ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH – HOLLAND, MN

VOLUME 2018 November, 2018–NEWSLETTER No. 8 ***“An Ancient Heresy Returns”***

 ***“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority” [ I Tim. 2:1,2]***

Rev. Fred Hinz began his presentation at the pastoral conference with the scripture above. Our world seems to go going further and further afield each and every day. Transgender confusion [not knowing if one is a male or a female or neither], commercial surrogacy [paying people to have their baby], selling baby parts from abortions to the highest bidder, LGBTQ [Lesbian, Homosexual, Bisexual, Transsexual, Other] language and popularity, physician assisted suicide, transgender indoctrination in the schools [re-engineering the English language to accommodate someone who doesn’t know if they are a he or she and using gender-neutral proper terminology to speak with them] is all the rage.

As Christians it’s easy to point to sin as being the common root to what’s going on. James 3:16 says, “For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there.” But there is a more precise root cause we can identify to help us combat what is going on in the culture. It is very similar to an ancient heresy called “Gnosticism.” This concept is hard to define and is also culturally dependent but has basically four general characteristics.

NeoGnosticism champions **1)Self-Deification**- that the human being is god therefore is all important to itself. **2)Radical autoniminy**- rejection of all external authority [no one call tell it what to do or to think]. **3)The perfectability of human nature-** perfection can be achieved. **4.)Radical Dualistic view of humanity-** a division of humanity into spiritual and material [physical] natures. This division identifies the Spiritual/Mental nature as good, superior, important and meaningful with the Material/Physical nature as evil, inferior, unimportant and without meaning.

When Gnosticism reigns disorder is celebrated so life ceases to be sacred [abortion and assisted suicide increased], maleness and femaleness are rejected [transgender, same-sex marriage] and people become commodities [commercial surrogacy, human body parts for sale]. Personal and societal perfection is ruthlessly pursued through reeducation, elevating a new ruling class [the gnostic elite], constructing a new muscular state to bend the restricting elements into line, a freeing of individuals from the “limiting influence” of family, church and organizations, and freeing the state from outdated restraints and in certain ways limiting government.

The Christian world-view: 1)There is only **One God** who is Triune. 2)**God is sovereign** and rules over all. 3)**All have sinned** and we cannot free ourselves or make ourselves holy. 4)The **unity** of body and soul makes us human. Both are important.

A battle is taking place in our world for the very salvation of human souls. What can one do? Be politically active by being aware, know the issues and vote. Challenge evolutionary thought and allow nature to witness to its creator. Be the church by praying. Emphasize the unity of the spiritual and physical. Speak winsomely and lovingly about moral matters. Emphasize the physicality of the faith: Jesus’ incarnation, physical death and resurrection. Avoid language that speaks of death as our friend. Be prepared to spend time with all who have been damaged by Gnosticism. *IN JESUS’ NAME, AMEN. Pastor David Petrich*