



Volume 4, Number 3 May/June 1993

## **NEO-GNOSTICISM**

**by Jewel van der Merwe**

The Truth is the Anointing! Truth is absolute! That is why Jesus could say, "*I am the Way, the Truth and the life*". His words give understanding to the simple. Those who perish are those who do not have love for the Truth. When the love for the Truth is absent, "...*God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie...*" The delusion is interpreted in the text as "straying from orthodoxy".

The orthodox position on Truth, or "sound doctrine" is being slowly undermined by a desire to build an earthly political kingdom, self-centered ministries, and marketing a "new anointing". As a third generation Pentecostal, I am sad to see the inroads the New Age is making amongst our own ranks. Sadder still, Shepherds are too busy hooking up to the latest fad to realize that in the process they are selling the Truth. Proverbs 23:23 tells us to "*Buy the truth and sell it not...*" God's Truth is to be valued above thousands of gold and silver. (Psalm 119:72).

Today people are so "experience" oriented and busy looking for a "new anointing" and "new thrills" that they are willing candidates for just about anything!

An evangelist from South Africa (Rodney Howard-Browne) is drawing huge crowds because of an unusual phenomenon. In his service, people roll on the floor in ecstasy and howl with hilarious laughter. Upon watching a videotape of several services, it was amazing to note that laughter broke out, cackling and derisive, during the reading of the Word of God. The overtones of the comments of those laughing were very carnal (i.e. comparing their

"experience" with that of those drinking alcohol). Amid all the hilarity they were still trying to find a scriptural basis.

(It is interesting to note that New Age writers refer to laughter as being "healing", "therapeutic" and "a way to break down reserves".)

Solomon (a king to whom God granted wisdom) also speaks of laughter in Ecclesiastes:

*"I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, what doeth it?" (2:2)*

*"Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better...but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." (7:3, 4)*

*"For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity!" (7:6)*

It was heart rending to watch the video and see pastors, the leaders of the sheep, falling for this deception! Listening to the bedlam going on was like hearing all the demons let loose from their abode.

We no longer have time to worry about being labelled "critical", "judgmental", or "touching God's anointed". The blind are leading the blind! First, it was "falling out" that was the anointing: Everyone swoons and falls and believes that they have a "new anointing". Other "waves" have ebbed and flowed. A leader from a church in Seattle recently wrote to *Charisma* (June, 1993):

"...[their]church of 2300 members began to change in the early 80's when we started dancing before the Lord, then dancing with other partners, then "spiritual connections" (i.e. sexual affairs). Husbands and wives suffered terribly as spouses began falling in love with others because of dancing and "connections". We quit counting the number of divorces after we reached 250.

These were not ignorant, uneducated people. Yes they followed their pastor - who was very authoritarian - into great deception and gross sin..."

Now, the latest is taking leave of one's senses and rolling on the floor thinking the "anointing" is being drunk! What on earth is next? It will have to be a good one! Will it be levitating? Rodney Howard-Browne needs to be strongly rebuked and taught the Word of God!

What has put so many of these NEW ANOINTERS beyond the Word of God? In Acts 18:24-28 there was a Jew named Apollos who was very fervent, an eloquent man and MIGHTY in Scriptures! He spoke very diligently the things of the Lord - but his DOCTRINE WAS NOT RIGHT! Obviously this was very important because when Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly! Today Aquila and Priscilla would be called heresy hunters! Yes, they were! Praise God! They loved the Word of God! They were jealous with a Godly jealousy for Truth! As a result, Apollos left Ephesus and mightily convinced the Jews from the Scriptures! The Truth is powerful! It convinces the soul of righteousness and true standing before God.

## Gnostic Thought and Practices

When a high value is placed on personal experiences or revelations, Scriptures are then unscrupulously twisted and misquoted. We find those who believe the feelings of a 'Congregation must be hyped-up in order to "feel" the Presence of the Lord or else the church is thought to be "dead". Instead of music being used to worship and glorify God, it is used as a means of "connecting" or "feeling" the Presence of God. If the "location" (or a feeling within) of God is not aroused and sensed, the Spirit is said to be either absent or bound. To counter this passive situation, worship is intensified, the devil is "bound" and certain forms of excitement are encouraged until "God's Presence" is "felt". Many times music is used as the conduit for the "feeling". A popular slogan to advertise a certain music company is: "Feel the Presence of the Lord." The church has been taken down this primrose path for so long that they equate the Presence of God with a feeling that they obtain by doing certain things. Having "goose bumps", or the "warm fuzzies", or tears of comfort, is their way of "knowing" that God is present. So what this thinking boils down to is simply: "To know God's Presence you must feel Him." In actuality this is pure Gnosticism.

If knowing God is contingent on feeling, then Gnosticism and pantheism have a place in Christian thinking. "Pantheism (from two Greek words combined to mean 'all is God') is that system of thought which identifies God with the universe. Trees and stones, birds and animals, land and water, reptiles and man - all are declared part of God, and God lives, and expresses Himself through these substances and forces as the soul expresses itself through the body." (KNOWING THE DOCTRINES OF THE BIBLE by Myer Pearlman, Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, MO pp. 53)

Gnosticism is linked with pantheism in that it supports and overlaps the idea of the soul (self) harmonizing with nature and the universe as the means of perceiving God. The common tie between Gnosticism and pantheism is that both purport to find "God" in creation. Gnosticism finds "God" within man - relating to the feelings, and pantheism finds "God" in creation as a whole. The two blend in that they both worship and serve the creature more than the Creator. The Gnostic god is localized in a subjective experience, a soulish feeling of being in union with creation and God. It rejects the relationship with the Creator based on faith in His written Word - regardless of feeling. (A very tough pill for some Charismatics to swallow.)

## True Worship vs. Gnostic Worship

Worship is an integral part of the Christian faith. Sometimes feelings of ecstasy are experienced. The Presence of God is rightly acknowledged by true worship. However, when emotional feelings become the doctrine of God's Presence, then God is reduced to a "gnosis" form of Presence. For many, the doctrine of "knowing the Presence of God" is sought in a subjective experience. An emotional experience, (especially a repetitive one during a worship "service") if not kept in proper perspective or check, can lead to an altered state of consciousness in which the capacity for rational reasoning is greatly reduced. At this point the congregation can be open to delusion and easily led astray. In many charismatic groups an altered state of mind is explained, as "getting into the Spirit" or as a manifestation of the Presence of God. Uncontrolled spiritual feelings transcend sound scriptural rationale and gives rise to the doctrine of "the Presence of God" built on an experience.

## **The Serious Gnostic Deception**

A very serious practice which gives deceiving spirits the opportunity for deception is the notion that God is localized in people (consciously) or around people (consciously). The desire on the part of some is to "feel" the presence of God through prayer, worship or otherwise as evidence of His Presence. They are disappointed if they leave a service and haven't "felt" God. They will then run from church to church looking for a "feeling".

Sensing the presence of God is revered. We do "enjoy" our religion. God has made us emotional creatures. However, when experience becomes the evidence in our relationship with God, it is then dangerous and could prove spiritually counterproductive. "*The just shall live by faith* " is still the only principal the righteous live by and can relate to God.

Some believers live so inwardly in communion, worship and vision they become spiritually introverted, and cramped and narrowed in their outlook. As a result, their spiritual capacity and mental powers become dwarfed and powerless. Others become victims to the "inner voice". They go about declaring, "God told me this, God told me that". Very impractical decisions can come as a result of that which is thought to be God speaking.

"... Turning inwards to a subjective location of God as indwelling, speaking, communing and guiding, in a MATERIALISTIC OR CONSCIOUS SENSE, is open to gravest danger; for upon this thought and belief, sedulously cultivated by the powers of darkness, the most serious deceptions of deceiving spirits have taken place." WAR ON THE SAINTS, by Jesse Penn-Lewis, The Christian Literature Crusade, 1977.

"New Age" thought with its strong emphasis on the supernatural, feelings, and paganism is so preponderate in today's society that it is no wonder the present generation of Christians are becoming more and more Gnostic in thought.

## **The Gnostic Approach to the Bible**

The Gnostic believes it is wrong to use only the Bible to interpret the Bible. Besides the Bible, they believe there are additional inspired manuscripts and books on a par with the Bible and find no problem with hearing the voice of God apart from the Scriptures. A typical New Age writer neatly puts it:

"In order to obtain a satisfactory comprehension of Bible teachings, it is essential to give careful consideration to its symbolic, allegorical and mystic elements. The student and interpreter must learn to consult the vast library of Legend, symbol and myth as faithfully and as accurately as he would resort to a Lexicon of Hebrew and Greek terms and radicals. These elements - symbolic, allegorical and mystic...are skillful devices for concealing yet half-revealing the deepest truth." THE SONS OF GOD by R. Swinburne Clymer

This is evidenced in today's "prophetic" movement. The preaching is filled with allegory. Symbolism replaces substance, and revelations are given apart from the Scriptures. A new

pamphlet advertising an upcoming newsletter (*Streams of Shiloh*, John Paul Jackson) gives some topics that it will discuss in the future, such as:

"The Prophet and the Gift. The manner in which revelations comes is of vital importance. The role that dreams, visions, trances, impressions, visitations, translations, and transportations play will be discussed."

Pick up any New Age magazine and what is it full of? Dreams, visions, trances, impressions, visitations, translations, and transportations! Yet the "prophetic" enjoys cloaking their delusion (departure from orthodoxy) in ethereal terms as: "Intimacy with Christ" and "renew the body of Christ".

It is no wonder that the Word warns US that, *"the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears."* (II Tim. 4:4)

John Paul Jackson goes on to say:

"Interpretation skills need to be developed in order to communicate what is meant by revelation. The meanings of colors, numbers, types and symbols, as well as personal symbols will be studied. Ways to enhance interpretative skills will be covered..."

Heavy duty occult activity sanctioned and encouraged! Numerology, auras, symbology, astrology, out-of-body experiences, trances are given prominence. At the expense of what? The Word of God! Rather than training believers in the fear and admonition of the Lord, develop your "revelatory skills"! You might even end up thinking like David Koresh.

There is a concentrated effort, especially in psychology, to bring about a blending of ancient wisdom and modern techniques. Shamanism is being reintroduced in an unprecedented manner to the modern society. One of the ancient practices is Huna (a Hawaiian esoteric philosophy). This philosophy teaches that we are to be able to "develop intuition, work with our dreams, make shamanic journeys and vision quests, raise our personal energy profile...dialogue with the spirits of nature for two-way teaching and healing, and work with visible and invisible energy patterns to influence the past, present and future. Journeying through other dimensions, we gather information, explore the unknown and the mysterious, and release our powerful creativity."(OMEGA, Summer 1993, pg. 76)

For the Scriptures to be properly understood, the Gnostic holds that they need to be interpreted symbolically, spiritually or allegorically. The literal interpretation is thought to be presumptuous and unspiritual. Most of the theological controversy dividing the church stems from the rejection of the literal interpretation of the Bible. In the 2nd and 3rd century the church came to prefer the allegorical interpretation to the literal. It was this change that opened the church to Gnosticism. No wonder Gnosticism is so deeply entrenched in Christian theology. As long as the allegorical method of interpretation is used, Gnosticism will continue to have influence on Christian thinking.

We cannot separate Christ from His Word. He is the Word "*...and the word became flesh and dwelt among us.*" We can not know Christ apart from His Word. John 5:39 "*Search the Scripture; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.*"

There will never be any revelation apart from the Word of God. Revelatory gifts apart from Scripture take the soul into fables, myths and Gnosticism.

The literal method of interpretation is steadily being phased out in preference for the spiritualizing/allegorical method. Generally, Christians are so accustomed to subjecting their ears to allegorical preaching they automatically make good candidates for Gnosticism. It comes as no surprise why this new wave of Gnosticism is flooding the church and why the Gnostic prophets have a hold on the Christians.

The church that strays from the literal method of interpretation and fails to use Scriptures to interpret Scripture is in danger of being absorbed into Gnosticism or mysticism. The church that slides into the Gnostic school of thought will inadvertently depart from the authority of Scripture and become a law unto itself. Most of the new and weird teachings can be traced to the allegorical method of interpretation. The only way for the fundamental and evangelical churches to guard against this Gnostic method is to stand firm on the literal method of interpretation (i.e. on the literal meaning of all Scripture).

### **The Internal Deity/Authority**

The Gnostic believes that the real spiritual birth comes from a consciousness of the divine spirit dwelling in every man. Through this experience the presence of the "Spirit" is perceived, the "knowledge" of God is learned and spiritual maturity is reached. Their reference point is not the Scriptures; although sometimes they misapply Scripture for support. Their reference is an internalized experience, based on the idea that "God" dwells in every man and knowing this is the start of spiritual life and maturity to godhood. On the authority of this concept they build their spiritual lives. It is from this viewpoint they emphasize "holiness", "intimacy with God", etc.

This form of Gnosticism is often detected in teachings and preaching. With the modern emphasis on the Holy Spirit, Christians are conditioned into thinking, sometimes unwittingly, that the Scriptures are insufficient to be a total effective authority. They feel the Scriptures should be supplemented and substituted by some internal authority such as feeling, experience, conscience, intuition, inner voice, etc. The ever increasing problem with this form of authority is that it is being rated above the Scriptures in the name of the Holy Spirit. Greater heed is given to the self-conscious internal authority over faith in the voice of The Word. When a voice (intuition or a subjective impression) replaces the authority of the Scriptures and takes precedence over "God's Word", then it is cultic. Cults have always sought divine authority within man, while Christians seek divine authority in God's Word. The cults, like many modern Christians, place the inner voice above all else. They teach that the real guiding Voice of Light comes from within. The emphasis and substance of their religion hinges on an inner voice or experience which they claim is the light of God. For example, consider the following statement by the Roscrucean, R Swinburne Clymer:

"This light, to a lesser or greater degree, is in all men. It is that which the Philosophers and Initiates of all ages have called the Divine Spark, the Voice of

conscience, which, to the degree of its growth and development, speaks unto all men. He who possesses but a little of this light and wisely uses it, shall perceive (develop) a greater light and this process shall continue until he has all light necessary for his Immortalization... The voice of conscience speaks to all men more or less clearly unless it has been totally destroyed through continued acts of evil. It is essential that man should listen for and heed this voice which is his light. If he does this, then gradually the light that leads the way - the Voice - will become strong and ultimately always will be with him... This is the light that is in man and is the Voice that must be obeyed... The light, which is the LIFE, leads to the CHRISTOS. He who follows the light assuredly follows the CHRIST, the MANISIS, and with each good deed, kindly act, loving thought and compassionate service, the CHRIST child in the manger (the body) grows stronger, until at last manhood is attained and man has become (glorified) the Son of God." [Emphasis theirs] (THE SONS OF GOD by R. Swinburne Clymer, The Philosophical Publishing Company, Quakertown Pennsylvania)

Any. authority apart from Scripture will lead to apostasy. When the voice of Scripture is quenched in favor of a personal internal authority, disaster follows. History readily proves this:

"During the Middle Ages the Church of Rome concentrated in itself through its episcopacy all the authority of tradition, bishops, councils and anything else that held sway over the mind of the church. This movement culminated in the decree of Papal Infallibility of 1870, which holds that 'the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks ex cathedra, has that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer endowed his church, in defining a doctrine of faith or morals.'" (UNGERS BIBLE HANDBOOK by Merrill F. Unger, Moody Press, Chicago pp 6.)

As a result of a Gnostic emphasis on the internal authority of man as a substitute for the authority of the Scriptures, the church has and is being inundated with popes - "apostles and prophets" - exercising ministries centered on self, each being a law unto himself. The Gnostic "popes" interpret their internal authority to represent the presence of the Holy Spirit and divine inspiration. Many well meaning Christians, at the expense of God's written Word, have faith in an internal authority. Unknowingly, they are grieving the Holy Spirit and could experience a strong delusion from Satan. Nationally acclaimed so-called prophets and apostles are notorious for their claims to having internal authority and knowledge on a par with Scripture.

A "prophet" gave a word to a pastor and his wife regarding their personal affairs. As a result they resigned their pastorate and heeded the word of the prophet to move to another city. When questioned, "How did you know it was God's direction?", the answer came back, "Oh, I felt it, I just knew it was God. The prophet told me things no one could ever know." The questioner persisted, "But how did you know it was God? What was your reference point?" The conversation couldn't get beyond the point of internal feelings. Shortly afterward it was learned by the questioner that the prophet involved exercised an unscriptural ministry, sometimes prophesying the most bizarre thoughts and concepts to be imagined. His outrageous prophecies have been well documented. However, the point being made here is that the couple followed their own intuitive or internal dictates without regard whether or not the situation they were getting themselves into lined up with the Scriptures. Had they only turned to the authority of the Word, they would have found the prophet as well as the church in which he ministers in gross error. Unfortunately, they preferred to stay with their internal thoughts and feelings instead of with the authority of the Word.

## The Hidden Voice

In the following quote, a typical "Christian Gnostic" position can be detected. "We felt all unworthy and overwhelmed by the wonder of it, [the wonder being they could hear directly from God without Scripture] and could hardly realize that 'we' were being taught, trained and encouraged day by day by Him Personally, when millions of souls, far worthier, had to be content with guidance from the Bible, sermons, their churches, books and other source." GOD CALLING by Two Listeners.

In essence, the above quote is a Gnostic testimony because the source of their knowledge is attributed to a personal subjective experience believed to be the voice of God. Their experience sets them apart as spiritual elitists. There is enough leaven in this short quote to trigger off a whole new doctrine in favor of Gnosticism.

According to the new Gnostic emphasis, spiritual maturity comes from being attuned to the inner voice of the Holy Spirit. Unless the Spirit is subjectively heard in one form or another on an ongoing basis, mature spirituality has not been reached. In other words, spiritual maturity comes from hearing God beyond the sacred page (Scripture).

Christians that insist on the Holy Scriptures as their only most trusted source of spiritual knowledge are considered to be into idolatry and bondage. Because Christians faithfully reverence the Holy Scriptures as the VOICE of GOD, they are accused of worshipping a book and of over-reverencing the Bible. The following quotes are typical examples of how this thinking has filtered in:

"Most of the people in this faction have gotten themselves in bondage to the written Word of God and seem to be bent on dragging everyone else into prison with them. They have let their respect for the scriptures run overboard and plunge into idolatry." RESTORATION by James Robison

"We see it today in people's reverence of the Bible. I remember the day I stood in the pulpit and played the role of the iconoclast. I was decrying 'bibliolatry' - worship of the Bible. I wanted to call people to the God of the Bible for many had made the Bible a god...So I took an old Bible and began ripping the pages out of it, throwing it to the floor to demonstrate it was only a book - not a sacred idol. Some of the people were shocked, offended and infuriated. I had pulled down their idol." Jamie Buckingham

Any Christian in his right mind will not worship a book, its binding, its pages or its ink. But he certainly will utterly reverence God's inspired Holy Scriptures. It is impossible to over-reverence God to the point of making Him an idol - absurd! Even God shows utter reverence for His Word when He says, "*for thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy name.*" II Psalm 138:2

## The Peril of the Gnostic Voice

The "Christian Gnostic" religion is a mystical form of godliness experienced intuitively and all too often is construed to represent the Presence or Voice of the Holy Spirit. The peril

of this concept relegates the inspiration of the Scriptures to a subordinate position of personal "inspiration" or to "private interpretation" of Scripture.

It is quite commonplace to read or hear messages, sometimes by popular preachers, saying, "Hear from God". This emphasis is ostensibly to improve a Christian's quality of life. The problem with this well-sounding phrase is that it invariably disregards the written Word of God and gives self preference to the Word of God. Christians hooked on "hearing from God" without regard to Holy Scripture are not only open to serious error, but also disposed to strong delusions. This could lead to a self-centered "cult-like" religion at the expense of God's precious written Word.

If a man truly hears from God, he will reverence and honor the written Word of God more than ever and over everything else. Many Christians are into a form of Gnosticism dangerous to themselves and others. They have a real problem distinguishing the Voice of God from their own thoughts, feelings and imagination. The reason is they don't align their minds with the written Word of God. Many have never learned to understand their experience in the light of Holy Scriptures. How can anyone know God's Voice or Will apart from Scripture? How can anyone know the Truth of God if the Scripture is allegorized? Any other way of assuming to know God's voice apart from Scripture is perilous. However God chooses to minister to His children will always confirm and accord with Holy Scripture. The Gnostic school of thought subtly divides the ministry of the Holy Spirit from the Holy Scriptures. This position demises the Scriptures and pits the church against God's Final Voice of Authority. The switch of emphasis to the Holy Spirit at the expense of the Scriptures is seen by some as a NEW THING God is doing in the believer and the world. This is a strong delusion.

### **The Still Small Voice**

Because God at one point in time chose to speak to Elijah the prophet through a still small voice, and at another time to Balaam the prophet through an ass, He is in no way obliged to repeat the performance. It would be wrong on the part of a Christian to turn inward to self in the hope of hearing a still small voice, just as it would be to go to an ass out in the country in the hope of hearing God speak.

The "still small voice" concept is such an obsession in certain segments of the church it is no surprise that bizarre messages, presumptuous judgments and decisions are made in the name of the Lord. The concept sows confusion in the church. If only Christians would learn to line up their thoughts and intuitions with Scriptures, we would have more of the Spirit and less of the flesh.

### **God's Sovereign Voice to the Church**

God in His sovereignty gave man the Holy Scriptures. All we need to know about God, redemption, holiness, eternal life and ourselves is recorded in the written Word of God. The Holy Spirit provided the Scriptures so that by the preaching of the gospel of Christ the world might come to know the Lord Jesus Christ. By the preaching of the gospel of Christ according to the written Word, the Holy Spirit speaks to sinners and saints alike. Holy Scriptures remain the final Voice of God - whether the world believes it or not. The Holy Spirit uses the written Word of God to save, sustain and mature the believer. Any other source used to determine spiritual growth other than the Scriptures is false. It is wrong for a man to presume he knows

the mind of God if it is not according to the Scriptures. To do so is to be grossly presumptuous. God is Sovereign. He will speak whenever He chooses and in whatever manner He wills. But, if and when He speaks, it will be a Sovereign Act. God's sovereignty is not negotiable. It cannot be monopolized or manipulated by our wishes, thoughts, prayers, cries, meditations or even by our communion with Him. It is impossible for man to control God's sovereignty. When God speaks or acts, He never contradicts His written Word.

### **Christians vs. Gnosticism**

The Christian does not look inward for his redemption. He looks UPWARD to God who is seated in heaven far above principalities and powers. His redemption was bought and brought nigh by the blood of Jesus Christ. The Christian's approach to God is by faith in Christ's complete work of redemption at the cross. Redemption is not an experience, it is God's salvation bought by the precious blood of the Lamb - and is a free gift.

Christians know they are saved, not by any experience they might have had along the way, but because they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures. Even their faith from the heart is the witness of the Holy Spirit and their redemption. Sometimes Christians have great spiritual experiences, but refuse to glory in the flesh. Their glory is only in the Lord.

A Christian does not build his life on "self- consciousness", but on the written Word of God. The only God the Christian knows and desires to know is the God of the HOLY WRITTEN WORD. The god of the imagination and the god of self was resoundly crushed and defeated at Calvary some two thousand years ago.

The Christian's affections and thoughts are not turned inward. but rather upward toward heaven from whence they expect the personal and glorious appearing of the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings. For at the sound of the trumpet and the voice of the archangel, the saints in Christ, both living and the dead, shall put on immortality, incorruption and see Jesus Christ face to face and be like Him. Amen!

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## **PROPHECY AND POWER**

### **The New Role For Music**

by **Tricia Tillin - Banner Ministries, England**

This newsletter has often pointed out that Christian music can be used by the Enemy. It has highlighted unscriptural lyrics in choruses, and also demonstrated the satanic nature of some heavy metal music used in churches.

Now a new deception is coming! A new teaching is sweeping round the churches and is being repeated almost parrot fashion, without a thought for the consequences.

Back in 1969, Ken Copeland "prophesied" that a **new revelation** was coming by means of music. He said that God was about to reveal "what is available through the ministry of praise and worship...for in the midst of that atmosphere is great strength and power...and in these last days, that praise and worship will come as a great restoration to the Church. It will, in fact, go out even further than a restored truth into the realm of **truth that has not yet been revealed**, for there is a depth of praise and worship that the Church doesn't even know yet and has not walked in yet."<sup>1</sup>

Then, in August 1990, a "prophecy" given to James Ryle as a series of dreams was widely reported.<sup>2</sup> It said that a new type of powerful music was about to be given to the young people today. This new music would *rival that of the Beatles*, drawing thousands of young people under its spell. "It will bring a **new revelation of the truth** and it will usher men into My presence."

### **A Potent Weapon**

Rick Joyner (the editor of *Morning Star Journal*), added a new twist when he wrote about music for the American Christian magazine *Charisma* in August 1992.

In his article, titled "The Prophetic Power of Music", Rick Joyner said that "music has a unique ability to touch the soul and arrest the heart. Music is a language of the spirit, and those who know this language and can use it effectively have been entrusted with a potent weapon in the battle for the hearts of this generation".

Joyner believes music has the power - almost of itself - to change people's minds and hearts.<sup>3</sup> Men and women who hear this new battle song will, he believes, be drawn into the kingdom that is being established in the earth at this present time.

Rick Joyner also confirmed the Ryle prophecy by saying: "As we witnessed during the 60's, music can shape the spiritual direction of a generation. The music of the Beatles and other groups...both prophesied and sustained the social upheaval of that period."

Yet, the 'social upheaval' of the Beatles era consisted of promiscuity, drug abuse and dabbling in the occult! The music of that evil era, Joyner claims, will be recovered in the 1990's, but this time, "the Lord is raising up a host of warriors to seize this battleground from the enemy and use it for His kingdom. He is anointing prophetic minstrels who will communicate truth..."

What Joyner is proposing is to bring the music of the Beatles era into the Church and use it for God! The Beatles were inspired by the use of hypnotic drugs like LSD. They openly called themselves "anti-christ" and promoted Eastern mysticism. Their album covers glorified occult themes, and one featured the notorious satanist Aleister Crowley. The Beatles were one of the first groups to use satanic backmasking on their records. Yet Joyner holds up the power of their music as an example of the "new anointing" that is going to influence thousands over the next decade!

James Ryle agrees. He says God showed him that He had called the Beatles to Himself and that it was "His anointing" on their music. The Lord's purpose was to "usher in the charismatic renewal with a musical revival". However, the Beatles decided to use their talents

for "the other side", so in 1970, God lifted the anointing off their music and for twenty years has kept it hidden - **but He is about to release it again!**

The new music will be "new in kind, new in sound, arresting in content - it will stop traffic and turn men's heads and capture their hearts, but this time it will do it for the Lord", says the Ryle prophecy.

Can God use people like the Beatles to fulfill His plan of salvation? James Ryle is convinced He can. Using Joel 2:28 he claims that the Spirit will fall upon the rebellious in the last days. "He makes His rain to fall on the wicked and the righteous. Gifts and talents are given by the Lord, even though we may use them for evil". This sort of statement is often used to defend rock music.

### Using Our Talents

However, tagging worldly human abilities and activities with the label "used for God" will not sanctify them. We could just as well expect a prostitute to continue her trade "for God" or ask a thief to steal in the Name of Jesus!

What God commands is an entirely new state of mind, not conformed to the thinking of this world, but transformed by His truth and power (Rom. 12:2). He calls us to put off the old lifestyle, with its human abilities and desires.

*"Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind." (Eph. 4:22) "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, [to fulfill] the lusts [thereof]." (Rom. 13:14)*

Why do we assume that, when we are saved, God will call upon the musical talent we formerly used in the world? He is much more likely to provide a new spiritual gift that requires our complete dependence on Him, rather than on self.

However, Rick Joyner commends those (like Amy Grant) who have crossed over from spiritual worship to the murky depths of the secular music scene. He sees them as pioneers of the new musical revival, having left behind the "constraints that inhibit creativity" within their churches!

Such people, he tells us, are "chosen vessels" placed in positions of authority, ready to turn the situation to their advantage in the coming revival. Having gained a secular following, they will be able to "steer this generation towards its ultimate destiny".<sup>4</sup> This mighty army "will be anointed **with the prophetic power** of music to capture the attention of a generation."

The new direction for music - that is, the revelation of spiritual truth and compelling power to change minds and hearts - was further developed in an article by Robert Gay, worship leader for Bill Hamon's church and song-writer for Integrity Music.<sup>5</sup>

Quoting Amos 9:11 (*"I will restore David's fallen tabernacle "*), Gay says that the tabernacle was a place of continual praise and worship and God's purpose in restoring it is "so

that they may possess." [emphasis his] He goes on, "possess means to cast out, consume, destroy, disinherit and occupy by driving out the previous tenants."

**Here, then, we see that the NATURE of the new music is to be compelling and prophetic and the PURPOSE is "spiritual warfare" in order to possess the land."**

Gay claims that Psalm 149 says praise executes God's vengeance and judgements, and binds His foes. Gay likens this to the militant songs of today, but says, "the warfare songs being written today are mild compared to what David wrote - God is raising up anointed prophetic songwriters to bring forth the war songs of Zion in order to make the Church a fighting army - He is Lord of a warring people!" say Robert Gay.

### **A New Militancy**

This new element - militancy - is coming into church teaching as if by royal command. For instance, *Jesus Lifestyle*, the magazine of the "Bugbrooke Community" gives us an article titled "Music of The Jesus Revolution" in which Bugbrooke leader Noel Stanton claims: "music and song bring **holy power** to spiritual warfare - the **battle cry** of praise devastates the enemy...music identifies with people, calls to them and communicates creative gospel power." [emphasis added]

Just what sort of music is this? Stanton specifies that he is including "all types of music" in his statement, such as "rock, dance, ambient, ballad, acapella, white metal, gospel, contemporary rhythms and traditional hymns - **all** praise the Lord and communicate the gospel."

We could ask what Stanton means by "communicates creative gospel power." Perhaps this is simply jargon. But if not, it implies that music (of all types, he says) has an inherent power to impute salvation to unbelievers! It brings those who hear it to the Lord!

Truly godly music has no such "power" within itself. It can soothe, uplift and remind us of God's love, truth, etc. But the gospel message must be conveyed in words that can be accepted and understood, if conversion is to result. Anything other than this would cause an emotional reaction, or - worse - a supernatural encounter with spiritual powers that are NOT of God!

### **Occult Power**

For many centuries, occultists have recognised and used the power of music in their communication with the spirit-world. For example, they know that listening to a repeated beat or hypnotic sound will bring about a mental passivity that leads to altered states of consciousness and even to profound supernatural experiences. Also, the potency of much rock music, with its fast beat and psycho/sexual energy, can arouse emotional responses that lead to spiritual changes. This is especially true when spiritual messages are interwoven in the lyrics or backtracks of the songs.

Rock music was extensively used in communist countries to brainwash Christian prisoners and to prepare their minds for Marxist ideology. Russian Christians object to the invasion of "Christian" rock music now coming into their land, saying that "for years rock

music was used as a weapon against us day and night to destroy our souls. We could only resist with much prayer and fasting - however, now it is Christians from America who damage our souls - they rent big stadiums and infect teenagers and adults with their rock music."<sup>6</sup>

However, rock music is not the only danger. Spiritual power - the sort experienced in new-age hypnotic flute music, for example - is also present in songs written by restorationists. Their praise songs and choruses are frequently militant, and often have words that cannot be supported by the Bible. There is spiritual power available (but not the power of the Holy Spirit) when people gather together to "possess"; and this power is evident in their songs.

There is no doubt that a revival of powerful militant music is at hand; the prophecies will be fulfilled, but not by the will of God. The "creative power" of this music will draw thousands into the worldwide kingdom, yet they will not have been redeemed by the Blood of Jesus Christ, nor will they know the joy of dying to their former lives and making Jesus Lord of all.

What they will hear is the Pied Piper's song that lures them to deception, and the "new anointing" they will receive is the luciferic initiation into an altered worldview - the paradigm shift that brings them in line with satan's goals. God save us from such music!

(Mainstream, Spring 1993 - used by permission)

#### ENDNOTES:

1. *Voice of Victory* magazine of KCM, 1989.
2. Undated reprint in *Morning Star* Journal, edited by Rick Joyner.
3. The music referred to would be modern choruses and songs, as well as performance music like rap, folk and rock.
4. *Charisma* magazine article, August 1992.
5. *Charisma* magazine article, October 1992.
6. Peter Peters & Vasilij Ryzhuk, Unregistered Union of Churches, Moscow. Printed in *Prophetic Alert*, November 1992.