

## HERESIES - New Gospel Emerging

Many students of Scripture agree that the world heading for a global religio-political alliance that will usher in the last-days' man of sin. In order for that to be accomplished, a vast majority of Christians would have to be brought into line with an ecumenical agenda that targets not only professing Christian groups, but all of the world's religions. The question has been, how could this be possible?

We have seen for the past few decades a concerted effort on the part of Catholics and non-Catholics to form a unified front against the world's evils. That effort has been accepted by the vast majority of evangelicals today.

Although we do not agree with the rationale that disregards the unscriptural tenets of Roman Catholicism, we can understand how it has developed. Both claim Jesus Christ as Savior. But how would the bridge between Christians and non-Christians be effected? How could such unity ever be possible?

When, in October, 1986, Pope John Paul II brought representatives from virtually all the world's religions to Assisi, Italy, for his ecumenical day of prayer for world peace. He proposed that they all worship the same god. This brought consternation to some evangelical leaders who had been looking to him for ecumenical direction. The universalist philosophy he espoused was inconsistent with the biblical truths to which they lay claim. But for evangelical leaders to openly contest the pope's position would hamper their efforts for unity with the papacy.

Thus, for the sake of that unity, it appears as if it is necessary for evangelicals to fall in line with the papacy's position on other religions. As a result, a new gospel is emerging among evangelicals, which promises to bridge the gap between themselves and the worlds' religions. ***That new gospel suggests that people of any belief system are saved without knowledge of Christ.***

One source of the new gospel is the man most recognized as the world's leading evangelist of the Gospel. Appearing via satellite on Robert Schuller's Hour of Power television program for June 8, 1997 (originally taped January 21, 1996), evangelist Billy Graham stated categorically that he believes people of other faiths are members of Christ's Body, ***even if they have never heard of Christ.*** After reminiscing about the past fifty years and how Billy Graham had influenced him,

Schuller asked Graham, "Tell me, what do you think is the future of Christianity?" Graham replied:

*Well, Christianity and being a true believer-you know, I think there's the Body of Christ which comes from all the Christian groups around the world-or outside the Christian groups. I think everybody that loves Christ, or knows Christ-whether they're conscious of it or not-they're members of the Body of Christ.*

*And I don't think that we're going to see a great sweeping revival that will turn the whole world to Christ at any time. I think James answered that-the Apostle James-in the first council in Jerusalem, when he said that God's purpose for this age is to call out a people for His name. And that's what God is doing today; He's calling people from out of the world for His name, whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or the non-believing world, they are members of the Body of Christ because they've been called by God.*

Did Graham mean that God is calling people out from among these various religious systems to follow Christ? His following words revealed that this isn't what he meant:

*They may not even know the name of Jesus, but they know in their heart that they need something that they don't have, and they turn to the only light that they have. And I think that they are saved, and that they are going to be with us in heaven.*

It is clear that he meant that while still in these religious systems-even if they are in "the non--believing world"- they are members of the Body of Christ. By saying this, Graham has redefined the Body of Christ without offering anything more substantial than what he thinks or believes. Schuller asked for clarification:

**Robert Schuller:** What I hear you saying, that it's possible for Jesus Christ to come into a human heart and soul and life, even if they've been born in darkness and have never had exposure to the Bible. Is that a correct interpretation of what you're saying?

**Billy Graham:** Yes, it is. Because I believe that. I've met people in

various parts of the world in travel situations, that they had never seen a Bible or heard about a Bible, and never heard about Jesus, but they believe in their heart that there was a God, and they tried to live a life that was quite apart from the surrounding community in which they lived.

**Schuller:** This is fantastic! I'm so thrilled to hear you say that! There is a wideness in God's mercy!

**Graham:** There is; there definitely is.

The two again reminisced about how Graham helped get the Hour of Power program going, after which the conversation on religion continued:

***Schuller:** Billy, if you look into the future, what challenges would you throw out to Christians, or to pastors-thousands of pastors, and hundred of rabbis, and, they tell me, over a million Muslims a week watch this program. What challenge would you have to these listeners?... Give them a message right from your heart.*

***Graham:** Well, the message is that God loves you. Whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever your religious background, God loves you. He wants to come into your heart and change the direction of your life, and give you a peace and a joy that you've never had before. And He will do that today, if you will make that commitment to Him.*

This was the best the leading evangelist could offer "right from the head" to Muslims, et al? How terribly sad.

Schuller then extolled the virtues of his mentor, the late Norman Vincent Peale, and the late Roman Catholic Archbishop Fulton R. Sheen, asking Graham what he thought of these men. To this Graham replied:

*I knew both of them, as you did, and loved them both. And I have in my book a story of how Fulton Sheen came to my apartment on a train once, and we had two or three hours together. And when I went to his funeral they took me right up to the place of burial. And I felt I had lost a very dear friend. And since that time, the whole relationship between me and my work, and you and your work and the Roman Catholic Church, has*

*changed. They open their arms and welcome us, and we have the support of the Catholic Church almost everywhere we go. And I think that we must come to the place where we keep our eyes on Jesus Christ, and not on what denomination or what church or what groups we belong to.*

This is not the first time Graham has alluded to a personal belief that men may come to God through other means than Jesus Christ. In a previous issue we reported on a Parade magazine article in which Graham stated:

*I fully adhere to the fundamental tenets of Christian faith for myself and my ministry, but as an American I respect other paths to God.*

Upon challenging him on the idea that there are "other paths to God," we were inundated by readers with quotes from Graham's ministry whereby Graham stated that "the Bible clearly teaches that no one can come to the Father except through Christ."

Yes, the bible says that. But does he believe it? In an apparent attempt to "synergize" these opposing positions, it appears as if Graham believes that now salvation apart from Christ is really salvation in Christ; the people are saved, they just don't know it.

In other words, yes, Christ is the only way to God; but people can be in Christ without knowing about Him.

The influence that Graham wields over the Christian community is tremendous. To present this new gospel on the basis of what he thinks and believes, without offering a shred of biblical evidence to support it, should cause wholesale rejection of this idea. But there has been no concern evidenced by the mainstream voices in the Christian media or churches.

Had Graham's remarks been isolated, and had other major voices risen to condemn them, we would not see a pattern emerging. Instead, others are beginning to teach virtually the same thing.

In October, 1997, "Bishop" Carlton Pearson brought the new gospel into homes via the Trinity Broadcasting Network. Appearing on one of TBN's "Revival" meetings, Pearson spoke of how the Lord convicted him of judging others outside the

Church. He told of going into a restaurant. Asked if he would like to wait in the bar until his order was ready, he declined. At that time "God" spoke to him:

*"I'm over there." He said, "Look at them drinking. The ones that are drinking themselves-you know why they're drinking?"*

*I said, "No" My quick answer: "Well, because they're just sinners on their way to hell, glory to God!"*

*"He said, "They're drinking because you have not convinced them that I don't like them. Go over there and tell them that I'm not angry at them. They're trying to drink their guilt away."*

*I'm talking about the Church. You have not convinced them that we love them. You have judged them, and criticized them, and put them down, and sent them to hell. You don't have no hell to send them to!*

*"They're just-tell them my blood! They're already bought; they just don't know. I paid for their sins! They're justified! They're accepted! Tell them that I love them!"...*

*"You have convinced them- [you] in the religious world-that I don't have good will toward them; that I'm angry, and I'm a judge, and I'm going to send them to hell! Tell them I have good will; I'm pleasantly disposed toward them!"...*

*I'm sitting in front of my television, eating my dinner with my new baby girl-she's about three months old, or something, Majesty-watching the news. The Tutsies and Hutus are returning from Zaire to Rwanda. And they're dropping by the thousands on the road-flies caked in the corners of their eyes, and of their mouths, and sores all over their bodies, and they're gaunt and drawn and starving to death. And I sat there with a plate full of food, and my baby in my arms, and I said-and I'll be honest with you, I was angry-I said, "God how can You call Yourself God, and let those people fall like that and just such [sic] them right into hell?"*

*He said, "Oh, that's what you think I'm doing?"*

*Now this is in my mind, God is speaking. I said, "Well, that's what I've been taught"...*

*He said, "Oh, you think I'm pulling them right into hell." He said, "Do you believe that my Son died for them?"*

*I said, "Yes."*

*"Do you believe that His blood can cover their sins?"*

*I said, "Yes."*

*"Well, if you think they're all going to hell, if you go over there and tell*

*them, do you think that that would save them?"*

*I said, "Yes."*

*He said, "Well how come you're not on the first thing smokin' to get over there?"*

*And I got mad. I said, "God, don't put that guilt trip on me."*

*I said it. I said, "Don't put-don't do it; I cannot save everybody."*

*He said, "Exactly. I am the Savior!"*

*He said, "I'm not sucking them right into hell!! They're already in hell; can't you see it? I've prepared a place for them."*

*I said, "Wait a minute; wait a minute! They didn't hear my message and respond to my 'Just as I am' song and altar appeal."*

*He said, "My blood covers. While they were yet sinners I died for them. I was wounded for their transgressions; I was bruised for their"-we have not preached the full Gospel!*

*We don't understand the finished work of Christ. We think they gotta all come in our way-our church, our altar call, our four spiritual laws.*

*I don't believe that anymore. Now maybe you all don't want me to come back, but I believe that Jesus covers sins. We are to tell them, "You're justified! You're forgiven! You just don't know it! He owns you; He bought you!"*

*The devil has convinced you; he said, "All of your righteousness is as filthy rags."*

*After some lengthy anecdotes about God speaking to him, Pearson summarized the new gospel:*

*"Stop telling them to get saved, and start telling them they are saved."*

*Wait, wait, wait, wait a minute now, wait a minute; they couldn't be saved.*

*"What do you think I died for? You haven't been preaching the Gospel right. You've been preaching your gospel, not Mine. Tell them that while they were yet sinners I died for them...."*

*I said, "'Wait, wait, wait Lord, you've got to send somebody to hell! You know, we'll have another Jerusalem council to try to- wait a minute, Lord, some of these people gotta go to hell! You've gotta find a way for some of them!"*

*We would argue. If you found out that everybody was going to heaven you'd lose your religion. "Somebody gotta go to hell, God, please!"*

*Now that's not the love of God in our hearts.*

Speaking of sinners who consider themselves unworthy to be in fellowship in the Church, Pearson tells them virtually the same thing Graham told Schuller's audience:

*First of all, accept God's love. I'm not going to tell you to stop sinning first, because you don't know how to do that by yourself. Accept God's love; accept His deliverance. Stop judging yourself. You see, you can't expect God's forgiveness if you don't forgive yourself.*

Pearson continued with a tearful plea to just accept everybody where they are and love them. Do not judge them or confront them with their sin.

In stating that non-believers should not be told that they must be saved, but rather that they are already saved, Pearson mistakes personal desire for reality. Yes, we all acknowledge that Christ died for the whole world-that His blood is sufficient for all who come to him in faith. But Scripture nowhere hints that one can be saved without knowledge of Christ. On the contrary, we are told:

*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! (Romans 10:13-15)*

Without a shred of solid biblical evidence, Pearson, like Graham, has compromised the Gospel with personal beliefs and random thoughts mistaken as the voice of God. And the belief that people must be confronted with their sins in order to repent, he equates with hatred.

If there is any question as to whether or not Pearson was really conversing with God, we need only point out how he attributes to Satan words that God spoke through the prophet Isaiah: The devil has convinced you; he said, "All of your righteousness is as filthy rags." So now, man's righteousness is not as filthy rags; that's a lie of the devil!

This is the "new gospel" that we will be hearing more and more of as the apostasy grows among professing Christians. Awareness of God's love is all that will be needed in order to be in unity with one another. We are no longer to judge sin in our midst, and certainly we are not to judge anyone's beliefs. The authority we have for this new gospel is what Billy Graham thinks and what Carlton Pearson received in conversation with "God." No Scripture; no empirical evidence from God's Word that would justify centuries of belief that is grounded in Scripture. We are to believe it because these men (and others) are telling us they believe it. It is a convolution of God's Word to suggest that being in Christ, or being "saved" means something other than a living, obedient faith in Jesus Christ. So consumed with a love for unity at any cost, the new evangelicals are erecting a barrier to unity with those who would remain faithful to the truth. But this is how it must be.

Rather than get too upset, we should thank the Lord for showing us so clearly the deception that is taking hold on the hearts of the many. Truly, contrary to these men's belief, the Lord's Words demonstrate how the vast majority of the world's population will not be saved:

*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. (Matthew 7:13-14)*

In actuality the new gospel is not so new; it has been around since the Tower of Babel. It has its modern expression in this universalist gospel which is now being accepted within traditionally evangelical circles. This will eventually open the door to the full unification of evangelical Christianity with all religions and philosophies.

In the religio-political scheme of the Brave New World Order it will not be necessary for everyone to be of the same religion. All that will be necessary is that "negative," "exclusive" religious beliefs (such as the Gospel of Jesus Christ and insistence upon obedience to His Word) be sufficiently neutralized to allow mankind to march in unison into the New Age.

Of course, love for unity will result in hatred for divisiveness. The powers that be will never admit to hating those whom they accuse of divisiveness, but they will



"hate the sin and love the sinner" to death. They will believe they are doing God a service by putting to death His true disciples (John 16:2).

And the leading voices among today's Christian leadership will so mesmerize the people with their oratory and sweet songs of love for Jesus that the people will cheer when the "evil" is purged from their midst.

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