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WHERE ARE WE?

Jewel van der Merwe

The calendar says "1998". The daily newspaper of Durban, South Africa gives a countdown to A.D. 2000. As the systems, structures and citizens of the world focus on this event with increasing anticipation, the words of the prophet Daniel give a clarion call down the corridor of time:

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Daniel 12:4

Even the prophet Daniel could scarcely envision the fulfillment of that awesome prophecy. The countries of the world have networks of interlocking highways connecting with gleaming jets. A myriad of phone lines hum day and night as access to the super highway of cyberspace becomes available to the most remote parts of the world.

The plans and purposes of God are inseparably linked to what we see unfolding before us. His unchanging Word is being fulfilled, and the awareness of this pierces deep into the heart of the believer. The tapestry of the human race is carefully woven, a thing of beauty for those whose lives are built on the Word of God, but a snare for those who are without.

South Africa has not escaped that snare that has been carefully laid for this world. The desire for fame and fortune has also fraught with crime, heartache and problems. Adding to the church such as would be saved has been replaced by church growth for the sake of appearing successful. This has been a priority among many church leaders. The desire to match America in glitz and glamour has unfortunately brought about the same malaise that is common today world-wide.

When pastors should be Shepherds of the sheep protecting them against grievous wolves, they have become hirelings chasing the sheep into the pastures of the supernatural realm where they are opened up to everything that is coming in with the latest "wave". All caution is thrown to the wind as the Bible becomes dry and stale for those who long after the fleshpots of Egypt.

Pastors are entering in to what they call “deep intercessory prayer” where they seal off portions of their city from the devil. Mothers are out doing battle in the cosmic world while their sons and daughters lock themselves in their rooms spaced out on the latest rock star.

Redemptive Music. The singing of simple hymns of faith and worship has been replaced by heavy drumbeat with a cacophony of sounds beating time to repetitious mindless choruses. Music is a powerful tool that is being used to bring about a “higher” anointing. There are those who are so brazen as to say that this new music will actually bring in an increasing manifest presence of God. Some even declare that the “anointing” will be transferred through instruments just like the “anointing” went to Jesus’ garment and healed the woman of the issue of blood. It is impossible to say that there is a “higher” anointing in music that will “save” the masses. Only the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (which is the power of God into salvation) will save the soul. Music will be used rather as a tool to manipulate the masses. One doesn’t have to go back very far in history to see where music was used as a control mechanism for one of the most advanced and civilized people on earth (the Germans).

A new paradigm evidently occurred within the church at a recent traditional evangelical missionary meeting in the Philippines; it was reported that on the first evening the entire time was given over to a Filipino Christian dance troupe. The missionary reporting this said: “For two hours they danced indigenous dances of the Philippines that were originally used to worship other gods. They redeemed these dances and now dance them to the Almighty God. Several of them were incredibly powerful: especially a Mindanao warrior dance . . . many spiritual truths were communicated in these dances. . . God was breaking something in our conservative, old mission as they danced.

Redeeming dances to other gods? How does one redeem dances? What basis is there in redeeming something that belongs to the enemy? Obviously doctrines of devils have infiltrated and will continue to do so in the days that are ahead. From England comes this astounding message to the New Wine list on the Internet:

We have had a number of the men using staves in worship in our church for at least three years now. There seems to be an increase in their use in times when we get into spiritual warfare. There have been amazing times when the Spirit of God has come and the men each take their staff and pound one end of it on the floor in rhythm. It has the feel of a war dance, and then it is like the more they pound, the more powerful it the anointing to wage war against the enemy. There have been times when we have sensed a real breakthrough in the spiritual realms and the result worship is also exciting.

Use of Dreams and Revelations. International boundaries are quickly scaled as “prophets” move between countries. Recently in Pensacola, Florida, a minister from England took the pulpit and provided the vision for the service. He then gave the pulpit to a prophet from the same country, Graham Cooke. This “prophet” has a word for the congregation regarding the coming days when many people would be receiving personal dreams and these dreams would be an open doorway unto the future. He said that the people should keep a record of these dreams in a journal because these dreams would herald the next move of God.

When people leave the secure boundaries of the Word of God, bizarre things happen. Stories abound of folk whose lives are shipwrecked as a result. One lady was recently “led” to the movie BRAVEHEART. It seems that many “prophets” have been led to this movie. Before seeing the movie, this lady had a vision of a group of wild, warring people with their faces painted with blue

paint in various striped designs. As this “prophet” believed that blue was the color of anointing and revelation, she was surprised by the parallels in the movie. She actually believed God spoke to her and said, “This is the kind of warrior I want my people to be.” The absurdity goes on. However, the tragedy is that the deception of the enemy is clouding the eyes of so many who are hungry after “a new move” or “more”.

There are no limits to where the new paradigm which has been released will take the church. An Australian church leader has recently said that in Australia the “Toronto Blessing” has crossed the line – thus bringing in a paradigm shift and has opened the door to evil as nothing else in church history! The bizarre is going to become more and more common place as the door to the expressly forbidden realm of the supernatural has been flung wide open. Christians are eagerly walking in the “soulish” realm and calling the powers within it the “Holy Spirit”.

The “Revival” Predicted. Looking over the past eight years of newsletters it has been incredible to see the fulfillment of so much the Lord has shown us watchmen. As noted with the Kansas City prophets in 1990, there were stern warnings given by them that if a person did not go along with their new prophetic anointing, dire consequences would follow. Those who would dare even question this latest “move” of God would be labeled “divisive” and even “Jezebels”. The same spirit that didn’t want to be questioned has increased among those who are riding the crest of the current wave or “move”. Recently (November 7, 1997) Paul Crouch made this declaration on TBN:

God, we proclaim death to anything or anyone that will lift a hand against this network and this ministry that belongs to you, God. It is your work. It is your idea. It is your property. It is your airways. It is your world and we proclaim death to anything that would stand in the way of God’s great voice of proclamation to the whole world.

It would seem that this type of spiritual intimidation has successfully held God’s people in fear as the deception has increased and the voice of reason has been muffled by the mighty roar of the tempest. According to Discernment, Vol. 1, No. 2 from June 1990, the new revival that was being heralded by the “prophets” would have certain characteristics. The only thing that has changed since that time has been some of their terminology – which is typical of those espousing “The Manifest Sons of God” teaching. This teaching has been riding on the back of the Restoration Movement right through this century. In 1990 the Manifest Sons were called The New Breed. Now, they are called “Apostles” and even the “Bride”.

The following are the unchanged characteristics of the “revival” that was to come from the 1990 newsletter:

1. It is a revival of the prophets that use the Holy Scriptures deceitfully.
2. It is a revival of “sorcery” (the magic art of manipulating people).
3. It is a revival that wants to see the walls of the churches and denominations crumble and come under the authority, structure and network of the new apostles.
4. It is a revival that rejects the literal rapture of the church.
5. It is a revival that rejects sound doctrine as a basis for unity.
6. It is a revival that teaches that it is wrong to judge the prophets according to the Word of God.
7. It is a revival obsessed with Apostles and a political agenda on earth.
8. It is a revival bent on turning the church into a militant people with a war-like mentality designed to take dominion of the world and if need be – by force.

Apostles in South Africa. Recently the opportunity arose to witness first hand the New Apostolic Paradigm in South Africa. Bishop Bill Hamon was introduced at this conference as the leading prophet in the world today. He was holding “Prophets and Apostles” conferences in various cities around the country. Bill Hamon said that he came to South Africa fifteen years ago to activate the prophets and now he was here to activate the apostles. South Africa seemed to be only part of the world-wide trip. Other countries he has visited recently where there is an increase in networking are: Japan, Philippines, Singapore, Israel. It would seem that he has been visiting these many countries for the express purpose of releasing the “apostolic” anointing. As new apostles are commissioned, the need for the release of the “five-fold calling” would occur. He also stated that they were in the process of training business people all around the world. The people were told that there is a dearth in the land for the Word of God which he defined as the spoken word of the new prophets.

Bill Hamon believes that the purpose in activating this particular apostolic anointing is to bring back the King. This would intimate that Jesus is stuck somewhere and can not come back until the church 1) restores apostles and prophets, 2) commissions individuals to raise up a company of prophets, and 3) reproduces the anointing.

People in South Africa are very taken with this concept. The crowds stretch out their hands and release the Christ anointing within them. Listening afterwards to the excited talk of those who are taking special classes to release this anointing causes one to wonder what else “new” is on the horizon.

In the light of this let us never forget we are to examine against the Word of God any teachings that come forth. It would seem that this would be an insurmountable task given all the teachings flooding the church today. A simple question to always ask is: Did Jesus or the Apostles do this? With this as our basis, let us check out further Bill Hamon’s ministry. On one of the evenings he commissioned the local pastor as a new apostle. In his commissioning he said, “I call forth the apostle in this vessel. We release your anointing.” Bishop Hamon’s “prophetic words” continued:

The Lord is going to use you to be an extension of Himself. You are going before Big Corporations. You will sit on Boards. . . .”

Could he truly be saying such things? The ego was puffed up, the senses dulled and the words kept coming:

The greatest ministry Christ has now is raising the Church to His level. . .

But wait, we have heard all of this before. This new revelation is not new at all, but a rehash of the Manifest Sons of God teaching of the 40’s. Moving into new and higher levels of anointing takes the child of God to a form of spiritual illuminism called *Gnosticism*. The new *Gnostics* talk the same language as Christians. However, they are moving further and further away from the Word of God. Their authority has been invested in new revelation or “revelation knowledge”. Instead of the Holy Scriptures, they are moving into the “deep” things of God which take them beyond God’s truth expressly revealed in His Word.

Read carefully from the following notes from Bishop Hamon’s recent South African message on the Battle of the Brides:

The last day apostles and prophets that are alive today is going to take the Church through the transition from the dispensation of grace to the dispensation of the Kingdom, from the

dispensation of the mortal Church to the dispensation of the immortal Church. Apostles and prophets bring transition. There is more than revival – there is revolution, a restoration, there's an activation – Jesus is coming back King of kings and Lord of lords!

Oh, if only this were an isolated incidence! Remember the snare is being set in place worldwide! The computers are being used as e-mail seminars are being offered to anyone who wishes to learn how to tune in to their prophetic gifting. Note the following instructions in “activating” new prophets.

Week 1 – Activation

This week's activation will give to each of you the opportunity to reach deep within and receive a thought from God for your partner. . .

The goal of this week's activation is to allow you to actually hear the voice of the Lord. . . God does not usually give us judgmental, negative, harsh, corrective directive words when we are just learning to move in the prophetic. . . If you believe you receive one of these types of words during the activation exercise, assume you have heard wrong and go back to the Lord and ask Him for a different thought from God for your partner.”

Week 2 – Activation

The purpose of this week's activation is to allow you to actually hear the Voice of the Lord, and to be able to share EXACTLY what you believe you have received.

The overriding theme to hearing God is to “look deep inside, listen closely, see and hear what God is saying. Do this for about 2 minutes. Then, no more praying, only listening, for about 30 – 45 seconds. This allows you to really tune in.”

Participants are encouraged to activate this gifting via e-mail with a partner. Also, if you miss a couple of times, don't worry – Michael Jordan doesn't stop shooting basketballs because he misses a few! This is from Prophet Training 101. It can be viewed on the Internet at www.ci-ministries.org.

How the emphasis today has changed. In the manner that the New Apostolic Paradigm is presented, one can see how the God of the Bible, revealed in Jesus Christ, has changed to finding the god within. That “god” within has an insatiable thirst for new revelations and new experiences. This is Gnosticism at it's best . . . to move from level to level to ultimate One-ness with the Godhead. For what reason? What is the purpose?

The driving force for the new prophets and apostles is political power in the clothing of Kingdom Now/Dominion Theology. Instead of Jesus Christ setting up His Kingdom during His Millennial reign, the church is mandated to take dominion and set up a political structure here on the earth without the personal presence of Jesus Christ. This teaching actually holds that the church is the ongoing incarnation of Christ. It teaches immortality – without Jesus.

More now than ever before . . . let us not grow weary in the faith.

Reinterpreting Christian History

Sterling M. Durgy

Recently an article written by Dr. Ralph D. Winter, president of the U.S. Center for World Missions was brought to my attention. This piece, entitled “Seeing the Reformation with New, Missionary Eyes” (*Mission Frontiers* supplement, June 13, 1997) is remarkable for the way Winter radically reinterprets the Protestant Reformation. The Protestant Reformation has traditionally been seen as a time when conflict between those who took a stand upon the teachings of Scripture and those who promoted the traditions of the Roman Catholic church brought major changes in the church and society.

Winter, however, presents it as primarily a clash between Germanic and Latin cultures – the significance of which is more sociological than theological. A similar point of view was presented in another, earlier work by Winter “The Bible, Reformation and Modern Missions” (*Missions Frontiers*, September-October 1996).

Any serious student of history or theology will readily admit that the Protestant Reformation had complex roots in the culture, politics, historical background, and technology of the times. But that simply explains the widespread effects of the Reformation, it does not dismiss the central importance of the theological issues upon which it centered. Protestants looked to the teachings of Scripture rather than to the authority of the church for Spiritual truth. This distinction is taking on new, not diminished, significance in our day, when the Roman Catholic Church seems to be moving progressively farther from a truly Biblical faith into one defined more by tradition and general culture.

Winter and the USCWM have close associations with others who are trying to radically change evangelical Christianity. Both are closely associated with Dr. C. Peter Wagner, who, as a church growth expert and professor at Fuller seminary, has been introducing a number of “innovations” into Christian practice and belief that we find inconsistent with the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. Wagner, for instance, promotes the idea that one’s theology should flow from one’s experience, success indicating which “theological view” should prevail. The Harvest Rock Church of Pasadena, California meets at Mott Auditorium on the campus of the USCWM. Formerly called the Vineyard Christian Fellowship of Pasadena, this church and its senior pastors, Che and Sue Ahn, 1995 when the John Arnott’s church in Toronto (famed site of “the Toronto blessing”) was asked to leave (another, separate Vineyard congregation has been established in Pasadena since). Such well-known Vineyard pastors as James Ryle and Randy Clark have, therefore, ministered to Che’s congregation. This month, the “Catch the Fire – The Release of the Apostolic and Prophetic” conference will be held at Harvest Rock Church with Mike Bickle, Paul Cain, and Rick Joyner of the “Kansas City Prophets” and John Arnott of the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship. The advertisement for this conference promises:

“God has spoken and a manifestation of true prophets and apostles will come forth to cause His church to reveal Christ in fullness to the world. This present revival must lead to a restoration of the Ephesians 4 mandate,” thus showing the latter rain, Manifest Sons of God emphasis in this conference and Harvest Rock Church (note the reference to Ephesians 4:11 and the restoration of the five-fold ministry”).

If Ralph Winter was writing his own point of view for some obscure academic journal we might simply disagree with him. However, considering his position of influence among those sincerely

interested in evangelism and missions, we find such a reckless bending of the truth to suit one's goals to be profoundly disturbing, even if the goal is to promote missions and evangelism. Used with permission from the NEWS AND NOTES section of THE AMERICAN NIGHT WATCH newsletter, Vol. V Part 11, Nov. 1997.

David Ickes visiting South Africa

A controversial UK author and lecturer, David Ickes is being advertised widely in South Africa. His best seller "...And The Truth Shall Set You Free" sets him out as a world expert on government conspiracies and controversies. He talks about the tyranny called the New World Order which he says will manifest as a world government, a world central bank and currency, a world army, and a microchipped population linked to a global computer.

He is being given television time, newspaper coverage and tickets to his lectures are sold through computicket. Many Christians are willing to give this man a hearing because they have already been warned of all these dangers by different ministries that they trusted. However, David Ickes is a member of the Green Party. His meeting with a British medium in 1990 set him on a spiritual journey of discovery. His religion is that of the New Age religion which connects the earth's energies to bring about planetary healing.

Discernment South Africa

A very capable lady, Mich Peyper, will be taking the major responsibility for Discernment in South Africa. Hester van Boven will be assisting Mich in developing an information centre. Mich is married and the mother of two daughters. She lost a baby daughter in 1994 and as a result she reached out to God. The Bible became the source of her strength as she realized it was not simply a history book – but it was the Book of Life. She accepted Christ as her Savior and has become a dynamic witness to His cause.

Hester found herself in the USA in 1981 with her husband and two children. After 9 years she had not made friends and was very lonely. Her marriage was falling apart and her children had grown and left home. Unfortunately she started looking for answers in the wrong places. When she questioned someone about God – she was directed to the Theosophical Society (whose headquarters are in Wheaton, Illinois near where she lived). Because her English was not fluent, she thought this was the same as "theology". Instead of finding God, Hester was led into doctrines of devils. She began communicating with these "hosts of darkness" who pretended at first that they were her friends.

In despair, she returned to South Africa without her family. In a wonderful way God intervened in her circumstances and she learned the truth about His precious Son, Jesus. It was a slow and difficult journey, but by the grace and mercy of God she came to a complete understanding of God through His Word. As a result, her heart burned with the desire to tell others about Christ. She laid out the Gospel in a series of 19 pamphlets/tracts and distributed these on a weekly basis walking miles/kilometers throughout her community.

Since 1993, 10,000 families have been reached with 250,000 pamphlets dropped in their mailboxes. In 1996 Mich and Hester met and together continued the mission to the community. In

1997 they started a cassette and video ministry. They distribute cassettes in the same way as the pamphlets. During the year they distributed 5,500 cassettes on different topics, but always laying a clear scriptural foundation for the Gospel. The pamphlets and tapes are in both English and Afrikaans. The testimonies of salvation that have come as a result of this ministry has made all the hard labor worthwhile.

FROM ENGLAND

The Alpha Course

Tricia Tillin writes from England that “the Alpha Course is about to hit England big time. Holy Trinity, Brompton, the Anglican home of the Toronto Blessing and the originators of the Alpha Course are about to launch a nationwide promotional scheme designed to reach “every unchurched person in the country” and get them to take the Alpha Course. The first step is for HTB to circulate 4,500 churches with a promotional video (with Sandy Millar and Nicky Gumbel) asking them to spend 100 pounds each towards the costs of invitations in their local area. Then in September there will be a huge advertising campaign with billboards, posters and direct mail, inviting people to attend the courses.

If the Alpha Course were truly evangelistic, we would be saying Amen to all this. Sadly, the evangelistic content is poor and has been watered down so much that Alpha courses are now run in Roman Catholic parishes with no problem – the idea being mainly to get people to “join churches”. The most worrying aspect is the “Holy Spirit Weekend” which is a weekend away with the leaders and course members where the concepts of spiritual gifts and manifestations (including the Toronto Blessing of course) are promoted amongst the participants, many of whom are not yet converted!

The Alpha Course used to be bought as a package by unsuspecting churches who used it as an evangelistic tool, skipping over the questionable parts. However, HTB objected to that, slapped a copyright on it, and insisted everyone run it “as-is”.

To the cynically minded, the Alpha course is mostly a tool for introducing people to the TB – even unsaved people. Its secondary aspect, that of encouraging people to attend church, is not entirely a good thing either, when you consider the state of many churches in this country! However, the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, praised HTB for its “marvelous achievements” including the success of the Alpha course.

FROM THE EDITOR:

This past 7 months has been a time of refreshing here in South Africa. In January we were blessed to have Pastor Bill Randles visit us from Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The South Africans enjoyed Bill’s ministry immensely. A number of tapes will be offered with this newsletter from his ministry trip in South Africa.

Bill spoke on a wide range of topics regarding deception in the Church. He always gave a scriptural perspective on his subject. He manifested the Grace of the Lord in a way that impressed all who heard him. We are now expecting Dr. Joseph Chambers to arrive this week and to have him ministering around the country for two weeks. Expectancy is very high. His coming is very timely for those whose hearts are longing for the truth of God’s precious Word.

I am booked to leave South Africa on March 12, 1998. My daughter will remain in Natal to finish her Junior year of High School. She will more than likely follow in about 4-6 weeks.

My prayer is that pastors in the U.S. will be willing to take a stand for the truth like a number of the pastors in South Africa. They are willing to pay the price – which many times is very dear.

And let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Gal. 6:9

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound with hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Rom. 15:3

Jewel van der Merwe

The Last Day

The vast majority of thinking peoples concede that sooner or later, this world will come to an end. There are three basic views as to how this end will be accomplished:

1. Science advances, and History supports, that it will end because of over-population, pollution and destruction of the ozone layer, being struck by a large foreign object, nuclear war, or just pushing the wrong button.
2. Astronomers predict that life on earth could continue to evolve for another 5,000,000,000 years, at which time the sun will become too hot to sustain life. Some fanciful theorists propound the idea that man will evacuate earth and colonise other galaxies long before disaster strikes.
3. Christians hold that Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, will return to this earth as Judge and Reigning King. Their faith is based on their belief in the One who purports to be the Creator of all things, as revealed in the Bible.

In respect of the latter view, countless individuals, sects and organizations have professed to know the exact date of the end day. History has revealed that all of their predictions have been wrong so far. Notwithstanding the one hundred percent failure rate and the admonitions by Christ Himself, there are yet among us those who still profess to know that date.

Mark 13:32 But of that day and {that} hour knoweth no man, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Although Scripture contends that history will culminate, Christians are divided as to what will actually follow that event. The name for the teachings about the last days is called *eschatology* and can be classified under three main categories, namely the *Tribulation*, the *Rapture*, and the *Millennium*. There is, of course, a fourth group of 'I don't know'. However, irrespective of their points of view concerning that climactic day, they all agree that Jesus is coming again.

Matthew 24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Amen