strong emphasis was placed on holiness and walking circumspectly before the Lord.

One day this placid scene changed dramatically. Two men from Canada drove up to the little church. They were self-proclaimed "prophets" who came in with "words from the Lord". First they brought sweet and pleasing words to the pastor. They told him things that he liked to hear and won his confidence. He trusted them so implicitly that he felt free to take a vacation and leave them in charge. The "words" these prophets then began "receiving from the Lord" became more insidious and controlling as the weeks rolled by. Since these "words", were always coated with "thus saith the Lord", how could anyone come against these "anointed prophets"? Certainly, God was doing a "new thing" in their midst. The pastor had taken his "vacation" at a center that was moving greatly in the "new thing". When he returned to his church, he was fully ready to take his congregation with him into the "new truths". He found the congregation had been well prepared for this in his absence by the "prophets" he had left in charge.

Before long, the spiritual countenance of this beautiful church had completely changed. They no longer sang the glorious hymns of the church. The youth lost the call to holiness that once had set them apart from other young people. The altar service had strangely departed and "new things" were happening in its place. Before the year was hardly over, the church had disintegrated. The building was sold (somehow the "new prophets" benefited financially from the sale) and was soon boarded up.

In a dream, some years later, I dreamt I was standing, looking at the little white church which had broken windows and a board nailed across the door. My heart yearned just to be able to attend one more service. An old man, bent and white haired, came and stood beside me, tears running down his face as he also looked at the church. I murmured to him, "That was my favorite church! I miss it so". He replied softly, "So do I". As I heard the Scottish accent, I realized it was the former pastor. I looked toward the church again and saw a sign clearly posted "ICHABOD" (the glory has departed).

What is the Glory of God? It is explicitly evident that the glory of God is synonymous with holiness. It is by holiness that the power of God is manifest. Whenever the Glory of the Lord is ministered Isaiah 6 springs to mind:

The presence of the Lord filled the temple and the seraphim, filled with awe, chanted, *"holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."* The glory of the holiness of the Lord overwhelmed Isaiah the prophet, the effect of which made him humbly repent of his sins.

It is impossible to separate the glory of God from the "Full Gospel". In I Timothy 1:11 Paul calls the gospel *"the glorious gospel of the blessed God"*. RV "The Gospel of the Glory".

Preaching the gospel of Christ declares the Glory of God in the beauty of holiness. The Shekinah glory is always distinguished by holiness without which no man shall see God. It is immeasurable, incomprehensible, but is readily identified in holiness. The only way to show we are partakers of His glory is by His holiness manifest in our lives.

A life without holiness is a temple without the Glory of God. A manifestation of glory without holiness is religion without Christ. The absence of holiness in any manifestation falls short of the Glory of God. Without the presence of holiness, the Christian testimony is vain and void of the truth.



This church was torn apart some 35 years ago. At that time, it was not common for a church to be "hit" in this way by "prophets" coming out of the Latter Rain Movement. In stark contrast to what we see today, it is not an occasional "prophet" here or there, but a virtual army that has been gradually assembling and gaining ground unabated, especially in the last decade. This army of "last day prophets" is even bringing their teachings into otherwise orthodox churches, and woe betide anyone who questions their authority! Slowly their teachings permeate the fiber of the assembly and quietly weaves a web throughout the congregation. The change wrought is so subtle, only the most discerning eventually comprehend what is happening. By this time, it is often too late. As the discerners ask questions "What is happening?", the church turns on that one, armed and anxious to brand whoever questions as being divisive. The accusations are "coming against the anointed" and being a "hindrance" to the "new thing" that (supposedly) God is doing. All too often, and sadly so, this person is shunned and ostracized from the congregation.

A well-known prophet, Paul Cain, who is on the speaking circuit has been teaching this same brand of gospel (a carry-over from the Latter Rain Movement). He has been given credibility by a number of popular ministries, namely David (nee Paul) Yonggi Cho, John Wimber, Paul Crouch and others. Just to give an idea of the essence of his teachings, the following are quotes from just one of his messages given at Anaheim Vineyard, Session 7 of a "School For Prophecy".

- "...I tell you we're in a crisis stage right now to where the church is going to be forced to pray and forced to believe for the Prophetic Ministry because that's our only salvation. If God doesn't raise up apostles and prophets and power evangelists and pastors and teachers, then we've had it because the church is going to fade into oblivion. The church is going to fade away."

- "...the Gospel of the Kingdom is not just the Word, it is the Word and power...until we get millions of Christians to have that incarnate Word come to them and them be the Incarnate Word...that's the only way we're going to see a nation turn to the Lord in a day..."

- "...God's strange act is going to bring a New Order of things and bring a NEW BREED in and bring a transformation."

- "...The nations will come to your light...you're going to be the LIGHT OF DAY and the LIGHT OF LIFE. Capital L-I-G-H-T, Capital L-I-F-E. You're going to be the Light of LIFE, just as Jesus stood on the Mount of Transfiguration and went through that Chrysalis Metamorphosis Stage and they saw Him shine - His raiment did shine - His whole being did shine brighter than the noon day sun and God's going to have a whole company - a whole group of people that are going to be like that and then the world will see the Light...All nations will come to your light and that's the way we're going to get world evangelism..."

- "...things are about to change...Men cannot forget how Ezekiel spoke with God's words and a leader in Israel dropped dead...Ananias and Sapphira...came in...and the Apostle Peter brought a striking...indictment of the Holy Ghost against them and they both dropped dead...I tell you, when the place is shaken, liars are taken and when God

begins to move in these last days, He's going to shake the chains loose and there's going to be a chain-reaction and people will die."

- "...We're going to have some channeling one of these days, but it's going to be channeled right out of the throne room of heaven...it's going to be a more sure Word of Prophecy!"

- "...I tell you, God is going to have His army and they're going to be a fearful bunch and they're going to go into everyplace on the face of the earth..."

This is MANIFEST SONS OF GOD TEACHING! The Deity of Jesus Christ is replaced by MAN. A whole group of people going to be going through the Chrysalis Metamorphosis Stage.

It has become very popular to speak today of the "five-fold" ministries which is a system of church government with apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The "Restoration" teaching teaches that God is "restoring" these ministries to the church today. This teaching, unfortunately, opens the door to many heresies. New revelations and visions abound and new teachings are coming forth based upon subjective experiences. These teachings take away the foundation that has once been laid based upon the objective truth of the Word of God and replacing it with a false foundation built upon subjective truth which is based on experience.

Jesus said, *"You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free.* II No place in scripture are experiences used for a basis for truth.

The New Age uses "experience" as a basis for reality - therefore you can create your own reality. I have had many wonderful "experiences" with God and felt that those experiences connected me to God. Eventually the truth of the Word came through to my heart and I realized that it was simply trusting in the Word and building on that wonderful fact that indeed, though heaven and earth pass away, His Word will abide forever. No one was taking my experiences from me - however, I learned that I could not build on those experiences! They were mine...I ~ not connect to God through those experiences (subjective). The only way I "connect" to God is through His Word (objective truth). What a wonderful release! This is indeed what it means to put on the full armor of God!

Always leaning heavily into Manifest Sons teaching are the plethora of prophecies relating to June 9, 1994. Since that date has come and gone, let us examine some of these prophecies. Bear in mind that date setting has always had detrimental effects on the Church. Those propagating this particular prophecy have tried hard to set themselves apart from the date setters. Since there was a particular date set (June 9, 1994) and the prophecy stated that "evil will be ripped from the earth" there have emerged different interpretations or applications to accommodate this prophecy. Below are listed a few of the many interpretations from different people who "confirmed" the prophecy:

- "This is a cleansing that removes evil from the whole world and activates a worldwide spiritual revival with millions of people pouring into the Church". Don Hackman ("THE EVANGELIST")

- "In a similar vision, the Virgin Mary appeared and said, 'A great darkness will come upon the world. The heavens will shake. The only light will be through the Son of God and Man. The lightning bolts will flash like nothing the world has ever seen. MY HAND WILL COME OVER THE WORLD MORE SWIFTLY THAN THE WIND' and Christ will execute a worldwide cleansing and revival". Ibid.

- "David's [David Griffis, director of the Youth with a Mission office - Arvada, Colorado] vision represented an UPCOMING WORLDWIDE REVIVAL BUT PRECEDED BY GOD'S JUDGEMENT." Then September 1, 1993, David, while praying, began to shake. "Then I HEARD the Lord speak and I SAW a picture in my mind. I HEARD, 'June the 9th.' I saw the date in my mind...the heavens will bring forth thunder...commerce will be interrupted. The earth will be black with smoke. DISTRESS AS NEVER BEFORE..."

- Mrs. Teri Griffis came boldly before God's throne and put out a seven day fleece. "I will give you seven days in which to speak to me about June 9th, or I will not believe any of it. On the third day of her prayers in the wee hours of the morning, the Lord spoke to her about other things in her life and then He said to her, 'OH, TERI, JUNE the 9th IS CORRECT. . .'"

- This is a Clean-Up which means, "It is a time for judgment and cleansing. It must be done that my church will be ready..." Don Hackman (THE EVANGELIST)

- God states, "...NOTHING LEFT NOW BUT THE CLEAN-UP AND THE RESURRECTION." Since millions are coming into God's kingdom IN A FLASH, an exciting IMPLICATION evolves from the Anaheim prophecy - (the Resurrection/Rapture follows closely behind the Clean-Up). Ibid.

- "Watch to the east. Even as the sun rises, so will the signs come from the East. For 7 days the earth will vomit and rail. The land will be defiled for 21 days. The earth will be black with smoke. Distress as never before." Don Hackman, THE EVANGELIST. Ibid

- "The bottom line is this. On June 9, 1994, due to the Lord's cleansing action of evil from the earth, it is expected that, WORLDWIDE, commerce, transportation, communications and electricity MAY BE non-operative for a while. Possible solution: supplies NORMALLY purchased may be temporarily replaced with nonperishable food..." Ibid.

- "The east and the west coming together as one in Spirit will bring true revelation. I believe this revelation to be for cleansing and purification, not the rapture..." Cindy Schieger.

The sad thing about this is large churches and TV networks are promoting this type of teaching! We are being readied, en masse, for the biggest deception in history! It is such a tragedy that these folk who claim to speak for God are allowed to have such impact and influence within the church. One "prophet" says:

"When you hear the voice of God it is a voice that. . . sounds so familiar, someone you have known for a long time. . . the biggest problem is to distinguish between

God's voice and your own. God has to use your thought patterns and your voice. We learn by trial and error. To know the voice of the Lord is by faith as well. There is always a constant fight between the flesh and the Spirit." (Kim Clement, TBN Broadcast 4/14/94).

Such teachings and practices, permitted to proliferate unchecked, are taking the church on the royal road of apostasy even farther away from the pure Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. When John Hinkle was questioned on a local radio station on June 15th regarding the June 9th prophecy, instead of apologizing to the public he had various explanations:

1. There was a deep underground earthquake on that day that registered "8" and no one was injured;
2. he heard reports from a number of places of answered prayer; and
3. it was a "spiritual" removing of the evil.

Caught with "egg on the face", the natural man now has to give an excuse for God. Unfortunately, the week before when Hinkle had given the details of the prophecy he clearly stated that everyone would know this was of God. Most of the well-known cults of this century came about by "spiritualizing" the Scripture and by personal visions and revelations!

It matters not whether it be through entertainment, an admixture of spirituality with worldly pleasures, carnal practices leading to worldly lusts, a super spiritual thrust that takes folk into mysticism, supernatural manifestations, or aberrational teachings (such as false prophets)...the end result is that The Glory of the Lord departs!

In the early days of church history, Pentecost came with a burst of fire and glory! It spread quickly throughout the land. The Church has not been the same as a result. The Holy Spirit continues to make Jesus very real to the hearts of those who diligently seek! All along the way however, the church has been plagued with charlatans, counterfeiters and deceivers. Nevertheless, the truth of Pentecost that burst forth as recorded in the pages of the book of Acts has remained a vibrant reality in the lives of believers that steadfastly believe Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever, and continues to baptize His followers today!

Truth will always stand! No so-called prophetic declaration in conflict with Scripture can alter the fact Jesus is coming back for a triumphant church! It is not a church that is plaintively bemoaning its plight and has grown weary in well-doing. No, it is a church who has found that Jesus is the Bright and Morning Star! It has found the victorious life that He promised when He said, *"I will be with you until the end"*. It has found that He is the Healer, not only of broken hearts, but of broken and sick bodies. In the face of sickness, persecution, imprisonment and even death, the child of God is always triumphant!

These unchanging truths are demonstrated clearly in the lives of the fellow Christians in China who are still facing persecution.

"...in the provinces, believers are still fined, imprisoned, and tortured; local regulations still prohibit unofficial church gatherings", One lady was held for 110 days in captivity. She was hung upside down and beaten with electrical cords. Others with her were beaten with wire from the waist down. Their crime was meeting with an evangelist. Their testimony was, "...that God's presence was so tangible during the

torture that, in fact, she felt joyful. 'Because of these afflictions, we loved the souls of China more...and we prayed for those who were torturing us... We go out ready to preach the gospel, ready to go to jail, and ready to die for Jesus' sake.'
(CHRISTIANITY TODAY, May 16, 1994, pp. 33-34).

"It is interesting to note that the underground church in China is apolitical! They pray for their leaders but maintain a careful independence...more than a few believers [in America] trade in their Christian birthright for a mess of earthy pottage. We must continually ask ourselves: Is our first aim to change our government or to see lives in and out of government changed for Christ?" Ibid.

What amazed the writer of this article was that the Chinese women that were interviewed, when asked if they needed financial help, answered "no". His comment was that:

"...the American church, the wealthiest church in the world, always seems to find itself low on cash; yet the Chinese church is too busy fulfilling the Great Commission to notice their poverty...I have sat at the feet of believers in China who are being fitted even now for those white robes that will adorn the saints. Compared to their finery, I felt spiritually naked." Ibid.

The church in China is undoubtedly partaking of the Glory of God. It is this walk with God that becomes more precious than the very breath we breathe, not some New thing, New Anointing or New prophet's ministry. It is the hunger and thirst after things pertaining to God that must captivate our thoughts, not running from one meeting to another to get in on the latest spiritual craze! Oh, that we might know Him and the power of the Holy Spirit!

At the Michigan District Council recently, Thomas Trask, the General Superintendent, was the keynote speaker. He spoke eloquently to the pastors regarding the danger of the glory of the Lord departing from the Assemblies of God. He added that the church landscape is littered with denominations that have had the glory in the past!

It is true that many churches, as Esau, have exchanged their inheritance for a mess of pottage. A church can lose it's touch with the one true God when worldliness, entertainment, or mysticism replace the pure Word of God. It can also lose it's power when sin is not dealt with speedily (or honestly).

Rev. Trask admonished that pastors today are using a "User Friendly Approach" because they don't want people to feel like sinners. He added that the pastors don't really need to go to other churches to learn how to become "Seeker Sensitive". Doing so is a far cry from the message of salvation to the sinners who need a Savior. The shift away from the old time gospel has been so subtle that pastors have fallen into a serious trap, never realizing that they were being every so subtly baited!

With the "mingling" of so many worldly concepts (man's philosophies), the message of the Gospel of Christ has become watered down, even in circles that have prided themselves on being FULL GOSPEL. There is a concerted effort to present Christianity in a way that dwells on the desire of man rather than on the desire of God. You will rarely hear a message preached that brings men and women under deep conviction for their sins. Today's preaching is rather

like a high class sales job to convince folk that there are many advantages to belonging to Jesus!

In Africa there were the "clothes-Christians". These were the folk who flocked to church on the Sunday when clothing was distributed after the service. They came for what they could get! Your motives may not be so penury, but are you like many Christians who go to church for what they can get? Whether it be their social status in the community, a time of entertainment or even spiritual experiences that give them (at best) temporary spiritual euphoria, it is self motivated. It is a little more than what is "in it for me". God then often becomes a glorified image of self complete with frailties, weaknesses...more man like than God-like, and then so easily pushed aside to make way for a new prophet on the scene, a new revelation and even a New Christ.

Yes, tragically the GLORY HAS DEPARTED from many a church. Rev. Trask likened the glory departing to Israel's tragedy when the ark was taken from Israel. Israel always faced defeat when sin was in her midst. Unless we live a righteous and holy life before the Lord, we can not expect the glory of the Lord in our midst. Pentecost is powerful because it is a manifestation of a sovereign God. A God who can not be limited and put in a box! God does speak to the Church through tongues and prophecy. However, there is much going on in this realm that is not of God! God does not speak through unclean vessels!

Eli realized that without the ark all was lost. His daughter-in-law heard that the ark was taken and she immediately went into labor and called the name of her child ICHABOD and died.

Without the work of the Holy Spirit our best days are over. We can not afford the cheap substitutes any longer. We are tired of the lies we have been told by the Charismatic Media Avalanche. No, we do not need the arts to be "restored" to the Church. The gift ministries Ephesians talks about were not: Clown ministry, puppet shows, laughing ministries, recovery groups or therapy sessions etc. etc.

Christians are out marching in the streets to show "unity" to the world, yet they have problems in their own homes getting along with family members. There are those weeping and repenting for the sins of their grandparents, but are wallowing in the mire of their own guilt and unrepentant sin!

The Word of God gives the way of escape in a simple word, "Repent". Return to your first love! Yes, the Holy Spirit is still in the earth. He will judge the world of sin and unrighteousness and will bring us to repentance when we allow him to do so. The pre-eminence of Scripture must be returned to the Church so that Christians may know the working of the Holy Spirit of God.

The way of the Cross still leads us home. Doctrine is necessary for correcting the false teaching that pervades the church. There is a block against studying the Word of God. Recognize the reasons for this attack and from whence it comes. The flesh likes the easy way out. A 15 minute sermon laced with man's philosophies satisfies the flesh, but starves the spirit!

My young daughter is in her first year of Algebra. I never studied the subject, so when I look at her book my mind boggles! She complains that every day she must learn a new concept. It is only when she grasps that concept does the subject make any sense and then she must build on that which she has learned. It takes hard work and perseverance for her to learn the subject!

You can not learn the Word of God by osmosis! You have to study! Learn to check out what is labeled as truth, or taught as truth, by the Scripture. Build upon that which you learn through the Word. The most discerning folk that I have met are the ones who love the Word. They take great joy in discussing the Scriptures. They are not afraid to have their ideas challenged because they know Scripture will either confirm or refute these ideas! They are able to give an answer! If you are not skilled in the Word, you faint and falter when challenged or you hide under the guise of "unity" so as not to be shown ignorant of the doctrines in which you express belief. When you can not defend your position you become very defensive and then will rather challenge on a personal basis, hence the confusion between "heresy hunting vs. Discernment" (See the March/April newsletter). Confusion abounds as a result and on the heels of this confusion an apostate "Ichabod" church is waiting in the wings for the curtain call rather than the Bride awaiting the Bridegroom's call.

Thank You God that Your call is still going forth! I still have the opportunity to repent of my ways and come to You for Mercy! I can still seek Your face! I can still hear from heaven! The Bread of Life is still being broken for my weary soul! I need You, great God - Giver of All Life! The land is dry and thirsty. I thirst for You as the hart panteth after the water brook. Lord, I repent for the times I have not trusted in You alone. Forgive me and lead me in the way of righteousness - for Your Name's sake. Amen.

New Spirituality **by Ray Yungen**

Ten years ago while discussing recent discoveries regarding New Age movement with a fellow Christian; I was startled with his response. He merely chuckled and said, "All this stuff is just a fad, it will blow over in a few years". He did not feel there was anything to it and why make a "fuss".

Recently in Portland, Oregon it looked for awhile like this man's predictions were coming true. Three of the four largest New Age book stores in Portland, Oregon folded in the course of one year. This was something unthinkable a relatively short time ago. One of these book stores had been a pillar of the Portland New Age community since 1979. Another one was even older. Could this mean that the New Age movement was nearing its predicted end?

An article in the Portland OREGONIAN, newspaper revealed a more sobering reasons for the demise of these bookstores. The cause was not a lack of interest - but just the opposite. Regular bookstores now were stocking so many New Age books there no longer was a need for bookstores which specialized in New Age subjects.

I checked out the New Age books in a bookstore of a major national chain (BARNES & NOBLE). To my amazement, there were hundreds of New Age books in the "NEW AGE", "RELIGION" and "HEALTH" sections. Most significant was in the "Self-Help" section there were over 200 separate titles of books based on the occult perspective, 250 titles in the Addiction and Recovery and 500 - 600 titles in the New Age section. In the religion section there were 50 titles and many of these had to do with the subject of "angels" - very popular in New Age circles right now. In all there were over 1,000 New Age titles in one bookstore alone. Numbers this pervasive in such a national chain indicates that the New Age spiritual model is now being accepted widely as "normal" or "mainstream". A national demand for this market appears to have expanded dramatically rather than "blown over".

This open acceptance was made painfully clear while I was showing to a Christian friend various New Age books in a WaldenBooks bookstore at a local mall. As I was holding up one particular book, a young mother approached us and enthusiastically proclaimed, "Oh, he is really good. He knows a lot." My friend solemnly replied that this author was leading people away from Christianity and towards Eastern Mysticism. She glared back and defiantly said, "Well, I'm open-minded," and then hurried off.

Fuelling such acceptance are things like B. Dalton Booksellers putting little plastic signs under certain New Age books promising, "better family relationship" and "healing emotional wounds" for those who purchase those books.

There is also an ever-increasing blatancy in which New Agers present their true agenda. Robin Norwood, who wrote the huge best-seller, "Women Who Love Too Much" reveals on the jacket of her newest book, Why Me, Why This, Why Now" that she intends to take her "30 million readers" into the "deeper realms of spirit". She then comes out and states she is a disciple of Alice Bailey, the famous occultist, who coined the very term - New Age.

In the light of all this, I believe that "secular humanism" is no longer the most formidable threat to the Church in our time. I believe every regular bookstore in America is becoming a dispenser of New Age thought under the guise of health, self-help, creativity and spiritual well-being. Ten years ago I saw only a smattering of such books in regular bookstores. This is not the case now. Spiritually "perilous times" are indeed upon us. Society is being influenced by the "New Age" through the therapeutical mind/body approach. Even the American Legion organization has joined this effort. In their April, 1994 issue they presented "alternative medicine" including meditation and yoga in a very positive light. Dr. N. Ornish (New Age) was widely quoted in this piece and portrayed as some one who had legitimate answers to health problems.

The challenge to real Christians is to know and to preach the Gospel. It is the true "power of God" for "all that believe" (Romans 1:16, Romans 3:22). If one understands this truth, then the New Age preaching of the "higher self" will be seen for the subtle deception that it really is.

(Ray Yungen is author of "For Many Shall Come In My Name" available from this ministry or order from your local Christian bookstore).

An Unholy Renaissance Of Sacred Sexuality

by Bent Kjos

A chilly San Francisco wind swept along the stony walls of Grace Cathedral, belying the nearness of Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year. On the sidewalk, women buttoned their jackets and waited in line for admission to the June 24 *Renaissance of the Sacred Feminine Conference*. Some of us studied the program. The cover featured a sensual goddess dancing in front of a large circle - perhaps a sacred sun, or a Buddhist wheel of life, or a Sioux medicine wheel...It didn't matter which. Today's "goddess" is universal enough to encompass all the world's earth-centered religions and female deities.

An introductory paragraph suggested that this pantheistic yet many-faced goddess would unify people and save the planet: "This participatory event celebrates and honors the presence of the Divine Mother at the heart of the emerging global civilization. The Sacred Feminine has a central role in the healing of our divided minds and endangered planet... Without spiritual transformation on a massive and unprecedented scale, humankind will not survive..."

The waiting crowd grew impatient. The 6:30 entrance time had come and gone, but all pleas for shelter inside were ignored. "Remember we're on a cyclical path, not linear like the old patriarchal ways," was the only excuse given. I smiled, hoping that goddess-spirituality would continue to prove its true colors.

Twenty-five minutes late, the doors flew open and the crowd rushed in, filling the large Episcopal cathedral. While eerie chants to Mother Earth echoed between the gothic pillars, I glanced at a green slip of paper someone handed me at the door. "Failure," it said.

Curious, I turned to a woman next to me and whispered, "What did you get?"

The woman read her green slip and frowned. "Slavery!"

"Ah Mama! Ah Mama! Ah Mama..." chanted the Bay Area Lesbian Chorale Ensemble.

As others joined the chant, a large screen flashed pictures of goddesses from around the world. Emphasizing procreation and destruction, the images ranged from voluptuous fertility goddesses to gruesome blood-guzzling avengers demanding human sacrifice.

A four-step journey toward conscious oneness with this "Sacred feminine" began with surrender: "We bow to your sacred power, the holy wisdom of Sophia, our beloved mother who is in heaven and earth..."

"Our Father in Heaven," I prayed silently. "Holy is Your Name.."

The second step, Chaos and Ordeal, meant *experiencing* the "ordeals of birth, womb and transformation." We were told to *imagine* the condition written on our green slips of paper, *enter* its darkness, *feel* the pain, *invoke* the dark mother goddess, then groan, weep and wail. While the wailing sounds of imagined pain surged through the room. I thanked God for His triumph.

The third step, Embracing and Understanding, offered only pagan myths and hollow affirmations as solutions to life's pain. A story about a Japanese sun goddess ended with a futile solution to fear: a mirror for grazing at one's own glory.

The fourth step, Rapture and Transformation, was led by Andrew Harvey, a guru to Westerners seeking Eastern mystical experience. Mocking the Ten Commandments, he listed "Ten Rather Firm Suggestions." The ninth typifies the sensual focus of contemporary paganism: "cultivate sacred Eros in all its ecstatic connections."

TEN RATHER FIRM SUGGESTIONS:

1. Adore me...the Mother...
2. Adore every sentient being...
3. Dare to adore yourself as my divine child.
4. Know...that nature is the sacred body of my sacred life.
5. Know that my love is eternally active...
6. [S]hine to all four directions.
7. Dissolve all social barriers between sects and religions.
8. Dissolve all barriers between...the sacred and profane...
9. Discover and cultivate sacred Eros in all its ecstatic connections.
10. Know that I can be contacted anywhere at anytime through one sacred syllable "Ma".

Since Harvey communicates directly with unholy spirits, he receives the kind of messages that fuel today's spiritual rebellion. Recently, the "Divine Mother," told him that "everything will be transformed when you know and see me...I have willed the end of homophobia. I have willed the end of reason. I have willed the end of denial of the sanctity of the body...I have willed...the end of the exploitation of nature. For I have willed a garden..."

But there will be no garden under the promiscuous, pseudo-tolerant reign of the goddess. Contrary to the utopian promises of earth-centered social reformers, God warns us that paganism brings drought, war, famine and tyranny. (Deut. 11 and 28)

Yet the call to spiritual and global transformation rings out from global-minded leaders everywhere - in education, entertainment, the media, and politics. Al Gore affirmed it in his book, *Earth in the Balance*. New Age author, James Redfield, outlined it in his top-selling book, *The Celestine Prophecy*.

We shouldn't be surprised. Always, when God's people turn from truth, they drift back to earth-centered spirituality. I Corinthians 10 reminds us that we are not immune to pagan deception nor its deadly consequences.

The Sacred Feminine conference would continue two more days. After that, seekers could feed their craving for occult sensuality at any of the planned solstice celebrations on or before June 21. But J had seen enough. Driving home, I thanked God for His victory over pagan deities and the forces they represent. He alone can bring a renaissance of truth and light into this spreading darkness.

For practical information about feminist spirituality, which is spreading through our schools and media as well as churches, read *Under the Spell of Mother Earth* (Victor Books).

GRIEVING FOR AMERICA

Day care centers on the rise,
Toddlers waving tearful good-byes.
Double incomes now a must?
Hail to the dollar in whom we trust!

From Happy Days and Dr. Seuss
To pornography and child abuse.
Gone are the days of Barnie and Fred
Replaced by the likes of the Grateful Dead.

AIDS and all its distant cousins
Spreading destruction 'cross our land
With abstinence the only solution –
But it's uncool to take this stand!

We'd rather pass out condoms
Than teach our kids at home
'bout the risks they face when they decide
Far from God's rules to roam.

Abortion blood now stains the ground
Which on His principals once was found.
Kervorkian now a death engineer
To anyone who would bid him near.

Once proud and tall and statuesque
This land of mine did stand.
Now America's values have gone limp
And I wonder if it was planned!

Body piercing and tattooing
Priming us for the day
Where we'll be asked to accept the mark
Of whose name I cannot say.

Computer highways linking us
In a great entangled web
When your number will tell the government
What you bought and sold and said.

For this country once was based on Him
Has now turned the other way
And 'less was circumvent again
We'll have a price to pay.

God's been more than patient
With this wayward, rebellious land
And what I dread and pray won't be
Is that He remove His protective hand.

Char Follis
Lake Orion, Michigan 5/94