

## José Luis de Jesús Miranda

By James K. Walker

**Dates:** José Luis de Jesús Miranda was born April 22, 1948 in Ponce, Puerto Rico and in 1986 established his church based in South Florida, *Cresciendo en Gracia* (Growing in Grace).

**Unique Terms:** *Jesucristo Hombre* (Jesus Christ, the man), SSS for *salvo siempre salvo* (Saved Always Saved), *El Otro* (The Other), super race, transformation, Gospel of the Uncircumcision.

**Other Names:** The Government of God on Earth, *TeleGracia* (their 24-hour Spanish language television network), Learning Centers (small groups that meet together to watch Miranda's video broadcasts), and *The Truth about the Antichrist: the Miranda Code Explains*, (a book by Andres Cudris that provides evidence to support Miranda's claims).

### HISTORY

José Luis de Jesús Miranda had a troubled youth punctuated by drug use and petty crime. He regularly stole to support his heroin addiction until he turned to God in part to help break his addiction. He transitioned away from his nominal Catholic background and began to attend Baptist and Pentecostal churches eventually becoming a Pentecostal minister.<sup>1</sup> In 1976 he moved to Lawrence, Massachusetts and worked at a Bible-based drug rehab program but complained that all of the traditional churches were filled with "legalism and hypocrisy."<sup>2</sup>

Miranda claims that on a December evening in Massachusetts, he had a supernatural encounter in which he was transported into the presence of the "King of Kings" to be anointed. During this celestial meeting, that *being* merged with Miranda and began to speak to him directly through his mind. The voice ordered Miranda to read Romans 6 and told him that he was "dead to sin." He was completely transformed and enlightened by this experience. Miranda eventually understood that this event marked the beginning of his calling as Christ's second coming saying, "The prophets, they spoke about me. It took me time to learn that, but I am what they were expecting and what they have been expecting for 2,000 years."<sup>3</sup>

Miranda said that the voice continued to provide new revelations including the edict to move to Miami in 1986 with his first wife, Nydia, and four children, including his son Jose Luis Jr. who later left his father's church to form a rival faction in Puerto Rico.<sup>4</sup> After arriving in Florida, Miranda purchased airtime for a 15-minute radio program on WVCG-AM in Miami which helped attract about 500 people to the first meeting of his new church, *Cresciendo en Gracia* (Growing in Grace).<sup>5</sup> The church grew quickly, later expanding through small, video-driven "Learning Centers" in 130 countries and an international 24-hour TV network, *TeleGracia*. Impartial membership estimates are lacking but Miranda has boasted two million followers<sup>6</sup> – a claim that cannot be verified.

**AKA Paul, "El Otro," Christ, Antichrist, and Ex-Husband:** Beginning in the late 1990s, Rev. Miranda began to bestow upon himself a growing list of titles – each progressively more outrageous and grandiose. Initially in, "1998 he claimed to be [a manifestation] of the Apostle Paul. The following year he proclaimed himself 'El Otro' [The Other] — a demigod who would lay the foundation for the Lord's return."<sup>7</sup> Each proclamation seemed to further incite the critics while at the same time drawing more followers. Simultaneously, Miranda's control on his flock was becoming more intense. "Finally in 2004 he named himself Jesus Christ and the ultimate authority on the gospel. Today no one but him — and his right-hand man, Carlos Cestero — are allowed to preach."<sup>8</sup>

In 2007, Miranda added the title "Antichrist" to his résumé reinterpreting the label as God's special designation for the one who represents the true Gospel. He also proudly displayed his tattooed "mark of the beast" 666 explaining that the number is actually a seal of God's favor and a source of spiritual blessings and prosperity.

The newly minted Antichrist then endured a messy and expensive divorce from his second wife Josefina Torres, whom he denounced as a "gold-digging lesbian."<sup>9</sup> The trial revealed embarrassing details about the church's assets and financial practices including the fact that for years church funds were being funneled to Miranda's first wife, Nydia. Jo-Ann De Jesus, Miranda's daughter who

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functions as the church's treasurer, testified that the first ex-wife was receiving "\$12,000 in monthly alimony paid for by the church."<sup>10</sup>

In 2009, Miami-Dade Judge Roberto Piñeiro awarded \$2.2 million to Torres. Piñeiro ruled that Creciendo En Gracia functioned as a for-profit business to benefit Miranda and not as a non-profit church. Piñeiro notified the IRS of his findings and declared that Torres was due her share of the business. Miranda's faithful protested the ruling picketing the courthouse wearing shirts with 666 numbering. When Judge Piñeiro died the following year, Miranda's followers claimed his death was a fulfillment of prophecy that "angels would manifest just retribution" on Piñeiro who "had dared to come up against the Living God" by making "fun of the doctrine taught by Jose Luis de Jesus."<sup>11</sup>

**The 2012 Domsday and Transformation:** Miranda prophesied that the year 2012 would witness cataclysmic political and geological disasters including a "reversal of Earth's poles causing 'tectonic plates to heat up.'" Miranda explained: "For 2012, we are expecting a change on the face of the earth and the destruction of the world will come." Scheduled for June 30, the apocalypse was to have included the collapse of world currencies and human governments so that "the new government of the 666 will take over."<sup>12</sup> At the same time Miranda was to have experienced "the Transformation" giving he and his followers glorified, immortal bodies with supernatural powers. Followers boasted that on that day, "We can run and not get tired.... go through fire and not get burned."<sup>13</sup> Andres Cudris described the anticipated metamorphosis:

TRANSFORMATION: Transmutation; to pass from one form to another; from a state of mortality and corruption unto an incorruptible, immortal and eternal life state.... This is exactly what will happen to the mortal body of Jose Luis De Jesus Miranda. At the time of the Transformation, the veil of weakness [fleshly body] He used to minister and edify His church in which He concealed himself on Earth as a thief in the night, will disappear. He will dress in glory and assume His prophetic position as King of kings and Lord of lords to reign with His people over all nations (Dan. 7: 14, 27).<sup>14</sup>

## DOCTRINE

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The theology of Growing in Grace seems to be an eclectic blend of Miranda's very unique biblical interpretations coupled with ideas borrowed from the late Unification Church founder, Sun Myung Moon and elements of Mormonism.<sup>15</sup> Similar to Mormon doctrine, Miranda teaches a total apostasy and the preexistence of souls in heaven before coming to earth to be tested. "We were God's children in heaven before participating in a human body here on Earth.... God dressed us with an earthly body for us to know evil and to perfect ourselves...."<sup>16</sup> Similar to Rev. Moon's Unification theology, Miranda teaches that he is the second coming of Christ who fulfilled the biblical prediction of "coming in the clouds" (Matt 24:30) when flying by commercial airliner.<sup>17</sup>

Miranda's dominant hermeneutic, or principle of biblical interpretation, is an extreme form of ultra-dispensationalism<sup>18</sup> that pits the Apostle Paul's New Testament books against the writings of the other Apostles including all four Gospels and the rest of the New Testament. He uses this theory to radically reinterpret or completely dismiss most of the New Testament and all of the Old.

**Ultra-Dispensationalism:** Miranda teaches that the Apostle Paul was given a new gospel called the Gospel of the Uncircumcision for the Gentiles which was meant to replace the Gospel of the Circumcision (for the Jews) preached by Jesus and all the other Apostles. The old gospel was preached by Jesus of Nazareth who died to defeat sin and Satan. The resurrected Christ replaced that old gospel with the Gospel of the Gentiles that was entrusted to the Apostle Paul. Miranda charges Peter, Matthew, John, and the other New Testament writers with failure to accept the new Gospel of Grace in favor of the original, obsolete message. Miranda claims this led to open violence saying that it was actually Peter and the other original Apostles that had Paul murdered in Rome.

So, how come Paul does not include the rest of the apostles in his order of IMITATION? Because the apostles of the circumcision (Peter, James and John) continued to be faithful and zealous imitators of Jesus of Nazareth, His life experiences and His mosaic practices. They never wanted to abandon the rudiments of the doctrine of Christ (Heb. 6: 1-3). They were not meant to understand the great truths of the new covenant; they plotted Paul's death in Rome and in executing it, the Gospel of Grace became a closed book. Therefore, after Paul's death, true Christianity in its authentic doctrinal purity was not preached for 2,000 years. Instead, what has been preached is a mixed gospel, a gospel of two covenants, which nullifies the perfect efficiency of Christ's sacrifice.<sup>19</sup>

**No Sin or Satan:** When Jesus of Nazareth died on the cross sin was eliminated. While his followers are encouraged to live moral lifestyles they cannot actually sin because all sin was purged on the cross. The doctrinal section of the church's website explains, "When Jesus of Nazareth said 'It is finished', the era of sin expired bringing an end to sin."<sup>20</sup> Miranda teaches that because the ruler of this world was "cast out" (John 12:31), the devil no longer exists. Thus, "A person is

RESPONSIBLE for his or her actions.... It is not acceptable for a person to say that it was the ‘devil’ that led them to commit an error.... The ‘devil’ is a mythological character created to instill terror in an individual.”<sup>21</sup> Miranda charges that the Apostle John got it wrong. Under the delusion of the old Gospel of the Circumcision, John misinterpreted his vision recorded in Revelation 13 and wrongly identified “the dragon” as a yet to be defeated Satan:

If Christ destroyed the devil forever with His death on the cross... then, how is it that after its destruction, John still sees Satan as the figure of the dragon that gives authority, power and dominion to one of its representatives on Earth to make war against the saints until they are defeated? (Rev. 13: 7).<sup>22</sup>

**The Antichrist is Good:** The Apostle John’s references to the Antichrist in the New Testament are references to the Apostle Paul. John misunderstood Paul and thought that his new Gospel of the Uncircumcision was “anti” or against the original gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. Miranda explains that Paul did not deny the earlier fleshly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth but recognized that the older doctrine had been replaced by the Gospel of the Uncircumcision taught by the resurrected Christ. While “Antichrist” was originally a title John used to attack Paul, it now applies to Miranda as the second coming Christ who, like Paul, proclaims the new Gospel of the Resurrected Christ.

...Paul also orders to “leave behind the rudiments of the doctrine of Christ”, the Christ before the cross (He. 6: 1-3). This doctrinal position of Paul about the Christ before the cross brought him animosity from the apostles of Jesus, subsequently resulting in John labeling him “ANTICHRIST” (1Jn. 2: 18-22; 2Jn. 1: 7). In opposition to Paul and his Gospel of Uncircumcision, John is the first and only apostle to use the term “ANTICHRIST”. Thus, when we see that in His second coming the Lord adopts the same doctrinal position of Paul (as it is written, the Lord would come to “judge the secrets of men according to Paul’s gospel”- Rom. 2: 16) ...today, the religious system worldwide continues with the same spirit of circumcision that John had, hence they also call the Man Christ Jesus [Miranda] a “deceiver and antichrist”.<sup>23</sup>

**666 is God’s Number:** Following his own example, Miranda’s followers are encouraged to receive the tattooed mark “666” as God’s number of wisdom and prosperity. The biblical reference of 666 as the “mark of the beast” is interpreted by the church to be the mark of God to seal humans who are identified as a type of “beast” or animal-kind.

666 is the distinguishing mark pertaining to the Man Christ Jesus and to the International Ministry Growing in Grace (Ministerio Internacional Creciendo en Gracia). It is the SEAL of protection and security (Revelation 7:2-3, 9:4). God has always sealed His people with a sign, just as He gave Abraham the sign of circumcision and sealed him with the righteousness of FAITH (Romans 4:11). 666 is a VERY IMPORTANT number.... Hollywood [has] distorted the worldview of our number – 666 – branding it as evil.<sup>24</sup>

**Miranda is God:** Followers of Growing in Grace are taught that Miranda is God in the flesh. This has been progressively revealed to the church. He teaches that Jesus appears through history in different “veils” or manifestations for different dispensations. These appearances in history include the fleshly “Jesus of Nazareth” who died on the cross to overcome sin. This manifestation was followed by that of the resurrected Christ who appeared to Paul (according to the spirit and not the flesh) to preach the new Gospel of the Uncircumcision. The final manifestation of Jesus is *Jesucristo Hombre*, the Man Christ Jesus, in the fleshly body of Miranda.

Therefore, this is why today in His second coming as the Man Christ Jesus manifested in the body of Jose Luis De Jesus Miranda, He has also been identified through a succession and variety of functions. Initially, He returns to Earth as a thief in the night and only His church began to recognize Him as “THE OTHER”,... Later, He is recognized as the Father of the spirits and in this progressive manner, prophecies pointed to Him until He was fully identified as the one who was to come: THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.<sup>25</sup>

THE MAN CHRIST JESUS IS GOD ON EARTH: The Man Christ Jesus, Dr. Jose Luis De Jesus, is edifying the lives of the believers of Growing in Grace (Creciendo en Gracia) manifesting in each believer peace, joy, love, patience, kindness and a good conduct. He is the only one who presents a believer WITHOUT SIN....<sup>26</sup>

## CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

Paul’s gospel was not new or at odds with the other Apostles or the rest of Scripture. Although Paul confronted Peter’s inconsistent behavior on one occasion (Gal. 2:11), this variance was fully resolved as Peter would later write of “...our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him.” Peter and Paul preached the same Gospel and Peter accepted Paul’s epistles as Scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16). Manufacturing a false schism between Paul and the other Apostles was a tactic of the false teachers from the earliest days of Christianity.

One of the ways in which some false teachers of Paul's day tried to undermine his authority was to hint that his gospel was different from Peter's, and indeed from the view of all the other apostles in Jerusalem. They were trying to disrupt the apostolic circle. To prove that his gospel was independent of the other apostles, he has stressed [Gal. 1] that he paid only one visit to Jerusalem in fourteen years, and that this lasted only fifteen days. To prove that his gospel was yet identical with theirs, he now stresses [Gal. 2] that when he paid a proper visit to Jerusalem, his gospel was endorsed and approved by them.<sup>27</sup>

The June 30, 2012 failure of Miranda and his followers to be transformed into immortal bodies coupled with the continuation of the world's governments and currency demonstrate Miranda's inability to pass an important biblical test for a prophet. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 teaches when anyone speaks "in the name of the Lord" and makes a prediction that fails to come to pass, that prophet fails the test and is guilty of speaking "presumptuously." Deuteronomy 13 contains a similar warning for any "prophet or dreamer of dreams," who leads people to worship a false God. In both cases, the Old Testament penalty for the false prophet was death by stoning. Indeed if Miranda is not "God on the earth," then he is certainly leading his followers after a false God. This is the worst kind of idolatry – making himself God. The serpent tempted Eve with a similar lie promising her a transformation in which she "shall not surely die" but would become "as gods" (Genesis 3:4-5).

Jesus warned that false teachers would come claiming to be Christ while predicting the end of the world. "Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them" (Luke 21:8). In this sense, Miranda has indeed become a type of Antichrist in that he attempts to usurp or replace the Jesus presented in the Gospels. While he may not be *the* Antichrist, John accurately warned, "that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." (1 John 4:3).

## Notes

- 1 Stephanie Edelman and David Bromley, "Growing in Grace International Ministry," Richmond: World Religions & Spiritually Project VCU (University of Virginia Commonwealth), October, 2011 (Updated May, 2012). [www.has.vcu.edu/wrs/profiles/GrowingInGrace.htm](http://www.has.vcu.edu/wrs/profiles/GrowingInGrace.htm) (Accessed March, 2013).
- 2 Miriah Blake, "Jesus Redux," *Miami New Times*, Feb. 9, 2006 [www.miaminewtimes.com/2006-02-09/news/jesus-redux/full/](http://www.miaminewtimes.com/2006-02-09/news/jesus-redux/full/) (Accessed March, 2013).
- 3 Judi McLeod, "Daddy the Antichrist," Canada Free Press, Feb. 23, 2007. [www.canadafreepress.com/2007/covers/cover022307.htm](http://www.canadafreepress.com/2007/covers/cover022307.htm) (Accessed March, 2013).
- 4 Associated Press, "Miami Church Brands Members With '666' Tattoos," (Feb. 24, 2007) [www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,254360,00.html](http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,254360,00.html) (Accessed March 2013).
- 5 Jesus Redux.
- 6 Associated Press, "Followers await self-styled 'Antichrist,'" NBCNews.com April 20, 2007, [www.nbcnews.com/id/18234605/](http://www.nbcnews.com/id/18234605/) (Accessed March, 2013).
- 7 Jesus Redux.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Camilla Rowan, "Antichrist Jose Luis De Jesus Miranda Loses Divorce Settlement Case against Second Wife," *Guanabee*, Jan. 12, 2009, <http://guanabee.com/2009/01/antichrist-jose-luis-de-jesus-miranda-loses-divorce-settlement-case-against-second-wife/> (Accessed March, 2013).
- 10 "Wife seeks divorce from 'Jesus Christ reborn,'" *Anderson Cooper Blog 360*, July 17, 2007, [www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/anderson.cooper.360/blog/2007/07/wife-seeks-divorce-from-jesus-christ.html](http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/anderson.cooper.360/blog/2007/07/wife-seeks-divorce-from-jesus-christ.html) (Accessed March, 2013).
- 11 Francisco Alvarado, "Man Christ Caused Judge's Death?" *Miami New Times Blog*, Dec. 15, 2010, [http://blogs.miaminewtimes.com/riptide/2010/12/man\\_christ\\_caused\\_judges\\_death.php](http://blogs.miaminewtimes.com/riptide/2010/12/man_christ_caused_judges_death.php) (Accessed March, 2013).
- 12 Daily Mail Reporter, "Miami cult who tattoo themselves with 666 say the world will END on June 30," *Mail Online*, May 2, 2012, [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2138660/All-believers-going-destroyed-Religious-sect-spreading-word-ahead-impending-end-world-June-30.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2138660/All-believers-going-destroyed-Religious-sect-spreading-word-ahead-impending-end-world-June-30.html) (Accessed March, 2013).
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Andres Cudris, *The Truth about the Antichrist: The Miranda Code Explains*, (Sugarland, Texas: Creciendo en Gracia., Kindle Edition, 2007-2012), 10. (The original Spanish title was *La Verdad Sobre el Anticristo*.)
- 15 Rev. Moon died Sept. 3, 2012. Separate Profiles have been published on these two religions: Rick Branch, "Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity," and Tim Martin, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," *Profile Notebook* (Arlington, Texas: Watchman Fellowship, Inc. 1994-2013). *Profile Notebooks* are available at [www.watchman.org/notebook.htm](http://www.watchman.org/notebook.htm).
- 16 *The Truth About the Antichrist*, 8.
- 17 *The Truth About the Antichrist*, 5-6.
- 18 Traditional Ultra-dispensationalism teaches that the church did not exist "at the start of the Book of Acts and did not come into existence until, at least, the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10 (... after the conversion of Saul)." A more orthodox version of this doctrinal "view has been defended by men like Charles F. Baker, E. W. Bullinger, A. E. Knoch, and Charles Welch." Lanny Thomas Tanton, "The Gospel and Water Baptism: A Study of Acts 22:16," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Volume 4. 1991, (Irving, Texas: The Grace Evangelical Society), 34-35.
- 19 *The Truth about the Antichrist*, 17-18.
- 20 "The True Doctrine of God the Man Christ Jesus," [www.cegenish.com/the-true-doctrine/](http://www.cegenish.com/the-true-doctrine/) (Accessed March 2013). Although it is impossible to sin against God, Miranda still encourages his followers to make morally good choices. "People are called to live orderly and walk uprightly in good conduct; respecting the laws of their country such as paying taxes, as it is written '...for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.' (Galatians 6:7). It is important for man to conduct himself with excellence pleasing his neighbor."
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 *The Truth about the Antichrist*, 33-34.
- 23 Ibid. 30-31.
- 24 "The True Doctrine of God the Man Christ Jesus," <http://www.cegenish.com/the-true-doctrine/> (Accessed March, 2013).
- 25 *The Truth about the Antichrist*, 6-7.
- 26 "The True Doctrine of God the Man Christ Jesus," [www.cegenish.com/the-true-doctrine/](http://www.cegenish.com/the-true-doctrine/) (Accessed March, 2013).
- 27 John R. W. Stott, Dale Larsen, and Sandy Larsen, *Galatians: Experiencing the Grace of Christ*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press USA, 1998) 18-19.



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