

Charisma Magazine Report: Christian Group Leads Gulf Coast Prayer Walk

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By Mark Dinsmore

The Rev. Mitch Hescoc, president of the Evangelical Environmental Network (EEN), began the Gulf Spill Prayer Walk Monday in Waveland, Miss., and will journey through the Mississippi Delta before ending Saturday in Venice, Louisiana.

Churches in the region also have been rallying in prayer. After the oil leak began, Gulf Coast state prayer leaders prayed and repented during a conference call convened by the U.S. Reformation Prayer Network (USRPN), led by Mike and Cindy Jacobs.

On May 15, intercessors in Texas, Louisiana, Florida and Mississippi simultaneously blew shofars over the water and asked God to cleanse and heal the Gulf, said Mildred Bean, leader of Prepare His Way Ministries in Ocean Springs, Miss., in a report to the USRPN. Prophetic ministry leaders such as Chuck Pierce of Glory of Zion Ministries and Bob Jones have said only God can plug up the leak.

“There is no help for this nation apart from God,” Jones wrote in a June 3 message. “We must cry out for God to plug the oil well in the Gulf for He’s the only one that can do it! And He’ll only do it when the church cries out.”[Apparently with simultaneously-timed shofar blasts.]

Hescoc said the disaster has made some churchgoers open to his group’s message that Christians have a responsibility to care for creation, which they say includes reducing energy consumption. He says the crude oil that has leaked into the Gulf represents only a few hours of Americans’ daily oil consumption. This is not a time to fight over who’s at fault over the oil,” Hescoc said. “This is a time to say, ‘Lord Jesus help us,’ because quite honestly we’re all guilty of [overconsumption].

Read more: <http://www.charismamag.com/index.php/news/28761-christian-group-leads-gulf-coast-prayer-walk#ixzz0r3dzjOgf>

COMMENT: I’m not against prayer, and I’m not against walking; neither am I opposed to combining the two activities. However, this story is an example of the common confusion between the green “creation care” movement in the church, which believes that the spill is God’s punishment for humanity’s greed and overconsumption, and that of the Latter Rain movement, which believes that shofar-blowing is the key to plug the leak and to “cleanse and heal” the gulf.

Do these self-titled prophets of God really expect a supernatural removal of one-ton tar balls through mystical soundwave projection? Will blowing a ram’s horn “open the heavens” and restore God’s favor to the land? Will such efforts work when man detonates a nuclear bomb, or unleashes a chemical or biological weapon upon the earth?

While it is true that man is able to cause widespread destruction of life on earth by many means, both of these efforts featured in the Charisma magazine report are based in mysticism. Unfortunately, it has become commonplace for Latter Rain personalities such as Chuck Pierce to “summon the eagles” (specially-gifted prophets and prayer warriors) to travel great distances in order to physically intercede in times of regional or national crisis, all around the world, believing that the physical act of marching and shouting will serve to shake the heavens and pull down spiritual strongholds.

But believers need not engage in frenzied dancing and drum circles (which many in the Latter Rain movement do!) in order to garner God's favor. His word declares, "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," and "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (James 5:16, Matthew 18:20). In fact, we are exhorted in Scripture not to engage in vain repetition and loud public wailing as the heathen do (Matthew 6:7).

Clearly, no physical ritual of man, however dramatic or intense, can bring about a spiritual result from God; this is a pagan view of spiritual powers and alleged divine manipulation. It was Cindy Jacobs, one of the most vocally-gifted Latter Rain leaders (at least in terms of volume), who called for a nationwide prayer march on Wall Street after the 2008 stock market collapse, hoping to draw thousands there physically to cry, declare, and decree for a divine reversal of the reversal of fortune. However sincere the intent, this sacrifice of time and money for many traveling at great expense does not guarantee a spiritual return on such an investment. Perhaps some now unemployed regret not staying home in their own prayer closet:

"When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:5-6).

In many ways, the gulf coast catastrophe is a fitting picture of the spiritual darkness erupting in so many churches today. A seemingly unstoppable, 24/7 flow of sin, selfishness, and sulfurous doctrine that contaminates the body to the point it can only be purified by fire. Indeed, though God's Word warns us that the spiritual wickedness and deception of mankind will wax great upon the earth, it is truly tragic that so many professing Christians—of every political and denominational persuasion—are so easily "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14).

Both the liberal Emerging/postmodern church and the more conservative Latter Rain movement believe that the great commission involves the "redemption" and "salvation" of the environment as a means to bring the kingdom of God to planet earth. In this case, we see a common spiritual denominator between two politically divergent groups, converging in the name of Christ: they are both mired in mystic sludge, as thick and deadly as the crude oil that engulfs the wildlife they seek to redeem, and the terrestrial ball they hope to save.

Regardless of the reason, and solution, to the BP oil disaster, God's Word is clear: This present world will perish—in His time, by His word—and all the works of mankind (oil spills included) will be dissolved with fervent heat (2 Peter 3:9-14); but neither the social gospel, nor the shofar, will accomplish our true mission for which Christ came: to seek and to save that which is lost (Luke 19:10). Jesus said, "my kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Contrary to the efforts of Latter Rain leaders and all Evangelical-Environmental activists, man will never be able to "bring heaven to earth."

So by all means, pray for wisdom; by all means, plead for mercy and for all those affected by this disastrous man-made event. But spiritual leaders should not equate our God-given purpose and mission of saving souls with "saving the planet," nor should they attempt to manipulate people with guilt, nor seek to move the Creator of heaven and earth with misguided mysticism.

Instead, believers everywhere should set earnestly about "redeeming the time, for the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16). --Mark Dinsmore