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# DISCERNMENT NEWSLETTER

“...how is it that ye do not discern this time?” Luke 12:56

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## Art. IX Sec. 11 in the Assemblies of God & the process of TRANSFORMATION

By Jewel Grewe

The Assemblies of God denomination holds a General Council every two years. This year they took a vote pertaining to “transformation.” These proceedings reveal much about the formation of a global church. What follows is an overview of what transpired, the ramifications of this vote, a biblical commentary explaining the dangers of ecumenism, and a brief explanation of the new doctrines of “transformation.”

I attended Central Bible College, an AG college. My father was an Assemblies of God pastor as was my late husband, who took a keen interest in the changes that would take place on the conference floor. In 1995 a bylaw was put in place that provided for full fellowship with other evangelical denominations of “like precious faith.” So, when I noted that this resolution was to be replaced by a new resolution, which was to be presented at this year’s Council, I was concerned. This new resolution on ecumenism seemed to be a ruse to eliminate any barrier to fellowship with Catholics and World Council of Churches members. I certainly am aware that anyone can glibly agree with “five basic truths” and this is happening all of the time. But then the ecumenical “mixture” comes flowing, as we have seen recently in the global prayer movement.

Discernment Ministries recently placed three articles by Dr. Opal Reddin on our website ([www.discernment-ministries.org](http://www.discernment-ministries.org)). Dr. Reddin has been an ordained Assemblies of God minister since 1946. Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Central Bible College, she served as Chair of the Biblical Education Division. In 1999, Central Bible College established the “Opal Reddin Chair of Pentecostal Truth.” Now retired, she continues to be a voice for Truth. Dr. Reddin prepared special reports in July pertaining to the upcoming General Council of the Assemblies of God that was held in Denver, Colorado, on August 2-5, 2005. In these reports, she expressed concern about the resolution that was on the agenda. Copies of her full reports are posted at [http://www.discernment-ministries.org/NLSpecialReport\\_July\\_2005.htm](http://www.discernment-ministries.org/NLSpecialReport_July_2005.htm). Dr. Reddin wrote the following:

### Why We Should Retain the Present Bylaw Article IX, Section 11

The original bylaw, adopted in 1969 and *re-emphasized* in 1995, reads:

“The General Council of the Assemblies of God disapproves of ministers or churches participating in any of the modern ecumenical organizations on a local, national,

or international level in such a manner as to promote the ecumenical movement because:

a. We believe the basis of doctrinal fellowship of said movement to be so broad that it includes people who reject the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of Christ, the universality of sin, the substitutionary atonement, and other cardinal teachings that we understand to be essential to biblical Christianity.

b. We believe the emphases of the ecumenical movement to be at variance with what we hold to be biblical priorities, frequently displacing the urgency of individual salvation with social concerns.

c. We believe that the combination of many religious organizations into a world superchurch will culminate in the religious Babylon of Revelation 17 and 18.

(This is not to be interpreted to mean that a limitation may be imposed upon any Assemblies of God minister regarding his or her Pentecostal witness or participation on a local level with inter-denominational activities.)”

### The Proposed Revision of this bylaw says:

The General Council of the Assemblies of God encourages ministers or churches to fellowship with other Christians of like precious Faith who hold to the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of Christ, the universality of sin, the substitutionary atonement, the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and His second coming.

The General Council of the Assemblies of God shall not belong to any interdenominational or ecumenical organization that denies the evangelical beliefs stated in the above paragraph, and urges its ministers and churches to avoid entanglements with such interdenominational or ecumenical organizations except as opportunity may arise to support Biblical values in the culture or provide opportunity to bear witness to our evangelical and Pentecostal faith and experience.

The responses to posting Dr. Reddin’s comments on the Discernment Ministries website ranged from horror that a woman would be writing articles like this to sheer amazement that the Assemblies of God would be considering a resolution so far-reaching as to open the doors to an ecumenical mandate.

When the Resolution came to the floor of the Council on August 4<sup>th</sup> there were 1,666 voting members present. The discussion was quite animated. Those speaking for the resolution wanted to “strike a balance” and make a positive statement to be “able to speak into the life of people.” Rev. Jason Evans rose and said the language reflected in the resolution was “positive” and made the guidelines so broad that they could include homosexuals and Roman Catholics.

He made mention that there is now an Assembly of God church on the East Coast that brags about meetings held with Roman Catholics leading the services in their church.

Rev. Robert Stalcup suggested that the original bylaw section (c) be re-inserted regarding religious Babylon. This proposal was quickly rejected.

Those who were concerned about the missionaries stated that in many countries the missionaries will be affected deeply. This is because the main thrust of their mission work is to the Roman Catholics, and this new resolution strikes at the very root of the Gospel.

Rev. John Marston spoke in support of retaining the original Article IX Section 11, as he believed the current wording protected the cardinal doctrines as they related to eschatology. He was opposed to the proposed wording as it encourages ministers to reach across denominational lines to embrace those of "like precious faith." He said that everyone believes their faith to be "like precious faith" even though it may not be founded on Scripture alone.

Rev. Michael O'Brien said the following: "I was raised a Roman Catholic, studied for the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. After being saved, I served as a foreign missionary in Catholic Ireland. The Bishop of our Diocese put out an edict on my life. I have with me 8625 catechisms of the Roman Catholic Church that should tell us that we don't want any involvement with Ecumenism."

The highlight came when Dr. Reddin arose, slowly making her way to the microphone nearest her. I knew what an effort she had made to come to the General Council. But she did so because she is passionate in what she believes. There was not a hint of quaver in her voice as she declared:

It is the GOSPEL that is at stake in our present deliberations. In Galatians 1 and 2 the Gospel was at stake. God had a man, Paul, who publicly rebuked even Peter for siding with the Judaizers who were teaching "Jesus plus works of law for righteousness." This was followed by the first Council of the Church in Acts 15 where they dealt with the same issue we are dealing with here today. Led by the Holy Spirit, Paul, Peter, and all agreed that salvation is by Jesus Christ alone plus nothing. Jesus is all sufficient, our redemption, our sanctification, our salvation (I Cor. 1:30).

I am against this resolution because it does not adequately protect the Gospel, whereas our present bylaw does.

At this point the General Superintendent, Thomas Trask, interrupted to state that what Dr. Reddin was saying was not germane to the resolution. Dr. Reddin graciously said, "Thank you," and sat down. What Dr. Reddin intended to say next is recorded here:

All the ecumenically minded churches, Catholics in particular, would immediately claim to believe all of the five points listed in the first paragraph of the resolution. But each has a way a presenting "a different gospel," adding "works for righteousness" just as the Judaizers were

doing. That is why we need to keep the present bylaw, to keep us separate from ecumenical movements and thus protect the Gospel!

Unfortunately when the vote was cast, it was 899 for accepting the change and 767 against. Dr. Reddin's comment to me was, "I feel sure the sad defeat is minor compared to things we will face in the future, but God is in the Future as well as the Past!"

The following are comments from a few of the pastors who opposed the resolution:

**Rev. John Marston.** The 51st General Council of the Assemblies of God was, for me, a troubling experience. It seemed that rationalization and emotion, instead of the Scripture, was the criteria by which some of the resolutions were evaluated.

Resolution 1 called for returning to what had been the longstanding position of the Assemblies of God. Since the founding of the Assemblies of God, persons who were divorced and remarried prior to conversion were not granted credentials. This resolution lost by a wide margin of votes. Instead of presenting clear scriptural direction, the Doctrinal Purity Committee issued a list of the pro-con arguments to "guide" the voters in their decision.

In spite of a valiant effort on the part of some, Resolution 19, which would "soften" our stand on the Ecumenical Movement, was passed.

It is noteworthy that a far greater number of persons voted on Resolution 1 than voted on Resolution 19. It seemed that the Council was more interested in compromising on divorce and remarriage as it related to the ministry, than the issue of being prepared for the soon return of Christ.

The overall atmosphere seemed to lack a sense of the Holiness of God; nor was there any reference to the lateness of the hour and the need for The Bride (the church) to make ready to meet the Bridegroom.

**Rev. Michael O'Brien.** Having been a Roman Catholic and studied for the priesthood, I am in awe as to how many of our own are sympathetic to the Roman theology and consider them to be equally as Christian as we. I was taught in seminary that when the tradition of the Church differs from that of the Scriptures, we are to hold to the traditions of the Church. As I read Scripture, I see that necromancy is an abomination yet from a very young person, I was taught that it was proper to pray to the saints, speak with the Virgin Mother of God, depend upon them for our daily needs and that salvation could only be found through Our Lady. "All to Jesus through Mary" was the phrase that I learned and practiced until I was 26 years old! Today, the Church is in the process of canonizing a Pope who had a very deep devotion to the Virgin Mary. I recently read an article in *Charisma* that called him the "Vicar of the Spirit." What is it going to take for eyes to be opened to the reality that the

Roman Catholic Church is an, if not THE, Apostate Church of the Revelation? I could go on and on as to why the Roman Catholic could not and should not be referred to as an Evangelical church. Never ONCE did I hear that I needed to experience a personal relationship with Jesus Christ in order to be saved. I was even forbidden to have a copy of the Scriptures in seminary. I was told it would only confuse me as I didn't have the authority to interpret the Word into my own life. By the way – that has NEVER changed. Catholics can read the Bible but are still discouraged from applying it personally to their own lives without the intervention of a priest. Hopefully, this information will continue to be placed in the hands of many who don't have a clue.

**Rev. Jeff Whittaker.** I am the one that stood and addressed the Council following the nonspecific and politically ringing comments of a General Presbyter from the Washington, D.C. area. Overall, there seemed to be a type of doctrinal, historical, and eschatological anesthesia pumped into the ventilation system of the CCC when the issue was discussed. I am in great hope that now that the newly revised resolution passed on 4 Aug, it can be followed by a more detailed position paper from the General Council Executives, giving scriptural and historical reasoning behind our shift, as well as guidelines of behavior in “reaching” our Roman Catholic friends. If we can get someone in leadership to clearly state that Roman Catholics need to be saved from an unscriptural “system of salvation,” it will help our credential holders know how to conduct themselves.

...We now know that we have an AG minister allowing a priest to teach on transubstantiation while conducting an ecumenical mass. We have an ordained AG credential holder who is a professor of Church History and Ecumenicist at Fuller Theological Seminary who helped write a comprehensive document as part of the “Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue” stating that Pentecostals should not “proselytize” Roman Catholics, but rather “bring people to faith in Jesus Christ or to commit themselves more deeply to Him *within the context of their own church.*” (Those functioning in true Christian love would never) “encourage a *change in someone's Christian affiliation... Proselytism must be avoided.*” [“Evangelization, Proselytism, and Common Witness.” 1997 report from the International Dialogue (1990-1997) between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and classical Pentecostal denominations and leaders, p. 20.]

Now, we are told that we are making these changes because it will expand the ministry opportunities of credential holders like our esteemed Brother Dick Foth (whom I have deeply enjoyed every time I have heard him!). What expansion are we looking for? Is it expansion or redefinition? I believe that historic Pentecostal fellowships have been so intoxicated by the alluring mixture of political correctness, seeker sensitivity, and pragmatically successful church growth philosophies, that we are in a prime position to keep asking the customer what they want, and basing our message on what works, rather than pressing into the depth

of spiritual power and vitality that caused our Apostolic Fathers in the upper room to be mocked and accused of being “drunk with new wine.” You can bet that neither they nor our AG founders got that from having neatly packaged 55 to 60 minute worship services with appealing relevant music, skits, and a message on how to be a winner in the new millennium. A local seeker church that draws thousands on a weekly basis just returned from a highly publicized staff retreat to Las Vegas where they researched new ideas for future services (as reported in a local newspaper). They have also been found sliding back and forth across the theological spectrum depending on where the polls were that month.

I believe that the greatest days for our movement are potentially still ahead, but we must sound a clarion call as to how we will navigate the treacherous waters of our generation.

*In order to provide an overview of the scope of the problem, Professor Johan Malan from South Africa compiled the following abridged version of Dr. Reddin's articles which are posted at the Discernment website. This material is an excellent refutation of many of the neo-evangelical doctrines being promulgated in the name of “transformation.”*

#### **Dangers of the Ecumenical Movement**

- I believe the basis of doctrinal fellowship of the ecumenical movement is so broad that it includes people who reject the inspiration of Scripture, the deity of Christ, the universality of sin, the substitutionary atonement, and other cardinal teachings that we understand to be essential to biblical Christianity.
- I believe the emphases of the ecumenical movement to be at variance with what we hold to be biblical priorities, frequently displacing the urgency of individual salvation with social concerns.
- I believe that the combination of many religious organizations into a world superchurch will culminate in the religious Babylon of Revelation 17.
- I believe that the Gospel is “the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16). Uncompromised allegiance to it would protect us against ecumenical movements which inevitably blur and eventually destroy the Gospel message.

The contemporary ecumenical movement is as dangerous as was the coming of the Judaizers to the Early Church with their false “gospel of “JESUS *plus* works of law” (Acts 15:1; Galatians 1:6-9; 2:1-21). We need not be surprised by the ecumenists among us today. The Judaizers were so influential that even Peter and Barnabas were temporarily drawn away. Paul immediately and publicly accused them of hypocrisy and pronounced the curse of God on the false “gospel. Peter and Barnabas saw the Truth, repented, and joined with Paul in the first Council of the Church in Jerusalem, where the Holy Spirit led the Church to settle the message of the Gospel for all time (Acts 15:2-28).

### RCC leads the ecumenical movement

The main leader in the current ecumenical movement is the Roman Catholic Church; it teaches the same heretical “JESUS *plus* works for righteousness” message as that of the Judaizers. Like Paul and all the Apostles, we have the blood-bought privilege of preaching the Gospel of “JESUS *plus nothing*.” Through the finished work of Calvary, Jesus Christ provided our full Salvation. HE “became for us wisdom from God – and righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1Cor. 1:30).

The doctrinal position of RCC can be summarized as follows:

1. They will say, “We agree with you that the Scriptures are inspired,” but they also insist that the Catholic Church is the higher authority and that Scripture must be interpreted according to their Tradition (Vatican II, *Dei Verbum*).
2. Their Tradition accepts the Deity of Christ, but by worshiping Mary as “Mother of God,” they destroy the meaning of “Deity” (Catholic Catechism, 25).
3. They do believe in the universality of sin; however, they insist that the merit of Jesus Christ is applied to infants by the sacrament of baptism, and by baptism the guilt of original sin is remitted (Council of Trent, 22, 23, 54). As children grow up, their sins are dealt with by the unscriptural doctrines of Penance, Confession to priests, Indulgences, and finally the fires of Purgatory.
4. They will say, “Yes, we believe in Christ’s substitutionary atonement,” but for Catholics there is no justification by Christ *alone*. In their *Decree on Ecumenism*, we read, “For it is through Christ’s Catholic Church *alone* that the means of salvation can be obtained.” They say Christ makes salvation possible, but He is only one of the means of justification. Other essential means of grace include the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist, efficacious *only when* administered by the Catholic Church. They also insist that “Mary is truly Mother of the Church and *brings birth of believers*” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 25).
5. They profess faith in the physical resurrection of Christ and His second coming, but they insist that no one can be ready for that event without going through the cleansing fires of purgatory.
6. They teach that Purgatory exists because “the saved must be purged before entering Heaven” (*Catechism*, 268).

### Biblical church unity

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit. It is the end of God's purpose in human history; Christ “loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not

having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing” (Eph. 5:25,27). Every one who is born of the Spirit is a member of the “church of the Firstborn, which are registered in Heaven” (Heb. 12:23). The Church is universal with some from every tribe and nation. It is invisible in the sense that it is impossible to see the Church as a definite group in a definite place. All creation waits for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:18).

One of the most popular topics in Christian circles today is “Church Unity.” Many leaders are saying, “We must get together and bring the answer to Jesus' prayer in John 17.” Let us consider the *kind* of unity for which Jesus prayed, the fact that His prayer *was* answered, and that His prayer *continues* to be answered, according to His will as revealed in the Word.

Jesus prayed for His disciples: “that they may be one just as We are One” (v. 22b). He said, “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word” (v. 20). We are awed as we contemplate God the Son praying to God the Father that we might have the same kind of unity as that existing between *them!* Let us consider what kind of unity this is. First, this unity is *spiritual*. The Father and the Son are one in essence from eternity to eternity (John 17:5; 10:30). We know God is Spirit (John 4:24) and that God the Son in His incarnation became man with a physical body (John 1:14). Their essential unity was never broken because it is spiritual and immutable (John 10:30). Second, this unity is in *truth*. Jesus said, “I Am the Truth” (John 14:6), and He prayed, “Sanctify them through Your truth; Your Word is truth” (John 17:17). Third, we see that this unity is in *love*. He prayed, “that they may be perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me... that the love with which You loved Me may be in them” (John 17:23,26).

### Jesus' prayer is answered

Jesus' prayer for unity was answered initially on the day of Pentecost, and the Spirit-given unity was manifested in the Early Church. Acts records what we often refer to as the birth of the Church. The 120 + 3000 were brought into *spiritual* unity as all were filled with the Holy Spirit (2:4,38,41). They were in unity in the *Truth*, “continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine” (2:42).

All Scriptures that refer to church unity make clear that the true Church, the Body of Christ, *is one*. The only way to be in the true Church is to be placed in the Body of Christ by the Holy Spirit in regeneration; “the Body is one . . . all the members are one... for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one Body” (1Cor. 12:12-13). “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him” (1Cor. 6:17). “You are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

Nowhere are we admonished to implement this unity. Ephesians 4 does tell us we are to “*keep* the unity of the

Spirit in the bond of peace” (v.3), and that Jesus gave the five-fold ministry for the perfecting of the Body “till we all come to the unity of *the Faith*... to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (11-13). “The Faith” is the body of orthodox Christian doctrine, well known to the Early Church and preserved for us in the New Testament.

### Unity in doctrine is essential

We agree with David Wells (*No place for truth or Whatever happened to evangelical theology?* 1993:103) when he says, “there is no Christian faith in the absence of ‘sound doctrine’ (1Tim. 1:10; Tit. 1:9).” Without it, we have neither the Father nor the Son (2John 9). We are told to “contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). We must “guard” this faith (2Tim. 1:13-14; 4:3). We know that this faith was stated in *propositional* truths, for Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “I plead with you that you all speak the same thing and that there be no division among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1Cor. 1:10). It is on this basis that churches have statements of fundamental truths. Belief and practice are inextricably linked (1 John 2:3–3:18).

There are *two kinds of division*, one of God and the other of Satan. When Paul warned against division, he was referring to *bad division*, caused by *false doctrine*. Some “depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and *doctrines of demons*” (1Tim. 4:1). In John’s Epistles he warned, “Many antichrists have come... they went out from us, but they were not of us” (1John 2:18-19). Regarding fellowship, he wrote, “If anyone comes with *another doctrine*, do not receive him... for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds” (2John 10,11). Paul told the Romans to “mark those who cause division contrary to the *doctrine* which you have learned” and avoid them (16:17).

There is *good*, necessary division, the result of being separated from Error by the Truth (John 17:17). Jesus said, “I came to bring division” (Luke 12:51); He separated His Church from the Judaism that rejected Him (John 1:11). Paul maintained this separation by exposing the Judaizing heresy as “another (accursed) Gospel” (Gal. 1:6-9). Without this division, Christianity would have gradually become merely a sect of Judaism.

### Problems in current ecumenical movements

The basis of doctrinal fellowship of the ecumenical movement is so broad that it includes people who reject the inspiration of Scripture, the Deity of Christ, the universality of sin, the substitutionary atonement, and other cardinal teachings which we understand to be essential to biblical Christianity. The World Council of Churches has included as participants at conferences, not only all Christian churches, but also adherents of *non-Christian religions*. For instance, the 1991 conference in Canberra included Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and Sikhs; a Korean Presbyterian

professor near the end of her lecture summoned the spirit of Han and chanted to the departed spirits of ancestors.

The Roman Catholic ecumenical movement works in various ways. The New Catechism has not changed the insistence that there is no salvation outside the Church, referring to the Church in Rome. All the objectionable doctrines are still there, including baptismal regeneration, grace inherent in the Mass through transubstantiation, prayer to Mary, indulgences, and purgatory. Their “salvation” is a “faith plus works,” the same Judaizing heresy anathematized by Paul (Gal. 1:6-9).

The goal of Catholic dialogue with other faiths is to bring all Christians together in the One Church. In the *Decree on Ecumenism*, they state their purpose: “The results will be that, little by little... all Christians will be gathered... into the unity of the one and only Church... This unity, we believe, subsists in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose.” They also make the umbrella of the Church big enough to cover those in some non-Christian religions: “The plan of salvation includes those who acknowledge the Creator [Muslims and Jews]; together with us they adore the one, merciful God.”

### Danger: the loss of TRUTH

In 1994 a group of Catholic leaders and Evangelical leaders drafted a document known as ECT, short for “Evangelicals and Catholics Together in Mission.” Having read the document, I find it to be a plea for *visible* unity at the expense of Truth. For example, the one absolute essential for being in the true Church, “justification by faith,” is barely mentioned, though it is one of the major doctrines that irrevocably divide Protestants and Catholics. *ECT* forbids “proselytizing.” *In practice, it would stifle the evangelizing of Catholics*. Effectively, millions of lost souls will have to be left in the darkness of a false “Gospel” for the sake of man-made “unity.”

## What Is Transformation?

By Lynn & Sarah Leslie

When Christians hear the word “transformation” bandied about, they assume it is a biblical word. This is because the word is used in Romans 12:2: *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Matthew Poole’s *Commentary* from the 1600s exhorts: “Be you regenerated, and changed in your whole man; beginning at the mind, by which the Spirit of God worketh upon the inferior faculties of the soul....” Matthew Henry’s *Commentary* expounds, “The progress of sanctification, dying to sin more and more, and living to righteousness more and more.” The Greek word for biblical “transformation” is *metamorphoo*, from which we get the English word *metamorphosis*: i.e., a complete change, such

as a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. Biblical transformation, then, applies to an individual believer's sanctification.

There is another Greek word translated as "transformed" or "transforming" into KJV English. This word is *metaschematizo*, which carries the root word *schema* which means "fashion," from which we get the English word "scheme." 2Cor. 11:13-15 carries this warning: *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*

New Age Theosophists introduced new meanings for the word "transformation" into the modern lexicon in the early 1980s. Author Marilyn Ferguson, who is credited with launching the "coming out party" for Luciferian Theosophists, extensively used the term.<sup>1</sup> She defined it as "transformation of consciousness," "a new *seeing*," "conscious evolution," and a "paradigm change." Transformation was an essential part of the Teilhardian leap from "individual evolution" to "collective evolution."<sup>2</sup> Christian discernment researcher and author Constance Cumbey bluntly remarked that Ferguson's type of "transformation" was "a euphemism for progressively deeper levels of demonic influence."<sup>3</sup>

In today's neo-evangelical church, the term "transformation" is currently in vogue. Various churches and denominations claim to be undergoing "transformation." One definition of "transformation" is:

**Transformation**--the measurable supernatural impact of the presence and power of God on human society, sacred and secular. In the church, this is characterized by increased holiness of life, accelerated conversion growth, reconciliation in relationships, mobilization of gifts and callings, and an increased relevance to and participation in greater society. In the culture, this may be characterized by pervasive awareness of the reality of God, a radical correction of social ills, a commensurate decrease in crime rates (evidence of authentic biblical justice, as described in Isaiah 58), supernatural blessing on local commerce, healing of the brokenhearted (the alienated and disenfranchised), and an exporting of kingdom righteousness. To this end, a catalytic core of saints typically embrace a lifestyle of persistent repentance, humility, prayer and sacrificial servanthood that attracts the favor and presence of God, and breaks the predominating influences of the ruling power structures of human flesh and the devil.<sup>4</sup>

If this new definition of "transformation" sounds complex and obscure, it is. Unless you have been steeped in the new evangelical doctrines, this will sound like mish-mash. To aid the reader, here is a nutshell summary of the new doctrines of "transformation."

1) The term "transformation" means a planned, intentional "Second Reformation" (also called "New Apostolic Reformation").

2) This "transformation" is not personal (as in Rom. 12:2), but is applied corporately to groups and entities.

3) This "transformation" is to be accomplished by a "mission" strategy of doing "whatever it takes" to launch political, social, and cultural reforms on a global scale.

4) Extremely sophisticated psycho-social marketing techniques are employed to facilitate this "transformation."

5) State-of-the-art statistical measurement and assessment methods evaluate this "transformation," judging "effectiveness" by pre-set, man-made criteria.

6) A plethora of intricate spiritual activities with new names, new techniques, new methodologies, and new doctrines purportedly cause "transformation" to take place in the heavenlies and then on earth.

7) A re-alignment of church hierarchical structures, not unlike network marketing, is said to be essential for "transformation" to take place.

8) These new authority and accountability structures must be superimposed between believers and God.

9) This "transformation" dialectically thrives on a diet of constant change which is accelerating rapidly.

10) It is claimed that submitting to and participating in this "transformation" is necessary to fulfill the Great Commission.

11) This "transformation" won't be completed until the Bride of Christ is perfected on earth and "God's kingdom is seen on earth as it is in heaven."

12) Therefore, believers are co-creators and co-redeemers, renewing the earth through these various "transformative" activities.

Obviously, neo-evangelical "transformation" doctrines integrate (or contextualize) Theosophy with Christianity for a hybrid new orthodoxy. Therefore, this "transformation" is fertile ground for all new forms of ecumenism, easily finding common ground with both cults and the occult. Popular neo-evangelical leader Leonard Sweet laid out this broader concept of transformational ecumenism in his 1991 book *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic*.

A globalization of evangelism "in connection" with others, and a globally "in-formed" gospel, is capable of talking across the fence with Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim--people from other so called "new" religious traditions ("new" only to us)--without assumption of superiority and power. It will take a decolonized theology for Christians to appreciate the genuineness of others' faiths, and to see and celebrate what is good, beautiful, and true in their beliefs without any illusions that down deep we all are believers in the same thing.<sup>5</sup>

*(A longer version of this report on transformation is posted at the Discernment Ministries website).*

Endnotes:

1. For example, see index to *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, 1980.

2. *Ibid*, p. 68.

3. *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*, 1983, p. 54-55.

4. <http://boards.faithhighway.com:8080/~cityreaching/guests>

5. Book posted on-line at <http://www.leonardsweet.com/Quantum>