

## Gnosticism

### An Assessment and Impact on the Church Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

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Gnosticism is an ancient heresy that has been around from very early in the first century, if not earlier but it first showed up in a very subtle form probably only detected by the early apostolic fathers with an especially spiritually trained eye. Apostles like Paul and John thus made radical statements refuting it as a dangerous heresy that had lethally deleterious potential to cut at the very root of the sufficiency of Christ by denying the hypostatic and essential nature Christ's divinity. In those pristinely early gospel days, Gnosticism, albeit in a subtly different form from today (though essentially the same in nature), came across as an innocently harmless proposition that merely enhanced the already existing doctrines, when in fact not. It came across as a companion of authentic truth to the way of salvation but was, in fact, a very venomously deadly heresy patiently lying in the tall grass, waiting to strike! Its long term aim was to actually supplant the truth with human notions. In this write up, we attempt to trace, define, and expose this ancient heresy as well as highlight its present form which the saint must look out for and in the process reject it.

### Defining Gnosticism

What then is Gnosticism? What is its nature and what does it stand for? How should the saint interact with it? It must be admitted that this heresy is defined variously, given its fluid nature but without stating or defining exactly how the saint should interact with this lethal heretical doctrine, we may safely describe Gnosticism from two fronts. Firstly, Gnosticism is derived from the Greek word "*Gnostiko*" or "*Gnosis*" that has references to a kind of subjective inner mystical or secret knowledge that one acquires in order to be complete. Secondly, Gnosticism is that secret knowledge that the ancient Greek Philosophers believed one needed to acquire in order to be saved. It was believed and held that one needed to be rise through the hierarchy of knowledge to appropriate the said special gnosis in order to be liberated (more or less like Hinduism's *nirvana* state) and thus be saved from the evils that plagued humanity. In short, Gnosticism held that believing in Christ was not sufficient to be liberated from sin, one needed a special kind of knowledge that would, in itself, set one free. In the Bible, the Book of Colossians (1: 13-2:23) alludes to aspects of this error in

asserting that Jesus is all sufficient. As we proceed in our consideration of this subject, we shall appreciate why the apostles rose to the occasion to refute this heresy as well as prove that, in fact, the gospel was more than sufficient for one to be saved. A good definition of Gnosticism by other authorities would perhaps be handy: “A *system of religion mixed with Greek and Oriental philosophy (1st-6<sup>th</sup> century AD.) intermediate between Christianity and paganism, which taught that knowledge, rather than faith, was the greatest good, and through knowledge alone could salvation be attained.*”<sup>1</sup> Clearly, this teaching is syncretic in nature at its core, derived from various sources, religions, Eastern and Western thought.

## **The Nature and Tenets of Gnosticism**

At face value and when one initially encountered Gnosticism (in those earlier days), especially in its ancient form, one could scarcely notice that they were dealing with a very deadly teaching that threatened to undercut the very gospel of peace. If one carefully thought through Gnosticism’s basic tenets and implications, they soon realised just how damaging this teaching was. What do we mean to say? How so? To demonstrate our argument, we highlight some of the lethal parts of this doctrine. For one thing, Gnosticism taught that the body was evil but the spirit good and pure though trapped in an evil body. This belief runs through the entire teaching of Gnosticism and thus affects how one looks at, as well as, treats the body. If one imbibed this doctrine, it would eventually lead to rejecting the divinity and humanity of Christ (i.e. hypostatic nature of Christ) because how could Christ have possibly been a pure being and yet possessed an evil body (Gunton 1997 p14)? This thought pattern further leads to other erroneous doctrines like Docetism that basically denies the humanity of Christ, claiming that He merely *looked like a man* when, in fact, he was not. For another thing, Gnosticism held and taught that for the spirit in man to be set free, there was a process and formula to that end; acquiring a particular clandestine secret kind of knowledge. This self-same knowledge was the secret preserve of the select elite few caring to acquire it and grow through it (thus ascending to higher stages up the hierarchy) until reaching a level where the possessors of this knowledge actually became divine. The path to this elevated level of knowledge was fraught with many challenges but one needed to persevere in pursuing this elevated end through different levels, if they were to be truly worthy or liberated from the plagues of the perceived defective body. In effect, this teaching despised or rejected all teachings that premised its salvation on anything else other than on what had been passed down by the Greek philosophical fathers. By that token, not even the gospel of Christ was sufficient. Thus, the apostle rightly combats this heresy in the book of Colossians explicitly stating that Christ was all and in all (Col 1:16-20; 2:3). And yet, another point worth considering, in relation to the tenets of Gnosticism, this ancient heresy taught that the body was the encasement in which the pure spirit was trapped. This teaching was premised on the claim that during creation, something went awfully wrong by

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<sup>1</sup> Webster’s Encyclopaedia of Dictionaries; Baltimore, Maryland, Ottenheimer, 1978.

some creator-being which led that body to be entombed in this evil casket of sorts. Thus, in order to escape or reverse the effects of this “fall,” there was need to rework the effects by acquiring a special knowledge that would eventually liberate the individual. In holding such a view, the gnostics tended to be ascetics that ill-treated the body preferring to elevate the pure divine spirit that was trapped within (Col 2:18, 21-23). In short, divinity lay within the evil body but one could be set free by realising the hidden potential within them, if only they went ahead and appropriated this gnostic knowledge. In a sense, this kind of thinking is extant today among people holding a very low opinion about the body claiming that the spirit within them is superior but trapped the in. Such people do not care to look after their bodies, neglect it, as well as, detest any form of hedonistic, pleasure-related activity. The hermits and, to some extent, the monks of all stripes (in every age and denomination), in a sense, all have some gnostic tenets inherent in their belief system or practice.

## **Forms of Gnosticism**

As earlier intimated, Gnosticism is of different sorts and flavours. As it evolved over time, it showed different faces, though had one essential core as highlighted in the previous section. As one reads history tracing its development, it is evident that Gnosticism developed from just a philosophical world view to one that was the very epitome of salvation, liberty and independence much like what obtains today. People think and believe that by acquiring an education, knowledge and worldly wisdom, then they can safely rise above poverty, injustice, faulty thinking or practice and all the associated evils with the clutches of affliction. Good as this may sound, it actually points to a gnostic concept and world view of ancient times. We do not drill deeper on this point here but need to quickly transition to our main subject matter, the forms of Gnosticism. What then are the forms of Gnosticism? Briefly stated, historically, Gnosticism took the following forms or attributes: early in the first century and in the Hellenistic world, the Greek philosophers eloquently argued that if one had to be free or enjoy quality life, they needed to have a correct view of life acquired through increasingly complex thinking modes. They prodded and probed their minds with respect to an adequate epistemic view to establish what was rightly knowledge and true (Acts 17:21). Once that knowledge was acquired, they then developed on that path, in the quest to get more knowledge which would ultimately lead to further enlightenment and therefore fulfilment. Thus, Gnosticism evolved from a simple quest for knowledge to a secret type of liberating knowledge only available to those that sought and acquired it. Only the most diligent reached such epitomes. In the process, however, this thinking began to negatively affect even the would-be Christians because, according to local standards, belief in Christ alone was not sufficient for salvation but one of the multiple stepping stones towards this ultimate liberating set of truth. The apostles, discerned this danger and damaging nature of this teaching and rightly responded in the scripture texts we possess. Thus, we note some aspects of this rebuttal in books like I John and Colossians,

as earlier mentioned. Gnosticism also took other forms in its off-shoots; It fostered some form of asceticism where the body was considered as terribly evil, frail, weak and a form of trap for the inherent pure spirit (as earlier mentioned), which spirit needed to be set free by acquiring clandestine truths. That explains why the body was ill-treated, debased and not cared for (Col 2:18-19, 20-23). The hermits, monks and others are classic examples of some effects of gnostic practice because they strongly held that by punishing or down grading the body, the inner pure spirit could be better propped up. We see some aspects of this in legalistic sections of the Church who emphasise rituals, rules, regulations and practices that really have nothing to do with salvation but, appear to have a form of godliness (Col 2:23). Additionally, another form of Gnosticism denied that both the body and pure spirit could coexist in pure and perfect harmony. In thus asserting, Gnosticism subtly asserted that beliefs like the incarnation were absurd fallacies because how could an evil body and pure spirit reside in one perfect person? That was not logically sensible to them. Moreover, one of these natures had to fall off and thus left the world with some *Docetism*<sup>2</sup>, which essentially denied the humanity of Christ preferring to believe that Jesus was not fully man but had merely appeared to be a man. We detect aspects of this in I John 4:1-3 and 2 John 7, although in its incipient stages. The apostle John directly combats this heresy in his epistles, and to some extent, in his gospel. John asserts that Jesus indeed came in the flesh and anyone who had to be saved, of necessity, needed to accept and hold this view (I John 4:2). Still further, Gnosticism delved into the mystical and, in a sense, animism where it held that the spirit world affected the present natural existence via invisible forces and personalities such as angels, principalities and powers (Col 2: 15-18). They held that a person could not escape the influence of these potently venomous invisible forces until they were set free through gnostic knowledge. It could be further claimed that gnosticism taught that inside a human being lay divinity (i.e. a spark, light or seed) which could only be triggered by a person's realisation or triggering this evolution to self-divinity<sup>3</sup>. Thus, it was held that in every person lay a seed of divinity which only needed to be propped up. Thus, gnostics believed that a person could be a god on their own if they so wished, as some people had liberated themselves upon acquiring the much sought after gnosis. This form of gnostic teaching, especially as relates to the worship of angels, ceremony and the influence of animistic/mystical spiritual forces are addressed in Colossians. The apostle Paul makes landmark statements refuting this kind of gnostic teaching that was making its rounds in Asia minor in those early days, confusing entire churches, in the process. This kind of gnostic teaching is here with us today, where people teach that one needs a particular type of secret knowledge to delve into the divine. Pundits further teach that in every person is a seed of divinity needing liberating for it to evolve into a god. '*You are gods*' they say, as it

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<sup>2</sup> The online Britannica describes it thus: "**Docetism**, (from Greek *dokein*, "to seem"), Christian heresy and one of the earliest Christian sectarian doctrines, affirming that Christ did not have a real or natural body during his life on earth but only an apparent or phantom one" accessed on 19/10/2021 available at: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Docetism>.

<sup>3</sup> This sounds familiarly from Hinduism, respecting ignorance, illusion or *maya*.

were, attempting to quote Psalms 82:6, though out of context. In effect, this doctrine is pantheistic in nature because it teaches that man-god is in everything and vice versa.

### **The abiding dangers of Gnosticism**

As discernible from what has been described above, evidenced by a spirited fight that the early apologists and apostles put up, Gnosticism remains a very toxically deadly heresy that needs to be meticulously watched and opposed. It comes across in many subtle ways today as a teaching, worldview, attitude and, in a sense, a practice. Briefly described in this section, we highlight some of the dangers associated with the heresy at hand. For one thing, as highlighted elsewhere, Gnosticism cuts at the very root of Christianity over throwing the sufficiency of Christ's atonement and may we say, redemption. Instead of being the all sufficient saviour, other things take over Christ's work. Many Churches have slid into a gnostic mode unawares when they emphasise everything else apart from salvation by grace alone. Jesus Christ is all in all far above all rule, authority, power and dominion. For another thing, gnosticism, denies the incarnation and therefore the dual nature of Christ. If Christ was not fully man and God at the same time, then he could not have been a fit saviour for the world (1 Tim 2:5; 2 Cor 5: 18-19). In the third place, Gnosticism leads to unwarranted excesses including asceticism, degrading of the body and sheer neglect of any important part of the human being. The body is equally important and needs to be taken care of as much as the spirit which must be connected to God in regeneration. In connection with this latter assertion, Gnosticism actually denies the necessity of regeneration to remedy the effects of the fall (which fall, it denies) and thus leaves one in the heretical doctrine of *pelagianism*. The person is the one to decide to liberate themselves by acquiring some special knowledge and thus disentangle the clutches of '*creation gone wrong*' effects. No divine assistance is essential. Yet another visible effect of Gnosticism in some circles is the rise of mysticism, animism and may we say, some kind of new bondages where people are made to hold that belief in Christ alone for salvation and liberty is not sufficient; they need a further work by a gifted person (i.e. *man/woman*) of God so that they are fully set free from hind curses etc. which may have been passed down from their ancestors. This thought freaks out an animist for sure! The said master teachers claim to possess a secret knowledge, discerning obscure things and only they can break the said vicious bondages. In so doing, they infuse fear leading to tight control over people. These are some of the things that Paul would trash in Colossians. Christians need to read the scriptures afresh to find true liberty in Christ by faith alone not on traditions of men, rules, regulations or rituals. Gnosticism comes across as a very petic phenomenon when, actually, it is far from the truth, generating wrong world views or attitudes antagonistic to the truth as it is in Jesus Christ. When a person is in the company of such people, they are made to feel inferior or unspiritual because they lack this '*deep*' or secret gnosis hidden from common sight. But the scriptures are clear,

salvation is by grace alone through faith in a person-Jesus Christ not knowledge. The Reformers had their finger in the right place when they rallied around the five solas!

### **The modern equivalent of Gnosticism**

Although, in the previous section, we have hinted at some current manifestations of the heresy in question but we need to drill deeper. We need to set our search light more directly on our target, so that no part of it remains concealed in the near-by bushes! By that token, some thoughts might appear a repeat but that matters not, because at times, it is necessary to repeat for emphasis. Very well then, let us proceed! Gnosticism is visible today and can easily be detected everywhere, if one has a trained eye, including in the Church. Granted, there are several varying Church traditions but some clearly show signs of gnostic teaching plaguing them. For instance, some are deeply into mysticism and to some extent animistic in outlook or practice. They emphasise hidden secret things at the expense of what the gospel reveals. Most modern and postmodern preachers promote gnostic teaching of various forms and hues. The problem though, is that, most of this teaching is syncretic, a mixture from different religions that the average nominal Christian will not be able to discern the various strands, unless so trained or extremely spiritually exercised in the evangelical world view. Gnosticism also rears its ugly head in Churches where the seed of divinity inherent within an individual is propped up. Most motivational preachers hold and teach this view when they refer to '*the potential within you*'. Though they may have a good point and probably mean well, and in good faith, they are, in effect, teaching some gnostic tenets. Many Charismatic stars are gnostic on that score. Another modern gnostic evidence is the harshness and wrong view of the body. People overly emphasize or rely on rules, regulations and traditions to keep their bodies in check when Christ should be the object of their first desire. We do not here promote antinomianism but evangelical liberty (Galatians 5:1)! Finally, the quest to get and rely on a particular set of knowledge may be good in and of itself but, the gnostic world view strongly asserts that salvation rests in this knowledge alone instead of being a means to an end; Christ. This hype of heralding knowledge, education and all, may not solve the world's problems; it is a transformed life in Christ that leads us to the ultimate solution, Christ. Thus, the Christian must watch out for Gnosticism in its various garbs, work-suits, dresses, garments and expressions. This calls for eternal vigilance and discernment.

### **Why Gnosticism is at variance with the Truth of Scripture**

Gnosticism is clearly at variance with scripture because *Yahweh* is the central figure of worship rather than man. Furthermore, God reveals Himself in special as well as natural revelation, the former leading to salvation in regeneration. While the scriptures teach that God redeems His people in the person and work

of Jesus Christ through the redemption that is in our saviour, Gnosticism rejects this view preferring to replace Christ with a secret knowledge which has completely nothing to do with God's redemptive plan. Moreover, gnosticism denies the fall or its effects. Additionally, it rejects the incarnation leading to all sorts of practices like asceticism, legalism or even antinomianism (surprising as this may be!) and self-deification (which in itself, is idolatry). The world view becomes antagonistically warped and antagonistic against scripture. This, and many other subtle areas point away from the Holy writ. The Christian must watch against this heresy and its deadly effects.

## **How Gnosticism has Affected the Church**

We have traced the nature and, in a sense, the manifestations of this ancient heresy but how exactly has it affected the Church, given its pantheistic nature? Has the Church escaped its alluringly deceptive grip? Unfortunately, not. It has wormed its way right into the very core and fabric of the Church and the worst, is that, some of its greatest and strongest advocates have been Church leaders or clergy. In search of subjective mystical experiences during a crisis moment of their ministry, some Church leaders have turned to gnosticism for aid. Thus, if the said Church leaders have imbibed, ingested, integrated or applauded the tenets of this wrong teaching. Gnosticism has had an easy time slithering its way in among the saints, in the process bringing some back into bondage. The naïve, unschooled or undiscerning Church members have been clutched by chains they never imagined. Several points of its entrance have been identified by analytical writers like Travers Merwe (1995) who rightly points to several key animating entities including the Rosicrucian order, the New order and the Latter Rain Movement which were movements within and without the Church respectively. These movements had no boundaries and offered some apparent new experience of God as well as mystical subjective experiences so that whoever came under their influence or spell felt they had the hand of God upon their lives. The Latter Rain Movement, for instance, came around 1948 with a bang, literally invading Pentecostal Churches later, leading to the Charismatic Movement, which today is a mighty force, with an exponentially growing following. At the core of this movement is gnostic rather than Christian theology because it subtly dethrones Christ while enthroning man. Although it used some evangelical terms like being "*born again*" it, in fact, meant something completely different altogether. As time has gone on, this wrong teaching has ascended to some of the most key arms and organs of the Church then into main stream theology which is propagated all over the world. Some Para-Church organisations, including the Intervarsity fellowship (IVF), while having had a remarkable global impact (now and in the past), have not been spared either because IVF's founder apparently embraced gnostic teaching claiming that gnostic teaching offered what he had long sought after! So what would one expect from students that graduate from a vitally critical fellowship like this as they go through a critical turbulent and analytical period of their student days? The end result is obviously

people that question essential doctrines of the Bible! We do not for a moment suggest that para church organizations are necessarily dangerous, to be avoided at all costs, far from it! In our many words, we mean to say that no one is immune. While Martyn Lloyd Jones remained steadfastly true to his convictions to the very end, others of his contemporaries like JI Packer, Stott, Billy Graham or even Stacey Wood probably did not hold the same views in the latter years of their lives. Although they did not reject all they taught at first, there was certainly a drift in some areas. This is what makes it difficult to tease error from truth because of the endearing halo effect we all suffer with respect to the people we love, venerate and respect. Lloyd Jones remained a lone voice in the evangelical world. More are yet to tangent unless God turns the tide, even here in Zambia, if not world over! That said, we may therefore conclude and agree, with other writers (e.g. Merwe, Geisler & Pollitt), that Gnosticism (and New Age Movement) is seriously upon and among us, yea, has been experiencing a revival of sorts. Its resurgence is hardly surprising because the Church is asleep in the light with its doctrinal armour laid aside, if not discarded! At this miserable rate, what the early Church Fathers sought to reject or argue against will fast become the norm, unless God raises a vigilant army of Spirit filled Christian contenders for truth. So far, Gnosticism has a safe and sound place within a cross-section (not all) of the contemporary Church.

### **The All-sufficiency of Christ**

In Colossians, the apostle makes very deep and far reaching statements which prove that Christ is the all sufficient God, whether in Heaven or on earth (Col 1:17-18). Paul makes these assertions in the light of the fact that the gnostics of his day that were making wild claims to the effect that belief in Christ was but one of the smaller basic components or stepping stones to a higher plane of liberty and freedom when, in fact, the opposite was true. Thus, in the book (i.e. Colossians), it is abundantly clear that salvation is found in none other than the Lord Jesus Christ who is the image of the invisible God, the creator of the universe, pre-existent and the only potentate far above all rule and authority to the extent that no one can be saved without Him. The Colossian context heretics needed to hear these revolutionary statements so that Hellenism could be eternally silenced. Anything that claims to be above Christ must be identified, isolated, meticulously watched and discarded including seemingly religious teaching or practice common today all over the world's media and other sources. It appears harmless but harbouring a venomous serpent beneath the surface, just waiting for an optune opportunity to unleash its deadly lethal paralysing strike!

### **What Others Have Said or written About this Heresy**



Many have undertaken to write about and expose this subtle heresy over the centuries, the earliest being the apostles followed by the Apologists and Church Fathers. St Augustine wrestled with some gnostic related heresies such as pelagianism and to some extent, Docetism. In modern times, we have writers like Travers and Jewel Van der Merwe among others, who have written very detailed analysis of this heresy that are extremely potent eye openers and, in a sense, leave one with great fear of the awful danger that confronts the modern Church. Gnosticism has developed its ugly tentacles and weaved itself into the very fabric of our society, church and work life. Dave Hunt is another whose work deserves mention. His *The Seduction of Christianity*, is certainly a good read. Then we have Bob Dewaay and Pollitt H whose writings approximate to what we have considered in this paper. Obviously, we have a myriad of proponents of Gnosticism, in its various stripes within the Charismatic movement and outside. Names like Haggin, OSten, Myer, Dollar, Hinn or Copeland among others would be included in this bracket. They may not overtly teach this in public for all to see but a careful analysis of their theology betrays what they hold. Others, even within sound evangelical circles, have been trapped between the gnostic rails unawares, realising too late that they had drunk in poison far too late, if at all they do realise or even escape. This calls for eternal vigilance for all of us!

### **Lessons Gleaned a consideration of this Heresy**

Having elucidated and carefully traced this heretical deviation, it only remains for us to draw some take home lessons as well as applications. Many lessons can certainly be deduced from this multi-pronged evolving doctrine but we highlight only some of the prominent ones for our use in our daily lives, given our postmodern, relative context.

Firstly, Gnosticism thrives on ignorance of the biblical teaching of the entire revelation of God as relates to redemption and the atonement. Without a detailed panoramic view, yea, metanarrative of scripture, anything can easily worm into our veins without our realization. This lethal doctrine (i.e. Gnosticism), abhors the scriptures placing itself above God, making gods out of mere mortals.

Secondly, this doctrine teaches a wrong view of the origins. Once have a wrong view of creation and all other doctrines fall into disarray. Genesis 1-11 are key to Christian theology, without them, the super structure of Christianity crumbles. For instance, original sin in Genesis is felled, if we hold a wrong view, affecting all other doctrines across scripture. Moreover, the doctrines under anthropological studies are under siege and will eventually reject creation, the fall, sin or its consequences. This further implies that there is no need of the atoning work of Christ! Imagine a Christianity devoid of Christ's saving work! I Timothy 2:5 would then be meaningless!

Thirdly, this doctrine rejects the doctrines under the study of soteriology. Since it rejects the fall, it eventually discards monergistic regeneration in preference for some form of pelagianism, although secret knowledge, rather than a personal saviour in Jesus Christ, is the redeemer. This heresy makes gods out of mortals as earlier hinted at, making humans proud, akin to the tower of Babel fellows. In effect, Gnosticism questions the necessity and existence of the God of the Bible since humans themselves are intrinsically divine.

Fourthly, this doctrine leads to extremes such as asceticism, legalism or even antinomianism of sorts. It has many roots and daughters littered all over the globe though different parameters, religions or world views. Today, Gnosticism has permeated all religious and secular thinking. Thus, it is hardly surprising when people have an extremely low view of the body elevating the inner spirit whom the claim is actually saved and not the body. This writer has heard even sound Christians making such bold claims that the *spirit is saved and not the wicked body*<sup>4</sup>. In a sense, they may have a point because at regeneration, the spirit is revived while the flesh remains still affected by the fall but the difference lies in progressive sanctification leading to life-long transformation resulting in final glorification of this once mortal body following the resurrection (I Thessalonians 4: 16-17). Gnosticism knows nothing of such a view or hope.

Fifthly, Gnosticism breeds a defective work view resulting into a new bondage. This is because it premises its salvation on something other than Christ, who is the image of the image of the invisible God. In Christ is hid and encased all the treasures of the wisdom of God (Colossians 2:3), and God is the source of all knowledge (Colossians 1:15-17). As a result of trusting in a wrong object of worship, people never arrive at true peace and liberty contrary to what is posited. This writer has met or seen people who were once glorying in the liberty found in Christ degenerate into fearfully timid individuals because they had been deceived into believing that Christ was not sufficient to deliver them from all dark powers, whether they be mystical, animistic or indeed syncretic. We have dealt with this bondage in another paper to which we refer our readers. Bob Dewaay has done remarkable work too, worth reviewing.

Lastly, Gnosticism goes against the evangelical Biblical world view resulting in defective ethical practice. Although at face value, this may not be evident to the reader, it eventually manifests in various vices such as an aversion for a holistic Christian world view. Any suggestion or talk good about the body is viewed with some resentment or suspicion by the gnostic though the hedonist may also disdain biblical holiness as archaic and evil (Ryle 2001). New Calvinism has obviously entrenched some of these latter hedonistic tendencies that clearly are not Biblical as Nyasulu, Williams or Burke (2018) among others, ably demonstrate. Gnosticism is like a *movement* or spirit that can easily captivate any one of us, much like the great Tertullian of old was captivated by Montanism, if they do not diligently watch out for its cantankerous tentacles. It shows up in

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<sup>4</sup> I once heard a preacher state thus during my ZAFES student days, 1993!

literary every sphere and walk of life, including in secular humanistic contexts premised on evolution. There is no escaping its potently deceiving influence(s) or allurements!

## **Conclusion**

We may safely conclude that Gnosticism is a restless evil to be avoided like a plague by all well-meaning blood-bought liberated saints. As Gnosticism makes its further inroads percolating through and within the contemporary Church life blood veins, albeit, through different avenues or paths, the saint is called upon to contend for the faith once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3). Though it mutates and evolves showing different faces such as New Age thinking, this ancient heresy is essentially the same at its very core. We can only stand ready consistently wearing the full armour of God, with the belt of Truth firmly tied around our waists (Ephesians 6:10-18)!

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