

THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT:
MONOLITHIC OR PLURALISTIC?

Thousands of pages could be written, indeed have been written, about the New Age Movement. This monograph is a condensation of 400 pages of personal notes, with a bibliography of almost 400 books, cassettes, journal articles and clippings. It is intended to stimulate further study of the Movement as it continues to develop and spread.

INTRODUCTION

The words "New Age" appear to be a recent addition to our vocabulary, but in truth the Movement has existed for almost a quarter of a century. The impression that it has appeared quite suddenly has been created by the media that report on its more trivial and sensational manifestations and frequently overlook its serious philosophical/religious side. Popular writers such as Constance Cumbey, Dave Hunt and T. A. MacMahon, and even New Age sociologist Marilyn Ferguson, make the New Age Movement appear much more monolithic than it is. On the other hand, although New Agers tend to write, speak and act quite independently, there is enough agreement among them to define the New Age Movement as a distinct philosophical and religious entity in itself.

It is easy to confuse the philosophical/religious side of the New Age Movement with secular humanism, but while there are some similarities, the New Age is not the same as secularism -- any more than it is the same as Eastern mysticism, although it borrows freely from that source also. The New Age Movement is an olio of secular humanism, a variety of Eastern religions, humanistic psychology, superstition and pagan pantheism. It represents a relentless quest to integrate all knowledge and pseudo-knowledge, science and pseudo-science, belief and superstition, for the purpose of involving all people in the creation of a Utopian society.

The New Age's most serious devotees frequently are distressed by its more trivial proponents, for they see themselves as offering "salvation," not merely diversion, to mankind. For them the New Age is the next step in human evolution (called "transformation") that will culminate in nothing less than the deification of mankind.

There are two major expressions of the New Age Movement -- the occult/trivial and the humanistic/religious. This will become clearer from definitions and descriptions given below. It is easy for the Christian to think only in terms of the occult/trivial side of the New Age Movement and dismiss it as a fad that will pass as have other fads. This is a grave error, for the humanistic/religious side of the Movement promotes Satan's oldest and most deadly deception and seeks to involve every social, cultural and religious aspect of our lives. By the sheer force of its propaganda, the New Age Movement has become the major challenge to Christianity in our time. Dr. Carl Raschke of the University of Denver has called the New Age Movement "the spiritual version of AIDS -- that is, it destroys the defenses, the immune

system, the ability of people to cope and function" (Denver Post, May 3, 1987). It is incumbent on Christian people to recognize that in defining "Ultimate Reality" and pronouncing moral and spiritual judgments, the New Age Movement is religious to the core and is fundamentally hostile to every Christian belief. The task of the Christian Church, however, is not merely to denounce the Movement, but to minister to the vacuum in people's lives upon which this Movement feeds.

The New Age Movement can be defined in three ways: by its stated principles, by Scripture and by its varied expressions.

DEFINITION OF THE NEW AGE BY ITS PRINCIPLES

There are six broad principles that are held in common by New Agers of both the occult and the humanistic camps. The importance that is attached to one or another of these principles will vary with the particular emphasis of each New Age entity, but the principles, in one form or another, are the creed that binds New Agers together (monolithic). At the same time, the principles separate New Agers from one another, for the serious philosophers among them reject many of the fantasies of their occult cousins (pluralistic).

1. God is impersonal and not separated or distinct from creation. This concept has long been associated with the Eastern religions and their westernized expressions. In the New Age, God does not have personality but has become an "It," an energy, force, or an aggregate consciousness -- ever expanding through human evolution. The universe has no purpose. Possibility has no limits. Good and evil are the same, as are also life and death. Differences exist only in one's perception. Shirley MacLaine goes so far as to make God's very existence dependent on man's perception: "I know that the God-source exists. Therefore IT IS" (Dancing in the Light, p. 404).

In stark contrast to the New Age's first principle, God's Word pronounces judgment on all who fail to distinguish between the Creator and the creation (Isaiah 45:8-19) and especially on those who identify themselves with God (Isaiah 47:8-10). It is, indeed, the radical discontinuity between God and man brought on by the Fall of Man that is responsible for the deplorable conditions that are found in human society (Romans 1:17-32).

2. Humanity, like all creation, shares the essential being of God and is divine. Man, therefore, has no specific nature, no attributes, no limitations. All options are always open. The only barrier to further evolution is ignorance. And ignorance can be overcome through "enlightenment". Any New Ager may say "I AM God" in the same sense that the man from Nazareth said it. Being God, man is under no law, but is as the law -- responsible to none and ever free of all guilt. For this reason the New Age has been called "the perfect Yuppie religion -- never having to say you're sorry"!

The exact lie that Satan told our first parents in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:4-5) began the "Age" that has come to be called "New" in our generation! Ezekiel 28:2 sharply reproves humanity for aspiring to godhood and 1 Timothy 6:15-16 reserves deity to only One true God.

3. Humanity's crises rise from ignorance of man's divinity and his oneness with all things. Reality in the New Age is only what each individual decides it is. Changing one's perception of reality overcomes all anxieties and evils. Humanity's journey to perfection and omnipotence is an "awakening" or evolutionary process called "transformation." All limitations have their source in false beliefs. Mankind is the savior of mankind.

Oscar Wilde once said, "Only the shallow know themselves." Never in history have so many people attempted to "know themselves" through self-deification, creating a philosophy of shallowness that has led some to despair and others on an endless voyage of searching but never finding. No amount of consciousness-raising can unite God and man in one essence and nature, but the forgiveness accomplished in the atoning work of Jesus Christ can bridge the chasm of sin that separates man from the abundant life that God has prepared for him.

4. Humanity's greatest need is transformation -- or awareness of man's oneness with God and innate divinity. We are our own Creators! As such, we are responsible for everything that happens to us and around us. The capture of further evolution is man's only hope. The key element is that man must choose the direction of his future evolution. Man's divine nobility will emerge as he directs his own evolution for the betterment of mankind. Marilyn Ferguson creates a "scientific principle" that nature moves ever toward a higher order of life, gaining momentum as it goes, so that fully-formed, highly-evolved new species appear quite suddenly. (The Aquarian Conspiracy, pp. 158-163).

The Bible makes it quite clear that transformation is needed, but it must be brought about by an act of the grace of God. Such transformation is called "conversion" and is the basis for a continuing transformation effected by the Holy Spirit: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God . . . be ye transformed" (Romans 12:1-3).

5. Transformation can be brought about by a myriad of techniques that can be applied to the body, mind and/or spirit. The object of these techniques is to dismantle each person's perception of reality and build a new set of perceptions based on mankind being self-creating. An altered state of consciousness is required to change the individual's perception of reality. Marilyn Ferguson lists the following "psychotechnologies" for a deliberate change in consciousness: sensory isolation or sensory overload, biofeedback, autogenic training, chanting, psychodrama, hypnosis and self-hypnosis, "meditation of every description", frenetic activity and dancing, shamanistic and magical rites, seminars (such as est, Silva Mind Control, Lifespring, etc.), dream journals, syncretistic religions (e.g., Theosophy), primal therapy, rebirthing, self-healing (e.g., Science of Mind or Religious Science), A Course in Miracles, body disciplines of many kinds, etc. (Op. cit., pp. 85-87). Other New Agers would add to these: guided imagery and visualization, "boot-camp" humiliation and confrontational therapies, deep massage, drugs, diet, acupuncture, sleep deprivation, endurance tests, firewalking, pyramidology, use of crystals, astrology, "channeling" spirits, and almost anything else that will trigger a mystic or psychic experience powerful enough to cause one to question his/her perception of reality.

Romans 3:22-28 makes it quite clear that mankind's crises are not due to lack of techniques. Man's dilemma is personal and relational -- to God. The

resolution of mankind's crises does not require a technique to follow, a procedure to learn or an alteration to be made in consciousness. Healing of the crisis is initiated by God through the gift of His Son and is applied individually by the gracious action of God's Holy Spirit.

6. Personal transformation is the basis for global transformation characterized by mass enlightenment and social unity. According to New Agers, further evolution of mankind eventually will become collective, culminating in a golden age that will be free of war, crime, violence, racism, drug abuse and hunger. All mankind will be "one" -- with one language, one monetary system, one world government, as well as one mind and one will. Descriptions of life in the golden age vary widely, depending on the occult or humanistic bent of a particular New Age prophet.

The highly-touted "quantum leap" in consciousness is just around the corner, we are told. This New Age philosophy is heavily promoted, attractively packaged and marketed like most commercial products -- and like many commercial products, it is marked by ridiculously exaggerated claims.

While the New Age Movement provides diversion of a sort for those who seek to "know themselves", it also at the same time diverts funds and activity from serious social problems that plague our society. Poverty, racism, environmental decay and crime will not disappear miraculously by denying their reality; these require direct and immediate intervention on the part of those who have themselves experienced God's "intervention" of grace in their lives. If anything, as the New Age Movement grows, a heavier social burden will be put on those who selflessly give of their time, energy and material substance to alleviate the needs of the world's less fortunate.

DEFINITION OF THE NEW AGE BY SCRIPTURE

The idea that there is anything new about the "New Age" Movement is quickly laid to rest by Holy Scripture: "Is there a thing of which it is said, See, this is new? It has been already in the ages before us" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). The "ages before us" indeed refers all the way back to man's beginnings. The three primal lies of Satan are expressed repeatedly by New Agers: man is like God; humanity needs transformation; knowledge of one's divinity is salvation and power. To these the occult New Agers add the fourth of Satan's primal lies -- the denial of death (Genesis 3:1-5). At the heart of man's Fall and its subsequent distortion of all that God created is worship of self disguised as "knowledge" and "God-realization."

No less than seven times in Isaiah 45 God declares, "I AM the Lord and there is none else." From this pinnacle of God's description of Himself Isaiah traces man's defiance of God in the example of the ruler of Babylon's usurpation of divinity:

But these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thy enchantments. For thou has trusted in thy wickedness: Thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thy heart, I am, and none else beside me (47:9-10).

The poet Vergil declared, "We make our destinies by our choice of gods." We are shaped by what we worship. Romans 1:17-32 leaves no doubt about the accelerating degradation that follows upon worship of the creature rather than the Creator. The deification of man that is described in Romans 1 is indistinguishable from the forces that brought down the classical ages of Greece and Rome and from the future to which the New Age Movement would bring all mankind today.

In a monograph entitled "The Coming World Religion," the Spiritual Counterfeit Project's Brooks Alexander writes concerning the "one world religion" for which the New Age strives:

At the "end of the age" (as Peter, Paul, John and Jesus all consistently forewarned us), this basic lie continues to its ultimate state of development. It is brought to its completed form in a great one-world system of idolatrous worship. No longer a matter of individual deception, it becomes an encompassing, systematic delusion, as universal as the human condition in which it is rooted.

Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod pastor Don Matzat observes in his book Inner Healing,

While Protestant Christians accept the fact that there is no new truth, church history demonstrates that there is no new heresy either. The New Age movement offers nothing new to this age. We are dealing with "the same ol' stuff" in a different wrapper (p. 158).

DEFINITION OF THE NEW AGE BY ITS EXPRESSIONS

AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION!

The New Age Movement will appear to be a mass of confusing and contradictory beliefs and practices unless it is understood as two movements in one. There is an OCCULT movement -- involved in reincarnation, crystal power, spirit guides, UFOs and extra-terrestrials. And there is a HUMANISTIC movement -- more interested in developing unlimited human potential and an ethical system centered in responsibility only to one's self.

The OCCULT New Age expression is faddish, and in a sense, trivial. It will pass eventually, as have other fads, but will endure longer than most because of the sheer number and energy of its devotees. The HUMANISTIC expression will not pass although at times, like a chameleon, it may change its colors to blend into a new environment. Its name may even change with the times, but since it is synonymous with the Fall of Man, it will remain until the Lord's appearance.

PART I - OCCULT EXPRESSIONS OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

Belief in karma and reincarnation is a vital part of the occult New Age Movement. Without a belief in reincarnation it appears that millions of New Agers might die before the arrival of the promised "golden age." Reincarnation holds the promise for them that they will live in the golden age even though they may have to pass through countless lifetimes before they arrive at it.

Karma, the balance of good and evil (in place of evil, read "unenlightenment"), is the controlling agent for each subsequent incarnation. Shirley MacLaine speaks of karma as the instrument by which each person chooses or elects the experiences of his/her next life. In order to "burn off" vast amounts of bad karma, a person may elect to be aborted or born handicapped, suffer from cancer, live in extreme poverty . . . whatever. Some New Agers have written of the victims of the holocaust or the napalm-bombing in Vietnam as having consciously chosen these fates in order to rid themselves of bad karma and go on to a better life. For some it may take thousands, or even millions, of reincarnations before they "get it right" and move on to consciousness of their divinity. Indeed, the very word "victims" is absent from the vocabulary of many occult New Agers.

"Living out one's karma" is much praised by many New Agers -- starvation is a "corrective blessing" (a Hare Krishna guru) or the death of an infant "a comfort for parents" (MacLaine). The New Age teaching of karma/reincarnation obviously sounds the death knell of social ministry. Who would dare to interfere with the law of karma by granting relief to one who has consciously chosen his present state? One New Age leader asks, "Who would want to doom a sufferer to repeat his present existence by depriving him of its instructions?"

Although belief in reincarnation is derived from Eastern religions, leave it to the West to bring out a "new, improved version"! In Hinduism there is always the possibility of reincarnating on a lower plane -- a possibility quite remote from Western "upward-mobility" thinking! Can New Agers guarantee upward mobility? There is no concept of forgiveness in karma! Its absolute relentlessness requires that every person pay in full for every failure to achieve godhood in a given lifetime. The implications of this belief are staggering -- and only a "devolution" of mankind can result! New Agers, at best, have Hebrews 9:27 but without verse 28!

Belief in reincarnation leads to one of the most widely advertised practices of the occult in the New Age: channeling spirit guides. Spirit guides are supposedly people from the past, present or future who at present have no physical existence "on the earth plane". They are reported to be extremely knowledgeable. They operate through human "channels" -- temporarily assuming control of the channels' bodies while the channels are in a trance state. The channels close their eyes, twitch and jerk, breathe deeply, and then start giving advice in stilted accents. From any other source, their messages for the most part would be considered quite trite: "Love yourself", "You deserve a good life", etc., interlaced with genuine New Age philosophy, "You are a divine being . . . there is no reason for you to ever feel guilt . . . you create your own reality . . . you have within yourself the power to achieve whatever you choose."

Channeling doesn't come cheap; it can cost from \$20 per session to \$400 or more for a weekend seminar. Channeling sessions often turn out to be more than just a diversion for the terminally bored. Families have broken up and other tragedies have followed upon advice given by some channels. The proliferation of channels (Los Angeles alone has over 1,000) has brought warnings even from New Age writers: "Exercise caution; the spirit who speaks to you may not be YOUR personal guide . . . and there is even the possibility that the channel might be a fraud" (!). Curiously, Shirley MacLaine speaks of (and some channels advertise themselves as) "accredited" channels, a high-sounding but apparently meaningless designation!

Twentieth century channeling differs little from nineteenth century spiritualism -- except for the use of modern advertising techniques, mass marketing and the amount of money that changes hands. And both spiritualism and channeling are no different from the necromancy and use of mediums upon which the wrath of God is called down in the Sacred Scriptures.

Like belief in reincarnation and spirit guides, the use of crystals is a prominent part of the occult New Age. The "crystal craze" invests natural stones with powerful attributes, while at the same time employing pseudo-scientific, computer-age jargon to explain their powers. Crystals in the gas tank to improve miles per gallon, crystals in drinking water to promote healing, crystals worn around the neck to increase energy and mind powers, books on how to "program" a crystal to meet your needs -- and where to find the most powerful crystals (near the site of Atlantis, the "lost continent!") . . . welcome to the New Age! And welcome also to superstition and the age of ancient paganism that often assigned powerful magic to pretty rocks!

Extraterrestrials and UFOs also play an important role in occult New Age thinking. Planets and stars are believed to be inhabited by highly-cultured races that are spiritually and scientifically millions of years ahead of us. These "intelligences" may share their advanced knowledge with earthlings through spirit guides and mass meditation seminars and retreats.

Occult New Age events provide vivid social experiences for New Agers -- opportunities to enter into quick and intimate relationships without the responsibilities that longer-term relationships involve. Furthermore, these events attract an enormous amount of publicity for the organizers and profiteers of the New Age Movement. Even serious, humanistic New Agers such as Marilyn Ferguson speak of these events as "inspirational spurs to live as though their Second Coming scenarios were true." Various attempts repeatedly have been made to involve people all over the world in projecting their energies at exactly the same instant and thus bring about instant world peace and prosperity.

Mind, Body and Spirit Festivals are such events. They have drawn as many as 100,000 New Agers to visit "experts" who tell them of reincarnation, astrology, numerology, tarot readings, crystal power, auras, UFOs, etc., and sell them pyramids, crystals, herbal remedies, health foods and even cow manure (literally). 1986's First Earth Run, the carrying of a torch around the world to bring about "oneness," was highly publicized but did not stir emotions as much as two later "events" where New Agers could gather en masse.

The World Instant of Cooperation, December 31, 1986 was far more ambitious in its goals -- the bringing about of a "planetary pentecost" through restoring mankind to godhood, the elimination of all national boundaries, the establishment of one world religion, and the instant solution to all mankind's problems. Fifty million people were needed to "appease Mother Earth" and bring about the "quantum leap" in evolution that would usher in the golden age. January 1, 1987 dawned much the same as December 31, 1986, but the "enlightened" haven't given up hope. On August 16-17, 1987 a festival of Harmonic Conversion was held. The goal was for 144,000 "rainbow humans" to gather at ancient sacred sites around the world in order to bring about a "resonant attunement" that would propel all mankind into the New Age. All the baggage of the occult expression of the New Age Movement was brought into play -- pagan rituals, shamans, purification

rites, crystals, chants, etc. But like January 1, August 18 dawned on an unchanged mankind, so thoughts of immediate world healing were traded for the announcement that "the process has only begun and is yet unnoticeable."

For occult New Agers, a special kind of feminism has resulted from denial of God as the Creator. With the removal of God, only "Mother Nature" is left -- a term that for New Agers is much more than semantics. The "maternal ground of all being" is under investigation and re-exploration and interest in pagan goddess-religion is being revived. Christianity is blamed for creating a male deity who delights in war, repression and exploitation of people and resources. The occult "Gaia Hypothesis" of the New Age regards the earth and all that it contains as a single living entity -- feminine, self-creating and self-nurturing. While some occult New Agers speak of themselves as in the stage of becoming goddesses, some political feminists have become quite critical of their "sexism", declaring that New Age feminism is "regressive," a return to the stereotype of woman's role as caretaker and nurturer (MS magazine, September, 1987).

Entrepreneurs appear to have the most to gain from the occult New Age Movement. Today's "conspicuous consumers" are receptive to anything "new," especially if it offers "experiences" in great quantity and variety. Publishers of New Age books are discovering an unimagineable bonanza. The number of shops dealing in New Age literature and paraphernalia has mushroomed beyond the best expectations. Crystals sell for as little as \$2 for a rough specimen to \$400,000 for a gem-quality cluster. Shirley MacLaine's weekend seminars are reported to have grossed almost five million dollars, more than she could have expected from a feature film or a series of live shows. The genius of western consumer society is its capacity to transform anything into a "new and improved" commodity, package it attractively, ballyhoo its benefits -- and sell it! Even department stores have employed the logic that if there is going to be a New Age, one ought to buy the right outfit to wear in it -- New Age jeans!

Many names are associated with the occult expression of the New Age Movement. Shirley MacLaine ranks high in visibility. Her books and television miniseries Out On a Limb have made her name synonymous with the New Age. Her bag of tools includes mantras, crystals, a dogmatic reincarnation creed and whatever else may be considered New Age. MacLaine's seminars are purported to put people in touch with their "Higher Selves," but her lectures feature kundalini yoga, experiences in visualization, revelations regarding mythical Lemuria (sister "lost continent" to mythical Atlantis!) -- and sometimes even the re-writing of history!

MacLaine's own guru was J. Z. Knight, a Washington housewife who claims to channel Ramtha, a 35,000 year-old warrior whom she has turned into a vehicle for startling revelations -- such as "the human soul weighs 13 ounces and sits in a cavity next to the heart." Only those who are willing to pay \$400 for a seminar hear Ramtha speak "in person", but his books and videocassettes are sold widely.

Other channels are perhaps not as well known and they may not command such high prices, but their channeled spirits include Mary the mother of Jesus, a six-year old from Atlantis, a 6-foot-8-inch black female spice trader (also 35,000 years old!), Merlin of Camelot, a woman who will be born 600 years in the future on the planet Venus, even dolphins ("they are SO evolved!") and who knows

who or what next? Richard Sutphen is a name that is becoming better known among occult New Agers. He is founder and head of Reincarnationists, Inc., an organization that has produced hundreds of audio tapes for subliminal training, programming psychic power, reconstructing previous incarnations, etc. His catalog offers New Age jewelry and other products. Sutphen's message can be summarized, "YOU ARE GOD. Every living and discarnate individual is God. Together we are an energy gestalt called God" (Self-Help Update, January, 1985).

Other names associated with the occult New Age Movement include philosophers and would-be architects of the Movement. David Spangler, a board member of the United Nations' Planetary Initiative for the World We Choose, sees Lucifer as "the angel of man's evolution" and declares that only "the fit" (those awakened to their divinity) should lead the planet -- for their word is beyond good and evil. John Randolph Price was one of the organizers and promoters of the 1986 "World Instant of Cooperation" and has contributed a hidden agenda to the occult New Age Movement. He declares, on the advice of his spirit guide, that two billion people will have to be "removed" from Planet Earth before the year 2000 if the New Age is to become a reality. However, his spirit guide offers the questionable consolation that some of these may voluntarily remove themselves rather than impede the coming of the golden age!

Barbara Marx Hubbard, once a somewhat-respected futurist, also is now a New Age spokesperson. She was an organizer and promoter of the "World Instant" and was looking for a sudden, spectacular "quantum leap" in mankind's evolution, whereby a suprahuman race would appear, as far superior to today's humans as they are to the apes. She has encouraged her followers to love and forgive Satan, "the fallen brother of Jesus," thus creating an empathy "so powerful that the fallen Son of God returns willingly to God." Benjamin Creme became known for his worldwide announcements that "Lord Maitreya," the Christ, was now walking the earth and would reveal himself publicly in 1982. Since that time, Creme has had to content himself with being the "spokesperson" for the Christ. His credibility as a prophet has diminished to almost nothing, but his championship of the idea of a world ruler and spiritual savior combined into one still receives some New Age support.

One current New Age guru who seems to seek the best of both the occult and the humanist New Age Movement is John-Roger. As an occultist, John-Roger heads the "Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness." MSIA deals with the usual New Age attempts to "discover the divine spark within you" and the assurance that not one Soul will be lost even "if it takes forty million, trillion years" (Introduction Into the Light, p. 21). However, John-Roger is clever enough to realize that occult jargon may not appeal to pragmatic businessmen. He, therefore, has created a special organization, "Insight Training (originally, Transformational) Seminars . . . to establish loving as a dynamic reality and practical guide to life" (Insight brochure).

Some surprising names are found among occult New Age devotees. Psychiatrist Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, whose On Death and Dying is unsurpassed as a textbook for college and hospital seminars, began to dabble in spiritualism and was led into the world of spirit guides and communications "from other planes of existence." Former astronaut Edgar Mitchell has become an outspoken proponent of the New Age Movement and appeared as a featured speaker at John Denver's New Age gathering

at Snowmass, Colorado in June, 1987. Mitchell is perhaps most often associated with his promotion of A Course in Miracles, a pseudo-Christian, philosophical treatise originally declared to have been dictated by Jesus Christ Himself but later revealed to be the work of a college professor now deceased. A Course is a curious melange of theology in which humans are defined as Sons of God in the same sense as Jesus, evil is overcome by perceiving it differently, and atonement is what humans do when they "re-vision reality".

Seminars play an important role in spreading New Age teachings. In the early 1960s, Peter and Eileen Caddy founded Findhorn, a New Age community in Scotland. Later, Peter and Paula Caddy developed "The Gathering of the Way" summer retreat seminars at Mount Shasta, California. Their 1984 catalog lists 60-plus seminars on subjects such as A Course in Miracles, American Indian medicine, conscious evolution, experiencing one's inner god, channeling intelligences from outer space, crystal power, and how to "tap a great Spiritual power" through being guided by the Light of our children. Stanford University's Willis Harman and New Age futurist Barbara Marx Hubbard have been among the seminar leaders. Similar fare is offered at Joy Lake Mountain Seminar Center near Reno, where psychologist Jean Houston has served as lecturer. Sea Change Transformational Seminars have been offered in several large midwestern cities, featuring "Re-experiencing Past Lives", "Working with Your Spirit Guides" and "Trance Development Groups." These are but a few of the various seminar groups. In most major cities, catalogs of New Age offerings are published, listing hundreds of seminars, meetings, classes, shops and therapists.

Among the older metaphysical organizations that are enjoying a resurgence of popularity due to the New Age Movement are the Theosophical Society, the Association for Research and Enlightenment (Cayce), the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC), Unity School of Christianity, and The Christian Community, a descendant of Theosophy via Anthroposophy.

The New Age Movement, furthermore, has given birth to uncounted new organizations, a few of which are Science of the Mind (Religious Science), the Urantia Brotherhood, the Holy Order of MANS, the Church Universal and Triumphant, Transcendental Meditation and the Inner Peace Movement.

Relative to occult New Age expressions, the entertainment industry must be seen as a primary vehicle for promoting New Age views. Films are the most powerful instruments for influencing millions of minds. Movies such as Star Wars, Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom, The Empire Strikes Back and Dark Crystal make statements about a pantheistic "Force" that represents deity or communication with "the other side", ascended masters that form a hierarchy for bringing man into the New Age. All that one needs is within himself. Or, the only reality is that which is perceived. Even the award-winning film Gandhi glorifies the Indian leader as synthesizer of a new universal religion, a syncretistic mix of two mutually exclusive religions, Hinduism and Christianity.

In the Christian Century (November 18, 1987) Dr. Martin Marty makes an observation that describes quite accurately the occult expression of the New Age:

The popularity of (the) New Age further complicates the notion that we are simply a "secular" society. God may have been eclipsed, but not by agnosticism or secular humanism so much as by belief-in-everything, so long as it is not homegrown.

DEFINITION OF THE NEW AGE BY ITS EXPRESSIONS

PART II - HUMANISTIC EXPRESSIONS OF THE NEW AGE

The occult expression of the New Age Movement is far from progressive; it may be "trendy" but it is a regression into superstition, magic and sorcery of ancient times. But it is only half the story. The humanistic expression of the Movement is not a fad. It will not go away. It was born in man's primary attempt to be as God and it will endure until God Himself calls a halt to the pretensions of man. New Age humanism is a completely anti-God state of mind and its goal is nothing less than to draw all areas of life under its discipline. To that end it is making a coordinated effort to enlist the basic structures of society in its quest for a new humanity that possesses the attributes of God.

A familiar adage declares that "a half-truth is worse than a lie" and nowhere is this more evident than in the humanistic expression of the New Age Movement. Satan is the master of the half-truth and his success has inspired deception upon deception, age after age. In every vehicle used by New Age humanism to propagate its vision for mankind, the half-truth is the foundation upon which deception is built. Below are some of the vehicles used by the humanist New Age Movement.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Not entirely without reason, public school teachers are alarmed over lack of supportive moral and spiritual training on the part of parents who would rather relinquish to the school full responsibility for the training of their children. Add to this, obstacles to learning in the form of broken families, drug and alcohol abuse, and peer pressure -- and the result is that some educators "are becoming convinced that behavioral training can no longer be left to the home" (Elliot Miller in Moody Monthly, February, 1985, p. 23). From a half-truth a totally false conclusion and plan of action may be drawn and New Age proponents are quick to do so -- as when one Dr. C. M. Pierce, Professor of Education at Harvard University, in 1973 (and reaffirmed in 1983) told 1,000 teachers at a seminar on childhood education:

Every child in America entering school at the age of five is mentally ill, because he comes to school with certain allegiances toward our founding fathers, toward our elected officials, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural Being, toward the sovereignty of this nation as a separate entity. It's up to you teachers to make all of these sick children well by creating the international children of the future.

One prominent and influential educator, Dr. Beverly Galyean (d. 1984) carried Dr. Pierce's philosophy even farther into the New Age. Her system of "confluent education" is based on a pantheistic theology, but was nevertheless introduced into thirty-eight school districts in southern California. The program employs yoga, biofeedback and guided imagery in order "to introduce the children to the Inner Self -- the self that can guide them in making decisions or in knowing what is true and good." In a 1980 article in the Association for Humanistic Psychology Newsletter (August-September, 1980) Dr. Galyean stated,

Another aspect of meditation is the increased capacity to contact and learn from the source of wisdom, love and intelligence within us -- often called the "higher self": God, universal wisdom or spirit, conscience.

Her educational philosophy is clearly stated in a frequently-quoted summary she gave of her beliefs:

Once we begin to see that we are all God, that we have the attributes of God, then I think the whole purpose of human life is to reown the Godlikeness within us; the perfect love, the perfect wisdom, the perfect understanding, the perfect intelligence, and when we do that, we create back to that old, that essential oneness which is consciousness. So my whole view (of education) is very much based on that idea. (emphasis added)

Dr. L. James Boldt, executive for elementary and secondary education for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, has stated on several occasions that "all education is religious (in one form or another)" and Dr. Galyean's philosophy of public education certainly bears that out in a way that is specifically forbidden by law. Humanistic New Agers, for the most part, are unable to recognize this, for they have little understanding of what religion is. Therefore, without regard for mixing church and state, Ms. Galyean writes,

Teachers who are deeply spiritual and who feel comfortable working with their own spiritual development may choose to offer spiritually-oriented meditations to their students. (AHP Newsletter, op. cit.)

Textbooks that teach "Native American spirituality" at the same time ignore Christian contributions to American history and cultural development -- on the grounds of providing a "secular education". Caryl Matrisciana, analyst of New Age infiltration into American society, raises a valid and interesting question:

One of the most shocking of all these books is titled Meditating With Children: The Art of Concentration and Centering by Deborah Rozman. This blatantly Hindu, openly New Age workbook (it calls itself "A Workbook in New Age Methods using Meditation") has been used in a California school district. It refers to Education in the New Age, by Alice A. Bailey, and contains the following meditations:

All is Energy Meditation
White Light Meditation
Temple of Light Meditation
Spaceship Meditation
Five Senses Meditation

The artwork in the book is a collection of Hindu symbols, including the third eye, dragons, serpents, spiders, mandalas and lotuses. Can you imagine the uproar over a textbook illustrated with crosses, chalices, crown-of-thorns designs, and the Christian ichthus? (Gods of the New Age, p. 172)

It should be noted that Alice A. Bailey (above) pledged herself to the destruction of historic Christianity and was one of the first to gain notoriety for her "man IS GOD" assertions.

An article in the January/February, 1983 The Humanist magazine pays homage to secular humanism as a religion with the declaration, . . . the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as proselyters for a new faith. . . . The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new -- the rotting corpse of Christianity . . . and the new faith of Humanism (page 26).

However, it is left to feminist Gloria Steinem to define most succinctly the aims of humanist education -- with which the New Age would concur with exuberance, "By the year 2000 we will, I hope, raise our children to believe in human potential, not God . . ." (Saturday Review of Literature, March, 1973, quoted by Caryl Matrisciana, op. cit.)

"Values clarification," as it is promoted by New Age educators, is a good example of how a half-truth may be twisted into a deception. The whole truth is that every thinking individual engages in values clarification every time a choice or decision is made. Choices are made validly when they are based on some standard, be it religious, moral/ethical or cultural. Values clarification without a standard by which to measure rapidly becomes anarchy. There is a tacit (and not always tacit!) understanding in much of the values clarification that is taught in public schools: values emerge only from within the individual and are correct; they must not be imposed by teachers, parents, society or the church -- or even by scientific disciplines, because all truth and the only truth is that which the individual perceives.

New Age sociologist Marilyn Ferguson (The Aquarian Conspiracy) seems to take great delight in reporting that more New Agers, tens of thousands of them, are involved in education than in any other line of work. "They are the heroes of education" (op. cit., p. 281). Quoting one of these from the State University of New York, she reports, "The psychology of becoming must be smuggled into the schools" (Ibid.)

New Age influence is strong in higher education as well as elementary and secondary. For example, Stanford University's highly respected Graduate School of Business offers a seminar in "Creativity in Business" developed and taught by a professor who advocates New Age techniques of meditation, chanting, yoga, "dream work," mandalas, use of tarot cards and such axioms as "Destroy Judgment, Create Curiosity." Stanford's influence on corporate business seminars will be illustrated below under the heading NEW AGE MOTIVATIONAL SEMINARS.

It is worthy of note that at least a few of the occult New Agers warn that in "meddling with the psycho-mental apparatus of the human constitution . . . danger lurks at every step, and the meddler in these things is likely to bring disaster upon himself, both in matters of health and as regards sane mental equilibrium" (de Purucker, Occult Glossary, Theosophical Press, p. 183), while a humanist educator demonstrates that an Eastern occult world view is not essential to richer, more personal learning experiences for children (SCP Journal, winter, 1981-82).

PSYCHOLOGY

The goal of psychology may be defined as "the complete realization of the human personality." However, New Age transpersonal psychology adds to this the axiom, "There is no Deity but humanity." Unlimited potential (an attribute of God) is said to be shared by humanity and is an expression of the Oneness of all things. This "dimension of being" is achieved through altered consciousness, mystical experiences, cosmic awareness, self-realization and transcendence.

Experience of Oneness, according to psychologist Erich Fromm, is portrayed in the Biblical "myth" of the Fall of Man -- "man's first act of freedom . . . the beginning of reason" (Escape From Freedom, p. 58). Carl Rogers argues that reality is purely subjective and is created by each individual -- so that "there are as many realities as there are persons" (A Way of Being, p. 352). Other New Age themes are found in the writings of Abraham Maslow, Carl Jung and Rollo May.

The most "dazzling visionary, scholar and teacher" and leading spokesperson for "the coming transformation into the New Age" appears to be Dr. Jean Houston. Dr. Houston's list of credentials as a sociologist and psychologist is almost endless -- author of many books and published papers, director of the Foundation for Mind Research, one-time personal friend and protege of Margaret Mead, professor at several leading universities, recipient of numerous awards and an extraordinarily magnetic and effective speaker much in demand for keynote addresses at seminars, conferences and conventions.

Ms. Houston seems to have an uncanny ability to gauge the mindset and expectations of an audience and to modify her message accordingly. In a keynote presentation at The Lutheran Brotherhood Colloquium on the Church in Future Society (January 29 to February 2, 1979), while avoiding direct reference to the New Age, Dr. Houston emphasized that "the human race out of necessity is about to take some major growth steps. . . . We are living at the beginnings of the golden age and brain and mind and body research." "For the first time in human history," she declared, "(people) may become fully human -- the great scriptural promise" (?). "To be a planetary person means to be part of a whole different modality of knowing and being." To be such a person is "a beckoning evolutionary vision." We must work toward "global transformation," etc., etc. However, in a radio interview during the Colloquium, Dr. Houston spoke of "the moral mandates, the structured givens that were laid down 2,000 years ago . . . they've run out. The story doesn't work."

In a different setting with a different audience expectancy (John Denver's New Age Gathering at Snowmass, Colorado, June 12 to 14, 1987), Dr. Houston fell into familiar New Age concepts and terminology, emphasizing that a "critical mass" of man's collective brain cells can "launch humanity into another evolution." One reporter described Ms. Houston as "using her theatrics to full advantage . . . complete with vocal gymnastics" and body language. She received a standing ovation, but when one rapt fan was asked if he could explain what she said, he replied, "I don't think so. That's not important. She raised the cosmic energy. That's what is important" (National Research Institute Trumpet, October, 1987).

On yet another occasion with another audience expectancy, Dr. Houston may lead people back through the evolution of man in order to "awaken ancient memories". Whole Life Times, October-November, 1984, describes a session in which nearly a thousand educators, social workers, health professionals, therapists, clergy and housewives crawled and rolled over and under one another as they "evolved" in stages from fish to ape to modern human, culminating in the projection of themselves into the next, future step of their evolution. (Quoted in The Seduction of Christianity, pp. 75-76)

Dr. Houston's editor, Marilyn Ferguson, publishes the Brain-Mind Bulletin in which she has developed an elaborate justification for using occult and psychic experiences to bring about a more balanced, whole-brained education. While there seems to be some evidence that the right hemisphere of the brain is associated with creativity and the left with logic, it does not mean that either functions exclusively in its specialized field. The normal person is "whole-brained" with the hemispheres not functioning independently -- nor can either hemisphere be educated independently! No less authority than Dr. Jerre Levy, a psychologist at the University of Chicago, declared that much of the popular myth about left brain/right brain is "a misrepresentation of facts, a pop psychology myth . . . often represented as scientific fact. It is not." ("Right Brain, Left Brain: Fact and Fiction," Psychology Today, May, 1985)

MANY OTHER FIELDS

Western respect for science has influenced New Age physics to the extent that physicists in the Movement seek credibility by equating New Age thought to scientific discovery. Our culture trusts the dedicated scientist as being unaffected by superstition and personal bias. New Age physicist Fritjof Capra (The Tao of Physics) moves back and forth between physics and metaphysics without distinction, relying on society's respect for science to authenticate his Eastern mysticism. It is interesting to note that Dr. Capra has admitted to having had a psychic (and psychodelic!) "conversion" prior to his "scientific" discoveries. Many of his assertions are more properly mystic "revelations" than verifiable scientific conclusions. Semantic bridges do not establish scientific truth! The fact that all created things are interconnected cannot be extrapolated to mean that "All is One". The fact that matter can be converted to energy is no proof that consciousness can produce either matter or energy. Standing as a bulwark against the New Age version of physics is the Second Law of Thermodynamics (the Law of Entropy) -- or "creation's bondage to decay" of which St. Paul writes in Romans 8:21.

A glaring example of creating fiction out of fact is found in the New Age's entry into the field of health care. Sensitive and conscientious physicians have for centuries declared that health is a matter of soundness of body, mind and spirit. They may not have used the term "holistic" health, but they recognized the principle. However, New Age health workers and healers have presumed to lay claim to this "discovery" and have branded traditional medicine as "depersonalized" and "drug-oriented". In order to divorce themselves from the occult practice of New Age shamanism, some reputable physicians prefer to speak of "wholistic" health. Note, either term refers to a valid concept -- but not when used by the New Age to justify occult rites.

The New Age's health care strategy includes establishing state and federal funding for the propagation of its religious vision -- the teaching of "the Therapeutic Touch," a trance-state technique of moving one's hands around a patient's body in order to focus the Hindu prana or "universal life force" for the patient's benefit. Dr. Jonas Salk has spoken of "the historical, even evolutionary significance of the holistic health movement" which will "facilitate the next stage in human evolution" (SCP Journal, August, 1978). Ruth Carter Stapleton, more mystic than medic, has held out the quasi-evolutionary promise that "if I can remove all the negative experience from my own life, I too can become such a source (of creative energy as Jesus)" (Ibid.)

National and international politics are a field into which the New Age has entered with a great deal of gusto. Again, half-truths emerge. New Agers take credit for many political concerns that are shared by Christians and other non-New Agers as well -- ecological pollution, energy depletion, economic injustice, the escalating nuclear threat, exploitation of classes of people, etc. These concerns are not the exclusive province of New Age pantheistic belief in the divinity of nature and the deity of man.

The New Age's ultimate goal is political conquest, for it is from a position of political strength that it can establish its control of public education, health care and other fields. Furthermore, the New Age knows that it can make gains subtly and steadily while the attention of the populace is diverted elsewhere by media reporting of the trivial and bizarre antics of a few high profile New Age occultists. Some of the politicians who have been accused of subscribing to New Age (lack of) values are ex-governor Jerry Brown of California and a number of political supporters of Gary Hart's campaign. In 1984, occult New Ager Barbara Marx Hubbard made a bid for the Democratic vice-presidential nomination (Unmasking the New Age, p. 122).

The Green Party of Germany and western Europe in an avowedly New Age political party that has achieved important gains in getting its candidates elected to office. The party has a number of very valid ecological and environmental concerns, but it endorses abortion without limits and homosexuality as a viable alternative lifestyle. Above all, the Green Party rejects belief in a Creator-God who is separate and distinct from a finite, created world. The American Green Party has not achieved the political success of the European party, but it is working hard to build a grassroots organization with an eye toward future elections.

On the international political scene, the chief New Age organizer is Donald Keys, founder of Planetary Citizens, a New Age "networking" (see below) group that has attracted both occult and humanistic New Age leaders such as David Spangler, Peter Caddy, Edgar Mitchell and Willis Harman. Keys hopes to create a "critical mass" (see below) of "public awareness of planetary consciousness" to enable New Age politicians to make their move and permit more New Age teachings in the public schools. In 1982 Planetary Citizens, together with the Club of Rome and the Association for Humanistic Psychology, sponsored a consciousness-raising project called "Planetary Initiative for the World We Choose." Originally, Planetary Citizens was housed in the United Nations' headquarters. United Nations leaders have endorsed a number of New Age organizations. Its Unity in Diversity Council has given comfort and support to the international

network of Mind, Body and Spirit Festivals that are dedicated to creation of one world religion under one world leader. Robert Muller, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, is a New Age activist who sees humanity as transcending into "ever higher forms of life" and who commends the Hindu who "rightly sees no difference between our earth and the divine."

New Age leaders of both the occult and the humanistic persuasions find a great deal of optimism that future United Nations policies will be shaped by New Age strategists who are working for an elimination of national boundaries and a re-division of the wealth of individuals as well as nations.

NEW AGE MOTIVATIONAL SEMINARS

New Age entrepreneurs have found a lucrative market for their wares in America's corporate empire. Offering motivational and stress-management seminars, a number of institutes promise a personal transformation of employees (a spiritual "awakening" that will enable them to use "untapped energies" in the performance of their tasks). "Untapped energies" is a buzzword of the New Age Movement (more of these below) -- untapped energies within the psyche of the human being that may be harnessed for the good of the corporation and at the same time be beneficial to the employee, enabling him/her to live without guilt, regrets or inhibitions.

Such seminars have attracted the attention of the business community, where "success" is the name of the game. Increased productivity is the primary goal but the techniques used to achieve that goal may be defended by corporate clients as an altruistic effort to raise workers' self-esteem and make them more independent.

A word of caution is necessary: Not all motivational and stress-management seminars are New Age! There are many sound programs, some of them of long standing, to help individuals rise to their full potential. It is true that few people rise to their full potential, even in a lifetime. Programs that help people recognize and develop their latent talents and skills are not, per se, anti-Christian. In fact, many of them can be seen as an exercise in Christian stewardship! This grain of truth, however, is twisted into deception when a program declares that human potential is unlimited (an attribute of God alone), a person's only responsibility is to self, reality is created by what is visualized or perceived, no standards apply except those we have chosen for ourselves, etc. These and other dogmatic assertions described below identify the occult or humanist bent of New Age training seminars. One New Age journal makes this quite clear:

We are striving to develop the skills and understanding necessary to create our own growth and be responsible for our own reality. We create every aspect of our health, psychological well-being, financial flexibility and creative potential. This sounds threatening, but in fact, is a great liberation! The knowledge that we create our own reality is exhilarating, for to know that you are responsible means that you can do something about it. (Pathways, November, 1980, p. 21)

The extent to which large corporations are involved in New Age seminars was alluded to by the New York Times in an article on September 27, 1986:

Representatives of some of the nation's largest corporations, including I.B.M., A.T. & T. and General Motors, met in New Mexico in July to discuss how metaphysics, the occult and Hindu mysticism might help executives compete in the world marketplace.

Others reported to be users of New Age consulting firms are Northwestern Bell, Pacific Bell, RCA, Boeing Aircraft, Procter & Gamble, Rockwell International, Hughes Aircraft, the Bank of America, a number of federal government departments and agencies, athletic teams, political figures, clergy and individuals from all walks of life.

One of the most common techniques used in "developing unlimited potential" is "visualization," described by New Agers as the creating of mental images that can become realities because reality exists only in one's perception. (For corporate entities, however, this definition of reality must be modified to "that which is perceived by common consent"!)" "Affirmations" play an important role in corporate New Age seminars. They are a technique of repetition of a desired outcome until it can be successfully visualized . . . and then realized. However, few corporate leaders would go as far as Shirley MacLaine in affirming, "You can use I am God or I am that I am as Christ often did" (Dancing in the Light, p. 112). In fact, few corporate seminar leaders use any religious terminology -- except for an occasional disparaging remark.

Other training techniques include physical tests to overcome one's fears and provide a sense of exhilaration, even omnipotence upon completion, lectures on setting one's own moral standards, participation in crude confrontational situations to break down inhibitions and/or the practice of meditation, shamanistic rituals, self-hypnosis and self-determination.

Business school professors at Stanford and other universities have endorsed some of these techniques. Willis Harman, Associate Director of the Center for the Study of Social Policy at Stanford Research Institute, avoids New Age buzzwords but believes in the further evolutionary development of the human species. He collaborated with Donald Keys, New Age organizer, in production of a conference tape, "Sharing Personal and Planetary Security" in 1986. At the Lutheran Brotherhood Colloquium on the Church in Future Society (op. cit.) Harman obviously did not know his audience and he committed a serious blunder by speaking in glowing terms of A Course in Miracles, a pseudo-Christian writing that denies the reality and need of forgiveness and makes the atonement a kind of do-it-yourself exercise that each person can perform because each is a Son of God. He established a most dangerous criterion when he said, "The real test of something like this, of course, is whether it works with people. In this particular case, it seems that there are thousands of people who find that this is the most valuable thing they have ever found in print." Harman was spared the embarrassment of a strongly negative reaction and perhaps even an audience walkout simply because hardly anyone in his audience knew any more about A Course in Miracles than the little he shared!

Not all corporate executives are enthralled by the New Age training programs. Richard Watring, personnel director for Budget-Rent-a-Car, has tried to

arouse concern among his peers over how quickly corporate America is embracing "pseudotherapy" programs. "I really think you're going down the wrong path in business when you deal with a person's spiritual being and attempt to manipulate his mind," he said. He sees some of these seminars trying to "induce a trance-like state" that is intended to prepare the mind for new thoughts and ideas to be implanted. He further asserts that this "manipulation of the mind" changes not only work habits but also individual values and personality, (New York Times, op. cit. and follow-up story). Dr. Edwin Morse, former member of the University of Wisconsin's psychology faculty, says that "graduates" of some of the New Age corporate training programs are often "psychologically scarred" by the use of hypnotic procedures about which they were not told. He and other specialists contend that adherents feel exhilarated from a sense of discovery about themselves, their jobs, their mates and the world in general. But the participants later become depressed and troubled . . . (Ibid.)

Robert Lindsey, New York Times staff writer reports on interviews he conducted,

Jack Gordon, editor of Training magazine, an influential trade publication, said the programs were likely to spread because more and more corporate executives, looking for easy answers to their business problems, were responding to "people who make the most dramatic claims." He recalled training programs in which executives were asked to walk on burning embers as proof they could do anything. "Fire walking was popular" in some corporate training circles two years ago, he said. Now, Mr. Gordon said, businesses were responding to sales pitches "that say, 'Let's invade the employee's head and see if we can adapt the employee's basic motivation'." He added, "When they accept this, then the training tends to become guru-driven instead of concept driven."

In a different vein, one utility company has angered consumer protection groups by its intent to spend as much as \$147 million on New Age motivational training of its employees -- and then pass the expense to customers on their monthly bills! (Newsweek, May 4, 1987)

The list of "accused" New Age motivational seminars and institutes is long and only a few examples are noted here: Werner Erhard's est, its "refinement" The Forum, and their business-oriented expression Transformational Technologies are among the best-known. Lifespring has a credo very much like the New Age "six points" noted at the beginning of this paper. Silva Mind Control includes occultic as well as humanistic New Age involvement. The Continuum Center in Minneapolis sponsors programs by Marilyn Ferguson, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, Robert Muller of the U.N., Willis Harman and others, to provide a "collective vision" of the "ever-expanding boundaries of human consciousness." Robert Fritz's DMA "retrains the subconscious" for mastery. Success Potential Unlimited concentrates on stress-management through "psychic attunement". Success Motivation Institute deals with visualization and affirmations for success. Pacific Institute makes the self the determinant of right and wrong, with emphasis on affirmations and visualization. Leadership Development (Kroning) is highly controversial on the West Coast because of the high cost of its Gurdjieff-based

mysticism. The Power of You is said to "help people find deity or oneness in themselves . . . in order to achieve personal and professional goals." The list goes on and on, with more entrepreneurs regularly entering the field.

A CASE IN POINT

To understand the kind of experiences to which an employee might be subjected if his company chooses to make attendance at a New Age training seminar mandatory, a specific training seminar has been chosen. Because litigation is still in process (lawsuits by employees against employers who made attendance a condition of continued employment) and because some of the pertinent materials and correspondence is confidential -- the name of the motivational institute will remain anonymous. Suffice it to say that it is one of the largest and most successful seminar programs and has as clients a long list of some of the biggest corporations in America. Information is supplied from taped presentations, statements and transcribed notes of participants, correspondence exchanges among the client's officers and news clippings in regard to complaints filed and lawsuits.

The stated aim of the motivational institute is:

This course is designed to assist the individual in programming new habits and attitudes that are directed toward personal and family growth, effectiveness and accountability. The primary target population are (sic) employees and their household members, family or friends. (emphasis added)

The following are statements elaborated on in lectures by the founder and head of the institute, and are taken from cassette tapes of the lectures or from transcribed notes of participants who found them offensive to their beliefs and intrusive into their lives:

Truth is what we perceive reality to be in our mind.
New Age Thinking will help us live the truth as we see it.
Self-hypnosis is helpful for adopting New Age Thinking techniques.
Traditional beliefs have become barriers to the full development of the human being.
Moms and dads must be taught not to condition their children.
Standards in themselves are often restrictive and bad.
Standards create fear and are inhibitive.
Rules are good for authority but are usually bad for those under authority.
If you don't have New Age Thinking, you are depriving your employees and your corporation of full potential.
To grow, we have to change our attitudes, our habits and our belief systems.
Never allow yourself to be criticized or condemned.
Self-esteem is the most important aspect of your life.
The essence of New Age Thinking is to master thought control, first of yourself and then of those around you.
We are self-made people.
Universal knowledge exists and can be accessed through ESP (known as intuition).
Man has infinite capacity for knowledge.

You are in control of your life, your destiny.
You are your own judge and jury; commute your sentence
and set yourself free.
You must let go of that conscious deliberate control that
you have been using. It will totally interfere with
your high performance.
We don't have to walk a straight line morally to be free
of anxiety or tension as long as we are inside our
comfort zone.

The final dogmatic statement above is a good example of New Age philosophy. It erases all standards of right and wrong. Wrong is only that which causes stress. "Wrongness" consists of "being outside your comfort zone." The solution? Not the refusal to participate in what causes stress, but "enlightenment" -- expansion of your comfort zone to accomodate what has been causing stress, and wrongness becomes right!

One officer of a corporation using these seminars wrote his superior that the lecturer was dynamic and highly entertaining but made it quite clear that if anyone was negative toward what was being said, that person was "Old Age" and out of touch. The writer said that the whole situation reminded him of the story of The Emperor's New Clothes!

Criticism of the seminars motivational techniques did not grow out of Christian concern only -- although that seems to have been the primary source. A public employee who attended a compulsory session of the seminar remarked, "Not only is this another religion, but it is a religion that is in direct conflict with the one which I have already chosen as my own." In one large corporation, several supervisors were responsible for terminating the institute's training of their employees (but at the same time, a number of others requested reinstatement of the training). An employee of another firm filed suit against his employer, alleging that he was fired because of his refusal to continue after attending for three days. He charges that the instructor concluded the last lecture he attended with the words, "I hate religion." One managerial employee who refused to implement the institute's training program charges that the training "was in conflict with the value system in our community." Elsewhere another participant almost lost his job when he refused to continue attending, but his chief complaint was that he had become emotionally troubled over emphasis that was placed on "self" in place of God. In lieu of actual or threatened legal action, several companies and corporations have now dropped the mandatory attendance requirement.

A SUMMARY OF THE DEFINITIONS
WHETHER OCCULT OR HUMANIST -- A NEW WORLDVIEW

Douglas Groothuis, recognized authority on contemporary religious developments, assesses the New Age as follows:

. . . the New Age movement is better viewed as a world-view shift than a unified global conspiracy. This is not to minimize its influence but to recognize it as an intellectual, spiritual and cultural force to be reckoned with in all sobriety. (Unmasking the New Age, p. 35)

In view of the above, humanistic New Ager Marilyn Ferguson's words are particularly ominous. Her book, The Aquarian Conspiracy, has been called "one of the best overall popular presentations of New Age thought." In it she writes:

Someone is always trying to summon us back to a dead allegiance: Back to God, the simple-minded religion of an earlier day. "Back to basics," simple-minded education. Back to simple-minded patriotism. And now we are being called back to a simple-minded "rationality" contradicted by personal experience and frontier science (p. 128). She also writes, ". . . part-time transformation is inherently impossible (p. 323).

Ms. Ferguson's "personal experience and frontier science" (above) is a meaningless generalization intended to sound factual -- but is itself contradicted by others' personal experiences and many respected scientists!

The New Age worldview can be summarized in a few brief sentences: There is no deity but humanity. Humanity is good. The individual inherently has right values. Humanity's evolution is ever toward greater good. Human potential is unlimited. There is no evil in the world. All value judgments are wrong. Everything is relative. Change is always good. Awareness inevitably solves all problems, per se.

Reporting on John Denver's Snowmass symposium in June, 1987, one observer wrote:

The message was that Americans who are foolish enough to hold to this country's religious heritage and nationalism, will be ignored as human dinosaurs of an ancient spirituality and political choice that has failed and must be replaced. (National Research Institute, op. cit.)

Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, distinguished evangelical theologian, in a newspaper interview voices the same concern:

It is highly probable that in the world of tomorrow Christianity will need to fend for itself either in a secularized social milieu of intellectual atheism that empties the churches or in a society where a religious sense of many coexisting gods saturates civic culture as it did in ancient paganism.

Taylor Caldwell's scathing words written in the early 1960s seem uncannily prophetic of the New Age Movement as far as it has developed in the present decade:

(The Earth) is now almost completely mad; the mediocre pride themselves on their intellects; vile little minds speak of "expanding man's consciousness"; the clergy have betrayed the faithful; . . . the wise and reasonable and sensible have been silenced; . . . the haters of their fellows speak loudly of their love for their brothers; . . . the fool is received as a prophet; the mentally illiterate crowd the fora of learning; lawlessness in the name of "liberty" has banished law; . . .

the depraved and immature demand privileges which they have not earned, but which were earned by their superiors; . . . a man is reckoned great . . . in proportion to his folly; . . . truth is despised in favor of lies; facts are abolished in favor of dreams, all of them puerile. There is little virtue left (on Earth) and even that will soon be driven out. (Dialogues With the Devil, p. 136)

HITLERISM RE-BORN?

Adolph Hitler was a full-fledged occultist. He was a member of various occult societies. . . . Moreover, Hitler's personal philosophy derived largely from The Secret Doctrine written by theosophist Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who claimed that mankind originated in Atlantis, and that the Aryans were the master race of the seven Atlantean races. . . . Those who followed (their) teachings would gradually evolve to higher and higher levels of consciousness, until they attained perfection. . . . Those left out included the Christians and, naturally the Jews -- an inferior race who had to pay for their "bad national karma." In Hitler's day the perfect man was modeled upon the Nietzschean "superman." Today he is someone who has attained "enlightenment." What many New Agers fail to realize is that their beliefs are direct derivatives of the Theosophical Mystical Teachings. In fact, New Age ideas are not "new" at all. They are simply the same old occult/pagan doctrines dressed up with names like the Human Potential Movement, Globalism and the Age of Aquarius. Frighteningly, the New Age Movement is -- practically point for point -- identical with Nazi doctrines. Underneath all the New Agers' talk of peace, love and harmony, there is an ugly antagonism toward any opposing viewpoint. In fact, part of the New World Order -- which New Agers say must emerge in the coming Aquarian Age -- involves both a New World Religion and a New World Monetary Order. This Order involves the elimination -- or "cleansing action" -- of all monotheistic religions -- namely Christians, Moslems and Jews. ("New Age Cults" by Scott Metzger, Hustler, February, 1987)

If one is inclined to doubt the integrity of the above because of the kind of magazine in which it was printed, the facts concerning Hitler can be verified in any public library and the judgments made about the New Age supported by writings and pronouncements of prominent New Age leaders.

David Spangler of the Planetary Initiative believes that the "new political order" must be hierarchial. All are not fit to lead the planet into the New Age, for it is obvious that in conducting the affairs of a spiritual society one would not turn to those less spiritually attuned! John Randolph Price, one of the organizers of the World Instant of Cooperation, claims to have received information from his "spirit guide" to the effect that two billion people "with lower vibratory rates" will be "removed" from the earth during the next twenty years.

When Price balked at the idea, his spirit guide is said to have responded, "Who are we to say that those people did not volunteer to be a part of the destruction?"

Once-respected futurist Barbara Marx Hubbard in her Book of Co-Creation: An Evolutionary Interpretation of the New Testament, calls one-fourth of humanity "defective seeds" and gives a very grim message regarding their future. As her "spirit guides" have revealed it, she writes:

We, the elders, have been patiently waiting until the very last moment before the quantum transformation, to take action to cut out this corrupted element in the body of humanity. It is like watching a cancer grow, something must be done before the whole body is destroyed. . . . We come to bring death to those who are unable to know God. We do this for the sake of the world. . . . This is the most painful period in the history of humanity. . . . Before the Book of Life can be opened, the selection process must be made so that only the God-conscious receive the power of co-creators. We will use whatever means we must to make this act of destruction as quick and painless as possible to the one-half of the world who are capable of evolving.

Although he does not advocate "removal" of the unenlightened from the earth, Transcendental Meditation's Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, in the rationale of Hitler, writes,

There has not been and there will not be a place for the unfit. The fit will lead, and if the unfit are not coming along there is no place for them. In the place where light dominates there is no place for darkness. In the Age of Enlightenment there is no place for ignorant people. The ignorant will be made enlightened by a few orderly, enlightened people moving around. Nature will not allow ignorance to prevail. It just can't. Non-existence of the unfit has been the law of nature. (Inauguration of the Dawn of the Age of Enlightenment, p. 47)

Many New Agers, like Maharishi, look forward to a crypto-fascist totalitarian society under the control of "transformed" would-be deities.

In the world of corporate New Age motivational seminars, little is heard about "one-world order" and "government by the fit." The goal of these is much more immediate and pragmatic -- corporate or personal financial success. Nevertheless, their world is still divided into the "fit" (those who recognize no limits in human potential and no standards for human behavior) and the "unfit" (those guided by traditional ethical, moral or spiritual standards).

BUZZWORDS

The New Age Movement has developed a vocabulary of its own. Some of its terminology deliberately mimics Christian language, while the rest is either drawn from Eastern spirituality or is newly-created.

Hasty conclusions must not be drawn on the basis of language alone. A larger interpretive context is required to positively identify New Age thought. Nevertheless, an abundance of New Age buzzwords suggests that a worldview may be of New Age derivation. It should be noted that occult and humanistic expressions of the New Age Movement have somewhat differing vocabularies, but no strict line of demarcation exists. Some good and expressive words have become buzzwords of the movement and their proper use should not be curtailed by New Age "ownership" of them!

Words and phrases often employed by humanistic expressions of the New Age are: breakthrough learning - paradigm shift - emergent paradigm - holistic or holographic - personal masteries - untapped human potential - quantum leap - end-state vision - visualization - affirmations - guided imagery - corporate culture - homogeneity of thought - interconnectedness of faiths - organizational alignment - group cohesion - universal knowledge.

Occult New Agers speak in terms of: God-self - earth-plane - evolutionary leap - cosmic Christ - I AM - New Disciples - Higher Self - karma - reincarnation - channeling - spirit guides - light frequency - intelligences from space - soul-repository - trance medium - higher consciousness - networks of light - planetary consciousness - altering polarities - Oneness.

Both humanistic and occult New Age expressions employ: planetary transformation - synergistic, synergy - (mass) awakening - altered states of consciousness - personal transformation - altered perception (of space, time, velocity) - critical mass - global consciousness.

THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT: A CONSPIRACY?

The rapid growth of the New Age Movement has caused some New Age critics to conclude that there is some kind of conspiracy -- a plot by which certain powerful forces are attempting to take control of the whole world. Constance Cumbey's Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow has reinforced the conspiracy theory among those who wish to believe it. Conspiracy theories are ever popular in unsettled times, but they are generally unsupported by evidence. They often result in hysteria rather than in rational assessment of a situation or circumstance.

"New Age conspiracy theories" should be viewed with caution. The mere fact that a number of people share an ideology does not identify them as co-conspirators. They may be worlds apart in their strategies to implement their ideology. An exaggerated emphasis on conspiracy can turn Christians inward upon themselves in a paranoid attempt at self-defense rather than outward to the world that is in such desperate need of God's message of grace in Jesus Christ. A "conspiracy" there is -- but it is not of human origin. It's roots are in Satan's attempt to de-throne God and bring to naught the atonement of Jesus Christ -- an attempt that is doomed to failure, for the works of Satan are already judged. See Luke 10:18, John 16:11, 1 John 3:8.

Marilyn Ferguson, one of the chief architects of the humanistic expression of the New Age Movement, speaks of "conspiracy" (The Aquarian Conspiracy), but in the root sense of the word -- "people who breathe together" or share the same ideology. Realizing the common goals of New Age entities, Ferguson advocates

"networking" as a way of linking New Age devotees. Networking means identifying one another, keeping informed on what they are doing, aiding and abetting one another wherever possible. She calls upon New Agers to be active in classrooms, on TV, in print, in film, in art, in song, in scientific journals, on the lecture circuit, during coffee breaks, in government documents, at parties, and in new organizational policies and legislation. . . . Transformative ideas also appear in the guise of health books and sports manuals, in advice on diet, business management, self-assertion, stress, relationships, and self-improvement. Unlike "how to" books of the past, these emphasize attitude, not behavior. . . . (Networking) is a source of power never before tapped in history: multiple self-sufficient social movements linked for a whole array of goals whose accomplishment would transform every aspect of contemporary life. (Op. cit., pp. 35, 217, emphasis added)

Occult New Agers agree on the effectiveness of networking. Barbara Marx Hubbard looks to networking as the medium in which separate New Age entities will coalesce, leading to the "rapid appearance of a new order" (The Futurist, April, 1983).

THE TIMETABLE

New Age leaders generally are agreed that "the new order" (i. e., the "Age of Aquarius") will arrive when a "critical mass" of individuals have achieved "personal transformation". No one seems to be willing to define what constitutes a critical mass. Years ago, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi of Transcendental Meditation defined it as 1% of the population, but when that figure was exceeded in a few isolated communities and nothing happened, he revised it upward to 10%.

The "critical mass theory" is akin to the proverbial "straw that broke the camel's back," the idea being that at some time in the future, the addition of one more convert to the New Age Movement will trigger a universal consciousness shift. Humanity will have entered the New Age once and for all.

A fanciful and often highly embellished tale of "The Hundredth Monkey" is used by a number of New Age writers to illustrate how the critical mass theory works. It deals with an island colony of monkeys that suddenly reached a high level of consciousness and immediately began washing their food -- after one more monkey was added to the 99 that had adopted this custom over a period of six years. (Not only that, but the new consciousness was transmitted by telepathy across the open sea to other islands -- and monkeys they hadn't even met!) Not many New Agers will venture to prophesy when the critical mass will be reached. One chosen year, 1982, has come and gone. Some occult New Agers look for the year 2000 to be the year of record.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW AGE

Tracing the history and development of the New Age can easily fill several volumes and carry us far beyond the scope of this study. In brief, it must be

noted that the New Age Movement is a developing historical process. It was conceived in man's first disobedience -- the lust to be as God in knowledge and power. It is traceable through continued repetition of that presumption in the Old Testament (see Psalm 2, e. g.). In New Testament and post-Apostolic times, the Gnostic heresy represented an attempt to synthesize Christianity and the already-old religious philosophy of the East. Knowledge of self was seen as discovery of the divine spark within, a cosmic oneness that removes all limitations from human potential.

The Gnostic heresy survived centuries of the spread of Christianity, appearing in various forms and philosophies from time to time. A little more than a century ago, Madame Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society, a unique blend of Eastern religion, occult speculation and Gnostic interpretation of Christianity. Her prize pupil, Alice Bailey, systematized Blavatsky's teachings and coined the term "New Age," but it was not popularized until after her death. Bailey's chief teaching was that the universe is divine and man must achieve enlightenment by realizing and expressing his divinity. Bailey's teachings are kept alive today by the Lucis Trust and its political lobby, World Goodwill -- as well as by many New Age writers.

Psychologist Carl Jung's theory of the "collective unconscious" is considered by many New Agers as "scientific" verification of their "God is the sum total of consciousness" doctrine. Jung taught that the "collective unconscious mind" contains the memories of the race -- its cultural, religious and mythological development. These could be tapped by visualization and introverted meditation. To Jung, this was encounter with God -- what New Agers may call "getting in touch with one's Higher Self".

New Age spirituality cannot be traced to one source like Eastern mysticism, as some have attempted to do. It is a paste-up of man's primal attempt to replace God with himself, pagan superstition, occult mysticism, a syncretistic combination of Eastern religion and selected "Christian" concepts, and convenient psychological theories. Plus yet another ingredient -- secular humanism.

Secular humanism was set forth formally in the Humanist Manifestos I and II of 1933 and 1973 respectively. These found their support chiefly among educators and the rationalist human potential movement. Many of the Manifestos' tenets have been borrowed by the New Age Movement, but with an added New Age spiritual dimension. The relationship between secular humanism and the New Age is one of coexistence rather than competition -- for, in the final analysis, there is little difference between declaring that man is a divinity and maintaining that he is the highest being, the ne plus ultra.

It is quite common to read that the New Age Movement is an outgrowth of the counterculture of the 1960s, but there is little demonstrable evidence. Few if any leaders of the serious side of the New Age Movement were counterculture activists. That which the counterculture did contribute to the New Age Movement was a negative attitude toward existing institutions, followed by taking the components of the New Age Movement into the streets, libraries and university classroom.

REASONS FOR THE NEW AGE'S POPULARITY TODAY

The reasons for the rise and popularity of the New Age Movement in the 1980s are many and complex. Cultural, social, religious and scientific factors are involved. Consider the following.

The New Age Movement represents a rebellion against science and technology. There is a disenchantment and feeling of uneasiness about science today. "Human engineers" are at work all around the globe. Among them there is an increasing capacity to re-shape the lives of large numbers of people. Their aim is to build an "ideal" society -- but ideal by whose standards? There appears to be no lack of arrogant volunteers to define what is ideal! Frightening things can be done, if permitted -- subliminal mind-bending; purchasing fatherhood and leasing motherhood; establishing the beginning and end of life by legislation; using drugs or even implanted electrodes to keep under surveillance and/or control dissenters, aberrants, armies, perhaps even athletes and students. Additional frightening things may soon be possible (perhaps already are?): building fetuses to order with the genetic qualities of four or more parents; building subhuman species for menial labor or even mindless human beings for "spare parts"; transplanting "memory particles" for learning; leasing animal wombs for human use; transplanting animal parts into humans for superior strength, etc.

The New Age Movement represents an attempt to address global crises. Space-food-energy crises continue to increase around the world. Something must be done to alleviate these crises -- it is obvious that traditional systems aren't working. The only hope that New Agers can envision is in man. Man has the potential to be perfect, they declare. Man's consciousness-level must be raised toward reaching omnipotence. It is the only hope New Agers have. As Harold Bussell notes in his Unholy Devotion, when people face crises, many of them "are tempted to jump into any lifeboat that might keep them afloat" (or at least promises to do so!) (p. 99). It has ever been true where God's Word goes unheeded. When calamity came upon the Egyptians (Isaiah 19:3), they scurried from hither to yon, consulting idols, sorcerers, mediums (channelers) and wizards.

The failure of secular humanism has contributed much to the rise of the New Age Movement. The simple fact is that we are not a secular society! The Spiritual Counterfeits Journal (Winter of 1981-82) suggests:

The religious impulse is not only too deep but too deeply true to our nature, to be permanently displaced . . . When religion is expelled from society through one door it tends to come back in through another. Chesterton's paradox has often been quoted and is appropriate: "When a man ceases to believe in God, he does not believe in nothing. He believes in anything." It is significant that secularism gains the most during periods of worldly optimism. But it is widely recognized that the last 15 years have seen a shift from optimism to anxiety, if not straightforward pessimism. Secularism has been losing ground, as a result, to an astonishing upsurge of religious enthusiasm. That upsurge manifests itself in the form of everything from UFO cults and Norse paganism to aberrant fundamentalism as well as authentic Christian revival (p. 5).

In The Humanist, February, 1977, philosopher-historian Will Durant observes, "We shall find it no easy task to mold a natural ethic strong enough to maintain moral restraint and social order without the support of supernatural consolations, hopes and fears. . . . There is no significant example in history, before our time, of a society successfully maintaining moral life without the aid of religion." Erwin Lutzer comments in his Exploding The Myths That Could Destroy America, "Durant has underestimated the problem. It is not merely difficult to have morality without religion, it is impossible" (pp. 47-48). The New Age Movement attempts to rescue society from the nihilism to which secular humanism inevitably leads, but it does so with the quasi-religion of man's divinity. Again Taylor Caldwell's words are prophetic:

I have observed that on (Earth) there is much mad conversation on the "New!" But every age believed it was "new," whereas all is old, all has been tried, all has been discarded, in ages past. The "new" man is as old as Nineveh, and all that he speaks has echoed against the pillars of Rome, the Pyramids of Egypt, the walls of Jerusalem, the purple gates of Athens. There has never been a "new philosophy of man's destiny," for man's mind is limited. (p. 130, emphasis added).

The churches, too, have contributed to the rise of the New Age Movement. There has been an increasing secularization of many churches, an erosion of belief in the supernatural, in miracles, in God's intervening power. Abandonment of the great moral imperatives of God's revealed Word has led to a crisis of values in many churches. In the place of clear moral distinctions, the faithful are offered psychological cliches and moral compromises that appear to many New Agers to have less authority than their own dogmatic statements. Add the growing emphasis on the glossy commercial packaging of Christianity that is typical of television's religious programming -- and it is little wonder that people have found diminished spirituality in their churches. John C. Cooper minces no words:

When you abandon the centrality of God's divine initiative -- our unmerited election in Christ and the faith given us by God through the proclaiming, loving activity of the one, holy, apostolic, and catholic church -- you are on the naked plains of the human spirit where any demon that comes along can consume you. (Religious Pied Pipers, p. 91)

Another factor contributing to the popularity of the New Age Movement is America's love affair with the "quick fix", the instant solution, the immediate gratification, the fast food for the soul as well as the body. The New Age offers easily available sensual experiences in place of thinking through problems and making tough decisions. Unlike self-discipline, the New Age is undemanding. The "fast food mentality" finds it easy to believe that all one's problems, perhaps accumulated over 20, 30, 40 or more years, can be solved in a weekend retreat!

Above all factors contributing to the New Age's popularity is Satan's strategy. Throughout the thousands of years since the Fall of Man, Satan has had a single purpose -- to de-throne God. He wishes human beings to believe that they possess the attributes of God, to declare that they themselves are gods, to render the atonement of Jesus Christ unnecessary, and to assert that they are able to do everything that Jesus did. Satan would be a fool to abandon the "New" philosophy that has been successful in all generations. He has been called by many names in the Scriptures, but never by the name "Fool"!

A PAIR OF "CAUTIONS":

I. RECOGNIZE DECEPTIONS!

Clever language used by proponents of the New Age Movement can be very deceptive. Some New Agers plainly state their beliefs in the divinity of humanity in direct anti-God language and concepts -- referring to living masters out in space, conjuring forces by powers of the mind, altering the make-up of their cells, etc., but others conceal their New Age thinking in cleverly disguised language more palatable to Western culture. These latter are more apt to use the language of psychology and the frame of reference common to the business world. Such language may not seem at all to be threatening, even to Christians. In fact, at least one New Age seminar was held expressly for the purpose of teaching devotees how to integrate New Age concepts into the business and economic communities through the use of acceptable language. Recruitment into the New Age Movement has become quite sophisticated -- so much so that some people are not even aware that they have been recruited!

Distortions of history are quite common among some of the more militant New Agers. An example of these was given in an article in the Lutheran Witness, April, 1987. There have been many other examples.

The so-called "facts" (in the Out On a Limb TV series), however, included some obvious distortions and some contrary-to-fact assumptions. The show claimed, for example, that ancient Egyptians believed in reincarnation. This is stoutly denied by accredited Egyptologists, who point out that, while the Egyptians certainly believed in an afterlife, references to reincarnation are simply absent from all Egyptian records. Of more serious consequences is the fantastic assertion made by MacLaine's human spirit-guide, David, who taught her that reincarnation was found in the Bible and in the writings of the early church until Justinian banned such teaching in 553 A.D. at the Second Council of Constantinople. The facts are that Justinian was born 400 years after the New Testament was completed and he reigned after the early church fathers had written. While they were aware of reincarnation as a pagan belief -- "one of the fabulous doctrines of the heathen" (Gregory of Nyasa, b. 335 A.D.) -- it was obviously no "censored" Bible that these fathers quoted! Origen, most frequently cited as having taught a kind of reincarnation, wrote a lengthy refutation of such teaching, declaring, "We do not find this at all in the Divine Scriptures." But it is erroneous assertions such as that of "David" that are repeated over and over again in New Age writings until they take on the appearance of being fact. (Philip Lochhaas, op. cit.)

Setting up straw men and then knocking them down is a ploy used quite successfully by some New Agers. Marilyn Ferguson (op. cit.) cleverly describes non-New Age or "old" thinking in parallel columns with "New Age" thinking. The "old" is negative, regressive, damaging, while the "New Age" is always positive,

progressive, constructive. The implication is that an individual is 100% one or the other -- either New Age or a cancer on society. You can't be part-time New Age, she asserts. No room is permitted for flexible, innovative, sensitive and contextual thinkers who nevertheless reject New Age concepts of unlimited human potential.

"Crawfishing" or "weaseling out" of difficult situations marks some New Age tactics, especially those of the occult persuasion. "Events" that were to bring the "conclusion" of the New Age takeover of society are re-labeled the "beginning" after they fail to achieve desired results. "The media" become the scapegoat for failed New Age prophecies. There seems always to be an escape hatch -- there never can be failure on the part of budding deities.

Telling half the story as if it were the whole truth is also the deceptive practice of some New Agers. Psychologist Carl Jung is the darling of the New Age philosophers, revered for his understanding and analysis of the human personality. Nothing is said of the period of his life when he experienced numerous encounters with the dead and a "screeching chorus of ghosts" or when he contemplated suicide because of self-disgust. One biographer of Jung wrote of evidences of Jung's "psychotic disorganization" during a seven year period of his life (recounted in Don Matzat, op. cit., p. 93). Nietzsche, another hero of many in the New Age Movement, saw insanity as the inevitable consequence of his "God is dead" dogma. He dreaded what the future might hold. Biographer Walter Kaufmann comments, "Nietzsche prophetically envisages himself as a madman: to have lost God means madness; and when mankind will discover that it has lost God, universal madness will break out." (Quoted in Update, September, 1986). Further irrationality is displayed by the occult New Age Movement's presupposition that an altered state of consciousness is preferable per se to the normal, "unenlightened" state. And yet more irrationality is present in the dogma that there are never any "victims" -- only misperceptions of such!

Deception is implicit in the occult New Age's touting of belief in reincarnation as a teaching of hope. The Lutheran Witness article previously cited challenges,

. . . tour the large cities of India, where the "New" Age Movement has held sway for centuries and see the starvation and unimaginable poverty, disease, exploitation and utter hopelessness that have resulted from belief in the unyielding law of karma, reincarnation and the self-deifying worldview. Then ask yourself, "Is this the golden age, the 'final evolutionary leap' to which the New Age Movement would bring all humanity?" (Philip Lochhaas)

Deception is further implicit in the way the New Age deals with Jesus Christ. Douglas Groothuis (op. cit.) explains,

He is merely one of many appearances or manifestations of God throughout the millennia. His mission was to alert the sleeping masses to their innate divinity. . . . The Christ of the Bible is redefined and made the ventriloquist's puppet for the New Age. Christ the mediator between God and humanity is replaced with the idea of "Christ-consciousness," which is another word for cosmic consciousness (pp. 28-29).

Christian apologist Mark Albrecht questions why the New Age is so addicted to including Jesus among their "masters" and suggests,

Such consistent and systematic attempts at reinterpreting Christianity are not utilized by these same groups in regard to other religions and teachers, such as Buddha, Krishna, Mohammed or Confucius. Why don't these people just dispense with Christ and Christianity altogether and concentrate on their own teachings? The underlying motive for all these explanatory gymnastics seems to be quite evident: Jesus of Nazareth simply can't be ignored -- his unparalleled influence over the centuries and continents has been too great. Perhaps, lurking at the bottom of all such gnostic speculation about Christ is the fear that he really is what orthodox Christianity claims: the unique incarnation of the transcendent, living God, who conquered sin and death by his own sacrificial death -- the living Foe of all spiritual error (Update, August, 1981).

The New Age Movement suffers shipwreck when it encounters hard reality. Because it is so inconsistent with the laws of nature and of human behavior, it must discourage critical thinking lest it be found out to be like Shakespeare's "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing"! G. K. Chesterton puts the New Age Movement into proper perspective when he writes in his Orthodoxy,

So you are the Creator and Redeemer of the world: but what a small world it must be! What a little heaven you must inhabit, with angels no bigger than butterflies. How sad it must be to be God; and an inadequate God! Is there really no life fuller and no love more marvelous than yours; and is it really in your small and painful pity that all flesh must put its faith? (p. 21)

And Taylor Caldwell adds her own caustic remarks,

Sad little man, strutting on his dung-heap and crowing defiantly at the sun as it rises, and often believing that without his crow the sun would not come up at all! At the worst he is convinced that his dung-heap is the center of the universe and that the beat of his wings is heard to the farthest star. (op. cit.)

A PAIR OF "CAUTIONS":

II. RECOGNIZE MISCONCEPTIONS!

Discernment is incumbent upon the Christian! What is New Age and what only appears to be (because of similarities of language, etc.) must be carefully distinguished. Broad assumptions and generalizations serve no good purpose but may, in fact, be destructive of Christian ministry. By no means can the "New Age" label be attached to everything that encourages self-improvement, mental discipline, or a global perspective on humanity's problems. Not every person who uses phrases or buzzwords favored by the New Age Movement can be presumed to be a part of it. Biblical terminology certainly does not always indicate Christian

commitment. How many Christians would be pleased to have their faith described in the "right" words but in the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) definition of them -- words such as grace, redemption, salvation, justification and Scripture? One Christian writer recently came under fire when he properly stated that Christians must develop "a new consciousness" of their "global" responsibilities! Furthermore, even the Army's motto "Be all that you can be" could be a New Age theme in one setting and a call to Christian stewardship in another!

It should especially be noted that although many corporate motivational seminars teach New Age principles in the guise of developing human potential -- not all such personal growth seminars are New Age. There are many offerings that can be beneficial for the Christian's personal and professional growth. Such seminars may teach freedom from irrational fears and a self-defeating negative view of self, human resource development to meet rapid technological changes in the growing complexity of society, personal discovery through testing and experience, and affirmation of the personal worth of every individual, including the aged, diseased, unwanted and unprotected.

Some critics of the New Age identify the so-called "Positive Confession" or "Word of Faith" teachers within Christianity as being "New Age." There are some very unfortunate parallels between the "success" preachers and New Age spokespersons, but these are not one and the same. There is vast difference between misapplication of the Gospel and outright denial of the Savior Jesus Christ. Some of the "success" preachers lend credence to a "New Age" kind of thinking when they present the Gospel as a formula by which their hearers can expect perfect health, unlimited wealth and success in everything they undertake. The "theology of glory" has always been seductive; it sounds so "right", but it does violence to God's Word and draws attention away from the centrality of the cross of Jesus Christ.

The "theology" of "inner healing" (popularized by Ruth Carter Stapleton, but spreading in certain "charismatic" circles) comes very close to the New Age concept in its concepts and practices. "Inner healing" visualization techniques differ very little from the New Age's "spirit guides," especially when visualized encounters with Jesus are considered an authority equivalent to the revealed Word of God. Some prominent Christian teachers have aligned themselves with the Inner Healing Movement. This is a subject to which hours of investigation can be devoted. In lieu of further explanation in this study, Don Matzat's Inner Healing: Deliverance or Deception? is heartily recommended (Eugene, OR.: Harvest House Publishers, 1987).

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT MINISTRY TO PEOPLE UNDER PRESSURE

When we think of people under pressure, we think of Christians as well as non-Christians. The complexities and changes of modern society create tensions and anxieties that touch the lives of all people.

Christians should have good reason to be free of anxiety, but in a fallen world the many uncertainties of life affect every person. God does not promise that all problems will automatically be resolved for His people. The Spiritual Counterfeits Journal (Winter, 1981-82) cites one example: "A Christian for whom

rejection may have been an overriding childhood experience may have difficulty experiencing God's love." In some cases the insights of modern psychology and psychiatry, as long as they do not contradict God's Word, can be helpful to Christians struggling with personal problems. In all cases, the supportive ministry of fellow-believers is of vital importance. The understanding of people who have faced similar struggles is to be coveted for the warmth and acceptance it brings. Testimony concerning what one struggler found to be an effective way of dealing with anxieties may provide strength to another faced with a difficult situation.

There could be times when a Christian may have to resort to legal recourse to prevent attendance at religious (New Age) seminars from being made a condition of continued employment or advancement -- or to prevent the public school being made a mouthpiece for an anti-Christian religious philosophy. For the most part, such recourse can be avoided by honest, rational discussion with employers or school administrators who perhaps are not aware that they are permitting unconstitutional discrimination against religious convictions.

Anti-Christian philosophies appear in such ever-changing, subtle forms that the axiom is as true as it ever was, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." In a set of guidelines for college students that have been reprinted so often that their origin is lost, the counsel is given, "Learn to be a Questioner!"

When you feel alone and lonely . . . totally overwhelmed by a decision you must make, and find yourself wishing that someone would just tell you what to do . . . like the world just doesn't make sense any longer and you are looking for something to do about it . . . YOU ARE VULNERABLE! BEWARE of people with easy solutions . . . of people who are inappropriately friendly . . . of groups that pressure you because "everybody else is doing it" . . . of invitations to special seminars or workshops having nebulous goals . . . NO CASUAL ACQUAINTANCE KNOWS WHAT IS RIGHT FOR YOU! PROTECT YOURSELF - DON'T attend anything unless you know exactly who is in charge, what is expected of you, what is the purpose, and whether you will be free to leave at any time. DON'T accept vague answers! Make people be specific . . . and then check it out with someone you trust. REACH OUT . . . to someone you trust, someone who has you in his/her heart - a parent, a pastor, a counselor, a teacher or former teacher, a friend who shares the same values. (Adapted and abridged)

In spite of the dedication of New Agers to supplying solutions to all problems facing society, there is no evidence that any positive results have come from their efforts. In fact, it appears that the New Age search for the final answer is growing more desperate as one avenue after another is explored. Mark Albrecht writes in the Spiritual Counterfeits Project Newsletter for February-March, 1980:

All the talk of a dawning of an Age of Aquarius, the "Age of Enlightenment" and the advent of a glorious "New Age" of love and cosmic consciousness is unmitigated nonsense. Such a hope, however well intended, cuts totally against the grain of reality. . . . Opportunistic humanists who reject

the consistent biblical proclamation of the inherent sinfulness of humankind and God's only remedy for it in the forgiveness of Jesus Christ will only find disillusionment and despair in the end.

Into the New Age's void of self-deification, the disciples of Jesus Christ are commissioned to enter with the Gospel of grace. The Christian's commitment calls for a five-pronged program: Communication, Confirmation, Confession, Compassion and Confrontation.

COMMUNICATION: Ministry to people in the New Age Movement and those attracted to it begins with recognition that there are problems of great magnitude facing the world today -- war, crime, poverty, hunger, racism and depletion of resources. No human being, Christian or New Ager, should be so preoccupied with his/her own Self that responsibility for addressing these problems should be left to others. While Christians share many concerns with New Agers, Christians feel a special responsibility. As stewards created to have dominion over the earth to the glory of God (Genesis 1:28 and 9:1-7), Christian people should be active in the development of social, political and ecological programs that reflect the divine mandate to seek the good for all men. At the same time, the differences between the Christian and the New Age worldviews must be clearly defined. Ronald Sider writes in the Spiritual Counterfeits Project Newsletter (Fall, 1983):

The God we love, worship and obey does exist from all eternity independent of the world. Our God created a finite world that is not divine but "very good" in its finitude. To model a new humanity of peace, justice, and wholeness, God became flesh in the God-man, Jesus Christ, who died and rose again to reconcile sinners with their holy Creator. And our God will reaffirm the goodness of creation as sin is finally defeated in the new heaven and earth for which we must wait. We must not miss the evangelistic opportunity to share this marvelous biblical vision with those around us longing for an authentic spirituality.

CONFIRMATION: All human beings desire confirmation of their personal worth. Our God has attached such great personal worth to every individual that He spared not His own Son in order to redeem mankind from its folly of breaking the relationship with Him as Creator and Lord of all. The wonder of God's love is its magnitude -- that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). In their lives and ministry, Christians must regard no person as less than an object of God's love and redemption -- not the aged, not the diseased, not the unwanted, not the non-productive, and especially not the unprotected (the unborn who cannot speak for themselves). The Winter, 1981-82 Spiritual Counterfeits Journal makes a clear distinction:

Christians do not believe that people are without value or that realizing human potential is wrong. In fact, we acknowledge the high view of humanity set forth in Scripture and the tremendous resources that are available to us for personal fulfillment. We do want to sound the alarm, however, about elements of the human potential movement that violate the biblical distinction between creature and Creator.

CONFESSION: Christians do not emerge victorious in every temptation or trial. They make no claim to perfection or even being "good". As long as they are in the world, Christians recognize that they live in a tension of "not having already attained or being perfect -- but following after" (Philippians 3:12), a sort of "already-but-not-yet" -- vulnerable to the temptations of Satan but forgiven in Jesus Christ. Too often Christians are caricatured by the world as men and women who think of themselves as superior to all others. No pride or arrogance becomes the Christian; his/her confession must always be "But for the grace of God . . . "

COMPASSION: There is no excuse for a Christian to ever "step out of character." Christians are called to be "the people of God" in everything they do. The Christian life cannot be fragmented into spiritual, family, business, community, recreational and personal segments. Christians are to be in every walk of life "lights in the world, holding forth the word of life" (Philippians 2:15-16). In addition to an uncompromised moral standard drawn from God's Word and applied without reservation to every circumstance and situation, it is incumbent upon Christians to support the same -- forgiving and raising up the fallen, encouraging the victorious and glorifying God for them. There are so many avenues of compassionate Christian activity -- speaking out on moral issues . . . writing letters to people who have demonstrated a strong moral position . . . contributing and volunteering service to pro-moral causes and agencies of mercy . . . running for public office. Douglas Groothuis (op. cit.) makes a strong point:

Christianity is a full-orbed world and life view . . .
It must implement the truth into all areas of life and thought. If Christians abandon crucial aspects of culture -- education, politics, science, psychology, health and others -- counterfeit philosophies will naturally and militantly fill the void. Because this has happened in the recent past, Christians are partially responsible for the rise of the New Age. When and where Christians retreat, the enemy advances. (p. 174)

CONFRONTATION: Communication, confirmation, confession and compassion are Christian imperatives -- but they are not Christian Gospel. David Paul Zimmerman, a former New Age devotee now studying for the Lutheran ministry at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, wrote in the Indiana District edition of the Lutheran Witness, October, 1987:

There are plenty of boys and girls, men and women, who not only have no one who loves them enough to die for them, but who have no one who really cares that much whether they live or die.

These must be confronted with the Gospel of the God who does love them enough to have died for them in Jesus Christ. This "Good News" must be verbalized in clear and forceful language. We testify what God has done. The way of salvation is not by aspiring to BE GOD, but GOD BECOMING MAN and dying in our stead. We find our true selves when we look away from ourselves -- to our Creator/Redeemer/Sanctifier. But . . . will the New Ager who shouts into the darkness "I AM GOD!" be likely to see the need for healing in Jesus Christ? Never sell the Holy Spirit short! The Lutheran Witness article on the New Age, April, 1987, contained this assurance:

How are we to meet the spiritually destructive claims of the New Age Movement? Too often we cast about for new weapons to combat what we perceive as new threats to our beliefs. There are no "new" weapons! And none are needed! The way we meet the New Age Movement is the way we meet every enemy of Christianity -- armed with the Word of God itself! The Word is an anvil that has worn out many a hammer, and it is as effective against error today as it has ever been. (Philip Lochhaas)

All Christian witness to those involved in the New Age should be undertaken with an expectant heart and much prayer. It should exhibit genuine interest and show patience and Christian love. All hostility must be avoided, as well as all hint of superiority. Witness is telling what Jesus has done for you -- and supporting that testimony with evidence of your personal peace, joy and assurance.

CONCLUSION

The New Age Movement demonstrates, perhaps more than any other contemporary phenomenon, that the basic disease of man has not changed. Man still wants "to be as God" -- not in personal holiness, but in unlimited power! Therefore, the remedy too has not changed: the source for magnificent "transformation" is the Gospel. One word of God in conclusion seems especially appropriate: "And now we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:20-21).

And perhaps a word of challenge:

I must confess: Shirley MacLaine is an easy target. Being on prime time will do that to you. In all fairness, we should wonder how we might fare if our lives were subjected to the scrutiny of millions (though, of course, this is her chosen lifestyle). More to the point, how do our efforts shape up in the eyes of the one who knows our every move and motive? What about our spiritual hungers? Do we seek to deepen our awareness of the eternal? And having sought to know God, do we then share our discoveries with our brothers and sisters, so that they, too, can be edified? Having been in the presence of the holy, are we passionately engaged with our companions on this planet? If not, then maybe like me, you'll forego the temptation to saw off Shirley MacLaine's limb and instead investigate your own spiritual life -- perhaps even venturing out a bit on a limb of your own, and afterward sharing your experience with others. (Craig V. Anderson in The Christian Century, February 25, 1987)

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