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WHAT'S THE APPEAL OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT?

Why is New Age thinking showing up in art, music, business, education, environmental concerns, health programs, and social issues? Why do people find a reason for living and personal fulfillment through New Age methods and teachings?

Dan Vander Lugt and Kurt De Haan have written this booklet to answer some of the questions you may have about the New Age movement. It is our prayer that as you read you will discover the truth that can give your life purpose, direction, and fulfillment.

Martin R. De Haan II

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THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY

According to news reports, social workers in a U.S. city discovered a woman who couldn't remember her name, where she came from, or where she was going. Authorities checked police files around the country for any reports of a missing person that fit her description. Newspapers published photos of her. Eventually the news story caught the attention of some relatives in a distant city. They came and tried to help her remember her forgotten past.

A growing number of people believe we all are like that woman in the sense that we have forgotten our true identity—that we are divine, part of God. Once we realize who we are, so they say, we will experience the peace and tranquility of

sensing our oneness with all people, all nature, and all of the universe. Some people would add that we have also forgotten our previous lives, and that we are in the process of experiencing one reincarnation after another until we get it right.

To assist them in their journey to discover “the god within,” many people are turning to spirit guides who are willing to speak through other people or directly to them as they make use of special meditative techniques to clear their minds and open themselves to messages that supposedly “raise their consciousnesses” to new levels.

What is the New Age movement? We have just mentioned some of its elements. It's difficult to define because it encompasses so many teachings and takes various forms in different parts of our culture. In his book *A Crash*

Course on the New Age Movement, Elliot Miller describes it as “an extremely large, loosely structured network of organizations and individuals bound together by common values (based on mysticism and monism—the worldview that ‘all is one’) and a common vision (a coming ‘new age’ of peace and mass enlightenment, the ‘Age of Aquarius’)” (p.15).

***A growing number
of people believe
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divine, part of God.***

Walter Martin, in *The New Age Cult*, states that New Agers “see themselves as advanced in consciousness, rejecting Judeo-Christian values and the Bible in favor of Oriental philosophies and religion” (p.130).

Is New Age teaching new? Much of the movement is merely a redressing of old Eastern religious ideas (such as the divinity of all things and reincarnation) and occultic practices (such as contacting spirits and astrology). Often the old ideas have been given new names and explained in different terms.

Some elements of New Age teaching are attempts to bridge the gap between a naturalistic science and supernatural religion. In order to accomplish this, New Agers make science become less objective and broad enough to be able to include mystical and nonverifiable experiences; and God is redefined to become less supernatural and more a part of nature. With scientists and media personalities promoting these ideas, the movement has gained a large following.

Why should we be cautious? The Bible warns us about ideas and practices that are expressions of counterfeit spirituality. For example, Moses told the Israelites:

There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead (Dt. 18:10-12).

Some 800 years later, the prophet Isaiah described the sin of the Israelites this way:

They are filled with eastern ways; they are soothsayers like the Philistines (Isa. 2:6).

The New Testament describes sorcery, spiritism, and witchcraft as dangerous, satanic perversions. People such as Simon Magus (Acts

8:9-11), Elymas the sorcerer (13:6-12), the demon-possessed soothsaying girl (16:16-18), and the vagabond Jewish exorcists (19:13-16) were condemned. In Ephesus, new believers burned their occult books (19:19). Paul listed “sorcery” as one of the “works of the flesh” (Gal. 5:20), and Jesus said “sorcerers” will not be in heaven (Rev. 22:15).

New Ageism is a powerful movement. It is not a passing fad. It involves spiritual powers that are condemned in the Bible. We should view it as an enemy of true faith in Christ and oppose it intelligently. Therefore we should understand its messages and why people are getting caught up in different elements of the New Age movement.

WHAT'S THE APPEAL OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT?

Have you ever bitten into a shiny red apple and discovered rottenness inside—or worse yet, only half of a worm? If that's happened to you, then you understand a little how Adam and Eve must have felt when they bit into a beautiful-looking lie and ended up with a bad taste in their mouth.

Sly and smooth-talking Satan invaded their paradise and promised Adam and Eve that their “eyes would be opened” and they would “be like God, knowing good and evil” (Gen. 3:5). Their eyes were opened, to be sure, but they were made aware of the evil and rottenness of their rebellion against an absolutely good God who had their best

interests at heart. Satan had fooled them with his cheap, counterfeit, self-serving brand of spirituality. And he's been doing the same thing to people ever since.






Why are people today biting Satan's bait? A lot has happened since the disaster in the Garden of Eden. Mankind has been pursuing fulfillment in many of Satan's counterfeits. And conditions today are ripe for a new form of the age-old lie.

The reason for the growing popularity of New Age teaching is that it offers an answer to people's deep needs and desires for meaning, fulfillment, hope, peace among people, spiritual experiences, guidance, and personal worth. In the pages to follow, we will examine the human needs that New Age teaching tries to satisfy, and we will contrast those ideas with what Christ has to offer.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE



Something for Everyone

-  Spiritual Vacuum
-  Need for Hope
-  Spiritual Experiences
-  Supernatural Guidance
-  Global Strategy

Are you fascinated by UFOs? Among New Agers you'll find people who will give hair-raising accounts of contacts with aliens. Are you captivated by the out-of-body experiences of those who were clinically dead but came back to tell about it? What about famous people who have traveled into other dimensions of reality in their "astral bodies"? You'll find your interests fulfilled in the New Age movement. What

about more serious concerns like the conservation of wildlife or the preservation of the environment? The New Age is involved here too. A wide range of human interests is spanned by New Age organizations and literature.

The movement manifests itself in a bewildering variety of ways, from sophisticated ideas in the scientific, educational, and governmental establishments to "far out" occult practices.

Periodicals like *The New Age Journal* contain a surprising amount of bizarre advertising, offering the services of trance "channels" like Kevin Ryerson (one of Shirley MacLaine's "channels" at \$250 per appointment!), access to meditation aids, health foods, and a variety of occult institutions. But they also contain highly significant articles by

leading writers and thinkers.

Many influential groups have strong New Age leanings. For example: the Findhorn Community (Scotland), the Green Party, Greenpeace U.S.A., Esalen Institute (Big Sur, California), The Unity-In-Diversity Counsel, the Association For Humanistic Psychology, the Association For Transpersonal Psychology, The Forum, The Farm, and Planetary Citizens.

The wide variety of people and interests in the New Age movement shows how it offers something for everyone. For example, well-known spokespersons for the New Age include futurists Alvin Toffler, Barbara Marx Hubbard, and Hazel Henderson, the late economist E. F. Schumacher, historian William Irwin Thompson, biologist Jonas Salk, psychologist Jean Houston, consciousness researcher Ken Wilber,

physicist Fritjof Capra, the late anthropologist Margaret Mead, the late futurist Buckminster Fuller, retired U.N. Assistant Secretary General Robert Muller, death-and-dying researcher Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, actress Shirley MacLaine.

Is there a New Age conspiracy? The presence of New Age ideas in so many different levels of society could make a person wonder if there isn't some sort of organized plot behind it all. But if the term *conspiracy* refers to a well-organized, centrally administered, secret plan that has been humanly devised to overthrow Christianity and establish a one-world government and religion, the answer is no—at least not one that can be proven. But the answer is yes if the term refers to a loosely organized movement that has become increasingly networked for cooperation between a wide variety

of New Age groups.

The New Age movement poses a serious threat to followers of Christ because conditions are ripe for its development. And when conditions are ripe, a secret conspiracy is hardly needed. Most New Agers have adopted their viewpoint largely because to them it seems to be the most effective response to the serious problems facing mankind. And their motives—at least on the surface—are largely good.

Just as the frequent evangelistic meetings and congresses held by evangelicals do not indicate that we are secretly plotting to take over the world, so the mere fact that New Agers are interested in promoting their viewpoint and winning converts does not imply that their movement is conspiratorial. Both evangelical Christians and New Age disciples are

openly dedicated to winning converts to their point of view.

The New Age movement is powerful and dangerously deceptive. Because of the serious threat it poses, Christians need to understand it and work to counter its effects. But it's going too far to imply that New Age sympathizers are consciously seeking to destroy Christians and set the stage for the reign of Antichrist.

Although Satan's goals for the New Age movement would undoubtedly include the suppression of the gospel, the persecution of Christians, and the establishment of a world government under Antichrist, most contemporary New Agers have no such conscious aims. To the contrary, they probably have very little awareness of the logical outworking of their point

of view, and they usually have little understanding of genuine Christianity.

New Age insider Marilyn Ferguson has written a book chronicling the movement's goals and activities. The title *The Aquarian Conspiracy* may suggest to a casual observer that New Agers are highly organized in their efforts to dominate culture and replace both secularism and traditional religion. But Ferguson and others would deny that the whole movement is being controlled by a few human leaders. In fact, a few New Age writers like Alice Bailey and Benjamin Creme refer to a hierarchy of *spirit* beings—not humans—who are coordinating all the activities on earth, and who will one day manifest themselves in bodily form to the world.

Those who read and believe the Bible would agree that the true conspiracy is being directed

by spiritual forces/beings. But we would label those forces as evil and demonic. According to the Bible, Satan and his cohorts stand behind all anti-Christ and anti-Christian activity. That's where the real battle is taking place. Ephesians 6:12 states, "We do not wrestle

***"We do not wrestle
against flesh and
blood, but against
principalities,
against powers,
against the rulers
of the darkness
of this age."
Ephesians 6:12***







against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of

wickedness in the heavenly places.”

How can followers of Christ respond? We need to show our world that we have what they are searching for. People are gobbling up the variety of New Age ideas because they are starving for something to fill their spiritual needs. As they shop around for various religious options, what do they see? Do they find faithful believers who care enough to live for Christ and to communicate the biblical message to people who need it so desperately? In the Bible we have the answers to their questions. Satan will delude them if he can, but we have the truth and Christ’s Spirit within us, and He is far more powerful than Satan (1 Jn. 4:4). God can penetrate the spiritual darkness with the light of the gospel.

HUMANITY’S SPIRITUAL VACUUM



-  Something for Everyone
-  **Spiritual Vacuum**
-  Need for Hope
-  Spiritual Experiences
-  Supernatural Guidance
-  Global Strategy

What happens when you pull your foot out of a tub of water? Does a foot-shaped hole remain? No—the water rushes in to fill the void. A similar thing happens when true beliefs about God no longer occupy a person’s thoughts and activities. An emptiness demands to be filled. And the vacuum tends to draw in all the false views and notions that come along.

The popularity of New Age ideas in this scientific

age is amazing. What moved out—or was pushed out—so those ideas could move in? In part, because of perversions of true biblical faith and practice, some people have gotten a warped view of what it means to be a follower of Christ. As a result, they have turned away from Him.

Another force behind the rise of New Ageism is a disillusionment with godless humanism, which offers no hope or purpose. This, along with humanity's inclination to reject the truth (Rom. 1:18-32) and the power of Satan to delude people's minds (Gen. 3:1-5; Jn. 8:44; 2 Cor. 11:14-15), has created ideal conditions for New Age ideas to flourish.

What's wrong with the followers of Christ? What the apostle Paul saw occurring in the early church has continued to happen up to the present. In 2 Corinthians 11:2-4,

Paul told the Corinthians:

I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

During most of its history, the church has been anything but the “chaste virgin” of Christ that God intended her to be (2 Cor. 11:2). The first-century church in Ephesus left her “first love” (Rev. 2:1-7). The church in Sardis became spiritually dead

(Rev. 3:1-6). The church in Laodicea became lukewarm (Rev. 3:14-22).

In addition, from the time of Constantine onward, large branches of the church have often maintained an unholy alliance with the state. This corrupt institutional church has encouraged such evils as the horrors of the Crusades, the wars of the Reformation period, the Inquisition, and the witch-hunting craze.

Because official Christendom has often been on the side of injustice, atheistic ideologies such as communism and secular humanism have attracted millions who otherwise would probably not have given them a hearing. Even in our day, official Christendom can seem more interested in buildings and bank balances than in caring for the spiritual and physical needs of the world. Such practices have hurt the reputation of Christ and

given people an excuse to look for a more satisfying alternative.

“I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”
Jesus (Mt. 16:18)

Aren't many believers faithfully living out their faith?

Yes, they are. But unfortunately, mankind's rebellious, fallen nature would rather focus on the failures of those who claim to follow Christ. It's easy to overlook the role that devout believers have played in science, the abolition of slavery, the emancipation of women, and the promotion of human dignity. Unbelievers

would rather criticize imperfect Christians than acknowledge their personal guilt and need of a Savior.

The church founded by Christ (Mt. 16:18) is still alive today. It continues to manifest vibrant faith—especially in places where believers have been persecuted. The fact remains, however, that the failings of the church have been an important cause for the rise of New Age teaching.

What has happened to secular humanism?

The other prominent option for modern mankind has been secular humanism. It can be defined as the philosophy of life that assumes that God and the spirit world are myths, that the physical, material universe is all there is, and that mankind and the entire universe are the chance product of evolution. According to this view, humanity is nothing more

than a complicated machine, life is ultimately purposeless, and terms like *right* and *wrong* become relative. The insufficiency of this and other atheistic ideologies has been an important factor in the rise of New Age thinking.

Although secular humanism and atheistic communism have been powerful forces in the 20th century, they have also helped to create a spiritual vacuum. By teaching that mankind is the product of chance evolution, they have convinced several generations to think of themselves as hopeless wanderers on a fearful voyage through an immense and indifferent universe.

These atheistic idealists have tried to conceal the ultimate hopelessness of their worldview by stealing some of the terminology and trappings of biblical faith. They speak, for example, of the “rights” of man and of

the “purpose” of life. But modern people are becoming increasingly conscious of the shallowness and emptiness of these philosophies.

What difference can we make? Humanism cannot fill the spiritual vacuum that every human being is born with. Neither can the religions of the East as practiced in the past. New Age teachers claim to hold the answers, but only people who know Jesus as Savior and Lord have the true answers. We cannot afford to be silent. We need to proclaim the biblical truth about God, spiritual realities, and the meaning of life.

The apostle Paul spoke out when he met with the leading thinkers of the first-century city of Athens (Acts 17:16-34). The city was full of idols and altars, including an altar “to an unknown god.” Paul presented the God of the Bible as the One

true God, the Creator. He told them that God had revealed Himself through Jesus Christ.

If we are to help our searching world today, we too must boldly proclaim Christ. We must take seriously the instructions of Jesus to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Mt. 5:13-16). If

“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Jesus (Mt. 5:14)

people are going to listen to our message, we must put our Christianity into action, living truthfully, exhibiting true joy, making a difference in our world by improving conditions, battling injustice, and proclaiming the true gospel of Christ.

THE NEED FOR HOPE



- 🍏 Something for Everyone
- 🍏 Spiritual Vacuum
- 🍏 **Need for Hope**
- 🍏 Spiritual Experiences
- 🍏 Supernatural Guidance
- 🍏 Global Strategy

In a world torn by war, famine, economic instability, family conflict, disease, and disaster, people need hope. When we have hope, our lives have meaning and purpose, and we can overcome incredible hardships.

A brilliant psychiatrist and observer of human nature, Victor Frankl was a Jewish survivor of the German concentration camps. As a prisoner living

for many months on the knife-edge between death and life, he witnessed time and again the essential human need for meaning. He noted that survival in the camps wasn't as dependent on physical strength as it was on the possession of a deeply felt reason to live. He observed that prisoners usually died if they lost hope and had no purpose for carrying on.

What hope does our world have? For most modern people, hope can't be separated from a dream for a new age. Humanity is facing so many crucial problems that only a radical break from the destructive ways of the past seems capable of offering solutions.

Francis Schaeffer wrote, "People are hungry for something which will give them hope in life. . . . They are also afraid. Things really do seem hopeless, even on

the level of everyday life with its threats of a lower standard of living, . . . of famine and ecological disaster, of devastating war. And they are looking for any answer” (*Whatever Happened To The Human Race?* p.148).

People who do not put their hope in God have no alternative but despair as they think of the future for mankind on planet earth. New Agers, however, are usually optimistic. Although the object of their faith may be vague, their faith is strong. Biblical Christians are also hopeful, but in a different way and for different reasons.

What is the New Agers’ hope? They are convinced of the goodness of the “evolutionary life force” and “the evolution of consciousness.” Traditional Eastern pantheism (the belief that God and the universe are one and the

same), seen in Hinduism and Buddhism, is fatalistic about the future, believing that mankind has already passed through its “golden age” and is on its way to destruction. But New Age thinking borrows the optimism of Christianity and Western science while rejecting the Judeo-Christian view of God on which both historical optimism and modern science are founded. The hope of a new age, then, is wrapped up in a view of mankind that sees humanity as progressively evolving to a higher spiritual state, with corresponding progress in the world at large.

Some people, like the late mathematician Bertrand Russell, seem to be able to accept the thought of complete extinction at death. Most people, however, sense that faith in some kind of ongoing existence is necessary to give their life ultimate meaning. The

teachings of both the New Age movement and biblical Christianity reassure people that death is not merely the absurd ending of a meaningless life. There is nevertheless a great difference between their teachings and ours regarding immortality.

New Agers believe that our essential being is immortal and that we continue to exist in spirit form. Many find evidence for this in their contacts with “spirit teachers” or “guides.” They also conclude that we will be reincarnated in an endless series of lives. They teach that the process of reincarnation purifies us and allows us to reach ever higher levels of spiritual enlightenment and fulfillment. This optimism, however, is based only on ambiguous personal experiences.

What is the reason for biblical hope? Biblical

optimism is founded on faith in a personal God who is in ultimate control of the universe and who gives meaning to history. Although

Biblical hope is founded on faith in a personal God who is in ultimate control of the universe.

it maintains that the present earth can never be entirely purged of evil, it looks forward to the time when it will be replaced by a flawless new heaven and earth (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21–22).

The Bible also teaches that life in this world is worthwhile. The apostle Peter was writing to Christians who were experiencing persecution and anticipating worse times

ahead. He encouraged them to be good citizens, to be compassionate and humble, and to keep alive the expectation of better times in this life (1 Pet. 3:8–4:19).

The Christian faith promises everlasting life to those who believe in Jesus Christ. The personal God we meet in Genesis 1:1 as the Creator of all things made us in His image (Gen. 1:26-27). He loves us so much that He became man in the person of Jesus Christ, lived a flawless life, died an unjust and shameful death to make possible the forgiveness of our sins, and broke the power of death through His bodily resurrection. This happened in history.

The apostle Paul, writing at a time when many who had seen Jesus were still alive, declared that believers can be confident of the reality of their own personal, bodily resurrection because of the concrete fact of

Christ's resurrection—a fact His readers knew to be true (1 Cor. 15:1-8,12-20).

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES



- 🍏 Something for Everyone
- 🍏 Spiritual Vacuum
- 🍏 Need for Hope
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- 🍏 Supernatural Guidance
- 🍏 Global Strategy

Out-of-body experiences. Astral travel. Contact with spirit beings. Channeling. Meditation techniques to reduce stress and heighten personal consciousness. Mental telepathy. Psychic healing. Levitation. Clairvoyance. Automatic writing. These and other experiences are found in the

New Age movement—and they are causing people to reconsider their views of reality. And in the end, the experiences become their ultimate judge of reality, their way of finding and measuring truth.

What makes New Age experiences so appealing? These intense experiences tantalize the New Ager with a seemingly endless variety of magical doorways, each offering to deepen still further his sense of excitement, personal fulfillment, and power. People today have come to maturity in a world that is void both of faith and of intense experience, a sterile world of spiritual plastic and cardboard. This makes the feelings of personal power and fulfillment offered by New Age paganism extremely attractive.

How can a desire for spiritual experience lead

people into error?

Believers in New Age religion seldom attempt to win a convert through intellectual arguments. Instead, they win converts by first encouraging them to take part in an experience, such as attending a seminar in transcendental meditation or visiting an astrologer or a spirit channel (medium).

Elliot Miller gives us a good description of how these experiences can alter a person's thinking. In *A Crash Course On The New Age Movement*, he writes:

First, an altered state of consciousness (ASC) is induced in the potential convert with the hope that it will trigger a mystical or psychic experience powerful enough to cause him to doubt his previous understanding of reality. If the subject's belief system has been shaken, he will be far more disposed to embrace a new worldview

than he would have been before submitting to this “nonreligious” exercise. Then he is exposed to New Age beliefs that supply him with a seemingly profound explanation of his experience. Since the monistic worldview (“all is One”) is derived from and closely related to mystical experiences, it will seem to fit the new way of viewing reality perfectly (p.91).

What is the role of spiritual experiences in biblical faith? For the follower of Christ, religious experiences are not to be the determiners of truth, nor are they the goal of life. The New Ager, in contrast, transforms intense experience into a god. Because he places such a high value on experience, the New Ager is likely to employ dangerous and immoral means to achieve it. As a result, he often becomes

addicted to the experience or the means of achieving it.

Commitment to Christ may not result in experiences that are as

“What about the growth of occultism, witchcraft, and astrology? . . . People are looking for answers—answers they can experience.”

Francis Schaeffer

immediately intense as the “altered states of consciousness” experienced through New Age magic arts. After all, commitment to Christ requires no mind-altering drug or technique. For the Christian, the mind isn’t altered, it’s transformed by God’s grace. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the

mind of Christ progressively takes control of the Christian, who experiences peace, assurance, wisdom, and harmony with God and His purposes.

Biblical faith requires an active commitment that will lead a believer into the reality of supernatural life in Christ (Mt. 10:37-39; 16:24-28; Jn. 12:24-26). Unlike New Age commitment, which leads deeper into a realm of spiritual delusion and addiction, total commitment to Jesus Christ is the pathway to a deeper spiritual life and freedom (Mt. 16:24-25; Jn. 8:32).

Jesus said that we must become like little children (Mt. 18:3). To do that, we must lay aside our prejudices and adopt an attitude of openness, honesty, curiosity, and faith in God. Such childlike trust leads to supernatural assurance, answers to prayer, awareness of God's

presence, and an inner peace that can't be humanly explained (Mt. 7:7-11; 28:20; Phil. 4:6-7).

Christ's Path To Fulfillment

- Believe in the personal, holy God of the Bible who is distinct from His creation.
- Recognize that you are spiritually helpless and lost apart from God's mercy.
- Experience God's forgiveness and love by accepting Christ's offer of salvation.
- Admit your struggles with sin and depend on God's Spirit to enable you to do what is right.
- Grow spiritually by trusting and obeying what God has said through Christ and the Bible.
- Experience the joy of fellowship with God now and anticipate complete fulfillment in heaven.

The New Age Path To Delusion

- Believe in the impersonal God/Force who is one with the universe (pantheism).
- Deny the reality of sin, evil, and judgment.
- Believe that “salvation” occurs when you become conscious of your deity and aware of your oneness with the God/Force.
- Deal with the anxiety and responsibility of your godhood by resorting to fantasy and even mystical experiences.
- Eventually encounter and submit control of your life to spirit guides and alien beings.
- Anticipate fulfillment in this life and in future lives through reincarnation, but actually become a victim of satanic delusion.

SUPERNATURAL GUIDANCE



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Many people who are searching for answers to life's big questions of meaning, purpose, and goals, are concluding that humans are not the only beings in the universe. And these other beings supposedly can help us to make the most of our lives on planet earth.

Some of these creatures are said to ride in flying saucers. Or they may take a very different form, appearing as spirit guides to prominent

people like Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and Shirley MacLaine. They instruct best-selling author and anthropologist Carlos Castaneda. They attribute strange powers to Indian sorcerers. They are involved in astral travel with Dr. John C. Lilly and others who vividly describe out-of-body experiences.

Who are these strangers? Because of the bizarre nature of these reports, it would be easy to dismiss them. But to do this, one would have to overlook both the fact that many of these witnesses are famous, highly respected people, and that there are thousands of similar testimonies by respected, “mainstream” modern people.

These eerie life-forms have been identified in many different ways. Some people hold that they are superior creatures from other solar systems, while other people seriously

maintain that their origins are other “dimensions” of reality. A large number of those who say they communicate with them on a regular basis describe them from the perspective of spiritism, believing that they are wise, temporarily disembodied spirits who have passed through many previous incarnations.

Some people, like Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and Shirley MacLaine, use the terminology of Spiritism, although today’s “channels” (mediums) apparently no longer rely on darkened rooms or the traditional seance setting.

The viewpoint of traditional sorcery is represented by the famous, highly acclaimed anthropologist Carlos Castaneda, to whom a *New York Times* reviewer refers as “a godfather of the New Age movement.” Drugs (potions) and ancient magic allegedly

put Castaneda in contact with “allies” and other eerie beings in this and in other worlds.

Space-age sorcery employing high technology is used by others, like famous dolphin researcher John Lilly, who designed a sensory deprivation tank that helps people drift off into other “spaces,” and Robert Monroe, a multimillionaire cable television pioneer who developed a technology for inducing lucid dreaming, out-of-body experiences, and astral travel. Both of these men take very seriously their contact with beings from other dimensions.

Are these spirit beings demonic?

Possibly. It is important to realize that not all “aliens” or “entities” may be the direct manifestations of evil spirits (fallen angelic beings, or demons). Some may be hallucinations as a result of mental illness, drugs,

or projections of the subconscious mind. (We shouldn’t forget how all of us have extremely vivid dreams from time to time, with all of our dream images projected by our subconscious.)

Still, we can safely say that all contact with entities and aliens of the New Age type are demonic in their effect, since they will always lead us into dependence on them. In fact, those who seek such encounters may discover with horror that it may be very difficult to terminate occult relationships once they are established.

Although these spirit beings claim that they want to help people, it would be naive to accept their word. The Bible tells us that “Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). He is the father of lies (Jn. 8:44) and will mix truth and error in order to trap people.

It is true that there are

good angels who have appeared to people throughout history, especially at important times. This is undoubtedly why John warned us to “test the spirits” (1 Jn. 4:1). Nevertheless, we have no biblical warrant for believing that the redeemed who have died will ever appear in spirit form to relay messages or offer comfort and counsel.

Why are people looking for supernatural guidance?

The spiritual vacuum of our age is rooted in man’s sense of loneliness, isolation, and insignificance in the face of the cold, impersonal vastness of time and space. Most people find it very difficult to accept the atheistic conviction that we are alone in the world, and that we have only our own imagination and strength of will to lend meaning to an otherwise absurd existence.

The Bible teaches that

man was created with a need that can find fulfillment only as he is in proper relationship with his Creator. Like the rest of us, New Agers have a deep longing to be related to a greater Someone, a heavenly Father.

Even though New Agers—in the fallenness of their human pride—declare their equality with God, deep within them remains a realization that they are not capable of bearing the burden of freedom they so arrogantly claim. Subconsciously they long for a Savior-God, a God like the God of the Bible. Like little children who have thrown a tantrum and run away from home, they find that the world is a much greater and more dangerous place than they imagined, and they soon look around for an authority figure to replace the one they have rejected. Tragically, the authority figures that offer help to

runaways are seldom trustworthy.

A GLOBAL STRATEGY



-  Something for Everyone
-  Spiritual Vacuum
-  Need for Hope
-  Spiritual Experiences
-  Supernatural Guidance
-  **Global Strategy**

Our world faces many crises: the threat of terrorism and nuclear conflict, revolution in governments, racial and ethnic tensions, economic instability, competing political and religious ideologies, drug and alcohol addiction, AIDS, child abuse, crime, homelessness, pollution and exploitation of the environment, and a

host of others. The types of problems we face in our world demand cooperation among people of diverse backgrounds. But humanity's competitive and selfish nature has created huge barriers to unified action. Selfish living, greed, and cutthroat competition between nations and corporations are outdated luxuries that cannot be encouraged indefinitely.

What's right and what's wrong with the New Age strategy?

One problem with the current movement toward toleration and unity is that New Agers are taking it a step—many steps—too far. In their commendable desire for human unity, they have called for unity on their terms—which means they reinterpret God, redefine spiritual realities, and throw out absolute standards of morality.

There is general

agreement among New Agers that God is not a self-conscious, moral being who has revealed absolute moral standards to mankind. They also agree that while life should be as pleasant as possible, truth is subjective and a wide range of viewpoints regarding morality and values should be tolerated.

This tolerant point of view is appealing to people who are tired of political and religious controversy. Unfortunately, it is also appealing to people who are in rebellion against the clear moral guidelines laid down in God's Word.

Many groups that hold to New Age religious ideas have goals that followers of Christ should be working toward as well—but for different reasons. It's also true that some aspects of New Age philosophy promote unbiblical solutions.

Christians and New

Agers can agree on the need for fighting pollution, preserving the environment, eliminating racial tensions, making peace among warring people, controlling crime, eliminating world hunger, and working for economic and social justice.

Hard-core New Agers also believe that *personal transformation leads to global transformation*. In this view, New Agers reflect a view similar to the Bible in that personal change must precede cultural change—but the process and end goal are very different.

For the New Agers, personal transformation is the process of mystically experiencing oneness with the universe. It is to come to the conclusion that your consciousness is one with God and that God is the sum of all the parts of the universe. This pantheistic (everything is part of God) view of the universe

pervades New Age thinking and profoundly affects its agenda for the world.

A person who reads the Bible will discover a very different view of God, a different path to personal and global transformation.

What is the biblical strategy for the world?

The strategy outlined by Jesus Christ and followed by His apostles was to proclaim the good news and live it out day by day. The church did not receive a mandate to become a political force. It was not designed to be involved in political intrigue, not even for worthy ends. The task of promoting social justice and other good causes is given to individual Christian citizens.

Shortly before Jesus ascended to heaven, He said, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in

the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Mt. 28:18-20). The book of Acts records the story of the manner in which the first followers of Jesus made the gospel known. They spread the good news of salvation in Christ with such zeal and

Many New Age groups have goals that followers of Christ work toward as well—but for different reasons.

conviction that within a few years millions of people—Jew and Gentiles—became devout Christians.

We as Christians are citizens of two worlds—this one as well as the one to

come. The Old Testament prophets and the apostle James cried out for social justice (Amos 5–6; Jas. 5:1-6). We believe in the God who inspired the writing of Psalms 127 and 128, which extol the blessings of human love and family relationships.

Why bother with a world that is passing away? A misuse of biblical prophecy has sometimes fueled the misconception that we should think only in terms of the world getting worse and worse, and that we will not experience times of improved conditions. Some Bible students have concluded that the Lord will surely come during the present generation. This scenario presents no incentive to work for justice nor to preserve our beautiful planet, which the Creator has put into our care.

The coming of Jesus Christ is imminent: It can happen at any time. But the

Scriptures give us no ground for date-setting, no ground for looking at the current scene and concluding that Christ will surely come very soon. Jesus made it clear that His coming will surprise people (Mt. 24:36-51).

We should therefore live with practical concern and optimism, planning for the well-being of future generations. Although every day should be lived with the realization that it may be the day of Christ's return, we should also be wise and unselfish in our God-appointed stewardship.

Our hope rests solidly on our confidence in the personal God who proved His love supremely in Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:8). It is shameful, therefore, when New Agers—who have a faith without a foundation—seem to be more effective than Christians in promoting international peace and the preservation of our planet.

NEW AGE VERSUS CHRISTIANITY

GOD

New Age: God is an impersonal, amoral, creative evolutionary force within the universe.

Christianity: God is a moral, personal Being, who is the all-powerful, all-knowing, everywhere-present Creator of the universe.

CREATION

New Age: The universe has always existed as the material manifestation of the creative God-Force.

Christianity: God created the universe out of nothing; it is distinct from Himself.

MAN

New Age: Humans are the apex of earthly evolution, having unlimited potential, giving self-awareness to the Divine

Force, and capable of guiding the universal process of evolution.

Christianity: Man was created by God in His image as a personal, rational, moral being.

REVELATION

New Age: We can mystically become aware of the divinity of all things, and we can experience union with the divine Life Force. "Guides" from other dimensions assist in this.

Christianity: God has revealed Himself through natural revelation (nature and conscience) and special revelation (theophanies, the prophets, the Scriptures, Jesus Christ).

JESUS CHRIST

New Age: He was an incomparable spiritual teacher who was aware of His deity and was dedicated to helping each of us become aware of ours.

Christianity: He is the Son of God, the eternal second person of the Trinity, both God and man, and Redeemer of the human race and the universe.

SIN

New Age: Sin is a failure to recognize one's own deity. Both "good" and "evil" contribute to the evolution of consciousness, the Life Force.

Christianity: Sin is moral evil, a willful violation of God's absolute moral law.

SALVATION

New Age: Salvation is deliverance from fear and guilt through awareness of our own deity.

Christianity: Salvation is deliverance from the penalty and power of sin through faith in Jesus, whose death on the cross paid the penalty for sin.

JUDGMENT

New Age: Since evil and sin are illusory and no personal Judge exists, we will be purified through an endless series of reincarnations, attaining ever higher levels of consciousness.

Christianity: Believers will be rewarded in heaven according to their faithfulness, and nonbelievers will be punished in hell according to the degree of their rebellion against the Creator.

ANGELS

New Age: Angels in the biblical sense do not exist. However, there are many spiritual beings in the universe who are more highly developed than man and are eager to guide our spiritual evolution.

Christianity: Angels are spirit-beings, created by God. Some of them (Satan and his demons) rebelled against

God and are enemies of Him and His creation. The rest remained faithful and continue to serve Him.

TRANSFORMED!

New Age teachers are right on one important count: In order to reach our highest potential as humans, we need to be personally transformed. But New Age teaching leads people astray in two crucial areas: how that transformation should occur and what we are trying to become.

Jesus said that we can be spiritually reborn as we put our faith in Him (Jn. 3:1-21). Our need is not to realize our imagined godhood but to be reconciled to the real God. Our aim should be to experience the joy of a personal relationship with the One who made heaven and earth (1:12; 17:3).

Jesus is the true source

of personal transformation, fulfillment, purpose, and meaning. We must reject Satan's counterfeit forms of spirituality. We need to accept the truth that we deserve judgment for sin, and that Jesus Christ, the one and only Son of God, died for us.

***“This is eternal life,
that they may
know You, the
only true God,
and Jesus Christ
whom You
have sent.”***

John 17:3

If you have never done so before, put your trust in Christ and come to know the personal God. Jesus wants to transform you, fulfill you, and prepare you for His coming eternal kingdom.

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