

MEDIA SPOTLIGHT



A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS & SECULAR MEDIA

SPECIAL REPORT

CELEBRATION 2000 NEO-ORTHOXOXY AND THE NEW EVANGELISM

by Albert James Dager

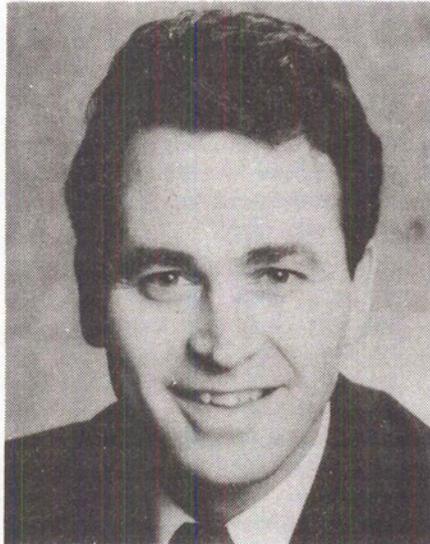
As the end of this century draws near, there are myriad plans in the works to make New Year's eve, 1999, the biggest blowout in human history. The celebrations will commemorate not only the end of a century, but the beginning of a new millennium. It doesn't matter that, officially, the third millennium will not begin until January 1, 2001. In most people's minds, it will begin on January 1, 2000.

The actual year of celebration isn't as important as the celebrations themselves. People are always looking for an excuse to party. And it would seem anti-climactic to wait another year to let the festivities begin.

Even now plans are being made in many areas, both secular and religious, for the grandest celebration in the history of mankind. For some reason, man's eternal optimism keeps him hoping that each succeeding new year will bring a better life than the one just ended. The facts of history, however, demonstrate that each year brings the same joys and sorrows, victories and defeats, and seasons of peace and war that preceding years brought. As the writer of Ecclesiastes said, there is no new thing under the sun; all is vanity.

The magnitude of these things is felt more acutely than in the past simply because there are so many more people on the earth today than there were yesterday. Add to this the fact that the world has shrunk into a global community by virtue of technology and mass communications, and we all, to some degree, enter into the pain and pleasures experienced throughout the world. Television brings us on-the-spot, graphic representations of all aspects of the human drama, from the exuberant joy of the Berlin wall's demise to the bomb-ravaged tragedies of Bosnia and Somalia.

Yet in spite of the preponderance of bad news over good in the media, each new year brings hope for something better. Perhaps the optimism for a better life in the future of this planet is a means to avoid having to face the reality of sin's consequences. It's man's way of not facing reality and the consequences of his own mortality. Death hangs over the earth like Poe's pendulum, sweeping away, second by second, little by little, the small gains in human joy that mankind manages to achieve, until, in the end, there is nothing left but the Judgment.



JAY GARY - Heading up Celebration 2000

If this sounds pessimistic it is not; it is realistic. While life holds wonderful moments for each of us, those moments are fleeting. The reason mankind increasingly seeks help from professional psychiatrists and psychologists is not because he remembers and rejoices in his times of happiness, but because his times of sorrow and pain are not as fleeting; they remain with him for his lifetime. And it doesn't matter how many moments of joy he experiences,

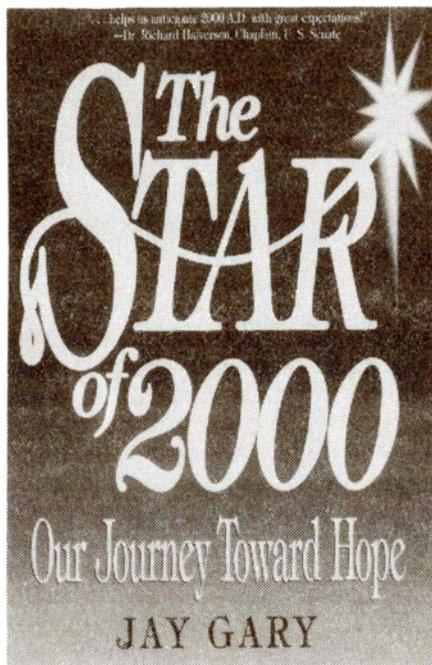
there are sufficient moments of pain awaiting him in the future to keep him focused on the miseries of life. Unless, of course, he is able to put things in their proper perspective and accept life for what it has to offer, trusting in the Author of life to see him through to the end. That, of course, is only possible through genuine faith in the Author who is Jesus Christ.

Without that faith, man will continue to celebrate life and new years with outward revelry that only masks the suffering of lost souls. To that end, the bigger the reason to celebrate, the bigger the celebration will be. And the dawning of not only a new year or a new century, but a new millennium, is the biggest reason man can find to celebrate.

What form those celebrations will take will depend on the spiritual condition of the celebrants. Hedonists will find in the new millennium an excuse to engage in unprecedented orgies of debauchery. New Agers will expect to be that much closer to the transformation of the planet and the dawning of a new era of peace and prosperity for an equally transformed mankind. Atheists will have impressed upon their consciousness the need to celebrate if for no other reason than there's nothing more worth celebrating; when it's gone, it's gone—over; done with; pfft! The average person will continue in characteristically stoic optimism and take whatever pleasure he can from the moment. In all cases, the liquor will flow freely, the confetti will litter the streets as at no other time, and approximately nine months later the world will see another baby boom, albeit on a smaller scale than what followed on the heels of World War II.

But what of God's people? How will we view the new millennium? Will we be among the merry-makers, hoping that the new year/century/millennium will give us more wealth, more love, more security in an insecure world? Or will we see things from God's perspective, viewing this momentous event as not so momentous after all—just another turning of the earth on its axis, yet bringing new opportunities to serve our Lord according to His will?

One man in particular is working diligently to make not only the years 2000 and 2001 significant moments to celebrate, but the remaining years of the century in total—from 1996 through 2001. Jay Gary, author of *The Star of 2000*, is setting a course that many church leaders are following.



THE STAR OF 2000

The Star of 2000, presents a plan for celebrating the 2000th anniversary of the Lord's birth as "the most memorable Christmas ever."

"No one would let the 100th anniversary of their grandmother's birth go by without giving her a tremendous birthday celebration," says Gary. "In a similar way, we shouldn't let the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus pass by without giving Him a magnificent tribute. In His honor, the year 2000 ought to be the most significant celebration in the history of civilization."¹

Gary is cognizant of the fact that the actual year of Jesus' birth is reckoned as anywhere from 7 B.C. to A.D. 4. But inasmuch as the actual date cannot be determined, the Lord's impact upon civilization must have some cohesive dating method. And the year 2000 is as good as any to celebrate that event.

It is Gary's contention that the world's celebration of the new millennium should not overshadow the church's celebration of the bimillennium of Christ's birth. In *The Star of 2000* he lays out a strategy for the Church to assure that the world will not forget that the real Star of the year 2000 is Jesus Christ, whom Gary calls "the hinge of civilization."

Borrowing from John Naisbitt's terminology, Gary anticipates what he calls "mega-images" of the millennial advent. As the "Star of 2000," Jesus is

the primary mega-image. Resting upon Him are all other mega-images that will unfold in the next few years.

In the '80s we got used to thinking about the "megatrends" shaping our lives as we approach the year 2000. Now we must think about what mega-images might best define the drama of this special season.

For the church, the "single great idea" behind the bimillennial is the single great person of Jesus. Yet to a large degree much of the success of the bimillennial era will depend on what images or themes we use to define our journey to Christ.²

Since 1991 Gary has been compiling a list of these mega-images from both religious and secular sources. Searching through hundreds of books with the year 2000 in their titles, he developed a fivefold classification of metaphors—the "Five A.D. 2000 Mega-Images." These are:

- Threshold 2000
- Trends 2000
- Agenda 2000
- Renewal 2000
- Jubilee 2000

Threshold 2000

The Threshold 2000 mega-image views the year 2000 as the beginning of a new era, whether the millennial reign of Christ, or the New Age, or some other significant era, depending upon the philosophical worldview of those holding that mega-image. "This is not a new idea," says Gary.

For more than 500 years, psychics, seers, pundits and prophets have been transfixed by the year 2000. Even in modern times, trend watchers, global planners and futurists have hooked their sights to this guiding star. No other year in all of human history, before or beyond, has gathered such incredible prophetic bets as A.D. 2000, given by such luminaries as Newton to Nostradamus, and Jeane Dixon to Ronald Reagan.³

In his book Gary contrasts the expectations of secular and religious pundits who see the year 2000 as ushering in anything from annihilation of the planet to the Second Coming of Christ. He makes no judgments, but merely presents these mega-images as evidence that the world is on the verge of a Great Expectation.

Trends 2000

In contrast to Threshold 2000, Trends 2000 looks at the possibilities for the future while assessing the past. In this regard, Gary cites, among others, the bestselling book, *Megatrends*, by John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene, and scientist/science-fiction author Isaac Asimov's *March of the Millennia*.

Generally, Gary has found among trend researchers an optimism for the future. But he suggests that man's appraisal of the future is incomplete.

From a holistic perspective, many Trends 2000 mega-images stop short. They cover the ascent of man, but miss the descent of God. The bimillennial must not just celebrate the human story, or the universe story, as important as these may be. It must also celebrate God's story, as made known through Jesus Christ.

The bimillennial will be a natural occasion for the church to rediscover and celebrate Christ as Lord of the whole universe, not just the church. At best, a Trends 2000 approach to the bimillennial era offers a vision of the future, filled with hope rather than fraught with fear.⁴

Gary's analogy aside, the "ascent of man" is a figment of the evolutionist mind. It suggests a less than human beginning. Only man's knowledge of the material universe has increased, and even then he often misjudges and misapplies the data. Morally, spiritually and physically he remains the same as when he was created by God.

Agenda 2000

This mega-image perceives the year 2000 as a milestone date—a target to work toward in tackling unfinished tasks. This would be accomplished through setting local, national and global goals. Gary calls it "a finishing line, calling us to enter the race."

Agenda 2000 programs usually have one or two horizons. One is an action plan for this decade, the other for a new century. The latter approach asks, "What will be the major, first-intensity issues facing the world as the new century opens?" The former says, "If we are serious about addressing them, how far can we reasonably expect to move along the path toward solutions in the intervening years before 2000?"⁵

Gary points out that by the late '80s more than 2,000 groups held goals for the year 2000 (with the number growing weekly) within government, business, education and religion, including the United Nations which has several Agenda 2000 programs.

He points to the Earth Summit Strategy as the most well-known of these programs, with the agenda of saving the planet. In contrast he offers the attempts of those involved in world evangelism to complete their task by the year 2000. Says Gary:

What do Agenda 2000 programs offer the bimillennial? At best these programs allow us to celebrate the year 2000 in action, not just in thought. They prepare a more just and peaceful world that is worthy of celebration. An evangelized world would be a wonderful gift for the church to present to Christ on His 2,000th birthday.⁶

Gary's optimism is evident in such statements. Yet he does not necessarily equate an evangelized world with a Christian world. The preaching of the Gospel is one thing. The conversion of the world is another.

Even so, Gary's own worldview seems to include the possibility for a just and peaceful society given the successful accomplishment of the global Agenda 2000 programs, particularly those of the United Nations.

Renewal 2000

This mega-image suggests rebirth and personal and social transformation. The New Age is looking for the evolutionary transformation of mankind into a new species; the planet will be transformed into a paradise populated by that species whose concern is ecological purity and a peaceful and just society.

The Church, on the other hand, is looking for revival. To some this means a transformation of society through the preaching of the Gospel. But Gary offers a warning:

The weakness of Renewal 2000 can come when we try to emulate the past in the belief that if we could recover the moral meaning of America, then we would again be a great nation.⁷

In spite of the optimism that permeates Gary's writing, Scripture does not prophesy a revival in the last days, but rather an apostasy—a great falling away from the Faith, with the subsequent appearing of the anti-Christ.

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. (II Thessalonians 2:3-4)

Yet this should not deter the Church from continued efforts to reach the lost. Certainly it calls us to holy living in the face of the world's evil.

Jubilee 2000

Gary's optimism is most evident in his dissertation on this mega-image. Whereas the other four mega-images are afforded several paragraphs, he devotes an entire chapter to the Jubilee 2000 mega-image.

Here Gary contrasts the jubilee year of Israel with the jubilee of Christ. The former was limited in time and scope; the latter will be an entirely new epoch with Christ reigning over the earth as Lord over all. This does not mean, however, that Jesus will have returned by the year 2000. It means rather that man's future will take a positive turn as a result of recognizing the importance of Jesus upon our culture and history. So sure of this is Gary that he entitled this chapter, "We Are The Jubilee Generation."

Gary tends to stretch the meaning of Scripture by stating that Jesus "opened a jubilee era of liberty for all humanity." To justify this, he cites Jesus' recitation of Isaiah 61 to proclaim the start of His ministry.

But the Lord's proclamation of freedom for the captives does not apply to the world; it applies to God's people. The world remains in bondage to Satan until he will be chained for a thousand years (Revelation 20:2). True freedom comes only through faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to God's Word.

While Gary appears to apply the concept of jubilee to God's grace and forgiveness through the cross of Christ—"an epoch without end"—it is clear from his words that he expects this to extend to the future condition of the earth even before Jesus returns:

Each generation seems to have its own "rendezvous with destiny," as President Franklin Roosevelt once said. In hindsight, it seems his generation was called on to pull down the idols of fascism and communism

so the world would be safe for democracy. What will be the rendezvous with destiny for our generation?

No one can be sure, but we may well be called upon to preserve the soul of Western civilization at a time when modern man increasingly rejects and despises the inheritance it has brought him.⁸

It is Gary's hope that the Jubilee 2000 mega-image will become a reality through the preaching of the Gospel. That preaching, he believes, must include a reminder to the world that the great benefits of Western civilization have been a direct result of the liberty in Christ that has spurred men on to greater heights of cultural integrity.

Like so many Christians in the West, Gary equates God's grace with the material blessings we enjoy. This is considered the direct result of a "Judeo-Christian heritage" that came through the preaching of the Gospel. Yet he is not materialistic, recognizing that materialism is one of the greatest causes of modern man's rejection of Christ.

And, like so many Christians, Gary tends to reflect the idea that Western civilization itself is somehow Christian. While it's true that we are inheritors of a biblical ethic, true faith in Christ among the great persons of Western civilization has seldom been evident.

WHO IS JAY GARY?

Born prematurely in 1954 in Nashville, Tennessee, Judson Gary was too small to carry such a big name. So his parents nicknamed him Jay. He was raised in the Methodist faith, but it was through the Jesus movement in 1972, while at Georgia Tech, that he made a commitment to follow the Lord. "I had a voracious desire to read the Scriptures," says Gary. "I put down my chemistry books and picked up my New Testament, and devoured all the Bible. I quickly was speaking for Christ and winning my whole dorm floor."⁹

He and his wife Olgy currently attend Springs Harvest Fellowship in Colorado Springs, an independent charismatic church pastored by Dutch Sheets, out of Christ for the Nations.

Gary's work with Campus Crusade led him to become a chaplain for that organization in Philadelphia. In 1978 he went to serve with the U.S. Center for World Missions, during which time he developed their Perspectives Study Program for world evangelization and

worldwide missions. After four years he became their conference planner and the executive editor of the *World Christian* magazine. He also wrote a number of curriculums for missions training.

From 1986 to 1989 Gary worked for Campus Crusade as a consultant in communications and research for their New Life 2000 program, particularly their Worldwide Student Network. At this same time he worked as a consultant and congress planner with the Lausanne movement. He was instrumental in bringing to pass the Lausanne sponsored Global Consultation on World Evangelization by AD 2000 and Beyond (GCOWE).

Those efforts have culminated in his founding of the Global Service Office, which is the parent organization of Bimillennial Global Interaction Network (B.E.G.I.N.), and Bimillennial Press, which published *The Star of 2000*. He continues to support and consult with various organizations whose goal is to evangelize the world by the year 2000. In addition, he functions as the Executive Director for Celebration 2000, an organization working with others who wish to develop methods of celebrating the year 2000 in honor of Jesus.

CELEBRATION 2000

Gary attributes the inspiration for Celebration 2000 to George Heiner, who, as a second-year dental student in San Francisco in 1984, claims to have been visited by angels in a dream during the morning of October 9th.

"It must have been about 4 a.m. when I awoke from the most powerful dream of my life. I was in a room filled with angels singing praises," Heiner shares. "I got up quickly, sat at my desk, and wrote down these words: 'There is going to be a celebration in the year 2000 of song and praise celebrating faithfulness in Jesus Christ.'"

Within six months Heiner launched an organization which has begun to plan a celebration for the year 2000 through the arts, television, drama and music. Within a year, Heiner had distributed more than 200 licenses for use of his "Celebration 2000 A.D." logo to groups with year 2000 goals....

His most recent project under Action Music was "Mission 2000 A.D.," a music cassette with interviews by Pat Robertson, Bill

Bright and other well-known religious leaders. On their full page magazine ad, printed in large letters, is the statement: "Listen to What's Uniting All of Christianity. Beyond Music & the Unbelievable. Mission 2000—It's Worldwide."

"The celebration I am involved in planning," claims Heiner, "is not limited to Christians by any means. We all have birthdays and those dates record our history in reference to the birth and life of Jesus Christ B.C./A.D."¹⁰

One of the celebrations planned is a retracing of the journey of the Magi, the brainstorm of Robin Wainwright, an entrepreneur who lives in California. He has met with government officials in the Middle East to ask for permission to retrace that journey.

By 1994, a working committee had already been organized in the Middle East. Plans call for the opening of a "Journey of the Magi" visitor's center in Bethlehem, complete with a planetarium! In addition, Robin envisions consultations on human rights, and a host of cooperative projects from 1998 to 2001 by child and refugee agencies to commemorate the 2,000th anniversary of Jesus' flight into Egypt.¹¹

Among the other groups involved in planning celebrations for the year 2000, two of the major ones are March for Jesus and Concerts of Prayer.

THE AD 2000 MOVEMENT

As the world is even now planning its celebrations for the turn of the millennium, many church denominations are planning to have completed the Great Commission by that time. Since the '70s, and especially in the '80s, evangelistic efforts have increased manifold in the hope of accomplishing that task. Some of the more prominent efforts are the following:

Assemblies of God: The Decade of Harvest;

Campus Crusade for Christ: New Life 2000;

Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee: Project 2000 ("Decade of Destiny");

Pentecostal Holiness Church: Target 2000;

Roman Catholicism: Evangelization 2000;

Southern Baptists: Bold Mission Thrust.

In addition to these and other denominational efforts, there are several interdenominational and ecumenical coalitions working together to accomplish their goal of world evangelization by the year 2000. The more notable of these are:

AD 2000 Together (Pentecostal, Charismatic, Catholic and non-Catholic);

The Order of Saint Phillip (mainline church Charismatics [Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, etc.]);

North American Renewal Service Committee (Catholics, Pentecostals, Charismatics, Evangelical Protestants).

With unprecedented fervor, many Christians are looking at the turn of the millennium as evidence of the Lord's imminent return. Those who do not believe in a literal return until the final consummation of all things are looking at the new millennium as the possible start of a new Christian era on the earth due to their evangelistic efforts. Regardless of their eschatological persuasion, the celebration all are looking forward to is not a big New Years Eve party, but a celebration of having finally fulfilled the Great Commission.

Jay Gary is at the forefront of the world missions efforts, working to support and cooperate with the various AD 2000 movement organizations. In 1989 he was chosen to coordinate GCOWE, an interdenominational gathering of representatives for those organizations.

GCOWE

From January 5-8, 1989, some 300 Christian leaders convened the Global Consultation on World Evangelization by AD 2000 and Beyond (GCOWE). It was an event designed to deal with global, not just local or regional issues facing world evangelization. Gary notes that this was a most significant gathering for a number of reasons. Paramount among them is that it was set up as a working consultation rather than just a preaching convocation. States Gary:

Participants from the Third World outnumbered those from Europe and North America. Fourth, it was deliberately inclusive. Great Commission leaders came from Anglican, Ecumenical, Evangelical, Catholic, Charismatic, Third World Indigenous, and Pentecostal networks.¹²

For four days the congregants fellowshiped and listened to one another elaborate on the plans for completing the evangelization of the world by the year 2000.

Leaders of the various AD 2000 agendas addressed the gathering in a spirit of camaraderie and Christian fellowship. Most of the speeches called for increased efforts and strong cooperation. Bill O'Brien, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board reminded the participants that there were "no illusions that Christ will return on December 31, 11:59 p.m. just before it turns to 2001." And even if the world were to be evangelized by that date, the work would still remain year after year. Said O'Brien of the need to work together:

The Consultation is a working meeting that begins with and builds on certain assumptions, such as the divinity of Jesus Christ, the authoritativeness of the Word, the role of intercessory prayer, the need to plant churches, the need to train leadership, etc.¹³

The assumptions O'Brien lists, of course, are hardly sufficient to justify fellowship. There are so many other factors that I'm sure time didn't allow him to address. But one that he did address, the authoritativeness of the Word, is especially significant in view of the role that Roman Catholicism played in GCOWE. According to Catholic dogma Scripture cannot stand alone as authoritative. The Roman Catholic Church does not consider Scripture authoritative apart from that church's traditions and interpretation—its magisterium, or teaching authority. Yet the priest-agents of the Vatican were allowed not only to attend GCOWE, but one, Gino Henriques, the Asian director of Evangelization 2000, spoke to the conclave.

Jay Gary's response to Henriques' speech is chronicled in his introduction to chapter 22 of the GCOWE report, *The Countdown Has Begun*:

On the afternoon of the third and final day of the Consultation, Fr. Gino Henriques was going to talk about the Catholic plan, which is the largest AD 2000 plan in the world. I'm not sure what I was expecting to hear, but I know I wasn't prepared for the tremendous outpouring of God's Spirit that I and so many others experienced as Fr. Gino shared with us.

Words can hardly capture what happened that afternoon. But it's my hope and prayer that as you read the following case

study, you may also experience what turned out to be, for many participants, the spiritual and emotional highlight of the Consultation.¹⁴

Henriques shared the vision that the Catholic Church has for evangelization and for ministering to its people. This included the adoption of the cell system devised by Paul (now David) Yonggi Cho of Korea:

Pastor Cho was very agreeable to meet us and share with us what he was doing. There is a lot of sharing of resources and ideas taking place.¹⁵

Is Jay Gary correct in asserting that there was a "tremendous outpouring of God's Spirit" when Henriques spoke? What else did Henriques have to say that would prompt such a gushing response?

Was it his assertion that "our holy father, the present Pope, has been saying, 'we need a new evangelization, new in expression, new in fervor, new in methods'?"¹⁶

The fervor the pope alludes to is for bishops and priests to step up their fight against non-Catholic efforts to evangelize Catholics.

And doesn't Scripture reserve the title, "Holy Father" to God alone? How has the pope come to usurp that title? It is bound up in the Catholic belief that one day there will be one flock and one shepherd. But that one shepherd is not Christ—it's the pope.

Were the conference attendees likewise inspired by Henriques' claim that "sixteen years ago, when I was a young priest, the Spirit of God revived my priesthood"? Or the announcement that "Next year [1990] in September we hope to bring 7,000 priests to Rome to give them an experience of their priesthood in Jesus"?¹⁷

Are we to accept the validity of that priesthood which claims the ability to change bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ—which insists that the Eucharistic wafer be worshipped with the same worship due the true God?

This is good? This is inspiring? This is of the Holy Spirit? If so, why not accept the idea that God has given His blessing to the Roman Catholic institution and we should all, for the sake of unity and a united front against the world's evils, go back to mother Rome?

No doubt Gary and the others were stirred by Henriques' call for cooperative efforts among Catholics and those

of other "traditions." So stirred was R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, that at the conclusion of the message he went to Henriques' side, put his arm around him and began to pray. Says Gary about this:

We'd been talking about "cooperation" and "working together" during these past four days, and now in one single moment we saw it enacted before our eyes.¹⁸

The Roman Catholic Issue

Yet not all went so smoothly, particularly with the Latin American delegation. Their concern over participation with Roman Catholic clergy was voiced in a written statement to the Steering Committee:

Point four of the statement read, "The religious political force of the Roman Catholic Church is using all means available and is in fact the most fierce opponent of all evangelistic efforts on our part." Cooperating with Catholics, the Latin evangelicals wrote, "goes beyond our historical and biblical commitment."¹⁹

Thomas Wang, the International Director for the Lausanne movement, responded to the Latin brethren's concerns saying, "None of us will take offense. This is a freedom God has given to them. It's their belief and convictions before the Lord."²⁰

Says Jay Gary in his report on the GCOWE meeting, "Clearly, we faced a Latin issue here not a Catholic question."²¹

But it is a Catholic question, considering that church's historical and continued persecution of the true Gospel.

Wang's simplistic response that the Latin brethren's attitude is a "freedom God has given to them" implies that the Latin brethren's position is merely a matter of their own opinion. But it's not an opinion; it's a fact of history past and present. Many of our Latin brethren are ex-Catholics; they know first hand the designs of the papacy.

Such a condescending response reveals a desire to please the enemies of the true Gospel over those who have had to work in spite of that enemy's attempts to thwart their efforts. The Roman Catholic Church's ecumenical overtures toward non-Catholic Christians have behind them the ultimate design of bringing all of Christianity

under the papal umbrella. In the process, the Vatican's counter-Reformation strategy has successfully pulled the wool over the eyes of many Christian leaders in non-Catholic-dominated countries. But for our brethren in Latin America who must face the persecution from Rome, there is only one face to the papacy: the anti-Christ's visage.

To think that evangelistic cooperation can be accomplished with the Roman Catholic Church is to invite the fox into the henhouse. The present pope has consistently encouraged his bishops in Latin America and elsewhere to fight against the efforts of the evangelical Christians to reach the lost. Rome would rather keep their people in the darkness of their Christianized paganism than allow them the liberty that true faith in Christ brings.

For this reason, such attempts to evangelize the world in cooperation with Rome will require that any Roman Catholic converts to Christ be reshuttled into the Catholic Church at best, or not be allowed to be evangelized by anyone but Catholic priests. In fact, this is the method Jay Gary revealed to me regarding the Catholic Church's evangelistic efforts. In response to my question whether his attempts are to break down existing denominational barriers, Gary responded:

I wouldn't phrase it like that. I would put it like this, that my book, *The Star of 2000* doesn't support any kind of pseudo-ecumenical premise that differences don't matter between Catholics and Protestants. I'm not talking about bringing down walls; I'm talking about within walls and within each of our buildings. Praise, honor, worship and thanksgiving being raised up to God in tribute to Christ. This is a tribute 2000 movement, not an ecumenical movement.²²

Later in the interview, I broached this subject, to which Gary responded:

You've asked how I could embrace the Evangelization 2000 program in the Catholic Church. That's a private initiative by Catholics...Its mission field is the Catholic Church. It's within its own church.²³

It's true that the various AD 2000 groups are not ecumenical in their individual outreaches. But they are ecumenical in their mindset and in their cooperative efforts, supporting one an-

other beyond the confines of their own movements. This is fine where all are agreed on the same Gospel. But Roman Catholicism preaches a different gospel.

No one can argue with the desire to evangelize the world. But GCOWE's efforts compromise the Gospel. The Roman Catholic gospel is not the same Gospel Paul and the Apostles preached. It is a different gospel which offers only the *possibility* of salvation through the sacraments of the Catholic Church. Yet many of today's Christian leaders are attempting to convince us that we can trust the Catholic Church to preach the true Gospel and lead those it evangelizes into freedom in Christ—that the Catholic Church is just another denomination of one universal Church. They are ignoring the very pronouncements of the Catholic Church itself that it alone is the universal church; there is no other shepherd over the one flock but the pope; there is no salvation in Christ apart from the sanctions of the Catholic Church (which has deigned in its graciousness to mete out "a measure of salvation" to its "separated brethren.") But don't include me or any other ex-Catholic in that graciousness; we are damned forever for rejecting the pope's authority.

It is the ecumenical influence that is at the heart of these organizations' efforts to get the Gospel out as quickly as possible, even if that gospel has to be watered down so as not to offend the Roman Catholic overlords.

Why? Because these groups have determined that they can't get the job done by 2000 without the Roman Catholic Church's help. The reasoning is that one-fifth of the world's population is already Roman Catholic, so they need not reach that segment. They will concentrate on the rest of humanity while the Catholic Church works among its own adherents with the hope of also reining in others.

But Roman Catholic evangelism is not predicated upon leading the lost to Christ alone. It is based on leading as many as possible to the pope's authority because of the belief that, without the pope, no Christian can have the fulness of faith in Jesus Christ.

In the process, these evangelistic groups have revealed that completion of the task is of more importance than leading souls to salvation and freedom in Christ. They have surrendered at least one-fifth of mankind to the papacy without protest, much as Roosevelt and Churchill surrendered Eastern Europe to Stalin.

WHAT'S THE RUSH?

With all the plans for this huge celebration, and the concerted efforts to evangelize the world by the end of this present millennium, some are questioning whether or not these efforts are of any true spiritual value, or if they are merely manmade attempts at religious works. No true believer would deny that the Great Commission calls for the preaching of the Gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. But did God establish the year 2000 as the closing date for world evangelization, or have the leaders of these movements?

With God a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day (II Peter 3:8). How can we suppose that God will have conformed His agenda to the Gregorian calendar? The phenomenon of concerted evangelistic efforts is not new to the end of this century; it has characterized the end of virtually every century, especially since the Reformation. For some reason men assume that because the calendar is turning over in a dramatic fashion the Lord is about to return, so they'd better get busy.

This isn't to denigrate the idea of fervent evangelism. The time is always right for that. But there is a difference between fervent evangelism inspired by God's Spirit, and that inspired by man's idea of what constitutes obedience to God's command. In the latter case there will be found a lot of human effort as well as careless theology and practice. These are things that need to be addressed if true, Spirit-led evangelism is to occur.

It isn't our intention to judge the intent or the faith of those involved in these efforts, but merely to offer caution to those who desire to be led by God's Spirit in their evangelism efforts. Because of their haste in attempting to evangelize the world, otherwise sober Christian leaders are acquiescing to the idea that compromise with Roman Catholicism is a must if the job is to be completed according to their A.D. 2000 deadline.

NEW AGE CONNECTIONS?

In his appeal to the churches for combining their millennium-ending evangelism with a celebration of the 2000th anniversary of the Lord's birth, Jay Gary has cited many secular sources to illustrate how the world will be looking at that event. He rightly asserts that the world already recognizes Jesus to some degree simply because the calendar reflects the influence of Christ upon

Western civilization. The years, measured as A.D., or *anno Domini* (the year of Our Lord), testify to His impact upon the consciousness of mankind worldwide.

Those who hate the idea of acknowledging the Lord's effect upon mankind have adopted a different method of identifying the year: C.E. or the "Common Era," for A.D., and B.C.E., or "Before the Common Era," for B.C. Wherever you see these designations for the year you can be sure that those using them are rejecters of Christ—and some are even anti-Christ. Yet they, too, cannot escape the fact that C.E. and B.C.E. are still based upon the demarcation line between the period before and after the birth of Christ.

By appealing to secular and even New Age sources for his argument that the turn of the millennium is a significant event for all mankind, Gary has opened himself up for criticism from those who see his position as sympathetic to—if not supportive of—the New Age movement. One example is Gary's citation of Robert Muller's book, *The First Lady of the World*, which posits a future celebration of the new millennium which would usher in "the expected new age." Gary's collaboration with Muller on the Bi-Millennial Global Interaction Network (B.E.G.I.N) is another source of great concern to discerning Christians. I asked Gary how these references to Muller came about.

I used Muller's hypothetical scenario for the year 2000 celebration of the millennium as a foil to illustrate the distractions that the new millennium extravaganzas might be to the Church. And the point was really simple, in that whole chapter, that we don't need to get sidetracked by New Years 2000; we need to keep our eyes on Christ, the Star of 2000, to celebrate Christmas 2000. So to use a citation from Muller's novel in my book is no way an endorsement of New Age ideas that might be contained anywhere else in his book. And I didn't place Muller's novel or any others in my bibliography as a clear indication that I do not endorse or support these cults, or global government, or global spirituality. Immediately after the citation I urged the Church to use discretion and discernment in evaluating civic celebrations of the year 2000.²⁴

In the absence of a qualification in quoting men like Robert Muller, omission of their books in the bibliography is hardly "a clear indication" of non-endorsement. One must say he does not endorse those whom he wishes to quote favorably, yet hold an unbiblical worldview. This is for no other reason than to keep the weaker or unknowledgable brother from stumbling into spiritual error.

Nowhere are any caveats against joining with non-believers in celebration of this momentous event to be found, although Gary does contrast the manner in which the world will celebrate the new millennium as opposed to how Christians should do so. In fact, he suggests that Christians "invite every people, creed and culture to share in this bimillennial tribute to Christ."²⁵

In other words, we should not join the world in its celebrations centered on worldly pleasure, but rather invite the world to share in our celebrations centered on Jesus. This is predicated upon the belief that Jesus is already well-respected in the world community, even if he is not accepted as Lord and Savior. In our interview, Gary stressed his desire to "encourage people to honor Christ on His 2000th anniversary."

Al Dager: But can they honor Him without confessing Him as Lord and Savior?

Jay Gary: They can't, no. But let me tell you a story: about a year and a half ago an associate of the U.N. somehow was referred to me, and asked me to critique a planning document they had for an upcoming year 2000 symposium. And the document, about four or five pages, asserted that the year 2000 had no precedent or meaning. So I fired off a five-page response to tell them that *anno Domini* 2000 had a firm historical, cultural and theological anchor that's Christ in Western civilization. And I later learned that my input caused these cultural leaders to go back to the drawing board rather embarrassed. So I intend to take every thought captive to Christ in the civic square, especially any attempts to make the year 2000 a "p.c. jubilee." And I think that phrase alone—"politically correct jubilee"—explains why I've been involved in civic matters. I'd rather see the year 2000 become a "J.C. jubilee"—a Jesus Christ jubilee. And if the United Nations would like to honor Jesus Christ and His legacy to society for 20 centuries I would support it.

A.D.: But at the same time, how can they honor Him if they do not receive Him as their Lord?

J.G.: How do you honor Columbus?

A.D.: Columbus is not my Lord. Columbus was a man. We're talking here about what Jesus Christ came to do, and He has said Himself that the world hates Him, and that we should beware if men speak well of us. I know that a lot of people see Jesus as a prophet, or as a good man; even the New Agers look at Jesus as having contributed to the spiritual enlightenment of mankind. But we're talking here about what God requires.

J.G.: ...What value is there for anyone honoring Jesus, or recognizing Jesus, or speaking the name of Jesus, or learning of His impact on society and civilization for 2000 years in relationship to our time? It's what we used to call in missions studies "pre-evangelism." I'm glad today that some Jews don't live in denial about Jesus, but they're starting to see Him as a central figure of the Jewish faith. Many of them become messianic Jews because others have thought that before them, and have given them permission to think of Jesus and to read His writings. And so the year 2000 and the bimillennial movement—the tribute 2000 movement to honor Him—can have great impact on the evangelization of the world. And my efforts in civic discussions have all been to that one single aim: that every knee should bow to Christ, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

I must admit that I am torn between my belief that any fellowship around Christ must be kept pure from worldly influences and Gary's assertion that focusing on Jesus for the bimillennium may be construed as legitimate pre-evangelism. My concern is the degree to which believers should encourage the inclusion of non-believers into our commemorations. The fact that Scripture doesn't encourage—in fact, it discourages—the special observations of days and seasons (Galatians 4:10), leads me to believe that these are human efforts to accomplish God's will.

Yet we must recognize that God will work through them. And if a brother chooses to observe one day above another, we cannot judge him for that (Romans 14:5). The problem with Gary's approach is that it is careless in the manner in which it invites the world to join in celebrating Jesus.

B.E.G.I.N.

As an outreach of the Global Service Office, later called AD 2000 Global Service Office, Gary developed a project called Bimillennial Global Interaction Network (B.E.G.I.N.). Through this project he sought input from several secular sources on how they were planning to celebrate the new millennium. It was his intention to develop a network for the cooperative efforts at celebration between these and Christian organizations. In the process Gary incorporated some unbiblical elements into his efforts. Excerpts from his own pamphlet, published as late as 1993, suggests a less than biblical worldview:

Like personal birthdays, family anniversaries, or national birthdays, the year 2000 offers a unique opportunity to measure the road covered and chart the road ahead. But instead of an anniversary fit for one family, or one country, or even one faith, the year 2000 has the potential to be a great jubilee and a global celebration for everyone on this planet.²⁶

Can Christians join with those of other faiths for a global celebration? What is there to celebrate? According to Gary, it will be the hope for "a sustainable peace and a nurturing environment."²⁷

Although Gary intended B.E.G.I.N. to be secular in its approach, a religious flavor found its way into his sixth step on how to celebrate the year 2000—to share the "Spirit of 2000" everywhere:

On the eve of this decade, I believe Providence has given us a visual illustration of what this spirit is about through the revolutions in Eastern Europe. There we saw the triumph of the human spirit in the face of tremendous odds.

We must recover the simple idea that the spark of eternity has been placed within each human being. We must fan this flame, this tiny spark within each person—and insure that no government, no group, or no authority is allowed to smother or snuff out this sacred flame....

As early citizens of the 21st Century, we have a sacred duty to carry this torch across the length and breadth of the planet. Let's blow the Jubilee trumpet and herald this coming renaissance among government, edu-

cation, arts, media, business, and religion.²⁸

Gary's celebration concept includes working for a new world order of peace and individual freedom. To what coming renaissance in religion was Gary alluding? Scripture tells us that the entire world will be allied against Christ when He returns.

There is no "sacred spark" within every person apart from life itself. That cannot be fanned into anything larger than it already is. The spark that Gary alludes to is the human spirit—or will—to overcome adversity. But that is anything but sacred; without Christ it is self-centered and contrary to God's will.

Was Gary suggesting that this "sacred spark" be fanned through the preaching of the Gospel? The Gospel snuffs out the human will. And Jesus prophesied that evil would increase as the end drew near. The Gospel, while preached throughout the world, will be received within few hearts. Broad is the way to destruction, and there are many who go that way, while few find eternal life in Christ (Matthew 7:13-14).

While Gary's efforts through Celebration 2000 suggest Christ as the central figure, his efforts to promote his celebration among non-Christian environments suggested otherwise.

An example is the *World Goodwill Newsletter*, No. 3 for 1993, which reported on Gary's solicitation of that publication's help in advertising his message for cooperation in celebrating the bimillennium:

In a letter to World Goodwill, BEGIN Executive Director Jay E. Gary writes: "One common project we are developing is an 'International Year of Thanksgiving' in 2000, especially through the United Nations. Dr. Robert Muller has given leadership to this proposal. If any of your readers would like to bring definition to a World Thanksgiving Year in 2000, marked by reflection, reconciliation, and gratitude between nations, cultures, and peoples, please have them correspond with us. We are collecting articles, and papers on these themes for an upcoming *Let's Talk 2000 Forum*."²⁹

World Goodwill Newsletter is a New Age publication of the Lucis Trust, originally founded by theosophist Alice Bailey as The Lucifer Trust. It is not a publication that is generally read by Christians.

I asked Gary how his plans for the International Year of Thanksgiving were coming. His response and my subsequent comments follow:

Jay Gary: I have no involvement with that project. I did until 1993. The International Year of Thanksgiving has no relationship to what I just referred to—the AD 2000 movement.

Al Dager: It has no relationship?

J.G.: It never had. In fact, I even wonder if that project has any future, because the UN's not interested in it. I'm sure there'll be some that might raise a flag for the thanksgiving project, but what I'm doing, Al, is blowing the trumpet for Christ's 2000th anniversary. No one touched our lives like Christ, and the nations go all out to commemorate the founding of the nation, or the 200th anniversary of the country. Our country had a bi-centennial; the world will have a bi-millennial (bi meaning two, millennial meaning thousand) 2000th anniversary. And so my message is very simple: Look to the Star of 2000. The Star of 2000 is Christ's occasion. He's the reason for the season.

In spite of Gary's claims, there appear to be many contradictory elements. There are just too many connections between his efforts and New Age resources, as well as an obvious affection for the United Nations. That was another subject I felt needed to be broached, especially in view of the fact that Gary displayed the U.N. flag in the window of his residence for some time—until he received some flak from concerned Christians.

He stated that he is in favor of some U.N. policies and activities, but that he trusts the U.N. like he trusts any other government organization—as far as he can throw it. As it turned out, his and Muller's plans to get the United Nations involved in their idea for an International Year of Thanksgiving was met with disinterest. They decided to drop the plan after that attempt. However, had the U.N. demonstrated any interest in the project they would have continued with it.

I felt Gary had begged my earlier questions regarding Robert Muller, so I pressed further as to how Muller could have become what Gary called on the B.E.G.I.N. letterhead, a "key person" in the Bimillennial plans for that organization. After a very long pause, he stated:

Until '93 or so, B.E.G.I.N. was a conversation—that's all it was. It wasn't an organization. Robert was part of a task force of people that were having conversations and writing letters, phone calls, sharing what others were thinking about the year 2000. All were representative of a network that had focused on the year 2000.³⁰

Gary stated that he neither associates with, nor endorses, what Robert Muller does, but merely reports on it in the process of keeping track of trends. More than once during our conversation I pointed out Muller's New Age thinking, to which Gary would admit only that New Agers took Muller's ideas and used them for their own purposes; that he doesn't view Muller as a New Ager, but more as a statesman in the political arena who holds Christian values. Yet in a June 24, 1994, letter to Bob MacPherson at Bold Truth Press, Inc., Gary stated, "I am fully aware of the convergence in thinking between Robert Muller and New Age advocates. I have raised these questions to Robert Muller myself, particularly in regards to occultism." Cult researcher, Dr. Brice A. Pettit, in a letter defending Gary's association with Muller, stated:

Mr. Muller is definitely in the camp of the New Age Movement, as a speech he gave at last year's [1993] Parliament of World Religions in Chicago will testify. But it is obvious to anyone who is familiar with Jay's written material and the details of his work to promote the celebration of Christ's birth in the year 2000, that it is unfair to make him guilty by association on this account; the same charge that was made against Jesus Christ himself [sic] (Luke 7:34).

This last statement is often used to justify collaborative efforts between Christian leaders and leaders of various philosophical persuasions. But Jesus didn't collaborate with sinners; He led them to the Truth. Of equal concern is Dr. Pettit's statement regarding familiarity with Gary's written material. In the list of books offered for sale by Gary's *Bimillennial Research Report* for March-April, 1992, Gary included *The Birth of a Global Civilization* by Robert Muller as "An inspiring look at our emerging global system, including new global human rights, global networking, global core curriculum, and global cele-

brations culminating in the year 2000." On page 1, Gary included without comment, the poem, "It is Almost the Year Two Thousand" by Robert Frost:

*To start the world of old
We had one age of gold
Not labored out of mines,
And some say there are signs,
The second such has come,
The true Millennium,
The final golden glow
To end it. And if so
(and science ought to know)
We may well raise our heads
From weeding garden beds
And annotating books
To watch this end de luxe.*

Frost's idea of the "true Millennium" is not that of the biblical Millennium. It is more in tune with the New Age concept of a golden age of peace and justice on earth brought about by human effort.

Of more interest is Gary's inclusion along with the Celebration 2000 Declaration, the prose of Robert Muller which called for all beliefs and cultures to "join their hands, minds and hearts in an unprecedented, universal bimillennial celebration of life."

Anyone who studies Muller's works would recognize instantly that his philosophy is New Age at the core, and motivates him in his efforts toward global citizenship and global education. Christians cannot join their hands, let alone their minds and hearts with non-believers in a celebration of life. The only life we celebrate is life in Christ. Any other life is not life, but death.

I asked Dr. Pettit if he had missed something in his assessment of B.E.G.I.N.'s correspondence. His reply was that these were offered in the secular arena, not the religious arena. He sees no cause for concern.

But B.E.G.I.N. was a project of the Global Service Office, incorporated as a religious non-profit organization with the purpose of aiding "in the renewal and renovation of civilization at the dawn of the Thrid Millennium through the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ."³¹

Gary states that he broke off his association with Robert Muller in 1994, mainly because he didn't want to cause others to stumble. Be that as it may, his failure to clearly qualify any association or citation of Robert Muller bodes ill for those who recognize the New Age's inroads into the churches. This is compounded by his citation of other New Age and similar sources.

"NEW AGE" CHRISTIANITY

In an address to Christian leaders in 1993, Gary focused on various movements that were calling for either increased evangelization efforts and/or concerted plans for celebration of the advent of the third millennium. A number of the books he cited are clearly New Age. One such is David Spangler's *Reimagination of the World: A Critique of the New Age, Science, and Popular Culture*, calling it, "one of the best." For this, Gary has received considerable criticism. Bimillennial Press has responded to that criticism as follows:

This phrase, "one of the best" has been lifted out of the context of an address entitled, "The Power of A.D. 2000 Mega-Images" which Mr. Gary gave to Christian leaders in the Spring of 1993. In this 50-minute speech, Mr. Gary reviewed the ideas from 33 books in terms of their relevance to the advent of the third Christian millennium. In some cases, as with Spangler's book, it was contrasted with the approach of another book. Here is the transcript of what was said:

Others are looking for a new vision for a new millennium. "The New Age is Dead, long live the New Age" could have easily been the title of David Spangler's and William Irvin Thompson's new book, *Reimagination of the World: A Critique of the New Age, Science, and Popular Culture*, and it is one of the best.³²

Bimillennial Press is an arm of Global Service Office, incorporated in California by Jay and his wife Olgly. So for all intents and purposes, Bimillennial Press is Jay Gary, and vice versa.

So it concerns me that this "quote" from Gary's speech isn't anywhere near accurate. It may be a condensed paraphrase, but it isn't the transcription that this document purports it to be. An accurate quote from the speech is as follows:

This book, called *Reimagination of the World*, might as well have been entitled, "The New Age is Dead, Long Live the New Age." Because these are written by veteran and pioneer New Agers who are looking now at the year 2000, and the New Age movement, reflecting on it after 20 years or more—and more his-

tory than that—not as just a mystical experience, but as a metaphor for understanding personal transformation and societal transformation, particularly the dawn of the year 2000.

This is subtitled, *A Critique of the New Age, Science, and Popular Culture*. And it's one of the best. Spangler, the author, talks a lot about images, and the image that he is rooting his life, and his New Age metaphor for the future in, is a holy civilization at harmony with itself, nature and God—a holistic civilization.³³

Allowing Gary the benefit of the doubt, his "one of the best" statement may have been misconstrued. But without any further qualification, it's no wonder people think Gary is endorsing Spangler's vision. His suggestion that Spangler is looking forward to a "holy civilization" suggests that Spangler's worldview is compatible with the Faith. Spangler isn't looking forward to a "holy civilization," but a holistic civilization resulting from the ultimate destruction of biblical Christianity.

Gary's citation of other secular works along with Spangler's has added fuel to the fire:

Another Trends 2000 book that we should pay attention to is *The Universe Story*. You know, as we approach the year 2000, many people will be saying, "We need a new story."

You know, up until the 1500s it was the Creation story—from Genesis to Apocalypse—that was our cultural agreement. It was the agreed-upon story that gave civilization and life meaning. But since that year—and since that time—the authority of that story eroded. Others have tried to—human stories—have tried to replace God's story. And without success—partial stories. And these modern enlightenment paradigms of understanding who we are, and mechanistic views—worldviews—have literally, these authors say, have literally shut down almost the life systems of our planet. And so in the tradition, you might say, of St. Augustine—who, after the burning of Rome in 410 or 413—he goes to write a book to chart a way, and to find a new story. What does this mean?

These authors propose a new story of our beginnings and our endings—a new story that will provide harmony between the human family and the whole earth. Their story is epic, sweeping; it's a story—a parable. And it goes from the primer of the flaring forth of the universe eons ago, to the creation of galaxies, and supernovas, and galaxies [sic] to the earth, to the emergence of human life, to the development of classic civilizations, and looks into the future. And the theme is "celebration of the cosmos"—that the universe is moving toward this goal of self-expression and celebration. The author even hints at cosmic liturgy—this is unfolding before the great, the holy God.

I find, as a member of the redemptive community, a little unease. And books like these are very stretching to me. I want to admit that. But I think there's no way we can back away from the great reappraisal the year 2000 will bring in our popular culture and our intellectual life of our planet. We as Christians have a dynamic theology of redemption, but a very static theology of the creation right now, and this is one of the challenges Trends 2000 will bring to us.³⁴

What Gary is saying is that, in the tradition of St. Augustine, the authors of *The Universe Story* (Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry) are proposing a new story of the future which will provide harmony between man and nature. By stating in connection with *The Universe Story* that the Christian theology of creation is very static, he seems to be suggesting that we must reevaluate creationism in light of evolutionary "evidence" put forth by these authors. This suggests acquiescence to the evolutionary theory which proposes the intellectual and spiritual advancement of mankind. I say this because *The Universe Story* is not a celebration of the year 2000, but, from cover-to-cover, a celebration of evolutionary thought. And while the authors allude to a "cosmic liturgy," they do not mention God; it is Gary's agreement with their worldview that supposes this liturgy is valid.

Such a book shouldn't be "very stretching" to Christians. It is clearly unbiblical in its evolutionary basis. And I must ask, why do we need "a new

theology of creation"? Is the biblical theology of creation so static that it cannot answer the critics of the New Age? I think not.

While we can allow that Gary has been misunderstood because of his attempt to cite in fifty minutes some thirty-three books reflecting what he calls mega-images of the new millennium, there can be no misunderstanding of his endorsement for books in the Christian domain which he overtly recommends. The gap between secular evolutionary and New Age philosophy to Christian activism for a safer planet is not as large as some might think. That gap is filled by Tom Sine's book, *Wild Hope*, which Gary recommends for Christians.

In *Wild Hope* the author posits the idea that unless Christians get involved in the attempts to save the planet from ultimate destruction human life may perish from the globe, and the earth will be left a wasteland.

Even as we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Earth Day on 22 April 1990, it became clear that we weren't just celebrating the past; we were anticipating the future. For more and more people from all walks of life—young and old, Republican and Democrat, in the United States and worldwide—are hearing an urgent environmental wake-up call from the twenty-first century. It is, in fact, an ultimatum: clean up our act or pay the consequences—possibly the breakdown of the very systems that support planetary life as we have known it. I believe at a maximum we have ten to fifteen years to begin reversing the trends of environmental degradation—or suffer the consequences.³⁵

While reading *Wild Hope*, I began to get a better picture of what motivates men like Jay Gary to work toward a cooperative effort at saving the planet. Such men have been influenced by the ideas of others whose worldview is tainted by secularist thinking. They combine that thinking with the idea that Christians must preserve the earth because it is the Lord's possession.

It is manifestly clear that Jesus is Lord over all creation, yet the fact remains that the earth is in the hands of Satan for a season—granted so by God's design to test the hearts of men. There will be no destruction of the

planet, simply because God's Word already reveals to us the future of the planet: after great tribulation God's wrath will be poured out upon an unbelieving world, culminating in Jesus' physical return to establish His rulership with a rod of iron over the nations for one thousand years.

Nor will the planet be saved by human effort in the interim. Sine, however, wants us to believe that unless the developed nations scale back their standard of living and move toward a more primitive state the very existence of man on the planet is in jeopardy.

True believers in Jesus Christ—those who know biblical prophecy—have no fear that the planet will be destroyed. Nor do we have any hopes that it will be redeemed by human effort before Jesus returns.

Sine's socialistic mentality is evident in the following statement:

Clearly, God's new order and new community are at counterpoint to the dominant order [the "Western Dream"]. This vision does not intend to preserve the world as it is, but to transform it, by God's power, into what God intends it to become.

God purposes to turn the world upside down—pulling down the rich and the powerful and lifting up the poor and the marginalized. God intends to transform weapons of war into the implements of peace. God intends to host a cross-cultural celebration from every tribe, clan, and nation. God intends for the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the captives to be set free. God intends to fashion a new order in which all created life exists in harmony and *shalom*. And at the very center of this new future will be a new, inclusive community of persons who have been reconciled to the living God, with whom God will reign forever.³⁶

God has not purposed to pull down the rich and powerful—certainly not through the efforts of His people. There is no more virtue in poverty than there is in wealth. Those who abuse their wealth and power God will judge. He will set all things in order when Jesus returns. But Sine isn't going to wait for Jesus:

Wild Hope is premised on the affirmation that the Creator God is at work within history to

bring forth a future in which all things will be made new. For whatever reason, the Creator invites us to participate as collaborators—literally co-laborers—in birthing this new order in our lives, in our communities, and in the larger world. I believe this *Wild Hope* offers not only an alternative vision, but also a biblical base from which to engage the mounting challenges of tomorrow's world.³⁷

To say that God is "at work within history" to bring forth this idealistic future, is to suggest that human effort in His name will bring it about. At the least it suggests that God will use His people to set the world in order. This is a denial of God's Word. It is to say that God didn't mean what He said when He prophesied increased evil and the need for judgment upon the world, only to be assuaged upon the physical return of Jesus Christ to rule the nations. It is to say that these men know better what God should want than God Himself. The audacity is mind boggling to say the least.

In the process of changing God's mind on how this age will come to a close, they also change the focus of the Gospel from evangelization of the lost and personal ministry to the needs of the hurting, to social action in order to alleviate *the conditions* of woe upon humanity. They ascribe to Jesus some humanly altruistic sense for the need to work for "peace and justice."

Those early Christians understood what often seems lost to the church today: following the Messiah Jesus means that every member of the Messianic community must labor for the purposes of God, even as he [sic] did. It means every disciple's putting aside every lesser agenda and seeking God's kingdom purposes first, working for righteousness, justice, and peace in a rapidly changing world.³⁸

God's kingdom purpose is not working for righteousness, justice and peace. To God the only valid righteousness is that of Jesus. And Jesus didn't work for justice and peace in the world. Rather, He brought a sword to divide those who would follow Him from the world that hates Him.

One thing we must understand: hatred of Jesus doesn't mean only an intense dislike for Him personally. It takes on many docile faces, even under

the protestation of loving Him. It extends from recognizing Him as a "good man," or a "prophet," or even "a god." But in every case it fights against the biblical Jesus as God incarnate who is the only way to the Father. And even where this is acknowledged, hatred of Jesus is manifested in an aversion to obedience to His Word. One cannot love Jesus and not love His Word.

A very subtle expression of hatred of Jesus and/or His Word is found in the reference to personal pronouns in the lower case. Rather than "He," "His," or "Him," we will find "he," "his," or "him." Sine's use of lower case pronouns for Jesus is an example.

This is not a small matter given the modern literary tradition of referencing personal pronouns for God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the capitalized form. Except for those who are completely devoid of any literary understanding, it is not easy to break from that tradition without determination. Why would any true Christian?

What is even more amazing, in 343 pages, Sine not only consistently uses the lower case pronoun for Jesus, *he uses no pronouns for God at all*, apart from a few quotes from Scripture (primarily the RSV), and a Catholic priest. In his own writing he uses the name of God two or even three times in one sentence rather than take the normal literary course of using pronouns once it is clear of whom he is speaking. It's as if he purposefully resisted using the traditional and biblical masculine pronouns for God.

Again, this is not a small matter, given the general eco-nut tone of his book. While mildly critiquing the New Age, he nevertheless presents a New Age message throughout.

So while we may offer the benefit of doubt to Jay Gary for his comments on Spangler's, Swimme's and Berry's writings, I find it difficult to reconcile his recommendation of Sine's book. Add to this his listing on the Production Team for the book, *Target: Earth* co-published by Youth With A Mission's University of the Nations and Global Mapping International, and we are struck with the conclusion that the infection of the New Age is more prevalent than we'd like to believe.

Target: Earth integrates the message of urgency for worldwide evangelism with a New Age ecological and peace message. It erroneously, if conspicuously, traces Roman Catholicism to A.D. 33, which implies that it is, as it claims,

the true church from which all others split. In fact, however, Roman Catholicism was spawned under Constantine in the fourth century; it was the first great apostasy from the true Faith.

To a large degree, the contributors to *Target: Earth* would be classified not as New Agers or liberal theologians, but as new evangelicals or members of the Redemptive Community.

Redemptive Theology

As stated earlier, Gary refers to himself as a member of the Redemptive Community. What, exactly, is the Redemptive Community?

One might say that he believes in redemption through Jesus Christ for the salvation of souls. And this he does. In my interview with him he revealed that he believes Jesus is the only Christ; that His blood was shed for the redemption of men's souls; that He rose bodily from the grave, as will all who are His; that He arose into Heaven; and that He is coming again. Gary also believes that the incarnation applies only to Jesus, never again to be repeated.

But is that what the Redemptive Community is about? Or is there more to it? Tom Sine offers a clue:

Evangelical leaders need to remind their people that God hasn't removed our responsibility given in Genesis 1 to be caretakers of creation. And we need to recover a biblical vision of a God who plans to make "all things new," including creation. One of the greatest needs in the evangelical movement today is to recover a redemptive theology that includes God's created order.³⁹

Working for the renewal of God's created order, therefore, must begin with fundamentally calling into question the Western Dream of conquest and consumerism. It also demands we discover and embrace a new dream based upon a biblical vision that includes the restoration of the created order. And it requires the recovery of a vital spirituality and a reexamination of our relationship to all created life.⁴⁰

Redemptive theology, then, is concerned not just with saving souls, but with saving the planet and the world social order.

I'm not suggesting that we should ignore the problems, but that we should do what we can not to harm the environment while not becoming so para-

noid that we forget that God is still in control. And according to His Word, the disastrous future envisioned by Sine and his compatriots is just not going to take place.

What comes to light as we study this Chicken Little mentality is that such purported Christians have much in common with the New Age, not *philosophically*, but *practically*. They are all working toward the redemption of the planet and, as Jay Gary calls it, "the preservation of the soul of society."

To this end, they work diligently, cross-referencing the works of others, both professing Christians and secularists—even New Agers—to bolster their argument. This doesn't mean they are New Agers; it means they learned their redemptive theology from others whose theories are similar to New Agers where planetary conservation is concerned. They are not far removed from Christian Reconstructionism, although some would deny that philosophy's postmillennial eschatology.

In my studies of this phenomenon I asked myself how professing Christians whose Christology is biblical could promote or even cite New Age teachings favorably. The answer is that adherents of redemptive theology are not New Agers, but they do identify with the environmental activism and paranoia found in New Age writings. In the process of finding this agreement with New Age environmental writings they often overlook the spiritual implications of those writings. Thus, they will reference or even recommend some New Age writings on one hand, while on the other hand disavowing New Age beliefs.

They are against channeling, crystal gazing, and other fringe practices, but they applaud New Age efforts to save the planet from total annihilation.

Some will even adopt New Age practices such as inner healing, meditation, visualization, and psychological integrationism, etc. while maintaining a biblical Christology.

As they delve further into New Age philosophy via environmental, political and economic agreement, they will inevitably adopt New Age terminology. Worse, they will fail to see the distinctions between much in New Age philosophy and their own emerging worldview. This has resulted in a cross-pollination of New Age and Christian beliefs to spawn a hybrid philosophy of an earth-centered Christianity, while maintaining a valid biblical Christol-

ogy. This is often where theistic evolution enters the picture.

The basis for fellowship, then, becomes not obedience to God's Word rightly divided, but a statement of faith and purpose that is germane to all Christian denominations. In my questions to Gary about the ecumenical flavor of his movement, he affirmed that the basis for acceptance is confession of the Apostles' Creed.

Yet a biblical Christology based on the Apostles' Creed is insufficient to guard against spiritual deception. In the process of trying to serve God we can easily find ourselves infected by those whose theology, while confessed as biblical, is influenced by neo-orthodoxy.

NEO-ORTHODOXY

At the root of earth-centered Christianity is neo-orthodoxy—a philosophy which arose around the turn of the century, most decidedly during World War I. It is predicated upon the belief in the nobleness of man, and upon the hope for the attainment of a world dwelling in harmony with itself. Its concerns are social justice, ecological preservation, abolition of war, and the attainment of a just and peaceful society.

One of the early major proponents of neo-orthodoxy was Edward Scribner Ames whose comments reflect much in common with those of Tom Sine and his proponents. This is found in Ames' claim that Jesus had the same interest in building a just society:

...another and more attractive goal has arisen before the modern Christian. It is that of the enrichment and enlargement of human life here and now in the conviction that this is also the best possible preparation for any future there may be.

This goal is in spirit much like that which constituted the earliest ideal of Jesus, that is, the social message of his teaching.⁴¹

As a father scorns the thought that his love for his son needs any command to stimulate it or any hope of reward to keep it alive, so thousands who have caught the social vision of our time labor for better laws, better schools, better recreations without waiting for a text of Scripture to tell them that this is their duty and without expecting any other compensation than just that of seeing these results accomplished. Gradually it is be-

coming apparent that this was precisely the attitude which dominated the mind and will of Jesus. Therefore leaders of social, humanitarian reforms find themselves in full accord with his [sic] spirit and ideals. They have come to have the same interest in building a society that shall minister to the deepest human wants.⁴²

What? Wants, not needs? What do humans want, but their own will, not God's.

Neo-orthodoxy sees Jesus as a unique embodiment of all that is noble in mankind, but not divine. God, it is said, is formed in the associated life of men. In other words, He is a figment of man's imagination, but a good figment which spurs man on toward higher goals for the good of man and for his environment. The Bible is not infallible and inerrant, but offers much in the way of inspiration to the loftier aspirations of man—along with the writings of the great philosophers through the ages. Jesus is not alive, sitting at the right hand of the Father; He "lived in the affection of his followers and in the alluring faith in his kingdom of love."⁴³

The philosophy sounds biblical in its language, but it denies the essence of the Faith. It claims to be Christian, but redefines what it means to be Christian.

It is because this attitude of love which is central in the Christian conception is spontaneous and inevitable in life itself that it is not to be regarded as a fantastic dream that the world may continue increasingly to find itself and to call itself Christian.⁴⁴

Neo-orthodoxy began to infect the churches during the early part of this century. Because Christian intellectuals didn't wish to "throw out the baby with the bath water," or thought they could "eat the watermelon and spit out the seeds," they adopted much of the secularistic thinking of neo-orthodoxy while retaining their biblical Christology.

Those who use these euphemisms to defend their attachment to ungodly philosophies do not recognize that they may apply to the natural realm, but they do not apply to the spiritual realm.

There is no source for spiritual truth apart from God's written Word. To go outside Scripture in search of truth that applies to the soulish and spiritual life of man is to invite Satan's philosophies to enter in. This is the reason for the increase in psychological in-

tegrationism in the churches today. People think that psychology offers answers to the human problem that Scripture doesn't offer. So they attempt to Christianize psychology or psychologize Christianity. This, too, was advocated by neo-orthodoxy almost one hundred years ago. It was neo-orthodoxy that introduced the philosophical meanderings of psychologists into the churches. Today it has taken such root among well-known Christian leaders and media personalities that its pronouncements hold more sway than God's Word for many professing Christians. Neo-orthodoxy continues to infect the churches today through new evangelicalism.

NEW EVANGELICALISM

New evangelicalism differs from neo-orthodoxy in the former's biblical Christology. But in every other respect it is identical. Whereas neo-orthodoxy has a non-biblical Christology and regards the biblical mandate as one of preservation of life and the earth, new evangelicalism adds to the biblical mandate for the saving of souls and personal ministry the call for saving the planet. It seeks not only to minister to those who are suffering, but to eradicate the very cause of suffering. Thus it concerns itself with poverty, war, and social and political agendas which, if only Christianized, they reason, will make the world a better place in which to live. In this respect, new evangelicalism finds common ground with liberation theology and Roman Catholicism, as well as many agendas of the World Council of Churches. Thus, the willingness to overlook doctrine in favor of ecumenical unity. But the roots of these concerns arose from an anti-Christ philosophy that sought to use the well-meaning intentions of good Christian people to further its own goals for establishing a peaceful and just society.

New Age? - Yes and No

As with neo-orthodoxy, new evangelicalism will be found in disagreement Christologically with overt New Age philosophy.

The New age asserts that man and the cosmos are undergoing transformation to a higher order through an innate evolutionary process. The "god" overseeing this transformation is the all mind or universal consciousness. This "god" works incessantly through the destruction of each preceding old order with the subsequent establishment of a new order. On earth this has to do with

a new order for society which will result in a golden age of peace and justice. "Justice" does not mean punishment of evildoers; it means equal distribution of wealth. Thus, socialism is an integral part of the new order.

New evangelicalism will say that the theological premise of the New Age is false; spiritism, witchcraft and all the strange neo-pagan influences in the New Age are evil. Man and the cosmos are moving toward transformation, but it is coming about through an increased awareness that Jesus Christ is Lord over His creation; that creation must be preserved as a tribute to Him, and in obedience to His lordship. As society becomes more "Christianized," the awareness of Jesus as Lord—or at least as someone worthy of honor for His contribution to a biblical ethic—will result in a stabilization of the forces in nature and in man, resulting in a better environment. New evangelicals will see this as working toward a Christianized world to whatever degree is possible.

In the process, however, their having been tainted with neo-orthodoxy leaves them in close agreement with the New Age on environmental, social and political issues.

To be sure, new evangelicalism grew out of the biblical desire to engage in charitable works: feeding the hungry, giving to the poor, healing the sick, ministering salvation through the Gospel. But these were deemed insufficient as long as they remained works of personal piety performed within the context of the local church and its missionary outreach. Parachurch organizations sprang up which sought to expand charitable works to a broader segment in less time. This resulted in the ordination of professional missionaries with staff personnel, big budgets, and public relations offices for the raising of necessary funds.

In itself, this isn't necessarily bad. The problem arises when the professionals are hired not because they have responded in obedience to a call by the Lord, but because they have a natural desire to help others. Into the milieu have come people whose worldview and religious proclivities lean more heavily toward good works than toward a desire to maintain biblical purity in all they do. More often through ignorance than through devilish design, they have adopted along the way a New Age mentality where those good works are concerned.

It is important that in all we do—whether in the secular realm or the religious—we maintain purity of doctrine. Purity of doctrine does not mean dogmatism apart from good works, but insistence upon a biblical framework for those good works. Faith without works is dead, says James; and works without faith are wood, hay and stubble—likewise dead. The disciple of Jesus Christ is called to both true, biblical Faith (which demands a defense [Jude 3]) and sacrificial acts of love toward all, whether brethren in Christ or enemies.

CONCLUSION

Virtually every beneficent philosophy of man is predicated upon the desire to attain a world devoid of evil. War, poverty, disease and death are the greatest enemies of man's enjoyment of life. If these can be eradicated, then man's existence will not only be bearable; it will be highly pleasurable. Yet God's Word tells us that as the end draws near evil will wax worse:

And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:3-14)

Man perceives evil as the calamities that befall him for his sinful condition; God sees evil as anything man does contrary to His Word, or that is not according to His will. Human effort toward good works—even works commanded by God—will produce wood, hay and stubble at best. Christians who think they can join with anti-Christ philosophies to save the world from God's judgments (these "evils" they are attempting to rid the world of) are fighting against the very work of God. It doesn't matter if evangelization of the world is included as one means to accomplish the task.

Jesus did not call us to social action for the betterment of mankind's lot on this earth. Of course, whether one chooses to involve himself in such action is between that one and the Lord. But it is not a mandate that he may impose upon the rest of the Body of Christ—particularly if that mandate requires compromise with unbiblical elements, whether secular or religious.

Jesus' Kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36) which is passing away. While we may exercise normal caution in protecting the environment, and in other earth-centered concerns, our foremost responsibilities are to be witnesses for Jesus Christ, and to minister to the needs of others. But the *cause* of suffering will never be eliminated as long as man remains in sin. Only by rebirth through faith in Jesus Christ will anyone escape that condition, and only fully after the Resurrection.

Even during the millennial reign of Christ, evil will continue to dwell in the hearts of those who are assimilated into it and who are born into it over the centuries. Only at the consummation of all things, when Jesus has judged all mankind, will righteousness, peace and joy prevail in the New Heaven and the New Earth. All attempts to bring this about before then are rebellion against God, regardless of the evangelistic efforts attached to them.

These intensive evangelistic efforts, as well as efforts to embrace the world in celebration of Christ, are ecumenical and hierarchically motivated. That fact, as well as their being tainted with an earth-centered, New-Age-like worldview—indicates, that God is not their author. ♦

NOTES

1. Jay Gary, *The Star of 2000: Our Journey Toward Hope* (Colorado Springs: Bimillennial Press, 1994), p. 16.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
9. Jay Gary, Interview with Al Dager, November 13, 1995.
10. *The Star of 2000, op. cit.*, p. 23.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
12. Jay Gary, *The Countdown Has Begun: The Story of the Global Consultation on AD 2000* (Rockville, VA: AD 2000 Global Service Office, 1989), p. 11.
13. Bill O'Brien, *The Countdown Has Begun, op. cit.*, p. 77.
14. Jay Gary, *Ibid.*, p. 146.
15. Gino Henriques, *Ibid.*, p. 148.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
18. Jay Gary, *Ibid.*, p. 159.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
22. Interview with Jay Gary, *op. cit.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. *The Star of 2000, op. cit.*, p. 35.
26. Jay Gary, *Get Ready to Celebrate the Year 2000* (Colorado Springs: AD 2000 Global Service Office, 1993), p. 2.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
29. Article, "Celebrating the Year 2000," (Lucis Trust, 1993, No. 3), p. 7.
30. Interview with Jay Gary, *op. cit.*
31. Articles of Incorporation, "Application for Certificate of Authority of a Foreign Nonprofit Corporation," for Global Service Office, 10-16-92.
32. *Taking Aim at The Star of 2000* (Colorado Springs: Bimillennial Press, 1995), p. 17.
33. Jay Gary, video tape of his speech, *The Power of A.D. 2000 Mega-Images*, 1993.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Tom Sine, *Wild Hope: Crises Facing The Human Community On The Threshold Of The 21st Century* (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1991), p. 16.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 230.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
41. Edward Scribner Ames, *The New Orthodoxy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1918), p. 89.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 30-32.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

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