

Whatever Happened to the New Age? Part I

During the 1980's, Bible believing pastors, teachers, and watchmen for "The Faith" stood up and began to prevail against the New Age Movement.

By the mid 1990's, it appeared as if the church assumed the threat had passed. It was as if a veil of deception enveloped the church to hide the truth – not only had the New Age Movement NOT faded away, it was spreading exponentially into the very fabric of society.

Ray Yungen, author of "A Time of Departing" describes this New (Age) Spirituality as "The Invisible Denomination."¹ It has been hiding in plain sight for over two decades. It is time for the Church to remove the veil of deception and see this New (Age) Spirituality that has permeated evangelical denominations, Bible schools, seminaries, Christian publishers and also the teachings of respected Bible teachers.

Paganism in Modern Dress

Walter Martin evaluated these practices in his 1989 book "The New Age Cult" in which he states, "The New Age Cult is a revival of this ancient occultism. It holds historical ties to Sumerian, Indian, Egyptian, Chaldean, Babylonian, and Persian religious practices."²

The following occult practices (among others) are described in Deuteronomy 18:10-11:

Divination – a "catch all" name for using any method to discover details of what is happening around you or to learn what will happen in the future by any means other than through God himself, who alone knows the beginning from the

end

Enchanter – another name for a sorcerer, one who practices the arts of magic of all kinds—magical remedies, potions, drugs and hallucinogens to see into the future.

Witchcraft – “the craft” or WICCA, includes sorcery and the worship the mother Goddess, nature, trees, etc.

Charmer – binds something physical with the spiritual—charms, amulets, something worn or carried on one’s person (i.e., good luck charm or religious article supposedly with a supposed blessing attached)

Consulter of familiar spirits – communicator with fallen angels or demonic entities in the spirit world.

Wizard – one who has supernatural knowledge which is attained through communication with familiar Spirits, a “knower”.

Necromancer – one who attempts to communicate with the spirits of the dead to acquire knowledge or to ask for assistance in some way by praying to anyone other than God Himself

New (Age) Spirituality includes the practice of many of these things; most notably consultation with and channeling information from familiar spirits, called “Spirit Guides.”

Common New (Age) Spirituality Practices

There is one key practice called “Mystical Meditation” from which certain beliefs emerge. Mystical Meditation is an essential part of New (Age) Spirituality, as well as other Eastern religions, mystical sects (i.e., Muslim Sufis and Jewish Kaballah), and the occult (i.e., Satanists and witchcraft).

There are a multitude of variations of Mystical Meditation. Some are given specific “brand names,” such as, Transcendental Meditation and Silva Mind Control, but they commonly share the following characteristics:

1. Comfortable Positions (i.e., sitting, laying down or an accepted Yoga position) to maintain a relaxed physical state without distraction.

2. Methods of concentrated focus (i.e., rhythmic breathing, maintained visual contact on a single object, or silent word repetitions) often accompanied by specific types of soft music, assist the practitioner in reaching an altered state of consciousness in which the mind is cleared of all conscious thought. This state of consciousness has often been referred to as “The Thin Place” – a state of mind in which the physical and spiritual worlds meet.

When the practitioner experiences random thoughts, he reacquires the altered state quickly by returning to the focus method.

At this point, the practitioner may “experience a sense of unity with all creation.” Many attain new knowledge or understanding, become “enlightened,” and may also experience various physical sensations. It is important to note, as discussed earlier, that the Hebrew word for “Wizard” means “a knower.” This practice is wizardry.

Channeling from Spirit Guides

During meditation, practitioners are often instructed to use visualization to connect with their Spirit Guide(s). Others may be instructed to await the appearance of a Spirit Guide in either human or animal form. Some choose religious personages, including Jesus, admired historical figures, angelic beings, or a “more successful self” created in parallel reality to teach how to become more successful in life.

Many famous New (Age) Spirituality writers claim to receive their inspiration or works directly from their Spirit Guide(s):

Alice Bailey, occultist and New Age Matriarch, who some credit with coining the phrase “New Age,” and of which the New (Age) Spirituality leaders reference quite often, had a spirit guide called Djwhal Khul (DJ).

Helen Schuchman transcribed “A Course in Miracles” as dictated by her Spirit Guide—an inner voice which identified itself as “Jesus.”

Barbara Marx Hubbard transcribed her book “The Revelation: A Message of Hope for the New Millennium” from her Spirit Guide—an inner voice which identified itself as “Christ.”

Neale Donald Walsch wrote an angry letter to God and was amazed when “God” immediately answered his letter by speaking to him through an inner voice which resulted in his book “Conversations with God.”

Ester Hicks bases her best selling books on translations of thought she claims she channels from a group of non-physical entities called “Abraham.”

David Spangler wrote many New Age books including “The Birth of a New Age” which he said was a compilation of channeled transmission he received from his disembodied spirit guide “John.”

Bernie Segal, an author and leader in the New (Age) Spirituality, claims to have a spirit guide named “George” whom he met the very first time he meditated.

The New (Age) Spirituality is not just a fad practiced and believed by a minority. It has entered society today through many different avenues.

The New Spirituality/Occultism in Post-modern Society

Following are some of the areas in which the New (Age) Spirituality is accepted in society today:

Meditation in the work place

A number of corporations (i.e., Apple, Google, McKinsey, Deutsche Bank, Texas Instruments, AOL, Yahoo!, Raytheon, Nortel Networks, Medtronic's, Viacom International Inc., and

Monsanto) provide meditation training to reduce stress and increase productivity. [As of 2008 when this was originally published]

Napolean Hill & A Positive Mental Attitude

Napolean Hill, author of the famous book "Think and Grow Rich," credits his foundational teachings of the success, motivation and positive mental attitude books, courses and seminars to the teachings of disembodied spirits who called themselves "Ascended Masters." Apparently Mr. Hill earned the right to reveal a Supreme Secret to others, "You have been under the guidance of the Great School...now you must give the world a blueprint..."³ Millions of business people, including Christians, have taken these courses and seminars not realizing that they are being taught "doctrines of demons."

Reiki in the Health Care System

The ability to heal came to Mikao Usui during a spiritual experience on a sacred mountain. The ability was called "Reiki" (Ray-key). According to the American Hospital Association, Reiki is being offered in a growing number of hospitals within the U.S.

A Reiki.org article entitled, "Developing Your Reiki Practice" clearly identifies the practice:

"Sensing the presence of spiritual beings, feeling their touch, knowing they work with you. Being raised into ever greater levels of joy and peace by simply placing your hands on another. Watching your life grow and develop as your continual immersion in Reiki transforms your attitudes, values and beliefs. Sensing that because of your commitment to help others, beings of light are focusing their love and healing on you and carefully guiding you on your spiritual path..."⁴

Meditation in the Prison System

The Dharma Foundation is a nonprofit organization which

produces a newsletter about meditation for those who are in correction facilities. Volunteers from their organization work with programs such as centering prayer, Zen meditations, and conflict resolution. They assert that 85% of inmates who have practiced substantive meditation never return as repeat offenders.

In an online presentation of the Dharma Seeds Foundation, it states:

“For any human to transform into the natural spiritual creation they are, they first must accept their own salvation from lower self towards the true SELF. Once they have done this they can then incorporate their own spiritual upbringing...”⁵

Meditation in the Public School System

The children in the Nataki Talibah Schoolhouse in Detroit meditate for ten minutes twice a day. The University of Michigan followed 140 of the school's 10-14 year olds and reported the children were more connected, happy, satisfied, peaceful and calm. Their studies indicate that children who meditate do better in school than those who do not.

The so-called benefits of meditation practices can be found in many websites. An example from a Health & Yoga website:

“Though meditation is usually recognized as a largely spiritual practice, it also has many health benefits. The yoga and meditation techniques are being implemented in management of life threatening diseases; in transformation of molecular and genetic structure; in reversal of mental illnesses, in accelerated learning programs, in perceptions and communications beyond the physical, in solving problems and atomic and nuclear physics; in gaining better ecological understanding; in management of lifestyle and future world problems.”⁶

If all these results come from mystical meditation, then how could God possibly object to it? Scripture, especially Deuteronomy 18, does not allow for a “if it feels good, do it” attitude.

We as Christians should not be ignorant of Satan’s devices and should recognize when these practices creep into our lives and our churches. However, repackaging New Age fundamental practices with Christian words has allowed an unsettling infiltration of both.

GO TO: Whatever Happened to the New Age? Part II

Works Cited

¹ Yungen, Ray. A Time of Departing pp. 9. 2nd Ed. Oregon: Lighthouse Trails Publishing, 2006.

² Martin, Walter. The New Age Cult. pp 15. Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1989

³Hill, Napoleon. Grow Rich with Peace of Mind. pp. 158-160. Ballantine Books, 1967

⁴ Rand, William Lee. “Developing Your Reiki Practice”
<http://www.reiki.org/ReikiPractice/PracticeHomepage.html>

⁵ Dharma Seeds Foundation, Inc.
<http://st-raphael-monastery.org/dharmaseeds/pdfs2008B0A%20presentationPDF.pdf>

⁶ Health & Yoga.
<http://www.healthandyoga.com/html/meditation/objectives.html>