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THE "ELITE" CONCEPT (part III of A GNOSTIC GOSPEL?)

No matter how we view Gnosticism, it is always an elitist faith. Each member esteems himself superior to heaven (no wonder the "Gnostic Christian" shows no interest in heaven or the personal return of Christ). Only the "elite" (the subjectively illuminated ones) can achieve Godhood.

The writings of the Gnostics lead one in an egocentric direction; to a religious life with self as the object of its devotion. It is a form of narcissism which is an escape from the real world into a world of myth and fantasy where no absolutes, measuring guides, or judgments apply. This is why "spiritual warfare", as propagated today, has such an appeal to many. The imagination is titillated as the "spirit realm" is unveiled and excited warriors find they can do battle with creatures of the netherworld.

The essence of the "Gnostic" is a life-long journey into self. His imaginary pursuit is perfection, immortality, and Godhood; and an "elite" form of godliness that sets him apart from the flesh and the world and takes him into the "unknown".

There are certain groups of Christians that fall into the category of "elitists", notwithstanding their affiliations. They use the same catch phrases: "Come out of your man-made systems", "Denominational walls are breaking down", and "Christians need to be 'delivered' from 'Spirits of Religion' and SOUND DOCTRINE". The guilty groups primarily are among the Charismatics. They go by many names and sometimes no name at all. We spot them by the teachers that are involved and by similarities in their doctrine. There is a variation in the doctrine among the different groups. However, the common denominator that ties them together is the "elitism" concept, set out as follows:

Basically, God is forming an overcoming company within the Body of Christ sometimes called, among other names, "The Manchild Company", etc. Revelation 12:5. The Manchild is

the true church. Those that are the real Christians are the Overcomers (Revelation 2 & 3) and are becoming more and more perfected so that they will be able to drive Satan from the world. This must be done before Jesus can return. According to their teaching, the church is not ready for the coming of the Lord. So, they are not looking for His Imminent Coming. They believe that Christ must come TO His Church before He comes FOR His Church.

They don't all necessarily use this terminology, but the premises are the same. The language is becoming increasingly militant as the "Army of God", "Gideon's Army", "Joel's Army", etc. A common thread is that they are expecting A NEW ORDER:

"In all revolutions there are noisy and dangerous times as the OLD ORDER is replaced by the new. . . after the dust settles, WE CAN PROCEED TO BUILD the beautiful kingdom that the Lord has purposed from the foundations of the World" - Vinson Synan, one of the leaders of A.D. 2000 (FULNESS, Jan. - Feb. 1990, Vinson Synan, p. 24.)

"We are now witnessing the beginning of a true paradigm shift. . . the Christian community in the United States has at last begun to adopt the intellectual foundations of a new world view, and this is always the first step in the replacement of a dying civilization which is based on a dying world view. . . the rotten wood is ready for burning, and a new civilization is being prepared to replace it" - Gary North, a leader of the Reconstructionists (DOMINION AND COMMON GRACE, The Biblical Basis of Progress, Gary North)

It all has such a spiritual sounding ring as one of the modern day prophets, Paul Cain, calls this elitism the "inner court experience". He announces joyfully that there is an empty place on Jesus' bosom for those who can "enter in". The problem with this "elitism" theory is that Christians are to enter into the "inner court" of God, not by the way of the Cross through faith, but through a subjective or "nirvana" type experience.

A Manifest Son says,

"But the purpose of God reaches from before the foundation of the world. It plans the transplanting of his sons and his daughters. It plans the creation of a NEW ORDER [the elite] on the earth and thus it transplanted celestial children to a physical world. It brought them forth into being in the bodies of the Adamic race." (Tape recording by William Swift)

A "prophet" from the Kansas City Fellowship in an interview session in 1988 proclaims that the Lord looked at him and said, "I have called the best of every blood line in earth unto this generation, , , I have elected to bring them forth in this generation, . , the ELECT GENERATION," (Bob Jones transcribed from 1988 tapes)

The NEW BREED does not believe in the "Rapture". According to Rick Joyner, one of the "Prophets":

". . . the doctrine of the Rapture was a great and effective ruse of the enemy to implant in the Church a retreat mentality, . . already this yoke has been cast off by the majority in the advancing church, and it will soon be cast off by all," (THE HARVEST, Rick Joyner)

The scripture, *"Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left."* (Luke 17:34-36) is being construed to mean that the imperfect one shall be taken (removed)

from the earth) and the perfect one left. Since the elite (the manifest sons) are being perfected on earth, the true Church is become the Christ - the ongoing Incarnation of Christ. Therefore the Church as THE CHRIST is empowered to drive all demons from the earth, perfect the Church, and establish the Elect's reign. The emphasis is always on the super spiritual race rather than on the person, Jesus Christ. One well known teacher summed it up as follows: "It is time to take him (Jesus) off and move up into the place God has ordained for us." This is heresy in its diabolic essence.

The Foremost Danger in Elitism

The foremost danger in these divisive teachings is that Jesus is removed from His high place as God the Son, to the level of all the sons of God. The sons of God are moved up to Christ's place. The truth of the humanity of Christ is taken to an extreme. This is one of Satan's chief ways to discredit and finally destroy God's Word - to add to His message by pushing it to the extreme. The records show that the worst danger in Gnosticism, especially in the concept of elitism, is its inherent propensity to extremism. Given free reign, it inevitably leads to moral, political, and spiritual extremism. Gnosticism has a notorious reputation for rough-shodding over the Scriptures, adding and subtracting in pursuit of extreme religious ideals. Revelation 22:19 tells us clearly what happens to anyone who adds to God's Word: *"And if any man shall take away from the Words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."*

Undermines Evangelism

The new Elite doctrine undermines the message of evangelism. Everyone is just where he is supposed to be where God wants him at the time. Recruits for the movement are not obtained from the ranks of the unsaved, but are plucked off one or two at a time from Christian groups by phrases like, "Wouldn't you like to learn new, deep truths?", "Have you entered in?", "Come into the inner court.", or "Surely, you want to move on with God?" These phrases promote spiritual pride and elitism in most, as well as a sense of inferiority or feeling of being unspiritual if we do not understand or want to participate. Everyone else seems to understand, why not us? Spiritual pride comes to those who think they understand and are part of the "New Thing" because they have these "new deeper truths" and the rest of us are just poor babes. Dr. Gordon Anderson from North Central Bible College brought this out so aptly recently, at a conference in McHenry, Illinois. In speaking of the Restoration Movement he said they had the greatest impact on the Charismatic movement. He noted that they present a great challenge to conservative Biblical interpretations and are successful because they are more "spiritual". This "spirituality" actually causes a deterioration, becomes divisive, and splits churches when spiritual "elitism" is formed. Others who do not get into the same "deep revelations" of the hidden meanings of scripture are left out and made to feel they are not "spiritual".

Undermines the Literal Word of God

The new and yet old elite doctrine that has suddenly burst forth in the church is the brain child of the New Age Christian Gnostics. In support of their doctrines, the Scriptures have been spiritualized (using allegorical interpretations) to mean whatever they want them to mean. At the expense of God's Word, they spiritualize the Scriptures in a way so as to

represent themselves as a special breed of God's people. A favorite scripture is, "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life". (II Corinthians 3:6). This text is often quoted, and as with other scriptures, ripped out of context and grossly misapplied. The Bible is perceived as a symbolic book. As a result of symbolic interpretations, preposterous thoughts and downright cult concepts have emerged. Rejecting the literal sense of the Word allows the Scriptures to be interpreted and applied indiscriminately. For example, II Corinthians 3:6 is allegorized to mean the Scriptures are a dead letter without the Spirit. But, that is not what the Apostle Paul is saying. Paul is making a difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The Old brought death whereas the New was a life-giving Spirit. To the mind of the Gnostic, the true meaning of the Scriptures appears only when they are allegorized or spiritualized. Unless this rule is applied, the Scriptures remain a dead letter. By this non-literal method of interpretation, the neo- gnostics have spiritualized themselves into being "Sons" equal with Christ and part of the "elite order" in the Church.

Immortality For The Elite

This teaching is becoming more widespread as popular circuit "Prophets" proclaim in Kansas City,

" . . . there is a ministry after the five-fold called the ministry of perfection - the Melchisedek Priesthood. . . your children will be moving into the ministries of Perfection. . . coming into that Divine Nature of Jesus Christ. . . they themselves will be that generation that's raised up to put death itself underneath their feet. . . because the Lord Jesus is worthy to be lifted up by a church that has reached the full maturity of the GOD-MAN!" (Bob Jones, Kansas City Fellowship, transcribed from 1988 tape).

Those who are Overcomers believe they will never be sick or die and they will be here when Christ returns. They believe they are now living in the prophetic time when the Church is being restored and perfected by the five-fold ministry; apostles, prophets, etc. The Elite (Overcomers) are now in the process of putting on immortality, perfection, and godhood and taking dominion of the earth. The Church is about to birth the Man-child - the Sons of God, the incarnation of Christ and brotherhood of Christ.

The essence of this concept is pure Gnosticism and actually accords with the following New Age thought (Gnosticism):

"The real object of man's life on earth is primarily his self-improvement and his own ultimate perfection. This perfecting process depends upon the attainment of unity within himself, a harmonizing between his physical and spiritual forces; the unity of human with the Divine nature, which is the essence and, in a spiritual sense, the NEW BIRTH. This perfection, or unity, becomes a STATE of the Soul, a degree of being, a SENSING and FEELING rather than a mere belief. This condition or state of being is possible only through the development of the divine nature of man from WITHIN himself and is the result of a process by which whatever is evil and unworthy is transmuted, i.e. changed or SUBLIMATED into the higher or spiritual entity - IT IS BECOMING; the change from the purely animal- human to the human-Divine.

The second object of man's life on earth is to lead other men VIA the same path so that ultimately all men shall have developed and brought into manifestation and activity this same

nature and thus will God's church or universal Brotherhood become an established fact." [Emphasis theirs] (THE SONS OF GOD by R. Swinburne Clymer, Published by The Philosophical Publishing Company).

Secret Coming For The Elite

The neo-Gnostic believes the manifestation of the Sons of God comes about in a secret inner coming of Christ to some Christians which would transform them into "Overcomers".

"Christ should visit the saints. . . and minister His life 'in secret' before He is openly manifest," (THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, George Warnock, Springfield, MO- Bill Britton 1951, pp. 108).

In doing this they reject the literal resurrection and Rapture (the personal coming of Jesus Christ FOR His Church).. It is interesting to note they will acknowledge Christ is coming, but His coming is off in the future. The emphasis is not on Christ's soon appearance but on the great "power" or "new anointing" that is to - be manifest in the Church. Again, a subtle change of emphasis.

The Mystic "Link" Between the Apostate Church: New Age and Elitism

The exaltation of self, "I am a god", or "I am divine" is the Gnostic connection with the "New Age" and "elitism". The following quote identifies the Church's new wave link with New Age thought. It shows the source of the elite mind set taking over in the Church as well as the secular world:

(1) The Principle of the Cosmic Christ = Pantheism

". . . it is not those who rely upon a personal historical Jesus for their salvation by 'belief, but the real Christians are those who have recognized that the Cosmic Christ principle is verily and truly their own higher Self, and who strive to have that 'brought to birth' in them, so that even here and now they may act in the power of that supreme divine nature, even as the historical man Jesus is reputed to have done. It is these alone who can truly say that their 'life is hid with Christ in God.' (Col. 3:8). The discovery of the Mystic Christ in you is being 'born from above'. This knowledge is of the utmost importance to human victory over the lower self. The imperishable secret of human life is the mystic Christ in all men, their hope of glory." (MYSTIC IMMINENCE, Archdeacon Wilberforce, p. 5)

(2) Man is Inherently Divine - A "god"

"Yet verily, this is a mystery. We can but dimly apprehend the heights and depths of it. We can but follow each in his own manner and circumstances, that Road, that PATH BY WHICH TO DEITY WE CLIMB, which has been pointed out to us by the great teachers of the past, and of the present. . . 'enter in at the straight gate' which leads to life eternal; it will only be a few who will accept that underlying teaching of the Christian Scriptures which I have here endeavored to elucidate as being in line with what the Sages and Initiates of the Ancient Wisdom have taught in all ages, i.e. the great fact of Man's inherent divine nature, and the potentiality which every individual possesses of realizing that divine nature in all it's potency to overcome every human disability - sin, sickness, death - and thereby to attain, even here and

now, 'the peace which passeth all understanding. . ." . . . "It is by belief in or recognition of this great fact of the indwelling 'Christ' (not the historical Jesus) that the individual may start on his journey to his 'Father's home', and step by step may attain at last, here and now, to the conquest of sin, suffering, and death, even as the man Jesus is represented as having attained." (THE GNOSIS OR ANCIENT WISDOM IN THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES, Bradford and Dickens, London, 1936 pp. 211-15)

(3) The Soul or Spirit of man is the center of divinity making subjectivity and not objectivity of the Word of God the final authority.

"Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise From outward things whate'er you may believe. There is an inmost center in us all Where truth abides in fulness; but around, Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in." - Browning Smuller

"In the CENTER of our being is to be found the Soul, the source of all truth, and the Christos, wherein will come the Father. Toward this CENTER we must direct our search. But before we can drink of this fountain of life and wisdom, which as a spring of clear and living water, we must break through 'wall upon wall' of 'the gross flesh' that 'hems it in,'" (THE SONS OF GOD by R. Swinburne Clymer, Published by The Philosophical Publishing Company, 1925)

From the three above quotes we learn:

(1) The Rosicrucian's and the modern "New Age" Christians believe in the "Cosmic Christ Principle", i.e. the divine nature element resident in every man.

(2) The "god-man", "the Christ" is the dormant or quickened spirit/inner soul of every man.

(3) The way to conquer sin, suffering, and death is through the divine spirit (force or spark) in man.

(4) The power of redemption lies within the soul or spirit and is therefore independent of the redemption through the Blood of Christ.

The following quote chosen from a file of material gathered from modern T.V. evangelists proves how current Christian thought ties in with Rosicrucian (New Age) and "Manifest Sons of God". It shows how an "elitist" mentality is permeating Christian thought.

"Your spirit, ladies and gentlemen, is God-like. He's God-like in everyway . . . The second this spirit-man comes into our being, pops into our bodies, we're born again. He's spirit, what's born of the spirit is spirit. Say after me, 'within me is a God-man'. Say it again, 'within me is a God-man' [congregation repeats}. Now let's say even better than that. Let's say, 'I am a God-man'. When you say 'I am a God-man', you're not talking about your flesh or your soul you're talking about your spirit-man. Become spirit-man conscious. Become new creation conscious. . . This spirit-man within me never makes a mistake. I do but he never does. This spirit-man within me never sins. I do but he never does. . . Say after me, 'my body is the sinner, my spirit is the saint' . . . Say, 'I'm born of heaven - God man. I'm a God-man. I'm a sample of Jesus. I'm

a super being'. Say it! Say it! Who's a super being? I walk in the realm of the supernatural. Say it! Who walks in the realm of the supernatural? . . . Say after me . . . Here's what I want you to say after me, O.K? Colossians 3:10; get the knowledge, get the spirit-man renewed, get him strong, and when he's strong, he'll hold off sickness. He'll keep your body well, and brother, you want to prosper! Money will be falling on you from left, right, and center. God will begin to prosper you, for money always follows righteousness and righteous living. . . Say after me, 'I hold my destiny. . .' The reason many of us ask and never get is because our spirit-man isn't strong enough to give it to us. Say after me, 'Everything I ever want is in me already'." (Benny Hinn, aired on Saturday, October 20, 1990, on TBN)

On the basis of Benny Hinn's quote it comes as no surprise that he believes in nine gods. Because he believes the spirit of man is "God" - he should add a tenth to his collection. The following is an account of Frank B. Robinson, the notorious cult leader of the "Psychiana Movement" in 1928 (Moscow, Idaho), at the time he was in his room crying out to "find God":

"As the moment passed he stood perfectly still, hopefully waiting for he knew not what. Then he fell to his knees, closed his eyes, and heard himself say, 'The spirit within me is the Spirit of God, the same spirit that has moved in the lives of all great men. I have confessed this Spirit for many years, but I have also suppressed it. I want to express it from this moment on - fully, completely, perfectly.' Kneeling there, he felt his mind cleansed of every thought save the thought of the presence of God. His eyes filled with tears and he found himself breathing deeply, repeating with every inhalation words which seemed to have been whispered to him, 'I believe in the Power of the Living God!' He had the vivid feeling that he was not alone in the room. He could sense the Presence of something or someone, although he could see no one nor hear anything but the words he so earnestly repeated. Yet something had drawn aside a curtain deep within him and he seemed to be standing face to face with the Power that is life. No longer, he said later, did he feel a limiting consciousness: he felt only a single specific sense of complete unity with God. In that flashing moment of insight, he realized as never before that he was the inner counterpart of a divine creative power. From then on he was convinced that he was the personalized activity of cosmic force. . . after that afternoon he was a changed man." (STRANGE SECTS AND CURIOUS CULTS)

Frank B. Robinson's Gnostic beliefs rejected:

- (1) The deity of Christ
- (2) The blood of Christ
- (3) Confession of sin

He believed in:

- (1) Unity with God through universal consciousness
- (2) The gospel of prosperity and personal revelations apart from and contrary to the Scriptures
- (3) The voice of "God" with no respect to the Scriptures

(4) The spirit of man as the final voice on matters of divinity

The concept that the spirit or soul of man is the divine element in man is the form of mysticism that races against the Scriptures for the prize - thought to be true spirituality. "Mysticism is the idea that direct knowledge of God or ultimate reality is achieved through personal, subjective intuition or experience apart from, or even contrary to, historical fact or objective divine revelation. Arthur Johnson, a professor at West Texas State University elaborates:

"When we speak of a mystical experience we refer to an event that is completely within the person. It is totally subjective. . . Although the mystic may experience it having been triggered by occurrences or objects outside himself (like a sunset, a piece of music, a religious ceremony, or even a sex act), the mystical experience is a totally inner event. It contains no essential aspects that exist externally to him in the physical world. . . A mystical experience is primarily an emotive event, rather than a cognitive one. . . Its predominant qualities have more to do with emotional intensity, or 'feeling tone', than with facts evaluated and understood rationally. Although this is true, it alone is a woefully inadequate way of describing the mystical experience. The force of the experience is often so overwhelming that the person having it finds his entire life changed by it. Mere emotions cannot effect such transformations. Furthermore, it is from this emotional quality that another characteristic results, namely, its 'self-authenticating' nature. The mystic rarely questions the goodness and value of his experience. Consequently, if he describes it as giving him information, he rarely questions the truth of his newly gained "knowledge". It is this claim that mystical experiences are "ways of knowing" truth that is vital to understanding many religious movements we see today," (OUR SUFFICIENCY IN CHRIST by John MacArthur, jr., Word Publishing, 1991)

The concept of Gnosticism is at the heart of Rosicrucianism, New Age thought, and Manifest Sons of God teachings. By Christian orthodox definition, the core of their thoughts (inner mystic knowledge) and beliefs are occultic. In varying degrees their thinking has, and is, infiltrating the church at an alarming rate. The Pentecostals and Charismatics are not exempt. The most common characteristic is an "elitist" mentality. The following ideas and beliefs are characteristic of Rosicrucianism and Manifest Sons of God, some of which, and in some cases all, are being received and taught by a great part of the Church. See whether you can identify any of the following heresies:

- (1) Have an "Elitist Mentality".
- (2) Consider themselves essentially divine, equal to Christ.
- (3) Believe they are the Manifest Sons of God.
- (4) Believe their divinity comes from within themselves.
- (5) Reject the literal Biblical view of the resurrection and the "Rapture" of the Church.
- (6) Are Overcomers and Conquerors of evil and the world.
- (7) Are in the process of becoming perfect and immortal in this age.

- (8) Claim to be members of the Melchizedek Order - High Priest with Christ.
- (9) Will purge the world of undesirables.
- (10) Will reign on the earth as gods.
- (11) Attribute their revelations to the Divine Gnosis (knowledge) located in them.
- (12) Share the same political ambition to establish the government of the "Sons of God" to the exclusion of the personal presence of Jesus Christ.
- (13) Insist the Bible should be interpreted allegorically, symbolically, and spiritually.
- (14) Believe it is wrong to interpret the Bible literally.
- (15) Reject Israel as a chosen nation of God.
- (16) Are Anti-Semitic.
- (17) Reject the written Holy Scriptures as the final, inerrant, and infallible Voice of God above all other voices or experiences.
- (18) Stress "love" and "unity" with little or no regard for sound doctrine.
- (19) Reject the resurrection and redemption of the body.
- (20) Spiritualize the resurrection and redemption of the body.
- (21) Reject the personal coming of the anti-Christ.
- (22) Look forward to the dawning of the New Age on earth, ushered in by a select group of Overcomers, the Sons of God.
- (23) Reject Orthodox Christianity.
- (24) Are always receiving "new deep truth" apart from Scripture.
- (25) Are essentially into "mysticism".
- (26) Believe in the attainment of perfection and immortality here on earth without a literal resurrection and Rapture.
- (27) Rejects redemption by the Blood of Christ.
- (28) The spirit of man is the god-man.

The above projects the following picture:

The New Wave "Mystery Babylon" (New Age Religion) riding on the back of the Churches is fulfilling the age long dream of the "Church of Illumination" (Rosicrucian/Gnostic church) which is the Church uniting on "love" and "godhood" - Satan's fruit.

"THE CHURCH OF ILLUMINATION has been steadily at work with the idea that ultimately the various churches would merge for the benefit of all religions as well as of all mankind.

THE CHURCH OF ILLUMINATION looks forward with confidence to a constantly increasing feeling of good will and religious tolerance among various creeds, so that some day in the not-too-distant future the dream of unification can be realized and one all-embracing religion taught to all the peoples of all the earth," (THE CHURCH OF ILLUMINATION by Rev. R. Swinburne Clymer, M.D., Quakertown, PA, U.S.A.).

The unification of the Church and the religions of the world is indeed an age long dream of the "New Age" advocates. To achieve the goal, self-deification and "love" for others is imperative. Redemption of all religions is contingent on the quality of "love" that covers all theological differences and creeds. The basis of their unity depends not on the "Love" that comes via the blood of the Gospel of Christ, but, on an ethos (love characteristic) that accommodates or rescinds any obstacle, be it theological or otherwise, dividing the union between the Church and the "New Age". Their redemption disregards the "Love" of Calvary or the "Love" that cleaves to God's Word. It is this "New Age" position on "love" in the Church that gives rise to one of the most arrogant qualities of spiritual elitism. The fearful aspect at the present time is that this neo-love is being absorbed into the orthodox fundamental churches.

The Heart of Elitism

The core of spiritual elitism lives in the psyche of man. Psyche, generally means mind, the invisible spirit part of man; life, soul, self, passions, feelings, desires, appetites, etc. There are a few theories as to what it means. However, it is quite safe to say, psyche is at the core of man's individuality, and personality, thoughts, and feelings. Satan knows this. This is why he is interested in the psyche and individuality of man.

When the "psyche" of man, through the subtle influence of Satan, assumes the role of "god-man", the individual will very likely become spiritually and morally unnatural. Thoughts and ideas become abstract and esoteric in nature. Behaviour generally assumes one of two directions: "Legalism" or "Liberalism". Extremism, as well as "Elitism", usually characterizes the god-man role. Sometimes it is difficult to identify the nature of the psyche of an individual, but, given enough time will manifest itself.

The teachings of the "New Age", as well as that of the church, for the most part, are designed to magnify and glorify the psyche of man, hence the obsession with "self-esteem", "self-potential", "self-indulgence", etc.

A gospel centered on self glorification will not only corrupt an individual psyche, but lead to unnatural behaviour. It was in view of this happening in the Church in the last days that

the Apostle Paul sternly warned the Church against "seducing spirits" and "doctrines of devils". (I Tim. 4:1)

A corrupt {unnatural} individual is identified in the Scripture as: one who *"changes the truth of God into a lie. . . worshipping the creature more than the Creator. . . changes the glory of God into an image . . . made like to corruptible things"* and has pleasure in what is unnatural. When these psyche characteristics appear it means demonic influence is in control.

Having individuality is perfectly natural; in fact it is a God-given faculty and certainly deserves recognition, and a place in our thinking and relations. However, when a man's individuality is glorified over the Word of God, "spiritual abuse" is in focus.

This brings us to the heart of elitism. Ever since the fall of man, individuality has thrived on self-esteem, egoism, introversion, and selfish exploits to the point that the Creator, the Scriptures, and the Cross of Christ have suffered abuse. Experience has proven over and over again that when self is deified or glorified in any way, shape, or form, the Gospel of Christ (in its unadulterated form) becomes a sore offense. When individuality steps or tries to step beyond the natural, as defined by Scripture, an abstract world emerges, generally characterized by sensualism, mysticism, Gnosticism, and elitism. (Romans 1:18-32); Unnaturalism is an escape from reality. The unnatural individual's justification for how he feels and believes hinges on - "I am a god".

Unfortunately, the deified psyche philosophy has, and is, permeating the whole of society with no exception to the Church, affecting millions of members who sit Sunday after Sunday listening to another gospel. Self is preeminent in the Gnostic gospel. Instead of the truth being sought in God's Word and insight into what is right or wrong based on the laws of God, "self" is sought. The current self-centered "elitist" religion denies the Deity of Christ as the only true God; denies the vicarious atonement, the glory and wisdom of the cross, and the efficacy of the Blood of Christ. Whoever communicates Gnostic thought renders the Cross of Christ of no effect and could inadvertently become an enemy of the cross.

For Christians, there is one preeminent source to glory in and that is the Gospel of the Glory of the Cross where self and the world died, where also the devil was soundly defeated. *"But God forbid that I should glory; save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world"* (Gal. 6:1.4)

The Glory of The Cross

Oh, the glory of the Cross I see!
By works the glory I hoped to gain,
In experience and self I sought in vain.
Ego, pride and vanity reigned o'er me,
Blinding me to Calvary.
But, now by grace, through faith,
I, the glory see.

Oh, the glory of the Cross I see!
In my quest I sought
the glory I strove to see.
Wretched was the nature of my soul;
As, if it were dragged to Sheol.
Then through Christ the Crucified,
I beheld the glorified,
as the Spirit bade me, see!

Oh, the glory of the Cross I see!
Which no spark of self e'er gave me.
Though time in meditation spent
Nothing could God's glory represent,
Save the Cross which now I see.
Oh, the glory of the Cross I see!

Oh, the glory of the Cross I see!
There provision for sin was made,
Sin and shame was borne away
and debt to sin in full was paid.
Through Christ redemption came
To all who see and call His name.
Oh, the glory of the Cross I see!

Travers van der Merwe

On reflecting on this past year, in some respects, I can only say, "Thank God it's over." After leaving a broken down car and walking along a dark expressway this week, I was reminded again to be thankful for the small and large things we take for granted. My husband's health is greatly improved. The children are well and progressing. God is faithful and His Word is true and remains forever.

The shocking revelations *of* the past weeks do not disturb the veracity of the Word *of* God. We can not put confidence in men. As the Jimmy Swaggart expose' came on and as the Gorman vs. Swaggart trial played out - the Assemblies *of* God cringed and said, "Oh no!"

At the Metro Vineyard (aka Kansas City Fellowship), the audience sat numb while Mike Bickle stumbled through the embarrassing scenario that caused John Wimber to state that "prophet" Bob Jones had been involved in serious sin.

He was being removed from ministry because he "used his gifts to manipulate people for his personal desires, sexual misconduct, rebelling against pastoral authority, slandering leaders, and the promotion of bitterness within the body of Christ."

This revelation was quite a bombshell considering it was on Bob Jones' "Visions and Revelations" (available from this ministry) that the "prophetic" was established in Kansas City. Mike Bickle asserts that he still accepts those weird "revelations". Think about it. How

could he say otherwise? If he disavowed the revelations, the house of cards would be lying at his feet. Rather try "damage control" and keep the spark alive.

This week the Christian Community squirmed again as PRIME TIME aired a report on W. V. Grant, Larry Lea, and Bob Tilton. The fraud exposed made Jim Bakker look like a Sunday School boy.

A strange phenomenon has developed. If God's children try to warn the Church, they are called divisive, heresy hunters, etc. Magazines like CHARISMA and television stations like TBN promote these ministries indiscriminately; and whatever doctrinal bandwagon is popular at the moment, with no regard for Scripture, is accepted and given all the promotion and publicity necessary to make a certain "prophet" or "evangelist" into a superstar. If the rest of us do not accept whatever they are pouring down our throats, whether it be strychnine or ambrosia, we are troublemakers.

Yes, there are sincere Christians involved and sincere Christians are going to have their faith shipwrecked if they are not led back to the Scriptures.

We are in a "warfare". *"Contend earnestly for the faith that was once delivered to the saints":* (Jude 3) *Be like the man which "built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock." and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock."* (Luke 6:48)

No man endured more "spiritual warfare" than Job! Yet did he go into the heavenly realm and do battle? No, he had confidence in God. *"But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."* (Job 23:10)

As the Hallelujah Chorus so magnificently proclaims - with Joy in our hearts we exclaim as Job, *"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."* (Job 19:25)

Warmest Christmas greetings and a blessed new year.

- Jewel van der Merwe -