

## Chapter 1

### The New Age Has Already Touched Your Life

Whether you realize it or not, you have been touched by the New Age influence. Whether you can identify any of the New Age tenets or whether you have even heard of the “New Age movement,” it has touched you. You may consider yourself an insulated, isolated, inoculated Christian, but you are not immune.

Without recognizing it as such, you may have New Age literature in your home - for example, Richard Bach’s bestseller, Jonathan Livingston Seagull, or Dr. M. Scott Peck’s *The Road Less Traveled*. You may have picked up on a New Age concept such as, “Whatever the mind can conceive, it can achieve.” You may even be teaching such ideas to others. You may have sung the lyrics of “The Age of Aquarius” or “Deja vu.” You may have listened to New Age meditation music on the radio or perhaps even in your church. You may have tried meditation, visualizing, or listening to an “inner voice.” You may have watched some of the New Age stars at the movies or on your television set. You may have purchased such products as New Age jewelry, rainbows, dragons, or pyramids. Out of curiosity, you may have read your horoscope in the daily newspaper. You may have visited a holistic health doctor or taken a karate or yoga class - not realizing you were being exposed to some of the powerful deceptions of the New Age movement.

Your children may be watching TV cartoons laced with sorcery and New Age themes, reading occult comics, or playing with their corresponding toys. They may even be caught up in the demonic Nintendo power-game mania. This is all part of the New Age scheme. Its tentacles are so widespread that it has infiltrated virtually every aspect of society.

The New Age movement has been called a conspiracy even by its advocates, who claim that “there are tens of thousands of entry points to this conspiracy. Wherever people share experiences, they connect sooner or later with each other and eventually with larger circles. Each day their number grows.”<sup>1</sup>

Its conspirators, who number in the millions,<sup>2</sup> can be found teaching in the classroom, chairing executive corporate committees, supervising science laboratories, leading out in government,

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entertaining in the show biz world, and leading the way in the alternative medicine field. They are among the antiwar activists, the feminists, the pro-environmentalists; they are in health-related institutions and even in some Christian churches. They can be found among the white-as well as blue-collar workers and among every ethnic group. Some are self-declared, ardent proponents, while others quietly keep their New Age lifestyles at a low profile.

Marilyn Ferguson wrote *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, considered by some to be the “handbook” of the New Age movement. She affirms that

the Aquarian Conspirators range across all levels of income and education, from the humblest to the highest. There are schoolteachers and office workers, famous scientists, government officials and lawmakers, artists and millionaires, taxi drivers and celebrities, leaders in medicine, education, law, psychology. Some are open in their advocacy, and their names may be familiar. Others are quiet about their involvement, believing they can be more effective if they are not identified with ideas that have all too often been misunderstood.<sup>3</sup>

One of these familiar New Age names is John Naisbitt, the prolific writer on corporate megatrends, who gave his testimony in the foreword for *The Aquarian Conspiracy*.

Rarely has a book articulated and documented what so many of us were secretly thinking... my book, *Megatrends*, was the soft-core document on change; *The Aquarian Conspiracy* was “the hard-core stuff.”... *Megatrends* spoke of changes in our society; *The Aquarian Conspiracy* dealt with the change in ourselves, in our souls.<sup>4</sup>

The Christian Research Newsletter informed its readers that according to one researcher:

Sociologists at U.C. Santa Barbara... estimate that as many as 12 million Americans could be considered active participants in the New Age Movement, and another 30 million are avidly interested. If all of these people were brought together in a church-like organization, it would be the third-largest religious denomination in America.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the legions of sympathizers and open, self-declared New Age conspirators, tens of thousands more, including unsuspecting Christians, are caught up in its influence without even realizing it. These people are not consciously working in the New Age movement, but they have unknowingly bought into some phase of its philosophy.

Often I am asked to speak on the New Age. At the end of every presentation, people come up and speak with me. Some thank me

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profusely for making them aware of the New Age movement. Others express a genuine concern about some of the areas I have identified as New Age. Unsuspectingly, some of these folks, or a close friend of theirs, have become involved or have been practicing some aspect of the New Age. The New Age movement has quietly come in while we were asleep, like an odorless vapor that has enveloped the whole atmosphere, touching each of our lives, some more than others.

What is the New Age movement?

By now, you may be wondering, “Exactly what is this movement that has found such fertile ground and flourished so rapidly in America?” Twenty years ago - even a decade ago - few were aware of the widespread, evolving momentum the New Age movement was creating.

The New Age movement is an umbrella term used to describe a conglomeration or kaleidoscope of beliefs based on spiritualism, humanism, and Eastern mystical religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Johanna Michaelsen, in her book *Like Lambs to the Slaughter*, says: “Western occultism and humanism have embraced Eastern mysticism to their bosom and the bizarre offspring of this union has been christened the New Age Movement.”<sup>6</sup>

The New Age movement is a revival of such occult and spiritualistic practices as: reincarnation, mystical meditation, pantheism, oneness with the universe, channeling, numerology, astrology, parapsychology, holistic health of various types, and psychic phenomena. Thus the New Age is not really new, as Shirley MacLaine, one of the leading New Age proponents, admits:

There’s nothing new about the New Age. It is, as has been correctly reported, a compilation of many ancient spiritual points of view relating to belief, the nature of reality, the practice of living, ritual, and truth, all predominately originating in cultures other than those of the West.<sup>7</sup>

The New Age is a movement that seeks to cast off the claims of Christ on humanity and encourages human beings to look within, rather than outside of, themselves for spiritual growth and direction. The New Age movement is not easy to define, since it has no organized body, no written creed, and no apparent human leader. Instead, it is a powerful network of independent key individuals, small and large groups, whose common goal is a transformed America and a “new world order.” It is a movement that is continually evolving and evading a definite description. Not every person in the New Age

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movement is knowingly participating in all of the hundreds of facets that make up this massive collusion. Most New Agers take those aspects that turn them on and leave the rest. In some cases, those following some aspect of New Age practice or espousing some New Age idea are not even aware that they are part of a massive movement, much less that certain other beliefs and practices are also a part of this alternative belief system. These people are not to be condemned or ostracized, but lovingly warned.

The New Age is so intriguing and diversified in its scope that it appeals to the very young and old alike. Three-year-olds are mesmerized by occult TV cartoons and Nintendo electronic games. Aging adults, who may have given up on conventional health treatments because they were dissatisfied with the results or received impersonal treatment, are experimenting with alternative holistic health and New Age pseudo-healers. Within the New Age movement, there is something for everyone - the housewife and the yuppie; the executive and the teenager; the senior citizen and the child.

One reason this movement is so alluring is that it gives a sense of self-control and power. It promises inner "spiritual" growth, discovery of one's "higher self," knowledge and understanding of the mystical world around us, personal insights for the future, and oneness with "God." There are no absolutes in New Age thinking. Whatever you decide is right, is right. Most of all, there is no biblical concept of sin, judgment, or death. There is only "karma," self-realization, and the cycles of life (reincarnation).

For example, in March 1989, Ozel Tendzin, spiritual leader of the Vajradhatu International Buddhists (the largest branch of Tibetan Buddhism in America), was exposed as having tested positive for the AIDS virus. The 3,500 members of Tendzin's group were stunned! Tendzin, whose homosexual activities were no secret, had been infected for several years, but did not acknowledge it until both male and female companions were found to be infected.

In a telephone interview, John Dart, Los Angeles Times religion editor, spoke with one of Tendzin's board members, Martin Janowitz, who stated, "We don't have a concept within our religion of moral or immoral sexual practices. We don't view, as do some other religions, homosexual relations as any kind of sin."<sup>8</sup>

What could be more appealing to human nature than to believe that there is no sin, that there is no death, that we can become as God,

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that we are gods - echoing the first New Age message by the old serpent in the tree six thousand years ago?

A paradigm shift

The “movers and shakers” of this New Age movement call it the Aquarian conspiracy to transform the world. The name Aquarian is derived from Aquarius, the eleventh astrological sign in the zodiac. Aquarius is the water bearer, pouring out refreshing, gently flowing water, symbolizing an age of peace, love, and spiritual enlightenment. Contrast this with the previous Age of Pisces, depicted by the symbol of two fish and called a “dark and violent” period of earth’s history. Ironically, the Age of Pisces was the period in history when Christianity developed and spread throughout most of the world.

New Agers are working toward a paradigm shift that they claim is now taking place - a new way of thinking. A new mindset. A new way of looking at the world, the universe, and life itself. Others describe it as a “quantum leap in consciousness,” a sudden significant leap forward in global and universal awareness. New Agers compare this paradigm shift to other radical changes that have taken place in human experience - such as the enormous adjustments “flat earthers” had to make when Christopher Columbus proved the earth was round. This had a great impact on the sciences, literature, and education of that time. Textbooks had to be rewritten. Maps had to be revised to include the great expanse of the Pacific and the other half of the world.

Or this shift could be compared to the change that occurred around the turn of this century - a change that began as two brothers sat in church one Sunday morning listening intently as their preacher-father addressed one of the popular concerns of the day. “If God would have wanted men to fly,” their father said, “He would have given us wings.” Then and there, Orville and Wilbur Wright decided to prove their father wrong. And when they did, people around the world had to change their views on man’s limitations and his ability, for the first time in history, to enter the domain of the birds. It was the beginning of the air age. The invention of the flying machine immensely modified the way people traveled, communicated, and fought wars. Technology and industry changed direction to accommodate the Wright brothers’ invention.

In the same fashion, New Agers believe that the present paradigm shift involves extraordinary intervention from outer space, bombardment from the spirit world, contact with universal spirit

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entities and guides, and intense communication with extraterrestrial intelligences. For them, the New Age involves powerful spiritual energy radiating from the astrological constellations, invisible power saturating our planet as we enter the Age of Aquarius. They see all these things combining to inspire and energize earthly human beings, much as Christians believe the outpouring of the latter rain will do in the last days. The present is a period of spiritual awakening, New Agers say, of discovering one's "higher self by focusing inward to the "god within us."

### Centers, clinics, and channelers

As a result of this new interest, New Age centers such as the Akashic Book Shop in Thousand Oaks, California, and the Yes Bookstore in Washington D.C., have sprung up in virtually every major city. There is such a demand for New Age literature today that one New Age book distributor in the United States recently reported that he has 3,200 bookstores on his customer list.<sup>9</sup>

West Hollywood, California, has probably the largest New Age bookstore in America - The Bodhi Tree, a pair of two-story houses on Melrose Avenue converted into a bookstore. It gets its name from the fact that Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) was sitting under a bodhi tree when he was inspired with the "Four Noble Truths."<sup>10</sup> Its doors are open twelve hours every day to accommodate customers, who range from movie and TV celebrities to executives, college students, and homemakers. It stocks over twenty-seven thousand New Age titles, in approximately three hundred sections. Topics range from New Age cuisine to New Age sex. If it's New Age you want, you can find it at The Bodhi Tree - magazines, books, crystals, wands, and other New Age paraphernalia.

The rooms are filled with ceiling-high bookcases. On the few walls not covered with books hang pictures of gurus and other spiritual guides. You would be amazed and shocked to see that among the pictures of Gandhi, Sister Teresa, Paramahansa Yogananda, and other gurus is a picture of Christ! New Agers believe that Christ, during those silent years of His youth and young adult life, went to India to study and became a guru to Christianity.

New Age health food stores have come into vogue. New Age holistic health clinics of all kinds have opened up around the country. Many New Age resorts, such as John Denver's "Wind Star" in Colorado, have become popular retreats. And to help people know

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what is out there in the New Age world, New Age fairs have been organized in many major cities to display products and acquaint you with the movement's beliefs.

Today the channeling business is a multimillion dollar enterprise. Channelers, the new name for the old spirit mediums, are highly sought after for their mediatory consulting services. These modern-day mediums have exchanged their dark, spooky parlors, weird garb, and crystal balls for well-lighted modern consulting offices. Many have master's and Ph.D. degrees in the various disciplines of psychology and other related fields. Their businesses are thriving because people today have a great interest in the future, in life after death, and in consulting with the dead and the spirit entities of the universe.

In 1988 "nearly half of American adults (42 percent)" believed they had been contacted by someone who had died. This was up from 27 percent from a national survey taken eleven years earlier.<sup>11</sup>

### A threat to Christianity

Millions of Americans from every walk of life are concerned with inner growth, and they have been experimenting with such things as Eastern meditation and mysticism. The 1990 Gallup poll, *Religion in America, Approaching the Year 2000*, says:

Few will dispute the fact that the 90's will be a period of severe testing for the churches of America, as they seek to relate to the populace that is increasingly drawn to spirituality, but less enthusiastic about organized religion, which they often find to be irrelevant, unfulfilling, and boring. Of particular concern to the traditional churches is the growing interest among the populous in paranormal, psychic, ghostly and other world experiences, and their susceptibility to movements such as the New Age, which traditionalists believe lead to a worship of self rather than God.<sup>12</sup>

Even more alarming, this Gallup survey shows that the popular beliefs and philosophies of the New Age are just as widespread among Americans who are "deeply religious" in a traditional sense as they are among those who are not. Russell Chandler, a religion writer for the *Los Angeles Times* and author of the book, *Understanding the New Age*, says that "the New Age is probably the most widespread and powerful phenomenon affecting our culture today. In newsbiz, we call it 'hot/'<sup>13</sup>

The New Age phenomenon is not something we can brush off lightly or ignore. It is dangerous because it strikes at the very heart of

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our Christian faith - salvation through Jesus Christ and belief in a personal God. In the following pages we will take a closer look at some of these undermining New Age beliefs that can be traced back to the Garden of Eden and that old serpent, the devil. We will see how his candy-coated versions of these forbidden fruits are being sold to us today by his New Age peddlers.

1. Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, Inc., 1987), 25.
2. *Christian Research Newsletter*, 5 (March/April 1992).
3. Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, 23, 24.
4. *Ibid.*, 13.
5. *Christian Research Newsletter*, 5 (March/April 1992).
6. Johanna Michaelsen, *Like Lambs to the Slaughter* (Eugene, Oreg.: Harvest House Publishers, 1989), 10.
7. Shirley MacLaine, *Going Within: A Guide for Inner Transformation* (New York: Bantam Books, 1989), 29, 30.
8. *Los Angeles Times*, 3 March 1989.
9. "Demystifying New Age Books," *Publishers Weekly*, 24 June 1988, 58, 60.
10. John Snelling, *The Buddhist Handbook* (Rochester, Vt.: Inner Traditions International, Ltd., 1991), 21, 22.
11. Russell Chandler, *Understanding the New Age* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988), 20.
12. George Gallup, Jr., *Religion in America - Approaching the Year 2000, 1990 Report*, 10.
13. Chandler, *Understanding the New Age* (dust jacket).