The Challenge of the New Age to Christian Theology and Life

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Abstract of Dissertation

The New Age Movement is an eclectic and syncretistic amorphous paradigm shift in world-views which is particularly affecting modern western culture. The major concern of this dissertation is to demonstrate how the New Age Movement challenges the evolution of Christian theology and the body-life of the church in its doctrine and devotion to God, the earth and human need. The thesis of this dissertation is that the New Age Movement as expressed in modern western culture is symptomatic of changes in foundational thinking which have also come about with regard to a change from a Biblical view of the origins of life, the authority and inspiration of the Bible and the uniqueness of the Gospel of Christ. The challenge of the New Age to the evolution of Christian theology is to establish an informative and evangelistic dialogue with the New Age to awaken within churches and individuals the various themes which have to do with care for the earth and human need without sacrificing the foundational structure of Christian belief in creation, the authority of the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation.

The introduction will introduce the popularity and wide scope of the New Age. Chapter one will follow with three sections. The first will introduce a wide range of definitions and critiques of the New Age by both protagonists and antagonists. The second section will offer an exposition of major themes in modern western culture and the global scene which constitute a paradigm shift. The third section will give an exposition of the major identifying marks of the New Age Movement.

Chapters two through four are selective of three major themes which are illustrative of the New Age and which directly affect a challenge to Christian theology. Chapter two offers an exposition of the New Age resurgence of mythology in the quest for meaning, purpose and value in life. Selective illustrations have been offered from New Age Gaia and Goddess myths from science, witchcraft and eco-feminism. Chapter three opens with illustrations of New Age spirituality and theology. Further sections in this chapter include the Findhorn Community, A Course In Miracles, Psycho-spirituality and Psychosynthesis. Chapter four demonstrates the New Age view of evolution and ecology with illustrations from Ken Carey and Peter Russell. This chapter shows the attempt of the New Age to incorporate science as well as subjective thinking to gain credibility.

Chapter five analyses the challenges of and responses to the New Age in Christian theology and the churches. Section one deals with responses to the New Age with examples from the hard core Millennialist attack, the “conspiracy” approach, and those who have “gone native” in an attempt to establish dialogue with the New Age. The concluding chapter sums up those themes of the New Age which are positive and which challenge an awakening in Christian theology and the churches. A final analyses demonstrates that if Christian theology sacrifices creation, the authority of the Bible, and the historical view of the Bible for views of evolution, subjective authority and a mythologised or demythologised Gospel, there would be no foundation left with which Christianity would remain a distinctive message of salvation under no other name but Jesus. Therefore the challenge of the New Age to the evolution of Christian theology is to awaken the Biblical view to the positive needs of spirituality and care for the earth and human need without sacrificing the Biblical teaching on creation, the Bible and the Gospel.
DEDICATION

To Christ and His Church,
and to those who share the quest
for a better world and a deeper spirituality.
I want to give honour first of all to my wife, Kelly, and our children Jessica, Jay Barton, Ashleigh, Auston and Aleisha for the sacrifices of love they made during the years of this study. Secondly, I want to honour my supervisors for their encouragement over the past three years; to Professor Alistair Kee for his insightful suggestions and encouragement in helping me to keep on track, for reading the material and assisting me in putting structure to a subject that wants to be amorphous, and to Doctor Frank Whaling for reading the material, for offering insightful encouragement with respect to content and comprehension, and for correcting my wording. Most of all I thank them for their objectivity, their kindness, and their gestures of friendship. May there be a blessing in this for them also.
DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the following dissertation and thesis are my original work submitted as the result of research carried out at New College, University of Edinburgh from October 1992 to June 1994.

Barton Dean English
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Introduction

The sword is to give way to the spirit. As it is above, so shall it be below. Heaven is coming to earth. A New Age is coming and now is here. Growing since the 1960s and gaining momentum, the New Age is expressive of people searching for meaning outside the realm of “the church” and traditional religion. Out of a time of hierarchies and utilitarian values, of authority and power-over there is evolving a search for personal freedom in an authentic life. One New Ager comments:

I wasn’t sure about it, because it sounded a bit strange. I ended up here rather reluctantly, to give it a try, and it seems to have fitted in and answered some of the questions and answers. So I’m happy that I’ve started on a journey that I’ve no idea where it’s going to take me, but it has just opened up a new set of horizons for me.¹

Out of a quest for meaning, purpose and value in modern western culture people have shifted from humanism through existentialism and now into a form of humanistic existentialism in the spiritual mode which has become known by the umbrella term “New Age.” This evolution of thought has been seen to shift people from traditional Christian beliefs to a resurgence of paganism which incorporates various positive themes with various unorthodox beliefs in a movement toward pluralistic and privatised religion. This is the New Age of which Marilyn Ferguson says:

the indefinable force is an idea whose time has come... Whether or not it is written in the stars, a different age seems to be upon us; and Aquarius, the waterbearer in the ancient zodiac, symbolizing flow and the quenching of an ancient thirst, is an appropriate symbol.²

William Bloom, who organises the Monday evening Alternatives Ministry at St. James’ Church in Piccadilly agrees, “In my view, the New Age is neither a movement nor a religion set apart from others. It is not something one can

choose or not to join. It is essentially a view of the time we live in and the world we are creating. It is therefore for everyone."3 The effects of the New Age are permeating the lives of western culture in many ways without people’s awareness that there is a New Age Movement. The New Age Movement is affecting virtually every facet of modern western life. It is seen in the changing paradigms of science and education from Einstein’s Theory of Relativity to Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle. It is evident as an exodus from traditional Christian values and a movement toward pagan religions and subjective morality. While in one sense Christianity is portrayed as more and more distant and less and less important to people’s everyday lives, there is a rising quest for spiritual satisfaction outside the church. A new faith for the future is rising in the New Age system which has all the claims of good news, yet with another gospel than that of the biblical text. The dissatisfaction and restlessness of modern western culture drives one to search the inner-self for meaning and new answers to the evolution of life.

A spokesperson for the Alternatives Ministry at St James’ Church, Piccadilly says, “There is a spiritual dimension beyond the senses, and we all have access to it. You don’t have to follow a religion that tells you what to do, you find out from within yourself — an inside knowledge— your own truth, not a Buddha or Jesus but an Absolute that you can contact and experience.”4 The New Age has affected psychology and medicine as a further progression of the Human Potential Movement into Transpersonal Psychology, Psychosynthesis and a holistic approach to life which allows for eastern remedies and self-healing techniques. Politically it is seen in the talk of a New World Order and One World Government. In such popular themes as ecological concerns, the New Age is represented in the Green Movement and in what is called “deep ecology,” — the deity of planet Earth. The New Age has arrived.

Popularity

Virtually everything can be converted to a New Age use. For example, in music it does not refer so much to a genre as to a therapeutic or other use of music to create an environment. It includes everything from shaman drums to Bach. According to Gordon Melton's New Age Encyclopedia, New Age music takes in around 100 million U.S. dollars per annum. In educational systems the New Age converts into recognising the primary value of a holistic education involving the whole person as opposed to educating the mind alone. Leaders of this field include Rudolf Steiner, Maria Montessori, and A. S. Neill with the Waldorf, Montessori and Summerhill schools respectively. In the business world the New Age is seen in shifts of training techniques such as using the Chinese art of I Ching and other esoteric anti-stress and self-help management training in numerous companies in Britain including enterprises such as IBM, Shell, British Telecom, Rowntree Macintosh, Clydesdale Bank, Esso and Rover. The universe is one says the ancient Chinese text, a book of philosophy and religion used to train employees. This is a definite shift for today’s business trainees. A toss of coins and consulting the sixty-four wisdom sayings on all of life assists the employee in decision making, dealing with change and flexibility. The I Ching philosophy says that there is meaning in every event, even tossing coins.

John Drane relates the subtlety of New Age infiltration into society through the business world as exampled in a bizarre story of a group of top executives of a multi-national corporation in Scotland who were sent out on a management course. The course turned out to be a wilderness survival trek with no kit except their suits and briefcases. The idea was to shock into awareness the realisation that business men are left-brained and in need of accessing a balance with their right-brained intuitive and creative self. This is the New Age way of increasing personal performance in the business world through self-actualisation. Drane notes that many would have nothing to do with the New Age if they thought it was a religion or spiritual

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phenomenon. Thus the New Age comes in through another door and is taken seriously and convincingly as “a course of training for their everyday work.”7 Often businesses even mask the use of the term “New Age” and are unhappy with the use of the term in describing their training courses.8

Patricia Yates and Richard Beaumont came to Totness in Devonshire, which stands 3,000 years old as Britain’s oldest town. They came to start “Kindred Spirits”, an alternative spirituality magazine for the New Age. They say their work shows a rising “interest in all kinds of spiritual experiences quite outside what is normally called religion,”9 Christopher Titmus, a leading writer on spiritual issues also demonstrates the wide interest in spirituality by those who would not claim to be religious as such. Titmus set up a meditation centre called Gaia House in an old vicarage. Over seven hundred people attend annually. In Titmus’ words they are “freeing [themselves] from religion and its language in order to open up to the New Age.”10 Neil Rutherford organises Eagle’s Wing in Buckinghamshire. It is a year long retreat centre for learning the practice of Shamanism from ancient American Indians. Rutherford claims, “Shamanism is the oldest psycho-spiritual way of people on this planet.”11 Rutherford goes on to say that Shamanism has been incorporated in the New Age’s deeper journey to seek out the spirit within.

The shaman is the healer, the spiritual guide who uses drums and other music to focus on brain waves and to access inner energy, approaching a deeper state of consciousness wherein he or she can access imagery from within. Using the language of the dream world that throws up an image of qualities that a person needs to implement in their life, the person accesses inner knowledge of self. By connecting to the inner self a person can ultimately get in touch with the cosmic Self. This happens when the devotee opens the door from his or her little conscious mind to the great spirits. The images received in the mind relate to what that person needs to do.12

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7 Ibid. p. 32.
8 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid. Rutherford gives this explanation of his Eagle’s Wing shaman course.
This is the search for the perfect self— the search within. While at variance with traditional Christian views because of its belief that God is within and that there is no point in praying to, surrendering to or worshipping a God “out there,” the New Age finds itself more at home in comparison with Buddhism, Hinduism and Shamanistic religion. However, true to the eclectic and syncretistic nature of the New Age, people may espouse a New Age world-view yet also consider themselves accepting of God as "other". For example Sir George Trevelyan would be comfortable with a God who is "other". Although contemporary as a father figure in British New Age circles Trevelyan considers himself an Anglican. This too exemplifies the New Age attempt to include exceptions to its norm.

A New Ager will not necessarily stand out in a crowd, though some will make use of crystal pendants and rainbow clothing with bumper stickers reading “Born Again Pagan.” Attendance at an annual Psychic Fair or the Festival for Mind, Body and Spirit in London (now in its 17th year) will show a parade of techniques for sale from Acupressure to Zodics which promise to heal body, soul and spirit and to open the third eye of enlightenment to secret wisdom whereby one might rise in consciousness to create a critical mass that will bring on an immediate transformation of the whole human race and the planet with a quantum leap in evolution. Crystal power promises to have regenerative forces which will heal and add longevity to one’s earthly life. The crystals detect the imbalance in a person whether in body, soul or spirit and thus work to bring a balance of health within the individual.

From one point-of-view the very thing the New Age advocates as the simple life of non Capitalism is contradicted by the “Big Business” of the New Age with a turn over of 4.5 billion dollars in the United States. To some extent the very use of the term “New Age” means big money to commercialism. It sells music, rocks, oils, toys, treatments, therapies, seminars and consultations, medicines and sporting goods, all guaranteed to be environment friendly and user friendly. There has been an explosion of books published on the New Age. New Age bookshops carry every flavour of spirituality and self-help imaginable from political decentralisation to personal healing, from breakthrough concepts of science to esoteric rituals. Bantam Books were the first to create a specific category which specialises in
New Age publications. The sort of books that before the 1960s would have been found on the dusty back shelves of second hand book stores are now in multi edition reprint. Publishers such as B. Dalton, Walden Books, Doubleday, Brentano’s, Crown, Routledge & Kegan Paul (Arkana), HarperCollins (Aquarian/Thorsons) and other major publishers and distributors have created entirely new imprints and sections for the publication of New Age books. The American Bookseller produced an entire issue on New Age publications in January 1988 and Time Magazine stated that more than 2,500 New Age or occult bookstores cover the United States alone.13 Once obscure authors such as Alice Bailey, considered the mother of the New Age and Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, the grand-mother of the New Age, along with such titles and teachings as The Secret Doctrine, The Plan, Theosophy and Anthroposophy have now become popular generations after their time.

There is an annual sale of over one million books relating to the New Age, and publishers are struggling to meet the demand for new titles. In 1991 over 800 new titles were published in the United Kingdom. Eileen Campbell, a New Age publisher, says she publishes in excess of 250 new titles a year.14 An interview with the manager of the Body and Soul Bookshop in Edinburgh disclosed the overall best sellers were those which were concerned with self-help methodology. People want to experience something more in life within a D.I.Y. methodology. The 1990-1991 New Leaf Catalog of Books for Growth & Change lists over 15,000 books available on “metaphysics, conscious living, and conscious books for young readers.”15 Since 1975 the New Leaf Distributing Company has been wholesaling with a holistic approach. The 1990-1991 Catalog introduction reads:

For 15 years New Leaf Publishing Company has been supplying retailers with New Age related books, magazines, music, spoken audio and many other items. We are a wholesale distributor currently (1990) with a staff of 60 people, 3 cats and 2 part-time dogs. The inspiration that birthed New Leaf was a desire to help

with the distribution of materials useful for people seeking spiritual growth while earning a ‘right-livelihood’ for ourselves.\textsuperscript{16}

Although in Britain the New Age Movement is relatively novel when compared to its Californian mother, the most comprehensive display is to be found at Britain’s first New Age community, the Findhorn Community on the Moray Firth in the north of Scotland. There participants find no formal doctrine or creed. Members follow their own path to spiritual growth. Presently there are around 200 tenants and about 300 more associates in the area. However, around 9,000 people attend the Findhorn Community annually. The most popular course is “Experience Week” which gives an introduction to Findhorn and the various communal aspects and rituals practised there to bring a spiritual view to all of life, common or other. The community is united in the cause of advancing spirituality beyond the occasional retreat or weekend seminar. Their attempt is to move spirituality from the temple, ashram or church to being something that is natural. Craig Gibsone from the Findhorn Foundation says they are “attempting to show that being spiritual is being natural, and that it happens throughout your day and throughout your week and that there is no separation.”\textsuperscript{17} One leans to the view that he or she is “not a human being on a spiritual journey, but a spiritual being on a human journey. God was something very distant. Now God is something that is right there all the time.”\textsuperscript{18}

In California, the streets are literally lined in some areas with the widest range of eclectic religion. It has become a virtual laboratory for the New Age. A survey showed that only 44 percent of the people there still believe in what would be called a Christian view of God as in the Bible. An equal amount believe in an impersonal spiritual force, a key New Age belief.\textsuperscript{19} Gordon Melton, Professor of Religion in the University of California at Santa Barbara has studied the emergence of the New Age in America and concludes the “reason we hear so much is [the New Age] has reached the Yup [Young Upcoming Professional] middle-class American and public

\begin{footnotes}
\item[16] Ibid. inside cover.
\item[18] Ibid. Gibsone states this as a theme of Findhorn spiritual development.
\end{footnotes}
personalities have identified with it." Marilyn Ferguson cites a public poll conducted by Yankelovich, Skelly, and White which revealed the following:

80 percent of the respondents expressed a strong interest in 'an inner search for meaning'. In 1975 the National Opinion Research Corporation reported that more than 40 per cent of the adults polled believed they had had a genuine mystical experience. A 1974 Roper poll found that 53 per cent believed in the reality of psi, with stronger belief correlated with higher income and education. A 1976 Gallup poll reported that 12 per cent were involved in a mystical discipline.

A Gallup poll released in February 1978 reported that ten million Americans were engaged in some aspect of Eastern religion, nine million in spiritual healing. In 1989 Walter Martin reported the following figures:

35 to 50 million people are involved in some form of cultic organization throughout America and on foreign mission fields. Almost 60 million dabble in some New Age practice or occult thinking. Over the past 25 years, national magazines, newspapers, and television programs have proclaimed and trumpeted the New Age cult.

Donald Reeves states that the New Age is now worldwide, "some ninety million strong."

Roots of the New Age

With a cafeteria style of spirituality, where everyone picks and chooses what each likes and leaves the rest, the New Age typifies the age of individualism yet in transition to the sense of a need for community. In San Francisco this

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step forward for the New Age is being manifested in the arrival of New Age churches such as Radiant Light Ministries which holds two Sunday services as a place to come for nurturing, a support group and empowering each other with the communal chanting of “I am of Radiant Light and I am free...” This New Age church started with twenty members in 1986 and has grown to an attendance of between five and six hundred at celebration services. This adds a further dimension to the individual’s quest for the wisdom of the universe supposed to be found within the individual. Fellowship and belongingness in communal relationship complete with sermons, songs, and music makes Radiant Light a harbinger of the 1990’s New Age churches.

After a period of reactionary individualism the New Age is finding that “we actually want to be a part of a group.”

Several writers on the New Age have devoted substantial sections and in some cases entire books to the study of the origins of the New Age. Generally the writers take the readers on a whistle stop tour of what has been perceived as a history of the movement. Some will trace roots of the New Age back to the days of the 1700s with Emanuel Swedenborg. Born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1688, Swedenborg became one of Sweden’s leading scientists. Later he championed the primacy of the invisible spiritual world and claimed he had been taken on an astral tour of the solar system. In 1747 he moved to London and between the years 1749-1756 wrote his eight volume Arcana Coelestia entirely in Latin. In this work he recounts the details of his adventures, claiming, “It has been granted me now for some years to be constantly and uninterruptedly in company with spirits and angels.” His claims were that these beings assisted him in correctly predicting such events as a great fire in Stockholm and is own death. Then came Franz Anton Mesmer’s belief in a “universal magnetic fluid” which yielded spiritual energy, magical and healing powers. The rise of Darwinian

evolution and the Free Thought Movement of the 1850s began to undermine religion.

During this time also Ellen G. Harmon (1827-1915), after marrying James White, came in contact with William Miller's prediction of the return of Christ in 1843 or 1844. The obvious failure of this happening led to the proclamation that in fact Christ had returned, but in an invisible cosmic realm on October 22, 1844. In 1844 Ellen White was influenced to have visions which she claimed put her in contact with extraterrestrials resulting in the claim of a revelation that she along with 144,000 were to visit the realms of all other worlds. This led to the eventual founding of the Seventh Day Adventist Church.27

From here the tour takes in such evolved teachings as Phineas Parkhurst Quimby (1802-1866), a mesmerist who believed that many diseases could be healed by suggestion. In 1859 he began teaching what he called the Science of Christ, Science of Health and Christian Science out of which evolved the work of Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) in Christian Science along with the writing and work of Emma Curtis Hopkins (1853-1925) and other metaphysical philosophies which became the New Thought Movement. Hopkins's work was apparently begun in controversy with Eddy's, thus there is some discrepancy as to which had the greater influence.

By the mid 1800s to the early 1900s Spiritualism began to rise with Margaret and Kate Fox's rappings (1848). Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) began to channel the philosophical religion of Theosophy (1875). Her 1200 page book Isis Unveiled (1877) was channelled from the Masters of Wisdom, Ascended Masters or Great White Brotherhood and exposes her new world-view that beyond Spiritualism is the possibility of making contact with cosmic beings and gnostic wisdom. She made familiar use of the term "reincarnation", the concept of the lost continent of Lemuria and the idea of the return of the world saviour, Lord Maitreya. Later and more significantly the writings of Alice Bailey (1880-1949) and the Arcane School are sighted for their use of the term "new age" and its incorporation. According to the channelled writings from Djwhal Khul, "The Plan" was set forth to bring about what Bailey called the new age in which a coming world religion

27 Ibid. pp. 103-104.
would unite East and West. These times also marked a rise in occult popularity and also spawned Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophy and the I Am Religious Movement with its emphasis on the metaphysical powers of light, colour and crystals.

The second stage of the history looks at tracing the thought through the Beat generation and the hippie movement of the 1960s when such figures as Aldous Huxley, Richard Alpert (Ram Dass), Timothy Leary and Theodore Roszak began exiting the University scene of intellectualism for an anti-establishment leadership in mind-expanding drugs. It was the time of heralding the dawning of the Age of Aquarius. The next stage of development came from the East and from psychology with the rise of eastern religions in the West and the Human Potential Movement. This carried the development of the New Age from the flower power ‘60s to the self-help ‘70s. During this period the New Age began to gain intellectual credibility.

This history is an “acquired characteristic.” As the New Age developed and began to be called the New Age, a look back saw the writings of those in this history who became popular to New Agers. Bailey’s term “New Age” stuck in preference to the Age of Aquarius. Gordon Melton in his edited New Age Encyclopedia marks the actual beginning of the New Age movement from circa 1971. By that time the third phase of history was connected with eastern religions and transpersonal psychology. Melton claimed these as “the key new elements needed to create the distinctive New Age synthesis” so that:

metaphysical leaders could begin to articulate the New Age vision. The East West Journal became the first national periodical to focus on the issues of the new movement, and Baba Ram Dass, a transformed refugee from the psychedelic age, emerged as the first national prophet. Early exponents created the typical organizational form of the new movement: networks so loosely tied together as to exist merely as mailing lists. By 1972, the first national network directories were published: Ira Friedlander’s The Year One Catalog and the first edition of the Spiritual Community Guide.28

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It was in the late 1980s that the movement became most popular significantly through the efforts of Marilyn Ferguson of Interface Press, editor of Brain/Mind Bulletin. Ferguson’s survey of the movement in her best seller, *The Aquarian Conspiracy* became the model definitive work on the rising movement. The next most prominent influence to Ferguson and Ram Dass came through David Spangler’s writings. After three years as codirector of the Findhorn Community in Scotland, Spangler moved to Washington to start the Lorian Association as a New Age community in America. The next major boost came from the popularity of Shirley MacLaine’s books and television production which raised the sales of the New Age movement to national and international popular awareness. Jon Klimo, authority on New Age channelling, says, “Critics and fans alike concur that MacLaine has done more than any other single person in recent times to soften the ground for people to believe and participate in things they once avoided for fear of being thought ‘flaky’.”29

As noted from personal interviews with “New Agers” the term New Age is not altogether acceptable. In the Odyssey Books store, in Lubbock, Texas and in several health care shops the typical flavour and savour of the New Age is evident in the scent of incense and aroma oils, hushed talk and taped cassette music waving over the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. The young lady serving at the counter engaged in conversation to the effect that she worked there to have access to the source of the wide range of books which reveal the plethora of spiritual pursuits from which one might choose in a quest for enlightenment. The person, like so many New Agers, had come from a traditional Christian background, yet found the liturgy and doctrine stifling to her freedom of expression and feminine intuition. The young lady was put off with religion and said, “I don’t know why people use the term New Age, it doesn’t define anything. It’s not New Age, its just being what you want to be.” The manager, an elderly lady, came into the conversation, to relate that her shop offers a wide range of spiritual interests, and that many people while initially leaving the Christian faith to pursue other spiritual interests will reach a spiritual enlightenment from other sources which sometimes leads them back to their church with stronger, deeper renewed faith.

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In respect of comments as to the use of the term “New Age” John Drane, in his book What is the New Age Saying to the Church?, notes that some New Agers are “backing off from using the term.” Drane cites Kenny Kaufman, producer of San Francisco’s annual Whole Life Expo, as stating, “It was OK in the ’70s to say “New Age” but now people think “rip-off” when they see “New Age”. So we’re now calling it the new era of awareness.” Drane furthers the strength of this comment with the response of Hemitra Crecraft and Sue King from their Chester County New Age emporium, “We don’t even call ourselves New Age. It has the connotation of the occult.” Carol Riddell, of the Findhorn Community says they too have grown weary of the term because of its caricatured association with gullibility and occult sensationalists rather than a pure search for spirituality.

The vision of the New Age envelops many contradictory ideas therefore any understanding of the movement as a whole has to be relegated to overall ideals rather than individual beliefs. A grave error would be to infer that any one person’s interpretation would speak for the whole movement, since it is characteristic of the movement that there are to be no set doctrines. However as is expressed in this dissertation, there are overall themes, ideals and goals which do typically apply as illustrations of the kind of beliefs which flourish in the New Age. Foremost in the ideals is the need for transformation. That is the key word for the Newness of the Age. Typically as the “acquired history” demonstrates, the movement is an incorporation of old ideas with new packaging. The vision of transformation involves first a change in individuals which leads to a critical mass transformation of social order and the world environment. The transformation is to occur through accessing what is called by many terms, prana, mana, the odic force, orgone energy, the holy spirit, Ch’i, mind, the force, love and many others. The overall goal is the emergence of a utopian society through a spiritual path. Significantly this path considers the need for life after death and the continuance of the evolutionary processes by which the transformation is to

31 Ibid., citing an interview with the Philadelphia Inquirer, 7 January 1990.
take place. Therefore some form of reincarnation or continued life after physical death is primary to the movement. Another aspect is the affirmation of personal Godhood which attempts the elimination of dualisms such as good and evil and promotes the idea that all the answers are to be found within through becoming one, recognising interconnectedness and raising consciousness to Godhood.

Due to the decline of traditional Christian views in modern western culture and consequently the loss of belief in an ultimate authority, there has been a shift in moral consciousness and a loss of meaning, purpose and value beyond instrumentality and utilitarianism. In such times people have begun a quest for meaning and hope, a spiritual quest. Having been taught evolution over Biblical creation, people have begun to look within for the answers rather than to some God "out there." Yet in all this there are resonant themes which still carry the impact of the Christian story.

In this dissertation the thesis presented is that the New Age movement is an eclectic and syncretistic amorphous paradigm shift in world-views which is particularly emerging as an attempt to answer the instability of social and spiritual vacuums in modern western culture and on the global scene. The New Age Movement as expressed in modern western culture is symptomatic of changes in foundational thinking which have also come about with regard to a Biblical view of the origins of life, the authority of the Bible and the uniqueness of the Gospel of Christ. Thus the challenge of the New Age to the evolution of Christian theology is to establish an informative and evangelistic dialogue with the New Age to awaken within churches and individuals the various themes which have to do with care for the earth and human need without sacrificing the foundational structure of Christian belief in creation, the authority of the Bible, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ for salvation.

Having introduced an overview of the popularity, roots and wide scope of the New Age, chapter one will follow with three sections. The first will introduce a wide range of definitions and critiques of the New Age by both protagonists and antagonists. The second section will offer an exposition of major themes in modern western culture and the global scene which
constitute a paradigm shift. The third section will give an exposition of the major identifying marks of the New Age Movement.

Chapters two through four are selective of three major themes which are illustrative of the New Age and which directly affect a challenge to Christian theology. Chapter two offers an exposition of the New Age resurgence of mythology in the quest for meaning, purpose and value in life within a culture that has lost its heroes and its stories. Selective illustrations have been offered from New Age Gaia and Goddess myths from science, witchcraft and eco-feminism.

Chapter three opens with illustrations of New Age spirituality and theology. The section on New Age theology is intended to demonstrate, as all themes are but illustrative of what is typical of New Age, the borrowed terminology of Christianity which has been given different meanings in an attempt to speak the language of western spirituality in a seemingly familiar context. However, while attempting to reach the soul, the New Age conclusions are often very different from the churches. Further sections in this chapter include illustrations of spirituality in the New Age as expressed in the Findhorn Community, A Course In Miracles, Psycho-spirituality and Psychosynthesis.

Chapter four demonstrates the New Age view of evolution and ecology with illustrations from Ken Carey’s channelled Starseed Transmissions and Peter Russell’s Planetary Awakening and fifth level evolution. This chapter shows the New Age’s incorporation of science as well as subjective thinking, theology and ecological consciousness to gain credibility in addressing the ecological crisis and the future of humanity.

Chapter five illustrates an analysis of the challenges of and responses to the New Age in Christian theology and the churches. Section one deals with responses to the New Age with examples from the hard core Millennialist attack, the “conspiracy” approach, and those who have “gone native” in an attempt to establish dialogue with the New Age.

The concluding chapter sums up those kinds of themes within the New Age which are positive and challenge an awakening in Christian theology and the
churches. A final analysis demonstrates that while there are many challenges within the themes of the New Age which are resonant of the Gospel and which should be enlivened within churches, if Christian theology sacrifices creation, the authority of the Bible, and the historical view of the Bible for views of evolution, subjective authority and a mythologised or demythologized Gospel, there would be little foundation left with which Christianity would remain a distinctive message of salvation under no other name but Jesus. Therefore the challenge of the New Age to the evolution of Christian theology is to awaken the Biblical view to the positive needs of spirituality, care for the earth and human need without sacrificing the Biblical teaching on creation, the Bible and the Gospel of salvation.

There are those who would say the church has entered the post-Christian era and that Christians must now endure a time of silent witness and insular fellowship while the New Age sails on. Others have incorporated with the New Age. Yet others realise the New Age as a great opportunity to present the Gospel to an age in which people are opening their hearts and lives to the quest for spirituality. The challenge is to establish an understanding yet evangelistic dialogue with the New Age, willing to take on board the credible commentary on the times as well as the failures of the churches to rise to the issues of the times, yet without sacrificing that which makes the Christ and the message of the Gospel unique for all time.
Chapter 1
Overview of the New Age

"A limited amount of knowledge leads us away from God, an elevated amount leads us back again;" or again, "The first drink out of the cup of science makes one atheistic, but at the bottom of the cup God awaits." Human beings, whether viewed as individuals or communities, have an innate longing to believe in something or someone who can bring forth in them their hope for the present and the future. This is represented from the earliest Sumerian civilisations of the Mesopotamian valley to the present world of pluralistic religions and in particular the eclectic and syncretistic phenomenon entitled The New Age. The New Age Movement or phenomenon constitutes evidence of a paradigm shift in the way people view reality. There is a change of world-views taking place in the occidental world. This new world-view is a synthesis of old ideas in new packaging, not new except in the sense that it has become popularised by a western culture that for nearly two thousand years has generally held a Christian point of view. The phrase "Christian point of view" itself became blurry long before the New Age was espoused, and to some extent that is the problem.

David Spangler, a leading channel and herald of the New Age elucidates:

As we enter into the New Age, what we are entering into is a cycle, a period of time, a period of unfoldment when truly humanity is the world initiate, the world saviour, and ultimately it is upon the shoulders of humanity that the future and the translation for the entry into light of this planet rest.

Its meaning as a new age is that for the first time in human history we have a chance to take up a conscious creative recognition of this fact and can begin acting upon it. Up to this time we have moved with evolution. Now comes the time to become the servants of evolution and through our own consciousness to release the light, the love, and the wisdom that will bring our renunciation of spiritual estate to its fruition in the occult redemption of the world.¹

According to Spangler and the New Age humanity will evolve in consciousness to the point of taking part in its own evolution. Rather than being a product of evolution, Humanity will become the mind of evolution, determining its own destiny, creating its own reality. This is the myth of the New Age which is to give rebirth to spirituality and hope.

Individuals and communities of believers create myths to live by. These myths may be based on purely imagined stories or ideologies which embody the principles of the lifestyle and hope to which one implicitly aspires. A second form of myth may involve stories based in a historical context, though the story itself may not have occurred in space and time. A third alternative may represent one’s hope in a historical context with actual events which occurred. However, in this context the myth may be represented by extending further meaning to the historical events, thus creating hope, meaning and value in the archetype represented in the historic myth.

There is however a fourth kind of story. This story may be considered as myth in the sense that it is of a category of event so unique that no other story can supplant it and no other event can replicate its history. The story is both historical and historic. This story is true not only in its meaning, but in its occurrence. This kind of myth is not fictitious nor imaginative. It is told in the language of its time, but its message and events are accurately recorded for posterity. It might be said that this is myth become fact. This is the story of all stories with a message above all messages, valid for experiencing the fullness of life. This story draws together all the timeless themes of the myths from all cultures, in the best way, through one authentic life.

What happens when people lose their myths? When humanity’s myths no longer represent its beliefs and world-views, those myths are broken and discarded. The inner being then creates new myths to live by. These myths evolve according to the ebb and flow of the paradigm or world-view held by the believer. Myths are created because of the absence of or the lack of awareness of any real occurrence in which the highest hopes, value and meaning to life are actually fulfilled. In this way humanity revives hope in
the midst of despair, community in the midst of loneliness, and continued purpose and value in the face of death.

The identity crisis being experienced in occidental culture is evident in science and medicine, philosophy and psychology, politics, ecology and religion. The increase of crime in both urban and rural populations, the drug and sexual revolutions as well as the rise in suicide among young people and the breakdown of the family are only a few examples which identify the effects of this identity crisis. The western world has lost its heroes and with them it has lost contact with its myths. As humanity approaches a new millennium there is an increasing desire to find new myths whereby to make sense of seeming senselessness.

Friedrich Nietzsche in The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music described his age as “bent on the extermination of myth.” Modern man is “stripped of myth, stands famished among all his pasts and must dig frantically for roots, be it among the most remote antiquities.” Sigmund Freud in correspondence with Albert Einstein commented, “It may perhaps seem to you as though our theories are a kind of mythology.... But does not every science come in the end to a kind of mythology like this? Cannot the same be said today of your own Physics?” As a result of this absence of myth, the occidental world is now plunging deep into a wide array of mythmaking, not only in the academia of science, philosophy and religion, but on the panoramic screen of the cinema. The New Age is evolving to create and repackage new and old myths. The New Age is challenging the occidental world’s lost and broken myths in the quest for meaning here and now as well as transcendence beyond this worldly experience.

Critiques of the New Age

Categories for protagonists of the New Age align themselves generally to three areas:

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3 Ibid.
1. Those who call themselves New Agers of the hard core and cultic/occult group. This is New Age with a capital “N” and capital “A”. These would be those “ecstatics” who follow gurus and techniques to reach spiritual enlightenment and adhere to a plethora of myths, as well as those who follow no specific leader but espouse an eclectic and syncretistic belief system comprised of occult and mystical myths.

2. Those who are soft core and adhere to some of the basic principles of the New Age world-view but without cultic discipleship. This is the new age without capitals. It refers to the obvious changes in modern western culture. These are the “social transformationists” who hold to some of the underlying themes such as the need for greater ecological care, peace, and equality of the masses and the sexes, possible rejection of the Christian religion, freedom of choice and subjective reasoning, interconnectedness, innate worth over instrumental worth, non hierarchical forms, ethnic and feminine freedom, peace and a new world order (yet without necessarily going along with all the hype of crystal healing, channelled spirits, cult or occult activity).

3. Those who do not consider themselves to be New Agers yet are sympathetic to or teach concepts which are picked up and embellished by the New Age. These are considered in the categories of protagonists in the sense that they do not go against the New Age ideologies and/or whose organisations or propositions were forerunners to the New Age movement/phenomenon.

Antagonists of the New Age separate generally into four categories of critique:

1. There is the sceptical approach of the Humanist which is quite severe in its critique of the pseudo-science and irrational nature of the movement along with its commercialism and conglomeration of myths.

2. Those of the Evangelical, often Millennialist, point of view who are severely denigrating toward the New Age Movement. These relegate the New Age to the apocalyptic arrival of the Antichrist or conspiracies involving world domination.

3. Those seeking a new way for the Christian religion which is more pluralistic and therefore quite compromising with the New Age incorporation into the Christian religion.
4. Those who recognise the social and religious paradigm shifts of the western world and are striving to create a dialogue with the New Age in order to highlight the relevant issues which would draw them into Christ by agreement with themes which are Biblical yet relate completely to Christ's teaching for fulfilment over the myths of the New Age.

One of the first introductions to the New Age came in the form of a "conspiracy theory." The leading developer of the "conspiracy" theory of the New Age is Marilyn Ferguson in her book The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s. Although Ferguson is a New Ager, it is helpful to include a synopsis of her material here in order to set the tone for the hard core evangelical attack on the New Age. Ferguson's material establishes a soft core "conspiracy" in the sense that there is a paradigm shift evident in global proportions that is establishing changes in the major areas of the way people think and live. The hard core New Ager is but one example of this paradigm shift that is experienced on a much wider base. However, the hard core evangelical attack of Constance Cumbey has picked up on Ferguson's use of the term "conspiracy" and developed it into a Satanic plot. Although, in her critics' eyes, Cumbey's presentation has been discredited due to her particular Millennialist view point and her unscholarly use of material, her interpretation of "the conspiracy" has remained as a base line for other similar attacks. Therefore, although in many ways discredited by her critics, her work continues in its influence. Cumbey has now returned to her practice as an attorney and left off the all out attack, while Ferguson's work continues as a base line for defining what is New Age. Material from both points of view are presented here to show the immediate contrast.

Ferguson's story relates that while researching social changes she became aware of more and more individuals and groups who were working toward transformation in society. She chose the idea of conspiracy in preference to transformation and chose the word "Aquarian" "to make clear the benevolent nature of this joining," being "drawn to the symbolic power of the pervasive dream in our popular culture: that after a dark, violent age, the Piscean, we are entering a millennium of love and light... the time of 'the mind's true liberation....' The label seemed fitting for the solidarity and
Something remarkable is underway. It is moving with almost dizzying speed, but it has no name and eludes description... The spirit of our age is fraught with paradox. It is at the same time pragmatic and transcendental. It values both enlightenment and mystery... power and humility... interdependence and individuality. It is simultaneously political and apolitical. Its movers and shakers include individuals who are impeccably Establishment allied with one-time sign-carrying radicals.

Within recent history ‘it’ has infected medicine, education, social science, hard science, even government with its implications. It is characterized by fluid organizations reluctant to create hierarchical structures, averse to dogma. It operates on the principle that change can only be facilitated, not decreed. It is short of manifestos. It seems to speak to something very old. And perhaps, by integrating magic and science, art and technology, it will succeed where all the king’s horses and all the king’s men failed.5

“The indefinable force,” writes Ferguson, “is an idea whose time has come, and it is robust enough now to be named.”6 For Ferguson the conspiracy is not a conscious overpowering plot being formed from some secret headquarters. It is the unconscious networking of virtually every area of life—social, business, academic, scientific and political toward a new worldview. Some people openly advocate it while others contribute silently. Still others contribute totally unaware of themselves as part of a network conspiracy “yet sense that their experiences and their struggle are part of something bigger, a larger social transformation that is increasingly visible if you know what to look for.”7 This unconscious or underground network is to bring about a gradual but radical shift in thinking on a global scale. The evidence will be a movement toward one world government and one world religion through a transformation of consciousness. It begins with personal transformation where individuals begin working for change in society. Eventually the “critical mass” is to be reached which will transform the entire world.

5 Ibid. p. 18.
6 Ibid. pp. 18-19.
7 Ibid. pp. 24-25.
From her initial interests in biofeedback and Transcendental Meditation, Ferguson moved into interest in how the brain/nervous system works in the human body. This interest produced her book The Brain Revolution: The Frontiers of Mind Research and a continuous follow up to the Brain/Mind Bulletin which began in 1975. Applying Thomas Kuhn's scientific use of paradigm shifts to the social structure of the planet, after a five year study of the emergent changes in society, Ferguson published The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s, the later part of the title now being changed to "In Our Times." Now published in eleven foreign languages, the book is acclaimed as the single most comprehensive commentary on the New Age. As a continuous up-date on the progress of these changes which constitute a paradigm shift, Ferguson began a new periodical entitled The Leading Edge.8 Ferguson defines the conspiracy:

Broader than reform, deeper than revolution, this benign conspiracy for a new human agenda has triggered the most rapid cultural realignment in history. The great shuddering, irrevocable shift overtaking us is not a new political, religious, or philosophical system. It is a new mind — the ascendance of a startling worldview that gathers into its framework breakthrough science and insights from earliest recorded thought.9

People from all walks of life academically, economically, socially— from taxi drivers to celebrities, from the poor to the rich, began to break with the status quo. The amplification of these changes in thinking began to permeate and network with other people of like mind. Groups began to emerge which made an attempt to connect people who were like minded by pamphletting and listing people, groups, books, seminars. The conspiracy is to work toward bringing about "the critical number of individuals, enough to bring about a renewal of society."10 The Aquarian conspiracy is the New Age.

According to Ferguson's analysis this sociological paradigm shift is being brought about in four stages which are taking place as a journey which began in human fragmentation and is moving forward without a

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destination. It does not happen overnight nor does it promise a twenty-four-hour-a-day clarity.\textsuperscript{11}

1. **Stage one is the preliminary “almost happenstance entry point.”\textsuperscript{12}** This stage is the trigger that explodes the status-quo old world-view. Ferguson’s analysis is that this began with the historic role of psychedelics in the 1960s when tens of thousands of people whom she calls “left-brained” who were following the mechanistic and logical/rationalist world-view began to get in touch with “the spontaneous, imaginative right-brained brethren.”\textsuperscript{13} In Ferguson’s view the awakening of psychedelic drugs opened the door to a primal knowledge which was beforehand only vaguely seen in dreams and other forms of altered consciousness. The intensity of these psychedelic experiences revealed “the role of the consciousness in creating... everyday reality.” However, the drug-induced \textit{satori} (a state of mystical union) did not last and was uncontrolled. In view of this there was a movement toward non drug-related psychotechnologies which offered more controlled experiences such as various forms of meditation, creative visualisation and psychosynthesis. To use Ferguson’s terms drugs were only the preview, the main event was yet to come.\textsuperscript{14} The introduction to the consciousness movement led some to explore more deeply. Yet accompanying this journey was a certain fear of the unknown and the implications of getting to know the real self— one’s full potential which would necessitate radical change.

2. **Stage two is the exploration stage** for those who choose to delve deeply into the quest for transformation. In this stage the doors of perception are opened to a plethora of techniques for getting in touch with the inner-self, seeking the duplication of some transforming experience which will yield a sense of well-being or guidance for life. Ferguson notes here that these techniques have for the most part been westernised in the sense that not only are many of the techniques no longer in their original forms but they are practised in the fast-paced consumer/competitor value system of the older paradigm— the modern secular world of quick-fix, instant gratification and instant feedback. In this mode, users became fixed

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{11} Ibid. p. 93.
\item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid. p. 94.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
to their particular technique "e.g. Transcendental Meditation, running, est, Rolfing... seen as the panacea for the world’s ills. All other systems are dismissed. This is what Ferguson called “pendulum change.” This “false dawn of certainty” gave way to the realisation that “no single system works for everyone.”

3. **Stage three is the integration stage.** At first this stage may be represented by a desire “to improve the situation rather than change it, to reform rather than transform.” There is a struggle within over old values and new beliefs. The right-brain is becoming more aware, yet is being lived in a left-brained environment— new thinking is mixed with old ways, one tries to rationalise intuition. The individual wants to analyse the leap of intuition. In this attempt to understand what is happening, new subjects of interest are studied which were previously of no interest, such as philosophy, psychology, quantum physics and a host of intellectual knowledge one would use to give definition to the transformation that is taking place. Ferguson concludes that the more one progresses in this transformation, the less validation or justification becomes necessary. The experiences themselves become intuitively self-validating and self-justifying. Just as the entry point suggested that there are new ways of knowing and the exploration stage revealed new ways of acquiring that “other knowing,” the integration stage revealed that the old ways of doing things and the old values were no longer appropriate— “there are other ways of being.” A new lifestyle evolves out of the new way of thinking.

4. **Stage four is the conspiracy stage.** In this stage the individual finds new power and new ways of employing that power in service to others. In Ferguson’s words, “If the mind can heal and transform, why can’t minds join to heal and transform society? The conspiracy is not supposed to be an imposition, it is supposed to be an offer for those who are hungering and thirsting for it. Ferguson quotes Michael Murphy, co-founder of Esalen, “Let’s make that conspiracy apparent! We can turn our daily common life into the dance the world is meant for.” As the conspiracy grows along

15 Ibid. p. 97.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid. p. 98.
18 Ibid. p. 99.
19 Ibid. No reference given.
with the number of individuals seeking transformation, it takes on a wider effect of social transformation.

Ferguson's conspiracy is an awakening to a new view of the world. Some began with a psychedelic drug experience such as the Don Juan trilogy of Carlos Castaneda.20 One Aquarian Conspirator responded to Ferguson's questionnaire with a testimony of a similar type of experience after a session of participating in the non drug-related technique of Rolfing which he had received at Esalen:

Suddenly I was overwhelmed by the beauty of everything I saw. This vivid, transcendent experience tore apart my limited outlook. I had never realized the emotional height possible. In this half-hour solidarity experience I felt unity with all, universal love, connectedness. This smashing time destroyed my old reality permanently.21

The new vision of the world leads to a new understanding of self and new dimensions of reality within the self such as for example the emergent masculine and feminine side in both male and female and the reunion of the two in what Buddhists call sahaja (born together).22 This leads to a further realisation of Self. As in Assagioli originally and latterly in Will Parfitt's interpretation of psychosynthesis, Ferguson cites:

The self is a field within larger fields. When the self joins the Self, there is power. Brotherhood overtakes the individual like an army... not the obligatory ties of family, nation, church, but a living, throbbing connection, the unifying I-Thou of Martin Buber, a spiritual fusion. The discovery transforms strangers into kindred, and we know a new, friendly universe.23

One of the ways in which the Aquarian Conspiracy is exemplified in social transformation is the network revolution. Donald Keys, globalist leader of

20 The Don Juan trilogy are the teachings given to Carlos Castaneda by an alleged Yaqui Indian sorcerer named don Juan Matus while under the influence of psychotropic plants. Castaneda, Carlos. Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of don Juan. Pocket Books and subdivision of Simon and Schuster, New York. 1972. p. vii. The first two in the series were The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge and A Separate Reality: Further Conversations with Don Juan.
22 Ibid. p. 105.
23 Ibid. p. 107.
the Planetary Citizens, claims “We’re at the final stage now of putting it all together. It’s a New Religion called ‘Networking’.” Ferguson calls the network “a tool for the next step in human evolution.” This is one of the means by which power is being shifted from hierarchical systems and dispersed corporately throughout the social fabric of the world community. One form of this is the massive integrated electronic communications system which serves as a support group for every user. Ferguson defines the network as

an invisible home... an institution of our time... capable of endless transformation... a mutual support and enrichment, empowerment of the individual, and co-operation to effect change... The network is a matrix for personal exploration and group action, autonomy and relationship... both intimate and expansive... Networks are the strategy by which small groups can transform an entire society.

The network serves like the brain of the living planet earth containing all the information and linking the entire nervous system. In another metaphor the network may be compared as having a heart that is everywhere at once. Anthropologists Luther Gerlach and Virginia Hine synthesised the term SPIN (Segmented Polycentric Integrated Networks) to denote this brain consciousness of networking. “A SPIN gains its energy from coalitions, from the combining and recombining of talents, tools, strategies, numbers, contacts.” The nature of the SPIN is such that like the brain it can linkup to many points at the same time, yet is self-sufficient in each segment. The Aquarian Conspiracy becomes the network of networks or SPIN of SPINs. There are variations of networks multiplying and fusing throughout the world. Their overall common denominator is the conversion of power from bureaucratic power-over to synergistic power-with. The purpose of networking in the Aquarian Conspiracy is to link up like-thinking support groups such as environmental networks, spiritual and psychological networks, educational networks, health networks, economic networks, mutual-help and self-help networks which will result in assisting the

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26 Ibid. pp. 231-233.
27 Ibid. p. 235.
development of the critical mass necessary for the transformation of life in a progressive evolutionary leap toward what others in the New Age are calling Planetary Awakening and Planetary Citizenship, One World or New World Order— a utopian social order.

In its earliest form New Age networking began with New Age speakers making a list of those centres which were most receptive to building a New Age. It was found that the great influx of Asian teachers after World War II had established centres. These along with metaphysical and occult centres were those found to be most receptive. In the 1960s Universal Link published what was called a directory of “Light” centres in England, Scotland, Denmark, and the United States. This connected people and communities sympathetic to the idea and promotion of the New Age. The United Nations proclaimed 1965 the International Cooperation Year. To carry on the work of linking and promoting organisations which were working for a better world, the International Cooperation Council (ICC) was formed. In the 1970s this council adopted the New Age Movement and developed a New Age programme, stating its goal as “Fostering a New Person and Civilization based upon Unity and Diversity among All Peoples.” In 1979 this became the Directory for a New World: A Planetary Guide of Cooperating Organizations which listed over ten thousand entries. In 1972 the Yogi Bhajan disciples produced a directory of New Age religious/spiritual centres, bookstores, meditation and yoga schools, restaurants and organic food stores. Network directories such as The Year One Catalog by Ira Friedlander gave listings of New Age communities.

The next step in listing the New Age came in the form of periodicals: national magazines such as East West Journal and New Age Journal. During the 1980s directories and New Age journals multiplied to canvass

and link the entire community of the New Age. Jessica Lipnack and Jeffrey Stamps consolidated networking for the New Age in 1982 with their book *Networking: The First Report and Directory* of nearly four hundred pages of New Age concerns such as health, politics, ecology, education, personal and spiritual growth and global issues. In 1988 John Button compiled a directory for the New Age Movement in Great Britain. Networking is expected to continue to play a significant role in the promotion of the New Age and is clear evidence of some sort of conspiracy in the sense that the many are joining together to organise a support system which promotes New Age in philosophy, religion, science, politics, spirituality, ecology, education, medicine and any other significant field of sociological growth on this planet.

Benjamin Creme's Lord Maitreya is a more hard core New Age "conspiracy." The April 25, 1982 newspaper announcement campaign read in over 20 major cities around the world at a cost of over $500,000:  

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31 Ibid. pp. 318-319. Melton lists several leading journals and directories with addresses.  
THE WORLD HAS HAD enough... OF HUNGER, INJUSTICE, WAR.
IN ANSWER TO OUR CALL FOR HELP, AS WORLD TEACHER FOR ALL HUMANITY,

THE CHRIST IS NOW HERE.

HOW WILL WE RECOGNIZE HIM?
Look for a modern man concerned with modern problems — political, economic, and social. Since July, 1977, the Christ has been emerging as a spokesman for a group or community in a well-known modern country. He is not a religious leader, but an educator in the broadest sense of the word —
pointing the way out of our present crisis.
We will recognize Him by His extraordinary spiritual potency, the universality of His viewpoint, and His love for all humanity. He comes not to judge, but to aid and inspire.

WHO IS THE CHRIST?
Throughout history, humanity's evolution has been guided by a group of enlightened men, the Masters of Wisdom. They have remained largely in the remote desert and mountain places of earth, working mainly through their disciples who live openly in the world.
This message of the Christ's reappearance had been given primarily by such a disciple trained for his task for over 20 years.
At the center of this "Spiritual Hierarchy" stands the World Teacher, Lord Maitreya known by Christians as the Christ, And as Christians await the Second Coming, so the Jews await the Messiah, the Buddhists the fifth Buddha, the Moslims the Iman Mahdi, and the Hindus await Krishna. These are all names for one individual.
His presence in the world guarantees there will be no third World War.

WHAT IS HE SAYING?
"My task will be to show you how to live together peacefully as brothers. This is simpler than you imagine, My friends, for it requires only the acceptance of sharing."

"How can you be content with the modes within which you now live: when millions starve and die in squalor, when the rich parade their wealth before the poor; when each man is his neighbor's enemy, when no man trusts his brother?"

"Allow me to show you the way forward into a simpler life where no man lacks; where no two days are alike; where the Job of Brotherhood manifests through all men."

"Take your brother's need as the measure for your action and solve the problems of the world."

WHEN WILL WE SEE HIM?
He has not as yet declared His true status, and His location is known to only a very few disciples. One of these has announced that soon the Christ will acknowledge His identity and within the next two months will speak to humanity through a worldwide television and radio broadcast. His message will be heard inwardly, telepathically, by all people in their own language.
From that time, with His help, we will build a new world.

WITHOUT SHARING THERE CAN BE NO JUSTICE;
WITHOUT JUSTICE THERE CAN BE NO PEACE;
WITHOUT PEACE THERE CAN BE NO FUTURE.
This statement is appearing simultaneously in major cities of the world.
At the bottom of the advert there were listed four addresses which attempt to give an impression of world-wide scope in the announcement:

1. INFORMATION CENTER AMSTERDAM
   P.O. BOX 41877
   1009DB AMSTERDAM
   HOLLAND

2. THE TARA PRESS
   59 DARTMOUTH PARK ROAD
   LONDON NW5 1SL
   ENGLAND

3. TARA CENTER
   90 UNIVERSITY PL.
   NEW YORK, N. Y. 10003
   U.S.A.

4. TARA CENTER
   P. O. BOX 6001
   N. HOLLYWOOD, CA. 91603
   U.S.A.

The Plan, is taken from the writings of Alice Bailey and incorporated in such organizations as New World Alliance, Club of Rome, World Goodwill, Lucis Trust, Planetary Citizens and others whose leaders are a part of the World Council of Wise Persons, more commonly referred to as the Brotherhood.35 In his book, Mystery Mark of the New Age, Texe Marrs identifies this Brotherhood with The New Group of World Servers, which is an organisation purporting to be the “Custodians of the Plan”. This Plan teaches that the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit “is inferior to an entity known as The Solar Logos.”36 The Solar Trinity is Will, Love-wisdom and Active intelligence and though New Age writers may use the Christian terms Father, Son and Holy Spirit respectively, in fact they have a New Age alternative meaning.37 The New Group of World Servers are jointly

36 Ibid. p. 65.
37 Ibid.
headquartered in such major cities as London, Geneva and New York. Their goal as the “Enlightened Ones” is to build a “New World Order.”38

Marrs refers to a five-year plan which was to begin with the Harmonic Convergence (August 16-17, 1987). During this plan the New Age was to achieve the following:39

1. Bring all New Age groups, organizations and churches together in unity and strength.
2. Establish a ‘mediarchy,’ composed of all television, radio, newspaper, and other media who will work jointly to set up a propaganda environment favorable to the New Age.
3. ‘Destructure civilization,’ dismantling national governments and setting up one world order based on global units called ‘bioregions.’
4. ‘Purify the earth,’ a hazy and vague concept which, when properly analyzed, clearly means the forcible establishment of a one world religion and the abolishing of true Biblical Christianity. Christian resisters will be killed.
5. Merge humanity with ‘spirit guides’ and ‘ascended masters’ from the invisible spirit world.
6. Exalt humanity to godhood. Citizens of the New Age Kingdom will be suddenly and magically capable of superhuman feats... Those unfit to join... will be destroyed, possibly to be reincarnated later.
7. Seize and redistribute the world’s resources and riches, through the principle of ‘sharing.’
8. Bring in the New Age Messiah, or ‘Christ’, now in the wings anxiously awaiting the moment of international crisis when he can assume the reins of world power.

Some rather radical statements have been made by New Age leaders which indicate hostility toward those who do not accept their movement toward planetary consciousness. Barbara Marx Hubbard is in print as stating that “People will either change or die. That is the choice.”40 Foster Bailey’s view of The Plan says that those who do not live by the New Age standards “will

40 Ibid. p. 27, citing Hubbard, Barbara Marx. Happy Birthday Planet Earth! Ocean Tree Books, Santa Fe, New Mexico. 1986. p. 32.
end up as irreconcilable outcasts." Donald Keys say the conspiracy is moving toward a world leader:

Don’t anyone think for a moment that you can run a planet without a head.... These folks who think that they’re going to be able to get off with some kind of sloppy, do-it-your-own relationships among nations, just casually checking in now and then, have got to think again. This planet has to be MANAGED.

John Randolph Price’s networking group, Planetary Commission, organised the Global Mind-Link (World Healing Day) on December 31, 1987. Their report was that they had marshalled together 875 million people in eighty-two countries to invoke a New Age healing upon the world. Price published his report to New Agers, stating that “a giant Energy Field, a massive Thought-Form, has been created. A Unified Consciousness of spiritually minded Light Workers has emerged, which is now transmuting the negative energy and forming a critical mass of Positive Good for this world.” Price, along with other New Age leaders follows the lines of Alice Bailey’s writings which indicate a holocaust of human lives if the earth cleansing does not take place through meditation and personal transformation to a higher consciousness of peace. Price’s channel, Asher, has revealed to him the most extravagant figures that up to “two and one-half billion men, women, and children will be killed.” These are those whose vibratory rates are lower and who do not accept the New Age. This is all to happen within two decades, which places it around A.D. 2000. A similar prophecy comes from Djwhal Khul, the spirit guide to Alice Bailey. More commonly called The Tibetan, Djwhal says that by around the year 2000 one third of the world’s population will be removed from the earth, “held back in another world or dimension, where after they are chastened

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and reeducated, they will be reincarnated.”46 David Spangler concurs that “These ones could be withdrawn into an inner realm that would be their home.”47 One of the New Age “Bibles” is called The Keys of Enoch. It is purportedly channelled from the Biblical character who walked with God and was published in 1978 by a group called the Academy of Future Science. According to these New Age “scriptures” by the year 2005 those not accepting the teachings of the New Age will pass from the scene in an apocalyptic holocaust. This great cleansing will enable the planet to rise to a “higher orbital frequency” which will allow a “New Communion” between humans and higher angelic beings.48 These beings from the Council of Light in the Heavens will communicate to humans become gods through a numerical sequence of “6-6-6” a channel open to communicate via a frequency of “specific light and sound harmonics... by means of a pyramidal focus created... over the third eye.”49 Those who pass away will be reincarnated to a primal state to begin the process again.

Defining the New Age is as difficult as trying to establish a conspiracy. John Drane, Professor in Religious Studies at Stirling University, Scotland declares, “Understanding the New Age is like trying to wrestle with a jelly.”50 He relates a definition offered to him during research:

Think of the New Age Movement as a vacuum cleaner. It picks up whatever is there, and messes it all up, so when you open the bag, you recognise all the bits and pieces that are in there — but the mixture is completely different from anything you’ve ever seen before, or anything you could even imagine. You probably wonder how it can all possibly belong together. The fact is, it doesn’t. Those things are in there just because the vacuum cleaner happened to pick them up. If it had moved in a different direction, it would have sucked all kinds of other things in. They would look quite unlike the first collection — but they would be “New Age” as well.51

49 Ibid. p. 70, citing The Keys of Enoch. p. 391.
51 Ibid. pp. 15-16.
Elliot Miller, a former New Ager, now editor of Christian Research Journal has been observing the New Age and other religious trends since 1976. His analysis is that:

The New Age movement (NAM) is not impossible to describe—just difficult. It is a complex sociological phenomenon not unlike the proverbial elephant discovered independently by three blind men: one came upon his leg and described him as a tree; another got hold of his trunk and likened him to a hose; a third stumbled upon his tail and insisted he was like a rope. That which is true about parts of the NAM is not necessarily true of the whole.... The New Age movement is best understood as a network—or to be more exact, a metanetwork (network of networks).52

Network is a term used to describe the loose knit interconnectedness of autonomous individuals, groups and organisations which are decentralised and whose borders are somewhat fluid. There is usually a base of essentially common principles expressive of unity in the midst of diversity. The New Age is an umbrella term which encapsulates hundreds of other smaller movements and networks that have their own agendas yet hold to common bonds which would connect them to the greater network.

Time Magazine's cover story said the New Age is “a combination of spirituality and superstition, farce and fad, about which the only thing certain is that it is not new.”53 The expression became a vogue catch phrase in the 1970s and 1980s now moving with increasing popularity into the 1990s as humanity progresses toward the threshold of a new millennium. In some ways the term is as undescriptive as the terms Democrat, Republican, Labour, Tory, Christian or Jew. At best the term “New Age” presently refers to a host of different types of people and beliefs which generally have some common grounds within themselves. Florence Graves's editorial in The 1988 Guide to New Age Living claims the New Age is “an amorphous cultural tradition.”54 In the evangelical assault, the New Age is seen as an attempt to corrupt and replace the Gospel of Christ. In the words of Brooks Alexander of the Spiritual Counterfeits Project, “The New Age Movement is a media

phenomenon, and its identity is a media creation."\textsuperscript{55} In these critiques the New Age is seen as a softer term now used to replace what once was called "the occult."

Rather than being linear, the New Age is circular or spiral and interweaving. Some of the common networks within the metanetwork include the holistic health movement, the ecological movement, the peace movement, the human potential movement and the altered consciousness movement. The New Age also interconnects eastern gurus and western cults and occults, the paranormal and the metaphysical. Yet any one of these autonomous groups or individuals may not necessarily declare themselves to be New Age. For example there are those of the human potential movement who would claim to be New Agers such as Marilyn Ferguson, Fritjof Capra and Jean Houston. On the other hand there are those of the human potential movement who would not call themselves New Agers such as Abraham Maslow and Rollo May, yet their writings are highly subscribed to by New Agers. All these are members of the Association for Humanistic Psychology. Joseph Campbell, a leading authority on myths would be another example of one who was not an out and out New Ager, yet his writings fill the shelves of New Age book stores.

Through the common bonds of mysticism and monism various aspects of Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity are mixed into the New Age metanetwork, although in and of themselves these religions would not espouse the New Age. A host of cultic teachings which pre-date the New Age are listed in the historical rooting system, such as Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's Theosophy, along with its two spin off groups—Annie Besant's Krishnamurti movement and Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy. Other sects and cults included are Phineas Quimby's mental healing and mind altering activities as listed in Horatio Dresser's \textit{Handbook of New Thought}, Alice Bailey's "The Plan" Arcane School and William Wescott and S.L. MacGregor's Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Kate and Margaret Fox's Spiritualist movement, and Swedenborgianism. There is a great tendency of New Agers and their critics to lump the host of antiquarian

beliefs under the heading New Age Movement, when in fact none of these are new, and most of them have obscure and small followings. However, it is the collective appeal and new packaging that gives rise to the collective title “New Age.” In another sense the New Age is a publishing phenomenon being capitalised by money-makers of the capitalistic publishing companies. As already stated in the introduction, books that were previously to be found on the dusty, damp shelves of the second-hand book stores are now being revived in multi-edition current publications. One may hunt, for example, a 1907 publication of Levi (“edited” by Eva)\(^56\) Dowling’s The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, or acquire the more current 1981 edition.\(^57\)

In addition new cult teachers include Elizabeth Clare Prophet, Sri Aurobindo and others covering over 100 cults and sects which are not necessarily New Age yet are included under the umbrella in the sense that they express the growing tendency toward pluralistic acceptance and share some of the common themes which have evolved into the New Age Movement.\(^58\) Those which are not necessarily New Age include A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada’s western styled Hare Krishna cult and Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh’s Ashram, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi’s Transcendental Meditation (TM), Ron Hubbard’s Scientology, Guru Maharaj Ji’s Divine Light Mission, Sun Myung Moon’s Unification Church, Mary Baker Eddy’s Christian Science, David “Moses” Berg’s Children of God, Jim Jones’s People’s Temple and even the latest tragedy of David Koresh’s Davidian cult. All these have some common bond which links them to the general and loosely knit structure of the New Age paradigm shift though in other respects they are not New Age at all. For example David Koresh proclaimed himself to be deity, a common theme of the New Age. However, few New Agers would go along with the idea of being exclusively bound in obeisance to any one teacher such as the exclusivist demands of David Koresh.

Russell Chandler, religion writer for the Los Angeles Times, says the New Age is not a cult or sect since it has no organisation to join and no creed to confess per se. "It is a hybrid mix of spiritual, social and political forces, and it encompasses sociology, theology, the physical sciences, medicine, anthropology, history, the human potential movement, sports, and science fiction." Gordon Melton calls the New Age Movement "an international social movement which emerged in the western society.... it is also an inherently religious one, though many New Agers might prefer the label "spiritual," as the word "religion" carries negative connotations for some."

Michael Northcott, Lecturer in Christian Ethics and Practical Theology at the University of Edinburgh presents the thesis "that the rise of the New Age points to significant problems within the institutional and ideological forms of western Christianity.... New Age may be seen as the counterpart of those impulses of the spirit and of human freedom and creativity which the post-Enlightenment forms of liberal western Christianity have effectively suppressed in their accommodation to modernity."

Lowell Streiker's book New Age Comes To Main Street, points out the contrast between the faddish hype and the underlying abiding elements of what is called the New Age. In some sense "the term New Age is losing it usefulness. The social transformationist has all but surrendered the expression to the ecstacies.... New Age is not new. It is more than fad.... In the midst of the hype, quackery, foolishness, and foolhardiness, there are permanent, vital, and abiding elements. If the labels "New Age" and "Aquarian" become worn, discard them. Nothing will be lost." In fact some book stores use the category "Mind, Body, Spirit" instead of "New Age."

Jeremy Tarcher explains the New Age in terms of a Perennial Philosophy having four major assumptions which form the foundation of the quest for humanity's place in the cosmos. Streiker summarised these points as follows:

1. The world, including the human race, constitutes an expression of a higher, more comprehensive divine nature.
2. Hidden within each human being is a higher divine self, which is a manifestation of the higher, more comprehensive divine nature.
3. This higher nature can be awakened and can become the centre of the individual's everyday life.
4. This awakening is the reason for the existence of each individual life.63

Tarcher also believes that the media have capitalised on the sensationalism and commercialism of the New Age rather than focusing on the underlying quest for personal and social transformation. David Spangler agrees in his introduction to *The New Age Catalogue*. The New Age he says is:

a metaphor for the expression of a transformative, creative spirit.... the never-ending quest to understand the nature and purpose of a God who is not just (or even primarily) the inner divinity on which so many New Age writers focus but the evocative Other whose very differences impel me to reach beyond myself and participate in the larger communion and community of life.... we can forget the New Age of channels, crystals, and charisma and get on with discovering and cocreating a harmonious world that will nourish and empower all of us.64

When stripped clean of the trimmings and tools, the media hype and the sensation followers, there is beneath the New Age a cry from western culture for some new hope to deal with the brokenness of ecology and the lives of the earth and its inhabitants.

Philip Seddon's assessment of the New Age is that it presents itself as the new orthodoxy. "It sees itself as the heir to the throne of the world, claiming

64 Ibid. pp. 31-32, citing Spangler, David. "Defining the New Age." The New Age Catalogue. Doubleday, New York. 1988. This catalogue is a 244 page listing of the tools of the New Age on order from Body, Mind & Spirit the most widely circulated New Age periodical (170,000).
the area of public truth, assuming the cultural high ground.... It is a Spaghetti Junction, an extraordinary farrago of ideas, a whole phalanx of inter-connected fronts, linked through the now highly developed use of what The Guardian (5 February 1990) has called 'awesome propaganda machines'."65

Marilyn Ferguson prefers to call the movement an Aquarian conspiracy in the sense that almost without conscious realisation individuals and groups have begun to set forth similar new beliefs which exemplify a paradigm shift, a transformative process which "sees humankind embedded in Nature." "For the first time in history," says Ferguson, "humankind has come upon the control panel of change." In this revelation human nature is neither good nor bad, just continuously open to transformation and transcendence, and humans can now consciously participate in bringing about the next stage of evolution. Ferguson likens this awakening to the discovery of "hidden pictures" previously camouflaged from normal sight. It would be like optical illusions which can only be seen from a particular perspective. With the awakening of the deeper consciousness one "finds the I, one's real, most intimate self, pervades the universe and all other beings."66

Gordon Strachan, a Church of Scotland Minister, sees the New Age as a time of rediscovering ancient wisdom in which there is no separation between God and nature and that instead of approaching the end of the world through nuclear threat, humanity is actually approaching the end of one age, and a transition to a new age in which Christianity is to be interpreted with a deeper cosmology and where there will be "a new earth order in which harmony will be restored as at the beginning.67 This deeper cosmology Strachan believes is based on a lost interpretation of the New Jerusalem of St. John's Revelation and the Jewish Temple and ritual which corresponded to the Zodiac and the Cosmos.

67 Strachan, Gordon. Christ and the Cosmos. Labarum Publications, Ltd., Dunbar, Scotland. 1985. back cover, p. 17; pp. 77-103; note particularly the conclusion of page 103 where Strachan presents the view that the Christian age was Pisces and that the new age of Aquarius is about to begin.
Peter Spink, Canon Emeritus of Coventry Cathedral and founder and Prior of the Omega Order also sees the New Age as an opportunity to widen the horizons of Christianity in a more pluralistic sense. For him the New Age is defined in somewhat existential terms as “the expression of life welling up from within the human psyche itself, the release of a new creative energy which is at the heart of all true spiritual awakening.” 68 It is the modern attempt to break away from the shackles of patriarchy and traditional institutionalism whether secular or religious.69

In contrast Constance Cumbey is perhaps the most striking example of the vehement attack on the New Age by Millenarian fundamentalists. In her book The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow, Cumbey explicates her theory that the New Age Movement meets all the scriptural requirements of the antichrist and the political scene that will inaugurate the eschaton, “a movement that includes many thousands of organisations networking throughout every corner of our globe with the intent of bringing about a New World Order — an order that writes God out of the picture and deifies Lucifer.” 70 A complementary approach to Cumbey includes Texe Marrs’ books Dark Secrets of the New Age and Mystery Mark of the New Age. Marrs sees the New Age as an undercover operation under the leadership of Satan for world domination. In a third book Ravaged By The New Age, Marrs propounds the evidence of New Age infiltration and targeting on youth with hidden messages in comic books, toys, cartoons, cinema, music, video and television as well as periodicals and books.

The late Walter Martin, Founder and Director of Zondervan Publishing House’s division of Cult Apologetics from 1955-1965 and founder and director of Christian Research Institute from 1960 was one of the foremost authorities on cults in America. His credibility among Evangelicals dealing with expositions and answers to cults and occults is far reaching. In view of this background knowledge Martin addresses the New Age movement as a late twentieth century cult with roots in the occult. He cites neoorthodox

69 Ibid. p. 5.
theologian Nels Ferre as correctly predicting the influx of eastern and Indian philosophy and theology as a major challenge to historic Christianity. Again he cites C.S. Lewis as concluding that in the final conflict between religions, Hinduism and Christianity would stand in lone opposition because on the one hand Hinduism absorbs all religious systems, and on the other hand Christianity excludes all others with the claim of the supremacy of Jesus Christ.\(^7^1\)

The majority of critiques of the New Age have in fact been written from an evangelical point of view. A somewhat more academic evangelical approach, yet still in the antagonist camp, would include David Clark and Norman Geisler’s book, Apologetics in the New Age which analyses the New Age as eastern pantheism come to the West. The etymological definition of the word pantheism is that “All is God.” According to Clark and Geisler the word was first used in 1705 by the Irish deist, John Toland. The key idea is that although there may be many levels of reality, ultimately all reality is ontologically unified. In reality there are no qualitative distinctions, no eternal creator and no temporal creature. For Clark and Geisler the New Age movement is a “modern version of Stoic pantheistic philosophy.”\(^7^2\)

Other balanced approaches which seek an exposition of the New Age movement include James Sire’s, The Universe Next Door which considers the New Age as an evolving eclectic new world-view, and Michael Perry’s book Gods Within, which presents an exposition of New Age themes which challenge the church to awaken to the needs of the modern world. Perry’s attempt is to do this without compromising Christian teaching. F. LaGard Smith presents first hand information on the New Age from his research attendance at various New Age seminars, interviews and personal knowledge of Shirley MacLaine, “goddess of the New Age movement”.\(^7^3\)

“Not since the Renaissance,” says Smith, “has there been such a potential for sweeping changes in a society’s religious and cultural outlook. On the verge

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of the twenty-first century, the New Age movement promises unparalleled enlightenment and human potential, but portends a return to ancient pagan mysticism and superstition.”

The Humanist critique of the New Age is at times similar to the harshness of the Millenarian attack. The difference of course is that the humanist approach of Robert Basil’s edition of Not Necessarily the New Age, excludes God and the Bible and substitutes science and reason as a defence of Secular Humanism against New Age Humanism. Here the writers make the assertion that the New Age is Humanism gone wrong and that Humanists need to defend their cause against the pseudo-science and irrational paranormal of New Age subjectivism.

Perhaps the most non polemical stance is that presented by Gordon Melton’s edition of New Age Encyclopedia which heralds the New Age as becoming “a significant social-religious force in western culture,” no longer to be considered a fad or “subgroup within the larger occult-metaphysical community.... the movement established a whole new era of metaphysical thought and took the lead in the general revival of the occult tradition that had been gaining increased momentum throughout the twentieth century.”

The label “New Age” is as elusive as the term “myth”. In religion the New Age mythology is a reaction to fundamentalism. In science it is a reaction to clinical empiricism. In philosophy it is a reaction to rationalism. Yet the New Age incorporates all of these in its myths to live by. Virtually every book written on the New Age says that it defies definition. That is in character with its fundamental hard core belief that there are no parameters, no boundaries, no absolutes. However, though the movement is amorphous, eclectic and syncretistic, there are boundaries which the movement itself espouses.

The so called New Age Movement is the natural progression of the rise of individualism in occidental culture. It is a philosophy of humanistic existentialism in a supernatural mode. It follows naturally from discarded

74 Ibid. p. 1.
Churchianity and the failure of humanism and existentialism in themselves to give hope to the implicit spiritual quest within the individual.

**The New Age Paradigm Shift**

In the modern occidental culture a new age has begun to be recognised. A paradigm shift is now apparent. There are new paradigms arising in science, psychology, medicine and health as well as the new physics, education and spirituality. The term “paradigm” is derived from the Greek word παράδειγμα meaning pattern, model, plan, precedent or example. Thomas Kuhn, a science historian, introduced this term as early as 1962 in his book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. (University of Chicago. 1970). The term was used to refer to the encompassing framework in which a group of scientists would analyse and solve problems. Fritjof Capra, author of *The Turning Point* and *The Tao of Physics*, used the term too as “the totality of thoughts, perceptions, and values that form a particular vision of reality.”

Marilyn Ferguson’s book *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* is promoted as the foremost herald of the New Age. In quoting the Association for Humanistic Psychology, Ferguson concedes to the chaos of former ideologies and the positive search for new myths to live by: “The very chaos of contemporary existence provides the material for transformation. We will search new myths, and world visions.” Ferguson points to her use of the term “paradigm shift” as:

> a distinctly new way of thinking about old problems.... Usually at the point of crisis, someone has a great heretical idea. A powerful new insight explains the apparent contradictions.... By forcing a more comprehensive theory, the crisis is not destructive but instructive....

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Campbell and Brennan quote reference to Capra’s *Tao of Physics* p. 25.
A new paradigm involves a principle that was present all along but unknown to us. It includes the old as a partial truth, one aspect of How Things Work, while allowing for things to work in other ways as well. By its larger perspective, it transforms traditional knowledge and the stubborn new observations, reconciling their apparent contradictions.79

A paradigm serves as the foundation upon which society organises itself. Disenchanted by the distanced theologies of the traditional modern churches, unfulfilled by philosophies and seeking beyond the present forces of psychology, individuals are searching for new myths to live by. Those of science and psychology, those of philosophy and religion are now in a state of flux. The term “New Age Movement” is an umbrella phrase intended to cover what is happening in these changing times. The New Age as a movement is not to be compared to any organisation or church or denomination. It is not structured as such, but is a movement in the sense that the term represents a changing era of thought such as the Enlightenment or the Renaissance.80 Clearly the fashions of morality and world-views have shifted somewhat from the Victorian era and Newtonian physics. We are now in the age of relativity, uncertainty and probability.

Ferguson suggests that the movement is not a conspiracy in the sense that it is preconceived and plotted by some secret organisation. However, it is a preconscious conspiracy or way of thinking held by a vast population of the world, particularly observed in the changes in political and moral and religious thinking in the West. Ferguson charts this change in thinking as a reaction to the wars of the 20th century. In her view consciousness is now moving away from self-destruction.

Another reactive mark of transformation is the rebuttal of the competitive utilitarian market place. There is a movement toward collaboration and a desire for peace and harmony. Against the so called “left-brained” era of logical reasoning the New Age is expressive of a movement toward the so called “right-brained” activities of intuition, femininity, poetry, imagination and lateral thinking.81

81 Ibid. pp. 11-12.
1. **Sociological Identity Crisis/ Age of Anxiety** — Whatever terminology is used, mythical or otherwise, an identity crisis in the occidental world has caused no end of destruction to this planet and its people. Relationships have been shattered in every respect. Man and woman now find it difficult to be one. Humanity is constantly somewhere at war, and is abusive to the earth and its creatures. Because of this fragmentation, death becomes the thief of relationships. Without respect, unseen death snatches away life and goodness. Aloneness, death, a sense of guilt and meaningless existence are among humanity's greatest fears. There is a sense of being disconnected from the source of life.

Paul Tillich's book, *The Courage To Be*, discusses the search for meaning and hope in the face of finitude.\(^{82}\) He explains that the overall threat to humanity is non-being. This threat of non-being cannot be eliminated. "It belongs to existence itself."\(^{83}\) This threat is manifested at three levels of existential anxiety: "that of fate and death (briefly, the anxiety of death), that of emptiness and loss of meaning (briefly, the anxiety of meaninglessness), that of guilt and condemnation (briefly, the anxiety of condemnation)."\(^{84}\) Death threatens the individual's ontic self-affirmation while at the same time emptiness and meaninglessness threaten the individual's spiritual self-affirmation. Everything is tried but nothing satisfies. This anxiety is brought on by the loss of a spiritual centre, says Tillich, but that spiritual centre cannot be mechanically produced. The harder one tries to go through the rituals intended to produce spirituality, the more anxious one becomes.\(^{85}\) Tillich's third level of anxiety is that of guilt and condemnation. This is the threat of non-being as it relates to human moral self-affirmation, the sense of being judge and being judged immanently. All these spiral together, none stands alone. They are interconnected.

This identity crisis is expressed throughout the media world. A typical example is found in a quasi-popular television series, "Thirty Something."

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\(^{83}\) Ibid. p. 48.

\(^{84}\) Ibid. p. 49.

\(^{85}\) Ibid. p. 55.
During one episode the close knit character group experienced the death of their friend, Gary. Trying to make sense of it all, one of the group said to another, "We just have to go on trying to make the best of life, from one funeral to another." That is to say there is nothing more to life than what can be crowded in between funerals, until it is finally one's own funeral. For what may humanity hope?

In such conditions anxiety grips the individual and a collective anxiety grips community life. Relationships are broken and distrust becomes common. Self survival becomes a paramount motivation along with the will to obtain as much pleasureful meaning as possible before the funeral comes. Opposite reactions may also occur such as the "epidemic" of teenage suicides experienced in the Clearlake, Texas community during which several teenagers from well established homes committed suicide in sequence.86

2. Urban Desacralization of Life— Changes which led to this age of stress and high tech information are due in part to the fact that western culture has moved from rural scenes of nature to the urban concrete jungle. Theodore Roszak, one of the counterculture's first apologists and prophets says the scientific and industrial revolution desacralized the world. Sacred groves of trees became processed lumber and people became objects of utility.87 Once the people were dependent on powers visibly greater and deeper than themselves. The elements of nature were all around. The people worked hand in hand with nature. God was depended upon for the

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growth of the seed and the preservation of life. Then with the movement toward the city came the great construction companies and corporate conglomerate business. Humanity was master of all that was surveyed. Whatever was wanted could be bought from a shop, whether food or clothing or shelter. Variety and control seemed to be in the hands of human power and monetary wealth. Medical technology and hospitals were built to heal people. The need for absolute dependence upon God was minimised by the apparent genius of humanity. Nature was replaced by elements constructed with human hands.

3. **Authoritarian hierarchy and decline in churches**— Along with this change came a tremendous increase in pressure from “the boss” in whatever form it took. Authority became somewhat despaired in the sense that it was often felt to be unjust, yet in control of the lives of the people. People became submissive with reluctance and began to mistrust authority, as it placed them under undue stress through manipulation. A certain hostility toward authority set in whether political, educational, religious or otherwise. An “us” and “them” attitude developed. The church began to be seen in much the same light as “them.” It became another controller, a robber of personal autonomy. The sense of volunteer commitment and community spirit was lost.

This was not to deny the good that is done in the name of religion, nor the churches nor the individuals who try, as best they can, to carry the load because humanity has not yet grown to share the burden proportionately. However the church is generally no longer perceived as the place to belong. It is not perceived as such by the people of the street, at least not to the extent that the people would know that the church was the place to go, like a sick person would automatically know to go to a doctor or hospital. Spirituality has been replaced by secular psychology, science has replaced faith, and the earth and creation have been seen as something to be used rather than appreciated. Values of worth have become discerned by the measure of utility rather than by innate being.

4. **Transformation in Consciousness**— These paradigm shifts have found their way into the expressions of psyche and consciousness as well as being exhibited in lyrical prose, music, art and movement. The most common
theme for explaining the New Age paradigm shift is that humanity is going through a transformation in human consciousness. This transformation is to have cosmological effects. The New Age myth expresses the next stage in the evolution of humanity as a conscious rather than a physical evolution.

Marilyn Ferguson writes, “Human nature is neither good nor bad but open to continuous transformation and transcendence. It has only to discover itself. The new perspective respects the ecology of everything: birth, death, learning, health, family, work, science, spirituality, the arts, the community, relationships, politics.” “In the transformative process we become the artists and scientists of our own lives.”

Willis Harman describes the transformation as “metanoia” which is the Greek word from which he says we derive a transformation of mind. In the New Testament the word is translated as “repentance.” The New Age transformation is to be brought about by two types of techniques, says Harman. One type is chosen by the individual and may vary. “It is aimed at spiritual or transcendental awareness; it includes meditation, yoga, self-awareness exercises, various group and individual psychotherapies, and psychedelic drugs.” The other type of technique which brings about metanoia has to do with social and political awareness brought on by environmental and consumer confrontations, ethnic group confrontations, and the political theatre. These techniques serve to “jolt the person out of his own transcendental nature and the influences of social institutions.” Taken together these constitute “the view that a societal metamorphosis could be imminent.” Harman lists five characteristics which are to outline what he calls the coming “trans-industrial paradigm:”

1. The fundamental dilemmas of industrialised society are rooted in the inadequacy of the value postulates of the industrial-era paradigm.
2. There will be a recognition that science has been shaped by the prediction-and-control values of the industrial-era paradigm. It would aim

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90 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
at seeing no contradiction between scientific metaphors adapted to the objective physical world and the religious or metaphysical metaphors used in communicating about supra-sensory experience.

3. It would assume the existence of a spiritual order, discoverable and explorable, and in some sense testable, against which human value choices could be assessed; emerging from this spirituality would be a creative work ethic with emphasis on being rather than having or controlling.

4. It would embody an ecological ethic of concern for the whole, deriving from the transcendental order and unitary perception of reality.

5. It would involve a teleological view of life and evolution (as having direction and purpose); hence the future would be perceived to be partly shaped by human choices, guided by supra-conscious evolutionary tendencies—toward the development of spiritual potentialities beyond the realm of human mundane experiences.92

Harman concludes that though these tenets have been embodied previously in the transcendentalist movement, the humanities, in occidental politics and in popular world religions, never before have they come together to direct the whole movement of society.93

5. The New Age of Scientific Awakening—One of the most apparent paradigm shifts was when Einstein's Theory of Relativity superseded the Newtonian physics. The clockwork, mechanistic and determined view of the universe was replaced with a world-view of uncertainty. There is a new physics being presented, a new science to replace the mechanistic Newtonian physics. Fritjof Capra's Tao of Physics presents this new science as suggesting that instead of mechanical laws of nature which define the physical universe as separate parts, science is now realising the relative nature of the physical universe within a system of inseparable, interacting elements in constant motion.94 In fact it is suggested that instead of solids, liquids and gases, the universe is actually defined as different densities of energy. Light is now defined in a relative sense as both particle and wave. This science is applied to a New Age world-view in which the cosmos is One and human beings are an integral part. This is represented in the synergistic

92 Ibid. 18,19.
93 Ibid. p. 19.
equation, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. These changes are seen in science with the increased acceptance of quantum physics’ view of everything in terms of differing concentrations of energy rather than the old Newtonian view of matter and energy. Rather than a fixed set of laws and certainties governing the universe, quantum physics suggests the myth of infinite possibilities and uncertainties.

Werner Heisenberg is credited with the discovery of a new revelation on the subatomic level. He discovered the interaction of the measurer to the measured. The observer plays a part in the observing of the object to be measured so that the more precise the attempt to measure the position of subatomic particles, the less certain one could be about the momentum of the particles and vice versa. This interplay became known as the “Uncertainty Principle”. In commenting on the new paradigm shift in science, Michael Perry in his book Gods Within notes the move in science from the “Uncertainty Principle” to quantum physics in which particles move from one orbit to another without passing through the space in between. This is the meaning of the term “quantum leap”.

Robin Kendall, a research physicist and student at M.D. Anderson Hospital in Houston, explained this perspective as an abandonment of Newtonian physics whereby one could be certain that, according to mathematical analysis, one’s position could be marked and that position would not alter without the conscious movement of the individual or without the individual being acted upon by observable overt action. To the contrary according to quantum physics and the “quantum leap” one’s standing position at any given moment could not rule out the possibility of finding oneself standing in a completely different location in the next instant without conscious movement and without being moved by some overt action. Things which appear to be impossible are now only highly improbable, but given the right circumstances could happen.

Although these ideas are supposed to apply only in nuclear physics, the metaphysicist of the New Age takes it much further. Their presentation comes in the most subtle ways. For example the television programme

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“Quantum Leap” portrays a scientist of the future who leaps from time period to time period and body to body in the odyssey of righting wrongs and bringing about good according to the direction of a guiding “god/force.” The New Ager also espouses the “chaos theory” in which all movement is relative and interconnected, meaning “the beating of the wing of a butterfly can affect the weather pattern of an entire continent.”96 In the final episode of Quantum Leap the character Sam Beckett, who is the genius inventor of “quantum leap,” finally understands that he is in fact creating his quantum leaps with the god/force within himself in an attempt to right the wrongs of history and create a utopian world. He finds that others too are leaping from body to body and time to time. There have been confrontations with leapers from the dark side too. The whole series manifests the propaganda of New Age physics being filtered into the living rooms of occidental culture with themes of monism, that all beings though having an appearance of being separate entities are in fact interconnected, that time and space are one and that God is only within, not outside the universe.

The way in which the new paradigm of science views the universe shows both a breakdown and a breakthrough. Instead of the old Newtonian view of a mechanistic universe there is the new paradigm of an organic universe. Instead of dead matter, the universe is being viewed as a self-regulatory living organism. This is popularised by James Lovelock’s Gaia theory. Another source equally quoted in support of the New Age is the physicist Fritjof Capra. Capra went to eastern esoteric teachings for support of his new physics. This New Age look at science is explicated in Capra’s Tao of Physics. Therein he supports his myth by quoting Einstein: “We may therefore regard matter as being constituted by the regions of space in which the field is extremely intense... There is no place in this view of physics both for the field and matter, for the field is the only reality.”97 Matthew Fox, a theologian in sympathy with the New Age, suggests a merger of the new physics in western science with the rediscovery of creation-centred spirituality to say that we are arriving at the medium of holistic living. Science and Religion are to meet in holistic life. There is a shift from the

96 Ibid. p. 27.
Newtonian/Cartesian mechanistic view to a new Gaian paradigm of a living earth.

Dr. Elisabet Sahtouris points out in her apocalyptic book, *Gaia: The Human Journey From Chaos to Cosmos*:

scientists who shudder at such anthropomorphism— giving nature human form— let us not forget that mechanomorphism — giving nature mechanical form — is really no better than secondhand anthropomorphism, since mechanisms are human products. Is it not more likely that nature in essence resembles one of its own creatures than that it resembles in essence the nonliving product of one of its creatures.98

The universe, and more intimately planet earth, is considered more like a living organism than a lifeless machine. So the debate of science enters the New Age.

6. New Psychology/Spirituality— In the new psychology of transpersonal relationships, the individual is deified and interconnected to the whole universe. The universe is seen as a hologram in which every part contains the whole. There is a new world-view in which the natural, the supranatural and the supernatural again interplay with a new consciousness and new spirituality. In psychology it involves what became known as the Human Potential Movement and Transpersonal Psychology which see all consciousness as interconnected. William Bloom, in his book *The New Age: An Anthology of Essential Writings*, cites spiritual revival as the hallmark of the New Age.99 Void of their heroes and myths to live by, the western materialistic culture is listening for the voice of God. This spirituality and voice of God is no longer limited to the so called “Christian” view of spirituality and God. Turned off by orthodox Christianity, church dogma and authority, people of the New Age are looking within themselves and toward eastern esoteric thought for new ways of tapping into the spiritual person outside of church. This spirituality may not even have a context for God. It may be purely humanistic self-development or mystical cosmology.


On the other hand it may be interpreted in the context of personal deity, that each person is God. Such terms as monism, pantheism and panentheism are used in critiques to describe the overall views of spirituality and God in the New Age.

John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene in their book, *Megatrends 2000*, look at the trends of western humanity as the third millennium approaches. One distinct phenomenon involves “unmistakable signs of a world-wide multidenominational religious revival.” While mainline traditional churches such as the Presbyterian and Episcopal Protestant faiths are in decline, smaller fundamentalist denominations are among the fastest growing religious groups. There is an upsurge of interest in the literal Second Coming of Christ at the millennium. Naisbitt and Aburdene report that there has also been a revival in the Charismatic Movement which has tripled to around 277 million since 1980. Alternative religious groups such as the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses are also on the increase. In America alone Naisbitt and Aburdene estimate as many as 26 million adherents to the New Age movement. Harvard theologian, Harvey Cox, comments that the revival in Shinto, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism was unpredictable twenty-five years ago.

Though traditional mainline churches are in decline, polls say 94% of Americans and 76% of the British people claim to believe in God. However, in Britain only about 10% attend traditional churches, and in America 59% complain that their churches are too political and lack spirituality. Privatised religion is a common trend in western culture as is evidenced in the plethora of religious preferences in the New Age outwith the established churches and Biblical Christianity. The hierarchy of needs in Abraham Maslow’s humanistic psychology suggests that once the material needs of food and shelter are met, people will shift interests toward

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101 Ibid.
102 Ibid. pp. 248-249.
103 Ibid. p. 250.
belongingness, achievement, self-actualisation and peak experiences. The desire for transcendence is a major theme for the New Age and people are turning to alternative beliefs in search of that transcendence. Yet this transcendence is a personal journey not to be held back by any one leader or teaching. Hence there is a distrust for traditional orthodox Christian views and the authority of the church.

The most famous cover line of Time Magazine appeared in April 1966: “Is God Dead?” It typified the movement into what has been termed the post-Christian era. The cover was such a sensation that it caused innumerable protest phone calls and a then record 3,430 letters to the editor. This was only exceeded by the 1979 selection of the Ayatollah Khomeini as Man of the year which authored 14,180 letters of protest. Time magazine responded again to the current trends of the day in December 1969 with the cover “Is God Coming Back to Life?”

In the 1960s-70s the prominent “God is dead” theory was articulated by the radical theologian Thomas J.J. Alitzer. Scientism and sceptical theology espoused a trend toward the worship of Science. Religion from the Christian point of view was to become a part of history. The old gods of the people were to perish in the wake of the enlightenment of Science. However, the limitations of science were realised. Science theoretically disallowed the human need for transcendence. Only rationalistic empiricism was allowed. This was to free the people from the guilt attached to “religion.”

The counter trend now becoming more popular since the 1980s conveys a spiritual revival. In some sense this was demonstrated by the growth of particular churches, yet the demise of established orthodoxy noted that beneath the “baby boomer” return to churches lay a deeper quest for spirituality without the trimmings of set dogma. For example, what was noted in the United States as a growth in church attendance during the late 1980s fell away by the early 90s.

The New Age call to subjective spirituality is finding wider appeal. There is a recognition that humans are more than psychological, philosophical,

sociological and physical animals. There is a spiritual, artistic, creative, imaginative and religious need in individuals. Spiritual quests are shifting toward pluralism. Individuals may tailor their choice of techniques or myths to their own interpretation in order to reach the depths of their soul and transcend the finite plane of existence.

7. **New World Ecology**— There is also a new world-view that incorporates talk of a new one-world order in government and ecology. Central themes of world peace and the preservation and restoration of the natural resources receive the green light. Green Parties, Green Peace and other green movements are making impact on the ecological consciousness of the occidental world. The new wave is to be environment friendly. The least illustrative explanation of this paradigm shift is to demythologise the New Age as simply brought on by the problems of a post-industrial age with its sophisticated technological and microchip awareness on the one hand and its gross crimes against creation and the creature on the other hand having forced humanity to focus on a new awareness and on new approaches to the preservation of life and planet.

Matthew Fox cites this crisis as two-fold and universal. There is a universal crisis in ecology and a universal crisis of unemployment. He quotes Einstein: “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything except our way of thinking. Thus we are drifting toward a catastrophe beyond comparison.”¹⁰⁶ Humanity must outgrow war as the West has outgrown slavery, says Fox. The ecological crisis brings on the issue of famine versus food. Species extinction, land stripping and habitat destruction, resource depletion and waste production, global toxification and the degradation of the worth of the individual in culture are but a few of the issues spiralling around the eco-wars on a world-wide basis.

The second barb of this hook caught in the throat of humanity is unemployment. Fox cites over forty-five million in the first world and four hundred and fifty million in the third world are unemployed. “Indeed,” says Fox, “I do not believe that we have unemployment in the world at all.

What we have is *misemployment.*" He further cites studies which revealed that for every billion dollars spent on the military, 18,000 jobs are lost. Studies have estimated that it would only take seventeen billion dollars per year to feed, to give water, to educate, to give health care and housing to everyone in the world. Yet this is the amount the world spends on arms every fortnight. Capra’s book The Turning Point also subscribes to the present world crises as evidence of the need for a paradigm shift:

more than fifteen million people— most of them children— die of starvation each year; another 500 million are seriously undernourished. Almost 40 percent of the world’s population has no access to professional health services; yet developing countries spend more than three times as much on armaments as on health care. Thirty-five percent of humanity lacks safe drinking water, while half of its scientists and engineers are engaged in the technology of making weapons.

8. **Holistic Life & Global Consciousness**— In New Age terminology, the paradigm shift claims to involve a recognition of definite tendencies in a changing world-view which show a movement from concern for profit to a concern for people. There is also a holistic view of life involving an interconnectedness of the universe, earth, and life on earth in all its forms. This new ideology seeks holistic solutions to planetary problems. Fritjof Capra’s book The Turning Point expresses the new ideology’s concern for planetary issues regarding increase of crime, man’s inhumanity to man, ecological crisis and the inability of the “experts” to deal with the relevant problems of the world. “It is a striking sign of our times that the people who are supposed to be the experts in various fields can no longer deal with the urgent problems that have arisen in their areas of expertise.” In the ecosystem of the planet the paradigm shift is recognised as a growing consciousness toward care for the planet and the interdependent balance of all life. In these latter days, suggests the New Age, the nations are approaching an apocalyptic ecumenism. Political systems and religious systems are moving toward a harmonic convergence. All people and all

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107 Ibid.
110 Ibid. p. 25.
religions can share creation in communion. Global consciousness is exemplified in talk of one world government, a new world order, the United Nations and the downing of the Berlin wall as well as famine relief and other benevolent responses to the crisis of creation. Matthew Fox calls this an evolution from an "egological to ecological consciousness." Aldous Huxley's Perennial Philosophy would say, all religions may be different on the outside, but on the inside they are the same.

The New Age pleads for a holistic view of the living earth and life on earth. Holism is a buzz word of the New Age which refers to ideas of the interconnectedness of life, matter, energy and consciousness. Holism is a reaction to the analytical nature of scientific investigation which is often accused of failing to see the whole as greater than the sum of the parts. The whole person is body, mind and spirit. Therefore in medical care and health treatment, the three are one. There is a movement in the medical field to merge with what is called "alternative healing" techniques and a recognition that in treating physical indications physicians should also take care and patients should be aware of the need to care for the inner person of the mind, spirit and even the soul. Holistic healing claims to restore balance to the person's whole being, whereas traditional medical treatment is accused of dehumanising patients and treating visible and physical symptoms instead of seeking cures. Further, it is believed that all humans are sociologically interconnected as a community, since all live on one earth and have the need to become one in care and harmonious living. Humans are believed to be interconnected in consciousness as well. This New Age idea is a follow on from Jungian collective unconsciousness. Further, according to Peter Russell, the earth is a living organism and humans are its growing awareness, its consciousness, its brain. Therefore, all things are considered one.

Due to the advances of modern technology, the media are able to make the world a smaller place. The Gulf War was watched on T.V. in living Technicolor. Network communication and travel methods have so advanced as to make the world an interconnected Global village. No longer is the

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earth a place from which one may view the stars. The holistic earth is now objectified and positioned in space. The symbol of the earth as viewed from space has become a New Age symbol intended to bring forward a conscious oneness and gestalt interconnectedness. In her book The Power of Myth, Betty Flowers presents the picture of the earth as the symbol of the new myth to live by:

When you see the earth from the moon, you don’t see any divisions there of nations or states. This might be the symbol for the new mythology to come. That is the country that we are going to be celebrating, and those are the people that we are one with.

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113 Melton, J. Gordon. New Age Encyclopedia. Op. Cit. p. 182 in the article on Buckminster Fuller, the invention of the geodesic dome came from a study of the engineering structure of nature’s creations such as the crystal. Also Fuller is attributed with the term “synergy” which refers to the whole as greater than the sum of the parts and the term “spaceship earth” as referring to the earth as a vehicle on which humans make their journey as a global village. The symbol of Earth as a unifying symbol is also identified by Edgar Mitchell’s “peak experince” as he recounts his spacecraft’s descent to Earth. Mitchell noted “how peacefully, how harmoniously, how marvelously [earth] seemed to fit into the evolutionary pattern by which the universe is maintained... the experience of divinity became almost palpable, and I knew that life in the universe was not just an accident based on random processes.” In 1973 Mitchell founded the Institute of Noetic Sciences to explore the consciousness and parapsychological phenomena. Mitchell, Edgar D. “Noetics: The Emerging Science of Consciousness.” Psychic 4,4. 1973. pp. 18-20 as cited by Melton pp. 288-289. See also Lovelock, James. Gaia: A New Look At Life On Earth. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1979, 1987. pp. ix-x. Here Lovelock links the view of Earth from space with the view of Earth as a single living organism.

Viewed from space the world is one. It is the blue pearl. It is considered that all boundaries political, geographical, racial or otherwise are not evident in the earth’s natural setting. All these man-made boundaries are eliminated when the world is seen as one blue pearl in space. The New Age image calls humanity to look upon itself from outside its own atmosphere in a way never before possible.

The Gaian view of Mother Earth and the necessity of ecological awareness is reflected in such popular writings as Thomas Berry’s The Dream of the Earth. In this book Berry encourages readers to regain the lost vision of "the vast mythic, visionary, symbolic world with its all-pervasive numinous qualities."115

9. The Quest for Hope & New Religion— The hope of New Agers is that there will be an increase in consciousness toward spirituality and the inner person, which is on a deeper level of consciousness beyond the basic levels of the conscious, subconscious and preconscious mind. The shift is noted in the decline of traditional occidental religious views, and an increase in eastern esoteric views and cultic phenomena. In reference to western culture’s identity crisis, one aspect is the quest for hope in a seemingly hopeless society. Mistrust characterises modern western society. The anti-establishment movement is a statement against the hypocrisy of lifestyles which promise everything and deliver precious little. Pessimism and scepticism typically lead to cynicism and sadism. Doubt and fear are very dominant themes. The late Erich Fromm is quoted as writing, “Those whose hope is weak settle for comfort or for violence.”116 That pretty well describes the comfort of consumerism and the violence of militarism which dominate the present western culture. Both western consumerism and crimes of violence are on the increase. When one hope fails another will be adopted in its place. The West is in search of new hope. The sedentary spirituality of a dormant church and the materialism of an exhausted secular humanism have led to a new consciousness.

While police in Britain are considering carrying arms to protect themselves in the streets, the August 23, 1993 issue of Time featured a cover story entitled “America the Violent: Crime is spreading and patience is running out.” On a world-wide scale during 1992 a British Broadcasting report heralded the statistics of 50 major wars (not counting skirmishes and gang wars) and half a million deaths from war in that one year. Added to crime increase and ecological crisis, the age of insecurity is compounded by the 495 million unemployed or misemployed of this world. Western culture is shifting from the security based white collar job, while industry lays off more blue collar workers. The ideology of job security is a thing of the past.

Secular humanistic philosophy supported the enlightenment age in which human ability became the measure of all things. It yielded a security system based on material prosperity and industry. Now that those foundations are shifting, the question again arises, Where is hope? There must arise in the heart of individuals some higher or wider interest that will enable them not necessarily to solve the insoluble problems of life, but to refocus on a new hope whereby the former insoluble problems lose their urgency.

In this search all the myths of the New Age become joyously adventurous. The myth seems not as important as the belief in the myth to raise the individual above the situations of life. Self-actualisation, self-healing, personal development and inner journeys as well as the search for extraterrestrials and other forces which will draw humanity toward transcendence are but a few of the areas that have made New Age literature and techniques the fastest growing area of publication.

10. The Quest for Freedom, Rights and Liberation — The age of individualism, the quest for one’s roots and the quest for freedom is epitomised in what is happening to the conglomerate population in the United States where the New Age hype began. Alex Haley’s book Roots and Martin Luther King’s speech “Free At Last” summarise the Civil Rights Movement and the growing desire to find one’s place and worth in the universe. These pursuits denote a shift from authoritarian utilitarianism to concern for innate value and root identity.
The innate worth of the individual is being hailed. People wish to be identified not as black or white, but as African American, Native American instead of American Indian, not British but Irish, Scottish, English or Welsh, not the U.S.S.R. but independent countries with unique worth to the whole earth. As Alex Haley says, "I had to find out who I was... I needed to find meaning in my life," so Nietzsche said, "man stripped of myth... must dig frantically for roots, be it among the most remote antiquities." The identity and freedom of the present are caught up in the search for history. That the genesis of the New Age came in the United States is little wonder since they are a people always in search of their roots.

Apart from the Native Americans (and even they now want to be identified according to their ancestral tribes) Americans came from peoples who left their myths behind in order to make a fresh start. Generations later, Americans are in search of this history to find meaning and freedom to be who they are in their own right. Humanity seems unable to go on for very long without retracing its origins. This revived search for roots is in part the inauguration of the New Age.

11. The Feminine Touch — Feminism is closely linked with nature and together they form another catalyst for the New Age. Career women are revolutionising terminology and lifestyle. This in itself declares a new age, a paradigm shift. Terms such as "man", "mankind" and "chairman" are but a few examples of the re-writing of the dictionaries based on the liberation of the feminine gender. In the New Age, patriarchal systems are being replaced by matriarchal paradigms. This has implications for virtually all areas of life whether scientific, political or religious. In science it is Gaia. In politics it is matriarchy or at least an androgynous approach to leadership. In religion it is a resurgence of Goddess worship, Wicca, and women's role in the churches, feminist theologies and ecofeminism. Mother earth is the symbol for nature and care for the earth and its inhabitants. New Agers set up a history of Goddess worship that is intended to demonstrate that the world under such mythological belief is more peaceful. The feminine side of humanity is to be incorporated in a leadership role in the New Age because according to New Age belief the feminine side (right-brain) is that which

yields creativity, intuition, feeling and art to balance the egotistical reason-oriented male-dominant (left-brain) mentality of occidental culture.

Clearly, not all New Age adherents would include themselves under all of these umbrellas nor necessarily agree with one another's existential interpretations of the times of change taking place in our world. However, the various interpretations generally fall into the categories of an evolution of consciousness, new mythologies of hope, and a forced-focus on survival. Behind all three wide-angle pictures is the recurring theme of the lost myth to live by. The range of belief systems for the New Age is amorphous, eclectic and syncretistic. It is amorphous because the range of beliefs and interpretations is allowed to be as varied as the number of individuals espousing them. The movement is eclectic because disciples are allowed to draw from several separate beliefs which may even contradict one another. The New Age is syncretistic in that it attempts to harmonise the various beliefs from which its disciples draw their rationally irrational systems of belief. The New Age's encyclopaedic listing of techniques and myths literally ranges from Acupressure to Zorastrianism. The movement's heroes cover leading figures from science, mythology, psychology, philosophy, cultism and the occult. The New Age draws from the East as for example in Zen Buddhism where the individual's detachment from the logical and rational world is a means of reaching enlightenment. However, in terms of religious beliefs there is a tendency to accentuate eastern esoteric thought, often mixed with legends, Celtic Christianity, Christian Mysticism and strong associations with Wiccan tradition and other occidental occultism.

MARKS OF THE NEW AGE

Although it is noted that the need for a paradigm shift and the paradigm shift itself in one sense mark the New Age, they have been treated separately in order to establish that there are two senses in which one can view the New Age. On the one hand the New Age may refer to the wider sense of change in paradigms as discussed above without taking on board many of

the underlying mythological, theological and philosophical beliefs, from the sublime to the bizarre, that are popularly representing New Age. To further distinguish this one might consider the former as a soft core more sociological phenomenon and the later as a hard core more cultic and occult view. However, true to the New Age’s amorphous nature the two often overlap as do the various themes. Various levels of New Age have been explicated:

1. There are those who trace the New Age back to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky’s Theosophy and Alice Bailey’s Arcane school. For example Constance Cumbey’s Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow makes great emphasis of arguments against the New Age in relation to the conspiracy plans set out in the teachings of Bailey and her forerunner Blavatsky.

2. Others trace the New Age from the days of the Hippie anti-establishment movement and the psychedelic drug days of the 1960s. Such people as Richard Alpert (Baba Ram Dass), Timothy Leary, Aldous Huxley, Theodore Roszak became prominent leaders of this movement toward alternate levels of expanded consciousness, which in turn contributed to a more sophisticated movement in psychology and human potential as exampled in the establishment of Michael Murphy’s and Richard Price’s Esalen Institute centred in the teaching of these and other prominent figures in esoteric and psycho-spiritual therapies.

3. Then there is a level which includes a rising acceptance of a montage of mystical and occult alternatives. This may be exampled as a rise in cultism, alternative eastern esoteric religious belief mixed with Christian terminology and mythologies of various types. For example Wicca has become more accepted as an open practice whereas formerly one would not necessarily openly profess to practice the Craft. This mark of the New Age will be dealt with later in more detail, since there are those who would claim that Witchcraft, being an older cult has little or no connection to the New Age.

4. There is yet another level of the New Age which aspires only to the social phenomenon of a shifting paradigm which works more toward a rise in feminism, the rising acceptance of alternative lifestyles outwith traditional occidental "Christian" values, the movement toward a new world order and world peace, and increased ecological consciousness toward the saving of planet earth and its life forms.

5. One might also suggest a fifth level of New Age as the growing acceptance of the theory of organic evolution and a "New Science" which
seeks to establish the unity principle of all that exists. This is a merge of eastern esoteric thought with the theory of relativity. Such theories are presented by Fritjof Capra's *The Turning Point* and *The Tao of Physics*.

Having generally set out some of the more distinct levels above, the following examples will reveal some of the more detailed marks of the New Age:

1. **Hard Core/Soft core**— The New Age is an attempt to pull together under one umbrella all the variations of the present paradigm shift. The New Age interprets the paradigm shift in two ways. The hard core "New Age" includes the specific cultic and faddish practices and innovations of alternative myths, the complete array of paranormal phenomena from astral travel to E.T., and from Atlantis to Arthurian legend. On the other hand the soft core "new age" dismisses these myths but captures the philosophy of a new and better world in which love will lead the way. Each belief system may be represented in any area. For example: the present paradigm shift constitutes a greater vision of caring for the earth. This may be represented in hard core New Age as approached by "deep ecology." The soft core approach would be evidenced in "social or humanistic ecology." Deep ecology is a montage of belief systems that espouse various forms of entities which are responsible for the nurture of mother earth and calls for humanity to come into relationship with these entities in order to establish a balance and preserve both humanity and the cosmos. Social or humanistic ecology would be a pragmatic approach to addressing the ecological crisis by legislating laws and practices which would discover and regulate the balance of nature. Virtually all areas of the New Age paradigm shift are represented by both hard core and soft core approaches.

2. **Antinomian.** One of the New Age's leading figures, Guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh says, "It's not that the intellect sometimes misunderstands. Rather, the intellect always misunderstands. It is not that the intellect sometimes errs; it is that the intellect is the error. It always errs."\textsuperscript{119} J.Z. Knight, one of the leading New Age channelers relays the message from her channel Ramtha: "This teaching is lawless. It possesses no laws, for the law is a limitation that obstructs freedom." The revelation continues, "When

others have permitted themselves to be governed with laws and morals and ideals, you will be a free entity, for you will belong to no truth but your own."  

Jon Klimo in his book, *Channelling*, says people “now have the possibility of giving ourselves permission to re-negotiate our own most meaningful relationship with the living ground of Being.” Since the theory Kuhn presented for paradigm shifts in the scientific arena has been stretched by New Agers to cover the ideologies and world-views of all cultures in the world, truth itself is now seen in this context to be evolutionary. William Bloom, founder of the New Age (Alternatives) programme at St. James Church, Piccadilly sums it up in his words to the effect that there is no longer to be a “repression of our instinct freely to explore the inner dimensions of our universe and of ourselves.... humanity is reasserting its right to explore spirituality in total freedom. The constraints of religious and intellectual ideology are falling away.”

Allerd Stikker in his book *The Transformation Factor: Towards An Ecological Consciousness*, interprets the Taoist point of view that: “Rules of conduct are due to lack of trustworthiness and are the beginning of disorder.” Rules and regulations are external and unnecessary, since The Way is within the human being and nature themselves. The Taoist, according to Stikker is one who follows the way within as opposed to the external way. Such Taoist thinkers as Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu were of the conviction that the way to unity and harmonious living was found within the human being and within nature. Therefore the person who “follows his or her own pattern can be in balance internally, and through that balance can be in tune with the environment and the universe.” This is the basis of the New Age antinomian rejection of external structures, authoritarian

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124 Ibid.
hierarchies and dualisms. This tendency toward antinomianism is a definite mark of the New Age movement.

3. **Pantheistic**—James Sire’s book, *The Universe Next Door*, describes the transitions that have been taking place over the centuries to constitute movements in thought which he calls changes in world-views, ideologies and paradigms. He views the New Age as marked by a progression of thought from theism, naturalism, naturalistic nihilism and eastern pantheism. Each system has posited beliefs which have been caught up by the swirling New Age. As older world-views have lost touch with the people an evolved new mindset has taken its place. Eventually people will assert what they want to believe, regardless of whether or not there is an objective reality.

“The New Age world-view itself is a mindset whose time has come.”¹²⁵ According to Sire’s analysis the New Age has retained the worth of the individual from the theistic world-view. Self is supreme in the New Age world-view. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries human reason became a dominant theme in the occidental world-view. In a shift from the former Biblical view of revealed truth from God who is transcendent, human reason became the arbiter of truth. With this change came Naturalism. In this view as Carl Sagan says, “The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.”¹²⁶ There is no afterlife of any kind and humanity is left to sort out its own problems. In the bleakness of this world-view people still longed for something more, yet without the confines of objective or empirical truth.

Therefore, the quest turned to the East for a third ingredient to the evolving New Age ideology. Pantheism entered the recipe. Fundamentally the pantheistic view is converse to both naturalism and theism. Unlike theism, in pantheism there is no transcendent God, for all is God. Unlike naturalism death is not the end in pantheism. However, its premise that God and the cosmos are one is drawn out and given a western twist to complement the swirling mix of the New Age paradigm shift.

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The basis of pantheism is that Atman is Brahman. Atman is the essence, the soul, the self of the individual. Brahman is the essence, the soul of the whole cosmos. All is one. The individual is subsumed in the cosmos; all is God. The New Age twist to this view is that Brahman is Atman; the essence is the individual. The emphasis is placed on the individual instead of the cosmos. Rather than the self being insignificant in the context of the universe, the self becomes the creator of reality. To the contrary in pantheism the self is really an illusion (the Hindu belief in *maya*); reality is the cosmos which is not created at all but rather emanates.

In line with the move toward accentuating the individual with a pantheistic twist Shirley MacLaine has made the New Age more popular than anyone else. Her auto-biographies are replete with examples of the New Age belief that the self is the real reality. "Was the search for God pointless because God was within me? Was God within each of us? Was self-search the only journey worth taking, because what we found, we would eventually realise, was our own creation anyway?" MacLaine is begging the question to proclaim the New Age belief in personal deity. Unlike pantheism that espouses no transcendent God, only Brahman, the New Age presents the individual as God who supremely creates reality. This reality in the New Age is within the consciousness of the individual. There are two levels to this reality. One level is the visible; the other level is the invisible which one may enter through the "doors of perception."

4. **Existentialist.** Existentialism is epitomised by the philosophies of two men who come from opposite perspectives. One came from a church ministry while the other came from atheism. Two sensitive thinkers foresaw the disillusionment which was to come at the fall of the Age of Reason's modern Humanism. One was Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) who believed in God, although his views were highly unorthodox. The other was Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), an antagonistic atheist. Kierkegaard considered his native church in Denmark had settled for a comfortable

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128 The term "doors of perception" was introduced by Huxley to refer to the various techniques by which one could visualise the unseen reality, i.e. acupuncture was the method by which Shirley MacLaine first opened the door and for Huxley it was through the use of drugs which eventually killed him. Huxley, Aldous. *Doors of Perception.* Harper and Row, New York. 1963; *Heaven and Hell.* Harper and Row, New York. 1963.
message and therefore no longer stood for real Christianity. Both men attacked the unwarranted optimism of their day by holding that behind the facade of stability was lurking doom. Existentialism was born to re-establish the passion of subjective experience because science and systematic theology had objectified everything.

Existentialism swings the pendulum in the other direction and rejects the conventional. There is no truth with a capital “T”, only “truth-for-me.” Existentialism was to bring humanity back to reality from humanism’s unjustified optimism. Yet the two hold in common the belief in relativism and selfism. However, this is not new. Protagoras, the Greek sophist, also promoted the belief that each person was the measure of all things. The branch of existentialism represented by Kierkegaard was the Christian’s experience of the world in relationship with Christ. The other branch led by Nietzsche was the atheist’s approach to life.

In his epic poem, “Thus Spoke Zarathustra,” Nietzsche unfolded his philosophy that “God is dead.” Humanity no longer felt God. The Christian religion had lost its authoritarian grip and “as yet no new God lies in cradle and swaddling clothes.” This spelled devastation for humanity. Thus Nietzsche drove his scepticism to its terminus, which is nihilism— the belief that nothing remains. In contrast the “superman” in Nietzsche’s philosophy is the one who can be God and become his own foundation for meaning and value, without flinching in the face of nihilism. So the progression of humanism led to existentialism which now has led to the New Age where meaning and value is found within the individual according to his or her own experience. In the New Age, humans become divine.

Yet in all this there was an implicit need for spirituality. The Age of Reason and Science had not answered the deep questions concerning humanity’s inhumanity. Psychology has yet to touch the source of good and evil within. The philosophy of humanism measures humanity too short, and

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131 Ibid. pp. 79-82.
existentialism’s search for meaning in the individual’s own experience without God has not brought hope to funerals.

Existentialism is the philosophical trend that is generally opposed to rationalism and empiricism. Rationalists and empiricists tend to view the universe as ordered and observable with natural laws which govern human activity. In the existentialist’s point of view being takes precedence over empirical knowledge. Being cannot be made the object of objective enquiry. The individual’s experience of self and freedom is relative to the perceived processes of nature, yet at the same time there is a quest for transcendence above the processes of nature.

There is no predetermined place or duty for the individual. Each person is compelled to exercise freedom of choice and can only interpret meaning to life through the personal experiences which result from the choices one makes. Anxiety is caused in the individual because of a realisation of the necessity to make choices based on an awareness of multiple possibilities yet without knowledge of the future outcome. Individuals create their own worth by the measured worth and utility of their choices. There is no innate value to human life, therefore personal achievement is of the highest priority. This sets up categories of worth in society and establishes a hierarchy in humanity. The rich are better than the poor; the healthy are better than the sick; the employed are better than the unemployed, etcetera. The New Age professes to react against this construct of Existentialism by pleading for innate values and equal worth, while at the same time retaining the emphasis on self-existence and experiential values.

Time Magazine’s feature article on “New Age Harmonies” in December, 1987 called the growing interest in the New Age a kaleidoscope of beliefs, fads and rituals. The New Age is existential because its tendency is to replace Descartes’ “Cogito ergo sum” with “Sentio ergo sum.” Intellect is not as important as intuition. Sense feeling is more important than reason.

Existentialists examine the choices with a background belief that their existence is finite. Nothing preceded their coming into this world and nothing follows their exodus. This is where the New Age adds a twist to existentialism. In reaction to the finitude of life, New Agers have begun to
interpret experiences such as near-death, out-of-the-body, paranormal, déjà vu, and other such mystical phenomena as evidence of transcendent existence. Herein is the quest for enlightenment, higher consciousness and power over the physical realms by the attaining of insights and access to evolved entities. A plethora of techniques are on offer for the New Ager to use in the pursuit of this enlightenment or higher consciousness. A sampling includes acupressure and acupuncture, aromatherapy, auromatherapy, chromotherapy, chiropractic therapy, reflexology and Chinese medicine, crystal powers, I Ching, dreams, Transcendental Meditation, firewalking, shamanism, rituals from Wicca, chanting mantras and gazing into mandalas, exercising with martial arts and the use of hallucinogenic drugs, ESP, etheric projection, creative visualisation and sensory deprivation, various forms of yoga, various forms of therapy such as Gestalt, rolfing, Erhard Seminar Training (The Forum) and A Course In Miracles. Most of the techniques are derived from eastern religions, Native American and aboriginal religious rituals, the occult and occidental psychology.

One point of technique has been muted by the New Age in its attempt to become scientifically and intellectually mature. The use of drugs was a harbinger of the New Age appeal to rise to higher levels of consciousness. Timothy Leary and Aldous Huxley were at the forefront of the mind expanding drug culture of the Flower Power 60s. They are heralded as leaders of the New Age and Humanist movements. James Sire records this point as well, referencing it from the early 1970s when Andrew Weil, M.D. advocated the use of psychedelic drugs to achieve new states of consciousness. In his book, The Natural Mind: A New Way of Looking at Drugs and the Higher Consciousness, Weil writes, “One day when the change has occurred, we will no doubt look back on our drug problem of the 1970s as something to laugh about and shake our heads over: how could we not have seen what it was really all about?”

The particular aspect of Existentialism that applies most readily to New Age thinking is that truth is relative. Truth with a capital “T” is non cognitive for

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New Agers. Truth is interpreted in a number of ways relative to the experience of the individual. Truth is relative and subjective. The individual is autonomous. The New Age agrees in the abhorrence of absolutism, though in fact the statement that there is no absolute truth is itself an absolute statement. Truth is determined by its suitability to the experience rather than its objective rightness. In this sense the Self is the guide and no teacher, text or structure of religion is the one and only means of salvation.

The common New Age phrase that sums up the existential twist is "you create your own reality." This means that individuals must take responsibility for their own life, but it also means that whatever one believes is possible is possible. Shirley MacLaine’s popularised version of the New Age is not necessarily adhered to by classical New Agers, however, in this respect Shirley MacLaine voices the belief of the New Age:

If I created my own reality, then on some level and dimension I didn't understand I had created everything I saw, heard, touched, smelled, tasted; everything I loved, hated revered, abhorred; everything I responded to or that responded to me. Then, I created everything I knew. I was responsible for all there was in my reality.133

5. Humanist. Along with the evolution of psychology’s myths the philosophy of Humanism gave humanity further myths that sought to find hope within the self. The myth of humanism is found in the Humanist Manifesto I (published in 1933 by a group of humanists and liberal “Christians” in America). Saving ourselves meant, “the complete rationalisation of human personality.” The Humanist Manifesto II (1973) states, “no deity will save us; we must save ourselves...” “Reason and intelligence are the most effective instruments that mankind possesses.”134

The Humanist Society was founded in America in 1949. In Britain, the British Humanist Association established in the 1960s began with a very anti-church format. Rather than continuing in this vein they have now turned to the more positive approach of simply offering humanism as a

positive way of life. In July of 1967 a policy was adopted by the Annual General Meeting. Its thirty-three articles cover the issues for which the Association stands. The preamble reads:

Humanists believe that man's conduct should be based on humanity, insight, and reason. He must face his problems with his own moral and intellectual resources, without looking for supernatural aid. Our concern is with this life, which we try to make worth while and sufficient in itself. We make no claims to special knowledge or final answers, since we regard the search for understanding as a continuing process.135

Where Humanism states that man is the measure of all things, New Age Humanism states that humanity is the key figure in the synergistic universe. Sir George Trevelyan, who is considered the father of the New Age in Great Britain states:

To me the New Age is the most important awakening that is going on within the consciousness of humanity. It's new because we've come through a very materialistic age, over developing the left hemisphere of the brain— the intellectual, analytical, masculine faculties and underdeveloping the feminine, sensitive, intuitive, holistic faculties of the right hemisphere of the brain which can apprehend that life is one immense whole, that the earth is a living creature in a living universe, a huge divine whole, and that man, as humanity, the 10th hierarchy a little lower than the angels, if I may quote Blake, is set on earth a little space that we may learn to bear the beams of love. Now in our divided, greedy, violent world separated in so many ways, is coming this new impulse essentially spiritual in its nature, which I really see as a rising tide of love.136

Clearly humanity is seen as a synergistic whole. This adopts Buckminster Fuller's dictum, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."137 For the New Age humanity is the major contributor to the transformation evolving into the New Age. Instead of being merely human, the New Age humanity is divine. Alan Watson, a conservationist with the New Age community of Findhorn in Scotland, clarifies the belief that, "what is important about the

136 This quote is taken from part one of the six part series on Channel Four of British television in early 1991. The series was produced by Clarke, Philip and Donebauer, Peter. Diverse Production Limited, Gorleston Street, London W14 8XS.
New Age is the presence of God in each one of us rather than an external figure somewhere in the sky.”

Robert Basil’s book of critical essays on the New Age considers the New Age from a humanistic point of view. Clearly the tone suggests that the agnostic or atheistic Humanist is in danger of being overtaken in an evolution toward New Age Humanism. Maureen O’Hara, a practising psychotherapist and a professor of Women’s Studies at San Diego State University conveyed her sentiments on the “take over” in an essay presented to members of the Association for Humanistic Psychology at its annual meeting in 1986. O’Hara vehemently scolds New Agers with the following:

what it is that makes members of professional organisations like the Association for Humanistic Psychology so vulnerable to pseudoscientific scams, paranormal claims, quantum film-flam, and all manner of psychological ideas and ideologies that are often based on nothing more than popular acclaim and successful marketing....

Members of the Association for Humanistic Psychology and its publications include such leading figures as Abraham Maslow, Rollo May and Carl Rogers as founders much quoted by New Agers and Fritjof Capra, Marilyn Ferguson and Jean Houston, to name but a few who are directly involved in the forefront of New Age writings.

The New Age is Humanism combined with a cosmic divine twist. The agenda of discovering what it is to be human is still part of the theme of the New Age as it is in Secular Humanism. The quest for optimism and the unlimited scope of possibilities for human achievement is also in line with both branches of Humanism. Also the rejection of traditional religious beliefs agrees with both branches. Humanism is the philosophy which seeks to place foremost a concern for the welfare of humanity and a solution to the problems of humanity without outside help. This is where the New Age Humanist differs from the Secular Humanist.

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140 Ibid. pp. 145-146.
denies the supernatural, the New Age Humanist affirms the supernatural and humanity as part of it. New Age Humanism pushes the unlimited possibilities for human achievement to their logical conclusion. For the New Age humanity is divine.

6. **Gnostic.** On the one hand the New Age claims to make no claims on the efficacy of knowledge. On the other hand gnosis is paramount to the "salvation" of the New Ager. This gnosis is experiential knowledge by which the New Ager may enter the doorway to "personal transformation." The term comes from the Greek word ἰδεις, which was particularly used to differentiate between academic knowledge, oïðα, and the knowledge gained through experience.

Many of the themes of Gnosticism are not carried over or are only partially carried over into New Age beliefs. For example the idea of dualism, that there is a transcendent God and an ignorant and presumptuous demiurge who created this world, is only partially carried over. There is no transcendent God for the mainstream New Age, but humanity is interpreted as the demiurge elevated to the highest pantheistic deity. Having stated that, there is a wide influence of New Age in Christian circles, which surely believe in a transcendent God. The contradiction is acceptable in the "anything goes" philosophy of the New Age. However, in Gnosticism, certain pneumatic individuals suffer from spiritual amnesia. Ideally this applies to all of humanity. Therefore a Gnostic Redeemer is sent to reveal knowledge that will enlighten the spiritual insights of these individuals so that they will realise or remember their cosmic emanation. At death these individuals are destined for reunion with their divine essence.

Terms used for this enlightenment in the New Age include, High C, Higher Consciousness, Christ consciousness, Cosmic Christ or Cosmic Consciousness, Higher Self, Real Self, God-Self, The Force, Self-realisation, *Samadhi* (the Hindu word of God-consciousness), *Satori* (the Zen Buddhist synonym) and New Age Transformation. Individuals must have the divine spark and then realise their divine essence in order to be released from the
corrupt, illusionary world of materialism. Otherwise after death they must continue to wander the realm of this material world again.\(^{141}\)

Another aspect of the Gnostic point of view is that this dualism constitutes two worlds, a world of the material which is illusionary and corrupt and a spiritual world of God where there is enlightened fulfilment. The New Age is similar in this respect to some of the eastern esoteric thoughts of Hinduism and Buddhism which lean toward pantheism and monism. All is God and All is One. For example in Shankara Hinduism, this worldly existence is an illusion, \textit{maya}. There are two levels of truth. One level of truth is the real world (Brahman); the other is the world as it appears to be, yet this level is illusionary (Atman is \textit{maya}). This also contributes to the antinomian nature of the New Age. This is why Shirley MacLaine's version of the New Age allows her to stand facing the Pacific ocean and chant with outstretched arms, “I am God, I am God, I am God.”\(^{142}\) Some eastern gurus agree. Sathya Sai Baba says, “...you are the God of this universe.”\(^{143}\) Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh follows on with the statement, “I don't believe in morality;” “I am bent on destroying it;” “to emphasise morality is mean, degrading, it is inhuman.”\(^{144}\) Again, Swami Vivekananda says, “Good and evil are one and the same... The murderer too is God.”\(^{145}\) In explaining the words of Arjuna, the warrior in the Bhagavad Gita, Rajneesh says, “Kill, murder, fully conscious, knowing that no one is murdered and no one is killed.”\(^{146}\)


\(^{146}\) Ibid. citing Rajneesh. The Book of Secrets, Vol. 1, p. 399.
Though there are many versions of Gnosticism, two scenarios will suffice to show the similarities adapted by the New Age. In Gnosticism the soul is pre-existent in the heavenly realms, but due to an unknown tragic event the human souls fell from their heavenly state to the earth, where they are imprisoned in human bodies. In this human state the souls have forgotten their true nature, therefore a Gnostic Redeemer was sent by the good god to enlighten the fallen souls. 147

Another version of the myth is that of a Primal Man who is the embodiment of all light. Before this earth’s beginning of time the Primal Man was savaged by demons and fragmented into particles of light which the demons used to create a world out of the darkness of chaos. The demons enslaved some souls in human bodies. Trapped in the human bodies, these souls forgot their identity. The coming of the Gnostic Redeemer was to illuminate the souls so that at death they could return to the Redeemer. A great expanse existed between the good god and the creation of the Demiurge. Seven spheres separated the good god from the humans. These realms were inhabited by other entities who were also emanations of the good god. The purpose of these intermediary beings was to assist in enlightening the divine spark within the elite humans. Once enlightenment was experienced the soul transcended the earthly plane to be reunited to the domain of the good god. 148

Just one of the many New Age interpolations of the Gnostic myth is that when the Big Bang to begin this universe took place it was an explosion of souls. Some souls landed on an earthly plane, corrupted because of amnesia which was the result of their obsession with the glitter of this world and egocentrism. The rise of the New Age is the evolving enlightenment of humanity to its true essence which will in turn lift the world from the corruption of the flesh to a pneumatic world of peace and harmony, to mature deity. 149 Ken Wilbur, a leading theoretician in transpersonal psychology and herald of the New Age describes the human condition as “moving up from Eden, not down. The Fall... was nothing less than the


involuntary descent of God into matter—the creation of the universe itself....
The universe is involved in a mighty drama of awakening and reunion....
Salvation [represents] a progression to the transpersonal state—to awareness of our prior union with God.”

The New Age has several myths regarding spiritual helpers, adepts, guides, allies, guardians, hidden masters, ascended masters, devas, channels and entities to name a few of the names given for those who would take the place of the Gnostic Redeemer. With the assistance of these guides humanity will remember its deity and become harmoniously one in the dawning of a New Age.

7. An Astrological shift—The New Age also describes the paradigm shift as the conditions evolving from the Zodiacal Piscean Era to the emergence of the Aquarian Era. The Piscean Era is described as one of hierarchical authority and power whereas the Aquarian Era is to be free of dogma, free flowing like water which easily assumes the shape of its surroundings because it has no definite shape of its own.

Structures of hierarchical devotion in the Age of Pisces are to be replaced with a more fluid and spontaneous unity in relationships “that dance to the Aquarian rhythm.” The New Age myth's place in time, according to astrologers, is equated with the Age of Aquarius. Every 2,100 years or so, due to the precession of the equinoxes, the Zodiacal Age changes. The Age of Aquarius is mythologically interpreted as the age of increasing harmony, understanding and spiritual development.

Twenty to twenty-five years ago the Aquarian myth was adopted as synonymous with what others now call the New Age. Since then it has widened its appeal beyond an astrological definition; however the fundamental thesis is still the same. From an astrological point of view the New Age is defined as the age of freedom. In the late 1960s the pop musical

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152 Bloom. Op. Cit. p. xviii. Herein are suggested the three reasons for the present paradigm shift as transformation of consciousness, an astrological shift and a sociological forced-focus in awareness toward the preservation of life on earth.
The Fifth Dimension proclaimed the inauguration of the Age of Aquarius with their song by that name. Hence it became the popular theme song for the musical play “Hair.” The lines of the song convey the theme:

When the moon is in the seventh house and Jupiter aligns with Mars; then peace will guide the planets, and love will steer the stars. This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius... You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars, you have a right to be here...

Astrology views the universe as a single organism with all the parts interconnected. Therefore the movement of the planets and stars affects the movement of life on earth. The heavens and the earth are connected. So goes the Astrologist’s phrase, “As in the heavens, so on earth.” If the gravitational pull of the moon can affect the tides, then the movement of the cosmos can affect the behaviour of life on earth corporately and individually.

Astrologers strongly support the idea of an imminent shift to a new age. According to their beliefs the ages are marked by the equinoxes of the sun. The equinoxes are the two periods of the year in which the day and the night are of equal length. This is the time when the sun moves from the northern to the southern hemisphere and back again. Since the second century BC the position of the sun has also been seen to follow a pattern of lining up with the constellations. This movement of the sun is actually based on the changes in the tilt of the earth on its axis. The earth tilts 37 degrees away from being perpendicular to the plane of the Sun’s ecliptic, consequently the earth’s equatorial plane also changes position relative to the earth’s axis.

The tilt of the earth’s axis as it spins causes another movement called “precess.” Precess is the variation of the top of the axis at the North Pole/South Pole occasioned by the earth’s axis slowly moving in a circle about the pole of the elliptic (much like a spinning top which is not perpendicular to the floor will have its axis continually change thus forming a small slower spinning circle showing the shifting movement of the axis). This movement in turn causes an earlier occurrence of the equinoxes in successive sidereal years. This overall change causes the “precession of the equinoxes.”
Precession changes the position of the earth's axis and equinoxes in relation to the stars. The full cycle is supposed to occur every 26,000 years. This is the Zodiac. The heavens are thus divided into twelve sections corresponding to 2,160 years for each sign of the Zodiac. This reverse movement through the constellations or "precession of the equinoxes" is measured within a 30 degree wide belt along the Celestial Equator. Each precession lasts approximately 2,160 years, although discernment differs in this matter. Whatever constellation is in the Zodiac belt at the time of the spring equinox (March 22 give or take a day) constitutes the Age of the Zodiac.153

According to interpretation the sign of Taurus, the Bull, began about 4,000 BC when the Sun appeared in that constellation. This corresponds to the Biblical time of the dismissal from Eden. Then came Aries, the Ram, at around 2,000 BC. This too corresponds with a Biblical change when God called Abraham to begin the quest for the promised land. It was a ram that was sacrificed in place of Abraham's son. The present age is under the sign of Pisces, the Fish. Interestingly, the Christian era marked by the birth of Jesus Christ has carried the symbol of the fish. In the early days of Christianity the Greek word for fish, ΙΧΘΥΣ, stood for an acrostic wherein the letters corresponded to Ἰησοῦς (Jesus), Χριστὸς (Christ), Θεοῦ Υἱὸς (Son of God) Σωτῆρ (Saviour). Now, according to Zodiacal Astrologists, the earth and its inhabitants are on the threshold of a new age, the Age of Aquarius, the Water-carrier. The exact transition between the ages is itself uncertain. Dates range from the 1960s-70s to well into the 21st century. Some say we are now in the Age of Aquarius while others technically observing the astronomical position say Aquarius is not to occur until around 2,100 and still others say it will not come for another 300 years. Regardless of the dating, the theme is that the world is in the process of a transition from one age to another and this myth gives meaning to the paradigm shift being witnessed during the last thirty years or so of this millennium.

Some New Agers have recast the Zodiacal ages to correspond to the “Three Ages of History" theory proposed by Joachim of Fiore (1145-1202). Joachim divided history into three ages of humanity: the Age of the Father, the Age

of the Son and the Age of the Holy Spirit. The Age of the Father was the Old Testament days. The Age of the Son was the Christian era, and the Age of the Holy Spirit is to be a time when again a great change will occur. As the theory goes for New Agers, Judaism gave way to Christianity and Christianity will give way to a new age of the spirit.154

Carl Jung is heralded by the New Age as their most popularly quoted psychologist. In his book Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth, he refers to his belief in:

changes in the constellation of psychic dominants, of the archetypes, or 'gods' as they used to be called, which bring about, or accompany, long-lasting transformations of the collective psyche. This transformation started in the historical era and left its traces first in the passing of the aeon of Taurus into that of Aries, and then of Aries into Pisces, whose beginning coincides with the rise of Christianity. We are now nearing that great change which may be expected when the spring-point enters Aquarius.155

Astrologers make a plea for their belief to be accepted as scientific rather than religious. However, the early beginnings of Astrology date to the ancient Babylonian religions where the stars were considered to be "gods of the night". Astrology took its place among omens from eclipses and the examination of animal entrails for signs of good or bad in the events considered. Around the sixth century BC the Chaldeans evolved the form known as Zodiacal astrology. By considering the position of the sun, moon and planets of this solar system in relation to each other and the star constellations, it is believed that energies are brought into play which affect the order of the world rulers and powers. The Greeks and Romans further developed the beliefs to include the influence of Astrology on the affairs of individuals.156

Even in the Catholic church astrologers were consulted. Pope Julius II delayed his own coronation several weeks due to a consultation with his astrologer.157 Ruth Tucker in her book Strange Gospels also cites the Reformation church as highly influenced by the advice of astrologers. Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560) the reformer and colleague of Luther argued for a Christian interpretation of astrology and placed confidence in horoscopes.158

The modern form of horoscopes is evidence of the widening influence of Astrology in its various forms. Radio, television and newspapers all give credence to the tales of the astrologer, although these newspaper pop versions of horoscopes are not acceptable to New Agers nor classical astrologists. Though the pop horoscope is not serious astrology in the sense that it does not present a unique plan for the individual as claimed by genuine astrological horoscopes, it does demonstrate the widening interest in such mythology and it sells papers, buys listeners and is very lucrative. In Britain it sustains a hundred million pound market and controls a multibillion dollar business in the United States, despite the scientific advances which prove the claims to be less credible. There are at least 100 astrological magazines published in the United States and a discipleship of 30 million.159

According to a Gallup Poll in 1984, 55 % of American teenagers believed in astrology. This was an increase of 15% over six years. In 1988 a similar poll concluded that 10% of evangelical Christians espoused astrology in some form. In May of 1988 Time magazine's cover story, “Astrology in the White House”, revealed that even presidential schedules were made by consulting astrologists. Since their marriage in the 1950s the Reagans have consulted the foremost authorities in astrology. These include the Hollywood host to the stars Carroll Righter, the prophetic Jeane Dixon and during the White House stay the San Francisco astrologer Joan Quigley.160 The New Age is defined by the stars.

159 Also note that Melton, Gordon (ed.). New Age Encyclopedia. Op. Cit. p. 315 mentions the Neo-Pagan movement and New Age movement as being addressed by hundreds of periodicals since the early 1960s. He lists Magical Blend, Shaman's Drum and Fireheart as three which address both movements with a national circulation.
160 Ibid.
In an age of anxiety and individualism when people are searching for hope, astrology provides an alternative resolution in fate, that one's destiny is determined by movements in the heavens beyond human control. Therefore the key to life is to go with the flow, to be Aquarian. However in the New Age brand of astrology there is a twist, a distinctive element of interpretation that differs from traditional astrology. The New Age accentuates the positive. Whereas classical or traditional astrology is more predictive, New Age psycho-astrology is creative. Instead of looking upon a forthcoming hard time of stress, a New Ager would be encouraged to see the time as an opportunity and challenge to stress undaunting courage and the will to live. The psychological astrologer interprets the signs of the times and allows the individual to make choices about how they will act according to that information. It is a matter for existential interpretation. Michael Perry cites several examples of this positivist or creative astrology. Prudence Jones has written a book entitled Creative Astrology in which there is confirmation of this twist:

astrology in the West has become increasingly concerned with the inner world, with psychology.... The modern psychological astrologer reads character, our subjective reality, rather than destiny, our objective circumstances, from the information on the natal chart.161

Sasha Fenton's book Understanding Astrology is also quoted to verify this New Age preference in astrology:

predictive astrology is a bit of a misnomer because fate is something which we can each make for ourselves. All that one can do is to show the forthcoming trends and point out to the subject where things are going to flow along easily and where they are not. What he then chooses to do with his life is up to him.162

8. New Age evolution. This section is notably longer than the other characteristic sections due to the fact that the theory of evolution is one thread that runs throughout the New Age. Without this theoretical twist the

New Age would have inexplicable gaps. However, due to the subjective nature of the New Age evolutionary theory, those gaps are bridged. Evolutionary theory is thus paramount and foundational to the New Age Movement. Robert Muller, retired United Nations Assistant Secretary-General concurs with one of the New Age’s primal motifs: “I believe the most fundamental thing we can do today is to believe in evolution.”

For the New Age myth to explain the inauguration and credibility of the world and its future hope, it must be driven by the model of the theory of evolution. Again as in its other marks there is a New Age twist to Darwin. The advanced stages of evolutionary theory now allow for quantum leaps. To explain this progress the term “punctuated equilibrium” is used. This theory was first presented quite apart from the New Age movement as a possible solution to the problem of “missing links” in the Darwin and Neo Darwin theories. It was proposed in 1972 by two paleobiologists, Stephen Jay Gould of Harvard and Niles Eldredge of the American Museum of Natural History.

Instead of the usual gradual progress through random chance mutation, a species in crisis conditions may now rapidly evolve the state of consciousness. From that point the entity is open to rapid evolution. This is brought on “when the equilibrium of the species is punctuated by stress.” Conscious evolution differs from the evolution of consciousness. Not only does a species now evolve consciousness, it is enabled to consciously participate in its own evolution. By accelerating the process of organic and metaphysical or psychospiritual evolution the New Age can develop a framework for believing that its goals of planetary paradise can become reality “in our time.” Through the use of psychospiritual techniques the individual can balance polarities (Taoism’s yin/yang), draw energy from the universe (Wiccan rituals), and free the consciousness from its false beliefs in limited human potential.

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Another factor in the New Age twist to evolution was the recognition that Darwinian theories were devoid of a spiritual base for developing hope and ethics. The context for answering this search for the spirit came through the German philosopher, G.W. Hegel (1770-1831), who viewed history as God in process of moving humanity forward in freedom through the three principles of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Conflicts were solved by the synthesis of a new way forward out of the existing contrary positions. Hegels dialectical evolution of the Infinite Spirit was viewed in three moments. God was not personal but a process of thought. The first moment was the historical moment (thesis). This was a way of viewing Jesus as a historical figure. Who or what Jesus was, according to Hegel, was of great importance. What was important was the way in which he was viewed, and this led to the second moment, the moment of faith which sees Jesus as the divine Son of God (antithesis). The third moment is the actual moment (synthesis). Jesus becomes the first man to live become one with the Absolute Spirit, meaning that in Hegel's view Jesus realised his life according to the Infinite thought within himself. Later Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) followed this process to its logical conclusion in rejecting orthodox Christian views of God for the view that the concept of God was a projection of the highest thoughts of the human mind and that humans would truly be free when they live according to the practice of this projection.168

From a biological point of view this philosophy was adapted to the theory of evolution. Spirituality was legitimised in the evolutionary process. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) is the New Age's greatest champion of this synthesised evolution of the soul. For Teilhard all systems must conform to the evolutionary process which moves with greater complexity and consciousness toward the ultimate supreme centre, the Omega Point. The Omega Point is the same as Higher Consciousness to the New Age. This evolution gives hope to the optimism of the New Age. A new humanity is evolving says Donald Keys, founder of Planetary Citizens. “This requires a leap to a quality of consciousness which most of us do not automatically

possess. It implies a quantum shift to a state of being which is fundamentally different from the divided or fragmented consciousness which has gone before."  

Peter Russell explains another aspect of this conscious evolution: "Just as matter became organised into living cells, and living cells collected into multi-cellular organisms, so might we expect that at some stage human beings will become integrated into some form of global social super-organism." Russell uses the term "super-organism" to incorporate the idea that the newly evolved being will not be merely a superior biological being but will have an evolved consciousness which in fact is interconnected with the billions of other individuals on earth.

This interconnected system comprising all conscious minds is what Teilhard called the "noosphere," taken from the Greek word νοῦς meaning mind. In this system individuals will however retain their distinction, making their own contribution to the integrated living system. Teilhard wrote of the "still unnamed Thing which the gradual combination of individuals, peoples and races will bring into existence." Russell suggests a fifth level of evolution beyond the levels of earth, life, mind and Omega. The fifth level is what Russell calls the "Gaiafield." This Gaiafield gives name to Teilhard's "Thing." Gaia is the name taken from the Greek Goddess Ge or Gaia, Mother Earth, Mother Nature or Terra. Such evolution goes beyond the individual to the planetary level. Since each stage of evolution could not fully define the next stage, neither can this present stage comprehend the Gaiafield. For Teilhard evolution still takes long periods, even though in overall terms it may be considered to be increasing in speed. However, for Russell and the New Age, "It could possibly happen within a few decades."  

172 Keys, Donald. Earth At Omega: Passage to Planetization. The Branden Press, Boston. 1982. p. 70 gives explanation to Terra's awakening influence in older indigenous societies such as North and South American Indians, Polynesians and Australian aborigines.
The "hundredth monkey" theory is also employed in the belief system of planetary transformation. This theory is also referred to as "the critical mass." The theory postulates that once five percent of any group believes a premise, that idea is embedded to last. Once twenty percent of a populace believe in that idea it is unstoppable. Processes by which this idea may be transferred involve prayer, meditation and visualisation techniques.174

One version of this transforming power is highly promoted in Wicca as the power drawn from a collective consciousness united with Mother Earth. As a self-professed Witch and coven priestess, Starhawk uses this medium to draw power for her work. The term "Witch" comes from the old "Anglo-Saxon root wic, meaning to bend or shape — to shape reality, to make magic."175 They were those who could shape the unseen to their will.176 "A Witch is a 'shaper,' a creator who bends the unseen into form, and so becomes one of the Wise, one whose life has been infused with magic."177 In her later books, The Spiral Dance and Truth or Dare, Starhawk elaborates on the Craft and its rituals, power and place in the changing consciousness of what many are calling the New Age and New World Order.

The folk tale version of the theory of the hundredth monkey is that monkeys began to be caught and placed in the same cage. More captured monkeys were placed in the cage until the arrival of the hundredth monkey. Then the cage broke up and the monkeys escaped. The moral of the story is that one alone may be relatively powerless, but a group together increases the power to overcome the greatest of adversities. The New Age twist to this fable is its application to the phenomenon known as "the critical mass" transfer of information through animals and humans.

Lyall Watson, a British writer interested in science and the paranormal, was the first to write about the hundredth monkey. In 1979 his book Lifetide: A

176 Starhawk. The Spiral Dance. Op. Cit. p. 19. The term Maiden" is also highly respected in Witchcraft. From this tradition it was supposed that Joan of Arc was in fact a Witch heralded as 'Maid of Orleans.'
177 Ibid. p. 22.
Biology of the Unconscious was published. Though only two pages deal with the hundredth monkey story, it has been caught up by New Agers, elaborated upon and developed into what Rupert Sheldrake now calls “morphic resonance.” Watson relates the story that four primatologists studying macaques living in the wild on islands off the coast of Japan observed phenomenal behaviour among the monkeys. The scientists had purposely left sweet potatoes out for the monkeys to feed on. In 1953 they observed that an 18-month-old female monkey began to wash its food before eating it. The monkey then “taught” the trick to other monkeys whereupon by 1958 all the monkeys were washing their food. Watson’s story is admittedly pieced together and improvised. He makes little attempt to explain it and mentions it purely for its apparent paranormality:

In the autumn of that year an unspecified number of monkeys on Koshima were washing sweet potatoes in the sea.... Let us say, for argument’s sake, that the number was ninety-nine and that at eleven o’clock on a Tuesday morning, one further convert was added to the fold in the usual way. But the addition of the hundredth monkey apparently carried the number across some sort of threshold, pushing it through a kind of critical mass, because by that evening almost everyone was doing it. Not only that, but the habit seems to have jumped natural barriers and to have appeared spontaneously, like glycerine crystals in sealed laboratory jars, in colonies on other islands and on the mainland in a troop at Takasakiyama.

Critical mass was first recognised in Britain in 1952 when the dairies began sealing their milk bottles with foil caps instead of cardboard. The little bird known as the blue tit progressively learned to peck through the foil and drink the cream. The story goes that the pecking order started in London and expanded throughout southern England. In the beginning the progress spread slowly as it was supposed that blue tits would learn by observing other blue tits pecking and drinking. However, in 1955 the birds took a quantum leap. Suddenly it was observed that “all of the blue tits and most of the great tits throughout Europe could do the trick.”

179 Ibid. p. 226.
that the enlightened birds had reached a critical mass in which suddenly an explosion of knowledge was transferred to all the species.

The New Age’s leading spokesman for the hundredth monkey is Ken Keyes, founder of the Living Love Seminars, Berkeley, California. In 1982 Keyes published and distributed 300,000 copies of a little book entitled The Hundredth Monkey in which he encourages humanity to reach a critical mass in peace consciousness so as to avert the apocalyptic nuclear war. Within a few years the book had been translated into nine languages and sold over a million copies. Elda Hartley furthered the cause with a movie version of Hundredth Monkey.181

Rupert Sheldrake’s book, A New Science of Life: the Hypothesis of Formative Causations, presents the idea of “formative causation.” This term is used as an explanation of the process in evolution whereby the force of habit can supersede physical laws— that it is easier to do something that has already been done. For example, at one time the barrier of the four minute mile was broken by Roger Banister. Now it is achieved even outside world class athletics. Other examples include the accelerated learning of technology and the general increase in the IQs of today’s children over their grandparents. Similar behaviour patterns in a species are the result of an accumulative habit or acquired characteristic of learning which (it is believed) may be transferred genetically.

In support of his ideas Sheldrake cites experiments performed in the 1920s at Harvard University by the psychologist William McDougall. McDougall placed rats in a tank of water with two gangways. One gangway was well lit but led nowhere; the other gangway was poorly lit but led to escape. The tested rats took 300 dowsings before learning the exit route. Over a fifteen year experimentation period McDougall recorded that the first generation of rats averaged 200 mistakes; the last generation showed only an average of 20 mistakes. His conclusions were that the learned information was transferred cumulatively through the genes. Years later Australian scientists experimented again and found that the rats tested were considerably better

from the start than McDougall's rats, and that it made no difference whether or not the rats were offspring or from the general population.

Here is where Sheldrake stretched his hypothesis to include a new term “morphic resonance,” that somehow there is an invisible field that interconnects all members of a species regardless of geography. If a new trick is learned in one place, that information becomes available to the same breed all over the world. This idea states that there are “morphogenetic fields” beyond space and time which assist in the development of a species. This hypothesis is used to explain the processes of evolution which surrounds the DNA code. A developing embryo will take the shape of a species not only according to the DNA programming but also in relation to the morphogenetic field shared by the members of a particular species.182

The ideas of global consciousness or planetary consciousness, critical mass, formative causation, morphic resonance and the hundredth monkey are composited in the evolutionary belief in a collective consciousness by which humanity is going to quantum leap into a new world and a new entity. Donald Keys summarises:

Our goal is largely to try to orchestrate... a general awakening, a crossing of the threshold to global awareness... for as large a part of the population of the world as we can.... There has to be some critical mass of public awareness, of planetary consciousness, before politicians will move, before foreign offices will get into gear, before teaching changes in the schools.183

The fears expressed by the New Age concern Social Darwinians who have used the evolutionary theory to say that the sacrifice of the organic world for the progress of the industrial world is a natural process of evolution. The

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Eco-wars are all about this dichotomy of evolution, that species extinction brought on by industrialisation is anti-evolution. British ecologist Edward Goldsmith first used the term “anti-evolution” in this sense to point to the contrast in the “increased biospheric stability” as the result of natural evolution and the “decreased stability” as a result of the later days of Industrial Revolution. Thus comes the apocalyptic appeal of those like David Spangler or the pop version of Britain’s celebrity David Icke to the effect that humanity must be rebirthed through transformation of consciousness to avoid human destruction.

The occidental naturalistic and humanistic world-views postulated that there is no deity and only the laws of nature govern the way things are and the way things will be. The New Age has extended the evolutionary model beyond the laws of nature to deify humanity and the cosmos. Jean Houston, one of the avant garde of the Human Potential Movement and director of the Foundation for Mind Research, presents the theory proposed by physiologist Paul MacLean and others that the human brain possesses leftover neurological and chemical substances from ancestral evolutionary history. Her seminars on the “Possible Human” are intended to assist people in harvesting the latent resources of the millions of years of accumulative evolution. Houston says,

It’s almost as if the species [humanity] were taking a quantum leap into a whole new way of being... to play the vast spectrum of consciousness... we would have access to a humanity of such depth and richness as the world has not yet known, so that our great-great-grandchildren may look back upon us as Neanderthals, so different will they be.

The themes and marks of the New Age which are exemplified in this exposition necessarily overlap. This is indicative of the New Age. Although the exposition is intended as an overview, as such it does not include all the

themes of the New Age in depth. It is intended to demonstrate the type of influence to be expected in the many themes of the New Age and its characteristic mosaic treatment of such themes by both critiques and New Age writers. Virtually all of the themes of the New Age recur and interweave themselves throughout various levels of New Age thought and practice.

Those themes which have been surveyed are evident in the world. They are suggestive of a crisis contributing to a paradigm shift. The New Age has grown out of this crisis and paradigm shift in occidental culture in order to address the issues of that paradigm shift. The interrelating marks of the New Age are somewhat of a hologram. In each mark can be seen the whole. For that reason there will appear a certain amount of recapitulation within the various themes. For example an exposition of the New Age belief in Gaia could be viewed from an evolutionary theme as the way in which the world continues to change in ever increasing levels of higher being. Gaia could also be representative of the mythological theme of the New Age in which New Age science has adopted the myth of Gaia as a handle for understanding the cybernetic and self-regulating system of the earth. Under the theme of New Age spirituality Gaia would be represented as a genuine belief in the Goddess entity which empowers the cosmos.

Such is the quest for meaning and hope as marked by the paradigm shift and by New Age thought and practice. For purposes of exposition it is noted that the themes which establish the development of a paradigm shift are seen to overlap in the section on the marks of the New Age, thus establishing that the themes of paradigm shift in the occidental world are huddled together under the umbrella of the New Age and that the New Age is an outgrowth of the paradigm shift in the western culture.

Having given an overview of various themes of the New Age, a more detailed exegesis of some of the underlying themes has been selected for chapters two through four to exemplify the interconnectedness of themes which have arisen out of the paradigm shift of the New Age. These chapters are intended to give the reader a feel for the beliefs and practices of the New Age in a more detailed layout and from a relatively objective point of view, allowing the New Age writers to present their themes. From these
expository chapters will then be manifest the influence and challenges of the New Age to Christian theology and church life.

For this purpose mythology, spirituality, evolution and ecology have been selected for fuller treatment because they are underlying themes which permeate New Age thinking and directly affect Christian theology and church body-life. Again it is noted that an overlapping of themes is indicative of the New Age and is virtually unavoidable. To dissect the themes into separates and disallow the overlapping of New Age themes would not give the reader a proper feel for the nature of New Age belief and practice. Further, due to the amorphous nature of the New Age, it is in constant metamorphic flow; therefore any attempt at an exhaustive treatment would likely be outdated by the time it was finished. Therefore these themes can only be accepted as typical of the New Age and its influence on secular and religious life in modern occidental culture.
Chapter Two
New Age— The Rebirth of Mythology

The Quest for Meaning

Thirty years ago, God was pronounced dead, and the birth of a post-Christian western culture was announced. Founded on empirical science and philosophical positivism, this new world-view was supposed to free humanity from the slavery of religion, myth and magic.

The myths refuse to die. In the midst of a science-worshipping culture, people are captured by and fully participate in a world of myths and experiences that defy the rationalism of the "modern" world. Science attempts to answer the analytical "What?" but cannot define the "Why?" The scientific explanation of life deals only with the material aspects and does not presume to address how one should live. For answers to such questions as how life should be lived, people must go beyond clinical science. In the quest for meaning and hope, humanity enters the world of myth and magic.

Since the ideologies of Humanism and Existentialism have generally left humanity without hope in a materialistic consumer oriented culture, and the Christian religion has become so divided and distanced from people, new myths and old myths in new packaging have arisen in the hearts and minds of occidental culture. This is a major trade mark of the New Age. The late Joseph Campbell has become a champion of the New Age for his presentation of the myths of modern humanity as they are connected to ancient legends. In the search for meaning, transformation, and unleashing of full human potential individuals and communities create stories which portray their longings.

In his book Myths To Live By, Campbell focuses on the universal themes of mythology which continue to influence the lives of people. Examples of these universal themes include the mythologies of love, of war and peace, of marriage, of the ethos of the hometown community and the hero with a thousand faces.
The death of President Kennedy is one vivid event which illustrates this quest for meaning and the sense of need for a mythology to surround the event in order for people to participate. Joseph Campbell writes of the four day event of the death and funeral of John F. Kennedy as:

an illustration of the high service of ritual to a society.... This was a ritualised occasion of the greatest social necessity... representing our whole society, the living social organism of which ourselves were the members, taken away at a moment of exuberant life, required a compensatory rite to re-establish the sense of solidarity. Here was an enormous nation, made those four days into a unanimous community, all of us participating in the same way, simultaneously, in a single symbolic event.”

The procession, the seven grey steeds with blackened hoofs, another horse prancing slowly at their side with empty saddle and stirrups reversed, the flag-draped coffin carried through the streets on a spoked wagon wheeled cart, led by a legion of soldiers in slow march—all this was to bring forth powerful myths in which all could participate either consciously or subconsciously. The flag of patriotism, the wagon wheeled cart to draw the nation back to the times of Lincoln—such an event could not have united the people with a typical Cadillac hearse.

Campbell interprets these mythological symbols which (unknown to most participants) did their work to establish sobriety and solidarity to a nation broken in heart, dazed and mystified by the meaning of it all:

I saw before me, it seemed, the seven ghostly steeds of the gray Lord Death, here come to conduct the fallen hero youth on his last celestial journey, passing symbolically upward through the seven ghostly spheres to the seat of eternity, whence he had once descended. The mythology of the seven spheres and of the soul’s journey from its heavenly home downward to its life on earth and, when that life was done, then upward again through all seven, is as old in this world as our civilization itself. The steed with riderless saddle, stirrups reversed, prancing by the dead young warriors side, would in the ancient days have been sacrificed, cremated along with the body of its master in a mighty pyre

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symbolic of the blazing, golden sun door through which the passing hero-soul would have gone to its seat in the everlasting hero-hall of warrior dead.... In addition, they brought echoes of another moment in our own American history: the gun carriages of the Civil War and the funeral of Lincoln...

Morton Kelsey, in his book *Myth, History and Faith*, also draws attention to the myth of a dying god which broke forth in the events of the death and funeral of Kennedy as well as Lincoln. A phenomenal web of coincidence between the deaths of both men were pointed out by numerous writers—"it struck at the deepest religious level of the people and aroused in them religious feelings of which they had been unaware, religious feelings which their formal religions had left untouched.... As he slumped in Jackie Kennedy’s arms, the picture left almost an imprint of Michelangelo’s ‘Pieta,’ the unforgettable image of the crucified Son in Mary’s arms." The myth came alive and has held a grip on the lives of people to this day.

Yet the questions arise, “Is that all there is? Is there nothing more to life?” This central question is directly addressed by the New Age alternatives to Humanism, Existentialism, Materialism and the religions of the day. For Campbell myths are the clues to humanity’s deepest spiritual potential. The New Age embraces the full range of meanings of myths whether literal, metaphorical (allegorical), moral or anagogical (mystical). The interpretation is left to the imagination and creativity of the individual rather than to science. Campbell concludes that the meaning of the analogy to dying gods and warriors sacrificed is that “the dead are buried to be born again, and the cycles of the plant world become models for the myths and rituals of mankind.”

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5 Campbell, Joseph. *Myths To Live By*. Op. Cit. p. 264 gives example of these four interpretations to what Campbell considers to be the myth of Christ Jesus risen from the dead. The literal is self explanatory; the allegorical suggests that the believer too will live on eternally through the effect of his or her life, or in some sense rising from death to eternal life; the moral interpretation might suggest that individuals should turn their minds from mortal things to eternal things; the mystical meaning is far more complex and relates to some sense of perceiving life as here and now, that in this world of death life goes on.
In his book The Inner Reaches of Outer Space, Joseph Campbell states the predicament of an occidental culture burned out in its philosophy and religion as well as its materialistic consumerism, yet still in desperate need of hope: "The old gods are dead or dying and people everywhere are searching, asking: What is the new mythology to be, the mythology of this unified earth as of one harmonious being?" Campbell traces the ages of hope and power through Oswald Spengler’s The Decline of the West, identifying eight past ages and a ninth now in formation. He lists from 4,000 B.C. forward:

1. The Sumeo-Babylonian
2. The Egyptian
3. The Greco-Roman (Apollian)
4. The Vedic-Aryan
5. The Indian
6. The Chinese
7. The Maya-Aztec/Incan
8. Faustian (Gothic-Christian to Modern European-American)
9. Now beneath the imposed alien crust of a Marxian cultural pseudomorphosis—the germinating Russian-Christian.

“Eight colossal monads of great majesty, with a ninth now in formation, as having shaped and dominated world history since the rise... of the first literate high cultures” are evidence to Campbell that there is a constant quest for a mythology that will give rise to hope. Each has sought hope in its politics and religion. For Campbell the hope of the ages was the outward expression of mythologies which expressed what Adolf Bastian (1826-1905) called “elementary ideas” or “folk, ethnic ideas” and what Carl Jung (1875-1961) called “archetypes of the collective unconscious.” In like manner these ideas and archetypes are expressed by Aldous Huxley’s Perennial Philosophy. These are the ideas which evidence the need for hope in dealing with what Campbell refers to as “the bioenergies that are of the essence of

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9 Ibid. p. 12.
life itself, and which, when unbridled, become terrific, horrifying, and destructive."¹⁰ There are three of these primal compulsions:

1. "The innocent voraciousness of life which feeds on lives and provides the first interest of the infant feeding on its mother."¹¹ The nightmares of cannibals and the image of the Hindu world-mother herself Kali, "Black Time," licking up with her extended, long, red tongue the lives of all the living of this world of her creation. This includes "ritual killing." It is the mark of all life that maintains itself by destroying life.¹²

2. "Linked almost in identity with the first... is the sexual."¹³ The image Campbell offers is that of the Hindu god Kama, "whose name means 'desire' and 'longing,' and who is a counterpart of Cupid."¹⁴

3. "The irresistible impulse to plunder."¹⁵ Campbell cites this impulse as not so much a primal biological urgency, but of an impulse launched from the eyes, not to consume, but to possess. This time the illustration comes not from Hindu mythologies but from biblical texts where God brings Israel into the land to take possession of it.¹⁶ Following this illustration Campbell cites examples of deities from the Vedic Aryans to Homeric Greeks and others who have led the way in their time of history with "tutelaries of pillaging armies."¹⁷

True to the evolutionary theory so evidently expounded by the New Age, Campbell says:

> whether in the depths of the forgotten sea out of which life originated, or in the jungle of its evolution on land, or now in these great cities that are being built to be demolished in our recurrent wars, the same dread triad of god-given urgencies, of feeding, procreating, and overcoming, are the motivating powers.¹⁸

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¹⁰ Ibid. p. 13.
¹¹ Ibid.
¹² Ibid.
¹³ Ibid.
¹⁴ Ibid.
¹⁶ Ibid., citing Deuteronomy 7:1-6; 20: 10-18 and 6: 10-12.
¹⁷ Ibid. p. 15.
¹⁸ Ibid.
In an attempt to predict what he confesses is unpredictable, Campbell sets the stage for the new mythology arising in humanity. This mythology will do two things for humanity. First it will open "the mind and heart to the utter wonder of all being. Secondly, it will awaken the newly packaged cosmology "of representing the universe and whole spectacle of nature, both as known to the mind and as beheld by the eye, as an epiphany of such kind that when lightning flashes, or a setting sun ignites the sky, or a deer is seen standing alerted, the exclamation ‘Ah!’ may be uttered as a recognition of divinity."19 The new mythology is one in which, "the old near eastern desacralization of nature by way of a doctrine of the Fall will have been rejected; so that any such limiting sentiment as that expressed in II Kings 5:15, ‘there is no God in all the earth but in Israel,’ will be (to use a biblical term) an abomination."20 Further, Campbell says the new mythology will be a recognition of implicit a priori knowledge. Humanity will look within for its meaning, value and purpose in the new mythology.

This is now evident in the New Age. Not only will the new mythology dismiss the God of Israel and set the standards of life by implicit values, but all nature will be worshipped for its symbolic aesthetic wonder and being. In this way humans will call for transcendence through the symbolism of nature and its epiphanies—art and narrative brought forth in such forms as ritual, painting, poetry, dance and stories. Campbell concludes in agreement with a quote from Walt Whitman, "the point is made with respect to the metaphorical language of mythology and metaphysics that ‘its worlds and gods are levels of reference and symbolic entities which are neither places nor individuals but states of being realizable within you’."21

Campbell’s view is that occidental culture has demythologized the world by learning technological information rather than the wisdom of life. What holds people together now is no longer the ethos of community but the interpretations of lawyers and law.22 Morton Kelsey notes that for many in

19 Ibid. p. 18.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid. p. 20, quoting Whitman, Walt. "Song of Myself." Part 17, line 1, in Leaves of Grass.
the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries myth was considered a means of making stories to explain what people did not know or did not understand. Again typical of the New Age writer’s attempt to place the movement in a historical context, Kelsey tries to establish the loss of myth to modern culture’s following of the philosophy of Auguste Comte (1798-1857). Comte’s positivism ruled out any knowledge which science could not produce. Primitive thinking was considered mythical. Mythical thinking progressed to a second level in evolution—philosophical reasoning. Knowledge was the third lever and considered the apex of evolved thought. This knowledge came in the maturity of empirical science. The only level of real worth was to be found in the empirical evidence of scientific method which could reproduce that evidence as proof of knowledge. This construct of the world-view of that time led to the dismissal of myth. Myths were ways of speaking of things which could never be proven true though believed within.23

Campbell and Kelsey refer to Sir James George Frazer’s twelve volumes of The Golden Bough (1890), as following the lines of Comte in the belief that myth was to do with superstition and would be duly discredited and left behind by rational, empirical science. He discusses the primitive religions of humanity worshipping what it does not know of trees and incarnations of gods, of the fear of death and the dead, of the supernatural and magic. Frazer’s disclaimer in the preface to the abridged volume clarifies the typical view of his day: “I hope that after this explicit disclaimer I shall no longer be taxed with embracing a system of mythology which I look upon not merely as false but as preposterous and absurd.”24

The New Age recognises the problems arising from the predator and plunderer impulses as well as the sexual revolution. Its attempt is to find meaning in the midst of these passions. Therefore the themes of evolutionary transformation, quantum leap evolution, human potential and psycho-spirituality give rise to the hope that humanity will immediately evolve (give or take a decade or millennium) beyond these primal desires and motivations. In semblance of eastern esoteric thought the New Age tries

to say that evil is an illusion, that humanity has the innate power to create reality and that reality is the absence of evil. The answer to death is compensated by these evolutionary processes and the ideas relating to higher forms of being for which humanity is destined through various forms of reincarnation and evolution.

Though miracles and the supernatural may be problems for some theologians, they are widely accepted and anticipated by the New Ager. However, instead of miracles being the intervention of God, the New Ager reduces miracles to a change in perception in individuals or communities. The supernatural is the natural taken to the super extremes of channelled spirit guides and extraterrestrials or Gaia, The Force, or some celestial supremacy. Confirmation of these may be presented in a host of past regressions, out-of-body and near-death experiences as well as a variety of paranormal phenomena. The New Age has definitely reintroduced the ideas that there are levels of existence beyond this physical plane.

Despite the modern technology and sophistication of science, the concepts of magic are still believed. People believe that by willing a thing it may become reality. What is the difference in the rainmaker’s dance and the professor of philosophy in the bowling alley who twists and turns after the ball has left his hands in hope that he might sway the laws of gravity to his advantage?25 Myths are far more than superstition. Myths portray the power behind the scenes. This is the power of the judge’s robe and the wigs and decorum of the British court room. It is translated in the power of presence with Princess Diana or the Queen. It is not the beat police, but the power of what he or she represents to the community by his or her presence. These are the every day myths by which people live. They are the symbols that give power to form societies. They are the sciences and the religion of the people.

Another clear example of this rebirthing of myth is the Star Wars trilogy. Like a medieval morality play in modern technological jargon, the forces of good and evil battle for dominance. It is even more moralistic than John Wayne westerns. Its popularity alone says that beneath the scientific reasoning there is yet a passion for morality. At some point humans must

say with Luke Skywalker, “Turn off the computer and trust your feelings.”

Science goes so far, then faith takes over.

In the New Age interpretation myth becomes more privatised religion. As Campbell says, “All men are competent to know the mind of God. There is no revelation special to any people.” The Bible, it is claimed, no longer functions as a vehicle for the modern world. “It does not accord with our concept either of the universe or of the dignity of man. It belongs entirely somewhere else.... We have today to learn to get back into accord with the wisdom of nature and realize again our brotherhood with the animals and with the water and the sea.” For Campbell, this is not pantheism in the sense of a personal god supposed to inhabit the world, “it is of an indefinable, inconceivable mystery, thought of as a power, that is the source and end and supporting ground of all life and being.”

Could it be that the Star Wars “Force” so appeals to the western search for meaning? The New Age would resound in the affirmative.

1. Mythology and world-views. Campbell details the themes of science and myth as they interrelate to creation and existence. Typical of New Age writers there is a brief historical survey which places the present New Age world-view in the context of the evolution of western thought. Once upon a time the earth was considered flat, like a dish floating on a cosmic sea filled with beasts dangerous to humans. There is also the Hindu view of the earth supported on the back of a great turtle swimming in a sea of milk. There was the Grecian view that the earth was a solid stationary sphere around which seven spheres revolved (the sun, the moon and the five known planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn). The paradigm of science of Aristarchus of Samos (310 - 230 BC.) with his heliocentric view replaced

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid. p. 31.
29 Ibid.
30 Examples of New Age writers and critiques presenting brief overviews of the history of western thought or the movement of particular world-views and myths are replete. See for example Rolo May, The Cry for Myth; Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyer, The Power of Myth; Joseph Campbell, Myths To Live By; Elisabet Sahtouris, Gaia: The Human Journey from Chaos to Cosmos; Morton Kelsey, Myth, History & Faith; Allerd Stikker, The Transformation Factor.
Aristotle's (circa 340 BC. in his book On the Heavens) belief that the earth was the centre of the universe.

Ptolemy, in the 2nd century AD, again elaborated Aristotle's theory into a complete cosmological model with earth at the centre, surrounded by eight spheres that carried the moon, the sun, the stars, and the five known planets. This order was arranged in a model with the moon as the first sphere surrounding the earth, followed by the consecutive order of Mercury, Venus, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and the stars. Though Ptolemy recognised flaws in his system, it was generally, though not universally, accepted.

In 1514 a Polish priest, Nicholas Copernicus proposed a simpler model making the sun the centre around which the earth and other planets orbited. Nearly a century passed before Johannes Kepler, a German astronomer, and an Italian Galileo Galilei started to support the Copernican theory publicly. In 1609 with the newly invented telescope Galileo observed Jupiter and its moons in orbit. Kepler added the concept of elliptical orbits. In 1687 Sir Isaac Newton published his Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica. In it he put forward a theory of how bodies move in space and time. He postulated the law of universal gravitation, according to which each body of the universe was attracted toward every other body by a force which is stronger the more massive the bodies and the closer they are to each other.

Before the twentieth century it seems no one suggested that the universe was expanding or contracting, though Newton’s theory of gravity showed the universe could not be static. In Campbell’s ancient Greek model: the planets were associated with metals—silver, mercury, copper, gold, iron, tin and lead. Souls descending from heaven to earth acquired the compounds of these elements as they passed the planets on their way to earth. Music and art too were considered demonstrative of the harmony of the universe as perceived. The seven spheres of the earlier model were believed to be living spiritual powers overseen by angels or sirens. Beyond the planets was the celestial realm where God sat enthroned awaiting the return of the unclothed souls who at death had passed once again by the heavenly bodies to deposit the elements they had gained in their earthly journey.31

Now science’s Palomar telescope and others show us an expanding universe which is proposed to show an increase of many billions of cubic miles of new space appearing daily between the galaxies.\textsuperscript{32} Therefore, once upon a time believed to be an eternal and unchanging universe, our home is now considered 20 billion years old and spans to the quasars, at the furthest limits of our telescopic vision up to 10 billion light-years away. Earth itself can now be viewed as a whole from outside its atmosphere, thus giving humanity a wholistic perception and suggesting new myths and world-views. The earth has become another symbol of myth for the New Age. In Campbell’s view the old paradigm viewed humanity as placed on the earth, as separate from nature to be masters of the world. The new paradigm is to view human beings as part of the earth, as the consciousness of the earth, its eyes and its voice. This is to be the new myth for the modern world. The earth as viewed from the moon gives a new world-view. “You don’t see any divisions there of nations or states.”\textsuperscript{33}

As science suggests new ways of viewing the earth and the cosmos, old myths are either improvised or discarded. Campbell suggests that old mythologically founded beliefs and morals are being unsettled by the science of the day thus leaving no basis for hope, security and morality. “There is everywhere in the civilised world a rapidly rising incidence of vice and crime, mental disorders, suicides and dope addictions, shattered homes, impudent children, violence, murder and despair.”\textsuperscript{34}

In Campbell’s view science claims no truth in the absolute sense. Whereas once the view of the western world may have been that there was a loving Father looking down on us from out there, now our sciences are telling us that nobody knows what is out there, or even if there is anything “out there” at all. He concludes that there is no absolute except the absolute mystery of the unknown, therefore “whatever defends us from the madhouse can be applauded as good enough — for those without nerve.”\textsuperscript{35} The world-view one holds has much to do with one’s morality and hope.

\textsuperscript{32} In the 1920s the American astronomer Edwin Hubble surmised the expanding universe from his observation of many distant galaxies. Not only were the distances between the galaxies considered to be increasing but the speed at which they were separating was also increasing relative to their distance from earth.


\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. p. 17.
2. **Mythology to focus on the meaning of life.** The myths by which people live are the means by which they refocus their busy external lives on their inner lives. The inner life is the place where hope rises and strength is derived wherewith to live, to dream and to expand to full potential. These recurring themes of strength cannot be dismissed by science of any kind. If there are no instances of heroes, individuals and communities will create them. Should they be dismissed, as was attempted in the philosophies of naturalism, nihilism, humanism and to some extent in existentialism, then humanity would despair of hope, lose focus, and become disoriented socially and spiritually.

Campbell says myth has basically four functions:36

1. **The mystical function**— in which the wonder of the universe, the wonder of the human being is presented, and this awesome mystery is experienced. This is the mystery beneath the forms. In such myths one is “addressing the transcendent mystery through the conditions of [the] actual world.”

2. **The cosmological dimension**— with which science demonstrates the measure of the universe in quantifying terms, yet “in such a way that the mystery again comes through.” Thus science would quantify fire in terms of oxidation, but realise that does not exhaust its meaning.

3. **The sociological function**— in which certain social orders are validated by the myths used to support them. These would vary according to culture and time. From these myths come the ethical laws.

4. **The pedagogical function**— in which is expressed “how to live a human lifetime under any circumstances. These are the myths in which one is open to the imprinting of nature.

For Campbell the sociological function that is now ruling the occidental world, should be replaced by the pedagogical function where the animals become the teachers of “the powers and patternings of nature.”37 Campbell asserts that it is upon myths that the moral fibre of societies is formed. These myths are “canonised as religion, and since the impact of science on myths

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results—apparently inevitably—in moral disequilibration, we must now ask whether it is not possible to arrive scientifically at such an understanding of the life-supporting nature of myths that, in criticising their archaic features, we do not misrepresent and disqualify their necessity....”38

Therefore, the necessity of myths being established, one is encouraged to find whatever myth suits one’s dreams of life, public or private. People recognise that myths serve as a vision of the longings, hopes and dreams that individuals and the community are striving to achieve in life.

Likewise, George Lucas developed the Star Wars “Force” because he wanted young people viewing to see that there was power beyond the technological world. Campbell talked about how Lucas “has put the newest and most powerful spin”39 on the classical mythology of heroism. “It was what Goethe said in Faust but which Lucas has dressed in modern idiom—the message that technology is not going to save us. Our computers, our tools, our machines are not enough. We have to rely on our intuition, our true being.”40 Instead of being an affront to reason, Campbell explains this mythic journey of the hero as the ability to “admit within ourselves the carnivorous, lecherous fever” that is endemic to human nature and in that self-discovery learning to overcome that endemic “irrational savage within us.”41

Campbell refers to the literary world having created Faust to best characterise the deep psychological and spiritual needs in humanity. There was Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus (1591). Then came Goethe’s Faust, finished in 1832. Finally there was Thomas Mann’s 1947 version of Dr. Faustus. The theme is universal and reoccurs in Mozart’s Don Giovanni, Benet’s The Devil and Daniel Webster, and various other productions.42 Faust is the myth of those tossed about like those in the transition between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Universally he is a man who has lost his way. He has sold his soul for glitter, yet in the end nothing fills his soul. Interpreted by various stories, it is the universal quest for fulfilment and meaning, and the

38 Ibid. p. 10.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
hope of redemption when one fails. In the New Age, Luke Skywalker fashion, it is the road to self-discovery of the powers within that can redeem oneself.

3. **Mythology Reborn in the New Age.** In the New Age science and myth are interwoven. Since there is no single myth to live by and no absolute science, the odyssey of the New Age allows for freedom to choose one’s own myth either from existing myths or myths of one’s own creation. A composite list put together after a fashion compiled from Campbell, Sire and others, lists a few of the questions answered by one’s world-view:

1. The quest for prime reality — Is it God, gods or matter? Is there a God or gods or is matter eternal?
2. The quest to define the content of the world around us — Is the earth a living organism or part of a greater entity, dead matter, created or autonomous, orderly or chaotic, subjective or objective?
3. The quest for what it means to be human — Is a human being a god, demiurge, evolutionary machine or created being, a “naked ape”?
4. The quest for knowledge — What is the source of epistemology? Is it God or evolved consciousness?
5. The quest for morality — Is humanity the standard or individuals? Is there a universal standard set by God, or does morality evolve with the culture and the survival instinct?
6. The quest for immortality — What happens after death? Is death extinction or metamorphosis?
7. The quest for purpose and meaning to human history — Why are we here? Is it merely to continue the species, to play our part in the evolution of life and technology, to create a heaven on earth or to prepare for some higher existence beyond this life?
8. The quest for belonging — How does being human bring consciousness of self and the need to fit into a community?

Whatever world-view, ideology, or myth one lives by, it will answer questions such as these and more. The recurring themes of New Age myths present an interconnectedness of the earth, biosphere, lithosphere and the cosmos including the world of mind and spirit. The second recurring theme

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of New Age myths is that they aspire toward a higher consciousness—a new level of understanding which releases full human potential and hastens the next step of human evolution. A third theme involves a return to the belief in the spiritual world and other higher levels of being beyond the human. This theme includes the hope of interaction with these higher entities for the improvement of this earthly condition. Freedom is a fourth major theme. Freeing the spirit, the withheld or hidden creativity. Personal autonomy is encouraged, while remembering the theme of interconnectedness in mythmaking. Enjoyment and play, eros and the artistic side are encouraged in holding forth these myths. These myths are made in all areas: ecology, science, psychology, spirituality, medicine, politics, education and business. Virtually every area could be analysed under the categories of mythology, evolution, spirituality and personal freedom.

For example Ecological myths may be expressed within the figures of Gaia, Chaos theory, or the Faery tradition. In science New Age mythology is expressed in quantum physics. In psychology the myths involve psychosynthesis. In the category of spirituality the world of myths is legion involving deities from ancient Sumer to Egypt to India and China, the Aboriginal tribes of the world, from the Wiccan tradition in its various forms, to alternative theologies for the Christian religion. In medicine the general flow is toward myths which bring healing to the whole person recognised as physical and spiritual, emotional, mental. The body is more than flesh. The mind is more than brain. The emotion and feeling are more than nerve synapse and chemical reactions. The holistic approach to medicine resonates through what is called Chinese medicine and alternative medicine.44

44 Techniques common to New Age alternative healing are the following: acupressure and acupuncture, applied kinesiology, aromatherapy, Bach flower remedies, bodywork techniques such as chiropractic and various forms of massage, chromotherapy, creative visualisation (art therapy), crystal healing, dianetics, dietary cures such as vegetarianism and fruitarianism, the Feldenkrais method, Gerson therapy for cancer, homeopathy, hypnosis, self-hypnosis and mesmerism, iridology, martial arts, various forms of meditation, moxibustion or cupping, music therapy with New Age music, naturopathy or nature cure, pulse diagnosis, rebirthing techniques, reflexology, reiki, rolfing, sensory deprivation, shiatsu and various forms of yoga.
In politics the New Age moves on myths which enhance progress toward a New World Order of peace, total employment, innate worth of the individual in the community and balance with nature. Educational myths too have a wide range of appeal toward the expansion of the intuitive, artistic, creative, erotic self expression. These are presented in new forms of meditation, sensory enlightenment, allowance for irrational over rational processes of thinking/feeling, listening to the inner voice, inner guide and developing awareness of the other fields of impact which New Age myths are touching. In business the themes are represented in corporate and individual ownership, the development of human potential, positive mental attitude and personal growth, stress management, equality of the sexes and non hierarchical structures which give responsibility to the team of all employees as of equal worth and as creating organic environments in the work place for greater growth. In this summation one can see the interrelated appeal of the New Age which is likened to a hologram wherein the whole is in each part, or like Starhawk’s Wiccan spiral view wherein there are infinite interconnections of all aspects of life. The world is one.

4. Eastern Esoteric Meets Occidental Exoteric in Myth. For the New Age there are both eastern myths and western myths. Buddhism and its forerunner Hinduism have a westernised version that applies for New Age membership mainly due to its pantheistic and monistic overtones. It must also be recognised that the religions of the East are becoming particularly appealing in the West because of their de-objectifying intent. However, again one must note that not all eastern esoteric thought agrees on the place of the individual, on pantheism or on monism as a basis for reality. For example Hinduism is divided into various levels. Shankara is non-dualistic, while Madhva is dualistic and Ramanuja holds to a qualified non-dualism. For Shankara the world of maya is illusionary and the individual must not focus on the ego (self) but upon Brahman (the essence of the whole cosmos).45 There is no interest in the individual as unique, whereas in the New Age the individual’s potential is a major theme in mythmaking. In fact Campbell notes this very point when he comments on the occidental secular, materialistic, consumer, utilitarian social order. “Instead of aiming to defend and maintain the integrity of the community,” he says, the western social

45 This point was clarified in discussion with Dr. Frank Whaling, New College, University of Edinburgh.
order has “begun to place at the center of concern the development and protection of the individual—the individual, moreover, not as an organ of the state but as an end and entity in himself.”

Once again the New Age draws what it will from the eastern religions and twists the meaning to suit a western subjective interpretation. Whether expressed simply in terms of the marked increase in the espousal of eastern religions in the West, or through the mythologies of Wicca's goddess, or the theory of James Lovelock’s Gaia which views the earth and cosmos as a self-regulating living organism, or even Teilhard de Chardin's evolutionary theory of the Omega Point—all these show a similar thread of belief that all that exists is interconnected and that the human species is the key to progress.

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Many of the myths of the New Age interrelate with various fields. This is true of the myth of Gaia. In particular the Gaia myth interrelates with the fields of science, ecology and spirituality. Elisabet Sahtouris expresses the mythology of the New Age in terms of "Gaia, the human journey from chaos to cosmos."  

James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis likewise present the Gaia myth as the way to best express the cybernetic, self-organising and self-regulating system of the earth. The earth defined in these terms is a gigantic living organism. This is no new myth. James Hutton, father of geology described the earth as alive in a lecture before the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1785. Science and ancient myth join to develop a new way of looking at the earth.

The Greeks developed the myth of Gaia (alternate form of Ge) as a living entity. The Romans called her Gea. Gaia, synonymous with Gaea, Ge and Terra, is the archetypal earth mother who was worshipped circa 1500 BC. The cultic centre was at Delphi where the priestesses interpreted the knowledge flowing from the cracks in the earth. The literary source is referenced in the Theogony, Hymn to Gaia in the so-called Homeric hymns (Hesiod). Gaia is the pre-Hellenic goddess who was mainly reverenced in Attica. She is the primordial self-creating essence of the earth. In Hellenic times Gaia became Da-meter (Demeter) the corn goddess mother of Kore the corn spirit.

In the ancient myth the dancing goddess Gaia, is swathed in white veils whirling through the darkness of Chaos. As she performs her dance her body takes the shape of mountains and valleys. Her sweat becomes the seas, pools, and rivers. Her arms swirl and make a wind-sky (ουρανός) which wraps round her as a protector and mate. Their fertile union as Earth and Heaven produce all living creatures and vegetation, even Titans who give rise to gods and goddesses; finally mortal humans evolve. Gaia's knowledge

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of how things came to be is poured forth from her cracks in the Earth to reveal answers to inquisitive and curious humanity.

Sahtouris explains that the meaning of earth was lost in the evolution of the ancient Greek language to English. Sciences that relate to the study of the earth still hold the form of the word such as "ge-ology," "ge-ography," and "ge-ometry." Sahtouris traces the etymology of the word to say that the earth should really be called "Gea." The English word "Earth" is traced through the Greek word "ἐργάζομαι" meaning "to work," which evolved into the Nordic goddess "Erda," then into German "Erde" and English "earth." Thus Sahtouris concludes the word "earth" implies female deity.\(^\text{49}\)

The New Age myth applies the old myth to science equating the swirling protogalaxies of the evolutionary genesis with the dance of Gaia. The formation of the earth is likened in Gaia’s dance to the self-creating whirling elements forming into mountains and valleys. The hot moisture arising from the cooling process formed the seas just as Gaia’s sweat flowed from the heat of her body in ever increasing active dance. "The tale of Gaia is thus being retold as we piece together the scientific details of our planet’s dance of life." And in its context, the evolution of our own species takes on new meaning in relation to the whole. Sahtouris suggests that as science adopts this myth become hypothesis, become theory, become fact, the whole world-view and behaviour will be profoundly transformed with new ways of solving the crisis of seeming insoluble problems.\(^\text{50}\)

Neither Lovelock nor Sahtouris proposed the myth of Gaia to mean that the earth is the Great Goddess or female being, the reincarnation of Mother Nature herself. Nor did they intend a new religion, though Sahtouris says, "it would hardly hurt us to worship our planet as the greater Being whose existence we have intuited from time immemorial."\(^\text{51}\) The intent in the use of the myth is to give poetic and spiritual metaphor to the idea of the earth as alive rather than the earth as dead matter with life upon it.

\(^\text{50}\) Ibid. p. 23.
\(^\text{51}\) Ibid. p. 22.
Lovelock intended a scientific hypothesis of the self-regulatory interrelationship of the physical geography of the earth. By calculating the estimated age of the earth, by now the energies and resources should have reached entropy; but to the contrary, life goes on. The seas should be far more salty; the atmosphere should have been totally polluted with carbon-dioxide, and there should be virtually nothing left of the air humans breathe.

According to evolutionary estimates the Earth’s age is 4,500 million years or 4.5 aeons. The earliest traces of life are to be found in sedimentary rock formed more than three aeons ago. Calculations of the laws of thermodynamics indicate that the Earth should in fact now be lifeless and cold. Lovelock borrowed the term Gaia as a means of expressing “that the entire range of living matter on Earth, from whales to viruses, and from oaks to algae, could be regarded as constituting a single living entity, capable of manipulating the Earth’s atmosphere to suit its overall needs and endowed with faculties and powers far beyond those of its constituent parts.”

In 1969 at a scientific meeting in Princeton, New Jersey Lovelock first presented the Gaia hypothesis he had formulated to explain the anomalies of the earth’s lithosphere, biosphere and atmosphere. A year later Lynn Margulis of Boston University joined Lovelock in putting fact to the myth of how the whole earth maintains homeostasis. Lovelock seeks some meaning to explain what he believes could not have happened by chance. It was the author William Golding who “without hesitation recommended that this creature be called Gaia, after the Greek Earth goddess also known as Ge....”

Lovelock can allow the laws of probability to affirm the imagination that a planet made of nothing but watch parts would in the fullness of time through the shifting forces of gravitation and wind “assemble at least one watch.” Discarding the stories of Prometheus stealing fire from the gods and the biblical story of Adam and Eve, Lovelock propounds the odds of

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53 Ibid. p. 9.
54 Ibid. p. 10.
55 Ibid.
a sequence of encounters leading to the first entity.... Life was thus an almost utterly improbable event with almost infinite opportunities of happening. So it did. Let us at least assume that it happened in this way rather than by the mysterious planting of a seed, or the drift of spores from elsewhere or indeed by outside intervention of any kind.56

Prefacing the myth with the words, “It seems almost certain,” Lovelock propounds the thesis of the origin of the solar system as the effect of a supernova event. His conclusions are that “there is no other credible explanation.... life can assemble by accident....”57

For Lovelock the notion of some organism working with an agenda of purpose is “scientific taboo.” Gaia’s dance in scientific application invokes “no notions of purpose or foresight in the evolution of this domain.”58 Gaia is now a recognised “legitimate and fruitful basis for scientific investigation.” Gaia has become respectable.

For Sahtouris, Gaia represents a new way of viewing the lithosphere (solid earth) and its biosphere (life systems) and atmosphere. Humanity is out of syncopation with Gaia. Humanity is on trial and has not yet learned to step in time with the Gaia’s dance. While other species have a programmed knowledge of their place and activity as part of Gaia, humanity is an experiment in free choice. Thus humanity is left to find its way with “enormous potential, powerful egotism and tremendous anxiety— a syndrome that is recognisably adolescent.”59 In its adolescent stage humanity is encouraged to learn from the wisdom of the aeons of Gaia’s works. According to the theory, humans are the only creatures (with the possible exception of whales and dolphins) with the ability to objectify the world and solve its problems with freedom of choice. However, this objectification has inflated to egotism. Instead of seeing humans as an integrative part of Gaia, humanity has interpreted itself as having power over the world. There is “us” and “them.” Sahtouris uses the Gaia myth to

57 Ibid. p. 14, 16.
assert the need of humanity to listen to the parent planet in order to grow up to maturity.

This adolescent egotism is represented in such scientific world-views as the Newtonian/Cartesian mechanistic model of the cosmos. Viewing the world as a machine which humanity can operate is to fail to see the body of humanity as in cooperation rather than competition with Gaia. Instead of the process of evolution being seen as “red in tooth and claw,” the Gaia myth is proposed to show the intricacy and intimacy of mutual dependency that exists over the whole earth. Rather than a machine that works to laws, Gaia is a mother providing for her children from the resources of her bosom. The myth of Gaia becomes anthropomorphic to replace older views of mechanomorphism.60

From an ecological application the Gaia myth is the New Age way of coming into balance with what is. In Sahtouris’ words, “we are wrong to devote our attention to saving or managing nature. Gaia will save herself— with or without us— and hardly needs advice or help in management.”61 Humanity is to learn as much from Gaia as possible and interfere as little as possible. To do this humanity must change its view of productivity in terms of Gross National Product and profit margins, which in Sahtouris’s view is totally at odds with Gaia. The greed of humanity is to blame for the crisis of creation. Gaia’s reprimand is to teach humanity to take no more than is needed and to recycle everything as does Gaia. Sahtouris suggests that the mounting evidence from archaeology shows humanity in former times was based on “cooperation and reverence for life and nature, not on competition and obsession with death and technology.”62 The basis for the proposed harmony then and the dysfunction now is the guidance by religious images of a nurturing Mother Goddess before and a cruel Father God which has replaced her.

While for Lovelock the terms mechanism or organism are interchangeable and useful, for Sahtouris only terms which express the earth as an organism are appropriate. The human body’s involuntary organs are used as

60 Ibid. p. 25.
61 Ibid.
examples of the regulatory system of Gaia. Rather than automatic, Gaia is autopoietic. The cybernetic feedback which Lovelock describes as a thermostatic control mechanism between the planet and its life is more indicative of a mechanism than an organism. Sahtouris concludes that only limited aspects of Gaia’s functions such as temperature control itself can be described as cybernetic, but never its essential self-organising, self-creating autopoietic system.63

The new religion from the East fits a Platonic world-view. The Hebrew-Christian world-view advocated the creation of a world by a perfect God. The world became corrupted through the disobedience of humans estranged from creation and Creator. Sahtouris says this scenario is blamed for the lost art of Gaia. According to Sahtouris, Plato’s ideas about education and politics creating a perfect society have dominated the Christian world-view that has presented the idea of developing a perfect world through education. Thus the educated would rule over the uneducated. Sahtouris summarises that Aristotle’s teaching furthered European Christianity with “formal logic and the pursuit of virtue— which originally meant excellence and later came to mean obedience.”64 For example, Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake in 1600 for reviving the notion of a heliocentric solar system. Ten years later Galileo proved that the earth revolves around the sun with the empirical telescope of science. He was imprisoned, and his teaching was forbidden. In building her historical background Sahtouris says that since ancient Greek times two models have served the people: one was the swirling dance of Gaia, the other was the mechanical world of Archimedes.

Carolyn Merchant’s book The Death of Nature is cited to unfold the way in which the mechanistic view overpowered the Gaian view. Modern science weeded the garden of all belief in alive nature. The romantic mysticism of the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Early Age of Enlightenment was transformed into the logic of the Age of Reason. René Descartes developed the world as a machine fashioned by the Great Engineer. Therefore it was believed that humans, when enabled to make machines, could improve their designs by mathematical measuring and eventually would produce machines as good as God’s originals. Human beings were dehumanised.

63 Ibid. p. 64-65.
64 Ibid. p. 171.
Sahtouris points to Descartes' view that women, being more like animals with no minds for machine making would better be dominated by men as with the rest of the mechanical world.

Sahtouris furthers her case by pointing to Francis Bacon, the father of scientific method. Bacon furthered the idea that the Golden Age of Science would control nature and press from it the goodness with which to construct its own mechanically perfect societies. Science would solve the problems of humanity. The mechanistic world-view suited the progress of the Industrial Revolution. All the invented mechanisms of measurement were employed to quantify the earth and harness its utility for the good of humanity. Eventually science's positivism would allow for nothing outside the measurable. Even the human being was interpreted in reductionist terms as a machine with pumps instead of heart and lungs. Humanity and the world were being dissected and investigated to find their secrets so that science and technology could construct their own.

Anaximander's evolutionary theory was two thousand years old. Now it resurfaced in the form of Darwinian evolution which quickly suited the Industrial world-view. Natural selection justified the rule of the masters over the slaves, the rich over the poor. Instead of the world-view where God condescended to humanity, humanity now would rise to God. Later western Capitalism promoted the concepts of the survival of the fittest in a competitive world. Communism on the other hand presented the view of cooperation of the many. Both political systems were in fact based on evolutionary myths that allowed the few to control the many.

In summary Sahtouris says that though the earlier philosophy of Plato and Aristotle surmised the progress of humanity through education and ethics, modern science has abandoned the ethical aspects and objectified the world machine. Science's task was simply to measure not to judge virtue. The fatalistic view of a clock running down or an expanding universe cooling off left people trapped inside the machine, imprisoned within the elements. For meaning and hope humanity must search beyond the present forms of science. The New Age answer is found in the rebirth of mythology.
The New Age world-view incorporated within Gaia advocates hope in the dynamics of a self-creating, self-sustaining and never-ending story. Being alive is free to flow with the changes of evolution to a better and better Gaia. Rather than the brink of despair, humanity is on the threshold of awakening. Gaia will go on; the question that remains is whether the experiment in freedom within the human species will become extinct or further progress as Gaia continues her swirling dance.

To survive with Gaia, humanity is encouraged to come into balance with her. Rather than producing species of animals that Gaia did not design over her aeons of wisdom, humanity is to leave well enough alone and let Gaia do what comes naturally. Instead of separation from one another, humanity is to realise the body of humanity. Science must recognise the ergonomics of Gaia in order to work with her instead of trying to control her. Instead of trying to produce a perfect world through the manipulation of the world and its creatures, the New Age strives to recognise the order in chaos. The imperfect world must learn to be gracious with imperfection, accepting imperfection and shifting with the flow as Gaia improvises her dance. The very fact of the Gaia myth being used suggests a New Age wherein humanity is encouraged to listen to and give voice to the feminine side.
The New Age also presents the theme of Gaia as a "spiral dance" in which those who are attuned to the Earth Mother can ground themselves to her and become channels through which the powers of the cosmos can be directed. Demonstrative of the characteristic interrelatedness of fields the Gaia myth includes Goddesses, Witchcraft, Magic, Ecofeminism, and feminine spirituality in the New Age.

Though the subjects demonstrate overlap, they are not identical communities. Thealogy (a term coined by religious scholar Naomi Goldenburg) comes from the Greek word "θεαί" poetic for "θεά" meaning Goddess. The term is used to incorporate a study of Goddess worship, seeking to establish it as the most primitive form of worship, dating back at least as far as the dawning of the Sumerian civilisation (listed circa 7,500 BC as beginning to grow animals and plants for food). Thealogy would tend to give pre-eminence to symbolic meanings in contrast to the rational dogmas of theology. In this sense thealogy is therefore considered feminine, whereas theology would be considered male. It is also referred to as "coven theology" produced by the feminist witchcraft movement.

Witchcraft, Starhawk wants to say, is one of the oldest if not the oldest religion. It includes the Goddess legends of 35,000 years ago. It is akin to the Native American traditions and Arctic shamanism wherein the gifted ones were empowered to attune themselves to the spirits of the herds of animals and in so doing not only were able to secure food for their tribes but were able to connect to the life force that infuses all life. This is the dance of the double spiral, of whirling into being, and whirling out again. This powerful immanence was portrayed in images of the Great Mother Goddess who brings all things into existence and the Horned God (often associated

with the Celtic Cernunnos and classically linked to Pan) hunter and hunted, "who eternally passes through the gates of death that new life may go on."\(^{69}\) Life and death were a continuing stream. This is the spiral dance. The New Age Movement likewise espouses a deep immersion into the themes of feminism and the Goddess movements. Their real meaning is not so much their historical validity but the myth they offer this modern secular culture to live by. Again, New Agers follow their tradition of striving to establish credibility with historical roots for the Gaia/Goddess.

Justification for the inclusion of material on Witchcraft (Wicca) and Magic as examples of the paradigm shift of the New Age needs verification due to the conflicting opinions of various writers. For example Gordon Melton compares and contrasts Neo-Pagans and the New Age in his first edition of *New Age Encyclopedia*:

> The Neo-Pagan movement in America and other English-speaking nations parallels the New Age Movement in some ways, differs sharply from it in others, and overlaps it in some minor ways.\(^{70}\)

Monica Sjoo, herself a Wiccan, in the book *New Age and Armageddon* (1992) regards the New Age as something quite different, and just a continuation of patriarchal consciousness.\(^{71}\) A further clarification of the difference between early Goddess worship as identified by Marija Gimbutas’ new edition of *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe 6500-3500 BC* (1982) and the modern resurgence of Goddess worship and witchcraft is presented by Ursula King’s assessment that Wicca is nothing to do with ancient traditions, but is a construct of the modern feminist movement. She writes:

> Contemporary witches’ covens are not identical with the witchcraft practised in medieval times; they are a specifically new blend of the feminist movement. Their emergence is linked to a process of retraditionalisation using elements of the past, whilst

\(^{69}\) Ibid.


\(^{71}\) It has been pointed out by John Drane that a similar conclusion to exclude Neo-pagans from the New Age is arrived at by Michael York, though York’s angle is different from Melton’s and Ronald Hutton who questions the identity between Neo-Pagan and Pagan. Both of these are found in Religion Today 1994, 9/3.
they represent at the same time a religious innovation of the 20th century.72

King goes on to say that some writers want claim that the term "witchcraft" should be confined to references to supernatural powers being used to do evil and that the term is wrongly being adopted by "self-styled witches of modern times who claim to be adherents of an ancient pagan religion which apparently pre-dates Christianity, but was eventually displaced and driven underground where it survived until its emergence today".73 King cites the source of this discrepancy as the "influence of Margaret Murray's article on 'Witchcraft' in the Encyclopedia Britanica (1929) and her other popular books on this subject (1970, 1971)."74

King notes the merging of thought between those who claim connections with ancient witchcraft and matriarchal religions in paganism. This merging of ideas also brought about an emergence of a hybrid syncretistic religion which combines "ancient folk religion with Goddess worship and modern feminism."75 Starhawk is cited as a leading example of the new feminist witchcraft.76 Campbell and Brennan also include Starhawk and Witchcraft in their Aquarian Guide to the New Age. King does recognise that witchcraft today is extremely diverse and may include many conflicting covens within and outside the feminist movement. While some covens may consist of those who claim hereditary allegiance to ancient rituals, others are comfortable in creating their own rules and rituals. While some may hold to even numbers of men and women, other covens are designed especially for gays or lesbians or men only/women only covens such as the Dianic covens for women.77

Gordon Melton compares and contrasts Women's Spirituality, Witchcraft, New Age and Neo-Pagan religion in the entry 'Neo-Pagans and The New Age' in his first edition of New Age Encyclopedia. Neo-Pagan includes "various Druid organizations, Norse pagans, and the Church of the Eternal

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73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid. p. 133.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
Source, based on Egyptian religion. All these groups are dwarfed in size by the Neo-Pagan Witchcraft movement... between 1000 and 5000 covens" whose membership runs in the hundreds of thousands. Similarities listed include a common interest in psychic phenomena. However, this entry claims that New Agers avoid the use of terms such as magic and witchcraft. A further claim of the article is that New Age bookstores rarely have sections on magic or witchcraft. Books on these subjects are rather gathered into other sections on spiritual disciplines and women's studies respectively. A third claim is that New Agers see all religions as one and that spirituality is to be learned from a master or guru, coupled with a hope for the appearance of a new world teacher or messiah to lead into the New Age. While not disputing the scholarship of those who agree with these claims, material in this chapter will demonstrate disagreement with these conclusions.

Several other beliefs are also cited by Aidan Kelly's entry in Melton's New Age Encyclopedia as contrasts between New Age and Neo-Pagan: Neo-Pagans like the Craft for its difference from puritanical, world-denying types of Christianity.
2. Most Neo-Pagans believe in reincarnation and karma, but reject the dualism of the Eastern traditions.
3. Neo-Pagans generally believe they are practising ancient folk religion.
4. It is suggested that the Neo-Pagans' emphasis on folk religions means they are not interested in the New Age of the future.
5. In contrast to New Age belief that all religions are one, Neo-Pagans believe that many religions are different and irreconcilable. In relation with this Neo-Pagans do not look for one world religion as that would be repressive; and Judaism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism are not an improvement over the folk religions they replaced. Apart from Hinduism's tantric traditions eastern religions are rejected along with monotheistic religion.
6. In summary of the above contrasts Neo-Pagans tend to be anti-authoritarian. Thus for example there is an anomaly between Neo-Pagans and Gardnerian Witches in America because the later has a hierarchical structure. However, there is some concession given to such figures as Starhawk, Zsusanna Budapest and Margot Adler since they are followed

79 Ibid. 314.
and read as somewhat gurus. Kelly strives to maintain the contrasting view by claiming that those who follow these leading figures as gurus are of the women’s rights/women’s spirituality movement and not Neo-Pagan Witches.

7. Another interesting contrast is that in the Neo-Pagan movement teaching and training should not be offered for charge. Thus the New Age psychic fairs and expos, the money making 900 call numbers, and other commercial charging that has made many New Age gurus into millionaires is detested by the "strict" Neo-Pagan.

Even with these apparent anomalies Kelly acknowledges New Age Witches, citing Selena Fox, head of the Church of Circle Wicca, whose ecumenical interfaith ministry includes involvement with the Neo-Pagan community. Her Circle Network News serves as a liaison for both New Age and Neo-Pagan.

Both sides of above claims, in this writer's view, may in many instances be expressed by New Agers. It is this particular ambiguity under the New Age umbrella that makes exclusive claims such as these difficult to substantiate across the board. The inclusion of Witchcraft, Magic, Ecofeminism, Women's Spirituality and Neo-Pagan beliefs takes into account the above considerations, taking also into account the "umbrella" nature and metanetwork80 character of the New Age. All these follow an emphasis on the rebirth of mythology. The similarities and contrasts also illustrate the syncretistic and eclectic nature of the broad coverage of the term "New Age." Further, when speaking of the New Age one should recognise references in this dissertation to different levels of hard core and soft core networking with the various themes that give rise to the ambiguity of the New Age.81 For example when one says there are no gurus of the New Age, immediately there are numerous examples of those being followed from Shirley MacLaine to Starhawk to J. Z. Knight's Ramtha channelling. Therefore at


81 For example in Melton’s New Age Encyclopedia an entry by Aidan A. Kelly on Covenant of the Goddess shows attempts made to create an umbrella organisation for the various conflicting views of Neo-Pagan witchcraft in 1974-1975. The attempts failed with the result that in 1975 Aidan Kelly assisted in creating an exclusive organisation for Neo-Pagan witches.
one level there are those who say there are no gurus, yet they become the gurus themselves. In the New Age variation is allowed. Though one level of New Ager may affirm the coming of one world government and a world messiah, not all New Agers agree with this belief system. An explicit example of this would be the New Age community at Findhorn in Scotland.\textsuperscript{82} All of this references the New Age as exemplifying the changes taking place in thinking and practice with respect to traditional occidental and eastern world views. Further examples include the following:

1. The resident themes of Wicca as expressed by Starhawk and Caitlin Matthews are examples of New Age umbrella beliefs such as magic being defined as "the power to change consciousness at will." Marianne Williamson's \textit{A Return to Love} and Helen Schucman's \textit{A Course in Miracles} speak of the same concept in miracles as Starhawk speaks of in magic.
2. The mythologies of Goddesses and Mother Earth are prevalent themes in the New Age.
3. The appeal to intuitiveness, visualisation and ritual techniques for reaching different levels of consciousness are all themes of New Age mythology. For example these may well be used in channelling, psychic reading, raising the cone of power, following \textit{A Course In Miracles} or in the psychology of Psychosynthesis.
4. There is a great deal of overlap between the various levels of what some would say is/is not New Age. For example Starhawk and Matthews are both invited speakers at such New Age centres as St. James' Church Piccadilly and Holy Names College where Matthew Fox's Creation Spirituality is taught.
5. The shift in moral conscience is evident in Wicca and magic, Neo-Paganism, Ecofeminism, and Women's Spirituality.
6. The very "outcoming" and new meanings attributed to Wicca which is appealing to the growing acceptance of this formerly considered taboo is another example of its inclusion in the paradigm shift endemic of the New Age. For example \textit{The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft} list various categories of witches:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Neo-Pagan (10 percent)—half feminist Witches and half Witches who follow the various revivalist traditions; Neo-Classical (70
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{82} Findhorn will be elaborated upon in Chapter Three— New Age Spirituality.
percent)—those who practice a folk magic with pagan and Christian roots; Classical (1-2 percent)—the village healers, wise women, etc.; Neo-Gothic (1-2 percent)—practitioners of Satanism, which is based on the "gothic" witchcraft of the witch-hysteria era; Family Traditions "Fam Trads" (1-2 percent)—families which claimed to preserve classical witchcraft traditions in their family over generations, common in the 1960s before the "Murray myth" was discredited; Immigrant Traditions (1-2 percent)—ethnic folk magic practices preserved in cultural pockets; Other: VODOUN, SANTARIA Native American Indian, etc. (10 percent)—magical practices of other religions.83

7. This dissertation will be predominantly referring to Wicca in terms of Matthews and Starhawk's interpretation. Here witchcraft seeks community, peace and transformation in this world through transformation of consciousness. These are all New Age themes, even though Neo-Pagan witchcraft may not wish to associate themselves with the New Age. Witchcraft myths are resounded in the New Age.

Joseph Campbell’s book Occidental Mythology: The Masks of God orders all cosmologies under four themes or creation stories:84

1. The Goddess creates the world without the assistance of a male consort.
2. The Goddess creates the world with the assistance of a male consort.
3. The world is fashioned from the body of the Goddess by a male consort.
4. The world is fashioned by a male God without aid.

Jeanne Achterberg relates the typical assertion that the earliest cosmology was one in which creation was the work of the Goddess and Woman was the healer. These were supposedly the times of peace and harmonious growth for civilization. Then came a pivotal point. Famine and disease and war broke out. Chaos set in and the Great Mother as healer and creator took on a more severe interpretation in hope that she would intercede in battle for those who worshipped her. When this failed she was replaced by whichever male God seemed to yield victory. This was the primeval turning point at which the female figurines were set aside in favour of the male gods. The

eventual result was the emergence of a monotheistic belief system which banned the magical arts and woman as healer. Along with this change the ancient mother goddess figure was blamed for humanity's fall from grace. The beauty of birth was now overshadowed by the pain of childbirth as the due penalty and reminder of the fall. Woman was relegated to the unholy and could no longer be engaged as healer.85

Once there was peaceful Inanna of the Sumerians. Then came the image of Ishtar, her warlike and eventually untamed image. The Istaritu who were the holy women representatives at Ishtar's temples were transformed from holy women consecrating marriage to harlots orchestrating orgies. The Sumerians fell to decadence and ecological disaster. Whatever form she took in the centuries and civilisations following, the cycle seemed to repeat itself— Nerthus (the Earth Mother) of Stone Age Denmark or the healing legacy of the Greek pantheon including Demeter (caretaker of women and children), Persephone (who could cure sore teeth, eyes and infertility), Hecate (healer of children's diseases), Athena (cured blindness), Medea and Circe (who held secret knowledge of poisons and antidotes), Leto (the surgeon), and Eileithyia (midwife of the gods). Hera was chief healer at Argos, and Isis though a foreign deity was considered by the Corinthians to be the pre-eminent healer.86

The Roman Empire too evolved a great tradition of healing Goddesses. Many were received through the integration of the Greek Goddesses. Their names often reflected the disease they were to heal such as Scabies, Angina and Fecunditas. Diana was goddess of pregnant women and birth. Minerva was healer and protector. Mater Matuta was the Goddess who opened the uterus to allow birth. The Great Mother (Magna Mater) of Rome was Cybele. She follows the line of Inanna and Nerthus.87

Achterberg even notes the Gospels as giving particular emphasis to the women followers of Jesus, but also concludes that those who confirmed the

87 Ibid. p. 34.
canon of scripture denounced such books as the Gospel of Mary, Wisdom of Faith, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and the Secret Gospel of John. In these Gospels God is seen as Mother of All things, half of the total dyad. In the Gospel of Philip the Spirit is Mother and Virgin. God the Mother is also Sophia the equal to the Goddess of wisdom. Achterberg’s conclusion is that by A D 200 all feminine imagery had been replaced.88

According to the traditions of Goddess religions, which of course are allowed to alter according to the needs of the disciples, the self-created Goddess is the earth. At first she made love to herself and filled with love became swollen with love and gave birth to a host of bright spirits which "filled the worlds and became all beings."89 Priestesses marked out the ley lines in the earth to evidence the flow of power from the earth as Goddess. Certain stones were believed to increase the flow of power. These were set up as rows and circles to mark the cycles of the solstices and equinoxes of the great wheel of the year myth.90 At these times it was considered that

90 Ibid. pp. 181-196. The major festivals of the Craft follow the seasonal changes of the year. The Vernal Equinox on March 20 or 21 and the Autumnal Equinox on September 22 or 23rd in which the sun rises exactly in the east and sets exactly in the west all over the world. Day and night are of equal length. This marks the point when the sun changes hemisphere. by crossing the equator. Typically the Vernal Equinox (Eostar Ritual) is celebrated on 20-23 March and the Autumnal Equinox (Mabon) on 20-23 September. The Spring celebrates the time when life returns from the earth, when light and dark are equal. Kore, The Dark Maiden returns from the Land of the Dead. In the Autumn again day and night are equal and thought is given to the balance within life. This is the time of thanksgiving and harvest, and of recognising the decline of life. Other rituals are observed on the Summer Solstice (Litha) 21 or 22 June, and the Winter Solstice (Yule) 22 or 23 December. These are the times when the sun is farthest from the equator. This corresponds to the longest and shortest day of the year when the sun appears to stand still. Litha is celebrated 20-23 June in triumph of the light, yet the turning point toward the decline into dark. Yule is celebrated 20-23 December in the triumph of darkness, yet the giving way to the changing into light. The Dark King is transformed into the Infant Light. The Great Mother gives birth to the Divine Child Sun who brings hope. In between these four rituals there are four other rituals celebrated to complete the Year of the Wheel myth. Lughnasad is celebrated 1 August. The Sun King dies with the waning year. It is a time of waiting between fear and hope. The grain is ripe but not yet harvested. The ending of the Witches’ year and beginning of New Year is celebrated as Samhain (Hallowe’en) 31 October. A plate of cakes, a drink and a lighted candle is set out for an offering in memorial to one’s beloved dead. This night the veil between the living and the dead is thin. Harvest is past and the fields are fallow. “The gates of life and death are opened; the Sun Child is conceived; the dead walk, and to the living is revealed the Mystery: that every ending is but a new beginning.” The Lord of Death is the Lord of Life. After the Winter Solstice (Yule) comes Brigid (Candelmas) 2 February. This is the ritual in honour of Brigid, the Goddess of fire and inspiration. In Ireland she is the Triple Goddess of poetry, smithcraft and healing. In celebration of the growing Sun Child, each celebrant recognises their own time of individuation. Each lights
priestesses could probe the secrets of time and the hidden mysteries of the universe. Following various lines of evolution the Goddess eventually developed masculinity and became the Blue God of laughter and love, then the Green God, rooted in the earth, the spirit of all growing things, and finally the Goddess became the Horned God, the Hunter, "ruddy as the sun yet dark as death." Eventually the Warrior Gods drove the Goddess underground by suppressing the peoples of the lowlands during the Bronze Age. These suppressed peoples were driven into the high grounds of hills and mountains where they became known as Sidhe (Picts or Pixies) and Fair Folk (Faeries). Later the Greek Goddess married the new gods which yielded an Olympian Pantheon.91

In the British Isles the Celts kept the traditions alive through the Druidic mysteries. The Faeries too preserved the Old Religion. The Clan mothers were called "Queen of Elphame" which means Elfland. These led the covens together with the priest who was called the "Sacred King." These all celebrated the Wheel of the Year with its eight feasts celebrating the changes of the seasons as the changes of life come full circle and rebirth.92

The resurgence of the Goddess Religion and the feminine movement have assisted one another's popularity along with the rise of the New Age Movement. In her 1979 edition of The Spiral Dance, Starhawk claims that the greatest influence in this century on the resurgence of the Goddess was Robert Graves' writings, such as his book The White Goddess. Ten years later in her 1989 edition she considers the feminist movement has supplanted Graves' primal influence. Femaleness is now sacred instead of being loathed like it was under the austerity of former days.

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91 Ibid. pp. 18-19.
92 Ibid.
Growing out of the feminist movement has evolved what is called Women's Spirituality or Feminine Spirituality. This is the way of the Goddess, the way of natural law and natural wisdom. Merlin Stone's book *When God Was a Woman* (1976) says that in the beginning God was a woman, and the earliest religions of prehistoric times worshipped the female deity who was the source of creation and destruction. These were times of peaceful living. In keeping, women's spirituality promotes the sacred dimension of female experiences which empower women to transform their lives. Humanity is considered a part of the whole which includes the cosmos and nature. It is also considered that in the West, the patriarchy of monotheistic religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam has denied access to the Goddess. It is increasingly popular for women today to follow the exodus from traditional religious institutions because they no longer find inspiration for their spirituality. From the age of misogyny woman enters the New Age quest for women's spirituality, to shape their own spiritual traditions apart from male models. They listen to the voice within to find healing, wholeness and ministry to the earth and others. This quest may follow the lines of Mary Daly's radical feminism which would do away with Christianity altogether or Rosemary Radford Ruether's so called reformist feminism which has evolved out of her earlier concerns with Liberation Theology and seeks different models within the Christian tradition from which to liberate women. In either case feminine spirituality evolves from a feminine theology of liberation which seeks to lay bare the myths and traditions within Christianity which are considered to have been interpreted in such a way as to perpetuate sexist ideologies, violence and alienation.93 This is the new theology for a New Age. It seeks to answer the question, "Does traditional theology still speak to women's experience today or do women need to create a new religious and spiritual tradition?"94

Mary Daly, a former Roman Catholic, sparked the movement with her 1968 publication of the book *The Church and the Second Sex*. There she advocated a reformation of the church. In 1971 she took her first radical step. Invited to be the first woman preacher at the Harvard Memorial

Church, she chose the theme, "The Women's Movement: An Exodus Community." She called for a symbolic act of the women leaving the church together after the sermon. Daly describes the feminist community as a sisterhood whose first priority is the liberation of women. "Let us affirm our faith in ourselves and our will to transcendence by rising and walking out together." Her further books include Beyond God the Father (1973, 1975), Theology After the Demise of God the Father (1974), After the Death of God the Father (1979), Gyn/Ecology (1978) and Pure Lust (1984). In these Daly castigates the idea of sexism and the whole concept of God the Father and a male Christ. She now considers herself "post-Christian."

Ruether's view is to restate the "insights of Christianity in feminist terms." Her concern is to reform the church into a non-sexist "vehicle of hope, rather than of oppression, for women." King states that Ruether's radical reformation attempt incorporates not only the Bible, but counter-culture movements in early Christianity, church history, the Goddess tradition, liberalism, Marxism and romanticism. Seeking a corporate term, she neither settles with God nor Goddess, but engenders a new term "God/ess" which at least in written form supports her view toward divinity as One who transcends both patriarchy and matriarchy to signal redemption for all.

The Malleus Maleficarum (1486) was written by two Dominican inquisitors, Heinrich Institor Kramer and Jacob Sprenger. Its oppression of women and spirituality is epitomised by the twofold thesis that Witchcraft is Satan's work in the world, and that women were more likely to be Witches because, "they were more stupid, weak, superstitious, and fickle than men." Margaret Murray, a prominent anthropologist of the twentieth century disagrees. Her book, The Witch-Cult In Western Europe (Oxford University Press, 1921) promotes the thesis that Witchcraft has its origins in the Stone Age fertility religions. More recently this theory has been promoted in Wicca but is scepticized by others as unestablished.
Gerald Gardner (1884-1964) was one of the first to openly confess Witchcraft. He strongly agreed with Murray's hypothesis. During the 1940s he became an initiate of the Craft when he discovered it was the secret practice behind a magical society of which he had become a member in Christchurch, Hampshire. Being dissatisfied, he hired Aleister Crowley, \(^{101}\) to compose rituals for his revived form of the Craft. These reflect the sado-masochistic sexual views of both of these men. Gardner's books, *Witchcraft Today* (1954) and *The Meaning of Witchcraft*, in addition to the adverse publicity of the Press concerning his books, inflamed a revival of the Craft which continues to grow to this day. \(^{102}\) In the book *Witchcraft Today*, Gardner presents his apologetic for Murray's thesis, adding that when the Craft was persecuted it went underground and continued to be practised secretly. This is also the belief of modern Witchcraft. Gardner became the leader of the movement until his death at which time there was a rivalry for the position of King of the Witches. The major rival was another school of Witchcraft led by Alex Sanders (1916-1988). While the Gardnerian version had appealed to a more mature middle-class people, the Alexandrian school was more ceremonial and drew a greater following of the youthful and intellectual.

Following the death of Gardner, Sanders won the title, King of the Witches, which became the useful title of his biography written in 1969 by June Johns. Johns records the claim of Sanders by right of his being head of 107 covens. Sanders and his wife, High Priestess Maxine led the movement to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s. Following Sander's death there was no repeat of rivalry for the title. This apparently concurs with Starhawk's premise that modern occidental Witchcraft has shifted from these forms of ritual and structure. There are more today seeking covens than there are covens and places within existing covens to receive initiates. Today the Craft, which prefers the title Wicca, is more an expression of feminist

\(^{101}\) Ibid. pp. 94-96. Aleister Crowley was a particularly nasty man who infiltrated and devoured the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, formed several of his own cult orders and considered himself to be the reincarnation of the French magician Eliphas Levi and the Irish derelict Edward Kelley. He was the self professed Anti-Christ, the Great Beast 666. In 1922, the Sunday Times labelled him "one of the most sinister figures of modern times." The Press of his day titled him 'The Wickedest Man in the World.' Just one example of his perversion was the leading of several female followers to have sexual intercourse with goats. \(^{102}\) Ibid. pp. 135-136.
awakening in western culture with an "abhorrence of centralization and hierarchical structures."\textsuperscript{103}

Paganism, feminine spirituality, Witchcraft and the New Age Movement may all hold to the Goddess traditions as a common ground, though many feminists may also follow the traditions of Judaism or Christianity. The traditions of Wicca and Paganism may also be followed without feminist traditions, simply by following the celebrations of seasons and awakening consciousness without allusion to the interplay of power and gender.\textsuperscript{104} According to Starhawk the Goddess religion is summarised in a threefold analysis. The \textbf{first principle} is immanence (the Goddess/God is embodied in all nature and being, therefore all diversities of life are sacred together). \textbf{The second principle} is interconnection (all being is interconnected with all the cosmos and interrelated as parts of one living organism). \textbf{The third principle} is community (the focus not on individual salvation but on growing and transforming through interaction and common struggle involving all people, earth, atmosphere, plants, animals and energy systems).\textsuperscript{105}

There are obvious connections between ecology, feminism, the New Age Movement and the Goddess religions which are readily visible in the ecological crisis of today's world order including some 495 million unemployed fellow human beings, the multitude of starving people and the vast wasteland of destroyed resources, parched wilderness and endangered species. Hence even the word "ecofeminism" has been coined to convey this evolution toward a realised interconnection.

In her book \textit{From Apocalypse to Genesis}, Anne Primavesi strives to reveal what she considers to be a theologian's proper integration of ecology, feminism and Christianity. Out of the apocalyptic chaos of today's crisis is emerging another genesis, a new ecological paradigm.\textsuperscript{106} Its purpose is to

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid. p. 317.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid. pp. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{106} Campbell and Brennan. \textit{The Aquarian Guide To The New Age}. \textit{Op. Cit.} pp. 234-235. The term "paradigm" is derived from the Greek word παράδειγμα meaning pattern, model, plan, precedent or example. Thomas Kuhn used this term in his book, \textit{The Structure of Scientific Revolutions}. University of Chicago. 1970. The term was used to refer to the encompassing framework in which a group of scientists would analyse and solve problems. Fritjof Capra, author of \textit{The Turning Point} and \textit{The Tao of Physics}, used the term in reference to "the totality of thoughts, perceptions, and values that form a particular vision of
enhance a proper stewardship of creation. Primavesi uses the term ecofeminism, not to stress any one category over another, but "to celebrate not only women and Nature but men, women and Nature (in any order)."107 Rather than being used as an exclusive term, it is intended to be used as a holistic term to conjure inclusiveness. This shift to an ecological paradigm is to eliminate the traditional Christian paradigm of dualism and hierarchy. Writing from a theologian's point of view Primavesi advocates the interdependence and interrelationship of an all in one holistic creation. The biblical Genesis account is reinterpreted by eliminating the traditional doctrines of original sin and the need for salvation (the fall/redemption paradigm), thus viewing the account not as the fall of creation but as its rise to maturity.

In opposition to the traditional Christian paradigm of dualism and hierarchy, ecofeminism promotes the innate value of all creation whether male, female, animal, plant, geophysical, atmospheric or whatever. The world is to be seen as a living body in which we all participate. Primavesi heralds this theory as the scientific elaboration of the new paradigm which demonstrates "the geophysical interaction of atmosphere, oceans, climate and the Earth's crust, which are regulated comfortably for life by living organisms using the sun's energy."108 The new ecological paradigm must include both hard and soft data.

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108 Ibid. p 54.
The Hindu term "shakti" refers to the "strength" or "power-from-within" which is the life force and energy that brings about activity in the universe. It is divinised by the Great Goddess Shakti (Goddess of energy and life force). All her powers are unified whether procreation or destruction, enjoyment or cruelty, etc.109

Ecofeminism's hope is to take us beyond the stereotypes of male (objective, rational, scientific, detached, linear, left-brained activity) and female (intuitive, bodily, illogical, emotional, disordered, holistic, right-brained activity). Starhawk too recognises the need to dismiss her former considerations of the dichotomies between male and female which she rather surmised in the first edition of her books The Spiral Dance (©1979, 1989) and Dreaming the Dark (©1982, 1988). The popularity of the left- and right-hemisphere brain research of the 1970's had led many to conclude certain attributes as feminine or masculine.110 Ten years on Starhawk is more in favour of a collective sense of energy. "Today", she writes, "I don't use the terms female energy and male energy. I don't identify femaleness or maleness with specific sets of qualities or predispositions."111 She concedes that she no longer holds the Jungian premise that in each woman is a male self and in each man is a female self. The re-emergence of Goddess religion has a definite intention to reshape the physical and spiritual state of our culture through a conscious and subconscious power. Starhawk says, "We are called to take a radical leap of faith, to believe that people, given the opening to dream of new possibilities, with tools and visions will create a living future."112

Ursula King, professor of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Bristol encapsulates the wide range of ideas involving the interdependence of the feminine movements and spirituality movements

109 Ibid. 54-61.
110 Ornstein, Robert. The Psychology of Consciousness. W. H. Freeman, San Francisco. 1972. In this book cited by Starhawk in The Spiral Dance, Ornstein presents experiments with brain-damaged and epileptic subjects which reveal that the two hemispheres of the brain appear to specialise in two different modes of consciousness. The left side of the brain seems to control the analytical thinking in which mathematical functions are performed and information is processed. The left hemisphere also controls the right side of the body, while the right hemisphere of the brain controls the left side of the body and is responsible for our orientation in space, recognition of faces, artistic talent etc.
112 Ibid. p. 11.
along with the emergence of earth religions, Witchcraft, and the Goddess movement.\textsuperscript{113} Living in an age of crisis, she says, we are looking for new voices which will incorporate changes leading toward "a more peaceful, just and loving world."\textsuperscript{114} There is a marked movement from the patriarchal and matriarchal cosmology toward the androgynous cosmology. In religion it is expressed as a movement away from the traditional views. New theologies are presented to liberate woman and creation in a new spirituality. The purpose of feminism in its varied forms is to bring about "a change of consciousness and organisation, power structures and fundamental values in our society. . ."\textsuperscript{115} King concedes that these are not the only voices to express such a vision of the possibilities of a New Age and a new spirit to come, but they speak from an important vantage point. The real vantage point of the Goddess movement today is the power of its myth to live by. King notes three factors which make up the movement:\textsuperscript{116}

1. The evidence of historical facts and the criteria by which they are given meaning.
2. The psychological and psychoanalytic levels of meaning taken from the historical data.
3. The level of spiritual awareness and religious practice which rises from the quest for the Goddess.

By far the most applicable factor in all the eclectic nature of the themes of the Goddess, feminism, ecofeminism, Witchcraft, etc. is the support of a paradigm shift in meaning which the Goddess gives to women today and the holistic approach to life on planet earth.

King quotes Carol P. Christ and Judith J. Plaskow, from their book \textit{Womanspirit Rising}, "Feminists have charged that Judaism and Christianity are sexist religions with a male God and traditions of male leadership that legitimate the superiority of men in family and society."\textsuperscript{117} Therefore, other forms of religion and spirituality are serving the voice of change, including the Goddess movement because it vies for the feminine awakening, and a

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid. p. 11.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid. p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid. p. 128.
\end{itemize}
modern revival of Witchcraft because it supports the Goddess movement, feminism and nature. In fact King goes so far as to conclude that the feminist movement is the reason why modern Witchcraft has emerged with its 30,000 Witches in Britain alone,\textsuperscript{118} not to mention the greater following in America where such groups as the Church of the Goddess, the Sisterhood of Wicca, and the Covenant of the Goddess are all recognised and growing religious groups. The estimate of 30,000 witches in Britain is conservative at least. Some estimates proclaim 70-100,000 active coven members.

King goes on to outline a threefold analysis of the Goddess for today's women, as offered by Carol Christ:\textsuperscript{119}
1. The Goddess is actually personified as a female deity who can be prayed to, sought and believed to really exist.
2. The Goddess is a symbol rather than a metaphysical reality. As a symbol she represents life, death and rebirth energy in nature and culture, personal life and community.
3. The Goddess is a symbol of the legitimacy of female power made possible in the women's liberation movement.

In all this there is the need to stress that a shift from God to Goddess does not really change unless this shift is incorporated in men and women throughout the world. A synthesis of Goddess/God is sought, in theory; but in practice it seems more Goddess than Godless. The female is definitely accentuated as the controlling myth. Personal deity and personal autonomy are the end goals with the hope that this shift will yield a better world and more complete humanity.

\textbf{THE WITCHHUNT}

Starhawk, Miriam Simos, in her book \textit{Dreaming the Dark}, strives with a multitude of others to share the journey that evokes the power-from-within that is expressed in the symbols of the Goddess. From her background as a

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid. p. 138.
Witch, ecofeminist, leader in the feminine spirituality movement, peace activist, and Jewess, Starhawk relates the value and meaning of life found in these symbols. As a self professed Witch and coven priestess, Starhawk uses this medium to draw power for her work. Starhawk defines the term "Witch" as derived from the old "Anglo-Saxon root wic, meaning to bend or shape — to shape reality, to make magic." They were those who could shape the unseen to their will. "A Witch is a 'shaper,' a creator who bends the unseen into form, and so becomes one of the Wise, one whose life has been infused with magic." In her later books, The Spiral Dance and Truth or Dare, Starhawk elaborates on the Craft and its rituals, power and place in the changing consciousness of what some are calling the New Age and New World Order.

According to the New York covens statement:

WITCH lives and laughs in every woman. She is the free part of each of us... There is no 'joining' WITCH. If you are a woman and dare to look within yourself, you are a Witch. You make your own rules... Whatever is repressive, solely male-oriented, greedy, puritanical, authoritarian — those are your targets. Your weapons are theater satire, explosions, magic, herbs, music... your own boundless beautiful imagination. Your power comes from your own self as woman... You are a Witch by saying aloud, 'I am a Witch' three times... You are a Witch by being female, untamed, angry, joyous, and immortal.

Starhawk's conclusion is that the Churches and other authorities set the flames against Witchcraft as a scapegoat to divide the common people and scar the western psyche by identifying sex, magic, and women with evil. Since Witchcraft held all these credentials, it undermined the authority of those with power over lands, knowledge, and religion. Therefore the war on Witchcraft must have become the focal point of the war to dominate the people. Witchcraft or Wicca, in Starhawk's view, is one of the pre-Christian

121 Starhawk. The Spiral Dance. Op. Cit. p. 19. The term "Maiden" is also highly respected in Witchcraft. From this tradition it was supposed that Joan of Arc was in fact a Witch heralded as "Maid of Orleans."
122 Ibid. p. 22.
mystery religions based on ritual which sees the earth as sacred. "The cosmos is the living body of the Goddess, in whose being we all partake, who encompasses us and is immanent within us." She does not wish to have Witchcraft confused with Satanism. Satanism is a Christian heresy, she says, and the Devil is a construct of Christian theology. Pagans on the other hand do not believe in the Devil.

Witchcraft was driven underground during 400 years of persecution. It became a secret society which is now rising again. Starhawk's conclusions are intended to bring human consciousness to "restoring a sense of the sacred to the world, and so restoring value to our own lives and to the community of beings — human, plant, and animal — that share life with us." From that interconnectedness, which is expressed in the struggle, comes power to change reality.

Rather than advocating power-over, Starhawk refers to power-from-within. Her quest is to "reshape culture on the model of the circle, the ever-renewing cycle." While agreeing with some New Age and feminists circles that "what we resist persists," Starhawk would relegate this to the realms of private emotions and personal development. To the contrary, when applied to the political realm, she says, "what we don't resist persists unchecked." Starhawk appeals for Witchhunts to cease and for women to be returned to their rightful place as healers. The power of the Goddess Movement, Witchcraft, and the feminist movement is the magic which Starhawk says will bend culture to this revived paradigm.
The Goddess movement has notably increased in population and popularity over the recent decade. Within this movement are Witches, Pagans, Feminists, Ecofeminists and other green groups. Implicit to this belief is the understanding that all the universe is interconnected; therefore all needs and struggles are to be mutually shared. The world is sick and needs healing.

Starhawk commends only a compassionate spiritual approach to bring this healing to our world. "From compassion, we can generate community." 131 Even in the realm of theology she cites Liberation Theology as seeing Christ as a sacred presence alive in the people, especially the poor, calling for justice to be enacted in the world. Her own link to interconnectedness is with "the WomanEarth Feminist Peace Institute on building alliances with women of color." 132 As a Witch and member of various organisations including her own covens, Matrix Affinity Group and Wind Hags, a high priestess of the American Witchcraft movement, and first President of the Covenant of the Goddess church, she remains what she calls politically aware and active on issues ranging from military intervention, to first-strike weapons, to gay rights and feminist concerns.

Starhawk follows The Old Religion — called Witchcraft, Wicca, the Craft, or in the wider sense Paganism or Neo-Paganism. She traces its origins to pre-Judeo-Christian tribal religions of the West akin to the Native American and African religions. The Old Religion draws from the myths of woman-valuing, matristic, Goddess-centred cultures. Starhawk uses the term "matristic" (mother-oriented) rather than "matriarchal" because scholarship debates over whether or not there ever was a culture in which women exercised power over men. Her claim is that the Old Religion was not a religion of dogmas and sacred books, but a religion of experience, ritual and practices which transform consciousness and awaken the power-from-

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132 Ibid.
within. Margot Adler, another popular New Age witch agrees that, “Most Neo-pagan religions have few creeds and no prophets. They are based on seasonal celebration, the cycles of planting and harvesting, on custom and experience rather than on written word.” 133

The Goddess is immanent in nature, human beings and relationships. Her view is that with the rise of Christianity in the cities, Witches (wise women and cunning men of the country villages) continued to bond with the source of life in nature. They drew from the power-from-within to bring healing and wisdom, to birth children, to build culture and to divine the future. The activities were bonded with erotic, sensual, and carnal values and practices because the flesh is not to be separated from the spirit immanent in life. 134

In contrast, the patriarchal civilization is read as a cumulative effort to break the bond and drive a wedge between flesh and spirit. The patriarchal regime restricted the peasants’ use of the land, removed women from the healing art, and imposed a mechanistic view on the world as a dead machine. The Craft went underground, and its re-emergence in this century, says Starhawk is due to the shifting paradigms that seek to reconnect occidental culture to the source of life by rejecting dogmas and domination. The coven of Witches provides a community in which to work with the Goddess. 135 Darkness is dreamed in a different light. Instead of the Christian connotations of evil in the darkness, Wicca and the Goddess movement dream the darkness as the soft skin of the night, the place where birth occurs as when a baby is in the womb or a seed in the ground. Rather than seeing the darkness as foreboding fear, anger, sex, grief, death and the unknown, Hecate’s birth-giving darkness is promoted as the power to transform, to create new images. Out of despair comes the power to change.

134 Ibid. p. xxvi.
135 A coven usually hosts thirteen initiates. This number is derived as the optimum for dancing around the nine foot circle in which the ceremonies are celebrated. Covens perform their worship and rituals preferably “sky-clad” (naked). But some do work robed, others mix with naked and robed according to the comfortable preference of the participant. The idea of nakedness is to represent truth. Clothing is also considered to inhibit the free and full flow of power rising through the coven members.
Drawing on the Latin word "podere" meaning "to be able," Starhawk contrasts the power-over with the power-from-within. The power-over is the power of the gun and the bomb, the domination power. Real power she says is not this at all but a power within, from which to draw as individuals and as a community to transform adversity into advantage and opposition into opportunity. The names given to this power-from-within are "spirit," "God," "immanence" and "Goddess." The term "spirit" she considers to be inappropriate because it conveys the idea of a separation from matter. The term "God" is too closely related to the power-over religions of patriarchy. "Immanence" is tolerated because it is truthful, but it is too clinical and intellectual to expose the true heart of the movement. Therefore "Goddess" is chosen, not because there is a being somewhere outside this world, but because as a symbol it conjures up the right concepts and power-from-within.

In a conference speech on ecofeminism, Charlene Spretnak, professed:

We would not have been interested in "Yahweh with a skirt"....What was cosmollogically wholesome and healing was the discovery of the Divine as immanent in and around us. What was intriguing was the sacred link of the Goddess in her many guises with totemic animals and plants, sacred groves, womblike caves, the moon-rhythm blood of menses, the ecstatic dance—the experience of knowing Gaia, her voluptuous contours and fertile plains, her flowing waters that give life, her animals as teachers.

First, the Goddess is a symbol of birth-giver and as such is communicative of the powers of connectedness, sustenance, healing and creativity. Secondly, the symbol is used because it immediately causes people to be uneasy in their patriarchal western culture. Therefore people begin to think differently about the concept of God, which is inherently good for bringing about a change in paradigms of consciousness. This consciousness of difference, Starhawk calls "estrangement." The blame for this

136 Ibid. p. 3.
137 Ibid. p. 4.
138 Ibid. p. 11.
140 Ibid. p. 4.
141 Ibid. p. 5.
estrangement is laid at the feet of Christianity with its duality between the sexes, spirit and flesh, the Devil and God. God was envisioned in the masculine image, transcendent from this world. In support of this she quotes Engels: "Religion is essentially the emptying of man and nature of all content, the transferring of this content to the phantom of a distant God who then in his turn graciously allows something from his abundance to come to human beings and to nature."142 God as male gives credence to the male rule of the white upper class, says Starhawk. Christianity is to blame also for degrading people to inferior positions as slaves, women and people of colour. The Christian God has nothing to do with the world of sex, menstruation and decay of the flesh.143 People become objects to be manipulated, without implicit worth. This shift was documented as the rise of modern science and the economic needs of pre-industrial capitalism in the 16th and 17th centuries.144

In contrast to this mechanistic, anthropocentric, male dominant deistic view, the Goddess myth is dreamed as a symbol of immanence—"the awareness of the world and everything in it as alive, dynamic, interdependent, interacting, and infused with moving energies: a living being, a weaving dance."145 This does not deny God, but rather includes the male as Consort to the Goddess because the Goddess is the figure which best represents bringing life into the world and thus valuing the world as Mother, from the Sanskrit root ma or matri meaning "production."146 In line with the supposition of the Goddess movement, Starhawk suggests the first images of worship found in the Paleolithic sites were those of the Goddess. As patriarchal religion came to rule, immanence was preserved by the pagans.147 The Goddess symbol penetrates to the roots of the concept of estrangement.

143 Ibid.
144 Ibid. p. 7. As documentation for this 16th and 17th century shift, Starhawk refers the reader to Carolyn Merchant's book The Death of Nature.
145 Ibid. p. 9.
147 Ibid. p. 10. Starhawk uses the meaning of the Latin word "paganus" meaning rustic or country dweller to emphasise the virtue of Paganism with its "folk customs, esoteric traditions, and covens of Witches." Included in these traditions are the peoples of Africa, Asia, Polynesia and Native Americans.
True values then are not in some distant hope or heaven but in an existential and spiritual humanism of this world, liberating women and restoring the highest value to nature herself. Without oppressing men or women the Goddess myth intertwines the two to make the whole. Starhawk and company conclude that the Goddess includes the sensual, intuitive, imaginative and emotional in a way that male deities cannot. The Goddess as a myth to live by gives rise to the immanent powers of choice and decisions that demonstrate "the interconnectedness of individuals in a community of beings and resources that all have inherent value."\(^{148}\)

**MAGIC AND THE GODDESS**

Magic, sometimes spelled "magick" to distinguish it from the stage-show version,\(^{149}\) in the Goddess religion is not to be construed as some sort of "hocus-pocus" but as the art of changing consciousness at will. Though it is another one of those words that seems to make people uneasy, it should be considered prosaic. Magic involves the techniques of "deepening awareness, psychic development and heightened intuition." Though these can be taught in hierarchical structures in an attempt to gain power-over, their "essence is inherently antihierarchical." Along with the revival of witchcraft the New Age is exemplified in an increased interest in a wide range of religions including Celtic revivalist witches, creators of Greek, Egyptian, Norse, and Druid revivals and those who experiment with various forms of ceremonial magic such as sorcery, animism and divination.

Those who use magic as a means of power-over, says Starhawk, are ineffective and associated with "self-deception, illusion, and charlatanry in our society." Magic properly used draws forth power-from-within and power-with\(^{150}\) to make connections and move energy. Starhawk states this as a poetic paradox: "Consciousness shapes reality; reality shapes

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\(^{148}\) Ibid. p. 12.


\(^{150}\) The term power-with is an addition which came in Starhawk's later book, Truth or Dare. Harper and Row, San Francisco. 1987. p. 8-10. Power-with is the power experienced in community where there is influence as equals.
Total consciousness is shaped by the many realities around and within individuals—the words, thoughts, actions within individuals and the world in whole. Magic is the interplay between the art forms of culture (which serve as images of our visions and dreams) and the will which is the directed energy, actions and choices. From this magic people derive hope, says Starhawk. In the midst of the forces of destruction individuals have the magic of choice, will and imagination which give rise to courage, passion, and a willingness to act and to love. As such human beings are not strangers to this world but part of its circle.

Starhawk explicates the magic of language as that which serves to form beliefs. In illustration of this point she suggests a "what if" situation in which children are reared with the concept of time as a cycle. All being, existence and events are part of the whole, "the sand dollar lies beside its fossil." Everything goes around and around again. "Nothing stands outside." The bird and the wave are part of the same rhythm. This organic evolutionary process views the same force that forms the fossil also forms the sand dollar. This same force of life slowly shapes the life of one and the preservation of the other. All this comes from the primordial mud. "Cycles upon cycles are the same forces that have formed my life," says Starhawk. In some sense she is suggesting that when one looks at the fossil one is looking into a mirror. Another illustration is the suggestion that when individuals look one another in the face they see themselves and are transformed in some way by being connected in this gazing relationship, yet at the same time respect a uniqueness in each other's independent being that makes each unpredictable.

In this world-view even God is a recapitulation; God is not outside the world. Carrying this thought further, Starhawk postulates an analogy of children being brought up without the concepts of power-over and a God outside the universe. In this analogy a utopian view is presented in the magic of language. This suggests that people follow in thought, emotion and action the model upon which they are reared. The alternative model, the better model Starhawk recommends is that in which mothers were not expected to stay clear of the world of business enterprise and fathers cared

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152 The quotes are Starhawk’s words. Ibid. pp. 15-16.
for infants as intimately as mothers. Flesh and spirit are not separated in this model, excretions are as sacred as any other cycle of the body. Life is not separated from livelihood. Life is not compartmentalised. People no longer work for money. There are no strangers in the world, and there is no illusion that any individual has the right to gain at another's expense. There is no "Cosmic Referee" to blow the whistle either. Life itself is a thrill, just to be alive and part of the whole, in an existential way, experiencing the connections and cycles. New models give rise to transforming images which transform thinking and create a new vision. The world is changed. The magic is worked at that point where union is established and splits are healed.

This magic is the process which alters consciousness. "Magic is the art of changing consciousness at will." Starhawk. Truth or Dare. Op. Cit. p. 6. It can be seen working in the progress toward a new world order where the concepts of power-over are replaced with concepts of power-from-within. Governments, companies, corporations, military forces, educational centres and all other groups are beginning to work toward a new consciousness, a transforming New Age. In this New Age the structures of hierarchy will be replaced at every point on the circle. Whether Catholicism or Communism, the structure is considered to be the same. Both have a hierarchy which must be replaced. All spiritual and political hierarchical models must be transformed because these all convey a consciousness of estrangement, performance and a measuring up dualism. These systems all say some people and some things are inherently more valuable than others. These are the institutions of authority which block the consciousness from the models of power-from-within. Following this model leads Starhawk to conclude: "The fact that we are following anyone else will prevent us from coming to know the spirit, the power, within."  

The list of rituals is voluminous and their improvisations makes the Craft an endless theatre of art forms. Starhawk concedes the magic of ritual is a "matter of performance, of theater."
participants to a state of relaxation and sense of freedom, simplicity and even childlike behaviour. Breathing deeply, humming, moaning, howling, barking, or even watching a video of "The Wizard of Oz" followed by skipping down the street singing "Follow the Yellow Brick Road," all are techniques to engender a sense of free conscience and allow the Younger Self (subconscious) to rise. The powers of suggestion, visualisation, intuition and projection are used to open what is also called the starlight vision (subconscious) and reveal the "other ways of knowing" than the linear and rational left-brained knowledge. Witchcraft, as with the syncretistic New Age Movement, is a religion of shamanism. It is an art which gives priority to "That-Which-Cannot-Be-Told." This makes the Craft and its syncretistic sister, the New Age, a form of existentialism, where each person's meaning is personally interpreted and not subject to the ridicule of another. This would also fall in line with Joseph Fletcher's world-famous "situation ethics," wherein truth is relative to the situation and circumstances pertaining to the individual. What is clear is that at this present time, the world is evolving toward an apocalyptic awakening. Anne Primavesi says, the apocalyptic chaos of the present age is going to bring humanity to an awareness that will (and even now is at work) transform the world into a new garden of Eden.

The claims of Witchcraft, the appeal of ecofeminism and the New Age Movement are based on self-confessed myths which are allowed to change

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157 Ibid. p. 60.
158 Ibid. pp. 39-40, 214, 243. Shamanism is the trendy word used in New Age thought to describe whatever traditions are used to open the inner spirit, animal spirit, the inner person which will reveal what course of life should be followed at any given time and what needs are to be met in this course of action. All these traditions are to link the subconscious, noosphere with the conscious world. The end result is to yield a practical application and growth to the individual and ultimately to the world. By transforming the individual, the world too is transformed.
159 Ibid. pp. 22, 62. The other ways of knowing and "That-Which-Cannot-Be-Told" are terms used to convey the idea that there is an inner knowledge that cannot be expressed in words. This knowledge defies verbal description. Therefore this knowledge can only be revealed through the experience.
160 Fletcher, Joseph. Situation Ethics: The New Morality. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 1966. The back cover summarises that Fletcher crystallises the modern thought "that any moral system is too shallow and petty to provide answers... every man must decide for himself what is right." It is intended to be a system of "loving concern based on agape, the love of which only God is capable, but which every man must endeavor to emulate." The conclusion is that in a given situation any act could be the right thing to do depending on the circumstances.
with the interpretations of the individual or group according to their needs and desires. There are many claims in these movements which are correlative to care for the cosmos and each other, and their charge is that the hierarchy and dualism of religion have done much to damage the cosmos and each other.

**MYTHS AND MAGIC**

The myth of the Goddess symbol is invoked to challenge the present myths upon which western culture has established systems of oppressive dualism and authoritarian hierarchy. The new myths are intended to inspire the Younger Self, the subconsciousness which will in turn affect change in people actions. "The myths and stories that have come down to us are not dogma to be taken literally... they are poetry not theology."\(^{161}\) The myths are enacted in rituals such as the wheel of the year, various rituals of healing, rituals of the Goddess, rituals of the God, myths of descent and return such as Inanna, Persephone, Osiris and others. All these myths and their rituals are to inspire the shamanistic death of the old self and rise of the new self.\(^{162}\)

The myths change with the times and culture in which they are enacted. New Agers use the same myths to visualise their progression to the Age of Aquarius, the rise to higher consciousness, the realisation of pantheistic Godhood within. It is interesting that Starhawk makes a statement which seems to suit a rebuke to New Agers as those who out of starvation for what their culture lacks, "unwittingly become spiritual strip miners, damaging other cultures in superficial attempts to uncover their mystical treasures."\(^{163}\)

As with the claim of the New Age, "Witchcraft has no sacred book."\(^{164}\) "In the Craft myths are not seen as dogma."\(^{165}\) The test of a true myth, says Starhawk is that each time one returns to it a new insight or interpretation is

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162 Ibid. p. 243.
163 Ibid. p. 214. Although this quote is not stated as directed toward New Agers, it does nevertheless apply to what is done in this eclectic movement which draws bits and pieces from eastern and occidental esoteric thought and evolves new myths or repackaging of old myths which in many instances are not true to the cultures and original beliefs from which the eclectic faith is derived.
164 Ibid. p. 37.
165 Ibid. p. 216.
gained. Starhawk defines myth as the "telling of a collective story about what really happens in the spiritual counterpart of the physical world." Therefore the myth is allowed to change to suit the situation and need. Starhawk’s Witchcraft and Primavesi’s theology would both advocate a replacement of all the stories which support dualism and patriarchal religion. Clearly this is not only against the evolution of the churches espousing Christianity, but also the written word of the scriptures.

To further illustrate the need for transforming consciousness Starhawk explores the magic of language in five of the stories that form human consciousness. These are the myths of western culture. The argument follows that in order to change culture the myths of culture must be changed:

1. The first is the language of "the Apocalypse." This story presents God, who is outside this world, and human beings as having hope of getting outside this world after the grand climax at the end of time. Under the influence of this myth Starhawk says people are estranged from one another and the world.

2. Revolution is another version of the same story, says Starhawk. People feel pressure to rush through life from one crisis to another, without rest or assurance. In Starhawk’s view this keeps people short-sighted.

3. A third myth which robs people of their inner energy is "the good guys/girls against the bad guys/girls." This is the story of dualism, the law of opposites. The good is idealised and the bad is devalued. This split world-view is represented in the models of flesh and spirit, darkness and light, sacred and secular.

4. The fourth myth is that of "the Great Man receives the truth and gives it to a chosen few." From here Starhawk derides the redeemer myths wherein the Great Man often pays some great price to purchase freedom for the chosen few. Whether Moses, Jesus, Freud, Buddha or Marx, their words

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166 Ibid. p. 218.
169 Ibid. pp. 21-22.
are written down for posterity as the source of authority and truth. All validity is judged on the basis of agreement or disagreement with the teaching of the Great Man. Starhawk's claim is that such a myth "breeds the lie that there is only one truth, a lie that has destroyed more movements than the secret police."\(^{170}\)

5. The fifth unacceptable model for consciousness is that of "making it/the fall" or "saved/damned." This same story in the religious world is interpreted as the story of success and failure in the western secular business world. Starhawk cites The Garden of Eden and The American Dream as indicative of this myth.\(^{171}\) In her example of the Christian tradition, The Fall is symbolised by the icons of a naked woman, a snake, a tree and the proverbial apple or more specifically "the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (Genesis 2:17).

However, Starhawk suggests a completely different metaphor in watching her pet snake shed its skin. The snake is no longer a symbol of The Fall, but of renewal and resurrection. The learning that goes on in watching the snake may suggest various shifts in consciousness, relative to the focus point of the person in relation to the snake. That is just one example of the relativity perceived in the whole world. The magic of the myth is its ability to bring about a change in consciousness, to connect the concrete with the abstract and to allow this powerful energy to bring about a practical response.\(^{172}\) Whatever is, is energy which according to the new physics is not separate from matter. Magic is the "conscious movement of energy causing change in accordance with will."\(^{173}\)

Thus human beings are to gain new consciousness through the challenges of new stories, myths which can shift consciousness with the power of their words and the images those words conjure. The word "Witch" for example

\(^{170}\) Ibid. p. 22. Starhawk illustrates this lie as supporting "the illusion that truth is found outside, not within, and denies the authority of experience, the truth of the senses of the body, the truth that belongs to everyone and is different for everyone." Starhawk says the idea of a Great Man a power-over belief that devalues woman.


\(^{173}\) Ibid. p. 28.
is preferred by Starhawk for just this reason.\textsuperscript{174} The Native Americans did not use nouns for names; they used phrases expressing relationship. Words can be used to exert power-over or to draw power-from-within. That is their magic. Their truths become relative to their reference.

Whatever it is called, be it ch'i, ki, prana, mana or “the force” of the Star Wars generation, language itself somewhat fails to be able to express the reality. Energy is experienced as bonding through common visions, common tasks, or sharing in tangible ways such as food, touch, song, dance, or work of some other fashion which changes thought forms.\textsuperscript{175} This can result in activity on a very practical level. It may be a letter written, a friend visited, a cup of water shared, a book written or read or whatever that energy determines in the freedom of will to do. The group exercise concludes with the affirmations, “You are the Goddess. You are God.”\textsuperscript{176}

Once again there is an emphatic charge that Christianity is a myth to be replaced by better myths. It seems the only justifiable rebuttal is that which pictures Christ and Christianity as to blame for the present chaos.\textsuperscript{177}

\textsuperscript{174} Starhawk. The Spiral Dance. HarperSanFrancisco, New York. 1989. pp. 4-5. The name Starhawk was derived from a dream in which Miriam Simos envisioned a hawk swooping down and turning into an old woman. Under this dream she felt the protection of the old woman. The other half of the name, “Star” was taken from the symbol of the Star card in the Tarot, which represents the Deep Self.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid. p. 30.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid. p. 32.
\textsuperscript{177} The argument that blames Christianity for the present world crises was epitomised and brought to the forefront by Lynn White, a professor of history at the University of California. The lecture delivered in 1966 was entitled The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis. It was later published in a 1967 edition of Science Magazine. The basis of the argument is that the science and technology of the 1900's was the outgrowth of western Christianity's anthropocentric religion which established a dualism between humanity and nature with humanity exercising power over nature. This view desacralized nature, that is to say it dissolved the pagan view that there are spirits in the natural world. White suggests that since the seventeenth century, Science and Christianity have followed the Newtonian mechanistic view of the world. Therefore White concludes, the outgrowth of this view was that occidental technology followed a pattern which promoted humanity's transcendence of nature and hence came the mastery over nature as an object to be used to serve the will of humanity. Thus White concludes Christianity shares the major burden of guilt for the scientific and technological abuses which have resulted in the present world ecological crisis. This presentation has to a great extent fuelled the fires of those who would eradicate Christianity and replace it with another system which they consider will restore care to humanity and the earth.
The ethics of Starhawk's magic challenge the western culture to go beyond what she calls its stories of estrangement ethics. The fear expressed by religious cultures like the West is that cultures based on immanence will lack ethics and justice because there is no split between flesh and spirit, "no concept of sin, no covenant or commandments against which one can sin."

To the contrary Starhawk advocates the ethics of her magic would bring true justice. There is no judge out there ready to bring shame and guilt and punishment upon people for their actions, the consequences are inherent in the actions they choose. "If I leave beer cans lying, and go away feeling powerless and depressed, my powerlessness is not a judgement imposed by an irate Goddess — it is an inherent aspect of the decision I made." Each of us has our own direct line to truth . . . so nobody can be invested with authority over us." Like Gnosticism there is secret knowledge to be acquired; but contrary to Gnosticism, "in Witchcraft, flesh and spirit are one." The Ethics of the Craft are those which demand responsibility for one's own actions. Hence Wicca's saying, "What you send, returns three times over." Starhawk sees this as an amplified version of the Christian's golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

There is nevertheless, written or unwritten, a code of honour which would hold it wrong to demean or denigrate anyone or anything. This ethic takes into consideration that there are conditions in which the life force is served in the "life feeds life" principle in which we must kill in order to survive. But life and the natural order should never be prodigal or needlessly taken.

The ethics of immanence are based on pride rather than guilt. A person will be motivated to pick up rubbish on the side of the road or river bank because it makes them feel good to do so. There may be a seeming danger in such pride in integrity. If personal integrity alone is justification for action, says Starhawk, then Hitler would have felt justified in himself for his

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180 Ibid. p. 36.
actions. However in the true sense "integrity means integration."183 This integration means an interwoven relationship with each person and the rest of humanity and the biological community. There is never a justification for domination over others. Everyone's will is equally sacred. Manipulation is unethical and diversity is welcomed. Diversity is presumed to be conducive toward approaching a balance in relationships. The balance of relationships is seen in an equality of giving and taking. Life and death are brought into harmony too. Seen in their circular balance death yields the possibility for new life.184 The Goddess is both reaper and sower.

Sexuality is the strongest power and should never be misused, says Starhawk. However, she says there are many alternatives to showing sexual love. In Witchcraft, "All acts of love and pleasure are My rituals,"185 says the Goddess.

In practical terms such ethics place issues such as abortion and diversity of sexual expression to the forefront. Sex is considered to be one of the strongest powers of magic. It is the erotic glue that holds the worlds together. It is no longer limited to gender differentiation; "... it arises in unique ways among and between any and all beings who are whole in themselves, meaning willing to integrate a wide spectrum of qualities that range from birth to death and back again... and provides a model that gives cosmic validity to all sexual preferences."186 "There is no one truth, or one way, that fits everyone."187 "There is no external truth, no set of absolute truths, that can tell us precisely how to determine the meaning of our personal commitment to the dance." As Starhawk sees it, the ethic brought to the fore in these issues is not the right-to-life versus the right-to-choice. The real ethic here is the right-to-coerce. In her view every foetus does not have the right to be born, but every child born has the right "to be fed, sheltered, loved, nurtured and protected."189 Therefore abortion is acceptable. Integrity has to do not only with working for justice and picking up strewn beer cans, but also has to do with ceasing to coerce others or to be

184 Ibid. pp. 37, 40.
185 Ibid. p. 27.
188 Ibid. p. 39. The dance is the living out of the life/death balance.
189 Ibid.
coerced by motivations of guilt and punishment. The balance is struck when one comes to terms with being imperfect and ceases to live under the pressure to perform and be like the Great Man. The responsibility for one’s actions and their consequences lies at one’s own feet individually as well as humanity collectively. Humanity must create justice and preserve the ecological and social balance in this world. Various rituals of the Goddess religions involve sexual stimulation and awareness in order to draw the power of the God Eros. Sexuality, in the broadest sense, is the essence of the Mysteries; and Witches pursue these Mysteries.\(^{190}\)

In the performance of visualised or actual sexual intimacy great power is evoked. Therefore rituals are frequently performed in the nude (sky clad). One of the rituals performed by Witches is known as the Drawing Down of the Moon. Formerly it was the High Priestess and High Priest who led this ritual, but now with the movement toward removing hierarchical structures from the Craft, presumably whoever takes on the leadership of the ritual at any given time will perform the acts therein which are to create a temporary incarnation of the Goddess in the person leading the ritual. This is done in trance, somewhat like the shamanic religions. The ceremony of the Great Rite celebrates the fertility of the Goddess in an actual or symbolic act of sexual intercourse between priest and priestess.\(^{191}\) An interesting aside here may be considered. If all relationships are considered natural, whether homosexual of otherwise, how is it that this ritual was enacted between priestess and priest? Similarly, sexual prowess is considered a source of great power in the ancient Indian Tantra yoga. Tantric yoga involves the arousal of *shakti*, the feminine divine source of energy. This is done through meditation on Hindu divinities during the act of ritual intercourse. By arousal to but withholding from orgasm, the power of kundalini\(^{192}\) is stimulated.

\(^{190}\) Ibid. p. 135.
\(^{192}\) Ibid. p. 191-192, 192-193. In the winter of 1937 while meditating on his chakra, Gopi Krishna experienced what he describes as a sensation at the base of his spine which travelled up his spine and into his brain. This enlightenment he believed to be the awakening of kundalini. It is likened in esoteric yoga to be a “serpent power” which lies coiled at the base of the spine. When awakened it strikes up the spine into the brain causing the initiate to enter a higher state of consciousness which can result in enlightenment or madness, depending on how it is aroused. Gopi Krishna claims no guru had ever heard of it, therefore
Nudity is one technique which is considered to express freedom from the social masks. Nudity's mystical meaning, according to Starhawk, is "truth."¹⁹³ There should be no inhibitions whether standing naked in front of a mirror visualising a companion self (a person of the opposite sex or yourself in the image of your opposite sex) or a mirror self (visualising yourself as a twin of the same sex). Rather than visualisation techniques with yourself, one can prefer to have an actual person serve as the role model. Christianity and puritanical ethics of the 17th century are considered to have denigrated sexuality. Repressed sexuality has resulted in a world full of "avid consumers of packaged substitutes for feelings that can be sold at a profit to a mass market."¹⁹⁴

In order to truly transform culture Starhawk advocates reclaiming the erotic power-from-within. In order to do this she claims the following action:

we must reject spiritual systems that further the flesh/spirit split. We must reject asceticism, hierarchies, the confining of sex to marriage or reproduction. If the Goddess is immanent in flesh and nature, then our practice deepens our connection to flesh and nature. 'All acts of love and pleasure are my rituals,' She says.¹⁹⁵

People are encouraged with the desires of the Goddess to "create a society that furthers my sexuality." Lesbian movements and gay men's movements are encouraged as long as they do not treat one another as objects. "Sexual desire for a person of one's own gender challenges the idea that the only valid purpose of sex is reproduction; it means that sexuality is valued for its own sake, for pleasure, not as a means to an end."¹⁹⁶ Starhawk furthers this transformation of sexuality in the affirmation that "in marriage, whether it is legal or informal, heterosexual or lesbian or gay, we go through stages that take us around the magic circle..."¹⁹⁷ The myth of the Wheel is being

¹⁹³ Starhawk. The Spiral Dance. Op. Cit. p. 60. Naked truth is a vivid analogy. Often suicide is committed in the nude, apparently a symbol of having resigned from all social and this-worldly associations.
¹⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 140.
¹⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 141.
¹⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 142.
interpreted today in other models than heterosexual love. Starhawk concedes that there is nothing wrong with desire between women and men, "but it seems a rather limited blueprint for a community."198 In the Christian context what would be called promiscuous sexuality is considered acceptable. Even the point of what would be called fornication or prostitution in Christian morality is accepted in Starhawk's Goddess/God magic as ritual, "impersonal, lusty sex," as in the days when young women offered their virginity at the Babylonian temples in honour of the Goddess instinct and the God Eros. "Within a healthy community, all forms are necessary if a balance is to be sustained."199

On the most radical edge, Deena Metzger advocates that "holy prostitutes" be revived. In this convention all women are to become prostitutes "as a means for resacralizing the body and regaining spiritual power lost with the advent of patriarchal religion."200 However, Starhawk does advocate that in view of the rise of the AIDS epidemic, caution should be exercised in sexual expression. The disease, she says has revealed a deeper sickness at the heart of our society which is our failure to love. AIDS is passed on in various ways other than sexual intimacy, yet the sufferers must contend not only with the disease itself but with the stigmas and assumptions associated with it.201

In attempting to address the problem of evil Starhawk re-classifies it as the problem of randomness. The term evil is too strong for Starhawk. There is no duality, only uncertainty and chance. Power-from-within is the ability to discern what is best for all concerned. Discipline sets limits but does not inherently exercise power-over. Starhawk illustrates with the analogy of a parent and child relationship. We cannot beat the child in order to force them to stop throwing tantrums, but we can walk away saying, 'when you are done screaming, I want to hear what you have to say.'202 Whether dealing with a child needing discipline or an adult or nature's multitude of cycles, integrity defines the loving relationship which is void of coercion,
manipulation and guilt/punishment motivation. The Goddess does not move on a reward/punishment model.\textsuperscript{203}

\textsuperscript{203} Ibid. pp. xii-xiii.
Whatever it is called, Witchcraft, Paganism, Polytheism, or simply spirituality, religions of immanence face the paradox of Goddess/God.204 The traditions of early civilisations from the Sumerians to the Greeks, from the Celts to the Native Americans, from eastern esoteric thought to African mythologies all portray various representations of the Goddess/God. Sometimes it is the One, the All of monism (the image of an androgynous myth without good or evil). At other times it is the dance of Gaia (the self-creating Goddess whose dance creates the universe). The Goddess has infinite aspects and thousands of names.205 "She is not separate from the world— She is the world, and all things in it."206 From the Goddess of the Sumerians' (circa 4,000 BC.) earliest civilization images of female deity were adored in worship. Inanna, Queen of Heaven and Earth, the Lady of the Evening, and the Morning Star were her early names. The Assyrians called her Ishtar, and she took on a more warlike identity. The myths surrounding Inanna pictured her as the cosmic force that brought order and civilization.

Ursula King sums up the Great Goddess in distinction from the Mother Goddess. The Great Goddess refers to the characteristics of the All-is-One metaphysical truth whereas the Great Mother refers to the mythical link to nature. She cites Ken Wilber's book Up From Eden (1983) as giving a naturalist explanation for the existence of the Great Mother or Earth Goddess. The Mother image was prevalent in early mythologies because of the biological impact and dependency on mothers for birth, breast feeding, etcetera. Wilber notes that all the forms of the mother image, i.e. mother, maya, measure, menses, menstrual, metered all come from the Sanskrit root "ma" or "matr" which literally means "production."207 The great Goddess appeared in four forms:

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205 A list of 140 Goddesses is given by Matthews, Caitlin. The Goddess. Element Books, Shaftesbury, Dorset. 1989, 1991. pp. 121-123. These are intended to show the numerous interlinking aspects of the Goddess as she is represented in part by each Goddess. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, but is merely the sample which is dealt with in her book.
1. As the Virgin Nature Goddess she represents the free and untamed resources of nature.
2. As the Earth Mother she represents the giver of life through birth, sustenance and death in which she receives back to herself that which she gave that she may give it again.
3. As the Pregnant Vegetation Goddess she influences and distributes fertility.
4. As the Terrible Mother she is the destroyer.

The revival of Goddess worship manifests itself in the new matriarchy groups. Ursula King references one such small madrian group, Lux Madriana, as the most elaborately structured matriarchy group today. They began as a small women's group in Oxford during the mid seventies, but is now situated in Burtonport on the west coast of Ireland. Their periodical, *The Coming Age*, first defined itself as "Magazine of the religion of the Goddess." Later it softened the description to "Magazine of the British matriarchal tradition." Complete with cosmology, theology, ecclesiology, salvation history and liturgy their belief system incorporates virtually all the elements of Christian theology, yet in reverse with reference to the Goddess in place of God. They have three main texts: *The Catechism of the Children of the Goddess*, *The Creation of the Crystal Tablet* and *The Mythos of the Divine Maid* (which relates the nativity, life, death, burial and resurrection of the daughter of the Goddess).

Their belief is that humanity has fallen into a depraved materialism which can only be overcome by a return to primordial conditions "where all of life is governed by spiritual principles." True to their beliefs, they live without electricity and the conveniences of the modern world. Their hope is to bring about a New Age in which there will be one new language, following a new calendar of festivals and rites. "The Goddess is the one Spirit of the universe, complete in Herself, uncreated, and infinite in potency, perception and perfection." The Trinity is "one Goddess, yet she is three Persons." "Our Celestial Mother" is "the Creator of the world and Ground of all being." "Her Divine Daughter" is threefold in nature. First she is "Princess of the World" who governs all cycles of life and nature. Second

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208 Ibid. pp. 138-140, 150, 151.
209 Ibid. p. 139.
she is "Priestess of the World" who gives us Communion with Her Mother. Third she is "Queen of Heaven" who brings us to the Celestial Throne. The third person of the Trinity is the "Dark Mother" who is "Absolute Deity who existed before the beginning of existence and is beyond being and unbeing... She is outside space and time; She is all that is and all that is not." There are no other deities beside the Goddess.

Other Goddess worshipping matriarchy groups in Britain which are listed by King include the Fellowship of Isis, the Earthforce, the Goddess of Maat, the Goddess of Truth and Love Centre, the Matriarchy Study Group and the Matriarchy Research and Reclaim Network. The idea such as is presented by Lux Madriana, that originally society followed a tradition of matriarchy which was later replaced by a patriarchy is typical to the beliefs of these groups. However, as King points out, "there is no general consensus as to their precise understanding of the meaning of matriarchy in historical or theoretical terms." Again the ambiguous historical background to their claims seems of little consequence to their greater need to find meaning and implicit worth to their lives as women. King cites the beginning of this search for proof of the myth of matriarchy as Bachofen's Das Mutterrecht (1861) in which there is postulated the theory that an earlier stage in human evolution followed the "mother right." Other studies promoting this theory are Briffault's work on The Mothers (1927), Neumann's treatment of Goddess worship in his psychoanalytic study The Great Mother (1955), Elizabeth Gould Davis' book The First Sex (1971), Merlin Stone's books When God was a Woman (1976) and Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood: Our Goddess and Heroine Heritage (1979, 1980).

The challenges to the matriarchal system of Goddess worship has given rise to the ideal of androgyny. This ideal "expresses the unification of opposites or the integration of sexual polarities into one unity." Physically it refers to a hermaphrodite. This is not the intended sense in which the term is used by the Goddess movements. The Greek prefix ἄνδρος with reference to "man"

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210 Ibid. This reference includes the previous quotes within the paragraph.
211 Ibid. p. 140. King cites a study of matriarchy groups in contemporary Britain which was done as an MA. thesis by Kayoko Komatsu at the University of Leeds in 1986 entitled An Empirical Study of Matriarchy Groups in Contemporary Britain and their Relationship to New Religious Movements.
212 Ibid. p. 142.
213 Ibid. p. 154.
and the word γυνή meaning "woman" are put together to form the compound word which conveys the idea of unity. King notes a better term may in fact be "gynandry" meaning "woman-man" although in all her research she has only come across the term once. 214 The Greek word γυναδρος means "of doubtful sex, womanish." 215 The idea also incorporates a Jungian idea that there is within each person a feminine and a masculine which the individual must bring into harmony and maturity within themselves.

Caitlin Matthews, a British witch, in her concise book The Goddess, summarises all the Goddesses as expressions of one or more of a nine-pointed star which visualises the Goddess as the Shaper of All. Each aspect corresponds to a certain Goddess or Goddess type of which any one of several Goddesses may assume the position, according to the visualiser’s interpretation. The ninefold aspects each form their own circle with representative Goddesses, symbols and colours which may alter according to the various traditions from which the Goddess is visualised, i.e. Hindu, Celtic, etc. The following is Matthews’ general representation: 216

1. **The Energiser** who gets things moving. Her symbols are Rainbow and Drum.
2. **The Measurer** who defines limits. Her symbols are Wheel and Spindle.
3. **The Protector** who guards the limits. Her symbols are Bow and Shield.
4. **The Initiator** who deepens experience, re-creating things. Her symbols are Cauldron and Cave.
5. **The Challenger** who opposes and questions, gets things growing, and destroys what is stale and outworn. Her symbols are Skull and Maze.
6. **The Deliverer** who brings liberation. Her symbols are a Butterfly Emerging From A Chrysalis and a Broken Chain.
7. **The Weaver** who makes connections. Her symbols are Web and Mask.
8. **The Preserver** who feeds and nourishes. Her symbols are Grain Jar and Hearth Fire.

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9. The **Empowerer** who brings wisdom. Her symbols are Mirror and Pipe of Peace.

![Diagram: The Shaper of All and Her Ninefold Aspects]

At the centre of the star constellation is the Goddess herself, known as the Shaper of All. Similar to Witchcraft's pentagram, Matthews depicts a circle interconnecting all nine aspects of the Goddess. At the same time there are three triadic relationships which are formed by the star and its ennead constellation. Each triad forms an equilateral triangle of composite action:

1. **The Transforming Triad** is a composite of Protector (3), Deliverer (6) and Empowerer (9). This triad transforms what the Shaper of All has made and represents the Goddess as Queen of Heaven.

2. **The Dynamic Triad** is the composite of the Energiser (1), the Initiator (4) and the Weaver (7). It energises and explores creation and represents the Goddess as Queen of the Underworld.

3. **The Enfolding Triad** is the composite of the Measurer (2), the Challenger (5) and the Preserver (8). This triad delimits, defines and balances creation and represents the Goddess as Queen of Earth.
Another way of visualising the triads is as the Goddess' Dulcimer on which there are three strings (A, B, and C). Each string corresponds respectively to the Queen of Heaven, the Queen of Earth and the Queen of the Underworld. The ninefold aspects of the Goddess are represented as three points equidistant on each of the three strings. Each of the three points on a string represents a higher octave of the same note.

According to Matthews these all form endless enneads collectively called the Temple of Light, which serve a more powerful visualisation than the threefold analogies of the moon-phases or female life cycle (Maiden, Mother and Crone). They demonstrate the vastness of the Goddess, that each aspect includes all other aspects in the multiplicities of permutations. The journey of visualising the Goddess also travels through the three courts of the Temple of Light:

1. The Outer Courts are a composite of the Energiser (1), the Measurer (2), and the Protector (3). These are the courts of beginnings where direction and boundaries are defined.
2. The Inner Courts are where the Initiator (4), the Challenger (5) and the Deliverer (6) come together. These are the courts of instruction which unfold to us the salvation stories of the Goddess.
3. The Courts of Light are circle including the Weaver (7), the Preserver (8) and the Empowerer (9). These are the courts of discovery and practical wisdom.
A still more complex visualisation of the Goddess is formed by various combinations of triads which may be called Ninefold triads (consisting of combinations of three triads whose circumferences either touch or overlap). The whole system of building one's own Temple of the Goddess is a complex visualisation exercise which enables the initiate to meditate on various aspects of the Goddess as they relate to one another and reveal meaning for the life of the individual or group. To assist in the journey toward realising the Goddess in oneself, one's own personal inner guide is solicited. "Not far from the Temple of Light is a cave wherein your inner guide lives. He or she is in the service of the Goddess, and the guide's task is to act as your helper and instructor."²¹⁷

²¹⁷ Ibid. p. 109 ff. The inner guide is approached through meditation and visualisation of a path leading to the cave. In the entrance to the cave is a fire at which the seeker sits and awaits the guide who will emerge from the cave and sit down beside the initiate. The guide is not a deity, but is an excarnate human being.
Yet another way of visualising the Goddess within is through the Star of the Muses. Matthews draws the reader’s attention to the traditions of the ninefold manifestation of the Mother in various cultures. The Greeks had their nine muses and mother Mnemosyne. In Britain the tradition followed the ennead sisterhood of the cauldron and Ceridwen. In Arthurian mythology there is the ennead sisterhood of Insula Pomorum — the Island of Apples or Avalon — where Morgen and her sisters dwell. The Star of the Muses contains the interconnecting lines of the nine-pointed star. These interconnecting lines are called the Knot of the Philosopher. At the centre is formed a nine-sided polygon. The glyph also holds the pentacle or five-sided star. Various pentads can be formed within the Star of the Muses glyph which again show permutations of the aspects of the Shaper of All who is represented in the centre ennead polygon.
Through meditation and visualisation the initiate communicates with the inner guide who answers all their questions and leads them to the Goddess. Meeting the Goddess purifies and births the initiate and prepares them for every aspect or encounter in life and death. This empowering by the Goddess is called the Transference of Light. Finally the initiate reaches the Assumption of the Goddess beyond the elements themselves. "This experience is beyond worship or veneration, it is pure being and identification."218

One word of caution is advised. The system offers no hope for those who are weak or suffer mental or emotional instability. "Lack of clarity, whether of visualisation or of intention, may cause personality problems." "Please do not attempt the following practice if you have a history of psychological disorder... You will receive no benefits but only further confusion."219 There is also a caution against those using consciousness changing drugs, prescribed or not.

There is no hierarchical structure. Each person who comes to the Temple of Light enters at his/her own place. It is a journey that starts wherever the person happens to be at any given time when they acknowledge the Goddess as Shaper of All. Each Goddess also represents all nine aspects, so that the Goddess is never limited to one form. The whole image of the

218 Ibid. p. 120.
219 Ibid. pp. 112, 119 respectively.
interconnecting points and circles forms the visualisation of the Temple of the Goddess as Inner Space and Sacred Mandala.

Within the vast plethora of Wiccan tradition the Goddess is also symbolised in a trinity of Maiden, Mother and Crone. In this symbol is manifest the full circle of life. The Moon Goddess as she waxes is the virgin maiden, Nimue. As she becomes full the Moon Goddess is the mother and sexual woman of fruitfulness, Mari. Then as the moon wanes she manifests the power of ending, Anu. The Goddess is also the personification of a trinity of love, healing and birth. She was co-creator of the universe with her male consort.220

One myth tells of Inanna going down to the nether world. As she passed through the gates she was divested of her divine powers and could never again return to the land of the living. The story was a prophecy interpreted by Enki, god of wisdom, that if ever this happened civilization would return to primitive conditions. Accordingly this is what is believed happened when the feminine deities were replaced by the dominant male deities.

In the Assyrian period Gula was the embodiment of death and resurrection. Gula and Ishtar formed an alliance of healers along with the sun god Ea. As Sumer became a battlefield (circa 3,000 BC.) the people appealed to Ishtar. Her healing qualities waned as she began to be appealed to as the goddess of

war and destiny. Gradually she was replaced by a male dominant deity.\textsuperscript{221} This scenario follows through history with the various rebirths of the Goddess. Starhawk lists Isis, Ceridwen, Astarte, Miriam, Oshun, White Buffalo Woman, Kuan Yin, Diana, Amaterasu, Ishtar, Changing Woman and Yemaya as a few who formed a once unbroken union with God who is represented in the names Pan, Dionysos, Osiris, Dumuzi, Baal, Lugh, Coyote and Alegba to name but a few. The female is represented with qualities of maiden, mother, healer, moon, earth, tree, star, flame, Crone, Goddess of hearth, spider or Lady of the Wild Things. The Male consort is identified with a multiplicity of characteristics attributed to child, father, dancer, sower of seeds, Horned God, Hunter, Dying God, Healer, Green Man, sun, tree, or standing Stone.\textsuperscript{222} As is noted these archetypes of deity often overlap. Archetypes are a dualistic concept based on the Platonic notion that the world itself was not real but a shadow of pre-existing forms.

Witches on the other hand, says Starhawk, believe that the world is real. The myths, symbols and stories of Goddess/God are real in the sense that they suggest images which initiates can aspire to experience in their being. Though they do not exist outside the human consciousness, they are the enabling power-from-within. They are the expressions of human potential.

The basic division is gender. Here again Starhawk returns to the recapitulation of the patriarchal austerity that has permeated the present western culture. The girl child has a very different challenge than the boy child. The suggestion is that there is a need for a paradigm shift, and that it is taking place. Male dominance is a matter of perspective in the sense that the male plays at being master, but in truth the woman supports him. In the male the challenge is to control, be competent "untainted with dependence and terror of abandonment."\textsuperscript{223}

\textsuperscript{221} Achterberg gives full discussion of the cosmology and progression of the female deities as they are eventually replaced by male deities. The assumption is that when female deities were prominent, healing and compassion and growth was evident in the progress of civilization. This progress was never able to be sustained continually. Eventually wars broke out and the female deities were appealed to for dominant attributes, finally replaced by a single male deity, civilization began to deteriorate in morality and peace until the cycle would start again. The assumption of the New Age Movement is that we have come back to the place on the circle where the Goddess will rise again.

\textsuperscript{222} Starhawk. Op. Cit. p. 73.

\textsuperscript{223} Ibid. p. 76.
Invoking the Goddess means awakening her imagery in human beings. The Gaea (Gaia) is invoked by contact with the earth. The imagery encompasses life and death. "The garden is full of things that have to be killed so that other things can grow." This death-force is called Hecate, Kali, Anna, the Crone. Hecate is the Goddess of crossroads.

Along with the image of Mother (nurturing) and the Crone (destroying) comes the image of the Maiden (birthing). The Maiden is Athena, Goddess of art and culture. She is the primal virgin, able to create herself. She is also a warrior, able to protect herself and define boundaries. Another Goddess who represents the Maiden is Artemis, Lady of the Wild Things. She is able to protect. She is the Bear Goddess who lives in the wild and whose power can escape the power-over structures, the Self-Haters, "so that we are bound not by rules and authorities, but by our own experience of balance, by the consequences of our actions." The Maiden is also incorporated in the imagery of Kore-who-becomes-Persephone. She descends into the nether world (underworld), into death itself and rises again. Her kindred images are those of Isis, Inanna and Astarte.

The story of the overpowering of Kore is considered by Starhawk to be a later addition or perversion of the original myth due to the shift toward male domination. The Eleusinian Mysteries revolve around religious rites in honour of Demeter, the corn goddess, and her daughter Persephone, the queen of the infernal regions and wife of Pluto. The legend is recited that Persephone lives six months in the underworld with her husband, Pluto, and six months with her mother on earth. It was believed this had to do with affecting the seasons of the crops, fruits and vegetation over which Demeter was goddess. It also secured a happy life beyond the grave for the initiates of the cult. Kore/Persephone is the merge of life and death.

Demeter herself is the image of persistent power and pacifist resistance. Her proclamation was that nothing would grow until her daughter, Persephone was released. This is the power to turn grief into a constructive power. It is considered that the power invoked by the use of the term "Goddess" is

224 Ibid. p. 81.
225 Ibid. p. 83.
greater than the term God or It; therefore the term "Goddess" is preferred.\textsuperscript{226} The God or Goddess will have interchangeable characteristics. The problem with God is that in this present western culture, Starhawk feels the symbols of God do not have as much power to raise to the inner-self as do the images of the Goddess.\textsuperscript{227}

Christianity, says Starhawk, has so much power in this estranged culture because "the image that links the male with mortality is, of course, Christ crucified."\textsuperscript{228} She compares this to the Virgin Goddess and her sacred child who dies only to be reborn into immortality. The image of a crucified Christ, she says, is the unconscious hope that maleness can deliver us from the realm of mortality, death, pain, suffering and all. Where Christianity is a poor hope, according to Miriam Simos, is at the point where instead of connecting us to a deeper appreciation of our mortal flesh and life, "Christianity cheats us with the false promise of an otherworldly resurrection."\textsuperscript{229} Whatever potential Christianity could have offered us, she says, is lost amidst the hierarchies of church and chapel dogma and their corresponding authorities and estrangement stories.\textsuperscript{230}

God descends too, as did Persephone; the myths are allowed to change. Persephone goes down voluntarily to enter the dark to change it, to dream it into a new form. The male consort is the Beautiful Body, Adonis, Osiris, Dionysos. He, like Icarus, has flown and learned to try to escape the earth. So he descends and meets the Goddess in the womb of the earth, the dark. The Dark God, Simos says, is not a "demon, abductor, overlord." He is rather a comforter who consoles us with the promise of renewal." What is dreamed in the underworld are the visions that give power-from-within. These rise to change, "to restore the earth."\textsuperscript{231}

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid. p. 84.
\textsuperscript{228} Ibid. p. 89
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{230} Ibid. p. 89.
\textsuperscript{231} Ibid. p. 91.
As evidence that the "power-from-within" magic works Starhawk offers a subjective interpretation given to various rituals performed to inhibit various political actions and to bring changes for the good in personal events and peoples' lives. One account is a healing ritual performed on behalf of a woman friend who was informed that the child in her womb might be born dead, due to a virus in the mother's bloodstream. With the same strength of belief in which a community of Christians might gather to pray for this woman and her baby, this coven of Witches gathered with a different belief to visualise a healthy baby and mother through a ritual. They draw the power from the earth— the baby was born in perfect health, and the community grows stronger.

Another most dramatic experience of ritual is Starhawk's account covering the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power plant blockade in the summer of 1981. The plant was hindered from opening until 1984. Starhawk attributes this to the magic performed in the rituals of that event, and others, in which over 1,000 demonstrating people were put in jail. She recounts the two times she was arrested and the four days she spent in jail with others on the first arrest, performing their magic circles all the while. After being released she returned to the site to lead, along with others, the Equinox ritual, invoking the power of the Goddess to curse the construction of the nuclear power plant.232 Starhawk relates the story as follows:

After the blockade ended, new problems were suddenly discovered in the plant. Blueprints had been reversed; structures had been built wrong; equipment had been inaccurately weighed. The safety violations were so grave that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission took back the license it had earlier granted... the power company is embroiled in audits and litigation. So the blockade succeeded ... by changing the reality, the consciousness, of the society in which the plant exists.233

Ritual assists in developing a sense of community in people. Power is then raised through various mediums such as chanting, dancing, breathing, singing, meditation, etc. Power is focused through an image, action or symbol by means of a trance or journey to the underworld together. After the power is peaked and cast forth to do its work, it is returned to the earth. The final stages of the ritual involve celebration and relaxation with food and drink, a thanksgiving to the powers that were invoked and opening the circle with a return to ordinary space and time.234

The magic of Witchcraft and the New Age Movement is observed in rituals which are autonomously interpreted, yet all convey the belief: "I am Goddess. You are God, Goddess. All that lives, breathes, loves, sings in the unending harmony of being is divine."235 Starhawk refers to Mary Daly’s book Beyond God the Father which makes the point that "the model of the universe in which a male God rules the cosmos from outside serves to legitimize male control of social institutions."236 Even though many in the western culture have rejected the biblical Christianity, they still hold to the paradigm of male rule. The principle of the "Great Man" as Starhawk calls it, may assume any one of many forms, whether Christ, Buddha, or Maharaj Ji. It makes little difference who the figure head is, they all impart knowledge to the disciple and all convey the idea of a war within between spirit and flesh, whether by the Christian view of conquering sin or the eastern view of conquering desire and ego. The end of this is a destructive self-hate, says Starhawk.237 The paradigm of Witchcraft and the New Age Movement is saying that truth is relative, and it is within the individual as a child of the universe. "In Witchcraft, each of us must reveal our own truth."238 As Mother Goddess reawakens in the mythology of her comings and goings, humanity is to arrive at a new consciousness which will lead all to a "sheer, intoxicating joy of being alive."239 Within this frame of being all will realize to the contrary of Christianity, there is nothing to be saved from, no struggle

234 Ibid. p. 155.
235 Starhawk. The Spiral Dance. Op. Cit. p. 16. This particular ritual of magic is begun with a chanting reaffirmation of personal deity, by going around the circle and calling each person's name in turn to come to the centre of the circle while the others call their name, kiss them and address them with the words, "You are Goddess."
236 Ibid. p. 23.
238 Ibid.
239 Ibid. p. 29.
against, no God outside the world to be feared and obeyed, no need for a Saviour.240 Starhawk quotes Victor Anderson, the Faery priest who taught her, "Honor the Goddess in yourself, celebrate your self, and you will see that Self is everywhere."241 As in the belief of Anne Primavesi, accordingly the Goddess myth does not present humans with a fallen universe from which they must struggle to be set free. The creation is not groaning in travail, "not in need of salvation or redemption."242

"Religion," says Starhawk, "has come to mean placing our trust outside ourselves, remaining like children following a long succession of father figures, teachers, preachers, politicians. And how are we to know, once we have ceased to trust ourselves, whether they are Gods or psychopaths."243 The Goddess is not to be mistaken as a parallel option to the symbolism of Christianity's God the Father. The Goddess is not outside the world, she is the world, and is manifested in her various attributes in each human being and in each part of the natural world. The use of Goddess mythology does not mean that a woman rules instead of a man. It is simply a myth to thwart the centuries of western culture's male domination. Starhawk concedes that a female domination would be just as oppressive as a male domination.244 Goddess is not to be understood as exclusively opposite to God. Rather in the mythology of the Goddess there is the inclusion of God because female gives birth to male. In practical terms the Goddess myth is used to spur the renewal of "the legitimacy and beneficence of female power."245 This sameness of male and female in the Goddess myth is likened to the Chinese concept of Yin/Yang. "They are the same force flowing in opposite, but not opposed directions."246 Desire is the driving life force of the universe.247 But in contrast to the Yin/Yang, male and female are not to be likened to the categories of active and passive, light and dark, etc. The Male and Female

240 Ibid.
241 Ibid. p. 27. see also p. 216 in which Victor Anderson is the teacher who passed on to Starhawk the oral Faery Wicca traditions of creation.
242 Ibid. p. 39.
243 Ibid. p. 198. There is an obvious comparison of religious leaders in reference to such religious cultism as was exampled in the mass suicide of the Jim Jones cult who drank the deadly poison in 1978.
244 Ibid. p. 41.
246 Ibid. p. 41.
247 Ibid. p. 227.
forces are to be understood as two sides of the same coin, necessary to make a whole, but not opposed to one another. In the Goddess myth the male is simply the projected self of the Goddess who in turn yearns for reunion. The Female force is the life-giving power in the universe and the Male force is the death force, necessary for the cycle of life to continue. For example a child is born, and from that point on there is the inevitability of death. When death comes the body is returned to the earth.

Death is not the end, but a stage in the process of rebirth. In the Goddess myth, as the body nourishes the earth, "the human soul is said to rest in "Summerland," the Land of Eternal Youth, where it is refreshed, grows young, and is made ready to be born again."249

Wicca desires to bend the meanings of religion back to a sense of "relinking," and intends that spirituality means the human spirit. Starhawk's conclusion is that "a mode of consciousness that has been dormant for thousands of years is now coming to the fore, we are beginning to value the feminine, the life-generative principle, to value humanness, and the existing world."250 In outlining her approach to this evolution of consciousness, Starhawk formulates several necessary transformations which must take place in the world-view:251

1. There must be the upsurge of Witchcraft's "belief in the continuance of life and the possibility of a truly life-serving culture." Witchcraft holds a cyclical world-view. What goes around comes around.

2. There must be a willingness to step out of line, stop leaving decisions to others and exert the will to make one's own decisions in the service of life.

3. There must develop what Starhawk calls an "acrostic eye." This is a vision which allows the individual to think about the future of religion and culture.

248 Ibid. p. 40.
249 Ibid.
250 Ibid. p. 198.
251 Ibid. pp. 198-212.
4. A transformation of attitude and world-view is needed which will give a renewed and deeper meaning to this world, life on this planet, how people relate to this world and what it means to be human.

5. This paradigmatic shift must examine the many regressive tendencies of society and religion. Leading Starhawk's list is what she calls "absolutism." This is formed out of "an intolerance of ambiguity."

6. A further emphasis on the transformed world-view opts for a "matrifocal culture, based on nature" which "celebrates diversity" in the ongoing survival of an evolutionary system. Therefore the more diversity, the better. Starhawk lists young and old, lesbian and straight, welfare mothers and aspiring bank presidents sharing common interests, needs, and sisterhood. Here there can be no "Chosen People," no "doctrines of exclusivity."

7. Religion and Science are in conflict due to absolutism, says Starhawk. She moves for a synthesis of science and religion in accepting that there are realities that cannot be measured. There are modes of consciousness not yet validated by scientific rationalism and empiricism. She lists the "starlight awareness," the holistic mode of perception in the right hemisphere of the brain. Astrology, Tarot, palmistry and all forms of intuitive, psychic divination are in revival today as evidence of these deeper levels of consciousness.

An experience of expanded consciousness is being sought through various forms of age old beliefs which are now presented in New Age packaging—the 1960s drug culture of Timothy Leary and Aldous Huxley et. al., Transcendental Meditation, Yoga, expensive weekend seminars such as the search for relaxation Alpha thinking through the Silva Mind Control seminars or the "est" programme (Erhard Seminar Training) which changed its packaging name to The Forum in 1985 in order to appeal more widely to the business world, self-motivation and the human potential movement. Hosts of these programmes outwith the rise of Witchcraft all demonstrate a shift toward the mysteries of the inner consciousness. People are definitely looking for fulfilment beyond the material world. Secular humanism has failed, existentialism has left people without hope and the New Age
Movement is now incorporating a multiplicity of myths to redefine humanism and existentialism in a spiritual sense. Meaning, value and purpose are found by recognising the inner sense of spiritual longing (New Age myths linking to the inner self), along with personal experience (existentialism) and yet still looking for answers within the human spirit alone (humanism).

The contemporary and historical dullness perceived to be Christianity is now being challenged by the "expanded consciousness," which is revealed through magic (the art of changing consciousness at will). Starhawk concludes that any viable religion today will have to be concerned with magic. She concedes that magic is not truth, but a system of "highly elaborated metaphors."

The longing for expanded consciousness is what has taken the West on a spiritual journey to the East. Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism, Zen and other eastern esoteric thought has been merged with occidental religion to evolve an East/West version of spirituality which is more experiential than intellectual. These offer exercises, practices, meditations rather than catechisms and doctrines. The claim is that the image of God is not anthropomorphic as in the Judeo-Christian tradition. To the "new religion" God is abstract, the "unknowable ground of consciousness itself, the void, the Tao, the flow." "Their goal is not to know God, but to be God." In this there is a common ground with Witchcraft.

8. Another dimension of absolutism which Starhawk rejects is extremism. This is defined as the need to "explain everything." Somewhere there is more to learning than meets the eye. Starhawk includes the human potential movement and gurus with the allegation that "I create my own reality." What of the coloured skin, the mentally retarded or disabled? "Does the rape victim create the assault? Did the children of Vietnam create napalm?"

9. The Goddess religion will replace the patrifocal religions because it will free humanity from the inhibitions of sexuality exemplified in today's western culture. These include pornography, prostitution, sadomasochism,
asceticism, celibacy, and Christian chastity which Starhawk says reflect "that sex is dirty and evil, and by extension, so are women."\textsuperscript{252}

Alison Joseph's book \textit{Through The Devil's Gateway} exposes the way in which religion has denigrated feminine worth. She starts with Tertullian's statement that women are "the Gateway of the Devil."\textsuperscript{253} The various contributors to the book show that women have been given an unfair treatment throughout the religious world. The Jewish Talmud says women become lascivious if taught the Law. In the Hindu faith, Mani teaches that anarchy is the result of non-restraint on women. Any religion which sees God in male terms and women as restricted from entrance into the Holy of Holies has spawned the movement of religions which worship a female divinity. Rosemary Radford Ruether, a Roman Catholic feminist theologian and professor of Applied Theology at Garrett Theological Seminary and Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois writes of the way in which Catholicism and other religions derived from the Old Testament have so demeaned women that holiness has been defined by them as exclusive of women.\textsuperscript{254} It has something to do with women's menstruation and bleeding at childbirth, gestation and lactation which relegates the feminine gender as polluted and therefore restricted from sacred ground. The power of the female is feared in patrifocal religions.

A horrific example of this depravity in women is depicted by Sara Maitland's reference to the 16th century Rosa of Lima (1586-1617) matron saint of Peru who tortured herself in penance from early childhood until her death at age 31 under what is considered to be a patriarchal oppression in the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{255} She engraved on her body the wounds of Christ and gave herself such blows that the blood sprinkled the walls. Every night she reopened her wounds. Her iron chain belt cut into the flesh so deeply that the chain itself was no longer visible. Rose of Lima rubbed her body with nettles and wore a full length hairskirt generously impregnated with needle points "to increase her suffering." She put her feet to the mouth of the oven,

\textsuperscript{252} Ibid. p. 208.
\textsuperscript{254} Ibid. p. 2. Such statements in the arguments over ordination of women in the Anglican church have declared in Synod "that to admit women to the priesthood would be like admitting a virus into the bloodstream."
\textsuperscript{255} Ibid. p. 60-69.
drank gall and rubbed it in her eyes. For a necklace she wore a three rowed silver circlet of thirty-three sharp points each, which pierced into her neck in ninety-nine places. Such apparent self-inflicted pain was all to bring her closer to her divine spouse. Rose of Lima is but one example of the many Catholic saints and religious beliefs of this type which necessitate asceticism. The rigorous forms of penance greater than the sin, may somehow be stored as an overpayment in propitiation for the sins of others.\textsuperscript{256} Such examples are capitalised by New Agers in their criticism of Christianity and support of the Goddess/feminist appeal.

Women by nature cannot image Christ,\textsuperscript{257} says the Catholic Church. Ruether traces this to the Aristotelian-scholastic argument that procreation has to do primarily with the male. When there is a failure in the process a female is born instead of a male.\textsuperscript{258} Celibacy for the woman freed her from the curse of Eve. For the man celibacy meant an avoidance of contact with women as the source of sin, thus giving them power over the inferior married people and access to superior holiness. Women were not even allowed to touch the sacred linens with bare hands.\textsuperscript{259}

Sanjukta Gupta Gombrich, former teacher of Indian philosophy and religion at the University of Utrecht, Netherlands writes that though Hinduism worships the Goddess in a multiplicity of forms, there is a sense in which left to herself she will be destructive rather than nurturing. The Goddess, and women alike, must therefore be dominated by the God or male. As Durga, the heroic Goddess who destroys the powers of demons, she is victorious. As Kali, the Goddess is the devourer of demons. Both of these are without a male consort. She is "the embodiment of the divine cosmic power of destruction."\textsuperscript{260} Yet as Uma or Parvati, the Goddess of benign grace and mother to the cosmos, she is accompanied by her spouse, the dominant male

\textsuperscript{256} Ibid. p. 65.
\textsuperscript{257} Ibid. p. 7 citing the 'Declaration on the Question of the admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood', Vatican, congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 15 October, 1976 (37).
\textsuperscript{258} Ibid. citing Aristotle, The Generation of Animals, 729b, 738b, 737a and 775a. Compounding the evidence she cites Thomas Aquinas and Augustine espousing this theory to argue that only the male possesses a complete and full nature of being human. The woman is only related to the divine through the male who is her head. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Q85, arts 1-6; and Augustine, On the Trinity, 7,7,10.
\textsuperscript{259} Ibid. p. 16.
\textsuperscript{260} Ibid. p. 50.
God, Shiva or Vishnu. As Lakshmi or Kamala, the Goddess represents beauty, prosperity, auspiciousness and benevolence, all the qualities of a good wife. The countless forms of the Goddess in Hinduism and like religions, though worshipping the Goddess, do so in the context of a patrifocal society. The Goddess is the active force of God and is the minister of God's creation and sustenance in the endless cycle of creation, destruction and recreation.

10. Yet another aspect of this shift in religion will be the incorporation of Monism. The All-That-Is-One is never to be separated from the physical world. It is each person; yet it is also everyone. To worship the Goddess is to assert that all is good. Rather than seeking to escape the human, individuals are to strive to become fully human.261

11. The final requisite of the New Order is that Witchcraft "provides a structural model: the coven, the circle of friends, in which there is leadership, but no hierarchy, small enough to create community without loss of individuality... there are no hierophants, no messiahs, no avatars, no gurus. The Goddess says, 'If that which you seek, you find not within yourself, you will never find it without.'"262 The need for community in the church is replaced by the circle of the coven. Christian liberation theology is to be fulfilled not in the body of Christ but in the coven where the Self and feminist spirituality merge in an inner journey that brings personal healing and self-exploration, where diversity is welcome and where the interconnectedness of the whole feels the pain of any one part, no matter how small or seemingly far away.263

The quest for meaning and value is resonant in the New Age’s rebirth of mythology. One could make an intense study of the everyday myths and rituals which people readily adapt to for corporate identification and unity ranging from such depths as the Kennedy funeral to the amazing world of multimedia advertising which capitalises on the inner myths of good times, personal identity, status acceptance and beauty. While the world of classical literature has proclaimed these scenarios for centuries, they have been retold

263 Ibid. p. 250.
in today’s language and situations and are astoundingly accepted in an apparently scientific “non-mythological” western culture.

Other levels of mythology which attempt to preach meaning to life, and hope beyond the finitude of this life include the world of cinema, exemplified in the medieval morality plays such as George Lucas’ Star Wars Trilogy or the resounding message of hope beyond this life in such films as Ghost, whose star role was played by actor Patrick Swasey because he wanted to convey hope to people wrestling with the death of loved ones. Seeking beyond the old stories and world-views, the New Age has revived the myths of Gaia, the Goddess and Witchcraft to appeal to the ecological, feminine, scientific and spiritual senses within. These and other myths of the New Age such as Arthurian legend, the Celtic Faery traditions, and Ley lines to name but a few are characteristic of the New Age claims on implicate order, the desire for positive transformation, and the hope for something more in terms of human potential than the visible levels of a material world. This introduces yet another major theme of the New Age quest— the need for spirituality.
Chapter Three

New Age Spirituality

One of the most dominant themes of the New Age is its characteristic of being a host to spirituality. Just as the modern occidental culture has lost its stories, heroes and roots, so also it has lost its spirituality. John Drane writes the testimony of a Californian transpersonal psychologist, Ron Valle, who put it this way: "I think there's a basic frustration in all of us. The mystery of God, the mystery of awe, has been taken away — at least for the lay person — by science. There's no room in our culture for that kind of experience we all long for. We're starving spiritually."1 Drane notes that "as long ago as 1883 the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had coined the slogan ‘God is Dead’ and by the mid-sixties of the twentieth century several Christian theologians were ready to agree with him."2 However, today people are beginning to realise the need not only for a story to live by, but a deeper connection to the story is the resurrection of spirituality that is necessary for hope. Spirituality is in vogue outwith the realm of traditional churches. The church is considered "a spiritual dinosaur in a state of terminal decline"3 and not worthy to play a part in the spirituality of the future. This loss of confidence in churches and thus in Christianity leaves an open door for New Age spirituality.

William Bloom says that the New Age is essentially about the rise of spirituality.4 However, spirituality for the New Age does not mean traditional forms of religion. Rituals and mythologies of the New Age are being preferred to what New Agers call "the authoritarian rituals." Usually this is a reference to churches within Christianity, although it can also include Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, or any other religion in its traditional orthodoxy. New Age spirituality is about deeper levels of consciousness and awareness of greater levels of what it means to be fully human. Bloom cites

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2 Ibid. p. 52
3 Ibid. p. 203.
Gallup polls which conclude that “almost 50% of all people have experiences that are mystical or, at least, not scientifically explicable.” Bloom comments:

The great beauty of the New Age movement is that if someone in it is approached by someone else looking for insight or counselling about the inner or religious dimension, he or she will not be told: ‘Believe this! Do this! Don’t do that!’ but rather: ‘There are a thousand different ways of exploring inner reality. Go where your intelligence and intuition lead you. Trust yourself.’ New Age attitudes are the antithesis of fundamentalism.

Andrew Canale makes a passionate plea for spirituality in Duncan Ferguson’s book, New Age Spirituality. His assessment is that organised religion has lost its healing power. Confronted with this lack of power many following these conventional ways of spirituality have simply placed themselves on “cruise control” and carry on in life pretending that everything is alright. Consequently the emptiness in people’s lives has resulted in an escalation of alcohol and other drug abuse, workaholism, and other addictions to deaden the pain of meaninglessness at the centre of their lives. In the attempt to alter awareness people of the New Age are making claims for the way out of materialistic consumerism and chemical abuse through the quest for past-life regression, channelling spirits, crystal healing, theosophy, anthroposophy, eastern religions, dream work, transpersonal psychology, psychosynthesis and other techniques in search of self-actualisation, acceptance and love, hope and meaning in authentic life. A key phrase here is “transformation experience.” Another key concept is “the unconscious” derived from Freud through Jung. A further addition to the recipe for New Age spirituality lies in the interpretation of dreams. The world of dreams is held to be the home of repressed memories and future potential. A fourth ingredient as seen in the previous chapter is the open use of myth in a positive way to encapsulate and reveal the imagination and open ended hope for the future evolutionary rise in consciousness to higher Being.

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5 Ibid. p. xvi.
6 Ibid.
Joanna Macy, who teaches ecological spirituality, in her book *Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age* encapsulates the thread of spirituality that runs throughout the New Age movement:

In our own time, as we seek to overcome our amnesia and retrieve awareness of our interexistence... we open to new spiritual perspectives. We move beyond the dichotomy of sacred and secular. Instead of vesting divinity in a transcendent other-worldly being, we recognize it as immanent in the process of life itself... we recognize that, like us, God is dynamic — a verb, not a noun. And in so doing we open to voices long unheard, and to voices that speak in fresh ways of our mutual belonging... Thus do we begin again to reconnect. That indeed is the meaning of religion: to bond again, to remember.8

David Spangler’s view is one of care for the earth and people—a longing for compassion and love to permeate the lithosphere and biosphere of spaceship earth9 to alleviate the suffering and estrangement of non relationships in this world. This is apart from the hype of the psychic phenomena of the New Age which Spangler and others do not consider to be mainline to the New Age. Canale sees the quest for spirituality as evident in his psychological counselling. People reveal themselves as frightened at the core of their being. The fears surround people’s feelings of rejection — that somehow they do not belong and are unacceptable to the community in which they seek identity. Many suffer the injuries of fundamentalism’s biblical literalism and are seeking elsewhere for counselling and acceptance. Canale likens the quest to the search for friendly ships by those hanging on to driftwood in the sea. Somehow people are unsure of which passing ship is friendly and are therefore loath to let go of the driftwood, insufficient as it may be. The New Age is their attempt to find a friendly ship.10

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9 The term “spaceship Earth” was coined by Buckminster Fuller and is expressed foremost in his book Operations Manual for Spaceship Earth.
Central to the quest is the feeling of self-worth. Somehow the stories of past-life regression and close encounters are supplying people with this feeling of wellness and worth as individuals. Beliefs in karma and reincarnation allow for hope that one will eventually "get it right." They seek a haven where outcasts are in, where the desperate are given acceptance and hope, where God is whatever he/she or it is needed to be. Unfortunately, there are those of the New Age who would also see these people as prey for the materialistic gains of the consumer oriented West.

A host of myths and pathways could be evidenced in the New Age which are resonant of the same themes as the Gaia and Goddess myths of Witchcraft, Ecofeminism and the scientific community's Gaia Theory. The amazing stories of Glastonbury and Arthurian legend as well as the incredible stories of the faery entities which empower the Findhorn Community in the north of Scotland reveal the quest for spiritual meaning so evident in the mythological themes of the New Age.

The New Age movement shows forth the characteristic tendency of western culture to lean now toward privatised religion. Sociological studies presented by Geoffrey Ahern and Grace Davie in their book *Inner City God* show that while 76% of the British people claim to believe in God, barely 10% attend traditional churches with any regularity. Such studies indicate what the New Age is highlighting—that traditional spirituality in regard to churches has lost its way with the people, yet in this unprecedented era people are crying out with a spiritual longing. Natural religion and spirituality seek to experience the sacred in the midst of the secular, which in fact is to remove the dualism altogether.

Roger Housden, in his book *Fire In The Heart* describes the sense of spiritual vacuum found in some of the traditional churches of western culture. This is the view held by the New Age. Housden recognises the spiritual longings of all people as represented by the religions of the world. He likens the fires of these particular spiritual traditions to ovens which—

worked properly only if the doors were closed. Lips had to be sealed and an authoritarian hierarchy protected the tradition's spiritual technology and wisdom. An absolute and unquestioned world-view provided the basis for moral and psychophysical
practices; and finally the container, or oven, was sealed off from the affairs of the everyday world.11

However, to say that spirituality is alive and well and living in the heart of humanity he quotes a poetic phrase from Antonio Machado:

I thought the fire was out
I stirred the ashes
And I burnt my fingers.12

The ovens have cracked, says Housden, due to the rigidity of their structures within and by the winds of change without. What is evolving out of this condition is the seepage of the heat into the outer world in which all participate as interconnected individuals. Housden expresses the innate spiritual longing in humans as “a wish, like some yeast fermenting beneath the skin, for something I cannot quite name... a yearning... an inner movement that lifts my attention beyond the daily round to face the eternal and impossible questions that are raised by the simple fact of being alive on earth.”13 He likens it to an inner longing which is a prodding that keeps on saying to the inner self that life does not consist in the abundance of the things one possesses, a religion, a relationship, a project or an idea. This longing is a spiritual homesickness:

Sometimes it remains in our heart most of the time. There are periods one goes through when one is constantly aware of being bereft of something. When this feeling comes we have to watch over our purity and not misuse it. The feeling is itself authentic and is an indication of being near to something.14

The spiritual longing in Housden’s view is the realisation that humans are in fact like the Greek god Eros, who is half-man and half-god. The human condition is the “progressive discovery of the two natures, or directions, that co-exist in me, and of the pain that is caused by neglecting either dimension for the sake of the other.”15 This is the quest to unite the sacred and the

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12 Ibid.
13 Ibid. p. 13.
15 Ibid. p. 16.
secular, the soul with the body. It is the quest for inclusion rather than exclusion, for interconnectedness rather than separation. Individuality is seen as part of a whole, not separate. It is the unity of the many and the one.

The New Age then is developing a hybrid spirituality from all the traditions. As Harvey Cox says, "The end result of the Western prismatic refraction of the light from the East is a wholly new pattern." The New Age resonance of privatised religion is witnessed in the resurgence of Paganism. Bumper stickers in California read, "Pagan and Proud" and "I’m a Born-Again Pagan." A pledge to Pagan Spirituality reads:

I am a pagan and I dedicate myself to channeling the Spiritual Energy of my Inner Self to help and to heal myself and others.

* I know that I am a part of the Whole of Nature. May I grow in my understanding of the Unity of all Nature.... May I always be mindful that I create my own reality and that I have the power within me to create positivity in my life.

* May I always be mindful that the Goddess and God in all their forms swell within me and that this divinity is reflected through my own Inner Self, my Pagan Spirit.

By the term “neo-pagan” or “pagan” the coven priestess Margot Adler means a move away from what she considers to be the atrophied spirituality of occidental culture and a return to “pre-Christian nature religions of the West, and their own attempts to revive them or to recreate them in new forms.... The modern Pagan resurgence includes the new feminist goddess-worshipping groups, certain new religions based on the visions of science fiction writers, attempts to revive ancient European religions— Norse, Greek, Roman— and the surviving tribal religions. One of the main appeals is to move “beyond God the Father” in terms of moving away from patriarchal religion, authoritarian hierarchies, male dominance and alienation from nature and the body.

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18 Ibid. pp. 133-134.
New Age Theology

Both theology and thealogy are incorporated in the New Age. The following examples are offered as illustrations of the wide range and often contradictory views held by New Agers. These exemplify the amorphous, eclectic and syncretistic methodology of the New Age which is quite distinct from biblical Christianity. However, this is acceptable to the New Age by reason of its premise that beliefs do not have to be reasonable to be believed, and there is no set dogma.

1. Who or What is God? In Jane Robert’s Seth Material one of the typical New Age views of God is expressed in terms of gestalt consciousness:

God is not human... though he passed through human stages; and here the Buddhist myth comes closest to approximating reality. He is not one individual, but an energy gestalt... a psychic pyramid of interrelated, ever-expanding consciousness that creates, simultaneously and instantaneously, universes and individuals that are given— through the gifts of personal perspective— duration, psychic comprehension, intelligence, and eternal validity.

This absolute, ever-expanding, instantaneous psychic gestalt, which you may call God if you prefer, is so secure in its existence that it can constantly break itself down and rebuild itself.

Its energy is so unbelievable that it does indeed form all universes; and because its energy is within and behind all universes; systems, and fields, it is indeed aware of each sparrow that falls, for it is each sparrow that falls.21

The idea of gestalt consciousness refers to an organised whole in which each part affects every other part and the perception of events and situations as a pattern or whole, rather than a collection of separate and individual elements. Though spoken of in terms of “he” this psychic gestalt consciousness is really more of an “it.” This cosmic “it” has evolved in its consciousness. For example, Seth says that there was a time when all the realities, both that which humans experience as past, present and future as well as other realities beyond the present human comprehension, were

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composite in the All-That-Is. This is what is called "being." However, there is also "non-being." "It is a state, not of nothingness, but a state in which probabilities and possibilities are known and anticipated but blocked from expression."  

To put it another way Benjamin Creme, in his book *The Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom* says, "In a sense there is no such thing as God. God does not exist. And in another sense, there is nothing else but God— only God exists.... All is God. And because all is God, there is no God."  

In terms of human history there was such an agonising state "in which the powers of creativity and existence were known, but the ways to produce them were not known. This is a lesson that *All That Is* had to learn, and that could not be taught."  

The New Age God suffers from amnesia and ignorance of self, yet according to Carol Riddell at Findhorn, "The idea of God as the Essence, the Reality of all that is, omnipresent and omniscient, is a monistic one."  

In Seth’s terms the "All-That-Is" or "Primary Energy Gestalt" is what students of theology call God. Further, this "Comic It" does not know if it is the only psychic gestalt or whether there are others like it. It does, however, know:

that something else existed before Its own primary dilemma when It could not express Itself. It is conceivable, then, that It has evolved, in your terms, so long ago that It has forgotten Its origin, that It has developed from still another Primary which has— again, in your terms— long since gone Its way.  

As the All-That-Is evolved in consciousness It had this tremendous desire to give birth to the probabilities of Its dream. In releasing these probabilities, creation began. "The psychic energy exploded in a flash of creation... in so doing gave existence to individualized consciousness."  

Seth concludes that this power is latent within humans who also desire to create— by bringing

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22 Ibid. p. 264.
27 Ibid. p. 268.
into reality their consciousness—to create their own reality. Ultimately Seth says, "There is no personal God-individual in Christian terms." However what makes It appear to be personal is that individuals are a portion of the All-That-Is and It knows itself as that individual. Like the 19th century Feuerbach, Seth says "Prayer contains its own answer." However, unlike Feuerbach, who would have concluded theology is but anthropology, Seth and the New Age would say there is a Force, ever-expanding, of which each human being is a part. In Buckminster Fuller's terms Seth says that God is synergistic—"the sum of all consciousness, and yet the whole is more than the sum of its parts. God is more than the sum of all personalities, and yet all personalities are what He is."28

Alternatively, there is no God, but there is the Goddess. Thealogy replaces theology as would be advocated by Starhawk and other New Age feminist disciples of The Great Mother, Gaia, Mother Earth, or the God/ess. As the section on Goddess and Gaia the previous chapter has exposed, there are variations of interpretation between tracing the Goddess from earliest Inanna of the Sumerians through Isis to the village healer who was later called a witch. From another point of view the use of the term Goddess is merely to suggest new thinking to offset the idea of a male God. In fact Starhawk wants to suggest a dismissal of gender in preference to a gynandrous or androgynous power. At times the Goddess is but a symbol of feminine and ecological liberation. At other times the Goddess is a symbol of metaphysical reality as seen in the energy of life, death and rebirth in culture and nature. Alternatively the Goddess is the personification of female deity who really exists, complete with a full trinitarian thealogy as in the Lux Madriana group in Burtonport on the west coast of Ireland.29 With all the variations of God/Goddess whether real or imaginative, personal or impersonal, physical or metaphysical, one point is crystal clear in the New Age, the God of the Bible is not accepted because of the moral and exclusive content of that theology.

2. **Who is Jesus Christ?** The Christology of the New Age is again borrowed language with a mystical meaning. The historical Christ of Christianity is set aside for a Christed Jesus, who is an archetype of what

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every human may attain to. To others of the New Age the idea of Christ is as a divine energy. This is the view of Peter Spink, who is one of the leading synthesisers of New Age and Christianity in Britain. Spink's synthesised Christ is like that of the New Age, "The Cosmic Being, Christ himself, of which all redeemed human beings are a part."30 Spink is Canon Emeritus of Coventry Cathedral and founder of the Omega Order whose aims are:31

1. To follow those spiritual disciplines which awaken the heart to the truth 'as it is in Jesus.'
2. To recognize Christ under all forms to the exclusion of none.
3. To encourage the new Christ-consciousness wherever it is found.
4. To work for co-operation with the evolving life of the planet.

Brad Steiger's New Age view of Christ says:

Instead of speaking of Christ, the New Age people speak of 'being Christed.' Jesus wasn't saying 'I am the Way.' If we look closely we can see that he is saying 'There is a way ... I have a way and you too can follow it, you too can create miracles'— which he says repeatedly.32

According to Seth, Christ never existed as one person in history. He was incarnate in three persons— John the Baptist, Jesus, and one other. These personalities are actually called forth by the collective human psyche during a time of global need to incorporate the kind of strength needed to get through the crisis.33 In his book Reflections on the Christ, David Spangler says:

within all life there exists a quality, an energy, which has as its basic characteristic irresistible growth, irresistible and inevitable expression of divinity. It is a quality which says that whatever form I am enclosed in, I will not be held a prisoner by that form, but I will transform it into a greater form. I will use all life, all experiences as stepping stones to greater revelations of divinity. The Christ is the basic evolutionary force within creation.34

30 Ibid. p. 104.
According to Spangler, Jesus merely built on the pattern of the Buddha and as such had to become awakened to Christ-consciousness. A much used text for New Agers, The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, purportedly channelled to one called “Levi” from the akashic records through Visel, the Goddess of Wisdom, or the Holy Breath, claims that Jesus was a student of the Brahmans and Buddhist wise men. “This Jesus is but man who has been fitted by temptations overcome, by trials multiform, to be the temple through which the Christ can manifest to men.” In this revelation Jesus is cited as saying, “What I have done all men can do, and what I am, all men shall be.” The writings of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Alice Bailey are often cited in New Age views of Jesus. A hierarchy of beings is listed with the top being the Solar Trinity followed by the “Seven Rays” followed by “S. Sanat Kumara” who is supposed to be “our God” who is also the “Ancient of Days” and the “One Initiator.” Cumbey surmises Sanat Kumara is “the eternal youth from Venus” and Venus is known in occultism as Lucifer. Thus in Cumbey’s critique of the New Age, Sanat Kumara is another name for Satan or Lucifer. The chart of masters descends to lower levels which include “assorted ‘Kumaras,’ ‘departmental heads,’ ‘Manus,’ ‘Bodhisattvas,’ ‘Mahachohans,’ and beneath them, in their turn, many masters” of which Jesus is the lowest and reports to one called the “Venetian Master.” The more contemporary New Age message from Jesus in A Course in Miracles cites Jesus in the same light saying:

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37 Ibid. p. 265.
way separate or different from you except in time, and time does not exist.\textsuperscript{39}

The most popular channeller in the New Age, J.Z. Knight’s Ramtha, says that Jesus of Nazareth is a “great god, just as you are a great god. But he is not the only son of God; he is a son of God. He was a man who became God, just as you will become God.”\textsuperscript{40} Further, “A Christ is anyone who realises that he is God and lives that truth.” For the New Age, Jesus was another avatar, a saviour, in the sense of having attained to the enlightened Christ-consciousness. Typical to the fluidity of the New Age the several and varied interpretations of Jesus and Christ often overlap. On the one hand Christ refers to a divine energy seeking to manifest itself on all levels of being through the process of evolution. Spink says, “The Christ principle may be defined as an energy, not an impersonal energy but the highest of all energies, that of love.”\textsuperscript{41} For Sir George Trevelyan, Christ is “an exalted being of Light and Truth... He must illumine every race, creed and nation.”\textsuperscript{42} Christ is the Lord highest in the hierarchy of spiritual beings. In disregard for historical evidence, Trevelyan holds forth the view held by many New Agers—that Jesus was an Essene and was recruited into the Great White Brotherhood. At his baptism, Jesus, having been trained up for the role was Christed. The exalted Being took over the human body of Jesus and spoke through him during the three year ministry. Following the theosophical tradition many holding the New Age view see the Christ as permeating the various subtle bodies of the various planes of reality, ultimately conquering all planes on the cross.\textsuperscript{43}

3. **What or who is the Holy Spirit?** The Holy Spirit in New Age terminology and understanding is the inner consciousness, the mind of Christ, that encourages one toward healing. The Holy Spirit is the right

\textsuperscript{40} Knight, J. Z. Ramtha. Beyond Words Publishing, Portland, Oregon. 1986; Sovereign Press. p. 36.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. p. 32, as cited by Osborn p. 148.
mind, “the only part of the Holy Trinity that has a symbolic function.” That symbolic function is to universally inspire and motivate people to “miracle-mindedness”—a change in perception that leads to a change in reality. In practical terms A Course in Miracles says the Holy Spirit is the spirit of joy, the mediator of atonement—that which brings right thinking, right perception and that right perception is a remembering of one’s personal deity, and that fallenness is not into sinful disobedience but amnesia. The Holy Spirit is that part of deity within the individual that will bring about that awakening of memory and choice between the amnesia of ego and the knowledge of the spirit.

4. What is the meaning of the death of Jesus? According to the Jesus proposed in A Course in Miracles, “the crucifixion is nothing more than an extreme example. Its value, like the value of any teaching device, lies solely in the kind of learning it facilitates.” According to the Course, the crucifixion of Jesus was in no way connected to the forgiveness of sins, nor punishment for sin, since God does not punish. “The statement, ‘Vengeance is Mine, sayeth the Lord’ is a misconception by which one assigns his own ‘evil’ past to God... He does not hold your ‘evil’ deeds against you.” Accordingly, God did not lay on Jesus the sins of the world. Further, God did not reject Adam and Eve nor force them from the Garden of Eden, and “sacrifice is a notion totally unknown to God.... evil does not exist.” The crucifixion becomes an example of the projected guilt of humanity. The ego creates this false sense of guilt, and says that “the guiltless are guilty.” Anywhere guiltlessness is manifest, the ego will try to crucify it because its perception is that there is no such thing as guiltlessness. In reality, according to the Course, the ego is a false perception. The Atonement is the release from guilt, which in Course terminology is the awakening to one’s guiltlessness. “For the redeemed son of man is the guiltless Son of God, and to recognize him is your redemption.”

47 Ibid. p. 32.
48 Ibid. p. 33.
49 Ibid. p. 224-225.
5. **What is the New Age view of the Bible?** The Bible is a useful book for many in the New Age, although its dogma is set aside, and it is quite open to out-of-context subjective interpretation. The New Age borrows the language of the Bible and mixes its meanings. There is no regard for the Bible as the Book of Books containing the message of salvation from sin and hope of eternal life to be received through the efficacy of “no other name” than Jesus the Christ. Once again, Ramtha sums up a popular New Age view:

> Love the beautiful entity that you are and the God that you are—and cease reading your insidious Book [the Bible]!... In your BOOK OF BOOKS [the Bible, John 1:1] it says: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and all was with the Word.’ Most improper! The Word was nothing without the Thought, for thought is the basis and creator of everything that is....

Everything your religions have taught you could be wrong. Do you know what is wonderful about that? It means that perhaps there really is no such thing as a devil, or hell, or sin, or damnation, or a fearsome God—that they could be wrong. And they are.

When asked, “What do you keep of the New Testament?” Brad Steiger answers:

> Most of it, except for some of Paul, because of his misogyny and what I consider his neuroses, which I think were expressed in prejudicial ways toward certain people. As far as the teachings of Jesus, and especially as we are now finding them in the Qumran, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Nag Hammadi gospels, I see a different picture of Jesus, which I feel more comfortable with.

The credibility of the Bible in the New Age is perhaps best expressed in the introduction story to Campbell’s book *The Power of Myth*. At a lunch counter Campbell was sitting next to a young school boy whose mother sat with him. The conversation between the school boy and the mother related that at school that day a boy named Jimmy had written a paper “on the evolution of man, and Teacher said he was wrong, that Adam and Eve were our first parents.” Campbell’s response was, “My Lord! I thought. What a

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teacher!" As he thought this a lady three seats away responded, "Well, Teacher was right. Our first parents were Adam and Eve." The young boy's reply was, "Yes, I know, but this was a scientific paper." As Campbell was about to commend the boy the mother retorted angrily, "Oh, those scientists! Those are only theories." The boy's "cool and calm reply; 'but they have been factualized: They found the bones.' The milk and sandwiches came," said Campbell, "and that was that."52 Alternative New Age "Bibles" include Oahspe: The New Age Bible,53 The Keys of Enoch, The Book of Urantia, The Satanic Bible, A Course In Miracles and the Lucis Trust's Alice Bailey writings.54

6. What is The Second Coming of the Christ. For some, the New Age Second Coming of Christ is the inauguration of an age of Planetary Awakening in which a critical mass will be reached and humanity will be launched into a new level of collective-consciousness— an evolved state in which all consciousness will be interconnected and humanity will outgrow war and begin evolving into perfect harmony with the Earth and humankind. It will be an awakening to personal deity. Spangler says that any one or any community that "so embodies the new that it becomes a magnetic source to draw the new out of the rest of the world, embodies the Second Coming."55 The eschatology of the New Age is seen not as the return of the biblical Christ, but the continued evolution of humanity toward a new age in which peace and harmony will reign on the earth for a thousand years. Then humanity will evolve beyond the body into other forms as consciousness evolves, until all is One. This is the view epitomised by Ken Carey's Starseed Transmissions. For Schucman's Course "The Second Coming is merely the return of sense... the awareness of reality, not its return."56 It is when the ego is ended and healing is complete. As with the many themes of the New Age, the details of the myths may vary according

53 Melton, J. Gordon. New Age Encyclopedia. Op. Cit. p. 331. Oahspe: The New Age Bible is one of the first books channelled. It was written in 1881 and 1982 by John Ballou Newrough (1828-1891), a New York spiritualist who claimed that lines of light appeared to rest on his fingers and guide them to type the messages over a period of fifty weeks. The book tells the story of the 78,000 years of evolutionary history of the human race and speaks of a coming age "the Kosmon Era" in which a new people will evolve to transform the world into a place of joy and peace.
to the writer, but the overall theme remains—the apocalyptic parousia is mythologically interpreted. Carol Riddell of the Findhorn Community says,

The 'second coming' is the availability to all, on a global basis, of the consciousness of Christ, rather than a new physical appearance of his body. By crucifying the ego of our materialistic desires, we can be resurrected into the Christ consciousness of the true meaning of life, and live in happiness and harmony together.57

There is no saviour returning to earth to take the saved to heaven, but there is an awakening coming in which humanity individually and collectively will rise above the unhealed ego that manifests itself as a theologian who says "I am a miserable sinner, and so are you... Projecting condemnation onto god, they make Him appear retaliative, and fear His retribution. What they have done is merely to identify with the ego."58 Thus the Second Coming is when the Holy Spirit replaces the ego and releases the individual from misconceptions about one's identity and sin. The only sin is the ego itself that keeps one from realising that all is good and that sin and evil are illusions. In the Second Coming all the world of illusion will disappear, even the illusion that there is sin or evil or anything that separates.

Sir George Trevelyan prefers to call the Second Coming of Christ "the rising of love in the human heart." The June 30th, 1989 issue of the Observer in London featured among other articles on the New Age an interview with Trevelyan who is called "the father of the New Age." The Observer comments, "He believes that our souls choose their incarnations. The children of today... will know the second coming of Christ: though not as Jesus of Nazareth marching along in a white robe. 'It's the rising of love in the human heart,' exclaimed Sir George, beaming with the light of which he speaks."59

7. **Is there a Judgement Day?** Neither the day of judgement nor heaven and hell as the final reward or punishment exist in the biblical sense for the

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New Age. The terms are symbolic, referring to one's own creation. One makes one's own heaven or hell on earth based on a kind of karmic activity. Seth says: "Those who believe in a hell and assign themselves to it through their belief can indeed experience one, but certainly in nothing like eternal terms. No soul is forever ignorant." In keeping with the general philosophy of the New Age, reality is what you make it. "You create reality through your feelings, thoughts, and mental actions... As long as you believe in a devil, for example, you will create one that is real enough for you, and for the others who continue to create him." However, there is no real devil nor is there any real evil, nor is there to be any real judgement day. This all would fall under the category of "superlative hallucination." Schucman's channelled revelation from Jesus proclaims:

The Last Judgment is one of the most threatening ideas in your thinking. This is because you do not understand it. Judgment is not an attribute of God. It was brought into being only after the separation, when it became one of the many learning devices to be built into the overall plan. Just as the separation occurred over millions of years, the Last Judgment will extend over a similarly long period, and perhaps an even longer one.

According to Schucman's channelled message the Fall of humanity was not in the biblical Garden of Eden and has nothing to do with a turning away from God in disobedience. No Satan ever tempted Eve with forbidden fruit, nor appealed to the pride of autonomy to be like God, knowing good and evil. For Schucman and the New Age, the Fall is merely amnesia. Humans have simply forgotten their true deity and interconnectedness with the All-That-Is, which some call God. Schucman further espouses the New Age attempt to dismiss evil, sin and judgement with the following text:

The Last Judgment is generally thought of as a procedure undertaken by God. Actually it will be undertaken by my brothers with my help. It is a final healing rather than a meting out of punishment, however much you may think that punishment is deserved. Punishment is a concept totally opposed to rightmindedness, and the aim of the Last Judgment is to restore rightmindedness to you.

61 Ibid.
63 Ibid. p. 30.
The New Age vacillates between belief in reality and illusion. Those things of the material nature are considered illusionary. Along with this concept when humanity evolves to the higher-consciousness of remembering its identity as deity, all that is not good will no longer be believed in and therefore will disappear, leaving only a good creation. “Everyone will ultimately look upon his own creations and choose to preserve only what is good... At the same time the mind will inevitably disown its miscreations which, without belief, will no longer exist.”64 According to Riddell and the Findhorn Community, the presence of evil is an illusion which will be overcome once the ignorance of the “little self” is enlightened and one gets reoriented with their inner deity.65

8. **What is supernatural?** In one sense there is no supernatural; everything is an expression of the natural evolution of the world and being. The realm of faeries, extraterrestrials, powers and principalities are part of the spiritual nature of all the cosmos. Depending on which tradition is followed one may invoke the Great Mother of Wicca or the faeries and Pan at Findhorn. Again one may consult the host of angelic entities and extraterrestrials as do Ken Carey and Brad Steiger. Brad Steiger has written over a hundred books on various aspects of what is now being called the New Age. He considers himself a “communicator”— one who is interested in assisting people to develop their spiritual potential in an existential sense rather than relative to objective facts. Having written on such subjects as UFO-abductions, psychic powers, superadvanced ancient civilisations, reincarnation, and trance-channelling, Steiger has attracted a considerable following. Although, the sceptics give little credit to his views, Steiger’s views are commonly held by New Agers. There is a high emphasis on giving symbolic archetypal meaning to events and experiences. For example, his view of the Harmonic Convergence is that if people:

> feel that what they have experienced is going to help them put their reality together now in a more positive way, I would tend to regard those things as symbolic inner visions. And I am

64 Ibid.
comfortable with that as long as no one tries to force the visions he or she received during the Harmonic Convergence on my reality.66

The Near-Death experience and Out-Of-Body experiences are used as evidence of other planes beyond the physical. Steiger claims his Near-Death experience is what most greatly influenced him to evolve beyond his Lutheran liturgy.67 The New Age envelops a vast majority of people who have become more protestant than Protestants in the sense that they are turned-off from religious hierarchies and believe that individuals may encounter God personally and without any mediator. Robert Basil pinpoints the deviation of New Age from Christian dogma in commenting on references in Steiger’s book Revelation: The Divine Fire. Basil recognises that there is a move “away from the historicity of Jesus and from Christian institutions; you don’t need the church to have direct experience of the divine anymore.”68

9. Is there to be a resurrection? Again, Brad Steiger speaks for many New Agers when he says that “it is not important to me whether Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene and the disciples in a physical body or a spirit body. To me, the story of the Resurrection is a powerful metaphor, a promise that we have within us an essential self that does survive physical death.”69 The literal bodily resurrection espoused in biblical Christianity is exchanged for a mythic truth, an existential meaning that says one may rise to higher planes, overcome the greatest adversities, even death. This is what gives hope to the New Age. However, in keeping with the “live and let live” philosophy of the New Age, Steiger will admit that he does not claim the right to say the biblical Christian point of view is wrong any more than he would accept someone telling him his view is wrong. In this sense a person’s existential experiences and beliefs are autonomous. Such concepts as a “literally true” resurrection are offset by personal projection. Rather than literal truth, the phrase “universal truth” is posited. Resurrection, like the many doctrines of New Age interpretation, follows the lines of a perennial philosophy so that Jesus’ teaching on resurrection applies to all

67 Ibid. p. 229.
68 Ibid. p. 233.
people, “not just to those who do the dance a certain way... The transcendental experience is there for each of us.”70 Jane Robert’s Seth says, “You do not realize that you, yourself, also exist independently of your physical body... You will reincarnate whether or not you believe that you will. It is much easier if your theories fit reality, but if they do not, you will not change the nature of reincarnation one iota.”71 For the New Age resurrection is mythological, but for the majority reincarnation is an unalterable reality. Again as with most beliefs of the New Age, there are variations of this theme too. Some prefer to think in terms of further stages of evolution and discard the term reincarnation. As referenced earlier in this thesis, Schucman’s Course claims there is no such thing as reincarnation, since time is not linear and there is no past or future only the eternal present. However, if one chooses to use belief in reincarnation as a help to perception, then it is acceptable, since the Course claims no set doctrine. Life is more than life-in-the-body, and in the enlightened world the body is shed. “We have been alive forever. We will be alive forever more.”72

Subjective experiences such as Past-Life regressions, Out-Of-Body and Near-Death encounters give hope and bring transformation to those who have them and those who hear of them. This is capitalised on by New Agers. The 1975 publication of Raymond Moody’s book Life After Life marked the increased interest in these phenomena. Theosophical astral projections and self-induced Out-Of-Body experiences are popularly sought through various techniques such as relaxation tanks, meditation, hypnosis, psychedelic drugs, and other New Age techniques. Sometimes these occur spontaneously as mystical experiences. Near-Death experiences on the other hand are a category of their own and usually refer to some sensation of ease and well-being and the perception that one is either dying or dead. Generally the person has the experience of looking upon his or her body from some external point. This experience is accompanied by an increased awareness of the senses. A presence is often felt beckoning the person either to leave or return to the body. By far the majority of examples recall some visionary experience of being drawn to a brilliant light or journey through a

70 Ibid. pp. 234-235.
tunnel. Relatively fewer incidents of Near-Death experiences encounter negative impressions. More recent studies have shown an increase in people recounting negative experiences, but still relatively few in comparison to the euphoric experience. Whatever the events surrounding the experiences there is a marked positive result in the transformation of the person’s life.

Ian Wilson’s book The After Death Experience synthesises the works of leading researchers such as Raymond Moody, Kenneth Ring, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, Michael Sabom, and Margot Grey and argues with profundity that in a seeming age of scientific orthodoxy, where scientific analysis would conclude that death is the end, there is now a seeming open “revolutionary backlash in the idea that ‘we’ cease to be after death.” This revolution is seen “even among those who never enter a church.” Wilson reports that some psychics now command fees of over £125 per hour. There are now over 2,500 bookshops in America which specialise in books on life after death. Shirley MacLaine, whatever one believes about the authenticity of her claims, has now sold over five million copies of her various biographies extolling the validity of reincarnation, past-lives recall and channelling spirits. Gallup polls in Britain show that belief in reincarnation rose from 18 percent in 1969 to 28 percent in 1979. Similarly in the United States there has been an upsurge to twenty-five percent generally. One interesting point is that statistics rise to around thirty percent in under-25s, and nearly a third of those believing in reincarnation are adult women. Gavin Weightman, commentator for the Channel Four British television documentary on The New Age, Sunday, August 11, 1991, purported that 25% of the populace in

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75 Atwater, P.M.H. “Is There a Hell? Surprising Observations about the NDE.” Journal of Near-Death Studies. 10, 3 Spring 1992. Out of some 700 case studies between 1978-1992, 105 (15%) claimed negative experiences. Speculative considerations for the absence of negative reports suggest reluctance of people to recall the negative and preference of the positive aspects over the negative.
77 Ibid.
Britain believe in reincarnation and Astrology. This is a slight increase on the 1969 Gallup Poll which exhumed statistics that 23% in the U.K. and United States, 26% in Canada, 25% in Germany and 23% in France espoused a belief in reincarnation.79 These are the experiences the New Age is using to proclaim that one does survive death and that spirituality and meaning in life are not relegated to religion alone. The un-churched too experience positive implications and revelations of life after life.

10. **What is the New Age view of Christianity?** Since the New Age has been born out of the womb of western secular and religious culture, the question must be raised as to why one of the identification marks of the New Age is sometimes its anti-Christian attack. The terminology of Christianity is adopted by such people as David Spangler, and Sir George Trevelyan may as easily confess his Church of England membership.80 However, in the main, New Age seeks to reinterpret Christianity with a backdoor approach and quite often attacks the church, the Bible, orthodoxy and the historical basis of the Gospel.

In drawing this point together one is reminded that the argument that blames Christianity for the present world crisis was epitomised and brought to the forefront by Lynn White, a professor of history at the University of California. The lecture delivered in 1966 was entitled The Historic Roots of our Ecological Crisis. It was later published in a 1967 edition of Science Magazine. The basis of the argument is that the science and technology of the 1900s was the outgrowth of western Christianity’s anthropocentric religion which established a dualism between humanity and nature with humanity exercising power over nature. This view desacralized nature, that is to say it dissolved the pagan view that there are spirits in the natural world. Since the seventeenth century, Science and Christianity have followed the Newtonian mechanistic view of the world. Therefore White concludes, the outgrowth of this view was that occidental technology followed a pattern which promoted humanity’s transcendence of nature and hence came the mastery over nature as an object to be used to serve the will of humanity. Thus White concludes Christianity shares the major burden of guilt for the scientific and technological abuses which have resulted in the

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present world ecological crisis. This presentation has to a great extent fuelled the fires of those who would question Christianity and replace it with another system which they consider will restore care to humanity and the earth.

Ken Wilber, a New Age “theoretician in transpersonal psychology, and widely heralded prophet of the New Age”\(^8\) goes so far as to say that church clergymen changed Christianity from a mystical religion to a personality cult:

A religion that is merely at the mythic level—such as fundamentalist Protestantism or exoteric (nonmystical) Catholicism—then a living mystic is a real problem for you, because the mystic claims that everybody can become one with God, and that means bypassing the middleman: the priest and his collection plates... so the exoteric Christians did a clever thing: They allowed that Christ was one with God, but nobody else! Christ got “kicked upstairs,” and from that time on, anybody who claimed to be one with God was pronounced heretical.\(^8^2\)

In discussion with the owner and an assistant at the Odyssey Book Store in Lubbock, Texas it became apparent that for some New Agers even Christianity could be tolerated as a means of finding their place in personal development. Usually this awareness and enlightenment was brought about by an initial exodus from “Brand X” model of Christianity to follow a journey with the use of expanded techniques and readings which may then lead full circle back to their former denomination with improved vision about how to use their religion to save themselves and the world. According to these disciples all paths can lead to the same end. For others Christianity along with western science and rationalism is responsible for the evils in this world and should therefore be abandoned.

Another contemporary group that has become prominent in the New Age movement is the Findhorn Community which began through the channelled messages received by Eileen Caddy and Dorothy Maclean in and around the northern rural seaside village of Findhorn and the ancient Burgh of Forres, Scotland on the Moray Firth. The Findhorn Community was started in 1962 and about ten years latter became the Findhorn Foundation. In the early 1980s the community rose to around 300 membership. It is now a spiritual community of around “170 residents of all ages, nationalities and backgrounds united by a common vision to create a better world.” An extension to the community has been set up on the Isle of Erraid in the Hebrides. The Erraid Community consists of around 10 members and their children. The centre currently welcomes over 9,000 visitors a year who come to visit and live in the community for varying lengths of time while participating in spiritual and personal growth workshops. With no formal doctrine or creed the community honours all major world religions in the belief that there are many paths to God. Kevin Logan’s book, Close Encounters with the New Age, is an updated view by a visitor to “Experience Week” at Findhorn. Logan cites Findhorn as “the leading light in the modern-day New Age movement.” He says, “Tens of thousands of groups and organisations looked towards the Findhorn community for illumination.”

Carol Riddell came to Findhorn after being awakened to a “real sense of a spiritual integration of the personal and the social” through learning Zen Buddhist meditation in the 1970s and a further three years of Re-evaluation Co-counselling, Gestalt and Bioenergetics which in her words, “gave me the strength to give up my job and trust in a then uncertain future.” After leaving her job, Riddell studied in California for a further three years to learn techniques to open her mind to “the intuitional faculties we all possess.”

84 Findhorn Foundation brochure. Findhorn Foundation, The Park, Findhorn, Forres, Scotland IV36 0TZ.
After this preparation in 1983 Riddell was drawn to Findhorn where she spent six years, as the outcome of which she wrote her book, *The Findhorn Community: Creating A Human Identity For The 21st Century*. Riddell points out that the need for her book was established in that the previous works of Findhorn, Spangler’s earlier writings and Hawken’s book *The Magic of Findhorn*, had been withdrawn from further publication since the authors considered them no longer reflective of the present day at Findhorn. Further publications which Riddell mentions such as *Faces of Findhorn* (1980) and others are either out of print or only express certain aspects of Findhorn life. Therefore, Riddell considered it necessary, along with the support of the Findhorn Foundation’s sponsorship, to produce a book which reflected the current atmosphere of Findhorn from an insider’s point-of-view. Riddell writes:

> Our story is not just that of another utopian community. It is urgently relevant to the problems of modern civilization. The community does not exist in isolation. It is part of a world-wide movement for personal and social transformation, expressed in channelled writings such as *A Course in Miracles*; in the teachings of contemporary spiritual Masters, like Sai Baba; and in the strivings of a multitude of individuals and small communities the world over for a change in consciousness. We are part of a gentle wave of transformation that is moving across our planet.87

Riddell further points out that although at first the Findhorn Community was quite accepting of being called New Age, she now says the community has become:

> a little weary of this description, which was once eagerly embraced... because in popular thought it has become connected with the sensation seekers joyously satirised in Doonesbury cartoons, whose interest lies less in seeking spiritual transformation than in dabbling in the occult, or in practising classical capitalist entrepreneurship on the naive. One cartoon shows a fortune teller gazing into a crystal ball and addressing a client: “You are gullible, and you give your money to charlatans!”88

87 Ibid. p. 5.
88 Ibid. p. 64.
Riddell's commentary on the purpose of the Findhorn Community is that it:

plays a significant part in a revolution that is gently changing the world... We are in the mainstream of and contributing to an older, an age-old, way of experiencing the world, whose time has now come, and without whose ascendance humanity cannot survive the challenges of its own civilisation. It is, simply put, a revolution of love, whose aim is to put spirituality back onto the centre of human identity where it belongs, so that world can enter a new era based on mutual understanding, cooperation and harmony.89

Findhorn’s hope is to contribute to the rise of a new spiritual civilisation which will fill the void left by modern western culture that has put material progress first on their agenda at the expense of “social problems... ecological destruction, and world poverty and debt.”90 They seek to bring about a transformation of consciousness that will realise the world beyond the senses— that material things are not an end in themselves and that happiness is within. The alternative to a material orientation is to transform one’s perspective to a spiritual orientation.91 This spiritual life can be attained by any one or number of techniques. Findhorn has no set dogmas.92

They follow a simple theology which says that “God is Love; God is omnipresent. God is therefore our essential Self. Seeking to make this essential Self our experienced reality is the spiritual approach to life.”93 Contact with the energy forces controlling the growth of plants at Findhorn allows people to become co-creators, creating flowers in the desert, and ultimately flowering a new humanity from the desert of world crisis — a transformed lifestyle. By quieting the outer activities of life and listening to the inner activities “behind the ordinary sense experience... they discovered that all the incredible multiplicity of form is an emanation of Oneness.

There is an ultimate vibration that underlies all others. It is present everywhere.”94 This vibration is what is called “unconditional and

89 Ibid. p. 9.
90 Ibid. p. 11
92 Ibid. p. 10.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid. p. 23.
unattached” Love. Again, those at Findhorn and the New Age may choose any path to reach this Love as a peak experience which reveals the reality beyond the delusion of the senses, “‘Maya,’ the belief that the limiting experience of sense perception is the truth, instead of a mask over the reality hidden in it.” Riddell says the process of transformation starts with a discovery of “who we really are—to experience the Divine within.” The second phase is to practice in the perceived world what is discovered within. By adopting this twofold spiritual path one will transcend “the Homo sapiens” and become the early representatives “of a new human development—‘Homo divinus’.”

This spiritual journey sought at Findhorn and through the various forms of New Age activity differs from “established religion,” in two ways says Riddell. The first difference is that “all major religions... propagate belief in the existence of God, and provide a basic moral code for right conduct—righteousness or dharma.” These codes filter down into social customs and laws which become the basis upon which the adherents try to solve the crises of the world. This leads to fundamentalist movements such as in Christianity and Islam, says Riddell. The second aspect in all religions is what Riddell proposes as “the mystical current.” This is the experiencing of “the nature of the Divine” through “contemplation or through practices which turn one inward.” What is discovered is the source of the morality of action. Religion, Riddell says, has become secularised. Religion has not been able to solve “any of the crises” because in her view religion has operated on the first aspect at the expense of the second. The mystical motive was lost and the material motive was accommodated. Thus she concludes that transformation is necessary. Churches must place emphasis on “God’s presence within each of us as the basis of the good life. Like the “born again” experience of the churches, Findhorn advocates a process of transformation, a “process of reorientation towards inner awareness” which involves “excitement, joy in living, growth in creativity, a relative release of material needs, increased ability to accept people as they are and a determination to resolve problems.”

95 Ibid. p. 25.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
99 Ibid. p. 27.
The work began in a mobile home at the Findhorn Bay Caravan Park when Peter Caddy and his wife Eileen, joined by Dorothy Maclean began a garden. Peter managed the garden while Eileen and Dorothy Maclean made contact as channels for devas (natural spirits, originally a Sanskrit word for "celestial beings," equivalent to the Bible word "angel" and in Hindu thought a word meaning "a being of light") through which they were able to receive and transmit "life force" energy. These devas were the spirits of various plants and landscape features which the trio later considered to be angelic archetypical forces. By 1967 the gardens had become well known for producing unusual vegetation despite poor soil conditions. The fame of the community was advanced by a quantum leap in the mid-1970s due to its media coverage in such New Age magazines as New Age Journal and East West Journal.

Paul Hawken’s book, The Magic of Findhorn, tells the story of his enticement to Findhorn through reading an article in Harper’s magazine. The “buzz” being purveyed about Findhorn told stories of “a garden growing in the sand and cold, producing sixty-five different vegetables, forty-two herbs, and twenty-one types of fruit.” As chairman of Smith & Hawken, a catalogue and retail company dealing with garden and horticultural products, Hawken set out to see the supernatural gardens which claimed to have produced 42-pound cabbages, 60-pound broccoli, 8-foot delphiniums and roses blooming in the snow. The windblown peninsula where once only gorse and spiky grass grew had been transformed into a Garden of Eden. When asked the secret of the wonder gardens, Peter Caddy ascribed the mastery to their community’s guidance by devic presences such as nature spirits, fairies, elves, gnomes, and Pan. What Hawken found on his quest to Findhorn, he claims:

seems larger than a 40-pound cabbage. Fairies and elves seem tame stuff compared to what one experiences there. Findhorn may be a manifestation of a light and power which could

transform our planet within a lifetime, or it could be an illusory bubble on the troubled waters of the world civilization that will burst, leaving no traces.103

The Findhorn Community was also linked to a wider network known as the Universal Link, which was, in Britain, the forerunner of the New Age. The Universal Link had evolved out of the channelled messages given to Richard Grave and Liebie Pugh in the early 1960s. Grave claimed the "bearded Christ-like figure" was called "Truth" while Pugh called him "Limitless Love."104 The entity revealed to Grave and Pugh that they should develop a network organisation that would interconnect the various theosophical and spiritual groups in England, Europe and North America. Universal Link was to inform all the esoteric groups of the revelations of Limitless Love. Findhorn was one of the first to join the Universal Link. Eileen Caddy began channelling messages from Limitless Love and Truth.

In 1970 David Spangler joined the group and began organising their educational programme. Spangler received similar messages from the entity and incorporated them in his 1976 publication of the book Revelation: The Birth of a New Age, which in that day became a manifesto of the Findhorn Community. Spangler corroborated that the highest spiritual forces and entities were directing humanity toward a New Age in which this spiritual hierarchy, known as the Great White Brotherhood, would manifest itself openly to assist the world in rising to a higher form of being. This transformation would constitute the parousia of Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

While at Findhorn, Spangler made such impact with his teachings that the group began to call him the Christ and hoped his powers would greatly further the Findhorn Community, which they did. However Spangler rejected the impulse to follow their calling in that way.105 Thus a host of experiential techniques are incorporated as education through which those at Findhorn can be guided by the higher entities. In Spangler's teaching the highest entity in the hierarchy is called the "Solar Logos" who is the ruling force of this solar system. Still evolving into higher forms with greater

103 Ibid. p. 7.
energies, the Solar Logos is permeating these new levels of power throughout the solar system to all lower entities. Spangler too channels the entity known as Limitless Love and Truth. According to revelation given to Spangler, the entity is God, Christ, a being come from the “dwelling places of the infinite,” the I AM, “that Presence which has been before the foundations of the earth...,” who says, “The earth is My Body. I Am the Life from which all form springs. I Am the Womb and all must enter through Me. I Am not a Being. I contain all Beings. I Am now the Life of a new heaven and a new earth.”106 As humans rise in their acquisition of these powers they will evolve to new levels of environment and being.

Though astounding in variety and beauty, the gardens Hawken saw produced more normal plants. The claim by communers was that originally the phenomenal growth was “to demonstrate to Peter Caddy and to others that it was possible.”107 This transition apparently took place when Peter trained new caretakers for the gardens. Caddy claimed that people got too hung up on the over-sized cabbages and forgot to reverence the consciousness behind the growth. Caddy said they kept quiet about the devas, elves and Pan until the scientific community and experts the world over had confirmed the phenomenality of the gardens. Then they let the word out.108

Beyond the gardens is the philosophy of the Findhorn Community which makes it a leading force in the New Age. “Pan is the body within every force, everything that procreates, everything that dies, everything that moves.”109 It is not the typical view of the hoofed and horned deity; he is the little worm crawling along the sand as well as the great blue whale. The community is based on what is called the Law of Manifestation.110 Everything that is needed will be supplied. There is absolute faith in Pan’s provision. Secondly the community lives by the principle of Live Now. There is no worry over the future and no regret over the past.111 A third principle involves absolute surrender.112 One must surrender one’s own will

106 Ibid. p. 197.
107 Ibid. p. 33.
108 Ibid. p. 42.
109 Ibid. p. 35.
110 Ibid. p. 38, 39.
111 Ibid. p. 39.
112 Ibid.
to the will of the greater. Therein one’s needs, not greeds, are met. A fourth value in the Findhorn credo is that there are no minorities and no majorities. Decisions are not made by argument, but by guidance. Eileen and Dorothy are guided by the spirits and Peter claimed his guidance is by intuition. The fifth principle outlined in Hawken’s book refers to “no fixed regulations.” There are no orders and no external chains of command. The people of the Findhorn Community rely on group-consciousness to increase their awareness of the God within who will lead them to demonstrate unity in their daily life and work. The Law of Manifestation is likened to an inverted view of prayer. It is revealed that something is coming and then they ask for it by “holding it to the light.” Finally the emphasis at Findhorn is on positive mental attitude and creative thinking with humble self-assurance.

These principles hold forth the belief that “God, or the source of life, is accessible to each and to all at all times, and that nature, including the planets and their constitutions are alive, intelligent and are part of an evolution to a higher plan.” Within this plan is the idea of Divine Economy. For those at Findhorn there are no mistakes. Everything is to be worked out eventually for the good and all things needed are provided. “Divine Economy is Jungian Synchronicity mixed with a Buckie Fullerm.” This means that everything works together in a synergistic way and that all things are evolving toward a greater purpose through the guidance of a unity of intelligence. There is no random chance methodology in the universe. All is going according to plan. After six years of working at the Cluny Hill Hotel the Caddys and Maclean were fired and found themselves living off the dole in a caravan site nearby. Later they were to purchase that hotel and convert it into Cluny Hill College for the propagation of the educative forces that are to bring the planet and its inhabitants to the next stage of evolution. They started out trying to make a garden to ease their subsistence living and were inspired by the devas to produce a Garden of Eden, an entire community and an extended family at Findhorn. At the time

113 Ibid. p. 40.
114 Peter Caddy has since left Findhorn, divorced Eileen and remarried another.
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid. 41.
of seeming demoralisation they were given the message: “Just accept what is happening. Know that I would not let anything happen to you, for you are all precious to Me. All that you have undergone in the past has led you up to this... What appears as a great misfortune is the most wonderful blessing.”

Eileen’s messenger told her, “Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in Me. Trust in Me... Let yourself be used as My channel to radiate My love at all times.”

In Maclean’s perception devas are “thoughts, aspects of growth and creation temporarily forgotten and neglected by modern man.” Through greed and abuse of nature modern man had intimidated the devas, so that the devas no longer communicated with humans, and humans in turn lost the art of being able to receive their guidance. Devas are the archetypal forces which carry the “mould of life through space and time to the point where it unfolds into life on a crystal blue planet.” They are the essence of life which through aeons of time “differentiated itself again and again into myriads of forms and patterns.”

The message that was to transform the garden was received through the pea deva:

To those who have an insight into life everything has meaning. For example, there is meaning behind the constant blowing of the wind, a spiritual meaning, in spite of any unpleasant results it brings about. To those whose eyes are open, everything fits into place.

The forces of nature are something to be felt into, to be stretched out to... One of the jobs for you is to feel into the Nature forces such as the wind, feel its essence and purpose for Me, and be positive and harmonize with that essence. It will not be as difficult as you immediately imagine, because the beings of these forces... will be glad to feel a friendly power. All forces are to be felt into, even the sun, the moon, the seas, the trees, the very grass. All are part of My life. All is One life. Play your part in making life one again, with My help.
The earth is looked upon as a living sentient organism and the planets as living beings. The devas are the forces which engender life into the manifestations of the earth. Pan is the elf-king who oversees the garden of this earth. In 1966 Robert Ogilvie Crombie encountered Pan in the gardens of Findhorn. Pan is introduced as unrestricted to one place as his name means "all" and "everywhere." He is the universal cosmic energy found throughout nature. The plea of Findhorn is for humanity to recognise its falling out with nature and to re-establish the spirituality necessary to once again work in unity with nature. In order for this to happen, according to the teaching of the Findhorn Community, humanity must work together with and receive its education from "the Nature Spirits and their god Pan." "They must be believed in with complete sincerity and faith. They must never be taken for granted and should be given love and thanks for the work they do." As to most humans the Nature Spirits are a myth, so also according to Crombie's communication most Nature Spirits consider real humans to be a myth. They are not sure what it is that is walking on earth, but they resemble what used to be known as people. However, in these later generations the species has "gone amuck." The apocalyptic message from the devas and other angels of light is that unless people change, the Nature Spirits who are themselves immortal and indestructible, will slowly withdraw their "life force" energy from the plants; and consequently from humanity as well. To the outward world it will seem as if humanity destroyed itself, which according to the communications, humanity appears to be doing.

Findhorn is but one of the many New Age communities and organisations which seek to promote the ideals of the movement toward spirituality without necessarily being religious in the traditional sense. These are the attempts of those who are fed up with the status-quo of performance-based relationships and hierarchies to experience co-operation between spiritual entities, the earth and humanity. It is an alternative place where people now come to seek God in the "invisible world of presences, beings, voices and

125 Ibid. p. 120.
126 Ibid. p. 150.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid. p. 162.
guidance.” It is for these reasons that David Spangler was attracted to spend three years at Findhorn (1970-1973).

Spangler, himself a lively channel for entities which identify themselves as Limitless Love, Truth, someone called John as well as Pan, considers himself to have experienced a sense of eternity in his existence, meaning that he has realised his higher consciousness (Christ consciousness) as being one with the stars and the grass. In the spring of 1973 Spangler returned to California to establish his own educational centre for the New Age in the Lorian Association. He considers Findhorn to be but one of a host of centres where people can experience their divine being in attunement to the will of God— “where people become the plan rather than receive it in the Mosaic tradition from the mountaintops of religious bureaucracy.” It is a place where planetary consciousness is given free expression, exemplary of the cultural phenomenon which is bathing the world in the light of the New Age. Spangler uses Buckminster Fuller’s term “synergy” to explain what is happening at Findhorn and throughout the world in various ways. It is the world in transition realising that the old world of hierarchical authoritarianism and pyramid patterns of control and leadership are giving way to the “recognition of divinity within all.” Synergy describes the social state wherein the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, meaning that the individual in a group is greater than when he or she is alone. It involves a collective consciousness that is at once available to each and to all. Rather than under the old world-view where individuals are to sublimate themselves to the “highest good,” in the new world-view the individual is the embodiment of the highest good and brings that embodiment to the whole thus enhancing all. For Spangler and the New Age, “Man is the ultimate answer to all of his problems; he always has been and always will be. It is what man does in and through his own being, his consciousness, and his openness to life.” In the synergistic New Age the individual is attuned to the energy of the greater whole.

130 Ibid. p. 187.
131 Ibid. p. 186.
135 Ibid. p. 201.
Another buzz phrase which permeates Findhorn is the idea of “bringing heaven to earth.” In this sense, whether old age or New Age, the goal is to be ageless personally and collectively thus unfolding the essence of what the New Age is trying to say— that it is time for humanity and the earth to be reborn, to come home again to the spirit within each one. In that homecoming will be the realisation of the myth of Findhorn— a period when not just a few in a secluded commune, but the whole world will evolve beyond war and prejudice and all the distortions of the collective psyche to reveal “the true divine nature of the planet.”136 The people who live there believe it to be a power-point on the etheric web of ley lines that surround the earth and empower it like the oriental belief in chakra points in the human body. These power-points are the places where healing and transformation can take place, where dreams of utopia can begin to be realised, where the mythological themes of rebirth and resurrection can give hope to a world where crisis is a household word. In the flowers and food growing from the sand is envisaged a desolate world coming alive again.

Return to Love— A Course in Miracles

Marianne Williamson’s book, A Return To Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles, as the title suggests is based on the reported teachings of Jesus Christ as channelled through Helen Schucman in A Course In Miracles which has now sold over half a million copies.137 This for many in the New Age is the Tao of applying love to the hurting self and the hurting world. Williamson has set up non-profit organisations to feed and care for people suffering from AIDS and other life-threatening illnesses. Her claim is that each person already has all the love that there is, within their own being. Though, like Spangler, much of her terminology is Christian with New Age meaning, her teaching is reminiscent of the ways of Jesus Christ. Her story is one marked by the late 1960s and early 1970s when she decided that “God was a crutch I didn’t need.”138 She writes of her

prodigal life of relationships and drugs, and of a nomadic lifestyle, which were attempts to distract herself from the deepening neurotic pains of life:

There was some huge rock of self-loathing sitting in the middle of my stomach during those years, and it got worse with every phase I went through. As my pain deepened, so did my interest in philosophy: Eastern, Western, academic, esoteric, Kierkegaard, the I Ching, existentialism, radical death-of-God Christian theology, Buddhism and more.\textsuperscript{139}

In 1977 Williamson came in contact with a copy of \textit{A Course in Miracles} which claims:

This is \textit{A Course in Miracles}. It is a required course. Only the time you take it is voluntary. Free will does not mean that you can establish the curriculum. It means only that you can elect what you want to take at a given time. The Course does not aim at teaching the meaning of love, for that is beyond what can be taught. It does aim, however, at removing the blocks to that awareness of love’s presence, which is your natural inheritance.\textsuperscript{140}

This Course for Williamson was a turn-around. It used similar Christian terminology but interpreted it with psychological and intellectual appeal. Rather than “fighting the fight” the Course taught her to surrender completely. It is a statement of universal spiritual themes without monopoly on God. “As we begin to understand more deeply why love is such a necessary element in the healing of the world, a shift will occur in how we live our lives within and without.”\textsuperscript{141} For Williamson, as the Beatles claimed during her wandering years, “All we need is love.” The theme is that perfect love casts out fear. Fear has to do with the material things on which people falsely focus their love. Consequently life loses meaning because things lose meaning and there is no relationship in things which cannot return love. Following similar themes as Spangler and Findhorn, Williamson believes humans to be co-creators with God. This love of which she speaks can only be seen with the metaphysical Third Eye, or what esoteric Christians call the vision of the Holy Spirit, and what the New Age calls the Higher Self.\textsuperscript{142} The

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid. p. xiii.
\textsuperscript{140} Schucman, Helen. \textit{A Course In Miracles}. Foundation for Inner Peace, Inc. Introduction.
\textsuperscript{141} Williamson, Marianne. \textit{A Return To Love}. \textit{Op. Cit.} p. xvi
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid. p. xix.
love within humanity cannot be destroyed, only hidden. The crisis of the world expressed in outward terms as “anger, abuse, disease, pain, greed, addiction, selfishness, obsession, corruption, violence and war” is the fear sweating out of humanity’s pores. The love hidden within is the child within. Using the myth of Avalon Williamson tells her readers that the hidden love is like Avalon hidden in the impenetrable mists. Without the parting of the mists no one can see the Isle of Avalon. The only thing that will part the mists is the belief that Avalon exists. Williamson says, Avalon symbolises the world beyond the physical human eyes, a miraculous world. This is the world people know as children— the world of innocence, trust, softness and spirit; but that world has become clouded and love with it. The only thing that will allow the child of love to resurface is the faith and hope of the child within. “The mists part when we believe that Avalon is behind them.” The miracle necessary for a better world is “a parting of the mists, a shift in perception, a return to love.”

For Williamson who interprets the Course in Miracles, the first step is a realisation that individuals create their own hell. This is done through the self-fulfilling prophecy of fear. That fear is based on measuring up to the standards set by others— beauty, education, financial wealth, athletic prowess. These are the credentials that paralyse the masses with fear. Fear is a thousand-faced demon within. The faces of fear are manifested as fear of relationships, fear of loneliness, fear of failure, fear of success, fear of life, fear of death, fear of being too young, fear of being too old. All the fears of inward oppression are like emotional chains that become heavier and heavier; as Dickens says in the story of Scrooge, they are of our own making. “Hell has many mansions too.”

Once the fear and negativity have brought an individual to breakdown point, then comes the second step— surrender to God, surrender to love. At that moment the wrecking ball hits the individual’s life and God starts to rebuild the new person. In Williamson’s words, “Until your knees hit the floor, you’re still playing at life.” God is the love within us. Following the New Age concept of God, God is love and dwells within every human being.

143 Ibid. p. xx.
144 Ibid. p. xx, 9, 16.
145 Ibid. p. 7.
146 Ibid. p. 12.
God is energy, and Love is energy. They are the same; and through focusing on love one actualises the power of God. *A Course In Miracles* is training in self-actualisation by transformation in thinking.

**A third step**, according to the Course, is to realise that only love is real, therefore the world of anything which is not love is an illusion. Unloving is the same as hallucinating. Since fear is to love as darkness is to light, fear is the basis of illusion and the world is “a mass hallucination, where fear seems more real than love.” The miracle sought in *A Course in Miracles* is the miracle of change in perception from thinking in illusionary fear to thinking in real love. Sin is defined as an illusion, “loveless perception.” Therefore to be free of sin is to think love. In cause-and-effect terms, thought is the cause and experience is the effect. Therefore one thinks love and thus produces love. Love in the mind yields love in one’s practical life. This is heaven. The converse is also true. To think in terms of fear is to live in fear, and that is the extent of hell. In Freudian terms humanity is neurotic because individuals are separated from Self. And the Course, according to Williamson says the real Self is the love within.

**The fourth step** in the system of Course philosophy is that the Self is perfect, not something that has to be created, but something that has to be set free from its encasement, much like Michelangelo’s view that the true image was already created within the marble, but had to be set free by the chisel. The innate value of the Self is changeless. For Williamson and the Course, there is nothing that a person can do that will alter his or her approval and acceptance by God. There is no fallen being; that is an illusion. Characteristic of the New Age interpretation of Jung’s “collective unconsciousness,” there is a shared mind which is a divine or “Christ” mind. At their centre humans are not only identical but the same. Identical may refer only to the fact that two separate beings share something in common, but the idea of “same” means that the two are in fact one being. Williamson likens it to the spokes on a wheel. When considered from their position on the rim the spokes seem separate, but defined according to their source, the centre of the wheel, they are all the same.

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147 Ibid. 20-21.
148 Ibid. p. 21.
The borrowed terminology of the Course uses words like Christ, Holy Spirit, God, salvation, atonement, body of Christ, etc. in a psychological rather than religious sense, since for Williamson and company “no religion has a monopoly on the truth. Christ refers to the common thread of divine love that is the core and essence of every human mind... There is no place where God stops and you start, and no place where you stop and I start,” says Williamson. The Holy Spirit brings about the miracle of transformation to realise in the mind of the individual that he or she is perfect love and individually a cell of the body of Christ.

The problem with Self is the ego which has been programmed by the environment of negativity to believe that one’s worth is based on what one does rather than what one is in the essence of one’s being. The awesome fear of being unacceptable creates the self-hater ego within. There is no devil, no evil force that stalks humanity, but “in Course terminology the entire network of fearful perceptions, all stemming from that first false belief in our separation from God and one another, is called the ego.” Williamson likens the ego to a virus that attacks the core of a system, a kind of spiritual “mad cow disease.” The alternative to the ego is the Holy Spirit, a power within each person that delivers them from the illusionary hell of doubt and fear. As the Holy Spirit guides the person to a new perception of reality based on love the great Atonement is carried out. The ultimate goal is to expose all areas of life which are not comfortable and to challenge those areas of life to become comfortable in unconditional love. This is enlightenment, the fifth step in the system of realising a miracle.

The enlightened one realises that holocausts and AIDS are the product of fear not love. Enlightened ones are those whom the Holy Spirit has completely healed. Such examples include Jesus who accepted the Atonement and fully realised love. According to Williamson and the Course, the Christ mind is as much in each individual as it was in Jesus. There is no need to change, only the need to realise. The realisation of unconditional love that resides within is “the truth that sets us free,” it is the

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149 Ibid. 29, 39, 41.
150 Ibid. 28, 30.
151 Ibid. p. 32.
152 Ibid. p. 34-35.
"perception that saves us from our own fearful thoughts."153 Jesus, Buddha, or any other who has evolved into that enlightened state of consciousness are considered the evolutionary mutations that show the rest of humanity what lies ahead in evolutionary potential.

The practical implications of the channelled message from Jesus to Helen Schucman are explicitly laid out by Williamson. The process of surrender and the resultant healing is relative to the level of faith one places in the perception of the miracle. Williamson outlines the way of surrender as beginning in the Zen tradition with emptying of the mind, which in Christistic tradition she equates with "becoming as a little child."154 It is letting go of all attempts at power over things and people. Since God is merely "the love within us," she says, returning to Him is merely "a return to ourselves."155 This surrender to the greater power allows a person to enter situations where outwardly he or she does not know what to do, but according to the Course, there is a power within which does know. This is a higher power to which one surrenders so that it may lead through the illusions which cloud one’s perception and reveal the way forward. Intuitively, there is a release of the greater power which takes over and places one in a winner’s mode. Some have called it “beginner’s luck.” It is where the rules are not known, therefore there are no established boundaries and fears. This frees the higher power to lead to unlimited success. In this way the person ceases to build defences and stops “fighting the world” and starts loving it. Only by absolute surrender in letting down all arms does one release the Christ self. The ego is let go and love returns.

Once love returns miracles begin. These miracles are the natural outflowing of love which having altered one’s perception release power to correct and heal.156 From that point forward the miracles are involuntary expressions of love in the mission of saving the world. All perception is altered. For example because one’s perception of scarcity and death are altered, one is able to perceive one’s self as aware beyond this world. Scarcity and death are not feared because they are illusions. Love is freed to perform the miracles of forgiveness, rebirth and resurrection, healing in relationships,

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153 Ibid. p. 38.
154 Ibid. p. 52.
155 Ibid.
156 Ibid. p. 57.
right understanding toward work, and healing diseases in body, mind and spirit. In becoming a miracle worker, Williamson suggests one becomes a part of a “spiritual underground that’s revitalizing the world, participating in a revolution of the world’s values at the deepest possible level.”

Miracle workers keep their own counsel because others may not understand. The miracle worker is part of what the Course calls, “the plan of the teachers of God.” The teachers are not so much verbal as purveyors of energy. They come from all religions and from no religion. They are the called-out, those who have responded to the call to “constantly seek a greater capacity for love and forgiveness within.” This activity is preparing the world for a major shift.

Forgiveness is not seen in the traditional sense of removing a wrong and the guilt of wrong thought and action, since according to the Course, sin and guilt are illusions, only love is real. In reality there is nothing to forgive. Therefore, to forgive is merely to forget the unloving things. The traditional view of forgiveness is considered to be the arrogance of one person viewing themselves as better than another, or at least as equally sinful. This perception must be altered, and by altering perception in one person, since all consciousness is connected, healing is brought to the world.

In illustration of the power of miracles being apportioned to the mind-set of the individual, Williamson tells the story of a string of car accidents in which she was involved. It happened that in a relatively short term she was rear-ended three times on the freeways of Los Angeles. Having thought she dealt with them in love, about a week later she came down with a cold and sore throat. She prayed within herself to heal her sore throat, since she didn’t know any doctors in the area. After doing an inventory of her thoughts she realised that she had deviated from the way of love. Following the accidents everyone was so concerned for her that they began asking how she felt and gently rubbing her neck and back, inquiring if she had seen a doctor. The attention was good, and in her reassessment Williamson concluded that she had succumbed to the temptation to think that “being sick made people love me more.” After the prayer to heal herself, she

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157 Ibid. p. 60.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid. p. 61.
found that she still had the sore throat. Then on the way to meet a friend she met a person who turned out to be a doctor who then prescribed some medicine for her throat.

Williamson perceived meeting with the doctor and the prescription as miracles apportioned to her level of enlightenment. Instantaneous healing would have been too much for her belief-system at that time, so the God within apportioned a level of healing that was in line with her level of understanding. Since Williamson’s level was thinking in terms of doctors and medicine, opening up in love to a stranger allowed the Holy Spirit to provide that vehicle of healing. The saying goes that “crisis comes bearing its own solution.” The implications of this are vast. Williamson says that such a crisis as AIDS will bring enough people to their knees to bring about a critical mass of miracle-minded people. Then there will be a rapture of instantaneous healing. Doctors and scientists will get the prizes, but the underground of miracle workers will know how it really happened.

In the holistic notion of spiritual healing, the body-mind issue is dealt with from the eastern point of view. The body and mind are connected, therefore all healing must treat body, mind and spirit. Williamson cites Deepak Chopra’s book *Quantum Healing* in support of this process. In his view science is now confirming that the evolutionary process began with consciousness evolving a physical machine rather than the physical machine somehow evolving consciousness. Thus for Williamson and the Course, as well as New Age spirituality, the human spirit is the source of love and healing. Through the process of visualisation, one can bring healing love into the physical body. Williamson suggests writing letters to one’s illness, whether AIDS or cancer, or people. Then one is also to visualise the letter that would be sent in return. Through this process healing love is to come.

The body itself “is an illusionary wall that appears to separate us, the ego’s chief device in trying to convince us that we are separate from each other and separate from God.” According to the Course, there is no death and birth is not the beginning but a continuation. The physical body is merely the temporary encasement of the Great Rays which the Course explains as

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161 Ibid. p. 206.
162 Ibid. p. 216.
the lines of energy that emanate from within. "These lines of light and energy are our life force." 163 Near-death experiences and out-of-body experiences are cited as examples of other perceptions not conducive to the acceptance of empirical science and the naked eye. One day, says Williamson, human consciousness will so evolve that our senses will be able to perceive the Great Rays as did Jesus and Buddha. 164 "When Jesus said, 'Death shall be the last enemy,' he meant that it shall be the last thing we perceive as an enemy." 165 Williamson likens physical death to the removal of the shadow of the body, or in broadcasting terms, switching channels of transmission, or in literary terms as a book with chapters ending but a never-ending story going on. In terms of relationships, they go on beyond death. Williamson alludes to her own relationship with her father being better after his death than before. It is simply a matter of perception. Transphysical communication continues and one can enhance this perception through letter-writing and other techniques.

As for reincarnation, unlike many New Age followings, the Course claims there is no such thing since time is not linear, and there is no past or future only the eternal present. However, if one chooses to use the belief in reincarnation as a help to perception, then it is acceptable, since the Course claims no set doctrine. Life is more than life-in-the-body, and in the enlightened world the body is shed. "We have been alive forever. We will be alive forever more." 166 The body experience is but a classroom, and when graduation comes one should joyfully thank the body for all its service and gently welcome release.

**Psycho-Spirituality in the New Age**

Spirituality in the New Age is apt to be merged with newly packaged psychology. This psychology of inward journey toward the divine, toward self-discovery, self-actualisation, realisation of the full human potential and toward planetary evolution is all about transformation. In religious terms it might be likened to the “born again” transformation experience. New forms

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163 Ibid. p. 227.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid. p. 229.
166 Ibid. p. 232.
of psycho-spiritual therapy are on offer to inspire hope for this life and hope beyond this life. People are seeking what religion calls “salvation” yet in this-worldly terms. Carol E. Becker,¹⁶⁷ in the book *New Age Spirituality*, illustrates the futility of the secular world-view by citing the proverbial bumper-stickers of America which state the hopelessness felt by many in the words, “Life’s a bitch, and then you die.”¹⁶⁸ Bertrand Russell elucidated:

Nothing in America is so painful to the traveller as the lack of joy... Men whose grandfathers danced to the music of the pipe in Balkan and Polish villages sit throughout the day glued to their desks... Escaping in the evening to drink and a new kind of noise, they imagine that they are finding happiness, whereas they are finding only a frenzied and incomplete oblivion of the hopeless routine of money that breeds money.”¹⁶⁹

Carl G. Jung, the psychologist most celebrated and quoted by New Agers,¹⁷⁰ wrote of the need for religious experience in order for people to feel fulfilled in life. He was one of the first to reinterpret spirituality in terms of psychology. He predicted the New Age approach that the human psyche, with over emphasis on rationality in the consciousness, would eventually be reacted upon by an explosion of theosophical, eastern, occult and psychic interests. This impulse would go so far as to virtually void the dualism of body and consciousness in what Jung called the “psychicizing” of matter.¹⁷¹ The body and matter would no longer be seen as enemies. While Skinner’s behavioural psychology was identifying the human personality as “the ghost in the box” and biomedicine was treating ailments with drugs to alter the chemical balance of the brain, a New Age was in the making which would seek a holistic healing of body, mind and spirit.

¹⁶⁷ Carol E. Becker is director of the Department of Communications for Evangelical Church in America. Her approach to the New Age is from a sociological perspective, addressing the question, how one can hear God in the western culture. Her view is that the New Age is one way that has emerged in the modern western culture “that attempts to hear the divine voice.” Ferguson, Duncan (ed.). *New Age Spirituality*. Op. Cit. p. xi.
Andrew Greeley’s book *The Sociology of the Paranormal: A Reconnaissance* records that 39% of his random sample reported to have had overwhelming religious experiences, and an even larger number recorded having experienced extrasensory perception. Marilyn Ferguson, in her book *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, cites her survey of New Agers as revealing that 39% of all respondents claimed a psychedelic experience as important to their transformation. Most respondents also claimed belief in telepathy (96%), psychic healing (94%), precognition (89%), clairvoyance (88%), synchronicity (84%), psychokinesis (82%), cosmic intelligence (86%), consciousness that survives bodily death (76%) and reincarnation (57%).

Morton Kelsey too exeges the New Age movement as the quest “for experience of the nonphysical dimension of reality” with keen interest in seven categories:

1. **Prayer and meditation** as a way to religious experience and knowledge.
2. **Dreams** as another avenue revealing the spiritual dimension.
3. **Channeling** (being instruments of the spirit world, speaking through human beings).
4. **Afterlife** (often understood as reincarnation).
5. **Metaphysical speculation**.
6. **Healing** by religious or psychic means.
7. ** Extrasensory perception**.
8. **Ability of the mind to create reality**.
9. **Almost total avoidance of the problem of evil**.

While David Spangler would not identify the New Age as a new religion, he does agree that it draws from the highly diversified traditions of old religions, philosophies and activities. These avenues existed long before the New Age and therefore are not New Age in themselves. What links them to the New Age is that they all challenge “the dominant materialistic, patriarchal paradigm of contemporary Western industrialized culture. They each offer an image or process of transformation either for an individual or for the culture as a whole.”

John Button and William Bloom make an attempt to list and inform New Agers of the techniques and figures available

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172 Ibid. p. 39.
174 Ibid. p. 54.
175 Ibid. p. 81.

- Altered States of Consciousness
- Angelic and Fairy Realm
- Celtic and Mystical Christianity
- Channeling
- Cognitive-Behavioural Approaches
- Deep Ecology
- Druid Tradition
- ESP
- Goddess Spirituality
- Humanistic Psychology
- I Ching
- Martial Arts
- Men's Spirituality
- Neopaganism and Wicca
- Paganism
- Psychic Development
- Psychoanalysis
- Reincarnation
- Sacred Places and Earth Mysteries
- Shamanism
- Systems Theory
- Tarot
- Transpersonal Psychology
- Women's Spirituality
- Alternative Energy Sources
- Buddhism
- Celtic Tradition
- Christianity
- Death and Dying
- Dreams
- Ecofeminism
- Gnosticism
- Hinduism
- Hypnotherapy
- Kabbalah
- Meditation
- Native American Spirituality
- Near Death Experiences
- Psi Phenomena
- Psychic Guidance
- Psychosynthesis
- Sacred Dance
- Sacred Planet
- Sufism
- Taoism
- The Inner Game
- Western Magic
- Yoga

Sir George Trevelyan's claim for New Age spirituality is that human thinking is evolving holistically. The planet is now considered sacred "which merges spiritual vision with ecological awareness."

176 Trevelyan goes on to say that the human being is "an immortal droplet of divinity which cannot possibly die." 177 We are spiritual beings incarnate in the temple of the body to sojourn temporarily "in the heavy density of the Earth plane." 178 The earth is considered the training ground for souls, in order that the human being may "transcend ego desire, transmute our own nature, and discover what it means to become co-creators." 179 Accordingly the soul must pass each test in the earth school in order to make compensation for the harm done in "earlier times." The spiritual quest is all about learning to let go of ego and selfishness in freedom and love, to "take conscious control of our

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177 Ibid.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
own being, so that we can become a vehicle for the flooding in of the light.”

Spangler notes that although the emphasis of the New Age is on personal development as seen in the above list of spiritual approaches including psychology and psychotherapy, medicine and healing, there is a distinction to be made between the inner journey into the psyche and a spiritual journey that leads to a deeper experience of the divine. The inner journey of the psyche may involve psychic exploration, channeling and past-life regression. These methods are forms of psychotherapy and counsel. According to Spangler these methods would have evolved quite naturally according to the development of science and medical research into the nature of the mind, body and brain. The New Age simply embraces these developments and uses them as evidence of a paradigm shift and as a means to reach the goal of transformation.

For Spangler, as a spiritual movement, the New Age is contrary to the “narrow perspective of fundamentalists of any religious persuasion (including New Age fundamentalists), God is larger than any particular path or belief, and to be present in a person’s life apparently requires little more than the sincere openness and intent of a human heart to encompass a compassionate reality larger than self-interest and petty exclusiveness.” Whether through the use of crystals or talismans, whether seeking the Higher Self or attuning to one’s soul, New Age spirituality, for Spangler, is just another way of acknowledging within individuals and communities the need for a more noble wisdom to order human lives. In many ways, says Spangler, these techniques of the spiritual journey may be appropriately identified as psychological. As examples he quotes Arthur Hastings:

Contemporary channeled messages... are not equivalent to the literature of mysticism which focuses on salvation in Christ, union with God, or merging with the absolute. Contemporary messages tend to be in the immediate realm of human striving to manifest qualities of love, charity, spontaneity, wisdom, truth, spiritual purpose, and values. Few of the channeled beings show familiarity with the mystical traditions or mystical experiences, at least as they have been described by mystics and practitioners.

180 Ibid.
The presentation of most current channels is a popular and inspirational one.\textsuperscript{182}

Spangler goes further in citing Richard Rohr, O. F. M. to the effect that psychology has replaced spirituality in western culture.\textsuperscript{183} Under this presupposition Spangler announces that psychology has virtually become a religion for the West. Hence New Age psychology and New Age spirituality merge. Therefore the New Ager is warned by Spangler that in the midst of all the "costume jewellery" of the New Age one must search for the true "gemstones." In the quest for true spirituality the seeker is cautioned to make the distinction between what may be entertaining and exciting as opposed to what yields true spiritual discipline that quiets the personality "so that it can be integrated into a larger, transpersonal reality."\textsuperscript{184}

Ken Carey, a popular channeller for the New Age, records a revelation concerning psycho-spirituality given to him by a distant galactic entity in the \textit{Starseed Transmissions}. The entity claims that we live in a fallen state of sleepy amnesia. In this state we have lost access to the divine. The present state of human consciousness sees everything in dualistic terms such as space/time, material/spiritual, human/divine, good/evil. Humanity needs an awakening. The entity says this awakening will take place through a "psychological process." In reality, the entity says:

> This present moment is the stargate through which you will leave the prison of human definition and expand into an awareness of divine perception. It is the crack between the worlds, not only the worlds of past and future, but worlds of time and space, spirit and matter, form and being. It is a timeless zone, the gateway through which you will again begin to participate in the adventure of creation.

> Your entry into the eternal awesomeness of the present moment, into the Presence of God, will be through what we call a 'psychological process.'\textsuperscript{185}


\textsuperscript{184} Ibid. p. 91.

This “psychological process” which Carey’s entity reveals to him is a process by which individuals make an “identity shift” in which balance will be restored to one’s awareness of the two realities. One way of viewing these two realities is as form and being. The entity says through the psycho-spiritual shift individuals will realise that they are not the form which they animate, “but the force of animation itself.”

This psychological awakening will bring about a realisation of the person’s whole “Spirit” self. The awakening will return a person to a “state of grace, state of health, state of intimate association with all that is.” It will open the eyes to the reality of the creative power of thought. In this new revelation of self one will realise that everything he or she touches comes to life— “You are the energizing force of the material plane, the bringer of life, the bestower of blessing, and the sustainer of illusion. Through you, God is able to enter the very heart of Creation. Through you, God is revealed in material form.... You are the creator at this time of your own reality.”

However, Spangler warns New Agers that the quest for the individualised self is confused with the spiritual quest toward the divine. Thinking that God is a state of consciousness, it is assumed that one may reach God-consciousness through psychological means— “that some transcendent psychology, filled with techniques and processes, can lead us to such a cosmic state. In effect, psychology becomes a form of modern Gnosticism.” However, though this misinterpretation may be perceived and applied by some New Agers, Spangler says the real mystical tradition, such as the eastern esoteric view, would interpret God-consciousness as a blend that goes “beyond image, beyond description, beyond phenomena, and beyond psychology and anything it can offer.”

The problem of psycho-spirituality, for Spangler, is analysed as two-fold. On the one hand the seeker’s attention is diverted from relationship to the world, to a never-ending story of the human psyche where people become totally absorbed in processing their self as individuals in the never-ending

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186 Ibid.
187 Ibid.
188 Ibid. p. 37.
190 Ibid. p. 94.
quest for perfection apart from the world. On the other hand the New Age seeker may follow the extreme of locating “divinity within the self, so that if I go deeply enough or high enough within myself, I will find God.” In this scenario the individual is believed to be empowered to create his or her own reality, since the ultimate creative power of God “is the essential nature of the psyche.”

The most popular example of this belief in creating one’s own reality is epitomised by the most popular of New Age figures, Shirley MacLaine:

If I created my own reality, then— on some level and dimension I didn’t understand— I had created everything I saw, heard, touched, smelled, tasted; everything I loved, hated, revered, abhorred; everything I responded to or that responded to me. Then I created everything I knew. I was therefore responsible for all there was in my reality. If that was true then [sic] I was everything, as the ancient texts had taught. I was my own universe. Did that also mean I had created God and I had created life and death?

Spangler attributes the idea of creating one’s own reality to psychotherapeutic processes that strive to help people who are dealing with inferiority complexes such as alienation, disempowerment, lack of responsibility and projection guilt. These therapies deal with such fields as psychoneuroimmunology (the powers within the human psyche that give rise to self-healing). However, although amazing experiences have been documented in these areas of holistic healing, such as noted in Deepak Chopra’s Quantum Healing, again Spangler cautions that New Agers should not mistake the development of the human psyche, mind/body medicine or any other technique or talent for the real goal, which Spangler identifies as the goal of “creating community” and “embarking on a spiritual journey or

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191 Ibid.
192 MacLaine, Shirley. Out On A Limb. Bantam, New York. 1983, 1984. In this book as well as the five hour prime time ABC television production in early 1987, MacLaine is pictured facing the Pacific Ocean, being encouraged by her mentor to realise her personal deity by shouting into the wind, with ever increasing volume, “I am God... I am God... I AM GOD!”
moving toward the divine.”195 Also in this respect note the comments of Carol Riddell in *The Findhorn Community: Creating a Human Identity For The 21st Century*, which mention the New Age hype of people who advertise and capitalise on the weakness and naivety of others by selling techniques and wares for a fee. This is Capitalism with a New Age twist. Deeper New Age teachers are beginning to realise that one should not think that enlightenment can be purchased for a fee or achieved in some easy to apply quick fix manner. Transformation is a long journey through the masks of the external world and into the deeper internal consciousness where the true Self is revealed and set free from inhibitions to express what the New Age says is the real Self that is at peace, interconnected with others as well as nature and full of love. Riddell says, “that our purpose is to find the divine within, the criterion for which is the practice and experience of unconditional love. Our work is too important to be side-tracked.”196

The true quest for movement toward the divine, says Spangler, must include dealing with the “shadow self.” This is the capacity within humans to create pain and suffering. The masterpiece of Spielberg’s recapitulation in the film Schindler’s List, though a mild form of the true story, forcefully portrays the Nazi atrocities as the epitome of the propensity within humans for what Spangler once called the “Luciferic initiation.”197 This shadow-self is the repressed and suppressed painful content of the consciousness which is expressed in the outward world as oppression and injustice. As the New Age evolves its philosophy, this is beginning to be dealt with more openly. The dark side is now being more recognised and brought together with the light to express the holistic person.

In New Age theory and practice, the quest for spirituality is merely a step in the direction toward the divine and contact with the divine is merely a step toward the community—the world as one. Though in much New Age teaching it may appear that the self is a private and isolated being, in reality, Spangler says, contact with the real self leads to a recognition of the divine presence in all creation— “the radical Other who invites us and at times forces us to go beyond the comfortable and the complacent boundaries of

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our psyches to engage with what is not us, with what is different from us, and to discover the sacred in the struggle to create and embody community.”

In a Christic analogy Spangler recognises that the divine may be represented in the inner pain of the individual as well as in the pain of the individual inflicted upon others and upon the world. Therefore, to bring healing to the self is not an end in itself, but a means whereby healing can then be brought to one another and to the world. That is evidence of movement toward the divine. The archetype of the sacred community is now introduced into New Age psycho-spirituality. This sacred community is where people, nature, the world, God and the cosmos are in “a mutually enriching and empowering harmony.” Thus to be fully human is to ultimately discover and engage in the harmonious relationship which brings to reality the need of each part for each other part, and the effective harmony necessary for the wellness of each and all.

Spangler’s analogy of the New Age as a fair in which there are many tents of meeting serves to illustrate his point that no one tent can define the New Age. Some tents are secular, some are psychological and therapeutic, while other tents contain paths to discovery and exploration. Still other tents house spiritual pathways that exist outside the fair altogether, such as Buddhism and Christian mysticism. No tent within the fair nor the fair itself can be likened to a cathedral. The host of conflicting tents of meeting, confusion and paradox is the playground of discovery which gives rise to “the emergence of new insights and attitudes which might have had a harder time being recognized within the imposing structure of a cathedral.”

Spangler’s summary of the four-fold implications of a global spirituality as the end focus of psycho-spirituality in the New Age is as follows:

1. **The global Spirit will not be specific to any body of teaching.** The journey toward the divine is conducted in an atmosphere of “openness to all great faith traditions.” In this eclectic openness there is the risk of false synthesis which will lead nowhere, says Spangler. On the other hand, by

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198 Ibid.
199 Ibid. p. 99.
200 Ibid. p. 100.
201 Ibid. p. 102.
exploring all faiths in communion, one can discover the primal convergence of the universal spirit.

2. **The New Age spirituality is an ecological spirituality.** This means concern literally for the spirit of the earth as well as metaphorically concern for context, patterns, interconnections and interdependencies. Everything depends on everything else and co-creates everything else. Here the divine is not a point to attain but a field in which everything is embraced. The analogy of New Age spirituality to the biological rain-forests becomes a metaphor which says that the dismissal of varieties of religious experience is as potentially harmful as the destruction of the rain-forest which may be the home of species and remedies yet unknown to human beings. Vital insights toward the divine may be held in “such wild exotic growths as shamanism, occultism, paganism, and Wicca, as well as in the domesticated and well-cultured farmlands of Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam.”202 There is therefore individual as well as collective responsibility and accountability.

3. **The Divine is encountered beyond the boundaries of space and time revelation.** Rather than in a special place or at a special time or through a special revelation, the New Age encounter with the divine is potentially available at all times, in all places and through any source. By rejecting any source one may lose access to information which will assist in mapping the journey toward the divine, thus leaving gaps in unfolding patterns of interconnection that reveal the divine.

4. **The New Age spirituality is transformational.** Rather than an event, the New Age is a metaphor. It is not a prophecy of what the new world will be, but an inspiration of knowledge which will co-create a new world. New images of God, the world, and people, as cosmic, ecological and co-creative will lead to transformation beyond the mundane and the predictable.

For Spangler, “God is the radical Other... God is love and compassion beyond our imaginings, but God is also wild, ecstatic, and utterly unpredictable. God is the New Age, the original and only New Age.”203 Hence the New Age movement as a spiritual movement is the quest of modern humanity to hear the voice of the divine and to regain its identity with the divine.

202 Ibid. p. 104.
203 Ibid. p. 105.
Anne Bancroft, in her book *The Spiritual Journey*, traces her quest for spirituality as a working toward transformation. The various forms of spiritual journey are surveyed as ways of reaching this altered state of consciousness which gives rise to transformation. The transformation is experienced as a revelation “that there is an inner certainty to be found in everything. All things are so exactly and completely right in themselves that they need no comment or justification — they just are.”

Quite without determination or insight into spiritual life, Bancroft had what she recognised must have been a “spiritual experience.” It happened quite naturally as she was placing a rhododendron in a vase. As she enjoyed the look of its beauty, she recounts a sense of communication with the flower as though the two had become one. This induced a state of elation in which she realised that meaning for the mystery of existence was in her relationship to everything around her. She concluded that the euphoric state of oneness with the flower came about because for that moment she had become still in her gaze upon the flower, not wanting anything and that therefore freed her eyes to experience a new level of seeing things properly as they are in themselves.

Days later Bancroft had a similar experience while listening to the wireless. The music sent her into a new state of consciousness, transformed. The transformation lasted several days and faded away. These experiences convinced her “that an unimaginable wonder exists as the essential beingness of everything. And that it exists whether I notice it or not, and that when I do notice it, as I did then, it transforms me.”

Instantaneously one is struck by a sense of wonder that can be related to anything. It is a numinous experience of looking at something and seeing it in a wondrously new perspective. Bancroft also says it may come from a time in one’s life where there is a sense of something vital missing in life. This “longing nostalgia... the acknowledgement that there is something else” becomes the genesis of a spiritual journey. Such an insight has to be experienced rather than understood intellectually. Bancroft continues:

> Reason and intellect are our precious tools for life and we know of no other, but the ultimate meaning of existence has always escaped human attempts to define it by those tools and it is only

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205 Ibid. p. 4.
when they are put down and we become open to the unknown, to that which is unmediated by our discriminating thought, that the mystery can be felt and the spiritual journey get under way.  

Ferguson notes in her survey that of the spiritual disciplines and growth modalities the most frequently cited among New Agers is Zen Buddhism. Forty percent of those surveyed considered Zen to be a major influence in their transformation. Bancroft says in her experience she became convinced that something greater than herself existed. She could not call it "other" because it included the whole of herself, nor could she call it God because that objectified it. "What it really seemed to be," says Bancroft, "was a dimension of being." In her quest she became dissatisfied with Theravada Buddhism because it denied the existence of the self and for Bancroft there was both self and other. Alan Watts introduced her to Zen Buddhism which helped in realising that no-self really meant no permanent self. Mahayana Buddhism which includes Zen differs from Theravada on the nature of the self. Bancroft explains Watts:

Because the Buddha denied the existence of any permanent or 'real' self, the Theravadans take this to mean there is no self at all. Mahayana, on the other hand, considers that the true self is found when the delusion of that 'permanent' me is seen through. Theravada is content with conceiving enlightenment as merely the negative understanding that all things are without real self, but Mahayana completes this denial with an affirmation — that enlightenment is to realize that the self is not 'this person called "I"' as distinct from that person called "You", but that it is both "I" and "You" and everything else included.

Still the acknowledgement of a personal self did not seem to get enough credit, so Bancroft turned to quantum physics for help in the quest. Quantum physics claimed to be in physical terms what Buddhism claimed in philosophical terms. The claim is that particles are not things but interconnections between things, which are in turn interconnections between other things. The whole universe is one, yet perceived in different ways. Bancroft cites Fritjof Capra's The Tao of Physics for the explanation that

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206 Ibid. p. 5.
209 Ibid. p. 99.
though things may appear as separate objects in practical everyday life, in fact this is an illusion, so that quantum theory sees "the universe not as a collection of physical objects but as a web of relations between the various parts of the unified whole." Danah Zohar’s book, The Quantum Self, put the next part of the jig-saw together for Bancroft. She adds to Capra’s idea that particles are also perceived as waves. Zohar adds that particles have two functions, one as a "being itself" and the other as a wave. The oneness of the universe which Capra propounds is related by Zohar as particles existing as well as selves. As particles continually form new sub-selves in the same way in which people absorb new experiences. Both are changed. As with the sub-personalities of psychosynthesis, so the quantum person is an overlap of many sub-unities, just as a particle is both itself and a wave and all that it is interconnected with other things. Zohar writes:

... this shifting, composite “I” is not nothing, it is not an illusion. It can never be reduced to a mere collection of separate selves not to a collection of separate brain states... Quantum systems can’t be reduced in that way. The unity of the quantum self is a substantial unity, a thing in itself which exists in its own right... The “I” and the “we” is not a case of either/or but of both/and. I am uniquely me, something in myself, something in myself that only I can be, and I am also my relationships with others...  

Another improvisation which the New Age brings to the spiritual quest is that which Bancroft exposes as the need to feel the presence of God (by whatever definition) and the desire to worship, yet without Masters, hitting sticks and special clothes which came with Zen and similarly with other religions. For Bancroft the idea of master-pupil relationships meant removing power rather than empowering the self. Drury agrees and cites examples of New Agers being representative of the desperate spiritual yearning yet without institutional religion. Drury says they have turned away because they find the doctrines too formal and the belief systems too rigid. However, says Drury, in this very eclecticism comes the inherent problem of producing "an uncritical mix of ideas which flows from a real need to be 'open' to all possibilities in life — from chakras and crystals...

210 Ibid. p. 100.
211 Ibid. citing Zohar, Danah. The Quantum Self.
through to past incarnations in Atlantis."212 Bancroft and Drury exemplify the desire of the New Age to empower the self, rather than chain the self to a guru, medium, channel, or institutional religion of confined doctrines and belief systems. For Bancroft the eating of an apple should be as inspiring as any other religious ritual and seeing a flower for itself should be as elating as straight backed meditation, crossing one’s self, bowing five times a day in the direction of Mecca, taking one’s shoes off before entering a shrine or painting one’s face for Shiva. The head will spontaneously and naturally bow at a sunset, misty hilltops or skipping happy children. The palms will likewise come together involuntarily in gratitude over the realisation of any wondrous thing. In making her point about the need to recognise the sacredness of the world and all its gestalt and synergistic life Bancroft rhetorically asks:

Why is one action sacred and out of the world and the other, where most of one’s energy and time goes, thought of as mundane? Why was it somehow ‘better’ to cross oneself or bow to the master than, say, to pick up that most delightful of objects, an apple, and bite into it?”213

This is the substance of privatised religion for the New Age. Many divide in New Age thought by trying to combine the ideal that all is sacred with a philosophy that says all is One. For those travelling on this spiritual journey dualisms are illusions to be dismissed and forgotten. Yet one of the areas which divides many New Agers regards the presence of apparent dualisms. On the one hand some such as Williamson would say that dualisms are only apparent and not real. They are but a matter of illusionary perspective. On the other hand those such as Trevelyan would say there is a hierarchy of being of which Christ is in the order of the Great White Brotherhood. Some of the New Age would advocate revelations from higher beings such as the channelling work of Carey, Schucman, Knight, et.al and make the claim that there are definite realms beyond this world. Still others want to keep heaven and hell on earth, such as the attempt of Fox’s Creation-centred spirituality. For some the evolution toward utopian life is to be here on earth, while for others hope is to be realised beyond this planet. Some would claim personal

deity, while others would not. Yet in accepting any being as "other", it seems inevitable that there is the necessity of some form of dualism and/or hierarchy. The argument of the New Age is virtually self-defeating in this aspect. In all of this there seems again this tendency to want to have one’s cake and eat it too, which ultimately seems unable to escape the necessity of admitting some form of dualism and hierarchy. Even in the attempt to say that all is one, there is the accepted perception that some have not yet arrived at awakening.

**Psychosynthesis**

One of the techniques widely used by New Agers, which exemplifies the psychologising of spirituality, is a form of transpersonal psychology known as “psychosynthesis.” It is now the leading form of Transpersonal psychology and constitutes the spiritual discipline of some 29% of the New Age respondents in Ferguson’s survey. This new form of therapy was founded by the Italian psychoanalyst Roberto Assagioli (1888-1974) early in this century. His first chapters, originally written as individual papers in the 1930s were in 1965 finally incorporated into the book *Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques.* It was Assagioli’s desire that there should be an additional depth added to psychology which he considered as yet missing. This new addition was the transpersonal or spiritual realm. According to Assagioli, “psychoanalysis was concerned primarily with the basement of the psyche whereas psychosynthesis is concerned with the whole building.” The whole building constitutes not only the individual but all other living beings. While analysis is the separation of things into their separate parts so that one can determine what they are and how they function, synthesis goes further in putting things back together again in such a way that they work more harmoniously than before. Psychosynthesis adds

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spirit and soul to the acknowledged levels of the mental, emotional and physical realms. Assagioli defines the new psychology of psychosynthesis as:

A method of psychological development and Self realization for those who refuse to remain the slaves of their own inner phantasms or of external influences, who refuse to submit passively to the play of psychological forces which is going on within them, and who are determined to become the master of their own lives.217

Nona Coxhead in her book *Beyond Psychology: The Potential of Conscious Thinking*, considers psychology to be the study of the mind with focus on “interest in the phenomena of human behaviour.” She proposes going beyond psychology to explore “a possible interfusion of the meta-physical and the physical as suggested by the New Physics.” Coxhead’s cosmology proposes:

a conscious universe, in which man has direct access to self-knowledge and self-control, using the same laws that support his thought and make it manifest... each and every member of the human race has the creative power to rule his own life — and make it good.218

Transpersonal psychology is psychology which goes beyond the personal. It affirms that wholeness and self-transcendence are possible, and any system or work toward the improvement of the human condition must take into consideration global, social and environmental concerns. This is the extension of Abraham Maslow’s (1908-1970) third force Humanistic psychology of self-actualisation. Antony Sutich (1907-1976) pursued the idea of something beyond the third force and called it “Humanisticism.” Julian Huxley was working on a similar premise and calling it “Trans-humanistic.” Sutich defined this as the fourth force in psychology, and proposed it to Maslow as it is recorded in his dissertation:

Transhumanistic (or Fourth Force) Psychology is the title given to an emerging force in the psychology field by a group of

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217 Ibid. p. 1.
psychologists and professional men and women from other fields who are interested in those ultimate human capacities and potentialities and their actualisation that have no systematic place in either the First Force (classical psychoanalytical theory), Second Force (positivistic or behaviouristic theory), or Third Force (humanistic psychology which deals with such concepts as creativity, love, growth, basic need-gratification, psychological health, self-actualisation etc.). The emerging ‘Fourth Force’ is specifically concerned with the study, understanding, and responsible implementation of such states as being, becoming, self-actualisation, expression and actualisation of meta-needs (individual and ‘species-wide’), ultimate values, self-transcendence, unitive consciousness, peak experiences, ecstasy, mystical experience, awe, wonder, ultimate meaning, transformation of the self, spirit, species-wide transformation, oneness, cosmic awareness, maximal sensory responsiveness, cosmic play, individual and species-wide synergy, optional or maximal relevant interpersonal encounter, realisation, and expression of transpersonal and transcendental potentialities, and related concepts, experiences and activities.219

Maslow, a Buddhist psychologist, recognised the need to go beyond the individual’s human potential and thus began to use the term “transpersonal” which was first coined by the Czechoslovakian psychiatrist Stanislav Grof. In Transpersonal psychology there is limitless subjective feeling. No boundaries are imposed. Maslow said, “The more I think of it, the more this word says what we are all trying to say, that is, beyond individuality, beyond the development of the individual person into something which is more inclusive than the individual person, or which is bigger than he is.”220

Coxhead contrasts what she defines as traditional psychology, which avoids references to powers “beyond the mind-body function.”221 Cosmic and theistic dimensions are now allowed. Whereas in previous forms such as John B. Watson’s behaviourist psychology or Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic psychology the concept of “God” and “soul” were retired, in

220 Ibid. p. 172, citing Maslow’s writing in November, 1967 about the term as used by Stanislav Grof during a lecture at Berkeley some two months earlier.
the new psychology such terms are allowed along with words such as “spirit, spiritual, divine, faith, religious, father, creator, soul, Lord, Saviour, holy, trinity, deity, celestial, the kingdom, and many other terms of biblical reference.” In contrasting old psychology with the new Coxhead cites James Hillman in the quotation: “Psychology does not even use the word soul (psyche): a person is referred to as a self or an ego. Both the world out there and the world in here have gone through the same process of depersonification. We have all been desouled.” Jung’s term “anima” is from the Latin animatus “what makes living things live” from which comes the English “animate.” This is the meaning of the term “soul (psyche),” a word preferred by Coxhead and company in New Age spirituality for its esoteric inclusiveness. The word “God” is not restricted to religious definitions, but “is symbolic of the principle of life, visible or invisible. It is a description of the system of cosmic life, of the whole of which man is a part.” In the same way other terms are allowed in New Age psychology and science which formerly were relegated to areas outside fact and reason. Now science and psychology can use the term “spirit” to refer to that which animates the body and all living things, without theological overtones. The goal is a synthesis of science and psychology with New Age spirituality.

Will Parfitt, in his book The Elements of Psychosynthesis, defines the new psychology as a collection of techniques and exercises— “a comprehensive approach” with the aim of discovering the “true spiritual nature in individuals,” so that celebrants may move away from those things which they do not want in their lives and toward those things which are desired in their lives. This “psychology with a soul” places emphasis on the intuitive, inspirational and creative aspects of consciousness to the end that one may be and do whatever he or she wants. Synchronised with Spangler’s true spirituality, psychosynthesis does not work with the individual alone but in groups, from the smallest integrated relationships of people to the wider levels of society and the whole planet, to realise human potential without expense to others or the planet. A further imperative to psychosynthesis is the recognition of the evolutionary open system that is

222 Ibid. p. 35.
223 Ibid. p. 37.
224 Ibid.
225 Ibid. p. 36.
never finished. It transforms and grows in company with the progressivity of an evolving and ever-changing world.

Obstacles or blocks to growth are seen as gifts or helpers. By evaluating these blocks one can progress in the desired direction toward true being. In the process of evaluation one is challenged to exercise freedom of choice in respect to former thou-shalt and thou-shalt-not conditioning. Former conditioning should no longer be allowed to control one’s response. One is taught by psychosynthesis to be free of the conflict which arises over what one has been conditioned to do or not do as opposed to what one really wants to do. Parfitt says, “we are always bigger than the dynamic of any such conflict—if we move out of the conflict and connect with the self, from this better vantage point we can make clearer decisions.”

Psychosynthesis refers to peak-experiences as times when one feels connected with positive affirmations which lead in turn to further growth in the qualities of Love, Joy and Truth. These feelings should then be grounded by psychosynthesis to practical everyday life so that the energies are grounded in manifestation. Without grounding the energies dissipate into illusion. Through getting more in touch with the transpersonal qualities and expressing them in one’s life, a fuller potential is realised in life. Maslow claims that what the major religions of the world called “revelations” which came “from the lonely prophet to the mass of human beings in general” can be subsumed under the heading of “peak-experiences.” Rather than being supernatural these phenomenon were actually “natural human peak-experiences.” Peak-experiences include the perception that the whole universe is an integrated whole. Hierarchy tends to wane, the celebrant experiences an objectivity toward nature that realises nature has being of its own rather than merely being the playground of humanity. Peak-experiences move one toward ego-transcendence. While the peak-experience is self-validating, it also perceives all things as having independent reality. For Maslow, a peak experience also moves one to accept the value of objects and experiences in themselves—that life has meaning and value in these objects and experiences in themselves. Further,

227 Ibid. p. 9.
the peak-experience is always beautiful, good and meaningful, never unacceptable or evil. Evil becomes part of the whole and is accepted as belonging to the whole. There is a fusion of all apparent dichotomies and dualisms. The person who experiences the peak-experience will have a sense of peace and harmony, a transformation toward the real self who is responsible and creative, honest and innocent.229

Just as there is no set dogma of right or wrong in psychosynthesis, there is no exclusion process. Rather the aim is transformative inclusion to full potential. Likewise psychosynthesis requires no guru or guide (psychosynthesis therapist) either for individuals or groups. Though one may consult these, psychosynthesis is designed to be a system of self-help.230

Parfitt summarises the elements of psychosynthesis as eight-fold:231
1. a means for individuals and groups to grow and learn about themselves;
2. increased ability to assert one’s will in order to improve one’s situation from both inner and outer viewpoints;
3. a connection to the transpersonal realms of soul and spirit;
4. a clearer connection to conscious life processes and to the unconscious realms behind these;
5. more creativity;
6. a means of grounding creative energies and manifesting true life purpose;
7. an improvement to inner life;
8. improved interpersonal relationships.

Assagioli says the goal of psychosynthesis is to allow individuals to free themselves from enslavement by achieving “a harmonious inner integration, true Self-realisation, and right relationship to others.... The stages for the attainment of this goal may be tabulated as follows:

1. Through knowledge of one’s personality.
2. Control of its various elements.

229 Ibid. The information on Maslow’s characteristics of peak-experiences are summarised in the paragraph relating to this note.
231 Ibid. p. 4.
3. Realisation of one’s true Self — the discovery or creation of a unifying centre.
4. Psychosynthesis: the formation or reconstruction of the personality around the new centre.”232

Parfitt’s example of beginning the process is to find a comfortable position in which to relax, take a few deep breaths and begin the visualisation steps toward the interconnectedness of all things which constitute one’s self, beginning with imagining a single atom, connected to more atoms, molecules to molecules, cells to cells, organ to organ, tissue to tissue, blood to blood, bone to bone. Imagine the harmony of the physical person, the interaction of the billions of cells, innumerable molecules and atoms — the wonder of the holistic person. This being true of the outer person, one can realise the same must be true of the inner person — the thoughts, emotions, feelings, sensations and all that constitutes the whole inner world. Following, this imaginative visualisation one is to come back to present awareness and contemplate the thoughts, feelings and sensations experienced during the process.

**The Inner Journey**

In order to explore the inner world one needs a map of consciousness. The one suggested by psychosynthesis is what is called “the egg of being” or “the egg diagram.”233

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The Egg Diagram

The map of consciousness locates one’s relationship to the past and the future as well as allowing the individual to see who they are in the present in relation to one’s self and other people. Psychosynthesis encourages people to find the map of consciousness that suits them. There are no good, better and best maps, only a variety of maps which suit individuals. The “egg of being” may be useful to some while “the tree of life” map used by Qabalists may be suitable to others. The main principle to remember, whatever map is chosen, is that the map is not the territory. The map is only a static representation of a dynamic reality. Maps are not the truth. They are only useful tools to facilitate one’s exploratory journey of inner discovery. Familiarity with the map as a tool can assist one when actually encountering the metaphorical mountains and valleys, rivers and oceans of life.

The primary map for psychosynthesis is the map of “the egg of being.” This represents the person’s total psyche which is represented in seven areas. These areas are drawn with gaps in the lines to illustrate that free interplay is possible between all levels. In line with themes of an aquarian New Age the egg of being shows some structure for the individual to remain intact, yet openness and fluidity to establish interconnectedness with all beings. The work of psychosynthesis is to use various techniques of meditation and
visualisation “to strengthen the egg shell, and create more of an individual identity.”

The three horizontal divisions represent the person’s past, present and future respectively. Each time frame carries the others. For example in the present the past is carried as memories and experiences, whether or not they are recalled. The person is a composite of his or her past. In the same respect, the future is carried esoterically within the individual as the potential to become whatever the person decides to be. The egg of being represents the inner journey of the individual being and that individual’s connection to other beings.

1. The lower unconscious represented by the figure 1 in the diagram above includes the personal past made up of “repressed complexes, long forgotten memories, instincts and physical functions over which we (ordinarily) have no conscious control.” This level is where unconscious controls are at work. Not only does this include involuntary bodily

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234 Ibid. p. 19.
235 Ibid. p. 15.
functions, but it also includes the involuntary effects of events upon one’s life. Parfitt gives the example of being chased by a pack of growling dogs. Whether one chooses to remember the event or not, it will have an effect upon one’s life. This area also relates to training as an early child in the “do’s and don’ts” which may later give rise to subliminal senses of guilt. Through the processes of psychosynthesis one can get to know these inner workings of consciousness so as to integrate them and release their energies with the result that the individual will feel more freedom in life. Assagioli lists “dreams of an inferior kind, lower uncontrolled parapsychological processes, pathological manifestations such as phobias, obsessions, compulsive urges and paranoid delusions.”

2. The middle unconscious represented by the figure 2 in the diagram above is the area “where all states of mind reside which can easily be brought into one’s field of awareness.” This is the place where readily accessible information is stored. Parfitt’s example is that of having an appointment later in the day, so the awareness of that is tucked away until nearer its time of occurrence. However, it is noted that the intensity of that scheduled meeting may cause it to jump into one’s consciousness many times during the day. The middle unconscious is also the store-place of suppressed information. This differs from repressed information. Repressed information affects the individual but has been so “pushed down” into the lower unconscious that the individual is unaware of the memory or that the repressed material is having an effect on the person. On the other hand, suppressed material is that which is known to the individual but by choice the individual does not bring it out. The middle unconscious is readily controllable, whereas the lower unconscious is not so accessible and does exert control over the individual. Celebrants are cautioned in psychosynthesis to deal with suppressed information in due course before it becomes repressed and controlling. Assagioli calls this area an assimilation area where “our ordinary mental and imaginative activities are elaborated and developed in a sort of psychological gestation before their birth into the light of consciousness.”

3. **The superconscious or higher unconscious** represented by the figure 3 in the diagram above is one’s “evolutionary future, the region from where we receive all inspiration and illumination, however we experience it.”

The superconscious is experienced when a person has a sudden insight as to the solution to a problem which may have troubled them for some time. It is what Parfitt calls the “inner genius” where inspiration comes for art and science. It is the seat of intuition and imagination. Again it is stressed that the realms of lower, middle and higher are not intended as moralistic divisions. These terms refer to the evolutionary aspects of the unconscious. The lower unconscious deals with the past; the middle unconscious confronts the present; and the higher unconscious brings the person into cognisant evolution as the consciousness rises to new experiences that give the sense of “things dropping into place.”

Assagioli makes note that this is the place from which one receives “urges to humanitarian and heroic action” and “higher feelings, such as altruistic love... In this realm are latent the higher psychic functions and spiritual energies.”

4. **The field of awareness or consciousness** is the fourth region, represented with the number 4 in the above illustration of the egg of being. In the illustration it “is in the region shaped like an amoeba to emphasise how it is constantly changing as our field of awareness changes.” This area may also be represented as a circle and is constantly alive with aquatic flow as all the emotions, sensations and changing thought-patterns come into the present level of awareness and activity. The work of psychosynthesis is to keep the field of awareness from becoming hardened to one’s experiences. This is accomplished by techniques which encourage freedom of movement.

5. **The personal self or individual “I”** represented by the number 5 in the above illustration is the region which is also within the amoebic present. It is the awareness of self as the “I” who is experiencing the various levels of consciousness as distinguished from the changing thoughts, emotions and

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240 Ibid.
sensations themselves (4). Assagioli makes the distinction between the often confused Field of Consciousness (4) and the personal self (5).

The “self”, that is to say, the point of pure self-awareness, is often confused with the conscious personality just described, but in reality it is quite different from it. This can be ascertained by the use of careful introspection. The changing contents of our consciousness (the sensations, thoughts, feelings, etc.) are one thing, while the “I”, the self, the center of our consciousness is another.243

This awareness of self is the core which is separate from all else that constitutes being—the body, the feelings, the thoughts, the desires, the subpersonalities, the various roles played in life and all other inclusions to the whole person. It is from the personal self that all other aspects of being are co-ordinated and utilised to make up the whole person. The purpose of psychosynthesis is to place celebrants more readily in touch with their personal self. It is believed that the more in touch one is with one’s self, the more whole and healthy one will become. This is achieved through recognition and dis-identification with functions and roles so as to reveal what is distinctively “I.” The “I” is unique and unattached to all else. When every function, role, emotion, sensation and thought is dis-identified, what is left is the true self, the observer of all else that is thinking, feeling and sensing. In visualisation exercises one affirms:

I have a body, but I am not my body.... I have feelings, but I am not my feelings.... I have a mind, but I am not my mind.... I recognise and affirm that I am a centre of pure consciousness. I am a centre of will, capable of observing, directing and using all my psychological processes and my physical body.244

One is to affirm this daily, preferably at the beginning of the day as a symbolic second awakening. Parfitt explains that in the view of psychosynthesis, the personal self is the reflection of the spiritual Self (6). Therefore a foundation premise of psychosynthesis is to raise one’s level of self-awareness in order that the individual may be in control of his or her personality and life. Once the personal self is directed, the person is guided

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to the Spiritual Self (6) which in turn allows greater and fuller contact with the collective unconscious (7).

6. **The spiritual or transpersonal Self** represented in the region marked with the number 6 in the above diagram shows the deeper level of consciousness where spirituality resides. These spiritual realms of energy may be contacted through "meditation, dance, devotion, concentration, loving sex, aesthetic ecstasy, compassion, and shock." These energies are tapped in order to be manifested or grounded in this world. The precious jewel is only precious because its beauty is shared and appreciated with others. It is here that hope rises in the individual, and in that transformation the person becomes the vehicle of hope for others. As the spiritual or higher Self is connected with, a person's life begins to balance with purpose and a sense of wellness and wholeness. In this way the individual becomes a co-worker with evolution.

The transpersonal Self is distinct from the superconscious (3), which is sectioned off for convenience only. This higher unconscious is "that part of the unconscious that 'contains' energies of a higher frequency than those of the contents of the lower unconscious. In distinction the Self (using the capital "S") is "the central reality of a being, the innermost centre where he or she is completely individual and at the same time connected to everyone and everything else. The Self is immutable and imperishable in essence. The Self is like the sun that radiates upon all the earth. Each person may have a different experience of its radiance, but it is the same sun which shines on all. The Self radiates the spiritual qualities which Parfitt lists as including: "Love, Truth, Beauty, Joy, Courage, Trust, Ecstasy, Delight, Unity, Calm, Compassion, Peace, Loyalty, Freedom, Risk, Power, Simplicity, Vitality, Understanding, Humour, Patience, Service, Wonder, Eternity..."

In the superconscious (3) these qualities remain pure, but as they are perceived in the middle unconscious personality (2) they generally become distorted. This is not to say they have gone wrong or bad, says Parfitt, they are merely not experienced in their pure form. The more distorted the form of experience, the more negative is the apprehension. Love becomes

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245 Ibid. p. 43.
246 Ibid. p. 46.
possessive or jealous and trust becomes fear or slavery. Psychosynthesis seeks the positive response to a seeming negative situation, so that all is considered to be positive. For example facing possessiveness gives rise to transformation into its underlying spiritual quality, Love. The goal is to ground (manifest) the true creative Self which is the Spirit. Assagioli explicates the presence of the Transpersonal or Higher Self with the example that the conscious self (5) can be:

submerged in the ceaseless flow of psychological contents” as well as seeming to “disappear altogether when we fall asleep, when we faint, when we are under the effect of an anaesthetic or narcotic, or in a state of hypnosis. And when we awake the self mysteriously re-appears... This leads us to assume that the re-appearance of the conscious self or ego is due to the existence of a permanent center, or a true Self situated beyond or “above” it.247

Assagioli also avoids the confusion of the higher Self with the Freudian “super-go” by clarifying that Freud’s super-ego was not considered to be a real self but an artificial construct. In the same sense Assagioli distinguishes the true self “from any ‘phenomenological’ conception of the self or ego.”248

7. The collective unconscious is the level of participation shared by all sentient beings. This communion is shared by all living beings regardless of the being’s awareness of that participation. It is “the totality of interdependence between all living creatures.”249 Here the principle of synergism is applied to the aims of psychosynthesis. “The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.”250 Assagioli illustrates the collective unconscious as “processes of ‘psychological osmosis’...going on all the time, both with

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other human beings and with the general psychic environment." In the collective unconscious the apparent divisions and dualisms are recognised in reality as illusions. While in the world of apparent divisions one can become an example by "loving what we do and doing what we love" which introduces more of the beauty and harmony of the transpersonal Spirit. The ultimate goal is to achieve "the supreme synthesis where all parts of life come together and realise the whole that includes all yet transcends each individual part." 

Carl Jung's model of the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious encapsulates what psychosynthesis elaborates as "the egg of being." In his book The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious, Jung defines the personal unconscious as the superficial level under which lays the deeper level "which is not a personal acquisition but is inborn." This deeper level is the collective unconscious. It is this level of unconscious that most attracts New Agers to quote Jung more than any other because it offers them a spring-board from which to jump into all manner of subjective levels and altered states while furnishing them with a foundation for the evolutionary transformation of humanity and other forms of being. The term "collective unconscious" was chosen because this level of the unconscious—

is not individual but universal; in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a supra-personal nature which is present in every one of us.

For Jung the personal unconscious held what he called the "feeling-toned complexes" which constitute the private side of personal psychic life. On the other hand the collective unconscious is made up of what he called "archetypes." For Jung, archetypes are the inherited part of the psyche, the primordial images of the collective unconscious. In theory they are

254 Ibid.
unnumbered. They are the common images and motifs which are repeated numinously throughout history. Four major primordial types are listed as:

1. **The Persona** is the mask or facade one shows the outward world so as to appear accepted in social relationships. Behind the persona is the mirror of the real self, the protected fragile ego, the true face.

2. **The Anima/Animus** is the true reflection of the self. It is the mirror-image behind the persona. In the male the anima is the unconscious female side, and in the female the animus is the unconscious male side. It is “the life behind consciousness that cannot be completely integrated with it, but from which, on the contrary, consciousness arises.”

3. **The Shadow** is the dark side, the archetypal animal nature, the weakness, the unsolved problems, the negative. Facing the shadow opens the collective unconscious to deeper “helpful powers slumbering in the deeper strata of man’s nature.”

4. **The Self** is it pivotal archetype which unifies the personality. It is the image of a person’s fullest human potential and the unity of the personality as a whole. The self is the centre and whole circumference which embraces both the conscious and the unconscious. Human consciousness (ego) only portrays a limited range of the self at any given time. For Jung the self is the image of God within humans. Jung states:

   It is only through the psyche that we can establish that God acts upon us, but we are unable to distinguish whether God and the unconscious are two different entities... it does not seem improbable that the archetype produces a symbolism which has always characterised and expressed the Deity.... The God-image does not coincide with the unconscious as such, but with a special content of it, namely the archetype of the self. It is this archetype from which we can no longer distinguish the God-image empirically.”

The archetypes of the collective unconscious are relayed to the conscious world “generally in the form of esoteric teaching.” They are expressed in

256 Ibid.
dreams, intuitions, myths, mystical insights, and other similar revelatory metaphysics. One of the major techniques which New Agers use to access the collective unconscious is visualisation. The basic presupposition of visualisation is that the mind can change reality to one degree or another depending on the trained ability of the visualiser. The classic New Age exhibition of visualisation was the international visualisation of planetary harmony to be enacted as the Harmonic Convergence or Earthday. The event’s organisation was based on Jose Arguelles’ book The Mayan Factor: Path Beyond Technology. This book proposed a New Age eschatology in which Arguelles postulated from ancient Mayan calendars that the “materialistic world” would end or evolve toward a new dimension on August 16-17, 1987. The proposition was that if 144,000 true believers gathered around the world to resonate the dawning of a new age of peace and harmony, it would create a critical mass, halt the end and in fact inaugurate a new age of planetary harmony. The focus of the participants’ minds on harmony and peace was to invoke such energy that would create world peace and open the door of communication to beings from other planets. The convergence of three planets lining up with the new moon would correspond to a new wave of energy entering the planet’s life. This would begin the build up to the intergalactic Harmonic Convergence in the year 2012.

Visualisation is a technique which requires practice to perfect. One who has obtained “absolute visualisation” according to Indian tradition has attained siddhi (enlightenment). Some of the titles which address such a one include Bhagavan, Avadhut, Paramahansa, Acharya and Siddha Yogi. Such individuals have attained the godlike ability to control outward reality. This belief goes hand in hand with the particular idea that monism presents—that all that is and all that can be experienced is a projection of the cosmic Self, the One is all that is, all else is illusion.

According to Michael Harner, a leading authority on shamanism, New Age visualisation is shamanism in popular form. It is the key to invoking power. Anne Bancroft in her book The Spiritual Journey cites a quotation

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from Evelyn Underhill, author of Mysticism: “We are face to face with the ‘wonder of wonders’ — that most real, yet most mysterious of all the experiences of religion, the union of the human and divine, in a nameless something... it is here that the mystic encounters Absolute Being.”

William James is similarly cited for his book The Variety of Religious Experiences in which he lists four characteristics of spirituality:

1. **Ineffability** is the state of experience which goes beyond words and resides in the perceived feelings sensed in the experience.

2. **Noetic insight** is the realisation of some new knowledge that seemed beyond the scope of the ordinary mind. These are illuminations, revelations of inarticulate depth beyond the intellect.

3. **Transiency** is the actual experience beyond intellect in which one touches the Unconditioned, the Absolute Void, the Godhead, Suchness or the Ground of Being where the “I” feels changeless and at one with all things. One is lifted to a new plane of awareness momentarily, and depending on the level of importance placed on this higher awareness, the experience can develop and reoccur. Ultimately the celebrants can control this awareness. Douglas Harding describes his experience in his book On Having No Head:

   ...it felt like a sudden waking from the sleep of ordinary life, an end to dreaming. It was self-illuminous reality for once swept clean of all obscuring mind.... It was a lucid moment in a confused life-history. It was a ceasing to ignore something which (since early childhood at any rate) I had always been too busy or too clever or too scared to see.

4. **Passivity** is the state one feels after initially focusing and observing the various techniques to reach the spiritual awakening. Passivity is when the state being experience takes over from the will of the individual and he or she is carried along involuntarily by the experience as by a superior power. Such an experience, Bancroft says, “gives the person the confidence of knowing forevermore that there exists a Transcendent, a Reality, and that its dimensions are without limit.”

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263 Ibid. pp. 8-10.
265 Ibid. p. 10.
Visualisation is also represented in New Age spirituality in the form of astral projection. The imagination is trained to focus on certain vivid images created in the mind. These images or symbols are called “astral doorways.” These symbols become the focus of visualisation and are then transferred to the mind and enlarged until one can see themselves stepping through the symbol as a doorway. These astral doorways allow one’s awareness to interface with a parallel world called the astral plane. The astral dimension is a reality so plastic that while in that plane the surroundings take the form of whatever one perceives them to be. It is widely believed among New Agers that in addition to one’s physical body there exists “a whole series of subtle bodies, one within another, like a set of Russian dolls.” For example the etheric body (a ghost like body of finer material than the physical body) may travel beyond the physical body through the experience of dreams or what is now called an “out-of-body-experience.” This is often distinguished as etheric projection. The astral body is similar but occurs as a projection of consciousness into another world. J. H. Brennan, author of Astral Doorways, recommends various exercises to strengthen the power of imagination so as to sustain contact through visualisation:

Your mental pictures must become crisp and clear. Their colors must be vital and alive. And when this is achieved, you must go further. You must develop the ability to imagine sounds and smells, tastes and sensations. The better you can do this, the more rewarding your astral trips will become.267

Visualising the Personal self

Getting in touch with the inner world is achieved through relaxed imaging. New Agers would say the shaman lives within each person, though through the centuries access to the shamanic talent has been forgotten and lays at an unconscious level. In particular the shaman accesses the spiritual world before the fallen state when humans and animals were separated. Thus is accessed an ecological awareness. Though many and various scenes can be

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used, often in psychosynthesis the image of a “meadow” is projected in the mind to convey the field of awareness, the middle unconscious present. A path is visualised which leads to the mysterious dark valley of the past or lower unconscious, while another path leads up the mountain to the Temple of the Self or superconscious future. Whatever is imagined in the meadow, in the valley or on the mountain reveals what is present in the inner world of the person. In beginning the vision one is to simply see the setting and become aware of the various areas as vividly as possible without actually going into the content of those areas. Thus one sees the meadow in all its beauty, the sloping away to the edge and roughness of the path indicating the way down into the dark valley. In the other direction the meadow leads to an awe-provoking mountain scene. Then is pictured a bird flying down from the mountain with a jewel in its beak. As it passes over it drops the jewel into the person’s hand. The person is to thank the bird “and sense the power and strength of this object” as it is held tight fisted. The imager is to focus on the jewel’s kind, size and colour. The jewel is to be brought back from the vision into reality. Once returning from the visualisation experience, one is to draw or write about the jewel so as to keep it in the present. It is to be considered a gift from the superconscious and may be used “as a magical talisman which will protect” the person on their journeys into the unconscious. The power of the jewel will grow with the individual.

As people are trained in the techniques of psychosynthesis, they will realise the many subpersonalities which make up the individual. These subpersonalities are seen in the various roles people play in life—mother or father, husband or wife, business person or player, friend and lover. The challenge of psychosynthesis is to distinguish between the person and the role played. Parfitt likens the personality to an orchestra of players yet with one conductor. The goal is to make harmonious music of one’s life in relation to all others and to self. There are different levels of roles to be considered as one gets in touch with the self. There are the obvious outward roles, but then comes the exploration of subpersonalities which expose various states of attitude or approach to situations. Parfitt suggests images of “the miserable old man, the angry cat, the fool, the controller, the top dog, the mystic, the sad little girl, the sensible adult, the shy boy” and whatever is illustrative of various moods and attitudes, motives and intents of the whole.

person. Naming the subpersonalities one identifies connects one with their various energies, while also allowing some detachment. When visualising the multiple personality within one is encouraged to allow freedom of expression to create the image which best describes the subpersonality. Sometimes humour is used, sometimes animal, or mythic creatures or humans or anything else. The idea of spontaneity avoids making up the images. At any given time the images may change and the list of subpersonalities may change as the self progresses.

The more easily connected subpersonalities are what is called the “core personality” or ego. These are more readily identifiable and are more easily allowed recognition because they are what a person believes his or her self to be. The more difficult subpersonalities to contact are those suppressed in the middle unconscious. They are not so easily believed or accepted. These subpersonalities are often projected onto other people. Still deeper are the hidden subpersonalities of the lower unconscious. These are repressed and totally unaccepted. This is the shadow-self which controls the individual unawares. As the processes of psychosynthesis allow one to confront these repressed subpersonalities, their energy is released and the individual is empowered—transformed. Subpersonalities are first identified and then transformed by fulfilling the need they crave. In this way individuals are able to become responsible and independent, not depending on the identity of others for their own identity. This may often be experienced in retirement when a person is unable to let go of a career, or when parents are unable to let go of their grown up children. This is the child within that still needs to grow up. Psychosynthesis is the spiritual psychology that is intent on the individual growing up to full human potential.

All subpersonalities are good. The point of concern depends on whether they control the individual or the individual harmoniously controls them. By spending time in the “meadow” of visualisation one can determine what subpersonalities co-exist within, and once discovered and named a person can choose either to identify or dis-identify with a particular subpersonality depending on appropriateness at any given time and place. A major conflict which arises is between “thinking” subpersonalities and “feeling” subpersonalities. One may intellectually or academically determine a particular action is right, yet feel averse to doing it. Developing harmony
between thinking and feeling is achieved in psychosynthesis by the release of creative energies which emerge from the deeper levels of transpersonal qualities such as love, joy, truth, beauty and so on.

Another way in which this conflict represents itself is through one’s needs and wants. Needs are deeper than wants and go to the heart of the reason for the want. Once the underlying need is established, there may be exposed a number of ways to fulfil the wants represented by the need, yet without conflict. One must first accept the wants and needs as valid, but that the conflicts are resolved when the deeper need is filled. Identifying needs and resolving conflicts between wants yields transformation.

Conflict between subpersonalities is often an expression of “the dynamic between Love and Power (or Will).” Love-oriented subpersonalities tend toward wanting “to be included, listened to and taken care of,” while “Power-orientated subpersonalities want to be able to express their needs, and not be restricted from taking the decisions they feel are right.” Another conflict is between those subpersonalities which want things to change as opposed to those which want things to stay the same. Psychosynthesis assists the individual in making the right choices about when it is time to change and when it is time to remain stable. One learns to control the vehicles rather than becoming their passenger. Without this control, the transpersonal qualities within become impure. The loss of control is illustrated by Parfitt with such examples as trust being degraded to foolishness, courage becoming foolhardiness and compassion giving way to self-pity. The goal is to raise the weaker to the stronger. Whenever one does this investigative work there is energy released which moves one closer to one’s centre or true self and with this movement there is increased harmony in the life of the individual. Fragmentation and division give way naturally to harmony and healing.

The visualisation process for dealing with specific subpersonalities involves returning to the meadow and noticing a cottage, which is the home of some of the visualiser’s subpersonalities. After a person taps at the door of the cottage, they are to take detailed notice of the person who opens the door,

\[269\] Ibid. p. 29.
\[270\] Ibid. p. 30.
finding out as much about that person as possible. They are a manifestation of a specific subpersonality. That person will lead the visualiser into the floral garden where all the senses are invoked to absorb the variety and beauty of the garden walk with the subpersonality. Together the visualiser and the subpersonality take notice of a particular flower, its size, colour, and all. This is the flower of transformation which brings serenity to the person and the subpersonality. In discussion with the subpersonality the person discovers what is needed to keep the garden beautiful and what transformations may have taken place in sharing the wonder of the flower together. After thanking the subpersonality, the visualiser is to return to consciousness and record the experience and how one may implement in daily life the needs expressed in maintaining the garden’s beauty.

Through dialogue and “time sharing” (giving space to each subpersonality) the bodily sensations, the feeling emotions and the thinking mind listen to the inner voices of each other and strive toward balance. The more one is able to identify the self, the more one can access the spiritual Self. The more one is able to access the spiritual Self, the more he or she will be able to manifest spiritual qualities in the world. Ken Wilber, hailed by some in the New Age as today’s leading writer on consciousness and transpersonal psychology,271 says that the deepest level of consciousness is identical to the ultimate reality of the universe which is called by various names in various religions such as Brahman, Tao, Dharmakaya, Allah and the Godhead. In concurrence with Perennial Philosophy, Wilber collectively calls these “Mind” — all that exists in the ultimate sense is Mind. The various layers of consciousness which psychosynthesis outlines are similarly recognised as “multi-levelled manifestations or expressions of a single Consciousness.”272 Wilber calls these layers the Spectrum of Consciousness. “Each level of the Spectrum is marked by a different and easily recognised sense of individual identity, which ranges from the Supreme Identity of cosmic consciousness through several gradations or bands to the drastically narrowed sense of

271 Dreary, Nevill. The Elements of Human Potential. Op. Cit. p. 115 citing Roger Walsh of the University of California Medical School at Irvine. In the same light Drury cites the comment of psychologist Daniel Goleman from an article in the New York Times to the effect that Wilber has joined the ranks of those like Ernst Cassier, Mircea Eliade and Gregory Bateson.

identity associated with egoic consciousness.\textsuperscript{273} Although Wilber concedes that there are hierarchies in the Spectrum of Consciousness, one must get beyond these in order to reach the absolute spirit which is not hierarchical. The various levels up to the ultimate are \textit{maya}, types of illusion, which appear to be dualistic. The key for Wilber is to bypass these apparent dualisms, forget them in order to reach true self-knowledge where the witness and the witnessed are one and the same.

In regard to the spiritual Self, Parfitt emphasises the necessity of all spiritual qualities becoming incarnate in the world. No amount of illumination is worthwhile if it does not radiate in the world. In order to ground the energies one must discern the distinction between motivation and intention. For Parfitt, motives are connected to subpersonalities, but intentions are connected to the Self. While motivation may be the same as intention, more often they are exclusive, while intentions are toward the filling of the deeper need and are inclusive. However, whether deepest need or desired want, the intent of psychosynthesis is to pursue a plan for fulfilment. There are several ways suggested for grounding the energies of the transpersonal Self:\textsuperscript{274}

1. Expressing the experience.
2. Writing or drawing.
3. Reviewing the day and assessing performance for improvement.
4. Meditation on the object of the will or a symbol that represents the will.
5. Evocative word cards placed where they will be frequently seen to effect the unconscious.
6. Free or automatic drawing.
7. Creating a mantra and consistently chanting it to one’s self.
8. Specific acts which are conducive to the spiritual qualities being manifest, such as going to beautiful places.

These all must be incorporated naturally into one’s life without stress or performance. A major conflict here is fear which blocks the manifestation of the transpersonal quality. Fears are listed as “fear of responsibility, of losing individuality, of impotence, of being a victim, of disrupting your life, of

\textsuperscript{273} Ibid.
loneliness, of inadequacy, of being rejected, or even as the fear of success itself.”^275 Fear is overcome by the techniques of psychosynthesis such as meditation which refocuses the individual upon the “I” who is connected to the spiritual immutable and imperishable Self.

A three-fold form of reflective, receptive and creative meditation is used in psychosynthesis. Through meditation the many levels of being interact and increase spiritual awareness. This in turn deepens one’s ability to serve and ultimately interconnects with “the collective consciousness of the human race.”^276 In reflective meditation, the participant is encouraged to relax and direct the thinking on a particular subject appropriate to the individual’s evolution. The example given by Parfitt is “Peace.” The participant writes “Peace” on a piece of paper and circles it. Then the person begins to draw lines out from the circle and adding all things that come to mind which envisage the concept of peace. Once this is done the next stage of receptive meditation is initiated. In receptive meditation one strives to focus on the unconscious levels of being to allow whatever “intuitions, inspirations, messages, energies and stimuli” are suggested. The key is finding a place of silence in which to spend time to hear the inner voice. The goal of preparation is “to shut off all extraneous thoughts, feelings and sensations. Just be.”^277 After some time record the thoughts and move on to the final stage of creative meditation. In creative meditation one considers the content of the reflective and receptive meditation and creates ways to implement them into relevant, practical activity.

Here again is brought into play the themes of creating one’s own reality and going beyond the mystical experience to practical application in relationships. This means applying the transpersonal Self through the superconscious future potential and overcoming the repressive lower unconscious past by moving into the continuous present middle unconscious where also contact is made with the field of awareness and the personal self “I” who then controls by creative will the intents and motives of active transformation in everyday life. Through making choices to change, remain stable or compromise one aligns to the flow of nature, to the

^275 Ibid. p. 49.
^276 Ibid. p. 51.
^277 Ibid. p. 53.
end that one's choices "add to rather than subtract from the evolution of consciousness on our planet." 278

In the area of creative will the individual moves through four stages. To begin with a person may have the feeling of "having no will" where one considers his or her self to be the victim being controlled by outside forces and subpersonalities, where repressive traits rule. Then according to psychosynthesis and the New Age one is released from the feeling of being the victim by realising that whatever happens is by individual choice. Parfitt reiterates the common New Age theme with the words, "we all re-create our world afresh each and every moment." 279 This being realised the person progresses to the understanding that "will exists." The "strong will" is the energy within that makes the choice, and the "skilful will" employs "the knowledge of how to use that energy." 280 Here according to Parfitt unconscious desires become conscious wishes. Once the will is developed one passes to the third stage of "having a will." Choices are made, the personal self is centred and in control, and fragmentation becomes less between subpersonalities and the personal self. The final stage in the evolution of the will is called "being will." Here is where the individual personal self aligns with the transpersonal Self. The individual is now open to the deepest level of spirituality. Once experienced, it must be shared with the world to bring healing and nurturing.

The final result is the enactment of the collective unconscious, the pool of all sentient beings, the planetary vision of interconnectedness where each person takes responsibility for the whole, and the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. By bringing this collective consciousness into practical application, restoring and preserving, maintaining and compromising to evidence unity, the one and the many co-create the planetary conditions which further the progressive evolution of being.

What began in the Human Potential movement as the way into realising full human potential has evolved into the New Age counterpart. Drawing from Jung, Maslow, Sutich and Assagioli, the New Age has evolved beyond the
Think and Grow Rich of Nepolean Hill, the I Dare You of William H. Danforth and the Psycho-cybernetics of Maxwell Maltz. The Positive Mental Attitude movement encouraged the visualisation of self as successful. A kind of self-hypnosis was used to create a new image of one's self. Maltz, a plastic surgeon noticed that patients with new faces were transformed inwardly as well. Therefore, he postulated cybernetics of the mind to control one's self-image with constant positive reinforcement. Nepolean Hill proposed success in all things based on the realisation that the individual is master of his/her own fate and the captain of his/her own soul. Therefore, in order to create the reality of success one must feed the subconscious with visions of success. This is all mirrored in the New Age. Hill envisaged the New Age in maintaining that “to contact the Infinite Intelligence in the Universe, one's mind would have to operate with the highest ‘vibrations’, transcending the barriers of ordinary perception to look beyond to richer horizons.” Hill claimed his messages were channelled to him from elsewhere.

According to Maltz, thinking better wasn’t enough. One had to have a positive self-image. If the two conflicted, there could be no success. However, if the two were in harmony, success was potentially unlimited, no matter what the goal. The negative self, the shadow, therefore had to be eliminated. There should be no reason for guilt. For Maltz, the principle tools of creating a new positive self-image were relaxation, imagination and hypnosis:

The proper use of the imagination can be equivalent to the beginning of a goal and a belief in this goal. And if this belief is strong enough we hypnotise ourselves with it... all our habits, good and bad, are daily forms of self-hypnosis. Belief is a form of creative hypnotism.”

Nevill Drury, shamanist and editor of Nature and Health magazine, notes in his book The Elements of the Human Potential Movement that “the New Age counterpart of Maxwell Maltz is Shakti Gawain, bestselling author of Creative Visualisation and Living in the Light.” She describes creative

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282 Ibid. pp. 110-111.
284 Ibid. p. 112.
visualisation as “a technique of being able to imagine having what you want in your life so that you can create the internal experience of having your life be the way you want it to be…. Creating that internal experience seems to open us up to creating it externally as well.” Drury points out that Gawain’s second book, Living in the Light, moved toward the recognition of a deeper guiding force which she calls the “energy of life” and “energy of the universe” which was accessed through one’s deep intuitions. Here is where Jung is mixed in for a shift from mental abilities to a psycho-spiritual perspective which is more resonant of the New Age. In an interview with Everett Alexander, who organises the Inward Bound programme in Eugene, Oregon, Drury was again exposed to the New Age’s theme that the mind is considered the lower level of consciousness which works with outer levels and cannot itself perceive the higher powers of inner levels. Alexander is quoted for his holistic emphasis on the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual functions which are expressive of New Age thought:

I teach that we should stop thinking — that we should still the mind — and when that happens we are awakened to a Higher Source, the Eternal, the I Am, or whatever you care to call it. I train people through the process called ‘centering’ to make contact to be open, to wake up to this Higher Source… To me, God is not somebody ‘out there.’ God is a principle. God is within you. As you awaken to that fact, you change…. When you function at the lower level you want power; you want money, you want possessions, but you are on your own at this level. However, when you open yourself to the highest level, you get a sense of One-ness, you are one with everybody else, and then you realise you can serve other people — you’re not in it just for yourself.

I believe this is the big quantum leap that is coming to the planet in the next few years. Man is going to have to switch over from the lower level self to the level of co-operation and service. At the moment only a minority group is doing this — but it’s growing. At the moment man is Homo Sapiens — the ‘wise intellectual.’ Later man will be known as Homo Noeticus — the knowing man, who is guided by intuition and inspiration. Selfishness is out of date: co-operation is coming.

The theme of spirituality is represented in the personalised, implicit religions within individuals and the plethora of techniques available to the New Age. Spirituality permeates the New Age with alternative ways of touching the soul of humanity and resurrecting awareness of the divine within. More than any other the theme of spirituality/psycho-spirituality threads together the New Age. Whether speaking of new ecology, new science, new psychology, alternative medicine and holistic health or the new politics of One World Order the themes of accessing the full human potential, the higher-self and the interconnectedness of All-that-is-One are the common denominators of spirituality in the New Age. It is a reaction to the dogmas of religion and the emptiness of the materialistic and scientific world-views that have left humanity with so much pain and relegated the world to mechanistic, utilitarian and separate thinking. Spirituality is the faith of the New Age. It is evidence of a God-like void in people’s lives and the human hope for a better way and for transcending mortality. It is the quest for freedom and the passion for authentic life. New Age spirituality is the deeper desire in individuals to strip away the facades, the masks and pretences to reveal the true self. It is the hope of transforming the individual and the world by employing techniques which promise to lay aside the doubts, fears, misconceptions and inhibitions and to release true love, joy, beauty, peace and mutual help for the healing of the individual, each other and the world. Findhorn, the Caddys, Spangler and Maclean, Williamson’s Return To Love, Schucman’s A Course In Miracles, and the new forms of psycho-spirituality, transpersonal psychology and psychosynthesis are only a sampling of the resonant themes which are held by a multiplicity of approaches on offer to reach the soul in the New Age. Spirituality for the New Age uses the terminology of religion and psychology in non-traditional ways to shift perception and once again reach the inner person of the heart to bring forth healing to the body, mind and spirit of individuals, to ecology, and to the world so that the holistic shift can raise the world to the next step in the evolution of being. The spiritual journey of the New Age itself is evolutionary, unending and ever metamorphosing.
Chapter Four
New Age Evolution & Ecology

An Assortment of Theories

The Universe that was is no longer the Universe that is, nor is it the Universe that will be. New Age writer Michael Talbot, in his book Mysticism and the New Physics says, "The entire physical universe itself is nothing more than patterns of neuronal energy firing off inside our heads.... There is no physical world 'out there'. Consciousness creates all."1 The original eleven-dimensional Universe of pure energy over one trillion degrees centigrade and extremely compact evolved from the "Big Bang." Seven of those dimensions collapsed in on themselves and became what this world knows as the foundation forces of nature— "gravity, electromagnetism, and the weak and strong nuclear forces."2 The four remaining dimensions are what humans experience as three dimensions of space (length, breadth and thickness) and a fourth dimension (time). This is the model which New Age writer Peter Russell describes as "what most cosmologists now believe."3 This rendition from Russell relates to the "string" theory postulated by the physicist Edward Witten of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. In the string theory the majority of dimensions retracted into a compacted space smaller than that of subatomic particles. New Age evolutionists pick up on this untested theory in support of a holographic universe. A key figure here is Stanford neuroscientist Karl Pribram who was fascinated with the search for the missing engram of the mind, the seat and substance of memory. In studying the concept of holograms, Pribram suggested that the hologram might be a model for the brain's memory store.4


Just as a holograph\(^5\) stores the message of the object, so New Agers follow the 1966 assertion by Pribram that the human brain functions holographically, able to store infinite quantities of information in virtually no space. Later, during a lecture at a symposium in Minnesota he asserted that perhaps the whole universe functions in the same manner. Therefore at any given time or point the whole cosmos is available and that somehow the evolved human consciousness can access this information which “psychically affects reality itself.”\(^6\) The implications were staggering— the world indeed would be as the Hindu concept of *maya* suggests, an illusion.

Pribram studied the writings of the British physicist, David Bohm, who authored what is sometimes called the New Age “Bible” on the concept of *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. Bohm suggests “the notion of the implicate order in which any element contains enfolded within itself the totality of the universe....”\(^7\) This includes both matter and consciousness:

> Relativity theory calls for this sort of way of looking at the atomic particles, which constitute all matter, including human beings, with their brains, nervous systems, and the observing instruments that they have built and that they use in their laboratories... relativity and quantum theory agree, in that they both imply the need to look on the world as an *undivided whole*, in which all parts of the universe, including the observer and his instruments, merge and unite in one totality.\(^8\)

The mystical approach of New Age evolution draws from certain theories of mystical physics. In one sense, Russell explains, everything is made up of “a hundred or so different types of atoms” which in turn are “composed of a few elementary particles (electrons, neutrons, protons, etc.). These various particles, it now appears, may in turn be composed of just three even more

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\(^5\) Holographs were invented in 1947 by Dennis Gabor as a three-dimensional photograph made from laser beams. The photograph code is stored on film as a record of the light waves scattered by the object photographed. Ferguson, Marilyn. *The Aquarian Conspiracy*. Op. Cit. p. 193.


\(^8\) Ibid. pp. 10-11.
elementary particles called quarks." This simple form of unity is expanded by the New Age mystic to include oneness and interconnectedness of consciousness and matter. What has evolved into the New Age view of implicate order is explained by Russell as the evolution growing out of Einstein’s Theory of Special Relativity, published in 1905 and Werner Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle put forward some twenty years later.10

1. **Albert Einstein’s Theory of Special Relativity** first suggested the idea that one cannot isolate the subject from the object, the observer from the observation, the experiencer from the experience. What appears to the observer as time and space is not fixed. The example given is that of two people observing an event while travelling at different speeds. The implication is that both persons will measure the distances and times as being different in their experience. Russell concludes that Einstein’s theory demonstrates:

that, although they may appear to us as very separate phenomena, time and space are but different aspects of the same thing (the space-time continuum). But the oneness of time and space is broken when we observe the Universe, and different observers may see different proportions of the continuum.... the motion of the observer partly determines how reality is perceived.11

2. **Werner Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle** “showed that it was impossible to measure both a particle’s position and its speed beyond a certain limit of accuracy.” The more accurately one attempts to measure the velocity of the object, the less accurately will be measured the position and vice versa. Russell’s conclusion, in New Age terms, is “that the act of observation itself affects that which is being observed,”12 and thus the mental and physical worlds were interdependent.

3. **The Gauge Theory** is a latter day presentation of what Einstein spent the years of his life trying to establish as “a Unified Field Theory.” Having set out the theory that explained that relative oneness of space-time, electric-

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10 Ibid. pp. 124-126. The following points are Russell’s brief synopsis of Einstein’s and Heisenberg’s ideas as applied to New Age interpretation.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
magnetic and energy-matter ($E = mc^2$) he went on to seek the oneness of the four basic "forces of physics (gravity, the electro-magnetic and the so-called 'weak' and 'strong' nuclear forces)." Although the evidence eluded Einstein, Russell states that in what is now called the Gauge Theory these forces are presented as "different aspects of one force."

4. **Further Findings of physics**, according to Russell’s presentation, show that although for practical purposes of everyday life the notion of separateness of atomic particles is tolerated, in essence this "may not be the ultimate truth. At the most fundamental level there seem to be only patterns of energy giving rise to the appearance of separate particles." Thus although appearing to be separate, all things are interwoven.

The visible universe of cause and effect is what is called the "explicate order," whereas the implicate order is "a level of order not perceivable by the senses or by any physical apparatus. At the level of implicate order, every part of the Universe contains the whole Universe enfolded within it." This idea of the enfolded universe in which each part contains the whole is illustrated by the photographic technique called holography. Russell explains that in straightforward photography each point on a photograph represents a corresponding point on the final image. Each point has to be in its correct position for the photograph to be clear. In a different way a hologram (taken from the Greek ὅλος, pronounced "holos" meaning "whole," and γράφω meaning "write") is created:

Each point on the photographic plate records data about the whole image. Each part of the image is encoded in every part of the plate. Looking at a hologram with the naked eye, however you see nothing but a very fine pattern of ripples or waves. But when light of a particular kind is shone through the plate, the image can be made to appear, and it stands out from the plate as a three dimensional image. Since any region of the plate contains information about the whole image, it can give rise to the whole image (although the smaller the region of the plate used, the fuzzier will the image be). In this sense the image in 'enfolded throughout the plate."

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14 Ibid. p. 127. See also Bohm, David. Wholeness and the Implicate Order. Op. Cit. pp. 143-146 which explains in more detail the process of using laser beam light projected
5. Richard Prosser’s explanation of enfolding involves considering the nature of a single isolated particle “to be an infinite wave pattern spreading out in all directions across the Universe. The nature of the waves is such that they cancel out everywhere except in one very tiny region, and it is in that region that we find the ‘particle’.”\(^{15}\) The conclusion is that everything is everywhere at once yet only appears at a given point at any one time. Russell connects the mystic’s view of the universe with the new theories of physics to conclude that they are saying the same things from different perspectives. On the one hand the mystic is connecting the mental world, while on the other hand the physicist is connecting the physical world thus establishing that both the mental and physical both evidence the same interconnectedness of the universe—the Perennial Philosophy that says “at the deepest levels we are all one.”\(^{16}\)

In the beginning there was energy. Out of energy evolved matter; out of matter evolved life, and out of life evolved consciousness. This is the scenario followed by the New Age. Beyond consciousness there are other dimensions yet to be explored. According to James Gleick’s Chaos theory, although there may be an appearance of chaos, in fact there is order in disorder. Former views of Galileo/Kepler/Descartes/Newton gave the view of an orderly and clockwork universe as the foundation of reason and mechanics. The old view held that simple systems beget simple systems and complex systems beget complex systems.\(^{17}\) Chaos theory surmises that simple systems can beget complex systems and complex systems can beget simple systems. The predictability of science is doomed along with random chance. Whereas once the second law of thermodynamics said everything tends toward disorder, Chaos theory says order arises out of chaos. In practical terms, the weather man cannot always predict the weather, but weather will be what weather will be. Under the old view the incarnational metaphors for the second law are justification for the economic and ecological decay as well as the breakdown of social order. However, the

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16 Ibid. p. 128.
New Age incorporates Chaos theory to express its hope that humanity in the midst of chaos is in fact on the brink of a step forward in evolution.

The New Age extends evolution beyond the physical realm to include the evolution of consciousness and being. This evolution in consciousness is a conscious evolution. The being evolves to the point of awareness and begins from that point on to be consciously involved in the next steps of its evolutionary growth. The New Age evolution of consciousness is considered from two points of view. On the one hand the New Age is seen to be Renaissance of Consciousness. According to Joseph Adolph's article in New Age Journal, the "Consciousness Renaissance" is the process by which individuals and groups are experiencing an awakening to change from "traditional assumptions about life, the future of the planet, and the nature of reality." This view holds that there is no need for divine intervention because that divine potential is innate in humans. Through New Age practices heaven will be brought down to Earth in the dawning of human higher consciousness. By renaming the sacred humans realise they are divine and live in a perfect divine world in a divine and perfect cosmos. Humans need only to be healed of the blindness of limited consciousness.

On the other hand a second view of New Age evolution in consciousness necessitates outside intervention to bring on the healing. This then may be called "Quantum Leap Consciousness." Rather than taking a long and evolved process. Quantum Leap Consciousness may occur instantaneously. Highly evolved extraterrestrials or other forms of omnipotent Force or Being will draw humanity upward in the evolutionary process. Once enough people have risen to a certain higher level of consciousness a "hundredth monkey" or critical mass will be achieved which in turn will launch the whole creation upward. Often those who hold the differing viewpoints distance themselves from one another. The Consciousness Renaissance camp hold the others to be "hard core" and somewhat less credible in their beliefs and strive toward their evolution by implementing New Age values in society through corporate businesses, education, psychology, health care, entertainment (such as cinema and New Age music), science and politics. This is also a wide area of overlapping views.

Will Parfitt claims that former views of evolution are misleading students in teaching that the human being is the apotheosis of evolution, as if everything was evolving toward the highest form which is human being. In fact, say Parfitt and the New Age, human being is only a primitive stage in the organic evolutionary process. The contemporary illustration is to set the stage of evolution as a twenty-four hour day. According to this model, life on earth only came into being moments before noon and the whole human species has only been around since approximately five minutes before midnight. The question that remains in this model is, “What is to happen after midnight?” It supposes that human being is at the apex of evolution.

However, the model accepted by the New Age is one in which the life expectancy of that star called “the sun” is condensed to a twenty-four hour period. This is proposed as the life span of earth because one presupposes that after there is no sun, there can be no life on earth. In this model the time would now be approximately eight in the morning, and the whole of life has only been around for a couple of seconds. Human beings have only been in existence for “a split second around eight in the morning.” The supposition continues that if life has evolved so highly in just a few seconds, what wonder lies in store for the great future of the evolution of being in time and beyond space and time.

Peter Russell, in his book The Awakening Earth: Our Next Evolutionary Leap, presents a similar scenario using a year-long epic film covering 15 billion years of evolution since the “Big Bang.” The Big Bang is over in a hundred millionth of a second. In twenty-five minutes the universe is cool enough for stable atoms to form. By February-March gas clouds condense into star clusters and galaxies. In early September the sun and its solar system evolve. From this point forward the New Age theme of the increasing tempo of evolution begins to become more noticeable. By the beginning of October simple algae and bacteria form and photosynthesis evolves to overcome the first food crisis. It is now early November; complex cells begin forming and reproducing. By early December early forms of complex organisms appear and within a week “the first vertebrates crawl

out of the sea onto the land.\textsuperscript{20} Dinosaurs rule the earth (December 25-30). Ape-like ancestors come on the screen about mid-day December 31, but do not walk upright until one hour before midnight. Human language and the whole of human history from that point to the present develops in rapid sequence during the last one-and-one-half minutes before midnight. However, says Russell, “evolution is continuing to accelerate, and this rapid acceleration shows no signs of abating.\textsuperscript{21} Notably Russell and Parfitt confuse their audience with two different models. Parfitt suggests the “day of evolution” has just begun while Russell suggests it is almost over. However, both make it clear that humanity is on an ever accelerating and progressive evolutionary journey.

Concerning this evolution Anne Bancroft says, “I believe we have reached a turning point in human existence, where we are reaching into and towards a new level of consciousness. We are ready to mutate.”\textsuperscript{22} New Age magazine quotes an interview with New Age philosopher Ken Wilber who promotes this process evolutionary system in the New Age saying, “I really trust evolution. I really don’t think God would screw us around that bad.”\textsuperscript{23} The New Age process of emergent evolution proposes a “quantum leap” to overcome the problems of “missing links” in Darwinian natural selection as well as problems with the futility of human existence for this world only and the problem of humans without any spirit or soul on which to base such inner longings and expressions as love, beauty, hope, and self-awareness. John White, in writing on the New Age evolution of humanity says that in the last few centuries the process has been accelerating. A new species is about to evolve; “we are witnessing the final phase of Homo sapiens and the simultaneous emergence—still quite tentative because of the nuclear threat to all life—of what I have named Homo Noeticus, a more advanced form of humanity.”\textsuperscript{24} White goes on to describe the utopian society that will emerge “as we pass from the Age of Ego to the Age of God.”

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{21} Ibid. p. 56.
\end{thebibliography}
Rather than having the evolutionary process confined to natural selection and random chance mutation, the New Age has followed the lines of biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy and statesman Jan Christian Smuts (1870-1950) who in turn followed the Aristotelian dictum of "the whole is more than the sum of the parts." Following these lines evolution became an emergent organising process by which thesis and antithesis yielded a progressive synthesis. According to Peter Russell's presentation of New Age evolution, in the late 1940s Bertalanffy proposed the Systems Theory as a way of viewing the world. This view of the world saw nothing as separate in itself. Everything is part of an interconnected system that finds its full meaning only in relation to the whole system. Smuts used the term "holism" to refer to the belief that wholes are more than the sum of the parts. It advocates collectivism rather than individualism. Wholes are not simply the mechanistic assemblage of self-sufficient elements but are dynamic systems. Holism was the theory which sought an alternative to both atomism (that all phenomena are explicable according to the properties and behaviour of the consisting elements) and vitalism (that life cannot be explained in merely materialistic terms, that there is something distinctively non-material in living organisms that is not present in inanimate bodies). The process of holism progresses according to the various things present in animated as well as inanimate bodies, so that they are ever-progressing to new and higher levels. When this principle is applied to evolutionary theory it invalidates Darwin's natural selection and chance mutation in favour of a creative principle which legitimised concepts of spirituality. In New Age holism, consciousness and spirituality evolved quite naturally. It is this theory which allows for the utopian optimism of the New Age.

The New Age "quantum leap" in evolution is based on the new paradigm of "punctuated equilibrium" made popular in 1972 by paleobiologist Stephen Jay Gould of Harvard and Niles Eldredge of the American Museum

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25 Miller, Elliot. A Crash Course on the New Age Movement. Op. Cit. p. 64-65. Miller compares the processes of von Bertalanffy's "organising force" with Smut's "holism" and recognises that though von Bertalanffy dismissed Smut as being a "vitalist" that in effect they were both saying basically the same thing and neither was the less vitalistic. Smuts view was that the underlying principle of the evolving universe was toward ever-deepening synthesised holism. Smuts, J. C. Holism and Evolution. MacMillan Company, New York. 1926. p. 317.

of Natural History." This idea proposes that when high levels of stress or crisis situations evolve in the life of a species the "stasis" of that species can become so disturbed as to bring about a catastrophic and immediate transformation. New Age science writer Peter Russell, author of The Awakening Earth: Our Next Evolutionary Leap and The Global Brain contends:

Humanity could be on the threshold of an evolutionary leap, a leap which could occur in a flash of evolutionary time, and a leap such as occurs only once in a billion years... we alive today may be standing on the threshold of an evolutionary development as significant as the emergence of life on Earth some 3,500 million years ago.28

Russell says that one of the keen motivators toward the concept of holistic evolution was the ability of humans to view the "blue pearl" from a distance. Russell explains:

As the first astronauts travelled out into space, and the Earth receded into the distance, national boundaries began to lose their significance. These space pioneers found themselves no longer identified with a particular country....29

He cites the comments of Edgar Mitchell, the sixth man to step on the moon, who observed that "Each man comes back with a feeling that he is no longer an American citizen — he is a planetary citizen."30 Another astronaut, Russell Schweickart is cited for his comments:

that on that small spot, that little blue and white thing, is everything that means anything to you... You recognise that you are a piece of this total life... There is a difference in that relationship between you and that planet and you and all those other forms of life on that planet....31

The Earthview picture has become the symbol of the emergent evolutionary system which is being expressed in practical terms as a rising New Age of

29 Ibid. 3.
30 Ibid. 4
31 Ibid.
ecological consciousness and planetary citizenship which will bring on the next step in human and planetary evolution.

New Agers draw heavily upon the work of James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis that suggests the earth is a cybernetic system, nicknamed after the Greek goddess “Gaia.” The earth as seen from the moon appears as a living being. During the 1960s while serving as a consultant to the California Institute of Technology in search of life on Mars, Lovelock began a quest for determining what would constitute life. Lovelock recalls:

I expected to discover somewhere in the scientific literature a comprehensive definition of life as a physical process, on which one could base the design of life-detection experiments, but I was surprised to find how little had been written about the nature of life itself.32

Thus he embarked on the search for criteria which evolved into the Gaia hypothesis and later the Gaia theory. In Lovelock’s words the term Gaia was:

a shorthand for the hypothesis itself, namely that the biosphere is a self-regulating entity with the capacity to keep our planet healthy by controlling the chemical and physical environment. Occasionally it has been difficult, without excessive circumlocution, to avoid talking of Gaia as if she were known to be sentient. This is meant no more seriously than is the appellation ‘she’ when given to a ship by those who sail in her, as a recognition that even pieces of wood and metal when specifically designed and assembled may achieve a composite identity with its own characteristic signature, as distinct from being the mere sum of its parts.33

Lovelock’s later book, The Ages of Gaia: A biography for our living Earth, addresses Gaia as hypothesis become theory. It is a theory with a planetary perspective which connects the evolution of the planet to an ecological consciousness by virtue of demonstrating that the health of the planet is paramount to the health of people. Yet in fact Lovelock’s theory is primarily to demonstrate that the earth is a cybernetic system which will evolve

33 Ibid. p. xii.
onward regardless of the preservation of humanity. This he claims is not to minimize the work of environmentalist, but simply to defend Gaia as a changing system in which species may or may not be preserved without the destruction of Gaia herself. Therefore, it is the health of the Earth that is primary rather than the preservation of humanity. Deforestation, the increase of greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide, methane, changes in the ozone layer of the stratosphere and the risk of increased irradiation or the problems of acid rain are seen "as potentially serious hazards but mainly to the people and ecosystems of the First World— from a Gaian perspective, a region that is clearly expendable."34 As the human body regulates itself to maintain homeostasis, so Gaia "appears to be a self-regulating, self-sustaining system continually adjusting its chemical, physical and biological processes in order to maintain the optimum conditions for life and its continued evolution."35

Jean Houston describes the New Age essentiality of evolution as a "co-evolutionary partnership without any particular ideological or sectarian base."36 The themes of New Age evolution are often revealed through visionary experiences. Fritjof Capra unfolds his theory of New Age physics as having begun with a revelatory vision:

I was sitting by the ocean one late summer afternoon, watching the waves rolling in and feeling the rhythm of my breathing, when I suddenly became aware of my whole environment as being engaged in a gigantic cosmic dance... I 'saw' the atoms of the elements and those of my body participating in this cosmic dance of energy; I felt its rhythm and I 'heard' its sound, and at that moment I knew that this was the Dance of Shiva, the Lord of Dancers worshipped by the Hindus.37

It is a common New Age claim that the revelation of evolutionary progress has been revealed through channelling spirit guides. Houston connects the New Age term "channelling" as making contact with the enormous amounts of information already present yet untapped by the present stage in most

people's evolution. This world of information is one step beyond "the extraordinary awareness of outward information," and includes "the sensing of unseen information" which is taken in by the "inward proprioceptors of the levels of information that may be coming... from a flow pattern of electrons or the evolutionary pulse sounding... from dimensions beyond those of ordinary space and time."38 Channels, or sensitives as some call them, are those who can receive the deeper realms of Being. Typical to most New Age writers, Houston supports her claims on the evolutionary system of the New Age by the documentation of the physics and metaphysics of channeling. The premise is put forward that "the psyche is invested in matter and therefore matter can have access to psychic knowing."39

Carla Rueckert, who became a channel in 1974 has written A Channeling Handbook in which she defines channeling and its access to the metaphysical world. Rueckert acknowledges that channeling can be dangerous and misused. Her definition is as follows:

Channeling is the reproduction by words or sounds of concepts not generated within one's own conscious mind but transmitted from the subconscious mind or through the subconscious mind into the conscious mind from an impersonal or nonpersonal entity or principle... People are designed to be channels, just as a pipe is designed to carry water.40

Rueckert cites several examples of channelled material such as spiritualist seances, shamanism, the Old Testament prophets and some New Testament saints, a host of New Age religions which claim messages from angelic presences, spiritual masters such as Kuthumi, Jesus and the Ascended Masters. Rueckert avers:

The common theme of the inner-master channeling is the belief in the rightness of the proposition that there are some individuals who have, at some point in their life experience, gained access to great and hidden wisdom... This belief in a gnostical hierarchy of wisdom predicates that there be someone able to tell the truth-

39 Ibid. p. xi.
seeker how to find the gatekeeper of each door which unlocks the next layer or hierarchy of understanding, the next piece of wisdom which will, in the end, cause us to become masters ourselves.41

In support of this claim Houston cites examples of Thales of Miletus’ sixth century B.C. claim that “all things are full of gods.” Houston’s exegesis of this quote is that, “a sort of psyche, a divine emanation, is both complementary and co-extensive with matter and leads it towards larger realities.”42 Plato’s innate Forms or Archetypes in all things, bringing them to growth and becoming, as well as Jesus’ teaching that the Kingdom of God being within are cited by Houston as exemplary of the intuitive deeper levels of being available to all humans. The Islamic Sufis are cited to evidence this deeper accessed realm of Being. Houston explains their mystical teaching as accessing—

an intermediate universe that is thought to be as ontologically real as the sensory empirical world and the noetic world of the intellect. It exists in a metageography and possesses extension and dimension as well as figure, color, and other features perceived by the senses.43

This world can only be accessed by use of the deeper levels of what are called the “psychospiritual senses.” This world according to Houston is not unlike the “mundus archetypas of Carl Jung.”44

Houston continues her apologetics with her interpretation of the philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) who in contrast to Spinoza’s view that all things are of one substance, believed that there is an infinite variety of substances. Each substance, for Leibniz, is created and maintained by God. Leibniz called these basic substances “monads” because he believed each to be a “unit” or “unity.” Houston interprets these “monads” as “tiny units of mind, each of which mirrors (or channels) the universe from the perspective of its particular point of view.”45 She quotes the process philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941) as saying that “ultimate reality is an

42 Ibid. p. xi.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
underlying web of connections and that the brain generally screens out the larger reality through its ‘cerebral reducing valves.’” Thus goes the argument of Houston to establish that all particles are interconnected, that within each is contained the whole, that the information of the whole is accessible to each particle and that each particle has a psychic charge whether it appears animated or inanimate. Even the dust of the dead carries the information of the experience of their lives in the coded spin of the electrons remaining in the dust. Further, the electron spin of inanimate objects can also receive information through contact with animated electrons. Thus the pool of universal knowledge is not lost in time but is ever accessible and constantly present in totality. An event having happened or happening on a distant planet in another universe or plane of existence is accessible immediately to the individual. What Houston calls the “cerebral reducing valve” is the filter which keeps individuals from blowing their mind with this “avalanche of cosmic knowing.”

In the New Age system of evolution, those who practice telepathy, clairvoyance, psychometry, channeling and other such psychospiritual talents are using their electrons as transmitter/receivers in order to send or receive information from persons, objects or the universe even beyond the space/time continuum. Among those listed are Nostradamus who “channelled the pictures of the history of times to come,” Swedenborg who “saw through the surface world to multidimensional universes surrounding and supporting us,” William Blake who “painted and wrote out of the cornucopia of his ever-present visionary knowing,” Carlos Castaneda’s writings which “demonstrate the rigor of the training of the shamanic mind,” the sleeping prophet Edgar Cayce who diagnosed people’s ailments from a distance, the late Jane Roberts and her channelled Seth books, and among contemporaries David Spangler who is hailed by Jean Houston as having “a profound quality of depth knowing and prophetic insight,” and Ken Carey whose channelled message Starseed Transmissions is cited by Houston as “perhaps the finest example of intuitive knowledge I have ever encountered.”

46 ibid. pp. xii-xiv. The brief quotes in the previous paragraphs following the previous footnote are found within the afore cited pages of the forward by Houston.
The human race is about to join a universe larger than our aspiration and richer than all our dreams. It is time to prepare ourselves for being co-trustees of the evolutionary process, time, for the love of God, to re-educate ourselves for sacred stewardship.

Ken Carey’s Starseed Transmissions

For purposes of coherence in the various themes of evolution represented in the New Age, Ken Carey’s channelled model has been chosen as an in-depth illustration of what would be pure New Age evolution drawing from scientific theory and subjective pseudo-science. During an eleven-day encounter (December 27, 1978 - January 6, 1979) Ken Carey recorded the messages which transformed his life. Carey heralds these words as the direct channelled pulsations of an alien intelligence which he describes as extraterrestrial or angelic communion. First the messages came in the form of non-verbal pulsations. He concedes that in translating these pulsations into “the nearest approximating words or phrases from the English language” he used religious terminology, though he informs his readers that the “meta-conceptual that they are used to represent goes substantially beyond the meanings suggested by their contemporary usage.” This confession is in line with other New Age channels such as Spangler and Schucman who use particularly Christian terminology yet with New Age meanings. Carey explains the phenomenal experience with the “spacial intelligences” as a merging of his biogravitational fields with theirs so that the information was “transmitted neurobiologically.” The purpose of the communications was “to teach us of our own nature and purpose upon this third planet from the star we call Sun.”

The message is intended as a revelation from another entity to inform humanity of its true identity and purpose in the greater evolutionary process emergent in the universe. The evolutionary view presented goes far beyond the theory of organic evolution in present science. The implications of the extent of New Age evolution are revealed with the identity of the entity who

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47 Ibid.
48 Ibid. p. 2.
49 Ibid.
claims its message is for the final days of human history. Secondly, the entity says its own individual identity has only come into being in order to make a connection with Carey. Once the communication is transmitted, the entity will again merge back into the “Being behind all being.” Further identification reveals the entity as a focus of collective human consciousness which expresses the oneness of humanity with all other forms of life. The entity is conversing in what it calls the language of light, which humans can receive but have simply forgotten. The message channelled to Carey is to restore that ability to humanity as well as restoring humanity to the pre-Fall state of awareness. Initially this awareness will only be restored to a few who will in turn translate it to the world until a critical mass is reached in which the whole world will be reborn. At that time an instantaneous transformation will take place which will raise humans to a level of evolution which will liberate them from the “worlds of good and evil.”

1. The human condition is but a state of fallen amnesia from which humanity is destined to rise to higher being. According to the revelation of Carey’s channel, humans are the same as this extraterrestrial except that humans are in a condition of having fallen from the original state of grace. Apparently at some point in history humans became such because of an obsession “with the materializing process.” Peter Russell considers that at some point there was a programming error in human consciousness. He cites Arthur Koestler’s argument that “somewhere along our evolutionary journey human beings developed a ‘hardware fault.’ Our brains became ‘mis-wired,’ leading us to be born with an inherently selfish nature.” If it is a hardware problem then Russell concludes there is little hope. Therefore he prefers the illustration of faulty software programming— “a ‘bug’ in our thinking.” It is from this obsession and ignorance that the “light entity” is to set humanity free. Failure to do so in the allotted time frame will result in the extinction of humanity. The identity of the entity portrays the evolutionary theme of singularity of conscience— that although it is an extraterrestrial in the sense that it comes from outside earth’s planetary field and is an extension or “organ of Galactic Being” yet at the same time it

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50 Ibid., p. 3.
51 Ibid. p. 7.
53 Ibid.
claims to be “an element of your own consciousness.” In fact, says Carey’s entity, once humans have recovered from their fallen state of amnesia, they will realise that the entity and all its species are accessible to one’s own being. Therefore the entity’s task is to awaken humanity from sleep and bring it as a whole to its full destiny as light beings which are part of the great Galactic Being.

2. Human beings are but one of a variety of entities which are also part of the monistic Oneness of Being. The theme of “all that is is One” is a second common theme in the evolutionary theory of the New Age. Carey’s entity explains that individuals only appear to be objectified in relationship “with some other aspect of being that has become objectified. When such a relationship is not taking place, that particular expression of you simply does not exist; you float effortlessly in the potential of God.”54 Eventually as a person is needed for some particular function he or she once again takes on a form suitable for the task at hand. For example the entity communicating with Carey is, like humans in reality, only a specific cell of the larger being. It only comes into focus momentarily to perform its task, then it is subsumed into the greater being once again. “Whenever the divine impulse calls upon your services and brings you into form, you encounter other beings of infinite variety, on errands and excursions in worlds of love and light that are impossible to describe.”55 Thus one oscillates, beyond warp speed, between “pre-manifest state” and “species-form role.” Once again the problem with humans is that in the fallen state of consciousness they are stuck with awareness of only the form side and are unable to remember their identity with deity. Therefore humans live fragmented lives because they see themselves only on one side, as form, yet in reality they exist in both realities. As humans focus only on their form, they are restricted from the Life currents. The entity likens this apparent oscillation between form and meta-form as comparable to the American Indian word “nagual” which refers “to everything that cannot be named.” This is “the all, the everything, the nothing, the primal void where all exists in a state of potential. This is the Creator that surrounds Creation like the sea surrounds a fish.”56 Out of this sea one is called many times to “dwell, for the space of a relationship, in

55 Ibid. p. 9.
56 Ibid. p. 10.
its opposite, the ‘tonal.’ The tonal is everything that can be named. It is the imaginary world of God in which all apparent differences exist.57 According to the entity, part of the time, angels or humans or whatever can be named are in form. The rest of the time they exist in the “Totality of Being,” the nagual, which is also called “the Life of God the Father that animates all Creation.”58 In the fallen state humans remember only the tonal, material world, unconscious of being and conscious of form. Whereas once humans were able to shift at will, now they are stuck in the world of form; God-consciousness has been forgotten, and humans now live under the illusion of separation.

The Anthropic Principle has been developed in science to address the issue of life in the universe. Carey’s entity says there is One from which all springs. The Anthropic Principle in general says that the only universe possible is one in which the coincidences promoting life are such as may be observed. One of the two main interpretations of this is known as the Weak Anthropic Principle in which no overall design nor Designer is present. Humans can only observe a universe in which they have evolved, therefore all the parameters appear orderly because they are in coincidence such as are comparable to sustaining human life. Any other universes which might exist would be contrary to human observance. Russell relates two points of view in the Weak Anthropic Principle. There are those who hold that many universes exist in parallel “with our own,” while others hold that there have been many universes “preceding ours and that numerous others are yet to follow... Only in a minute fraction of them—probably less than one in a billion—would the conditions be right for life to evolve.59

The other main interpretation is the Strong Anthropic Principle presented by cosmologists such as Fred Hoyle in Britain and John Wheeler in the United States.60 Their argument is that there is no Universe without an observer, therefore any existing Universe must be capable of evolving life. As an explanation of this theory that the universe is conscious of itself, Russell adopts the language of Indian philosophy—“that Atman, the consciousness

57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
60 Ibid. p. 218.
that manifests itself within us all, is Brahman, the source of all Creation.”61 Russell’s conclusion is that the whole Creation is coming to know itself. An awakening is coming and may be only a century of two away “or even less.”62 The dating system of the New Age varies, but the quest and the journey is the same— the awakening of the Self in an evolutionary process toward the creation of reality wherein all is One. Russell suggests that according to “the most optimistic estimates” there are a quadrillion planets which would have conditions that would support life. This is another evolutionary guess supported by the Strong Anthropic Principle which allows for the emergence of life and the evolution of the observer. The possibilities suggest a universe teeming with life forms which are all at various stages of evolution yet all moving toward a cosmic self-discovery. Life on earth is therefore no more unique than any rose in any garden, except that from its own point of view humanity is now aware of the process and, according to Russell and the New Age, humanity is now consciously involved in the evolution of the mind, the next important stage of evolution. The challenge is to overcome self-centredness; if not then egocentrism will become humanity’s obsession and its doom.63

3. Humans are living in a fallen state of consciousness. The revelation takes on a distinctive hue of the Biblical account of the fall, complete with the serpent in the Garden who beguiled the humans to distrust God. Thus entered fear and mistrust which are the original sin. In that moment of fallenness humans began to think more of self-centeredness than God-centeredness, more of identity in form than identity in God. Thus began the spiral downward. The Garden of Eden had lasted for centuries. Then the enthrallment with materialisation began to cut off “direct nourishment of the divine light.”64 The Garden is still there surrounding humanity and in reality direct contact with the divine is still there as well, but the human condition required more and more energy to support the increasing layers and density of material identification. Concurrently the human condition became more fragmented within the self. As the self split it took on the material identities of two sexes that in the fallen state of consciousness are perceived as separate.

61 Ibid. p. 221.
62 Ibid.
63 Ibid. 224.
4. The means of evolution is by realising the Christ-consciousness. The Starseed Transmissions reveal the beginnings of all worlds as the breathing of God compared to the Hindu process of “the in-breathing and out-breathing of Brahma, the process through which God breathes out all of Creation, and then breathes it all back in again.”65 The present condition of the universe is approaching the point of in-breathing which began, according to the Starseed entity, “as unicellular organisms were emerging on the Earth. The mid-point is what the entity reveals as the Second Coming of Christ. This point is revealed as being in the near future of human linear time. The true identity of humans beyond the fleshly nature of time and space is “one with the Creator, the All that Is, the Source.”66 Humans are the relationship between Spirit and Matter. As the consciousness moves toward a manifest universe it takes on the nature of the Son, the Christ.

Christ is not restricted to Jesus of Nazareth, but is the “single unified being whose consciousness all share.... Christ’s first coming was the first time since life appeared on Earth that the totality of consciousness woke up in the frame of a man. This was Jesus of Nazareth.”67 However, as Carey’s entity unfolds the drama of history he says that Satan organised a vast bureaucratic structure around the simple teachings of Jesus, complete with elitist priesthoods to bore the people and confuse them. Superficiality was acceptable as long as people did not try to live the message of Jesus.

The call to take personal responsibility and to implement Christ’s teachings in daily life became lost in crucifix worship and later in scripture worship. The message of Jesus, to disengage oneself from the influence of matter, and become filled with the Holy Spirit, became buried under a catalog of religious verbiage and dogmatic interpretations. Self-righteousness was encouraged in the name of the Lord, and many died defending interpretations that had nothing to do with the simple truths of Jesus.68

The entity transmitting to Carey eventually identifies itself as the Christ by using the appropriate personal pronouns to express the identification as well.

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66 Ibid. p. 15.
67 Ibid. p. 59.
68 Ibid. p. 60.
as multiple quotations from and allusions to Jesus’ teachings.\textsuperscript{69} His claim is that the words do not matter, only the life and spirit of the teaching. In this sense Carey’s Christ is quite pluralistic and ecumenical. “Look to the bible of love, my living presence in your heart, rather than to the wordy debates of little minds on the written world of old.”\textsuperscript{70}

In this mediatorial function humans are Life as it relates to Earth, eternity in terms of time, the infinite in relation to the finite. As the Christ-consciousness begotten by the Father, humans are capable of encompassing or being within Creation, just as the Father encompasses Creation and permeates its every fibre as small as the particle or as large as the universe. Pre-existence to the human condition is revealed by the Starseed entity as having the ability to flow in and out of various galactic star systems at will over the past billions of years. However the temptation to be clothed with a body became the desire that constructed such a body full of paradoxes. As this desire became more intense this consciousness approached the limited consciousness of the rocks and other matter and began to engender life into the Precambrian ocean floors.

Consciousness became clothed with the material world. As the Christ-consciousness impregnated Earth with life, it became incarnate in creatures, each of which became “a type of hologramatic consciousness that rightly thought of itself as both part and whole simultaneously.”\textsuperscript{71} While on the one hand consciousness entered creatures, on the other hand it materialised creatures outside the world. These are the angels, who retain the original consciousness and are later to assist humanity and the other creatures in awakening to their original state of consciousness. The Starseed entity says that nearly two thousand years ago they (the entities outside the world) received the signal to begin the process of raising consciousness back to the cosmic level. This is to be done now as the “final cycle of Conscious Creation... The body you are creating for the habitation of Christ-consciousness is to be a mobile body, fueled by the creative intentions of the Father, capable upon completion of leaving the mother’s side.”\textsuperscript{72} The entity further reveals that Christ is the name given to those who awaken out of the

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid. pp. 60, 61ff.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid. p. 61.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid. p. 18.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid. p. 19.
shadow of Matter. "Christ is the name of the single, unified being that is the totality of collective human consciousness. Identification with Christ is the key to the time that lies before you."73

5. The next cycle of evolution is to coincide with the Second Coming of Christianity in the year A.D. 2011. In recognition of an immanent transition Joseph Campbell refers to the Irish poet Yeats for reflection on "the foreboding vision 'The Second Coming.'

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand...74

What is about to take place, according to the Starseed entity is beyond the sacred page of scripture, beyond the conveyance of words and in the realm of the spirit and of the soul. The New Age conveys the changing of ages. Joseph Campbell relates it as the transition from "the zodiacal sign of the Fish (Pisces) into that of the Water Bearer (Aquarius). The conquering armies of the Age of Pisces will be transformed into "one harmonious being."75 The Planetary Being is about to be born out of the gestation of all that has gone before. That Planetary Being is the fusion of Spirit and Matter. At that point the material world will no longer be as dominating as it has been in the gestation period of human history. Then for another millennium the Planetary Being will be in infancy, unable to go off on its own. The boldness of the star entity proclaims that this birth will occur as a collective event in the next generation.76 Since the channelled message was given in the beginning of 1979, that means somewhere around the third millennium.

73 Ibid. p. 50.
75 Ibid. p. 16-17.
However, in fact the event is already occurring. Individually, the birth takes place transcending time and space at the moment one ceases to struggle with fear. Fear is what originally brought on the amnesia and the fall, therefore to recover and evolve one must be released from fear. Those individuals who have been released will evolve past life and death to many lifetimes of eternity while retaining the option to return to the physical manifestations of the Being of Life on Earth. At the time of evolution all souls in the physical form will experience what the entity identifies as—

something incredible, something that according to all the laws of physics ever known or ever to be discovered, could never happen... like the babe in the manger.... On the morning of Creation, you will recognize the Unified Collective Consciousness of all Humankind as your own true identity.77

This Individual Awakening is the first stage of the three creative periods of further evolution.

6. **There are three historical stages to come in the future of humankind.**
The first stage is the Individual Awakening. During this period there will be three transmissions from the star entities. The first transmission came during the years 1967-1969. The second revelation was to come during the years 1977-1979. These are supposed to be Ken Carey’s *Starseed Transmissions* among others. The last communications will come during the years 1987-1989. Ten years following the Starseed Transmissions there is to be a great decade of signs and wonders in the name of Christ (1979-1989). Twenty years on the Individual Awakening to the Christ-consciousness will become commonplace (1989-1999). Thirty years on there will be a sufficient number of holoids to create a critical mass in the final cycle of Creation’s first stage of future evolution (1999-2009). A collective power will flow through those individuals, “a biogravitational field” that will have sufficient power to draw the rest of humanity. This critical mass activity will usher in the second stage of future evolution, the Planetary Awakening.

This term “Planetary Awakening” is resonant of Donald Keys’ *Planetary Citizens*, Russell’s global social super-organism which thematically follows the influence of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin’s planetization of Mankind.

77 Ibid. p. 24.
Keys, former consultant for the United Nations, is co-founder and President of Planetary Citizens. This New Age organisation was set up to address future studies, ecology and social planning.\(^78\) In his book, *Earth At Omega*, Keys writes:

> The transition of the world to a peaceful planetary society awaits the transformation of nations, which depends directly upon change in citizens—transformation in each cell of the body planetary. Unless and until enough individual cells—particularly ‘leadership’ cells—achieve a global vision and a sense of shared identity, the nations will continue to be afflicted with the disease of selfish separation, acting like roving dog packs on the decks of Spaceship Earth, endangering us all.\(^79\)

According to Carey’s revelation this stage will last a thousand years. During this period there will be actual physical manifestations of the extraterrestrial angels on Earth who will assist humanity in the third yet primary stage of evolution, the Age of Discovery. The millennium of Planetary Awakening will be for building “floating cities of light.” There will be enormous fleets of intergalactic star ships built from “biological components brought to life by the Creative Intentionality that will work through all humans of that age.”\(^80\) There will evolve a new body that will look much like the human body. This body will depart around A.D. 3011 nourished on a new food—light itself. In this body one will be enabled to travel at just below the speed of light. However, those not wishing to be confined to the pleasure cruise of around 186,000 miles per second may exit their bodies and move into non-physical vehicles to travel in excess of warp speed.\(^81\)

The ecological connection is relayed by the star entity as a possible resort to cataclysmic events by angelic beings to shock humanity into awareness. However, this is a last resort and should not come since all the information necessary to establish an equilibrium on earth is being revealed. The allowance of some ecological destruction in the mean time is merely to assist “a voluntary and cooperative return to a pre-Fall state.”\(^82\) The first twenty years will be spent in educational transformation so that humans who tune

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\(^81\) Ibid.

\(^82\) Ibid. p. 27.
in to the channels will experience the right psychological conceptual transformations to assist the rest of the world in establishing a conducive climate for the final decade of physical and emotional transformations. The entity reveals that their first entries into human history began in the years 1967-1969. The people able to receive their “vibrational patterns were those who had not yet received clearly defined social roles. Esoterically, these individuals could be said to have had loose etheric bodies.”

The open channels for vibrational information were most easily manifest in individuals who were not interested in the status quo life-style. The children of the sixties people are said to be the ones who will participate “in the great revelations of the late eighties. During the closing years of the seventies the focus will not be on the fringe people of the sixties but on a wider global outreach to people in what the entity calls “lubricatory positions.” These are factory workers, school teachers, and scientists. Then in the closing years of the eighties (1987-1989) they will begin contacting bankers, government officials and international financiers. Rather than perceiving the transmissions as coming from angels or extraterrestrials, most will simply perceive the transformations intuitively “as if it were coming from themselves.” Relatively few will actually sense the presence.

Though Carey’s model of evolution is channelled from a higher entity, similar scenarios involving the concepts of formative causation, morphogenetic fields and critical mass follow the same pattern. For example Peter Russell’s synopsis of evolution presents a continuously accelerating multiplication factor toward ever-upward progress:

Within the last 50 million years, the brain has undergone an explosive growth... Even more significant, the cortex— the outer layer of the brain thought to be the seat of the higher mental functions— has become relatively thicker and larger. The most developed cortices on this planet are to be found in human beings and in some of the cetaceans (dolphins and whales).... The brains of whales and dolphins appear to have stopped evolving 20 million years ago— long before the first humans appeared— suggesting that they may be perfectly adapted to their watery environment. The human brain, on the other hand, is a relatively

83 Ibid. p. 28.
84 Ibid. p. 29.
85 Ibid.
new evolutionary venture, having evolved over the last 3 million years or so. It is almost certainly still evolving.\textsuperscript{86}

The New Age applies Rupert Sheldrake’s theory of morphogenetic field to the development of higher consciousness. The more individuals that begin to raise their level of consciousness, the stronger the morphogenetic field and the more easily others will join in the momentum toward enlightenment until society entered “a phase of super-exponential growth.”\textsuperscript{87}

7. The purpose of the entities is to transmit the vibrational information that will release humans from the spell of fear and reason through a psychological process. The condition of being motivated by fear and reason are what the entity calls “subjective thinking” as opposed to proper “spiritual true Intelligence... used in the consciousness of the Christ,” which will “begin to serve the needs of the whole.”\textsuperscript{88} During the eighties the prime focus will be upon influencing youth. A new reality will be proclaimed among physicists and psychologists. Religions will explode beyond the confines of dogma in a re-discovery of the Spirit. The dualism of consciousness will be manifest on the one hand as Love and Life, on the other hand as fear and death. This will climax in judgement when the two views will be separated. Most people will gravitate toward Love and Life. The coming age will be one of astounding good will. The balance will be restored to ecology, global cooperation and universal harmony. Then comes the thousand years of growth climaxing in the evolution of the human body into a light body and the joining of the cosmic brotherhood leaving this earth behind. Once again the New Age theme of creating one’s own reality is brought forward. The entity reveals, “You are the creator at this time of your own reality.”\textsuperscript{89} Dualisms of space and time, matter and spirit, form and being will be transcended by a psychological process which very much resembles that of psychosynthesis. Carey writes:

This process is a process of identity shift, a process through which balance is restored in your awareness of the two realities. Through it, you begin to realize that you are not the form you animate, but the force of animation itself. Through it, you will

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid. p. 175.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid. p. 37.
reawaken to an awareness of all that you are in Spirit and in wholeness. It is a process that will return you to a state of grace, a state of health, a state of intimate association with all that is.90

Once all things formerly considered to be knowledge are let go, then what is truly real will be manifest and remain— "the Life-impulse will transmit to you everything that you need to know in any given situation. Its message will always come as your first spontaneous impulse."91 Similar to the seven Chakra points of the body, the entity says there are seven vibrational channels within the Planetary Being. Within these channels are seven sub-channels. Once persons are tuned in to their proper primary channel, information will begin to flow freely and they in turn will begin to function as they were designed to do as a projection of God in form. The living Christ will awaken in the heart of the individual apart from instruction manuals. All crutches are to be cast aside.

8. The centres of vibrational atmosphere will be the places where the New Age genesis will form the Planetary Being. Through these vortexes will flow healing energies which will assist the collective awakening. The New Age will be characterised by these hot spots or "vortex areas." The former New Ager, Randall Baer says a vortex "is supposed to be a special area where the power and magnitude of mystical energies is unusually high; a place in some ways ‘closer’ to the heavens than the other locations of ‘lower vibrations.’"92 Such places include Stonehenge, Glastonbury, Findhorn, the Egyptian pyramids, Mount Shasta in northern California, the ancient Andean town of Michu Picchu, Maui, Hawaii, the Black Hills of South Dakota, the Grand Tetons, Sedona, Arizona, Santa Fe, New Mexico and other places. These are New Age "hot spots," "power spots" or "vortex areas." A vortex is supposed to be a special area where metaphysical energies are particularly strong and where the veil between this dimension and other dimensions is especially thin. These are areas of awesome beauty and wonder, ancient worship sites or simply sites so designated by the psychic leaders of the New Age. It is believed by New Agers that visiting

90 Ibid. p. 36; see also page 46.
91 Ibid. p. 41.
these areas will bring greater results to whatever techniques of personal transformation are achieved in the areas concerned.93

Santa Fe, New Mexico was considered a hot spot in the late 70s and early 80s. Baer says at Santa Fe many spirits entered him and his soul-mate Vicki. They revealed themselves as Moses, Mozart, White Eagle, White Cloud, Serapis Bey, Ascended Master Kuthumi, Mary, Golden-Helmeted Ones, Green Ray Master, Universal Masters, Servants of Light, Great White Brotherhood, Spiritual Hierarchy of Light and among other hosts the Space Brothers who work in conjunction with the Great White Brotherhood also known as the Spiritual Hierarchy of Light.94 Baer and others are chosen because they are receptive to the New Age consciousness to lead the world into the New One-World Era. Ken Carey’s Starseed Transmissions confirms the same theme— that from these vortexes the New Age will spread throughout the whole Earth.

9. The supreme law is the law of Love. It is more than a law, it is the way of life. This is the gospel of the New Age. From the hills of Galilee to the intuitions of individual consciousness, the Christ within would have humanity evolve to peace, harmony and wholeness. Only in a “born anew” communion can this message be lived. With resonance of the Sermon on the Mount, the entity exhorts Carey and all who would become the bride for the bridegroom, the branches for the vine, one with the Father and the Son, to become the action of what is real in a sea of illusion.

I am the winds of change and I bring the breath of eternal life. The seasons of Humankind are ended now, and the season of unified Man is to begin. I am the new wine that this generation has been designed to receive. I am the resurrected Christ come joyfully to dwell in the hearts of men.95

10. The final Stage of Human development in the Age of Discovery will be recognised by liberation from the body. As the first two thousand years are considered to have been spent in the darkness of the womb, the third millennium is to be the childhood phase of human evolution. This is the

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Planetary Awakening phase. Then comes maturity, the final stage of growth, the Age of Discovery, "out among the galaxies as an awakened child of the stars."96 This stage is so far beyond human comprehension that it is only vaguely alluded to in the primitive mythologies of this world. After a thousand years of harmony on Earth the great craft of living Being will transport us to visit the star systems and beyond, to the home of the soul. Each human is a cell in that body, a hologram, each containing the whole, "all that ever was, all that is, and all that ever shall be."97 The great commission given to all who realise this evolutionary process is to go and become a channel for the vibrational energies that each will be able to impart to bring healing of every kind, to make everything whole again.

**Peter Russell’s Fifth Level of Evolution**

Following the lines of New Age Gaia theory, that the Earth is not just a self-regulating system like Lovelock suggests but is alive, Russell suggests the role of humanity is a synthesis of two opposing views—the global brain and the planetary cancer. On the one hand humanity becomes the subsystem within the greater planetary organism. This is the role of the global brain. Each person is a cell in this brain. The contrary view is that humanity in its destructive force has become the planetary cancer of Gaia.

As the global brain, human society becomes a vast collection of data. Villages, town, cities, and metropolises become the ganglia connected by complex communication networks which serve as the central nervous system. Russell compares the postal services to the chemical networks of the human body such as the hormonal system. Likewise the electronic telecommunications networks are like the billions of fibres linking the nerve cells in the brain. The library systems are like the memory of Gaia’s brain. The western and eastern world-views are like the right and left hemispheres of the human brain. The West is the corollary to the left-brained intellectual/rational hemisphere and the East is the corollary to the right-brained intuitive/creative hemisphere. Humanity is compared to the cortex.

96 Ibid. p. 76.
97 Ibid. p. 78.
of Gaia. "In evolutionary terms the cortex is a relatively late addition." This is the outer fine layer of nerve cells covering the brain. It is the seat of “thinking, knowing, perceiving and consciousness.”98 Russell draws from evolutionary theory concerning the ‘encephalization quotient’ (EQ), which is the ratio of body size to brain size. The baseline of all animals is taken as an EQ of 1. Chimps, gorillas and orangutans have a brain-to-body ratio of 1-2. Homo erectus is given an EQ of over 3 and modern humans are measured as having and EQ of 5. The astounding brain-to-body ratio is also relative to the brain’s complexity. Russell follows the theory with an allusion to the complexity of the brain being developed along with a thickening cortex—

The brains of humans (and of whales and dolphins) are, with no exaggeration, the most complex structures in the known Universe— many times more complex than the largest computers such brains have yet designed.99

As many functions may continue in the body without the cortex, so Gaia progressed well before humanity came on the scene to be her cortex. However following the lines of accelerating evolution, the complexity of the human brain is to follow multiplied advancement with ever increasing pace. In comparison Gaia’s cortex too is following the lines of emergent evolution. Russell cites the 1980 world statistics of 440 million telephones and approximately 1 million telex machines.100 A decade later in his book The White Hole In Time Russell notes the multiplication factor where in the 90s billions of messages are “shuttling back and forth at the speed of light.”101 The billions of minds of the human race are linked together by:

- artificial satellites, fiber optics, digital coding, computerized switching, faxes, video links and other advances in telecommunications...

We, the billions of minds of this huge 'global brain' are being linked together by the 'fibers' of our telecommunications systems in much the same way as are the billions of cells in our own brain.102

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102 Ibid.
In the 1940s when computers where first on the market there were less than ten machines. In the mid 60s there were 15,000 world-wide and by the 80s there were 50,000 being manufactured daily. The “lap top” is more sophisticated than the largest computers of the 60s.103 Unbelievable acceleration in technology, information and interconnection has created a global community and global consciousness— a global brain for Gaia. Russell cites the British computer consultant, John McNulty, as stating the global communications of 1975 being compared to a brain the size of a pea, whereas the data-processing capacity doubling every 2.5 years could produce a network equal to the complexity of the human brain by the year 2000.104 More is being done faster and with less. Russell borrows Buckminster Fuller’s term “ephemeralisation.” According to Russell the global brain is able to achieve in a year’s technological advancement what has not been accomplished in millions of years of genetic evolution. The solar cell captures the sun’s energy and becomes the extension to photosynthesis. Radar becomes the extended eye of the global being beyond the significance of the evolution of the human eye. Nuclear physics has synthesised new chemical elements such as has not been accomplished in around five billion years of the evolutionary process. Genetic engineering will allow for new species of life, no longer dependent on the slow processes of presupposed genetic evolution.105

However, according to Russell since the arrival and development of humans, the earth has also suffered a cancerous attack. Rapid increase in the consuming and savaging of Gaia’s resources leads to the analogy of a malignant growth erupting on Earth. Pollution, deforestation, species destruction and stripping the land are evidence of the effects of the human cancer. Russell surmises that perhaps humanity serves Gaia in a dual capacity as:

part of some global nervous system, currently passing through a very rapid phase of development, capable of being to the planet everything that our own brains are to us. Yet this nervous system has, at a very critical stage appeared to have gone out of control,

103 Ibid.
threatening to destroy the very body which supports its existence.106

The Eco-warriors at Findhorn and other New Age centres as well as individuals in a growing Green movement have learned the statistics well. America is the implied worst offender with more than seven million cars scrapped each year, seventy thousand abandoned on the streets of New York alone. The fast-food-throw-away generation litters forty billion metal cans, twenty-six billion bottles and sixty-five billion bottle caps per annum.107 In 1962 Rachel Carson’s now famous book Silent Spring sounded the first alarm on DDT and other chemical treatments which while attempting to control the insect population also poisoned the environment. She warned that unless drastic measures were taken the music of the birds and the beauty, joy and awe of nature would be lost. Jay D. Hair, president of the National Wildlife Federation in America tells a true story of devastation to the ecology that is resulting in the destruction of known and unknown medicinal cures:

About four years ago... my older daughter Whitney was very ill with cancer. She literally came within a few days of death. She is here today,... completely cured... The drug that saved her life was derived from a plant called the rosy periwinkle. The rosy periwinkle was a plant native to the island country of Madagascar. The irony of this story is that 90 percent of the forested area of Madagascar has been destroyed. One hundred percent of all native habitat of the rosy periwinkle is gone forever. And just at a time when we’re learning about the marvels of biotechnology. We are losing entire genetic stocks of wild living resources at a time when we’re learning about potential medical marvels of some of these plants, like the one used to cure my daughter. We are destroying them and their potential values forever. This is a tragedy with incredible consequences to the future of global societies.108

In this apocalyptic vein of New Age warning David Day gives evidence of the devastating rape of the environment in The Eco Wars. He illustrates the dilemma by building a pyramid of coffins in the imagination of his readers

108 Ibid. p. 19.
as a monument to the human martyrs of the eco-wars. At the peak are the coffins of the relatively few who have been outright murdered such as Dian Fossey (Gorillas in the Mist) whose courageous work to save the Rwandan gorillas ended December 26, 1985 with a fatal blow which split her skull with “an eight inch gash which ran from the forehead across the nose and down the cheek to the edge of her mouth;” or the example of Joy Adamson (Born Free) whose work to save the big cats of Africa ended mysteriously. Her body was found January 4, 1980 on the Shaba Lion Preserve just north of Nairobi, Kenya. She had been carved up “with a sima— a short curved knife.” August 20, 1989 her husband George Adamson and two African colleagues were ambushed and shot to death. In the Florida Everglades Guy Bradley served as an Audubon Society warden to enforce the laws banning the slaughter of the egrets. He was shot to death point blank in his schooner on July 8, 1905. The momentum has been increasing ever since then. The list includes such martyrs as Karen Silkwood (U.S.A 1974), Valery Rinchinov (USSR 1981), Hilda Murrell (England 1984), Fernando Pereira (New Zealand 1985), Chico Mendes (Brazil 1988) and a host.109

Beneath the peak of martyrs are the “hundreds of tribal people who are massacred because they occupy and protect wilderness lands...” Then come the thousands of coffins of those drowned in floods caused by mountain deforestation. The fourth level of the pyramid is made up of the tens of thousands of those who die of “chemical poisoning, toxic waste pollution, atomic radiation, and industrial fires and explosions.” Below that are the coffins of the victims of famines caused by improper farming techniques which have eroded the soil. The base of the monument is made up of over twenty-five million coffins of those who died from using polluted water.110 The monumental pyramid stands ten times the size of the world’s largest pyramid, that of King Cheops. Except for the few martyrs at the top, Day says this illustration represents the fatalities of only one year in the eco-wars.

The New Age refutes Social Darwinism that seeks to justify the extinction of species and the use of resources as simply a speeding up of the process of evolution in the name of progress. Day calls this “a total travesty of

110 Ibid. p. 17-18.
evolutionary theory." His point is that evolution has produced an increase of species, while industrial, exploitive humans have diminished species on a massive scale. This is called "anti-evolution" in association with the observations of the British ecologist Edward Goldsmith. Going one step further, Theodore Roszak, a New Age analyst, presents the typical New Age argument against Christianity by stating that Christianity's God is separate from the world, therefore the earth is desacralized and divested of any spiritual significance. From this conjecture it is argued that Christianity is then responsible for the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions which view the world in quantitative and instrumental terms which in turn results in destroying the earth and abusing life on planet earth.112

Calvin DeWitt reports statistics in seven categories that expose the ecological crisis:113

1. **Land Conversion and Habitat Destruction**— changes in the use of various land masses which results in changes of life for the inhabitants.
2. **Species Extinction**— the unknown numbers of life forms that are rushed into annihilation before their time.
3. **Land Degradation**— depletion of soil richness due to over production or dumping.
4. **Resource Conversion and Wastes & Hazards Production**— production of non biodegradable materials which pollute the atmosphere and earth.
5. **Global Toxification**— pollution of water sources and land masses due to chemical misuse.
6. **Alteration of Planetary Exchange**— contamination resulting in changes to the earth's circulatory system (air and water movement) and the balance of energy received from the sun and re-radiated to outer space.

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111 Ibid. p. 332-333.
113 DeWitt, Calvin B. The Environment and the Christian: What Does the New Testament Say about the Environment. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids Michigan. 1991. At the time of editing the book, DeWitt was professor of environmental studies at the Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and director of the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies in Mancelona, Michigan. The book was born out of the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies which began a forum in 1980 to bring together scientists, theologians and lay people to explore the possibilities and relationships between the Bible and the environment, Christianity and ecology. The Institute has association with some eighty evangelical Christian colleges and universities in the United States and Canada as well as association with Christian and religious leaders world-wide. See the preface, p. 10.
7. **Human and Cultural Degradation**— agriculture is replaced by agribusiness thus altering the lifestyles of peoples and animal life without due regard for either.

Geographically the land mass of the planet is made up of 16 billion acres of ice, snow and rock with another 16 billion acres of vegetation. Since 1850, 2.2 billion acres of the natural ecosystem have been converted for human use through processes such as deforestation, reclamation of wetlands, irrigation of arid and semi-arid areas, and farming of former grasslands and prairies. Tropical deforestation is consuming 25 million acres per annum. Humanity is literally changing the face of the planet and destroying unknown quantities of unrecorded species of life. The left-overs are converted into plywood and toilet tissue, while the cleared land is trampled by hamburgers.114

In the United States 400 million acres have been allowed for cropland, yet 3 million acres per annum are being eaten up by urban conversion. It is estimated that every day, in this world, there are at least 3 species being made extinct. To quantify this is difficult because it is not known whether there are 5 million or 40 million species in the world.115 Biocides, pesticides, herbicides, avicides and fungicides form but a few of the 70,000 chemicals compounded by humanity. Many of these leave the environment defenceless. With the use of these chemicals the micro-organisms in the soil have been altered. Erosion of topsoil has escalated because with the use of increased fertilisation, pesticides and herbicides, crops can be planted year after year without resting the soil or crop rotation to replenish the soil. The result for example in the "corn belt" is that two bushels of topsoil are consumed for every bushel of corn produced.116

Global toxification continues to alter the biosphere and atmosphere. Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), methanes and carbon dioxide are changing the weather and polluting the oceans and river systems. The well known pesticide DDT was discovered in Antarctic penguins. It is no longer a local problem. The old saying, "What goes around comes around" is seen on a

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115 ibid. p. 15.
116 ibid. p. 16-17.
global prospective. The earth’s temperature range is governed by an exchange of receiving and re-radiating the energy of the sun. With the increased amounts of carbon dioxide, methane and some 25-30 manufactured chemicals in the atmosphere, instead of the energy re-radiated being balanced with that which is received, these chemicals absorb the re-radiated energy and cause a greenhouse effect. The rise in carbon dioxide is caused by deforestation, reclamation of wetlands, and burning of petroleum, coal and wood. In addition some of these chemicals are found in aerosols, Styrofoam, refrigerants, and some fire extinguishers. There is evidence that the melting of the polar ice caps is raising the sea level at an accelerated rate. This in turn is causing changes in rainfall and drought. In addition to global warming and changes in rainfall, CFCs also destroy the ozone layer in the outer atmosphere. The blanket protects the earth from harmful ultraviolet radiation. In humans this will escalate the occurrences of skin cancer. Such claims are agreed by the eco-warriors of the New Age.

Out of this crisis and age of stress there is to evolve not a physical or biological change, but an evolution in consciousness that will create what Russell identifies the global social super-organism as “billions of individuals over the face of the earth,” who will retain individual diversity yet work together as an “integrated living system.”117 The person most quoted by the New Age is Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. It is from Teilhard’s theory of The Phenomenon of Man that Russell and the New Age extrapolate the fifth level of evolution. In Teilhard’s theory evolution would not be restricted to the physical or biological levels, but would go on to the human mind and develop a unification of a single interthinking group which he called the “noosphere.” Evolution was to develop from geogenesis (genesis of Earth) to biogenesis (genesis of life) and then to the noogenesis (genesis of mind).118 The era of noogenesis began “when for the first time in a living creature instinct perceived itself in its own mirror, the whole world took a pace forward.”119 Teilhard described the climax of accessing the noosphere as a “mass-formation”—the planetisation of mankind into a single organic unity, a psychical expansion to the Omega point.120 The Omega point is the point

118 Ibid. p. 83.
120 Ibid. pp. 252-253.
at which the personal and the All merge—when this world ends, when everything that is goes back to the original essence, "which Omega, if it is to be truly Omega, must reclaim."121

For Teilhard the culmination of the evolutionary process was the Omega point. However, Russell points to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo who takes evolution beyond consciousness into the "Divine Reality expressing itself in ever higher forms of existence." Having passed through the four evolutionary levels of energy, matter, life and consciousness, Aurobindo propounds a new level of evolution in the "Supermind." On both individual and collective levels humanity would evolve into an all-embracing consciousness—"the ultimate evolution of Spirit."122 Russell, like Ken Carey's Starseed Transmissions pushes the boundaries of evolution beyond Omega, beyond Supermind and into the realm of the Gaiafield, "as different from consciousness as consciousness is from life, and life is from matter."123 This new realm of existence is indefinable to the human consciousness, since it is beyond consciousness altogether. Though Russell concedes his theory to be without definition, he does assert that this stage will emerge at a planetary level "from the combined interactions of all the minds within the social super-organism."124

Evolution and ecology go hand in hand within the New Age. Russell, Carey, and the rest expose the New Age's positive hope for a better world and beyond, yet realise the inevitability of choice. Transformation is imperative in order to overcome the crises of the planet and its species. For Gaia to come alive, it is positively suggested that there is yet to come a planetary unification of mind, a collective access to the wisdom and knowledge of the noosphere. The avenues of revelation are multiplied from science to mysticism, from human consciousness to channelled entities beyond the stars, from the past and from the future. While some have deified humanity others have deified the Earth. The common denominator found in all is the shared quest—a search for a better world, for salvation, for something more than what is, something more than even the present state of consciousness can perceive. From that point onward the Spirit will

121 Ibid. p. 261.
123 Ibid.
124 Ibid. p. 85.
evolve beyond this world to interconnect with other Gaias in a universal Gaia— the All that is One.
Chapter Five
New Age and the Challenge to Christian Theology

The Challenge of the New Age to the evolution of Christian theology has been manifest in the variety of Biblical themes on which the New Age has capitalised. Though these themes are recorded in the texts of the Bible, they have been asleep for ages. The New Age in all its diversity and conflict with Christianity is challenging the church to become more aware of the Biblical texts which give life to such themes as care for the Earth, care for each other and the transformation of self in relationship with God. Donald Reeves attempts a synthesis of New Age and Christianity by incorporating various soft core themes of the New Age with rituals in the Alternatives Ministry, as rector of the St. James’ Church in Piccadilly, London. In his book, Making Sense of Religion: A Fresh Look at Christianity, Reeves lays out what he sees as the problem and the hope:

the key to the journey is the desire and longing for communion and union with Creation, one another and with God.

But today the Church is not an institution which works away at articulating and helping to put into some sort of practice what it means to seek communion and union. English Christianity has in general become a tame, puny thing, obsessed with its own identity, power struggles and survival. The grandeur and simplicity of its affirmations and promises have been muffled and lost.... Jesus — the paradigm and founder of Christianity — was displaced, removed and the God of institutional religion replaced him.1

As an approach to the awakening of spirituality and the credibility of the churches in a changing world Reeves advocates a “broad ecumenical approach... whereby Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, the followers of tribal religions as well as Christians, could learn from one another and together become a power for good. But ‘interfaith dialogue’ is still in its

infancy." Reeves goes on to list the charges against Christianity by its critics:

1. Christianity is obscurantist, and fuels fatalism and superstition.
2. The accusation of irrelevance: the way Christian beliefs and formulas are expressed belong to another age, and bear no relation to the problems and opportunities of the world today.
3. Christianity is accused of excluding people, women in particular.
4. The familiar critique of the Church as an obstacle to belief in God.

Reeves continues:

the world is in the midst of rapid change, the outcome of which is very uncertain. This awareness springs from two different but related issues: what we have done and are doing to the Earth, for Mother Earth is dying; and what we have done and are doing to the poor of the world— not only the poor in London and in the north of England but in all the world's major cities and in the Third World.

Leading New Age writers such as David Spangler as well as Ken Carey and Helen Schucman evidence the attempt of the New Age to use Biblical themes to support New Age concepts in the use of language borrowed from a Christian context. A theology of the New Age is exemplified in the use of such terms as God, Christ, Holy Spirit, Atonement, Salvation, Trinity, Heaven and Hell, Judgement, Demonic Powers, Sin, The Second Coming of Christ, and Life after Death to mention but a few. Although a number of New Agers are what has been described in this thesis as hard core, there are yet soft core New Age themes that run throughout ecology, mythology, evolutionary science, spirituality and psychology as well as the medical and political arena. Themes such as the political and medical fields have only been alluded to here. Due to the length allotted to this study, it has been necessary to be selective of but a few of the themes which permeate the New Age.

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2 Ibid. p. 8.
3 Ibid. p. 9.
4 Ibid. p. 7.
When asking the question, “Why would some of the leading writers of the New Age movement use the terminology of Christianity to explicate their beliefs it becomes evident that it is because the message of Christianity is a universal message of hope which will find resonance in all the mythologies of hope which movements such as the New Age espouse. For this reason the use of the same or similar terminology, yet with a different meaning is such that it may readily appeal to the audience of modern western culture which for so long has been foundationally reared on Biblical teaching. The New Age Movement has evolved out of a culture which generally would not accept the credibility of the cultic and occult. Therefore in an attempt to raise credibility, the New Age Movement has appealed to whatever sources are recognised as credible. There is a great emphasis among New Agers to credit their techniques with science because in modern western culture science is still a god.

For example when the British Jungian psychologist and astrologist Liz Greene is promoting the techniques of Astrology in her books The Astrology of Fate and The Mythic Tarot she claims that Astrology is a tested and learned body of knowledge which is practised. Greene wants to convey the idea that it is a science that is credible, that has been tested and found to work when properly practised. The American psychological-astrologist Howard Sasportas speaks not of the stars controlling the events on earth, but of the Jungian idea that the stars and planets are a reflection of what is going on psychologically within humans. These want to say that an astrologer is a counsellor and guide. In keeping with astrology’s premise “as above so below,” yet vying for credibility with the science of psychology Sasportas says, “Some people are turning to astrologists like they might have turned to priests or other counsellors in the past. An astrologer is a mid-wife of the spirit.”

Caroline Myss, an American who is by profession an Intuitive Diagnostician upgrades the seven chakra points of eastern medicine to modern computer language as “seven computer centres” in the body. One of Myss’ claims to credibility is that she works along with “a well respected

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neurosurgeon in the U.S.A."7 Marie-Louise Lacy, a New Age colour therapist and author, avers during interview that—

We are immersed in the colour rays of the seven colours of the rainbow. We absorb the colour. Science has shown that matter is condensed light pulsating at such a low frequency that it appears solid. We are walking rainbows of light. We are bathed in the light.8

To legitimise her claims Lacy refers to a computer technique by Harry Oldfield which is alleged to show the auric field on a television screen which also recognises chakra points with blips on the screen. From psychology to occult to alternative forms of healing and self improvement there is a desire to gain credibility by appearing to side with science.

The same is true with those who would use Christian terminology to verify the New Age. They are trying to say that the New Age is not in contradiction with the core of Christianity, but is in direct link with the same power that gave rise to Christian beliefs. This approach sets up for the New Age a further function which is an attempt to legitimise its critique of where Christianity has missed the mark. Firstly, the New Age would say that Christ has been falsely interpreted as the only name under heaven whereby people are saved. A second point of critique would follow such lines as Levi’s *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus* and Elizabeth Clare and Mark L. Prophet’s *The Lost Teachings of Jesus* wherein is the New Age claim that the teachings of Jesus have been altered. Originally, they would say, Jesus taught reincarnation and karma as well as chakras and mantras. Finally the New Age would claim a foul in the acclaim of Christians that Jesus is uniquely God incarnate. For the New Age, Jesus is but one of many Bodhisattvas or similar figures.9

In response to the New Age attempt to transform Christianity denominational leaders have set both a tone of debate and defeat as well as dialogue and compromise. Sadly, when both sides are claiming the way of love, much of their critique of one another fails to practice what it preaches.

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7 Ibid. interview with Caroline Myss.
8 Ibid. interview with Marie-Louise Lacy.
9 In discussion of these points one may also refer to Osborn, Lawrence. *Angels of Light*. *Op. Cit.* pp. 150-151.
Luther would have called people to love the sinner and hate the sin. Too often the polemic platform becomes a vent of hostility toward people instead of compassion for people who may be lost sheep looking for home.

**Responses in Christian Theology to the New Age**

As noted in the introduction to this thesis there have been various categories of response to the New Age Movement by the denominational world of churchianity. These range from one extreme in Constance Cumbey’s *Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow* to the other extreme of Matthew Fox’s Creation-Centred Spirituality. On the one hand the New Age Movement is categorically aligned with the eschatological interpretations of Satanic 666 and the imminent battle of Armageddon. On the other hand in attempting to empathise the critique has gone native to the New Age itself. For one the very term “New Age” is used as a judgement, for another it is a welcomed fresh look at the world, spirituality and the church.

**The Millennialist Approach**

There are those who once espoused the New Age with body, soul and spirit but have since become disciples of no other name than Jesus. Having come away from the New Age and being fully aware of the subjectivism and mysticism of its ways, these have aligned themselves with others who have adopted a form of denominationalism which has kept that same subjectivity with regard to Christianity. These now disavow the New Age as being Satanic and associated with the apocalyptic millennial “mark of the beast.”

With full regard for their intent to “contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints,” the manner of attack presented by such converts as Tal Brooke, Brooks Alexander and Randall Baer (former New Agers) would be used by New Agers in exposing the same subjectivity and disharmony among the 20,800 denominations claiming to be Christian. For the informative critique they offer, their argument can be weakened by its

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10 Jude verse 3.
manner of presentation. Their combined voluminous information certainly exposes the New Age Movement as being outside the boundaries of Biblical Christianity and exposes the way in which many churches have adopted New Age techniques, yet the sarcasm and allegations of demonic possession and Satanic intent are resonant of the same manner taken by some New Agers against Christians.

It may be argued that such people have earned the right to criticise the New Age with such vehemence since they were once insiders. Tal Brooke, now president of the Spiritual Counterfeits Project (SCP), was for twenty years a devotee to occult activity. He spent two years in India as the leading disciple of the God-man Sri Sathya (truth) Sai Baba, the miracle-worker guru who claims to be the reincarnation of the first Sai Baba (1856-1918) the incarnation of Siva and Shakti. Sai Baba is reputed to have over 20 million devotees. Brooke was singled out by Sai Baba. During sessions of revelation Brooke’s inner quest for love and peace was revealed by Sai Baba in such a way that Brooke was spell bound by him. He responded with a flush of emotion embracing Baba with the conviction “that the gender of his body was irrelevant to the deity that filled it.” Brooke recounts the testimony of one named Gill whom he refers to as Lion-man:

I experienced without interruption, the state of samadhi, suddenly and by no visible cause, including drugs. I had knowledge, and there was no limit to what I knew. When I saw people passing along the streets, I knew them better than old friends. I knew everything there was to know about them. And complete strangers would stop in their tracks, look into my eyes, and in reverence and trembling ask the questions about the meaning of existence, and about who they were.

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14 Ibid. p. 65; pp. 62-63 see for example Brooke’s account of having his unhappy childhood revealed by Baba.
16 Ibid. pp. 69-70.
During a festival with “a cross-section of India’s superrich, intelligentsia, nobility, and political officialdom, including cabinet members, ministers, governors, right up to the view-president” Sai Baba set up disciples to give testimony to his “supernatural covenant of grace.” On this occasion, long after the episode that in the end confirmed his disbelief, Brooke proclaimed that Baba was unique, having had no teacher, unlike those who had teachers:

Rama, Krishna, Christ, Ramakrishna, Buddha, Chaitanya, and Shankaracharya... Truth seemed to be his essential nature, the meaning of his name ‘Sathya.’ Now it was time to syncretize the world religions. The whole war of good and evil was about the physiological transformation of enlightenment. ‘New Jerusalem was simply that instant of enlightenment when the Kundalini Shakti reached the thousand petaled lotus, the ultimate chakra... I spoke on the Kali Yuga and Saint John’s Revelation. I was synthesizing apocryphal revelations about a time of worldwide upheaval when the embodiment of truth was to appear in a blood red robe. Indeed, Baba had been predicted from various global revelations. I was formulating what more than a decade later would be known as the New Age Christ.

Brooke’s account of Sai Baba’s own testimony before tens of thousands of devotees at the conclusion of the festival exposes the extent of Baba’s own belief concerning himself:

I am the embodiment of truth. This is the first time in history that mankind has had the chance of being with me in this number. In the Dwarka age and former ages, the rishis would meditate for years, and yet your chance is much greater than theirs. The moment you come into my presence, all your sins are forgiven. I can give you full self-realization, and take you back to the eternal limitless God-consciousness.

Do not try to compare my power with those petty powers of magicians. My power is divine and has no limit. I have the power to change the earth into the sky and the sky into the earth...I am beyond any obstacle, and there is no force, natural or supernatural, that can stop me or my mission.

17 Ibid. p. 211.
18 Ibid. p. 212.
19 Ibid. p. 215.
In his book *Lord of the Air: Tales of a Modern Antichrist*, Brooke recounts his testimony to the "miracles" of materialisation and healing which Baba performed such as producing from his palms pictures of himself to give to devotees and exuding "egg-sized sheroids from his mouth that had been 'growing' inside him, made of precious or semi-precious stone or metal."\(^{20}\)

On the occasion of his first session with Baba, Brooke tells of Baba’s diagnosis of Brooke’s stomach problem and materialising a clear crystal sphere of sugar for Brooke to digest while they hugged.\(^{21}\) At a moment of total devotion to Baba as *Mahapurusha*, the Lord of the Universe, Brooke recalls a "huge force surged from Baba to me, almost visibly sparking."\(^{22}\)

A stairwell homosexual approach from Sai Baba challenged Brooke’s conclusions.\(^{23}\) A second challenge came when Baba was caught in a lie and inconsistent instructions about foods to be eaten. Baba tried to justify himself by telling the story of Krishna and Arjuna identifying a bird while out on a walk together. At first Krishna says it is a dove, then an eagle, then a crow. Arjuna replied, "You are lord of the universe, whatever you say it is, it is. For your words are truer than what the eye sees."\(^{24}\)

Disillusioned by Sai Baba’s homosexuality and inconsistency, Brooke concluded:

> After two long years of frightful bondage to a god I was beginning to learn was not God, it was a most relieving thing to board a bus in the dark morning hours and rumble away through the wilderness shadows. I was not sure how yet, but an emboldened rage was slowly mounting within me about Baba, gathering in my soul, as armies before battle, for the needed confrontation to get at the truth.\(^{25}\)

Earlier Brooke had retreated to a hillside with his wrinkled Bible to sort out his mind and "search for truth, this time in the Scriptures." In subjective fashion Brooke through the Bible down with the prayer, If there is a God, speak to me now!" He writes: "Then I just threw the Bible wide open on a boulder, playing Russian roulette with its pages. It opened to Matthew 24:24."\(^{26}\) Brooke then proceeds with conclusions that, "far from being God

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\(^{20}\) Ibid. pp. 59, 61, 64, 120-121.

\(^{21}\) Ibid. p. 64.

\(^{22}\) Ibid. p. 125.

\(^{23}\) Ibid. pp. 127-132; see also 310-318 where others give testimonial evidence to Baba’s homosexual activities.

\(^{24}\) Ibid. pp. 174-178. The story of Krishna and Arjuna is on page 177.

\(^{25}\) Ibid. p. 327.

\(^{26}\) Ibid. p. 323.
on earth, this 'World Messiah' is in fact a modern antichrist, empowered by demonic forces bent on destroying the eternal hope of millions."27 The several passages cited by Brooke are those interpreted in many variations from referring to the destruction of Jerusalem to predictions of the parousia and the end of the world.28 During Brooke’s confrontation with Baba his conviction is that he now realised that Baba “resided within the shell” that “was neither divine nor entirely human.”29 Brooke’s assessment of the New Age is brought forward from his response to Sai Baba:

How about all those millions of pieces to the puzzle: man becoming God, the system of reincarnation, the God-realized guru? My heart, mind, soul, and body shook from the sepsis of this lie. From the original Genesis lie, across the centuries to Babylon, it filtered down from civilization to civilization. Its kernel is that man is God, Divine in his essence. According to the Bible, this seductive thought was the cause of the Fall of Man, the reason for his present alienation from God.... As Proverbs said, it was as sweet as honey in the first taste but underneath it was as bitter as wormwood.... Baba is an Antichrist who works miracles.30

Another insider’s story comes from Randall Baer’s book Inside The New Age Nightmare. He writes:

The New Age Movement was my life, my love for some 15 years... which led to years of study to become a professional New Age teacher, holistic health practitioner, and activist... renown as an expert in ‘crystal power’ and New Age philosophy. Before I was 30, I had two acclaimed books published by a respected mainstream publisher, Harper & Row, a large teaching and research facility, and was able to write my own ticket on the national lecture circuit.”31

27 Ibid. back cover.
28 Ibid. p. 323-325 citing Matthew 24:3-27.
29 Ibid. p. 340.
Baer exposes what he calls "the very real dangers that lay behind the oftentimes harmless-looking exteriors of so many New Age phenomena" that are in fact "Satanic webs of ensnarement."\(^{32}\) His journey began with using Marijuana, as did much of the drug culture, under the guise of pursuing a higher consciousness and experiencing out-of-body enlightenment. This took him further into the human potential and PMA (Positive Mental Attitude) philosophies of writers like Napoleon Hill, whom he later learned had channelled his messages from a "Council of 33 Masters."\(^ {33}\) Under the drug related leadership of former Harvard professors Richard Alpert (who later became the guru Ram Dass), Timothy Leary, Aldous Huxley, Dr. John Lilly and others, Baer tuned in to the "psychedelic gospel."

Baer became one of the seven million to take the occult related Silva Mind Control seminar to learn to get in touch with his intuitive powers. He delved deeply into the eastern esoteric practices of yoga and mantra chanting. His conclusion was that he was seduced by Satan—

I had asked for a 'vision' and 'powers' and got both... the enemy and his demonic legions masquerade many times as angels of light and servants of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:13-15)... What I was absolutely convinced was truth was actually an extended series of masterful counterfeits.\(^ {34}\)

At one point Baer's perception is that he was under the influence of a "familiar spirit" — a demon masquerading as a shamanic "power animal" spirit-hawk.\(^ {35}\) His assessment includes a claim that 75 percent of New Agers claim the belief in extraterrestrials. He goes on to say that the figure of 75 percent is conservative and that the figure is "most likely around 85-95 percent."\(^ {36}\) Baer also asserts an estimate that 50 percent "truly believe that they are alien or angelic beings that have reincarnated today into human form."\(^ {37}\) As examples he lists John Denver's claim to be from a place near the Lyra nebula and Shirley MacLaine's mentor, "David," who claims to

\(^{32}\) Ibid.  
^{34}\) Ibid. p. 19.  
^{35}\) Ibid.  
^{36}\) Ibid. p. 40  
^{37}\) Ibid.
have had a romantic and spiritual relationship with an alien woman named Mayan. Becoming adept at inducing out-of-body experiences, Baer believed his spirit to be:

released from Earthbound, bodily restrictions and freed to roam the unlimited expanses of the cosmos.... Here it was, the freedom, the light, and the truth that I had been searching for all my life. I had found the keys that opened the heavens before my very eyes...38

Baer’s later conviction confesses, “What I thought was ‘up’ was actually ‘down’... What I thought were Ascended Masters, extraterrestrials, and angels were actually demons in cunning, glowing disguises.”39

During one of these experiences Baer claims to have momentarily seen behind the mask of the posing angels of light and come face to face with “demons filled with the power of Satan” who were about to devour him. At that moment “the same supernatural hand as before delivered me from the jaws of this consuming darkness.... It was Jesus who had intervened...”40

Following a period of depression and watching televangelists, he entered a prayer time with Pat Robertson over the cable and “felt the conviction of the Holy Spirit pierce [his] heart... With absolute certainty, I knew that this was what I had been looking for all my life and never had found till now.”41

Personal testimonies and millennial eschatology follow a particularly limited and subjective interpretation of events and Biblical texts which initially make the same claim for finding meaning to life and peace of mind in a conversion experience that was once felt in the conversion experience to New Age teaching. While one’s experiences and feelings may be valid for oneself, the same arguments would make valid both lifestyles.

The “Conspiracy” Approach
A quite different interpretation to Ferguson’s New Age ‘conspiracy’ is placed on the idea of a New Age “conspiracy” by such people as Constance Cumbey in her number one best seller The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow: The New Age Movement and Our Coming Age of Barbarism. Cumbey, a

38 Ibid. p. 54.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid. p. 56.
41 Ibid. p. 63.
former attorney, claims that she applies her legal scrutiny to the New Age and concludes that it is not a benign conspiracy but a political take over and Satanic conspiracy. In like manner Frank Peretti’s occult conspiracy novels, *This Present Darkness* and *Piercing the Darkness* take forward the idea that the New Age is a plot to take over the lives of people and the world. This view holds that the New Age is virtually beyond redemption. As a former insider Randall Baer’s thesis is that the New Age is essentially a “Satan-controlled, modern-day mass revival of occult based philosophies and practices in both obvious and cleverly disguised forms.”

For him it is the fulfilment of end-time Biblical prophecy, the “powerful delusion that they should believe the lie.” In like manner Michael Cole, Tony Higton and company conclude that the New Age Movement is “an unholy alliance throughout the world challenging the rule and authority of God.”

For these, the very term “New Age” is used as a judgement.

With quite the opposite interpretation to the networking system of the New Age, Cumbey says that Ferguson’s “protest that the Movement is both leaderless and unstructured” is “belied by the abundance of network council organisational charts, matrixes, statements of purpose, and directories— all showing both leadership and structure to an advanced degree.”

The opening chapter of her book refers to Benjamin Creme’s attempt to proclaim the coming of Lord Maitreya with the $500,000 plus newspaper campaign. Although Creme’s prediction has never been fulfilled, Cumbey cites this extravaganza as exemplifying a plot to take over the world and create one world religion and an underground parallel neo-Nazi plan for a “super-race.”

Through listings in New Age directories Cumbey links the New Age with the bizarre story of Jim Jones and the People’s Temple. Previous to his mass suicide tragedy Jones was listed as fulfilling the role “to teach Christian socialism in preparation for the New Age.” Cumbey continues her critique with allusions to David Spangler’s “Luciferic initiation” which she claims is

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42 Ibid. p. 78.
43 Ibid., citing II Thessalonians 2:11.
46 Ibid. p. 16.
an initiation to worship Lucifer as deity in order to enter the New Age.48 Spangler admits to the flippant use of the term “Luciferic initiation” but disclaims the interpretation placed on it by “fundamentalist writers” whom he claims “took this phrase out of context and, with no reference to the content of the talk, simply said that I was saying that to be a part of the New Age a person had to undergo a ‘Luciferic initiation’ in which he would sell his soul to Satan, and this proved that the New Age was really a Satanic movement!”49 The controversial passage reads as follows:

The true light of Lucifer cannot be seen through sorrow, through darkness, through rejection. The true light of this great being can only be recognized when one’s own eyes can see with the light of the Christ, the light of the inner sun. Lucifer works within each of us to bring us to wholeness, and as we move into a new age, which is the age of man’s wholeness, each of us in some way is brought to that point which I term the Luciferic initiation, the particular doorway through which the individual must pass if he is to come fully into the presence of his light and his wholeness.

Lucifer comes to give us the final gift of wholeness. If we accept it, then he is free and we are free. That is the Luciferic initiation. It is one that many people now, and in the days ahead, will be facing, for it is an initiation into the New Age. It is an initiation of leaving the past and moving into the new, shedding our guilts and fears, our anxieties, our needs, our temptations, and becoming whole and at peace because we have recognized our inner light and the light that enfolds us, the light of God.50

Spangler claims his real meaning was simply to infer that there is a shadow side in humanity that is capable of creating pain and suffering in the world; and that unless people face up to this darkness as well as the light, there can be no healing. Spangler urges people to face the issue of “the shadow—the repressed, suppressed, painful content of our unconscious, as well as the existence of oppression and injustice in the world” in order to develop “an


authentic spiritual path toward the divine emerging out of the New Age movement.” 51

Cumbey’s contention is that for the first time since the Apostle John wrote the Revelation, “there is a viable movement — the New Age Movement — that truly meets the scriptural requirements for the antichrist and the political movement that will bring him on the world scene.” 52 However, Cumbey concedes that “the vast majority of New Agers are involved quite innocently. Their motives are often altruistic. They wish to help — not harm — their fellow human beings. Most of them lack knowledge of the ultimate goals of the Movement.” 53 The political movement is toward One World Government, and the religious movement is toward One World Religion. Cumbey further states that “it appears to culminate in a scheme both fulfilling the prophetic requirements for the antichrist as set forth in the Bible, and also matching Nazism down to use of swastikas.” 54 The conclusions Cumbey arrives at are based on her conviction that the New Age is based on The Plan, which is taken from the writings of Alice Bailey and incorporated in such organizations as New World Alliance, Club of Rome, World Goodwill, Lucis Trust, Planetary Citizens and others whose leaders are a part of the World Council of Wise Persons, more commonly referred to as the Brotherhood. 55 In his book, Mystery Mark of the New Age, Texe Marrs identifies this Brotherhood with The New Group of World Servers, which is an organisation purporting to be the “Custodians of the Plan.” This Plan teaches that the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit “is inferior to an entity known as The Solar Logos.” 56 The Solar Trinity is Will, Love-wisdom and Active intelligence and though New Age writers may use the Christian terms Father, Son and Holy Spirit respectively, in fact they have a New Age alternative meaning. 57 The New Group of World Servers are jointly headquartered in such major cities as London, Geneva and New York. Their goal as the “Enlightened Ones” is to build a “New World Order.” 58

53 Ibid. p. 184.
54 Ibid. p. 18.
55 Ibid. p. 64-65.
56 Ibid. p. 65.
57 Ibid.
In establishing his “conspiracy” theory Marrs interprets a five-year plan which was to begin with the Harmonic Convergence. During this plan the New Age was to achieve the following:59

1. Bring all New Age groups, organizations and churches together in unity and strength.
2. Establish a ‘mediarchy,’ composed of all television, radio, newspaper, and other media who will work jointly to set up a propaganda environment favorable to the New Age.
3. ‘Destructure civilization,’ dismantling national governments and setting up one world order based on global units called ‘bioregions.’
4. ‘Purify the earth,’ a hazy and vague concept which, when properly analyzed, clearly means the forcible establishment of a one world religion and the abolishing of true Biblical Christianity. Christian resisters will be killed.
5. Merge humanity with ‘spirit guides’ and ‘ascended masters’ from the invisible spirit world.
6. Exalt humanity to godhood. Citizens of the New Age Kingdom will be suddenly and magically capable of superhuman feats... Those unfit to join... will be destroyed, possibly to be reincarnated later.
7. Seize and redistribute the world’s resources and riches, through the principle of ‘sharing.’
8. Bring in the New Age Messiah, or ‘Christ’, now in the wings anxiously awaiting the moment of international crisis when he can assume the reins of world power.

Marrs cites various rather radical statements which have been made by New Age leaders which indicate hostility toward those who do not possess their movement toward planetary consciousness. Barbara Marx Hubbard is in print as stating that “People will either change or die. That is the choice.”60 Foster Bailey’s view of the Plan says that those who do not live by the New Age standards “will end up as irreconcilable outcasts.”61 Donald Keys says the conspiracy is moving toward a world leader:

60 Ibid. p. 27, citing Hubbard, Barbara Marx. Happy Birthday Planet Earth! Ocean Tree Books, Santa Fe, New Mexico. 1986. p. 32.
Don’t anyone think for a moment that you can run a planet without a head.... These folks who think that they’re going to be able to get off with some kind of sloppy, do-it-your-own relationships among nations, just casually checking in now and then, have got to think again. This planet has to be MANAGED.62

The Native Approach

A third and very different response to the New Age is offered by those who would seek a dialogue in order to assess what the New Age has to offer the churches and Christian theology. This will be treated later. However, within this attempt some have become so sympathetic to the New Age that they have “gone native” to the New Age. Their dialogue has become dialectic; hence the term “native approach” is used to distinguish this response from other dialogue approaches to the New Age in Christian theology and the body-life of the church.

Canon Peter Spink’s Omega Order, founded in 1980, describes itself as “a contemplative ecumenical order for men and women.”63 It is based on the principles set out in Spink’s book A Christian in the New Age. In the description of the Omega Order at the conclusion of the book, Spink alludes to the theological foundations of the Order as being based on the writings of F.C. Happold and Teilhard de Chardin. Spink’s description of the Order contains the following:

Happold’s proposition that a leap epoch is now taking place in human evolution resulting in a profound change of consciousness, and Teilhard’s perception of a new Christ-consciousness combine to give the Order its vision.... The aims of the Order are:
1. To follow those spiritual disciplines which awaken the heart to the truth, ‘as it is in Jesus.’
2. To recognize Christ under all forms to the exclusion of none.
3. To encourage the new Christ-consciousness wherever it is found.

4. To work for co-operation with the evolving life of the planet.64

Spink’s assessment is that the heart-beat of the New Age is a revolution in consciousness which wants to “break free from the paternalistic shackles imposed by traditional institutions, whether secular or religious.”65 In support of this Spink cites the late Bishop John Robinson as having declared “that man had come of age and was determined to take control of his own destiny.”66 However, says Spink, in the church organism has given way to organisation. He lists several factors which parallel changes in religious consciousness reflected in the New Age. Spink claims these changes are now emerging within the churches.

1. Harvey Cox’s popularisation of “religionless Christianity”, particularly in his book The Secular City, moved God from distant places to seeing “God at work in the technological world of the twentieth century.”67

2. Bishop John Robinson’s 1963 publication of Honest to God related “God not as Being above and beyond humanity, but as the very ground of man’s being... God was no longer somewhere ‘out there’. He was ‘deep down within’.”68

3. Situation ethics came on the scene to rationalise “that very few things are in themselves intrinsically good or bad, but that circumstances determine the morality or otherwise of an action; the only ultimate criterion being that of charity.”69

4. The Death of God movement claimed “that God, as popular belief had for centuries conceived him, was now dead and done for. The God who had simply filled in the gaps left by science and who operated from over and above the world was finally buried.”70

5. God’s maleness was questioned. “Liturgies and translations of the Scriptures which failed to reflect the feminine in the Godhead came under scrutiny.”71

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64 Ibid. pp. 113-114.
65 Ibid. p. 5
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid. p. 55.
68 Ibid.
69 Ibid. p. 56.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
6. Movements within churches such as the Liturgical Movement, a renewal and reformation of worship around the turn of the century, the Second Vatican Council which moved toward the Ecumenical Movement which transcended dogma and doctrines and in the late 1960s the Charismatic movement experiencing what Spink calls the "psychic 'gifts of the Spirit' all tended to break down the conventional behaviour of churches in the western world.

These factors lead Spink to the Omega Order which is open to pluralistic acceptance. For example he recalls one evening when three Buddhist monks came to the Priory for a twenty-four hour stay. During that time they all shared in meditation and ate together. Spink concludes: "No one in the community had any doubt but that we had also shared 'fellowship in Christ'".72 The "spiritual path" of intuitive "experiential wisdom" is addressed by the mystics as the "I Am consciousness" which for Spink is the same for a Christian as it is for a Jew. This is recognized as Huxley's Perennial Philosophy.73 Spink also recognises that it is not necessary to believe in God in order to have a spiritual awakening.74 "Movement with integrity contains the essence of belief, and reaching towards the highest that we know constitutes the advent of what the theologians call 'saving faith'. Yet the names and titles, theological or otherwise, have only secondary significance. A further New Age concession involves "an essential link between the human race, all sentient beings and the planet itself." For Spink as for the New Age this means a "disappearance of the old dichotomy between the material and the spiritual. This old dichotomy so long reinforced by both science and religion, is no longer tenable."75 The historical incarnation of Christ is the witness to the universal consciousness that is the Cosmic Christ coming to birth. "The end of the evolutionary process will be the perfect manifestation of the Divine Principle, or the revealing of the whole Christ in and through the cosmos; the harmonizing of all things."

For Spink as with the New Age, Jesus was able to say that he was the way, the truth, and the life because he is the prototype of what all humanity is destined to become— "a Christed humanity... a declaration of

72 Ibid. p. 60.
73 Ibid. p. 80.
74 Ibid. p. 96.
75 Ibid. p. 98.
what it is to be truly human."76 This allows karmic rule and reincarnation which Spink calls "the law of eternal recurrence, from which humanity breaks free only in the finding of true identity."77 His conclusion is that experiential wisdom is "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Another example of "native approach" dialogue with the New Age comes from Donald Reeves who claims that his acceptance of the Alternatives Ministry at St. James' Church in Piccadilly which began around 1981-82 is to offer to assist New Agers and others on a spiritual quest to find acceptance and a place to share their quest. Having close associations with the Findhorn Community, the Alternatives Ministry offers opportunities to hear lectures and attend workshops by leading New Agers such as Sir George Trevelyan, David Spangler, Caitlin Matthews, Rupert Sheldrake, Starhawk, Matthew Fox and others. On the one hand the St. James' Church professes a disclaimer to the ideas presented, yet openly hosts their promotion. Reeves claims that many "have found Christ through the hospitality" offered at St. James' Church. He concedes to having made mistakes, but feels they "are the only church in the United Kingdom which provides this sort of hospitality for the New Age — now worldwide, some ninety million strong."78

With respect to a Biblical view of Christ, Reeves would have Christians stretch the imagery beyond the Bible. His claim is that when science came into its own, it replaced what trust had once been placed in the Bible.79 The charge is made that there is:

no final proof that God exists. Fundamentalist believers of any religion who insist otherwise are mistaken. Those Christians who say the Bible is an absolute truth, the literal Word of God, incontrovertible and different from all other texts, have turned the Bible into an idol, and their own religion into a monstrous creation...80

76 Ibid. p. 99.
77 Ibid. p. 103.
80 Ibid. p. 10.
This is a view that would be quite sympathetic to and void of argument in the New Age. Secondly, Reeves accepts evolution as the process by which life came into being as is paramount to the New Age. Reeves agrees in quoting Sallie McFague’s *Models of God*:

> The evolutionary, ecological perspective insists that we are, in the most profound ways, ‘not our own’; we belong, from the cells of our bodies to the finest creation of our minds, to the intricate, constantly changing cosmos.... To feel in the depths of our being that we are part and parcel of the evolutionary ecosystem of our cosmos is a prerequisite for contemporary Christian theology.\(^8\)

The stress that McFague puts on metaphor appeals highly to Reeves as it would to the New Age in mythologising the message of the Bible into an evolutionary story that changes with the times and is expected to move forward in new ways to new times as from the time the “process started over 20 million years ago when the universe first began, and then some four million years later when the Earth was formed, and humankind emerged.”\(^2\) Reeves further states that heretics of the past such as Galileo have proven that “religious belief has to be tested and refined in the light of our knowledge of the universe, of evolution, of the whole complex organism of the planet, and of historical changes.”\(^3\)

For Reeves and New Age theology Creation becomes the body of God—“God, as one intimately part of all Creation, so intimate that it is possible to speak of Creation as the body of God.”\(^4\) The metaphor of God as Mother or “talking about God as if she were our Mother” is preferred by Reeves to God as Father.\(^5\) His reasoning is that the Father image of God has been relational to hierarchical and patriarchal structures in Christianity. Reeves calls upon feminist theologian Rosemary Ruether in support of the Goddess metaphor:

\(^{2}\) Ibid. p. 36.
\(^{3}\) Ibid. p. 50.
\(^{4}\) Ibid. p. 25.
\(^{5}\) Ibid. p. 19.
Precisely because it is the central symbol in Christianity, it [the Saviour figure] is also the symbol most distorted by patriarchy. All efforts to marginalise women in the Church and Christian society... take the form of proclaiming that Christ was a male and so only the male can ‘image’ Christ.86

Following the imagery of the “Rhineland Mystics: Meister Eckhart, Mechthild of Magdeburg, Hildegard of Bingen and, in England Julian of Norwich” Reeves would revive the image of Jesus as Mother.87 While there are allusions to metaphors of the motherly nature of God in the Bible, Reeves considers the relationship of God as Father “no longer works, and belongs to a bygone age.”88 For Reeves as in the New Age, the Gospel presents “impossible demands;” there is no original faith and no “once for all” Jesus.89

Reeves advocates a spirituality that gets the message off the page and into the street. His challenge to the churches is toward a liberation theology which addresses the materialist consumer gospel so evident in the world of advertisement where almost every product promises a better world and a better life. Reeves points out that the Gospel of Christ has been sacrificed to a gospel of health and wealth in a modern western consumer oriented society. Reeves would challenge this with compassion. He would agree that in dealing with the ever present evil and suffering in the world, one needs a vision of God who reigns in pain. The scandal of the cross is a suffering saviour. Reeves says, “Jesus — the paradigm and founder of Christianity — was displaced, removed and the God of institutional religion replaced him.”90 This institutional Jesus seems more concerned with reminding people of their unworthiness than mediating grace. This is one reason why Reeves suggests the people are leaving their churches— “they sense the disease of institutions which foster such attitudes.”91 Although the historical aspects of the Gospel are left somewhat ambiguous for Reeves, he does recognise that in some sense the distant Gospel of 2000 years ago cannot be relegated to a theological formula that involves Jesus alone. The efficacy of

87 Ibid.
88 Ibid. p. 38.
89 Ibid. pp. 56, 59.
90 Ibid. p. 73.
91 Ibid.
the Gospel must be spelled out in contemporary life in a partnership of the gospel which addresses the lack of hope and the present brokenness in the lives of people. God is not a God of institutional religion but a God of relationship to individuals who are connected to a community which is connected to the earth.

Themes similar to Reeves' yet on a much wider scale are presented by the Catholic priest Matthew Fox in his books *Original Blessing* and *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*. Fox's theology of creation-centred spirituality is one of the most dominant expressions of "native approach" dialogue with the New Age. For this reason a detailed exposition of Fox's creation spirituality is laid out in this dissertation as an example which holds the themes of a New Age theology coming from one who would claim to be within Christian theology.

In 1977 Matthew Fox, a Dominican monk, founded the Institute in Culture and Creation Spirituality at Mundelein College in Chicago. In 1983 he moved the institute to Holy Names College, Oakland, California and began offering a new, yet ancient vision to students. By 1983 four hundred-plus students had experienced the program which enlivened their Creation-Centred Spirituality. Fox's eclectic and syncretistic view of what might be termed a more Gaian form of Christianity is supported by a variety of beliefs which include Starhawk, the Wiccan Priestess and national leader in the Neo-pagan Movement, Luisah Teish who is a Vodoun priestess, a Native American medicine man named Buck Ghost Horse, and an Episcopal vicar become Zen Buddhist.92 St James' Church, Piccadilly is the British counterpart, Centre for Creation Spirituality, which hosts Celtic spirituality, Druidic magic and lectures by the New Age witch Caitlin Matthews.93

Creation-centred spirituality is not to be mistaken for a Christianity which would espouse a concern for the spirituality of creation such as suggested by Lawrence Osborn's *Meeting God in Creation*. Creation spirituality is a view of orthodox Christian teaching which sees the wonder of God in creation.94 However, Fox's creation-centred spirituality is a panentheistic view that

94 Ibid. p. 198.
couples the Cosmic Christ and Mother Earth which are in everything. It dismisses a biblical fall/redemption theology with the view that the universe was in existence aeons before sin was committed, therefore one should espouse the wider view of Fox’s four-fold path as anchored in creation. Fox calls people to realise that original blessing came first and thus calls for a sense of awe and celebration of the whole creation. In this awe for creation Fox brings forth a comparison between Mother Earth and Christ crucified:

Mother Earth is being crucified in our time and is deeply wounded. Like Jesus at Golgotha, she is innocent of any crime. She has blessed us for four and one-half billion years. Yet, like Jesus, she rises from her tomb every day. Like the risen Jesus, she has the power to walk through closed doors, through the closed hearts of the people to wish them peace, to breathe the common breath of life upon them as their source of rebirth and creativity.95

Fox’s claim is that institutional religion has suppressed this original blessing which he asserts was practised by Jesus and is resonant throughout the history of the churches. A return to this view of original blessing, in Fox’s view, will solve the disunity of the Christian tradition and open the world to global blessing socially, ecologically and spiritually. Out of his research Fox has written what he considers to be more a journey than a book, Original Blessing.96 Fox poses two questions:

1. In our quest for wisdom and survival, does the human race require a new religious paradigm?

2. Does the creation-centred spiritual tradition offer such a paradigm?97

His response is a resounding Yes, “that the people may live.”98 To live is not merely to survive but to enjoy. Living is going beyond the nest. "Living

97 Ibid. p. 9.
98 Ibid.
implies beauty, freedom of choice, giving birth, discipline, celebration." E. F. Schumacher's premise that wisdom is found in nature and in religion is used as a source for seeking an interconnectedness between science and religion. However, in the West these two have not worked together since the seventeenth century. On the one hand religion became privatised and science became the ruthless abuser of technology. In both areas people have been victimised.

Fox begins by setting the stage for the idea that the churches have suppressed truth and called it heresy. His example is that in 1600 church authoritarians had the genius Giordano Bruno burned at the stake. Fox goes on to explicate the reversal of roles as in this century when scientists, now sharing power with the military, have sacrificed humanity upon the altars of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Love Canal, the rain forests of Brazil and the ovens of Auschwitz. The sins of Science and Religion are ever before us. Surely it is time for a shift. Fox seeks a common denominator with which the genius of Science and the spirituality of Religion can both teach humanity the way forward.

For Fox this common ground is found in creation-centred spirituality. Certainly the Einsteinian and post-Einsteinian models of the universe are encouraging a shift toward relativity thinking. In religion there is evident a shift toward a dialectical theology in place of what Fox considers to be an outdated, dualistic paradigm. The necessity of the equality of change in both science and religion is cited in Alfred North Whitehead’s statement: "Religion is tending to degenerate into a decent formula wherewith to embellish a comfortable life...Religion will not regain its old power until it can face change in the same spirit as does science." The challenge is to let go. Meister Eckhart projects, "Only those who dare to let go can dare to reenter."

For Fox religion has lost its way due to an over-emphasis on the fall/redemption model of theology. The fall/redemption theology is that

99 Ibid.
100 Ibid. pp. 9-10.
102 Ibid. pp. 10, 11.
propounded by the Protestant and Catholic traditions which are founded on a dualistic and patriarchal model. This model begins with sin and original sin, then gradually moves toward redemption. According to Fox this spirituality does not teach people about "New Creation or creativity, about justice-making and social transformation, or about Eros, play, pleasure, and the God of delight. It fails to teach love of the earth and care for the cosmos." Furthermore the fall/redemption model for spirituality is frightened of passion and does not listen to the cries of the streets. The *anawim* (the little ones of human history) are not heard nor are their needs met. In Fox's view it is the fall/redemption theology that has suppressed creativity and eros by creating a dualistic view of the world. Fox makes his concluding plea in this way:

Beginning with artists in the nineteenth century and extending today to scientists, feminists, New Age mystics, and social prophets, a veritable explosion of creation-centred spiritual energy is and has been occurring. If entire religious bodies such as Christianity could enter into this expanding energy field, there is no predicting what powers of passion and compassion might become unleashed.

The fall/redemption spiritual tradition is traced by Fox only as far back as Augustine (354-430 A.D.); to Thomas a Kempis, who said: "Every time I go into creation, I withdraw from God;" to Cardinal Bossuet; to Cotton Mather; and to Father Tanquerry. On the other hand the creation-centred tradition is traced by Fox to the Old Testament, to Jesus, to much of the New Testament and as well into the first Christian theology of Irenaeus (c. 130-200 A.D.)

In support of his explication for creation-centred spirituality Fox incorporates an appendix of creation-centred personages. Much debate could be made of whether or not those he lists would espouse his dismissal of fall/redemption theology. However, beginning with an inclusion of both the Yahwist (J) author of the Hebrew scriptures, the New Testament writers and Jesus he moves on to include a list from Irenaeus through a line of more than 183 people bringing us to the threshold of the third millennium. Fox catalogues the theologians and leaders of the Christian tradition, musicians,

103 Ibid. p. 11.
104 Ibid. p. 315.
105 Ibid. p. 11.
painters, poets, writers, ecologists, artists, prophets of social change, philosophers/scientists, more recent theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth century, feminists, psychologists, liberation theologians, New Age mystics, and non-Christian spiritual traditions such as Taoist, Kabir (Hindu/Sufi), Native American, Wikke, African, Zen, Celtic, and Hasidic.106

This impressive list includes Scotus Erigenus (810-877) more commonly known as John the Scot, an Irishman who represents the Celtic love of God in nature and nature in God. Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179) the multi-talented renaissance woman and grandmother to the Rhineland mystics is mentioned for her amazingly ecological world-view based on micro/macrocosmic psychology. Naturally such a list would include St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1225) for his panentheist views which were strongly influenced by Celtic spirituality and Sufism. Another leading figure in Fox's role of honour is Mechtild of Magdeburg (1210-1280) an unmarried laywoman who spoke out profusely against the corruption in the church. He includes Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) for his efforts to move Christianity beyond Augustinian and Neoplatonic dualisms, excepting his label of women as "misbegotten males" a la Aristotle.

Meister Eckhart (1260-1329) gets four stars in Fox's list and seems throughout the book to be his main mentor, hailed as "the most profound biblical creation-centred theologian in the West."107 Others who are frequently quoted include Julian of Norwich (1342-1415) for her creation-centred and panentheistic book The Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love and her metaphysic of goodness, declaring that "goodness is God;" Hans Denck (c. 1495-1527) and Sabastian Franck (c. 1499-1542) are cited for their Word of God theology based on Dabhar, God's creative energy which is within every creature; Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) joins the ranks as an intellectual though very pious Lord Chancellor of England who was beheaded for refusing to support the divorce and supremacy of Henry VIII.

Teresa of Avila (1515-1591) is mentioned more than once and joins the list for her unrivalled and unceasing work in the Carmelite Order in which she incorporated deep prayer and busy administrative duties. In the face of

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107 Ibid. p. 310.
constant political opposition she counselled the deep need for joy, moderation, self-knowledge and compassion as the test of one’s mystical life.

The list includes Dante (1265-1321), Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400), the anonymous author of Theologica Germanica (c. 1340), Erasmus (1469-1536) the most renowned scholar of his time, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) and George Fox (1624-1677) founder of the Society of Friends.

According to Fox there are creation-centred musicians such as Bach, Schubert, Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler, Wagner, Chopin, Bruckner, Ravel, Stravinsky, Dvorak, Schumann and Bernstein. There are painters such as da Vinci, Michelangelo, Watteau, Monet, Renoir, Goya, Matisse and Picasso along with poets such as Shakespeare, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Goethe, Blake, Hopkins, Dickinson, Whitman, Yeats, D.H. Lawrence, Rich and Bly. The list of writers includes Swift, Dickens, Tolstoy, James, Joyce and Chesterton; the ecologists include such popular figures as Jacques Cousteau, Lewis Thomas and Thomas Berry.

Creation-Centred spirituality’s family tree has prophets such as Jane Addams, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Martin Luther King, Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Thoreau; and philosophers/scientists include Whitehead, Einstein, Teilhard de Chardin, Buckminster Fuller and Fritjof Capra. The listing in all categories is open-ended. In this cursory way Fox observes that those in Christian theology who espouse a creation-centred model derive their theology not from the West, but from the East. Irenaeus was an easterner moved West. Fox maintains that the entire Celtic tradition is derived from eastern theology. He claims in his knowledge that there is not one woman theologian who could be termed to stress fall/redemption in theology or spirituality.

With the dechurching of society in the sixteenth century, it was the artists who continued to develop in creation-centred spirituality. With the progress of the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment’s rationalistic thinking came the industrial revolution. Education became predominantly left-brained and patriarchal. Creation spirituality was for a time swallowed up in the fall/redemption ideologies that suited the times. During this climate it was the lay world that kept creation-centred spirituality alive. Today there is an
explosion of creation-centred energy on tap within the interconnectedness of global consciousness, new paradigms of quantum physics, and in a marked increase of spirituality from New Age Mystics to Pentecostalism and privatised religion. Fox says now is the time for an evolutionary merging of science and religion the mediation of which will be a creation-centred model.

Fox lists ten reasons why a creation-centred tradition offers a much needed new paradigm for wisdom and human survival:

1. **The Crisis** of this world is two-fold. There is a universal crisis of ecology and a universal crisis of unemployment. Einstein is quoted as saying that, "The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything except our way of thinking. Thus we are drifting toward a catastrophe beyond comparison."108 Fox says it is religion's responsibility to reintroduce a less chauvinistic vision of the world and to motivate people toward discipline and sacrifice, for letting go. He pleads that humanity must outgrow war as they have outgrown slavery; and Creation-centred spirituality offers an ecological consciousness "by putting us in touch with a love of our bodies and of Mother Earth... As Hildegard of Bingen puts it, 'The earth which sustains humanity must not be injured! It must not be destroyed!'"109

Fox recommends a solution to the 495 million world unemployment figures is to be found in putting 15% of the population to work in the arts, thus making life more erotic with music, clowns, storytelling, etc. A creation-centred tradition, by emphasising creativity and letting go, can move humanity toward full employment. Fox draws from the Chinese definition of crisis as also meaning opportunity and the Greeks who considered crisis as a time to make decisions. In this ecological/nuclear crisis and unemployment crisis humanity faces a time of decision, a time of identity crisis where people must choose to grow up, and to let go childish ways by redefining how they will resolve conflicts and find useful definitions for work. "Breakdown is very often the surest starting point for a genuine breakthrough."110

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110 Ibid. p. 15.
2. **The Scientific Awakening** exampled in the new paradigm of unfolding energy opens a dialogue between creation-centred spirituality and science. Fox says, "The creation-centered spiritual tradition can not only dialogue with science, it can create with science." The emergence of the new physics in western science and the rediscovery of creation-centred spirituality in the West suggests that humanity is arriving at the medium of holistic living. Science and Religion meet in holistic life. Fox suggests that the "doctrine of Incarnation is itself an invitation to all believers to love the earth, cherish it, find the divine in it."

3. **Global Ecumenism** means all persons and all religions can share creation in communion. The global consciousness which is evolving is a spiritual awakening of global dimensions. Fox says it is an evolution from an "egological to ecological consciousness." For this concept Teilhard de Chardin is quoted as saying that "our consciousness, rising above the growing (but still much too limited) circles of family, country and race, shall finally discover that the only truly natural and real human unity is the spirit of the earth." Although Fox, as a Catholic priest, would not necessarily include himself as part of the New Age Movement, he recognises this mystical myth as aligned with the creation-centered spiritual tradition as are native American spirituality, African religions, Celtic religions, and the matrifocal and Wikke traditions. After all he says, "the Creator God is the God of all that is."

4. **Justice and Liberation Movements**, says Fox, also demonstrate that the creation-centred tradition is approaching its full term for rebirth. One of the chief concerns of creation-centred spirituality is the care of the *anawim*, "the forgotten and oppressed ones," and the establishment of justice. Fox submits that though many of the mystics have been mishandled and misrepresented by the interpretations of fall/redemption spiritualities, seen in the light of creation spirituality they are perfectly clear. Meister Eckhart

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111 Ibid.
112 Ibid.
115 Ibid. p. 16.
116 Ibid.
for example, considered by Fox as the greatest spokesman of this spirituality, states: "The person who understands what I have to say about justice understands everything I have to say." While the fall/redemption tradition is accused of having served what Johannes Metz calls "the history of the successful and the established," the creation-centred tradition has served the suffering in its recognition of the embrace of suffering with beauty, sorrow with pleasure and loss with love. Fox challenges liberation theology to an alternative understanding of suffering:

Ironically, however, too few liberation theologians have realized that the memory of suffering is only complete when it embraces memories of beauty, of pleasure, or original blessing. Why? Because suffering is proportionate to what is lost—the Via Negativa follows on the Via Positiva—you can only truly lose what you love. The pathos of the crushing of individuals' dignity happens because individuals are creative; that of divinity, because people are divine with the image of God alive in them.

5. Feminist Movements come in line with creation-centred spirituality because in Fox's view there is within the creation-centred tradition a dichotomy between patriarchal and matriarchal paradigms. According to Fox the patriarchal traditions have dominated through knowledge and control for at least 3,500 years. However, before that time and now again there was and is an evolution of Wisdom and Eros epitomised in the feminist tradition. There is within these movements an awareness of ecology whether in political feminism or within a view of nature as feminist. Both seek justice. Fox cites Carol Christ who in his view "raises the tension that exists among feminists who are energized by nature and those who are energized by political movements." Fox recommends that creation-centered spirituality would alleviate this "unnecessary dualism comparable to the religious dualism of salvation versus creation." Nature is seen as the matrix in which humanity comes to self-awareness and in that coming of age there is the discovery of the power of transformation. The fall/redemption tradition cannot deal with the threat of a new view of

117 Ibid. p. 17.
118 Ibid.
121 Ibid. p. 18.
nature, but the creation-centred tradition welcomes it. Fox, in line with the New Age, lays blame on the fall/redemption's patriarchal model as responsible for the deep pessimism of the present situation, but within liberation movements there is a development toward harmony, balance, justice and celebration. Spiritual liberation comes through whatever rituals yield experiences of cosmic awareness, healing and celebration that in turn lead to a transformation and liberation of peoples. Feminism is so closely linked with nature that some have even coined the expressive term "ecofeminism" to denote that interconnection. This clearly is the concept expressed in creation-centred spirituality.

6. **Hope versus Pessimism, Cynicism and Sadism** is yet another evidence of the implicit need for the rebirth of a spiritual approach to the world of creation-centered spirituality. For Fox the downward spiral from pessimism to cynicism to sadism is due to the emphasis on original sin instead of original blessing. Matthew Fox would concur that in this kind of fall/redemption theology humanity is starting off on a downward journey. Creation-centred thinking is not the proverbial optimism which ignores the reality of pain and suffering. On the contrary it deals in a realised eschatology that can envelop the pain and sufferings of humanity in hope, realising and practising the blessing of life itself. In this matter of perspective Julian of Norwich is approached for support in her statement to the effect that those who dwell on sinfulness are "foolish." It is the creation-centred mystic who gives us the word "enjoy", a joy beyond measure as the potential within the reach of every human's experience. In creation-centred spirituality there is the recovery of "an erotic God who plays, takes pleasure, births, celebrates, and feels passion."

7. **Religious Transformation** is paramount to participation in the paradigm shift which Fox aims at with the rebirth of creation-centered spirituality. This is intended to bring about a recovery of the excitement and adventure of faith that will invigorate the lives of people and their institutions with an awakening of spiritual potential. In order for this to happen Fox says religion must confess its sins.122 These are the sins which produced a fall/redemption paradigm that separated spirituality from nature and relegated it to dogmas of the church which instructed people

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122 Ibid. p. 19.
academically in what they were to experience instead of giving them the freedom to experience. In cursing nature as sinful the fall/redemption paradigm leaves people "victims of cosmic loneliness and an anthropocentric isolation from creation." Here Fox assumes the theory of organic evolution to postulate that the universe is twenty billion years old, and sin has only been around at the most as long as man, which is supposed to be about four million years. This means the fall/redemption model does not take into account the other "nineteen billion, nine hundred ninety-six million years of divine/earthly history." 

Ironically this exclusion has caused a trivialising of sin, making possible such atrocities as genocide, ecocide and biocide. This in turn also trivialises the gospel message, says Fox with reference to Gandhi's complaint of a "Christianity without Christ." Without the link to creation, Fox cites Father Edward Schillebeeckx, "spirituality becomes pure projection," recognisable in the church pieties of today which reverberate slogans of "Jesus saves" and "Jesus is my best friend" when in fact there is no experience of healing or new creation which would be evidenced in transforming attitudes and creative power in a harmonious life-style. There is a need for the rebirth of a prophetic voice and living testimony to heal the Catholic and Protestant wounds on creation.

Fox advocates that the time has come to bring healing to these divisions with the balm of creation-centred spirituality. In such a spirituality there will be a restoration, a return to our origins' predivision, before the sins against one another left their gaping wounds. In such a spirituality there is renewal, birthing together. This is no fad nor cult with its significant leader such as — Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church or Jim Jones' Koolaid programme. Fox advocates that rather than a cult, creation-centred spirituality is a tradition well represented throughout history as noted in Fox's creation-centred family tree which Fox claims links such spirituality to the oldest writers of the Bible right through history to the present New Age.

Though they are present throughout the ages, they were not always the prominent voices heard. Instead there was often the religion of the

123 Ibid. 124 Ibid.
fall/redemption kind. Fox claims that the wisdom and experience of the twenty-six themes in the four paths of creation-centred spirituality are absent in 99% of the teaching and training of religion and theology in the West. The Newtonian and Cartesian models of science and knowledge departmentalised and specialised theology into divisions such as "systematics" or "dogmatics" or "historical" or "biblical" or "ascetic" theologies. Fox says the Middle Ages did not mention "spirituality" at all. The term "creation-centred" is employed to distinguish this tradition from other spiritualities, psychologically or fall/redemption based, which may also allude to creation but are not based on creation. All theologies must let go of their specialised-parts mentalities and return to the whole.

"The four paths and twenty-six themes of the creation tradition can, I believe, form a working structure for rethinking and rerelating theology to its own inner disciplines and to other disciplines as well." Krister Stendahl is quoted as one who understands the introspective and therefore non creation-centred nature of Augustinian theology and its effect on the West: ".... Man has turned in on himself, infatuated and absorbed by the question not of when God will send deliverance in the history of salvation, but how God is working in the innermost individual soul...." He goes on to say that this introspective conscience became the plague of the West with a theological apex in the Reformation and a secular apex in the psychology of Sigmund Freud, but that this was not the way of the Apostle Paul.

In Creation-centered spirituality Augustinian either/or dualism has lived out its focus and must give way to a dialectic both/and holistic focus derived from creation. Fox charges that such topics as "cosmos, earthiness, divination, original blessing, sensuality, prophecy, creativity, new creation, royal priesthood, panentheism, letting go, nothingness, beauty, celebration and compassion are absent from the fall/redemption theologies. In Matthew Fox's view "these are not even words, much less categories, in the books and minds of most theologians... or most theological schools."
Using Claus Westermann’s distinction, Fox says people must let go of the hegemony of salvation as deliverance for salvation as blessing.129

Fox likens our spiritual journey to a spiral rather than a ladder. Suggesting that all the paths and themes intertwine and interconnect, he parallels the movements of a symphony where every piece of music and instrument is caught up into the whole. Thus each of the twenty-six themes in Fox’s Original Blessing is represented in each of the four main paths which in turn are interconnected and related to one another in such a way that all can be seen in all. No one theme or path can be experienced apart from the whole:

Path I, the Via Positiva of Befriending Creation cannot be fully experienced without Path II, the Via Negative of Befriending Darkness and Letting Go, Letting Be. This path in turn finds fulfilment in Path III, the Via Creativa of Befriending Creativity, since all creativity — as distinct from reshuffling — is ex nihilo, from nothingness and darkness. Path IV, the Via Transformativa and the Befriending of New Creation, fulfils Path III, for the direction of increased compassion as celebration and justice is the direction our creativity needs to take us. Yet Path IV reconnects with Path I, just as new creation is related to creation itself. Around each of these paths we can ask what art, politics, and science have to teach us, as well as theology.130

8. Educational Transformation: Welcoming the Right Brain in Each Person must also be recognised and introduced through creation-centered spirituality before it can become a transforming power in the world. Creation-centered spirituality cannot be taught within the confines of Cartesian academic structures alone, says Fox. Spirituality demands both solid theory and solid practice.131 “Left-brain-itis is the lethal disease that today has quite literally the power to destroy all the earth.”132 The present situation is typified by Whitehead as the “celibacy of the intellect.” To overcome this Whitehead suggests, “fertilization of the soul is the reason for

130 Ibid. p.23.
131 Ibid.
the necessity of art."133 Fox says, "Only art as meditation can make us green again, to use Hildegarde’s term."134

9. An Argument From Default takes into view the atrocities done in the name of Christ and religion, i.e. the Crusades, Inquisitions, genocide of Native Americans, burning of Jews, witches, homosexuals, scientists, of Protestant by Catholic and Catholic by Protestant. The unbalanced hegemony of the fall/redemption spirituality is held responsible for this default and can be remedied through a liberation of the fearful self, the dualistic self, and the violent self. "Creation spirituality was a spirituality of the oppressed and representative of the oppressed, It did not dictate the dualisms of saved/unsaved, fallen/redeemed that gave so much impetus to the Crusades..."135 Creation-centered spirituality offers liberation to Christianity from "its patriarchal self... its overly introspective and fearful self... its dualistic self... its violent self... its marrying-with-empires self... its fear of passion, of prophecy, and of Eros."136

10. Vision, Adventure, Community. There must arise in the heart of individuals some higher or wider interest that will enable them not necessarily to solve the insoluble problems of life but by a greater emphasis and priority placed on the new hope, to cause the former insoluble problems to lose their urgency. Here Fox cites the conviction of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) following years of healing:

All the greatest and most important problems of life are fundamentally insoluble…. They can never be solved, but only outgrown. This “outgrowing” proved on further investigation to require a new level of consciousness. Some higher or wider interest appeared on the patient’s horizon, and through this broadening of his or her outlook the insoluble problem lost its urgency. It was not solved logically in its own terms but faded when confronted with a new and stronger life urge.137

134 Ibid.
135 Ibid. pp. 24-25.
136 Ibid. p. 25.
Hope is found in recovering the ancient tradition of creation-centred spirituality which sees community not as a noun but as a people building something together, working on a common project (cum-munio). Whitehead is again quoted: "the death of religion comes with the repression of the high hope of adventure." There must be hope. There must be adventure. It is time to get away from a preoccupation with human sinfulness and take up the attention of divine grace.

**Fox's Creation-Centred Spirituality**

Following the above indications of these ten observations concerning the present situation of humanity in relation to themselves, creation and God, Matthew Fox exegetes the four-fold paths and twenty-six themes of creation-centred spirituality as a new paradigm for life in wisdom and survival. The following outline shows the pattern as one which incorporates all themes and all paths intertwining within each other in a holistic way:

**Path I Befriending Creation: The Via Positiva—**
1. **Dabhar:** the creative energy (Word) of God—
2. **Creation as blessing** and recovery of the art of savouring pleasure—
3. **Humility as earthiness:** our earthiness as a blessing along with passion and simplicity—
4. **Cosmic, Universalist:** Harmony, beauty, justice as cosmic energies—
5. **Trust:** A psychology of trust and expansion—
6. **Panentheism:** Experiencing the diaphanous and transparent God—
7. **Our royal priesthood:** Our dignity and responsibility for building the kingdom/queendom of God. Creation theology as a kingdom/queendom theology—
8. **Realized eschatology:** A new sense of time—
9. **Holiness as cosmic hospitality:** Creation ecstasies shared constitute the holy prayer of thanksgiving and praise—
10. **Sin, Salvation, Christ from the perspective of the Via Positiva:** A theology of creation and incarnation—

**Path II Befriending Darkness, Letting Go and Letting Be: The Via Negativa—**
11. **Emptying:** Letting go of images and letting silence be silence—
12. **Being emptied:** Letting pain be pain: Kenosis—
13. **Sinking into nothingness and letting nothingness be nothingness—**

Path III Befriending Creativity, Befriending Our Divinity: The Via Creativa—

15. From cosmos to cosmogenesis: Our divinization as images of God who are also co-creators—
16. Art and meditation: Creativity and birthing as meditation, centering, a return to the source—
17. Faith as trust of images: Discipline? — Yes! Asceticism — No!—
18. Dialectical, Trinitarian: How our lives as works of art spiral beauty back into the world—
19. God as mother, God as child: Ourselves as mothers of God and birthers of God’s son—
20. Sin, Salvation, Christ in the perspective of the Via Creativa: A theology of Resurrection—

Path IV Befriending New Creation: Compassion, Celebration, Erotic Justice, The Via Transformativa—

21. The New Creation: Images of God in motion creating a global civilization—
22. Faith as trusting the prophetic call of the Holy Spirit—
23. A spirituality of the anawim: Feminists, third world, lay, and other oppressed peoples—
24. Compassion: Interdependence, Celebration, and the recovery of Eros—
25. Compassion: Interdependence and Erotic justice—

Path I

The Via Positiva of Befriending Creation is where one discovers original blessing and the divine in all. Here one experiences the theology of Creation and Incarnation within the themes which will free humanity from dualistic views that separate mankind from creation and both from God. Rather than a prison for the soul weighed down and punished by fallenness, creation is to be enjoyed as a blessing. Fox introduces his readers to “Dabhar: the creative energy (Word) of God.”138 Here one is to recognise the full embrace

138 Ibid. p. 35.
of the Hebrew creative sense of the word *dabhar*, translated "word." Fox espouses the theory of evolution to support his view that:

all of creation contains the living wisdom and word of God, and all of it is for all of us. The human word is only one among billions of words that God has spoken and that therefore emanate from the divine splendor. To make contact with wisdom is to go beyond human words, which have, after all, existed for only about four million years — and have appeared on paper for only a few thousand years and in print for only five hundred. We are invited to return to the many billions of years of ongoing creation that also constitute God’s talking.¹³⁹

Creation is seen as blessing and the recovery of the art of savouring pleasure—God is everything which is good; God is blessing. “Nineteen billion years before there was any sin on earth, there was blessing.”¹⁴⁰ It is obvious here that Fox is countering the Catholic doctrine of original sin, and throwing out the whole fall/redemption theology that is central to Christianity’s need for a Saviour. For Fox it is the anthropocentric preoccupation with sin that prevents humans from being free to learn the way to the unity and blessing of creation. Blessing is relationship and relationship means dispelling duality. “From Meister Eckhart to Mary Daly, the sin behind all sin is seen as dualism.”¹⁴¹

The positive way is the way of humility as earthiness: recognising earthiness as a blessing along with passion and simplicity—Recognizing one’s humble position in relation to and in touch with the earth, experiencing sensuality. Here individuals and communities are to awaken their sensuality. “To deny our earthiness is to bottle up deep and divine energies of creativity and imagination.”¹⁴² The idea is put forward that Descartes located the soul in the pineal gland in the brain and that one’s sensuality and emotions are always needing to be controlled as if passions were to be suppressed because of some inherent evil in them. Again, Fox denigrates the failings of Augustinian theology as docetic, denying the human sensuality and sexuality of Jesus. This also leads to the desolation of

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¹³⁹ Ibid. p. 37.
¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 46.
¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 49.
¹⁴² Ibid. p. 59.
four billion tons of topsoil a year in the American assault on the land. Fox says people “deeply require an earthly spirituality.”

Harmony, beauty and justice are to be seen as cosmic energies. Through creation-centred spirituality one reclaims the sense of justice for the cosmos. In Fox’s view, “The cosmos keeps a ledger — not God; and the cosmic order will not in the long run tolerate human greed, human indifference to its beauties and its laws of balance and harmony, or human injustice.” Here is the resonance of a karmic rule in the cosmos. Fox compares it to the Tao in the Chinese tradition. It is to be balanced by awakening within the psychology of human consciousness a recognition of oneness with the cosmos. “Dualisms of us and cosmos, of inside and outside, of receiving and giving are broken through.” Here Fox advocates the Native American shamanic practices as well as the rituals of Wikke. He cites Starhawk, a witch on staff at Holy Names College, in support of his view:

In the Craft, we do not believe in the Goddess — we connect with Her; through the moon, the stars, the ocean, the earth, through trees, animals, through other human beings, through ourselves. She is here. She is within us all. She is the full circle: earth, air, fire, water, and essence — body, mind, spirit, emotions, change.

A cosmic Christ which scripture identifies as “everything in the heavens and everything on earth” promises to unite all things in an ecological and cosmic rebirth. Theme five introduces the idea of developing faith and growing into deity by letting go of forms of religion which are based on fear. Here again Christian fall/redemption is denigrated and Mahatma Gandhi is quoted as saying “Where there is fear, there is no religion.” What this means for Fox is that “religion built on fear must keep preaching its own fears in order to keep the religion going and that is why people are leaving religion in the West: “because they are growing up and growing out of fear and into trust, and very often they do not find Western religion adequate to

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143 Ibid. p. 65.
144 Ibid. p. 71.
145 Ibid.
147 Fox cites several texts of scripture to support the idea of the cosmic Christ, i.e. Ephesians 1:3-23; Colossians 1:15,20; Philippians 2:10,11; Romans 8:22,23.
148 Ibid. p. 82.
their adult spiritual needs. In the process of growing in this trust and fearlessness Fox says one can grow into divinity. Citing Julian of Norwich, "We are of God. That is what we are. I saw no difference between God and our Substance but as if it were all God;" and Meister Eckhart, "A seed of God is in us. Now a seed of a pear tree grows into a pear tree; a hazel seed into a hazel tree. A seed of God grows into God." 149

Theme six openly espouses "panentheism: Experiencing the diaphanous and transparent God." 150 God is in all and all is God. This is Fox’s bridge between theism and pantheism. He quotes Jung as saying there are two ways to lose one’s soul. The first is "to worship a god outside you." Fox calls it "Newtonian theism that posited a clockmaker God who wound the universe up and sat back." 151 Panentheism is needed, says Fox, in order to see the world sacramentally. In creation-centered spirituality creation is the primary sacrament. 152 "It is not theistic because it does not relate to God as subject or object, but neither is it pantheistic... Other sacraments derive their fruitful and creative power from this primary sacrament." 153

Themes seven and eight deal with the dignity of humanity and the co-creatorship with God in a realised eschatology. Creation-centered spirituality does away with the idea that “eternal” life is something that comes after one dies. This dualism, Fox says, is yet another result of the fall/redemption model. However, creation spirituality would say that “we are all to be sons and daughters of God as Jesus Christ taught us.” 154 In the realisation that all humanity shares in the royal priesthood of creation and the kingdom of God, theme nine brings forward the ecstasy of thanksgiving and praise which is lived out in hospitality to creation. With the fall/redemption model out of the way and creation-centered spirituality replacing it, creation is seen not as perfect but existing in the beauty of imperfection. The fall/redemption model presented the idea that holiness is a quest for perfection, but the creation-centered spirituality sees holiness as the beauty of imperfection. It is the quest for perfection that Fox says is the

149 Ibid. p. 84-85.
150 Ibid. p. 88
151 Ibid. pp. 90-91.
152 Ibid. p. 90.
153 Ibid.
154 Ibid. pp. 105-106.
blame for social difficulties. He writes of Otto Rank’s speaking of the “disease of perfection” as “an ego quest” and not a deeply spiritual quest of the human person. Fox says that the text of Matthew which says, “Be ye perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect” has been misunderstood and thus misapplied. Fox cites Luke 6:36 as alternatively referring to compassion as perfection. In this sense then one is to strive toward compassion and hospitality, not perfection. Herein is the fellowship banquet in which all participate as both host and guest. In the Via Positiva true holiness, leads to full hospitality which leads to gratitude.

As a theology of Creation and Incarnation The Via Positiva dismisses fall/redemption theology’s definitions of sin, salvation and Christ. Sin is injuring creation, limiting pleasure and introverted living. The sin of consumerism is a child to the sin of omission of Eros, the failure to trust. Salvation is found in awakening Eros as love and awareness of life, healing injustice, living in harmony not as subjects and objects, getting a fresh start, renewed growth, living without a why. Jesus Christ in the Via Positiva announces life instead of death, the royal person par excellence, the weak and imperfect, yet God, the cosmic Christ who is fully present to all of creation drawing heaven and earth together in perfect harmony.

Path II

The Via Negativa of Befriending Darkness and Letting Go, Letting Be is where one discovers spiritual strength in the midst of apparent loss. It is evident for example in an American society where seventy-six million Valium are consumed every day and thirty million people are glued to soap operas on television that people are lost for purpose, meaning and value. In befriending the darkness one experiences a metaphorical and mystical theology of the Cross. In theme eleven one identifies with the way of emptying, letting go and letting silence be silence. Here one identifies with pain and accepts it as “profoundly social.” “Pain helps us to understand

155 Ibid. pp. 110-111.
156 Ibid. p. 113.
157 Ibid. p. 115.
158 Ibid. p. 141.
other people in pain."\(^\text{159}\) This opens the door to compassion. Secondly, Fox affirms that pain, by reverse reflection, can help one to appreciate and understand pleasure. Another blessing of pain is that it brings people together in sharing pain. Here Fox cites Mechtilde of Magdeburg:

When I can no longer bear my loneliness I take it to my friends. For I must share it with all the friends of God. ‘Do you suffer?’ ‘So do I!’\(^\text{160}\)

A fourth value of pain is its ability to open people up to the idea that pain is cosmic. Not only do humans have pain but so do animals and all else in creation. Pain unites the cosmos. Rather than suffering being the result of the fall/redemption tradition that says one pays for one’s sins, pain and suffering for Fox are more like the Buddhist concept that all of life is suffering. It goes with being. This is not to say one should “wallow” in pain, rather one is to let go of one’s pain and get on with blessing. For Fox a theology of light is not sufficient. Such theology ignores the dark or reduces it to anthropomorphized sin and salvation. In such theology there is a fear of the dark and for creation-centered spirituality the dark is as important as the light; “for growth of the human person takes place in the dark... A light-oriented spirituality is superficial...” His illustration is that roots grow in darkness, the workings of the organs of the human body carry on their processes in darkness and life in the womb begins in darkness. He quotes the feminist witch Starhawk for a definition of the beauty of the darkness in saying that the dark is “all that we are afraid of, all that we don’t want to see—fear, sex, grief, death, the unknown.”\(^\text{161}\) Fox further solicits the support of Starhawk who says, “The depths of our beings are not all sunlit; to see clearly, we must be willing to dive into the dark, inner abyss and acknowledge the creatures we may find there.”\(^\text{162}\) There is also the darkness of grief at the loss of a loved one, the pain of a relationship and the darkness of one’s own death. A further depth to befriending the darkness is to let go of all images and all language. As in Zen, says Fox:

\(^{159}\) Ibid. p. 143.
\(^{160}\) Ibid. p. 145.
silence means the letting go of all images— whether oral ones or auditory ones or visual ones or inner ones or cognitive ones or imaginative ones. Whether of time or of space, of inner or of outer. It is a radical letting go of language... A concentration on what is non-language, no-music, non-self, non-God. It is being. A being still... We pray even to let go of God. Here if anywhere lies “sheer abandon.”163

Sinking into the darkness is the way of Via Negativa which allows one to let go into God. A twelfth theme of this spiralling theology of befriending darkness is when one experiences being emptied. This is when a person accepts pain and lets pain be pain. This involves kenosis, sharing pain, enduring pain so that it yields strength thus making one stronger. Rather than masking pain with drugs, one is encouraged in the Via Negativa to embrace the pain and allow it to be what it is. “Next comes the journey with pain; then the letting go,... into a fire, into a cauldron where the pain’s energy will serve us. And finally comes the benefit we do indeed derive from having burned this fuel. Pain is meant to give us energy.”164 Once this sinking into darkness is experienced there comes a rebirth or recreation. At the “zero point” of letting go of everything to experience nothingness one lets go of subject/object worlds and sink “into a consciousness of interdependence and indeed of transparency ... and synchronicity.”165 Part of this Via Negativa experience involves laughter, as in the Buddhist tradition, too, with its koans pays tribute to the act of laughter as an act of the Via Negativa. One is encouraged not to take even one’s pain too seriously. Yet the experience of the nothingness of pain is when that pain becomes “so great in us that the only name... is no name, thus nothingness. Pain can be so deep, so dark, so silent, so untouchable, and so unresolvable that it can appropriately be called nothing. We touch the void in our pain.166

Sin, salvation and Christ in the perspective of the Via Negativa is viewed metaphorically as a theology of the Cross. Sin is a refusal to let go, a refusal to admit the need of receptivity, a refusal to develop receptivity (as in labour a birthing mother can only assist by relaxing into the pain), a loss of control, a refusal to trust, a stifling of such arts as relaxing, meditation, massage,

163 Ibid. pp. 136-137.
164 Ibid. pp. 142-143.
165 Ibid. p. 152.
166 Ibid. p. 153.
quiet and solitude in the holy art of relaxation, a letting go of things but a refusal to let go of attitudes, the sin of projection which is a refusal to let be. Not allowing sin to be sin is to multiply sin; sin is a refusal to let pain be pain, to listen to pain, to admit to pain, to allow pain, refusing to develop our capacities for endurance, strength for the journey and strength to endure pain. Salvation is not a salvation from pain but through pain, a return to origins, to forgiveness, to sacrifice, to trust, to wait for God. Letting go is salvation. In the Via Negativa theology of the cross Jesus Christ is a symbol of ultimate letting go, confronting death head on, the turning point, letting go of the fear of death, letting go of sin in forgiveness, the divine emptying, the prelude to an even greater birth. Jesus is compared to Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. as those who realised that:

the only way to live life fully was to let go of it radically. And this has everything to do with letting go of the fear of death... Jesus confronts the fear of death head on. And he invites us to do the same— not by meditations that project us on a cross and not by mortifications that have us create our own crosses in our privatized basements, but by living the Good News, the kingdom/queendom of God.

Path III

The Via Creativa of Befriending Creativity is where one develops and befriends one’s divinity and experiences a theology of Resurrection. This is the celebration of the union of the Via Positiva and the Via Negativa. Fox connects the positive and the negative, the pleasure and the pain to give birth to new creation. Theme fifteen encapsulates the thrust of creativity in the cosmos and in humanity. Fox says:

The fact that we ‘grow into God,’ that we are ourselves part of the cosmonogenesis and its patient and evolutionary ways, is attested to by Paul, as well. ‘And we, with our unveiled faces reflecting like mirrors the glory of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we

167 Ibid. p. 159.
168 Ibid. p. 167.
169 Ibid. p. 175.
are turned into the image of that we reflect: this is the work of the Lord who is the Spirit.\textsuperscript{170}

For Fox human beings are as images of God. He quotes Meister Eckhart as saying, “The seed of God grows into God.”\textsuperscript{171} This is one of the most evident exposures of the godhood of humanity and all creation. The seed becomes what it is intended to be, and for Fox humans are the seed of God and are therefore to grow up to be God. The creative power within humans is manifested in the 300-400 eggs produced in a woman’s lifetime and the four hundred billion sperm in each male’s lifetime.\textsuperscript{172} This theme of releasing the creative divinity within is drawn out in the imaginative and creative ability seen in Art as meditation, centring and recognising one’s interconnectedness. Art and spirituality go hand in hand. Out of fear comes courage, out of despair comes hope. In theme sixteen one is encouraged to take spirituality seriously and allow the faith that is within and the creativity that is within emerge. Artistic techniques are encouraged as a form of worship within that learns to express itself outwardly in the things created by art. “Every church ought to have clay and paints, body movement and music, ritual-making and body massage and gardening as meditation.”\textsuperscript{173} This is the right-brained way that should also replace the left-brained educational systems. Fox postulates that the healing and faith producing spirituality of art has been denigrated by those who see art merely as entertainment or for its instrumental value in the commercial market place.\textsuperscript{174} By trusting one’s inner expressions of creativity to birth the art that is within, one learns to trust in one’s own worth and ability, rather than being suppressed by feelings of being measured by performance. One paints for oneself and creates by responding “to an ‘inner drive’... that is very old; it is inscribed in my archetypal depths.”\textsuperscript{175} Fox explains the blessing as follows:

Vulnerability is no excuse for not creating, just as fear is no excuse for lack of courage and despair is no excuse for lack of hope. Fear produces courage, which in fact happens in the midst of fear.

\textsuperscript{170} Ibid. pp. 183-184, citing II Corinthians 3:18.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid. p. 183.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid. p. 181.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid. p. 192.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid. p. 194.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid. p. 196.
Despair produces hope, which is born out of the depths of despair. And vulnerability produces creativity, which requires a capacity to get hurt.\textsuperscript{176}

The way of creativity is dialectical rather than dualistic. Again Fox would dismiss dualism as patriarchal and cites feminist theology as opening the door to both/and as opposed to either/or. Fox explains this theme with the following analysis:

The basic dynamic of the creation-centered spiritual tradition is dialectical, as distinct from dualistic. Dualism creates a consciousness and with it institutions and structures, of either/or. One is either good or bad, male or female, strong or weak, spiritual or sensual, for example. Dialectical consciousness is about both/and thinking, both/and relationships.\textsuperscript{177}

Fox illustrates with examples from nature to the effect that birth is a process of coupling rather than separating. This being true not only of human birth but in the miracle of water from the dialectical interconnection of hydrogen and oxygen. The same is illustrated in connecting positive and negative charges to create electricity, the wood with the sculptor to create a work of art and the musician with the images of notes coming from within to create a symphony.\textsuperscript{178} Creativity is dialectical. In this dialectical freedom Fox argues for a Trinitarian view that emerges from within rather than from Augustine.\textsuperscript{179} Such trinities would express the fullness of life in “work, art and play... to recover the dignity of humanity in its likeness to a triune God who works and creates and plays.”\textsuperscript{180} In practical terms Fox suggests a dialectical way to enhance the ecumenical movement. The problem as he sees it is that of “dialogue” in which “representatives of different traditions talk to each other with a certain tolerance and desire to understand one another.”\textsuperscript{181} Fox advocates creative birthing by going beyond dialogue to connecting parties whether “Protestant or Catholic, Christian or Buddhist,
scientist or theologian, artist or mathematician.”

Full creativity comes when dualistic dialogue is overcome by dialectical interaction. This means “letting go” of those things which inhibit the both/and interconnectedness. Without this dialectical principle Fox says there can be no theology of grace. Thus the fall/redemption theologies cannot express the full sense of the Trinity. A further extension of the dialectical creative way is to witness God as mother, God as child, humans as mothers of God and birthers of God’s son. Images of roundness and circles take precedence over linear images. Feminist creation-centeredness yields a freedom from literal motherhood and extends right-brained over left-brained metaphor to access the motherhood of God. Fox claims that compassion and non-violent social reform are mothering attributes. Here is where the matrifocal religions such as Wicca and Native American traditions connect to Fox’s theology. Fox connects feminist recovery of the traditions of God’s motherhood, creation-centered spirituality’s replacement of the fall/redemption model and the awakening of mystical awareness in science and art as indicative of a new way of living in which “nurturing and trust, where earthiness and democratic panentheism, where circles instead of ladders arouse our images. And where creativity is welcomed, encouraged, nourished, and celebrated in the name of the Creator of all.”

The Via Creativa presents sin, salvation and Christ in the perspective of a theology of Resurrection. Following his lines of mystical and metaphorical interpretation Fox defines sin not only as the privation of goodness, but the misuse of goodness. Sin is the “demonic power that is coiled up in the very divine power, namely the imagination, of humanity”— divine imagination to create evil, sadism and masochism, refusal to make connections thus remaining privatised, sectarian and defensive. The use of creativity for misuse of goodness is seen as the sin of sins. Fox illustrates: Other species of animals kill to eat or protect their young or their territory, but humankind is the only species we know that kills sadistically, that is, to get pleasure from the killing. Sadism and its counterpart masochism are

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182 Ibid.
183 Ibid. p. 216.
184 Ibid. pp. 225, 228.
185 Ibid. p. 224.
186 Ibid. p. 232
born of misplaced imagination.”187 It is represented in the sadomasochism of pornography as well as the sadomasochism of boardroom decisions and wherever the power-over makes decisions for the powerless. In justification Fox cites from Adrienne Rich’s book Of Woman Born:

At the onset of labor, the woman was placed in the lithotomy (supine) position, chloroformed, and turned into the completely passive body on which the obstetrician could perform as on a mannequin. The labor room became an operating theatre, and childbirth a medical drama with the physician as its hero.188

Not only is sin a privation of good, a misuse of good and sadomasochistic power over, but it is also seen in the omission of creativity and the refusal to make connections. Salvation in such a context is the refusal to be a victim by illuminating the possibilities. By awakening to one’s divinity one is resurrected “from boredom, pettiness, acedia.”189 Out of seemingly negative situations and circumstances one creates Good News. Fox makes the distinction that human divinity is, however, a created divinity as distinguished from God’s uncreated divinity.190 What is imperative is that one realise that the dualism of God’s divinity and human divinity should be overcome in a dialectical way by realising people as co-creators with God. Further, the Via Creativa “breaks through... temptations we harbor to worship a ‘God outside’.” Faith is therefore not a trust in God outside but a trust in the images from within and taking responsibility for where one is lead by those images.191 The Via Creativa also liberates one from “preoccupation with salvation as deliverance.”192 In this one is to be free to experience birthing without guilt. This is what Fox calls “allowing the Holy Spirit to return to our lives.”193

Jesus Christ, in terms of the Via Creativa, “was a poet, storyteller and artist” rather than “a priest or a theologian or an academician or a dispenser of

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187 Ibid. p. 231.
189 Ibid. p. 235.
190 Ibid.
191 Ibid. p. 238.
192 Ibid. p. 239.
193 Ibid.
sacraments primarily.” Fox quotes Albert Nolan, the South African Third World theologian, in support of this premise:

Nothing could be more unauthoritative than the parables of Jesus. Their whole purpose is to enable the listener to discover something for himself. They are not illustrations of revealed doctrines, they are works of art which reveal or uncover the truth about life.194

Fox’s Jesus was “an awakener to the sacrament of the cosmos, of the kingdom/queendom of God in which all persons are immersed and which immerses all persons.” In Fox’s view fall/redemption theologies “have reduced Christianity to the cross alone.”195 Fox’s Jesus supports the idea that it is alright to be divine and human at the same time. Jesus exemplifies the dialectical process in the flesh. His crucifixion too realises the dialectic reality of ugliness and glory together. Fox says the primary focus of the Incarnation was not to wipe away original sin but to release “the divine Dabhar through human creativity” in which one is “resurrected from dullness and boredom and violence.”196 Jesus awakens humanity to the divine within and the divine motherly. Redemption is a matter of:

recovering the compassionate side of God... a mothering hen who weeps over her lost chicks as he weeps over Jerusalem. Jesus is the one who shows us what it means to be beautiful and make our lives a work of art and beauty. How harmony, compassion, care, passion, freedom, relating, are the essence of the beautiful. Cleanliness, money, possessions, honor, prestige, security are not where beauty is to be found. Jesus died confused and dirty, ugly, bloody, and naked. But beautiful. And his Resurrection announces how beauty and not ugliness, life and not death, rebirth and not killing will in the end triumph as they did in the beginning.... A significant contribution to salvation that is made by Jesus’ crucifixion is his invitation to be courageous enough to create. And to pay the price. And to believe that the many crucifixions involved do not add up to even one resurrection.197

195 Ibid. p. 239.
196 Ibid. p. 241.
197 Ibid. p. 242-244.
Path IV

The Via Transformativa is the befriending of the New Creation. It provides a basis for judgment in directing the divine power of good, compassion, celebration and erotic justice in the experience of a theology of the Holy Spirit. The Via Transformativa provides the judgment necessary to complete the interconnected paths and themes of Via Positiva, Via Negativa and Via Creativa. As Fox noted the combining of the first two paths leads into the creativity of the third path. Just so the third path is realised as having the potential for misuse of good, therefore path four completes the dialectical process by adding discernment, judgment, direction and transformation into new creation.198 This presents creation as “righted from its state of sinful or unjust relationships, mended, made whole again.”199 The New Creation is the development of the global civilization. It is a realized eschatology which uses the divine power within for good, for new birth and for global awareness. According to Fox humanity has all the attributes and capabilities “to create a new civilization that is worthy of our dignity as royal persons and our responsibility as divine co-creators.”200 In this new age humanity will outgrow war, celebrate the innate worth of every person, end unemployment by implementing the “true image of God” which involves the “true creative powers of people.”201 The focus of this progress toward utopian civilisation is to be characterised by social consciousness manifested in heartfelt concern for the loved ones of God who are suffering, a return of blessing for blessing, a non elitist empathy. This is the prophetic voice within each person heard and understood in the streets. This prophet within is the calling to carry on the Dabhar, to illuminate the people to establish interference with the present conditions in order to call forth a transformation. Fox lines the prophetic voice up to the dialectical four-fold path in saying:

The prophet in us calls forth the excellence and beauty in each of us, it calls forth the best that we can give, the best that we can enjoy (Path I), the best that we can let go of (Path II), the best that

199 Ibid. p. 247.
200 Ibid. p. 251.
201 Ibid. p. 252.
we can create (Path III), the best that we can give to birthing the future by transforming the past (Path IV).\textsuperscript{202}

Fox calls on the Biblical concept of being born anew to substantiate his claim for the work of the Holy Spirit within. He cites the following texts:

It is the same God who said, ‘Let there be light shining out of darkness’ who has shone in our minds to radiate the light of the knowledge of God’s glory, the glory on the face of Christ.... Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.... For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who work by this rule, upon the Israel of God.... Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts... and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.... You have stripped off your old behaviour with your old self, and you have put on a new self which will progress towards true knowledge the more it is renewed in the image of its creator; and in that image there is no room for distinction between Greek and Jew, between the circumcised or the uncircumcised, or between barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man. There is only Christ: he is everything and he is in everything.... For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren.... But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.\textsuperscript{203}

In attempting to understand and implement the New Creation, Fox says humanity must first befriend the first creation. He testifies that for four decades as a priest he has never heard a sermon on the “New Creation.”\textsuperscript{204} His conclusion is that this is due to an emphasis on fall/redemption spirituality. He therefore advocates dispelling fear of such terms as “new age” because newness is a divine attribute.\textsuperscript{205} Awakening to the new “is the baptismal experience of rebirth.” It is a “metanoia, waking up.” It is the invitation “to create a global civilization of love/justice and ecological

\textsuperscript{202} Ibid. p. 262.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid. p. 254-255, citing II Corinthians 4:6; 5:17; Galatians 6:15-16; Ephesians 4:22, 24; Colossians 3:9-11; Romans 8:29 and II Peter 3:13.
\textsuperscript{204} Ibid. p. 255.
\textsuperscript{205} Ibid.
harmony."206 This harmony is to be brought about in the spirituality of the anawim—the feminist, the third world, the lay and other oppressed people—through a resurgence of compassion interdependence, celebration and recovery of Eros and Erotic justice. Fox cites an example from José Hobday:

Why are white people so afraid of the homosexual? In Native American languages we don’t even have a word for the homosexual. In fact, it is well known among us that the most spiritual people are often homosexuals and these people have often been counselors to our greatest chiefs.207

In terms of sin, salvation and Christ, the perspective of the Via Transformativa is the perspective of a theology of the Holy Spirit. Completing a mythological interpretation of a trinity in the Gospel Fox gives his definition of sin as: apathy, injustice as creative misuse, sins against nature as bringing nature’s judgements upon humanity and a failure to live lives of transformation. In this context salvation is seen as liberation, justice and justification, as the bringing together of people in social order, breaking down walls, healing through Eros and a return to origins. Play becoming salvific. Jesus Christ is seen as born of the Holy Spirit, a son of God, a new creation, one who calls all to reconciliation with self, one another and creation. He is a prophetic voice to the poor who becomes an outcast by choice. Jesus “calls all persons to reconciliation with themselves, with each other, and with creation.” Reconciliation to self is authentic self-love which forgives self and recognises the “divine beauty and royal personhood” within.208 He is the compassionate and passionate one intimately involved with Eros, and he leaves humanity an example to follow in memory of him, acting in his name. In his name the anawim are heard and loved. In his name healing is effected. In his name religion is transformed.209

Fox’s theology of creation spirituality is what he claims as the way in which Jesus lived.210 Fox postulates that creation-centered spirituality will reinstate the Christ in Christianity which will remedy Gandhi’s complaint of a

206 Ibid.
207 Ibid. p. 266.
208 Ibid. p. 300.
209 Ibid. p. 304.
210 Ibid. p. 305.
"Christianity without Christ."\textsuperscript{211} Further it is the basic approach for Christians to live the gospel that Jesus lived and died for. A third consideration is that this life-style would invoke a spiritual journey that would inaugurate a truly ecumenical age in which global problems would be approached by global religions in all four stages of human development. Since all share in creation, all likewise share in the responsibility for that creation. All are called to draw from that creativity and transformative spiritual power to recreate. Fox concludes that there is no better place to begin than with the recreation of religion itself.

\textsuperscript{211} Ibid.
Conclusions

Challenges of the New Age

From the point of light within the mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men
May Christ return to Earth.

From the centre where the will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men—
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out.
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan to Earth.1

The New Age prayer pleads for enlightenment from the mind of God to the minds of humanity. It recognises the transcendent nature needing to descend on earth. It pleads for love and for the will of God to direct the wills of men to shut out evil and restore the earth and all to whom earth is a home. This too is the plea of the Gospel of Christ. The question is, “Are the two compatible?” In some sense the wider range of New Age goals seem to be those of the Gospel of Christ. Yet a closer examination reveals that there is much that is of “another gospel.” The resident themes of the New Age have met with a variety of approaches from the completely dismissive to native acceptance by those espousing Christian beliefs. Again as in previous chapters, the voluminous and wide range of information can only be handled with selected illustrations. The New Age presents an innate challenge to Christianity. Its various themes, of which those chosen in this

1 The Great Invocation published in 1937 by Alice Bailey conveying the theosophical ideal of a coming world religion which would unite East and West. This prayer is used widely in New Age and occult circles both in its original form and in adapted forms.
dissertation are illustrative, cover the search for meaning in myth, the quest for spirituality and an underlying evolutionary theory. These have been discerned by hard evangelical/fundamentalists as well as those seeking to establish a dialogue with the New Age. In both extremes the passion and motive cannot be argued against, for all present themselves sincerely with conviction.

However a biblical approach would suggest gleaning from the New Age and the various responses to the New Age, those themes and challenges which can awaken a Christian apologetic response without the subjectivism that has manifested itself on the one hand in conjuring conspiracies or narrow millennial views or on the other hand "going native." The term "going native" is being used in the sense that those who would still claim to hold a Christian point of view, in attempting to dialogue with the New Age have in fact taken on so much New Age belief and practice contrary to biblical Christianity that it may be said that they have lost their identity with the Christian faith and have "gone native" to the New Age. In these instances the outcome shows little distinction between New Age and Christianity.

The challenges of the New Age invoke the church to awaken to its source root, to its doctrine and relationship with God, the earth and humanity. There are various themes of the New Age which although interpreted differently are resonant of the passionate pleas of the Word of God. As a critic of the Christian church, the New Age calls the church to rise to these challenges. The challenge of the New Age Movement at its deepest source is a challenge to spiritual life. This relates in truth to all humanity. With its emphasis on holistic life the New Age challenges body and spirit, mind and emotion, intellect, intuition and soul. It is the challenge to go beyond the physical without discarding the physical. In one sense the New Age is not a religion because it goes beyond religion altogether. With its emphasis on free expression the New Age is a challenge to go beyond the Christian religion, yet the movement retains at its heart the need for temporal expressions of faith in praise and thanksgiving. For example one may exchange the prayers of the Christian tradition for Transcendental Meditation or the Great Invocation in the New Age Movement. On a more ceremonial level one may exchange the visual handles of the Christian religion, i.e. the emblems of the Lord’s Supper and baptism, for a simple
communal meal or some form of purification ritual that connects the person to the community of his or her choice. However in both cases there is still the need for the physical emblems which link the follower to something spiritual.

The challenge of the New Age must have a common denominator, otherwise it is superfluous to seek a dialogue between New Age and Christianity. It would then become another vanity, another category, another futile attempt to make sense of the senseless. The New Age challenge is the quest to find life, rather than blind existence, to find wholeness rather than fragmentation, to experience relationships and acceptance instead of arbitrary usage of subjects and objects. It is a quest for the hope of peace and harmony in this world and beyond, the quest for meaning, purpose and value. The challenge of the New Age is the quest for a deathslayer— for life beyond the grave. It is the expression of implicit belief and the search for belonging. It is western humanity's evolution from secular humanism and liberal theology. It is the cry for hope in all that is happening. In this sense the New Age is a mirror of implicit hope. These are all reminiscent of the call in the biblical texts of the Gospel of Christ.

There must be a practical application for all humanity. The call of the New Age is to reach deep into one's being and realise the universal truths which can make individuals and communities whole again. To sum up the wide range of soft core and hard core New Age techniques establishes the eclectic and syncretistic nature of what most call a movement and some have observed as a phenomenon. There are those who say it is a religion and those who say it is not a religion while still others insist it is beyond religion. Ferguson has called it an Aquarian conspiracy while Cumbey calls it a Satanic conspiracy. The term New Age is seen as an umbrella term to cover all that is happening in the wide swing of a changing paradigm of thought which is being observed and espoused in science, ecology, politics, education, medicine, religion, psychology and spirituality encompassing a changing world-view from the Newtonian/Cartesian model of fixed laws to an Einsteinian/Heisenberg relative uncertainty. In ecology it is represented as greater concern and care for the planet, the sacredness of earth and all life as interconnected. In politics it is a movement toward global oneness. In medicine it is a holistic approach to body, soul and spirit in healing the
whole person. In education the New Age is represented on all levels as teaching the new paradigm and concepts of human potential— that the answers are within the individual. In religion it is the movement toward pluralism. In psychology the New Age is a holistic approach of combining the three forces of classical psychoanalysis, behaviourism and human potential in a fourth force of transpersonal psychology which works with transcendent states of consciousness, mystical and peak experiences. In spirituality the New Age represents the shift toward mysticism and eastern esoteric thought.

The above section has presented the more general atmosphere of the challenge of the New Age. The following are five areas where the New Age specifically challenges Christian theology and the body-life of churches.

1. The Challenge and Need for Spirituality— The Challenge to Organised Religion. One of the poorest commentaries on the leadership of the church in the stewardship of spirituality is that the greatest source of appeal for a spiritual lifestyle should come from outside the church. The New Age has adopted the term “spirituality” and returned it to the vocabulary of the people. It has demonstrated that the Christian church does not have a copyright on spirituality. Further, the emphasis on spirituality in areas such as psychology has produced a “how to” guide to spirituality which can be helpful in assisting the Christian to understand how to grow in spirituality. This does not mean a necessary acceptance of all of the packaging of these techniques, but can be used within a biblical context to assist those who are “poor in spirit” and those who seek a commentary on spiritual healing and transformation. For example Fox notes the need for creativity and realisation of blessing in one’s life and in creation. This is biblical. People in churches need to know how to “let go and let God.” The Via Negativa can assist in dealing with people’s pain. It would be a case of placing these concepts within a more biblical context for the Christian. One does not have to sacrifice God for Goddess to do this. Parfitt encapsulated this in his definition of psychology as “a comprehensive approach” to discovering the “true spiritual nature in individuals.”

and death without an antidote. Therefore people seek something deeper than what is merely physical; all need hope beyond themselves. Whereas once psychology was disassociated from spirituality, now a spiritual psychology is being introduced which goes beyond the mind-body function to seek a psychology of the soul. For example psychosynthesis would be an example of an attempt to explicate the processes by which one may experience spiritual growth, so that when one comes to faith as a Christian some such psychology of the soul could assist a person in the “how to” that formerly may only have been a dogmatic statement saying “Have faith.”

Further the attempt to combine psychology and spirituality can be seen to add credibility to the idea of a true Self or soul that is the centre of one’s being even beyond the individual’s mind, which was formerly denied. People seek the divine; they seek authentic selfhood; and they seek a better world. There are spiritual communities of Christians who are extremely concerned with the spirituality of the world, but their voice is at times muffled by the more public impressions of at the one extreme TV evangelists’ patter and at the other extreme the silence of gothic structures which appear more relics of the past than hope for the future.

Andrew Canale, a Roman Catholic therapist, contends that only in finding God does one find his or her “way in a confusing and chaotic world.”³ In the book New Age Spirituality: An Assessment, Canale’s essay is introduced pointedly:

> Across the ages, the human family has been engaged in a spiritual quest, a quest that has taken a variety of forms depending on the culture and the historical circumstances... the particular circumstances of our time have contributed to the rise of New Age spirituality... For many people, organized religion has lost its healing power. It seems dead, drab, anachronistic, even embarrassing and unenlightened to them.⁴

Canale goes on to relate how people have put themselves on “cruise control” pretending things are fine, while ignoring or pacifying or deadening the pain, the emptiness of a “meaninglessness at their center... Many have been so injured by organized religion that they go everywhere else to seek

⁴ Ibid. pp. 2-3.
belonging." Meanwhile the spiritual vacuum in their lives leads people to try to replace it with work and career motivation (workaholics), or chemical dependency among the tranquilliser-a-day stressed-out people in British society or the cannabis and crack addicts of the under-ground drug culture (drug addiction). Others try to fill the void with the increase of knowledge in the Age of Information and academics; still others join clubs seeking fellowship in sport, hobbies. Those intimate inner witnessings of the spirit within humans which once were fed in the spiritual communion of the churches of Christ are now being replaced by gyms, pubs and other privatised forms of religious belief and practice.

In my seventeen year career as an Olympic weight-lifter as well as an evangelist for Christ, I have many times witnessed "church in the gym." While training for the goal, the passion of the inner person, the spiritual approach, the inner game is often witnessed. People share their deepest needs and confess the dark night of their souls during sessions of training. The health foods and supplements become "the communion." There is also "the forbidden fruit" of illegal substances. There are substitutes for the spirituality once obtained in worship and private devotion to God and in the wisdom gained and practised through interaction with the Word of God. The sense of communion over the sharing of and mutual encouragement of pressing on to the higher goal of sports has become the religion of multitudes in modern occidental culture. Others have their fellowship and communion over a pint of ale while watching the football scores on TV in the local pub. Each has its own in-house language, its own forms of "communion meal" to which each is solidly committed in attendance. Each listens to its own "evangelist;" each has its own ministers of encouragement to keep them pressing on toward their upward call. Meanwhile, the gothic structures, the cloaks, collars and stained glass windows, the clerical liturgies and God-in-a-box theologies are abandoned. Canale says, "People are hungry for God. They are searching for God. Even when they don't know it (as those with addictions), their center and goal is God." For Canale, "God is a mystery. God is the name we who aren't atheists give to the core meaning of life. God is the impulse toward growth and wholeness and

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5 Ibid. pp. 3, 8.  
compassion and love." "People", says Canale as a psychologist, "are hungry for an experience of deep meaning; they want there to be a meaning."

Carol E. Becker, director of the Department of Communication for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America raises the question of how in any age or culture people can hear the voice and calling of God. The New Age, for Becker is one option in which the voice of God can reach all cultures today. Becker challenges the churches to find their own understanding of communion and koinonia without becoming pre-occupied with critiques of the New Age movement's tendencies toward Gnosticism and paganism. She sees the challenge of the New Age to Christian theology not as neoorthodoxy but neoeexistentialism, defined as "a call to communicate the hope that we know— actually to reform culture and religion. The task is to communicate a meaningful hope for a people who have lost their way." She considers that to be what the New Age is doing and what the churches must reclaim, and in that reclamation the churches will themselves be reformed.

Becker presents a seven-fold challenge to the evolution of Christian theology. The most prominent challenge is to break out of the mainline box. One practical application is for the churches to seek new ways of understanding incarnation. There must be a rebirth of the practicalities of theology. Christianity must not be relegated to how one thinks of God, but how that thinking incarnates in daily life— what this writer calls "getting it off the page and into the streets." Becker's challenging statement is that "seldom do our mainline traditions offer us ways to experience faith in our bodies." Yet she concludes that is the only way to experience such theologies as grace, love and hope. Her example of innovation is the pop singer Hammer calling "young people to experience their faith, dancing and singing to exhaustion, when he performs his hit song 'Pray.'" In more classical terms Becker calls for a resurgence of Christian mysticism as per Meister Eckert, Hildegard of Bingen and Mechtild of Magdeburg who "describe the divinity as rooted in the physical, as 'mysterious, changeless, and the source of all birth and

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7 Ibid.
8 Ibid. p. 28-29.
rebirth." Becker further challenges the patriarchal view of God with coming to terms with the Goddess. This image challenges the church to realise feminine power and the healing of the duality of spirit and matter. As Gaia, the earth mother, the Goddess image is to help the church see itself as part of nature and God in all aspects of the physical world. This is to offset the criticism that the traditional creation scenario allegedly contributes to the instrumental and exploitive view of nature. In reclaiming the feminine aspects of God, Christianity can rise to healing and realise "the immanence of God in nature."11

It is expressive of the distance between churches and the community that Becker heralds a resurgence of simple grace in the love of one another as a new way forward for the churches. A second point in the mainline theme relates to bridging the gap between the world and the church by explicative preaching which upgrades its language so that it can be understood without a theological dictionary. Being very practical Becker realises that the mass media have made the New Age popular, hence she advocates better coverage in the mass media as well as the visual demonstration of faith in congregational life. The use of technology to network the community of faith for greater intimacy and the power of communication in working toward joint action and uncoerced cooperative decision-making are two further considerations for demonstrative faith. The final two suggestions relate to addressing the age of individualism which Robert Bellah says is becoming so powerful that it is threatening to unravel the fabric of culture.12

The churches are challenged to revitalise the idea of the community of the saints, where there is care for the individual in the corporate body and where the individual feels a sense of ownership, accountability and responsibility for the whole community. Becker’s final appeal is to the need for depth in the expression of symbolism. She writes:

The phenomena usually grouped together as New Age exhibit a richness of symbol and graphic interest and attention to symbolic meanings. Although the Christian tradition is more powerful and rich and complex in its symbolic and artistic history than any New Age faith, it often seems sterile and verbal and literal and wooden in comparison. What a tragedy! We need to touch again our spiritual depths, the power of our myths, and the richness of our symbols, and speak with them in a visual age.... make it possible for people to be Christian again.13

Not only are the churches challenged by the New Age to free themselves of the entanglements of organised, capitalistic hierarchy and administrative estrangement, but the deeper challenge is to replace the unbiblical hierarchies and traditions of men with new forms of worship which allow for celebration and intimate exchange in worship with the realisation that worship is both adoration and service. One need not go beyond the biblical example to find all of this. The very structure of assemblies in church buildings demonstrates the estrangement with pews or chairs in straight rows and pulpits up high. Though such settings need not distract from intimate sharing, it is likely that the heart of the individual and the collective heart of the community of saints would seek structures which were more conducive to looking at one another and sharing in spiritual dialogue from the heart apart from chants and liturgies recited by rote. Communion is by the very word to be shared as a celebration with each other as well as with God, and the word of God is to be shared between each other rather than by the one to the many. Suggestions from nature example the interplay and circular atmospheres of synergistic involvement where all the senses are incorporated and where an orderly expression of feeling and experience may find expression in worship. Intimacy, integration and involvement by all, through all and in all will stimulate oneness. Then in turn service will be the natural expression of worship overflowing from everyday life in community. The blessed become the blessing. Creativity and transformation will be released to express themselves in building relationships which prefer one another, practice hospitality with one another, wait upon one another, encourage one another, love one another genuinely, forgive and heal one another in body, soul and spirit seeking balance in all relationships through the practical serving kind of worship. Letting go of the hindering hierarchies

and giving place to the spiritual development of individuals in community is to find its way according to the inner spiritual person in whom the divine nature dwells. Biblical patterns of this are found in the following examples:

present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect... For as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function, so we, tough many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.  

2. The Challenge to Establish Balance Between Utility and Innate Value. When forests are seen as lumber yards and people are considered for their instrumental value disproportionate to their innate worth as individuals, then it is time for a new age to arise. The New Age has rightly exposed the abusive behaviour of humanity toward nature and itself in this aspect. What does it take to awaken individuals and communities to their need of each other? The dehumanising effect of scientific reductionism regards humans as little more than meat and chemical reactions and nature as a process of evolution. The prodigal effect of western secular consumerism has caused much abuse in the name of progress. What has been called Shumacher's theme— small is beautiful— is for the New Age a call to implicit value in what is natural. The 495 million unemployed and the 15 million plus who starve to death every year are lost because of value systems that equate worth with utility rather than appreciation for being. "All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small...." is the resonant plea of the New Age and Christianity alike. Performance-based relationships devoid of grace and mercy are resonant of the modern secularised culture which desacralises nature and the worth of the individual.

The Gospel of Christ and the New Age would both plead for grace and mercy, for freedom of will and employment according to talents and gifts

14 Romans 12:1-2, 4-5.
15 The hymn "All Things Bright and Beautiful" gives honour to all creation collectively and to each aspect of every part being beautiful in its own way because God made all things well. It holds together the theme of creation and redemption, the Creator who makes all things beautiful will restore and redeem that beauty.
rather than measuring up to performance quotas and utilitarian value systems. The New Age says one should accept responsibility for one's actions and accept partnership in the world. That too is the call of the Gospel. Concern for ecology is a major New Age theme. However, the biblical notion of dominion over the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and the beasts of the field does not imply an abuse of nature. It is rather the mandate of God that human beings should exercise care for the earth and all that is in it. The biblical story of creation calls for the greatest of human potential—"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."16 As God is portrayed in the story as a creator, provider, and care-taker, so humans are to be in his image creative, providing and caring. As God seeks relationship with humans and creation, so humans, being in his image, are at their best in the original blessing of relationship with God, creation and each other. The New Age awakens the church to those passages and experiences which confirm the goodness in humans, the goodness in God, the goodness in creation and that the harmony of these three is realised in relationship when each is accepted and exampled as doing what is natural to their nature.

It is important in establishing a dialogue with the New Age that Christians do not become suspicious of everyone who is environmentally conscious as if to suggest that all are occult New Agers. At the same time articles such as Lynn White's 1967 "Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis"17 must be countered by acceptance that the biblical view of science and scripture, of reason and revelation holds ecological care as a Christian virtue. In the book The Environment and the Christian, edited by Calvin B. DeWitt, there is a concise exposé of the challenges facing our world.18 The ramifications of

16 Genesis 1:27.
18 DeWitt, Calvin B. The Environment and the Christian: What Does the New Testament Say about the Environment. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids Michigan. 1991. At the time of editing the book, DeWitt was professor of environmental studies at the Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and director of the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies in Mancelona, Michigan. The book was born out of the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies which began a forum in 1980 to bring together scientists, theologians and lay people to explore the possibilities and relationships between the Bible and the environment, Christianity and ecology. The Institute has association with some eighty evangelical Christian colleges and universities in the United States and Canada.
such a study demonstrate to the New Age that the biblical point of view is not marred by twenty centuries of churchianity, but that the world has been marred through disobedience to the biblical mandates. God, the God of the Bible, and Jesus Christ, His incarnate Son, do still and have always been involved in the universe and in the lives of people and their environment. The accusation by Theodore Roszak et. al. that Christianity is responsible for the power-over structures of authority which have raped the planet and dehumanised our community is far from reality. The root of the problem still lies at the feet of humanity itself. God’s Word and the Christ have been so misinterpreted and misused that the truths of God’s message concerning people and their salvation along with a concern for the environment of this planet have been hidden in the wrappings of the traditions of men. It is this misinterpretation that the New Age rightly challenges. However, alternative Cosmic Christs or Christ-consciousness, alternative God/Goddesses or Goddess/Gods and channelling spirit guides offer no solution superior to that of the original God of the Bible who is incarnate in Jesus Christ. New Age advocates say there must be a return to the source, to humanity’s roots. They appeal to a shift in consciousness. Indeed this is what is needed, yet for Christians it cannot mean sacrificing the Creator for Creation. Christian theology and the body-life of the church are challenged to rescue the earth without worshipping nature. New Agers may also affirm that the earth does not need to be rescued, for Gaia will take care of herself. These would claim that it is humanity that needs to be rescued. Either way both the earth and its people need saving.

In the biblical text God charged humanity with the power and the responsibility to properly care for people, and the living environment of this earth. "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." This was part of the covenant relationship between God and humanity. There were to be Sabbath rests so that people and the

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19 Roszak, Theodore. Where The Wasteland Ends. Doubleday, Garden City, New York. 1972. pp. 123, 132. Theodore Roszak is a New Age analyst who presents the typical New Age argument against Christianity by stating that Christianity’s God is separate from the world, therefore the earth is desacralized and divested of any spiritual significance. From this conjecture it is argued that Christianity is then responsible for the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions which view the world in quantitative and instrumental terms which in turn results in destroying the earth and abusing life on planet earth.

20 Genesis 2:15.
environment would not be over stressed and become non productive. These were also restorative seasons so that the fruitfulness of all life might continue.

What are commonly referred to as the ten commandments themselves are a summary of the union of relationships that are possible between God and humanity, God and creation, humanity with creation, and humanity with itself.21 The sabbatical days and seasons, the jubilee years, all denote God’s wisdom in relating to humanity how best to care for the environment and one another.22 Isaiah and other prophets relate that the foundational problem is not with God or his revealed wisdom. The problem lies with the rebellion which humanity has chosen to prefer. The result will be barrenness and loneliness in the land. It is manifested in the greed of joining land to land and house to house:

Woe to those who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is no more room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land. The Lord of hosts has sworn in my hearing: 'Surely many houses shall be desolate, large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant. For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath, and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah.'23

Even in the story of the flood, God’s concern was for the faithful to preserve the life of the environment. God intended a catharsis, after which the faithful would start afresh. The catharsis became necessary because the covenants between God, humanity and creation had been broken by humanity. Ezekiel too lays the charge at the feet of humanity. "Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must foul the rest with your feet?"24

While the New Age cries that the church and religion are responsible for chaos in the environment, a return to the roots of Christianity will demonstrate that the New Age Movement is superfluous to what has already been challenged in Christ. That which has been termed the golden

21 Exodus 20.
22 Exodus 20:8-11; Leviticus 25, 26.
23 Isaiah 5:8-10.
24 Ezekiel 34:18.
text of the Bible says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,” and the word for “world” is κόσμος. The word refers to the universe, not just people. There is therefore a scheme of redemption for the universe. There should be no conflict between saving souls and saving trees. Each has its place. An evangelistic dialogue with the New Age will place evangelism and ecology in perspective. Biblical Christianity is intended to be environment friendly. This is expressed also in the following text:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God.  

However, because the world at large has lost faith in the Christianity presented by many of the modern Christian churches, they have abandoned the Bible and are therefore susceptible to being challenged by the New Age Movement in their quest for spiritual and environmental well-being. While the New Age is crying for the anawim, the Kingdom of God has always cried for even the sparrow that falls to the earth. In his discourse on anxiety Jesus encouraged people to view the world with the understanding that God feeds the birds and clothes the cycle of nature with its beauty. The natural is sustained by the divine presence who is both immanent and transcendent.

This balance of utility and innate value has implications not only for ecology and human relationships but for another theme which is appropriately brought to the surface by the New Age, and that is the theme of the mandate for harmony between male and female. The denigration of females in a double standard world of sex objects, beauty contests, and “catching the last bus home with Bacardi’s auntie Morag” is no more lethal than the portrayal of the typical man as a “couch potato” or a “redneck macho” or a male chauvinist “Archie Bunker.” The New Age would have each person recognised for his or her own worth as individuals with mutual respect, acceptance and cooperative partnership. The same is true of the Gospel, calling forth the best in both male and female in his and her respective roles which best suit each to maintain the balance of partnership, as for example

25 Romans 8:19-20.
26 Psalm 84:3; Matthew 10:29.
in the illustration of the body where the eye does not say to the foot “I have no need of you,” and where it is recognised that if the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing.27 The synergistic plea of the New Age is not a vying for position and a competitive “self-over-everyone-else” climb of self promotion, but as in the Gospel a call to realise one’s full potential and employ that for the benefit of the whole, that the whole may be more than the sum of the parts. The holistic view of life also recognises that the innate value of all life is deeper than physical. Likewise the Gospel is intended to present the individual and the community as whole in body, soul and spirit.28

3. The Quest for Hope & Divine Presence. Something has been lost in the midst of the modern western secularised consumer culture. The song writers and poets proclaim it; the empty eyes of the drug culture see it and the rise in violence and suicide demonstrate it. The pop singer Billy Joel says it clearly in his song, The River of Dreams:

In the middle of the night I go walking in my sleep
From the mountains of faith to a river so deep
I must be looking for something, something sacred I lost
But the river is wide and it’s too hard to cross.

And even though I know the river is wide
I walk down every evening and I stand on the shore
And try to cross to the opposite side
So I can finally find out what I’ve been looking for.

In the middle of the night I go walking in my sleep
Through the valley of fear to a river so deep
And I’ve been searching for something taken out of my soul
Something I would never lose, something somebody stole.

I don’t know why I go walking at night,
But now I’m tired and I don’t want to walk anymore.
I hope it doesn’t take the rest of my life
Until I find what it is that I’ve been looking for.

In the middle of the night I go walking in my sleep
Through the jungle of doubt to a river so deep
I know I’m searching for something, something so undefined

27 I Corinthians 12:12-26.
28 I Thessalonians 5:23.
That it can only be seen by the eyes of the blind in the middle of the night.

I'm not sure about a life after this
God knows I've never been a spiritual man
Baptized by the fire
I wade into the river that is running to the promised land.

In the middle of the night I go walking in my sleep
Through the desert of truth to the river so deep
We all end in the ocean; We all start in the streams
We're all carried along by the river of dreams in the middle of the night.29

People feel a sense of something lost. Sometimes people may not even be able articulate that sense of listless lostness. Often attempts to articulate terminology may differ, even in poetry and song. The New Age rises to this challenge of “something taken out of the soul.” In this way the New Age challenges the Christian individually and the church collectively to awaken to the transcendence and immanence found in what is believed and why it is believed. When alternatives are being offered and accepted such as Arthurian and Atlantian legend or those of other mythic worlds and powers, it is because Christian stories and art which call to both a priori and a posteriori knowledge have been lost on the cluttered desk of academic theology and in the volumes of church dogma. While not dismissing the validity of either of these, the Christian and the church finds hope and divine presence through the primary value of its own stories. The challenge of the New Age is to awaken Christianity to the overwhelming power of its stories and to the telling of those stories. A voice will cry in the wilderness. The living and abiding Word of God is a message of hope which would have to be heralded by word and deed in order to have meaning in peoples lives. Christian stories which lie in the dust need resurrection in their telling and in their living so that people can hear and see the Living Word, the body of Christ, the incarnation of God through Christ in His church. When 9,000 people a year are drawn to the Findhorn Community because they have heard the story of 42 pound cabbages and of a people concerned for the earth and people, a people who proclaim the divine presence within each human being and a theology of Love which hopes to establish a spiritual civilisation, that heralds a loud message to the church about how it has or has not lived and told its greatest story of freedom and love.

Those stories are relived in the telling and touch the heart with immanence and transcendence. One eventually sees one’s self in the stories and finds hope that such goodness could come and such freedom and love could incarnate. That is why their history is important over the myths of the New Age— that the stories not only could happen but did happen— stories such as the woman who received renewed integrity at the well with Jesus, the adulterous woman forgiven and restored at the feet of Jesus, the woman healed of the issue of blood at the touch of His garment in faith, the demon possessed Legion who became clothed and in his right mind, the diseased being healed in body and soul, the hungry being fed in body and spirit, the woman who reminded Jesus of the crumbs from the table and the story of stories that turned depressed and fearfilled disciples at a funeral into ecstatic and unashamed street preachers. One needs only to ask what funeral they ever attended turned out that way. Though many myths tell of the hope of resurrection, life after life and gods taking on a human form, no other stories compare with the Christ event, since that story is to be counted as an actual event as proclaimed. That is its uniqueness, and since one category of myth defines a story that gives rise to the highest hopes within human beings, in that sense alone the Christ event may be called myth. This is also the sense in which the Christ event may be categorised as "myth become fact." Easter eggs would not do that, but a bodily resurrection would. While the church sells itself short on its stories and debates whether they happened or not, the New Age is receiving the broken and abused, those searching for something taken out of their soul, the spiritually bankrupt.

Dennis Nineham, in the book *The Myth of God Incarnate*, concurs with this need for hope to be found in a story:

People find it hard to believe in God because they do not have any lively imaginative pictures of the way God and the world as they know it are related. What they need most is a story, a picture, a myth that will capture their imagination while meshing in with the rest of their sensibility in the way that messianic terms linked with the sensitivity of the first-century Jews, or Nicene symbolism

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30 John 4, 8; Mark 5, 6, 8; Matthew 15; and Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20 and Acts 1-2 respectively.
with the sensibility of philosophically-minded fourth-century Greeks.31

The plethora of myths on offer today in the New Age is indicative of the need within individuals to create a story which epitomises their deepest aspirations. In the absence of the knowledge that such a story has occurred people will create another story or attach themselves to another existing story. The adoption of scientific myths began the process that eventually led to the abandonment of the Gospel story for another gospel— the gospel of the New Age. Its promises are very close to those of the original Good News, yet without the Saviour. Out of the desolation and despair of scientific myth and the distortions of churchianity has arisen generations unaware of the depth of the Gospel happening that fulfils all myth. Therefore the Gospel itself is interpreted as just another myth to live by. In such cases people will allow other myths to replace the Gospel. In accepting the scientific myth as in some way denigrating to Christian faith, arguments have been asserted which allow faith to be sufficient in itself, no matter what the history behind it. This renders invalid any argument against accepting the New Age. Hence the difficulty with Fox, Reeves and Spink who want to believe in God but cannot accept the biblical Gospel without mythologising it. In this sense the New Age raises a challenge to the churches to re-address the question of the historical Christ and the Christ as preached and lived today.

4. The Sense of community, healing, unity and love — Liberation. In an age of independence and individuality the deeper cry of the New Age has certainly been supportive of the need to work toward community. Fascinating as the various methodologies are in the New Age, it is apparent that the New Age is answering people’s need for acceptance and support in the search for freedom and meaning in life. Though much of the surface of the New Age appears self-centred, there is a deeper aspect to the New Age which would say that the individual is to become all he or she can be in order to better serve the community. Spangler noted the possibility that people may be attracted to New Age techniques merely for personal pursuit of perfection as if doing the technique was the end in itself. However, the

same could be said of independent spirituality in Christianity. In both cases one is encouraged to realise that no amount of personal improvement is of value if not connected to the improvement of service in all of life's relationships. The ideas presented as the collective unconscious suggest an interconnectedness of all of life. Again, although all the implications and interpretations placed on this by the New Age need not be subscribed to, the idea of recognising human need for community is worthy of full acceptance. From a biblical point-of-view, "None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself." It may also be said that the New Age has played the game of capitalism and materialistic gain, when one considers the fact that its revenues are something like four billion plus dollars per annum, and it has made more than one millionaire channeller. Professed Christianity has had its materialistic hype as well. Still the deeper message of both is an appeal to conserving the world's resources and caring for people. Though New Age critics dismiss this as a front, it cannot be denied that such an appeal reaches the heart of the people. That too is a challenge to the churches espousing the Christ who cared for people and made the church to bring blessing to this world. The origins of the Gospel are founded in the liberation of those who are the weak, those who are abused, those who have lost their way, those who have been estranged and persecuted. The metaphor of crucifixion and resurrection points to the reality of the guiltless being held guilty, and at the same time the acceptance of pain in the midst of hope. Acceptance and abounding love with an atmosphere of grace and healing were not only characteristic of Christ but were the themes of apostolic teaching. Of course it behoved all the church to live it. Thus the need for grace.

The New Age is concerned with body, soul and spirit. This too should be a concern of the body-life of the church as is exampled in the apostolic prayer that, "the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." This holistic approach is Christ-like and should be the reputation of those who profess Him. Reeves says there is no "once for all Jesus" and comments that no such Jesus is necessary, for "faith is not dependent on such certainties and securities." In contrast the Hebrews writer says, Jesus

32 Romans 14:7.
34 I Thessalonians 5:23.
Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.”36 They are both saying the same thing in the sense that Jesus must relate to people of all times or He is not the Christ. Still one need not sacrifice the μονογενή for a pluralistic Jesus who is no more than archetype. The themes of interconnectedness where each person takes responsibility for the whole is as much a Gospel concern as a New Age concern.

5. The Challenge To Faith and Doctrine— While New Agers are confident and assertive of their beliefs, no matter how bizarre they may appear to others, the Christian faith is being questioned at its foundations even by those on the cutting edge of church leadership. The Christian religion is often spoken of as a “private thing.” Many wrestle with the ambiguity of God. One’s private belief may vary drastically from one’s public profession. The New Age challenges the Christian faith to look again at its foundations, its stories, its dogma as ask if the indictments of the New Age are valid. The indictment is that the churches have not properly addressed nor solved any world crisis, so now the New Age will solve the world’s problems through a process of evolution which may be immediate or take lifetimes of reincarnation. Has hope shifted from the church to the New Age? By listening to the New Age critics the Christian faith will be able to reaffirm and renew those aspects of its life and practice which are relevant and strip away the excess baggage which it may have accumulated through the centuries. The New Age challenges the Christian faith with the following charges:

5.1 Patriarchal male God structures serve to legitimise the male control of social institution. Patriarchy downs women, abuses nature, and transgresses the innate worth in place of performance based utilitarian values.

5.2 The symbol of Goddess religions are on the rise because of the inappropriateness of present political and religious models to give spiritual meaning to people’s lives. Goddess as a symbol is better for overcoming the power-over structures with power-from-within, personal deity.

36 Hebrews 13:8.
5.3 Evil is an illusion and humanity has the power to create reality. The problem of evil is really the problem of randomness which is necessary, otherwise there could be nothing new.

5.4 The Bible no longer functions as a vehicle for the modern world. Its dogma is set aside, and its stories are open to non exegetical interpretations. The Bible is no more inspired and no more a revelation than the many New Age writings whose authors claim revelation through channelled entities who often identify themselves as Christ and God.

5.5 Dualisms and hierarchies are inappropriate. Flesh and spirit, saved and damned, success and failure are dualisms which have come from Patriarchy. Holistic techniques are employed to release love which eliminates the illusion of dualisms.

5.6 There is no one truth for everyone, no external truth; there are no absolutes. Truth is within, not external. God is larger than any particular path or belief. Pluralism and Eco-spirituality necessitate the inclusion of all varieties of religious experience just as all species of the rain forest are important and every flower in a field. None should be dismissed or destroyed.

5.7 Magic and miracle are the same— a change in perception which alters reality. Creative visualisation, psychosynthesis, and other techniques adopted by the New Age are the vehicles of invoking a change in consciousness which leads to a change in reality. That power-from-within is not limited to gifted people, but is available to every person.

5.8 There is no Great Man, no saviour. Jesus was a Christed individual just as every person may become Christed. This Christ speaks through various individuals as a channelled entity in the New Age. The Self is empowered through self-actualisation to master one’s own life rather than become the slave to the psychological forces within. The Self has the innate creative power to make life good, and has no need to be “chained” to a teacher.

5.9 Pantheism and Panentheism should replace Yahweh as a means by which the dualism of secular and sacred is erased. The West has turned to
the East for spiritual guidance. Paganism and Neo-paganism are accepted over Christianity. God is not a person, nor a trinity of persons. God is only immanent, a gestalt energy force. The term "God," "is symbolic of the principle of life, visible or invisible. It is a description of the system of cosmic life, of the whole of which man is a part."37

5.10 The crucifixion is an image of maleness promising to deliver humanity from realms of mortality (death, pain, suffering, and all). God doesn’t hold evil against people. There is no judgement day coming. These terms are symbolic of one’s own creation of karmic activity. God does not punish, therefore the crucifixion’s value is totally in the kind of learning it facilitates. There is no connection to forgiveness or punishment. The idea of sacrifice is totally unknown to God. The crucifixion teaches that the guiltless are held guilty and that atonement is release from guilt which is really just the recognition that people never were guilty in the first place.

5.11 Christianity is a poor hope, cheating humanity with a false hope of other-worldly resurrection. The New Age reinterprets Christian terminology to suit today’s thinking. The historical resurrection is not important. What is important to the New Age is the power of the metaphor of resurrection, that there is something that survives death. Reincarnation is more accepted as an unalterable reality along with further stages of evolution if not reincarnation. All these metaphors really convey that “We have been alive forever” and We will be alive forever more.”38

5.12 Christianity’s potential has been lost amidst the hierarchy of church and chapel dogmas and estrangement stories. It has lost its grace. Organised religion has lost its healing power. Spirituality is alive and well and living in privatised religion— The New Age. Christianity is blamed for the world crisis since it was out of the mechanistic world-view that science evolved a mechanistic/rationalistic science which in turn promoted a utilitarian industrialised society that abuses nature and people. It is further accused that the clergy of Christianity converted it from a mystical religion to a personality cult.

5.13 Evolution offers a better answer to death. Twenty billion years of evolution from the Big Bang to the present insures a future continuance of the processes which have brought the cosmos thus far. A Divine economy is at work in a synergistic way to assure continuous progress for the good of the whole. Past lives, reincarnation, Near-Death and Out-of-Body experiences are evidence of continuance of life beyond the physical and of realms present beyond the visible and physically observable.

5.14 Moral ethics are relative. Sexual preferences are to be welcomed in order to show balance; spirit and flesh are one; therefore there is no outside justice or judgement; consequences are there own justice and judgement. There are no absolutes, yet one is not to do that which would harm nature, self or others. Starhawk's basis for trying to eliminate these distinctions is because it then allows her to dismiss heterosexual human relationships as the basic pattern of all being. Her considerations are now more true to the convictions she held all along. These convictions include "lesbians, gay men, bisexual people," or "whatever sexual preference," even an erotic relationship to "trees, flowers, stones, the ocean, a good book or a painting, a sonnet or a sonata, a close friend or a far away star... erotic energy inherently generates and celebrates diversity." None of these relationships are deviant. Herein is one of the great challenges of the New Age Movement. In the quake that is to eliminate erroneous hierarchies and dualism, catastrophic tremors are also felt in morality and ethics which severely shift from a biblical and Christian foundation.

5.15 Personal subjective, existential confirmation is all that is necessary for the world to be in balance. Atonement is when the individual realises a new perception of reality based on love that delivers one from the illusionary hell of doubt and fear. Reality is what is true to one's Self. The Self is the anchor, the confirmation of what is valid. All else is illusion.

5.16 The world is in crisis and in desperate need of transformation. The heaven one makes or the hell one makes is experienced here on earth. Out of the crisis situation will arise a critical mass which will imminently transform the world into a utopian gestalt order. Humanity holds the ultimate answer

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to all its problems. Transformation takes place through techniques which realise full human potential, self-actualisation. This is the "born again" experience of the New Age. Salvation is in this-worldly terms.

These five areas and particularly the sixteen statements under the challenge to faith and doctrine are illustrative of the kind of challenges to Christian theology and life that run throughout New Age literature and practice. They challenge the origins as well as present belief and practice of the Christian faith. In this sense they offer both a challenge to change as well as a challenge to reaffirm an apologetic response which will strengthen what is lacking in the present church's doctrine and devotion. At the same time the New Age may be seen as an implicit instrument of God to purge the churches and if the churches will not be purged, then God may raise up a people elsewhere to live and tell the story.

**Pulling Together the Underlying Themes**

As a lead into the critique of responses to the New Age and for ease of reference a pulling together of the underlying themes is presented here. In chapter one it was made evident that the critiques of the New Age have covered a wide range from both protagonist and antagonist points of view. While most would call it a New Age, there are those who recognise it as a media hype and others who would call it an "old lie." The global issues of socioecological crisis, spiritual poverty, and the quest for hope have not been solved by humanism nor existentialism. The scientific awakening, the import of eastern esoteric thought and the rise of feminism and liberation movements in socio/theological realms have offered new ways of approaching the human condition. The New Age is seen to be an eclectic and syncretistic movement drawing from all forms of philosophy, psychology, science, and religion to make its own cafeteria style belief system designed for the individual as well as the community. In all this there has been a synthesis to evolve a form of humanistic existentialism in a spiritual mode. In rebellion against reason the New Age claims no need of scientific confirmation for its self-justification, yet at the same time it appeals
to science and reason, religion and faith in an attempt to establish its credibility.

In chapter two the example of mythology was chosen to illustrate the New Age as a quest for hope in a poverty-stricken western consumer culture that has lost its story of life along with its identity. People construct stories that give meaning, purpose and value to life. Mythology unites people in the sharing of those stories. When individuals and communities lose their stories, they lose their sense of transcendence and hope despairs. When people lose hope they do not necessarily stop believing in everything. To the contrary it is likely that they will begin to believe anything, no matter how incredible. This establishes the innate need to believe in something that gives hope to the individual and the community. Whether historic or historical in nature myth creates a sense of shared experience which unites people, and encourages them to higher hopes. In the absence of myths people will create myths, and when those myths are broken they will adopt new myths. Joseph Campbell’s assessment follows that occidental culture is burned out in its philosophy and religion as well as the promises of materialistic capitalism. The New Age in response is in the process of mythmaking whether by creating new stories or repackaging old ones with evolved meaning more synonymous with what is now believed. The new mythology as Campbell presents it is a mythology of a unified earth as one harmonious being. It is an evolutionary myth that answers the “triad of feeding, procreating and overcoming.” The new mythology will open up to the wonder of all being and the sense of awe at the recognition of divinity seen in nature’s events. The New Age embraces all interpretations of myth—literal, metaphorical, moral or anagogical depending on the imagination of the interpreter. Despite modern technology and theology that had once dismissed mythology as unnecessary and unscientific, people have virtually rebelled in a New Age of flowering myths. It is an attempt to “turn off the computer and trust your feelings.” The resurgence of myth incorporates the new world-view of the New Age.

Having relatively dismissed the scientific model which evolved a mechanistic universe and a mortal humanity, the New Age has sought meaning to life in Gaia the living planet, and in legendary stories connected to other realms of mysticism, and in alternative myths incorporating ecology, mysticism, eastern esoteric thought and occidental esoteric thought such as exampled in Witchcraft, Goddess religions and Faery traditions. While for Lovelock and Sahtouris the Gaia myth is to invoke an awareness of earth as a self-regulatory system that will save itself, with or without humanity, for Starhawk and others Gaia becomes the Great Mother, the Goddess worshipped and invoked for powers to transform consciousness and create reality by magic. This mythology is also intended to move humanity from a patriarchal system to a matriarchal or androgynous system wherein dualisms are eliminated. Here the feminist movement comes into play with the Goddess movement as well as the ecological movement. This demonstrates once again the interweaving nature of the New Age which incorporates various themes within each other and within a new world-view to promote responsibility for innate value and worth in the individual and for a holistic approach to life on planet earth.

Chapter three illustrates the wide range of approach to spirituality in the New Age. Personal deity and the quest for a rise in consciousness from the amnesia of past deity and past lives to a future potential beyond present levels of awareness are sought through a multiplicity of eclectic and syncretistic techniques ranging from psychedelic drugs to creative visualisation and psychological astrology. Whereas western culture may have at one time considered spirituality to be equated with being Christian and out-moded, now spirituality is in vogue and unrestricted to any religious system. This is the sense in which some would say the New Age has gone beyond religion. The New Age approach to spirituality is to recognise that there is more to human living than physical existence. New Age spirituality in one sense is exemplified by the redefining of Christian terminology, yet in the example of Findhorn spirituality opens up a more pantheistic view of the world and nature. All spiritual traditions are accepted and no one way is seen to be the only way. Schucman’s Course in Miracles and Williamson’s Return to Love are examples of the borrowing of Christian terminology redefined within a New Age theology on the lines of creating one’s own reality by the choices one makes. This says that all
people create their own reality no matter what its effect may seem to be and that ultimately all that is undesirable is but an illusion from which one may awaken through a change in perception. This change in perception is the miracle. New Age spirituality also crosses over into psycho-spirituality. Assagioli’s transpersonal psychology and psychosynthesis as portrayed in the New Age by Will Parfitt demonstrate a replacement of traditional outward belief by an inward spiritual journey into the world of consciousness and unconsciousness in order to bring about a “born again” transformation that in turn will contribute toward a critical mass transformation of the world. This also brings in the Jungian idea of a collective unconscious in which all persons participate and to which all people are encouraged to look in order to reach what Teilhard de Chardin called the Omega Point and beyond consciousness to what Peter Russell calls Gaiafield, the fifth level of evolution.

Chapter four introduced an expanded illustration of what was introduced in chapter one as the underlying theory of evolution that is foundational to New Age belief. The ideas of what is called the New Science involve extended views of evolutionary theory and cosmologies which incorporate 20 billion years of Big Bang history in an eleven dimensional universe. For some New Agers evolutionary theory is expressed in the belief that there are other dimensions which may be accessed through the holographic functions of the human brain as the whole universe may be accessed in any one part. Doors of perception within the mind may be opened through various techniques to access the wisdom and enlightenment of the universe. The whole universe is enfolded within itself, both matter and consciousness. This theory grew out of Einstein’s Theory of Special Relativity and Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle. For Einstein space and time are of the same nature but are only perceived as different because of the particular position of the observer. Heisenberg added that the position of an object is affected by attempting to measure its speed. This has been further pushed forward into the Gauge Theory which says that all forces are but different aspects of one force.

Ultimately the New Age wants to say that separate particles and dualisms are but appearances and that in reality all is one, all is interwoven. This is the implicate order not perceived by appearance or physical senses. The
New Age is attempting to reach beyond the physical realm of body and senses in an evolution of consciousness either by long processes or by instantaneous quantum leaps. This evolutionary theory extends to include on the one hand more highly evolved beings, such as are accessed through channelling techniques, which assist humanity toward its evolution, and on the other hand a rise in consciousness through various techniques so that enlightened humanity may take a conscious role in deciding its own evolutionary progress even beyond the human condition. The next stage of evolution is to be mental rather than physical. Humanity will assume control of the evolutionary process as the global brain and rise from its fallen state of amnesia to ever higher forms of being as seen in the exposition of Ken Carey’s Starseed Transmissions and Peter Russell’s fifth level of evolution. All this necessitates an ecological consciousness of Gaia the self-regulating earth which evolves out of apparent chaos. In order for humanity to become the global brain of Gaian evolution it must assume responsibility for the care of Mother Earth as well as the global community. Thus ecology becomes the shared responsibility of New Age evolution. The implicate order emerges from the apparent chaos.

**Critique of Responses to the New Age**

Responses to the New Age have been voluminous. While the millennialist and hard-attacking evangelical responses have been informative, they basically have followed the same subjective lines as the New Age itself. Although the New Age does not submit easily to a structured response due to its own eclectic and syncretistic flow, nevertheless as noted in the introductory chapter, the New Age can be marked by a definition of its foundational beliefs. As it is not possible in the space of this dissertation to accommodate an in-depth study of all the defining marks listed, those chosen to be viewed in depth demonstrate the various themes relatively.

The humanist response has been as vehement as the millenialist in its dismissal of the hype of the New Age. Robert Basil’s edition of Not Necessarily the New Age is replete with documentation that dismisses hard core New Age as highly subjective and unscientific for example in areas such
as the paranormal, channelling, near-death, out-of-body and past life regression, reincarnation and karma, extraterrestrial encounters, as well as New Age scams and marketeering. The New Age having come in part out of the Human Potential Movement of humanistic psychology is now feared as a replacement. While this response has much to offer in the way of incriminating evidence and logical documentation in negation of the movement, this response would for other reasons dismiss Christianity and its Gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as the Christ and saviour of the world because the basic premise of humanism is that man is the measure of all things.

Similarly much of the New Age sees human responsibility as being the global brain of evolution toward a utopian world. It has been shown in this dissertation that the New Age has a slightly altered view of humanity, depending on who is consulted. From one point-of-view humanity has become the global brain, the consciousness of evolution. From another New Age point-of-view humanity is expendable, Gaia is the cybernetic self-regulating system that will live on with or without humanity. However, the basic New Age emphasis on ecology seeks for the survival of humanity along with the planet and the cosmos. Still another point-of-view sees Gaia as the living entity Mother Earth or the Goddess. In this metaphysical interpretation all things have spirit and life force energies with which humanity is encouraged to become one. There are variations in this view ranging from nature responses such as Wicca to eastern esoteric responses such as Capra’s Tao. All these are established in themselves as belief systems contrary to biblical Christianity and supportive of the theme that within humanity itself lies the answers to all the world’s problems.

While being useful and informative of the errors of the New Age, neither the hard core attack from what has been called “the millennialist” response, nor the so called hard core evangelical/fundamentalist response have acknowledged the way in which the New Age has challenged the churches to look at themselves and realise the need to return to origins, as is the plea of the New Age. Again the highly subjective approach of both the New Age and certain millennial interpretations of the so-called “fundamentalist evangelicals” cancel one another out on the polemic platform. Martin

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Palmer also notes this similarity in recognising the “off-beat aspects of the New Age” as fascinating in respect to their counterpart in Christian theology.

If you believe in a real devil; in occult forces, in witches and in the idea that the Book of Revelation is a coded manual for the last days and that the Antichrist is with us now, then it is quite likely that you will also be fascinated by crystals, pyramids, fortune-telling, devil-worship and so forth. In other words, the obsession with the ‘fringe’ elements of religion is as much a feature of the fundamentalist and, in certain quarters, evangelical branches of Christianity as it is a feature of many who play with tarot cards or read their horoscopes... The games are so similar that it is sibling rivalry...43

Carol Riddell acknowledges this similarity when writing of channelling as “the ability to receive inner guidance” in comparison with “speaking in tongues” which she says was “a common practice among the early Christian apostles.”44 The subjective experiential approaches of both New Age and certain professing Christian groups today are self-fulfilling prophecies. For example Tal Brooke, for all his passion and spiritual quest, said the same thing initially of his association with Sai Baba that he later said of his “born again” experience with Christ. Starhawk, who casts the circle and invokes the power of the Goddess Mother Earth, by whatever name, will claim the same evidence to answered prayer as the Pentecostal who “speaks in tongues.” There are those who get high on drugs, and there are those who get “high on Jesus.” Both will claim a transforming experience which radically changes their lives. While one claims visions and revelations another claims channelling and out-of-body experiences. There must be another way, otherwise everyone is right in his or her own eyes and people have come full circle back to the existential humanism with a spiritual twist as advocated by the New Age. The themes above are but illustrative of the great need to simplify and strip away the excess baggage acquired through the centuries and take a fresh look at the issues accented by the New Age. What is incriminating is that such themes should be led by New Agers instead of the church, which has been the primary source of spirituality and care for human need in the world since the first century.

In the same manner the "conspiracy" theories are useful to some extent in exposing certain networking aspects and some hard core New Age views linked with such teachings as Alice Bailey’s The Plan, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky’s Theosophy and the more contemporary plots such as Benjamin Creme’s Maitreya and Donald Keys’ Planetization. However, what may be said of one group or person under the umbrella of the New Age cannot necessarily be inferred to be true of the whole movement. That is one of the points about the New Age that makes it difficult to try to place a conspiracy theory over the whole movement. The extreme presentations of Cumby and company show an unbalanced perspective of the greater New Age subculture. The movement cannot be at once loosely structured with no set doctrine that must be believed and having no hierarchy or leader while at the same time being a tightly organised and hierarchical conspiracy. In his book, Close Encounters with the New Age, Kevin Logan accents this point in regard to the negative effect it can have on establishing dialogue and evangelism in the New Age. Logan writes:

It is vital for Christians to see this thriving new subculture in a balanced perspective. Nothing is more guaranteed to sink the British New Ager beneath the waves of laughter than the oft-repeated Christian claim of a worldwide plot. Nothing, I believe, damages our credibility and integrity more.

Logan goes on to cite various evangelical writers who have been mentioned in this dissertation who seek a more balanced approach to critiquing the New Age. Michael Cole, while accepting the New Age as a definite paradigm shift and an “unholy alliance,” does not see an organisational conspiracy. Elliot Miller has made an extensive investigation into the idea of a conspiracy as suggested by Cumby and company, yet concludes:

But although she has succeeded more than anyone else at waking the church up to the New Age movement, the "New Age

45 An example of this point can be taken from Cumby, Constance. Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow. Op. Cit. pp. 193-194 where Cumby acknowledges that the New Age movement is non-hierarchical and composed of a multitude of loosely connected networks. Having conceded this point Cumby goes on to write that Alice Bailey’s Lucis Trust is the "brains" behind the occult New Age, claiming that New Age disciples are following Bailey’s plans “like recipes.”

movement” that the church awoke to is decidedly different from the New Age movement that is really out there... It is time for the Church to wake up fully, shaking off its dreamy fantasy of a monolithic New Age conspiracy. Only then can it truly rise up to the very real and formidable challenges of the New Age movement.48

Again, Douglas Groothuis is cited to indicate that critical investigation by conservative theologians would agree:

While levels of cooperation and organization exist between various groups and individuals, the New Age movement is better viewed as a world-view shift than a unified global conspiracy. This is not to minimise its influence but to recognize it as an intellectual, spiritual and cultural force to be reckoned with in all sobriety. This movement has no uniforms, membership cards, dues or official leaders, and yet its influence is widespread and growing.49

The response which has been termed in this dissertation as “native” is that which claims to espouse the Christian point-of-view while at the same time attempting dialogue with the New Age in order to assist both the New Age and the churches of modern Christianity. For the most part this response as illustrated in Fox, Reeves, Spink and Strachan has gone more native to the New Age with its acceptance of pluralism and perennial philosophy, yet it strives to liaise with Christianity on the basis of Christian mysticism. This appears to be dialectic rather than dialogue. Instead of calling the New Age to Christ and the Gospel, this response would welcome the New Age in synthesis to produce another gospel and a pantheistic/panentheistic Christ.

**The Inadequacy of the “Native” Response**

This section is presented separately as it is at first sight what would appear to be the most promising response to the New Age. However, as will be seen, those who attempt discourse with the New Age run the risk of becoming so sympathetic that their response ends up with little or no

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distinction, having taken on those beliefs and practices which are native to
the New Age itself, hence the designation “native response.” The
inadequacy of what has been termed “the native response” is indicated in the
following areas where acceptance of New Age thought has been exchanged
with biblical teaching so that there remains little distinction between the two.

1. Fox’s creation-centred spirituality gives insight to the need for
ecological and feminine theologies, as well as to the need to accept the pain
and suffering of life by learning to let go. Creativity and transformation are
also relative to biblical teaching but in the process of seeking new mediums
and fresh outlooks on Christian themes Fox presents a pluralistic and
panenteheistic gospel that makes little or no distinction between Christian
teaching and that of Buddha, Wiccan ritual or shamanism. Fox’s Jesus is not
the Son of God but a son of God.50 Reeves follows the same pattern with the
charge that Christianity should change to become more ecumenical with
“Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus and the followers of tribal religions.”51
Spink too says that it is not necessary to believe in God for a spiritual
awakening to take place and for Spink Jesus is a “Christed” man. In this
sense Spink refers to the New Age cosmic Christ that is everywhere available
to everyone. One of the very premises of Spink’s Omega Order is “to
recognize Christ under all forms to the exclusion of none.”52 In practical
terms this accepts Buddhist and Christian as sharing “fellowship in Christ”
without qualification.53 Again, Spangler would agree in saying that the
cosmic Christ is a basic evolutionary force within creation. However this is
ture, the distinctive message of the Gospel of Jesus is replaced by a Christed
Jesus who is no more than an archetype. For Spink, Creation is the body of
God, whereas biblical Christianity says that God created. In these attempts
at dialogue the biblical Creation by a transcendent God is given up for a
pantheistic/panenteheistic view of God as creation and God in creation. In
the New Age and in the “native” response God becomes impersonal, and an
energy or life force. One might compare the Seth Material and The Starseed
Transmissions to show that there is little difference between the
“panenteheistic” view of Fox and the life-force of the New Age.

8.
53 Ibid. p. 60.
Ted Peters’ article in Dialog 28 (1989) among other writers, agrees with this assessment of Fox’s Creation-Centred Spirituality. Peters confirms that Fox is not clear on the relation of Old and New Creation, i.e. if the old is Blessing then the New is insult. The Old must be good enough for Fox. The idea of sin suggest dualism, and that is a problem for Fox’s attempt to abort dualism. For Fox light and darkness are embraced together. While realising the need to let go, Fox goes too far in his dialectic. There remains little distinction and in practical terms denies the evidence. Though sin is all the things Fox claims, i.e. refusal to do the right thing, doing what is against nature, misuse of creativity, etc., Fox fails to yield to the Biblical definition of sin as that which separates one from God, the Other. Consequently, in terms of salvation Fox sees the necessity of reconciliation with one’s self, with one’s neighbour and with creation, but misses the point of the death of Christ for the sins of the world. The Good News for Paul is that Christ Jesus died for our sins, was buried and rose again on the third day, in accordance with the scriptures.

Transformation is an attempt at solving this problem of sin in Fox’s theology. However, this transformation is cited as a realised eschatology which arrives at a global awareness, a new humanity/global civilisation and using inner divinity for good as co-creators with God. While it may be truly necessary for this kind of transformation, Biblical Christianity as expressed by the Apostle Paul goes much further with the work of the Holy Spirit than just a transformation of civilisation. Salvation is more than transformation of society. Fox cites various quotes in support of his view that Paul agrees with him, yet Fox fails to realise that Paul’s cosmic Christ is not pantheistic nor panentheistic. The quotes offered are in support of Christ’s pre-eminence and involvement with nature rather than his being nature. Transformation therefore would not only involve an inward and outward evidence of

change, it would involve a gracious act of God, the Other, upon the individual outwith self-awakening and self-transformation.

Biblical reconciliation and transformation appeals to the Good News that God in Christ did something for humanity that humanity could not do for itself. The idea of exemplary atonement would not be enough. Biblical Christianity appeals to the need within humans for redemptive atonement, meaning an act from outside that would raise one out of a pit that otherwise could not be exited.

Fox’s ecumenical approach is really pluralistic. He includes religions such as Wicca, Native American Shamanism, Buddhism, Muslims and Hindus. Fox moves for a global civilisation and global religion. Whatever does not relate interconnectedness is discarded. This too would be inconsistent with the Biblical Christianity of Paul, with whom Fox tries to liaison. A further construct that moves Fox beyond the Christian religion is that with Fox all is divine and all images of God are to be accepted—God as mother, child and humans as mothers of God. The problem here is that Fox mythologises and metaphorically interprets the Gospel of Christ. This gives him the liberty to make anagogical interpretations in any dimension he chooses in support of his plea. Fox’s theology stops short with pleas for turning pain and pleasure into new creation and allowing fear to create courage, hope to emerge out of despair and the resurrection of Jesus to inspire a new approach to life here and now. The Cosmic Christ comes into play as a principle of divinity which is universal, "an innate spiritual potential mystically present in every human and animal."\textsuperscript{56}

2. The fall/redemption model of biblical Christianity is given up by Fox for a creation-centred spirituality which nullifies the concept of sin that separates. This is also in line with the New Age writings of Schucman’s \textit{Course in Miracles} and Williamson’s \textit{Return to Love}. In these teachings it has been shown that sin is merely an illusion, therefore evil is an illusion, therefore there is no need to be forgiven and no God who forgives.\textsuperscript{57} There is no judgement day coming for the New Age, nor for Fox’s creation-centred


spirituality. The consequences of one’s actions carry their own justice. Heaven and hell are created on earth, not in some eternal realm. There is no devil and no evil. All allusions to such personalities and events are “superlative hallucinations,” according to such New Age writings as A Course in Miracles and Seth Speaks. The biblical idea of “once to die and after that the judgement” is replaced by karma and reincarnation or a continuance of life after death by some evolutionary process. Spink calls it “the law of eternal recurrence, from which humanity breaks free only in the finding of true identity.”

The Gulf War watched on television in 1991, the following Serbian/Croatian conflict and the recent 100,000 murdered in one month by military rule in Rwanda do not seem good evidence of the prophetic theories of Arguelles, Schucman, Williamson, Parfitt and company. These all dismiss evil as illusionary. Russell’s Planetary Awakening, Keys’ Planetary Citizenship and similar theories are allusions to the ever-present cry for hope implicit within humanity. However, the evidence of the times is that their subjectivity has missed the mark. The hard core New Age has not arrived, nor does it appear to be on the horizon. Were the borrowed scientific term “critical mass” to be true in the New Age interpretation, then it is likely that the world’s corruption would reign instead of the hope for peace and harmony. The New Age idea that one creates one’s own reality can hardly be accepted in the face of the 15 million plus who starve to death, child pornography and those born with infirmity. Surely these do not create their own reality. Nor can this be said of James Bulger, the little child led away by two school boys and wickedly murdered with bricks on the railway line. The presence of evil cannot be dismissed with aversions to positive thinking.

The Biblical fall/redemption theology is made to look bad by using an argument by default, stating abusive church doctrines and theological interpretations as reasons for casting aside the idea presented in the Bible.

59 Hebrews 9:27.
Fox blames Fall/redemption theology for the present ecological crisis, pain and sin as if to say that theology is the source of evil, yet all these things were evident before Augustine. One need only read the Old Testament and look at history for numerous examples of fallenness.

3. In connection with the above themes Fox and the New Age dismiss the idea of original sin in preference to original blessing. Therefore fallenness is more amnesia and ignorance than infection with sin. The basic belief is that the true Self is pure. God is within and humanity is merely confused with subpersonalities that are under an illusion of wrong choices. The remedy resides within the human consciousness rather than with the grace of God in the sacrifice of Christ. As Carol Riddell would say at Findhorn, temptation is from within through loss of God-consciousness:

There is therefore only Good... That which is not good, which is evil, is not something different from God — an alternative, inherently evil universal force — but a behaviour without a knowledge of the truth. The devil does not lie outside us, hoofed and horned; he represents that in us which has not discovered the truth, and therefore does not act from truth, but from ignorance.62

Fox's idea of original sin refers to a state of alienation in which one is born. Yet in the attempt to disallow this condition, Fox says the same when mentioning the eco imbalance, global injustice and threat of nuclear war. While he may be right in religion's mis-interpretation of the term, he cannot deny the reality to which the term "original sin" refers.

4. Fox states that Jesus died confused,63 whereas the Gospels present Jesus in control as the silent suffering lamb of God who said:

For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father... I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.64

Further to this Fox removes the efficacy of the blood of Christ as a sacrifice for sin by the grace of God when he reduces the crucifixion to an archetype of letting go and accepting suffering. This is the same for Schucman’s Course in Miracles which states that the value of the crucifixion of Jesus is totally in the kind of learning it facilitates. There is no sacrifice for sin, and atonement is when one realises that he/she was never guilty in the first place. Jane Strohl, a Lutheran theologian, objects to Fox’s convictions. She states rightly that the assurance that people have the ability to make right decisions does not insure that they have the will to do what is right. Humanity needs more than a positive mental attitude. Strohl further affirms that by seeking the ground of human hope in the human ability to create, Fox risks missing the point of the incarnation, sacrifice and resurrection of Christ, because "it is not only in divine grace of creation but in the redeeming grace of God bestowed upon us in the Easter resurrection.

5. Certain moral issues of the New Age are also in conflict with biblical morality. Fox sides again with the contemporary morality of accepting pro choice and homosexuality because according to Fox creation-centred spirituality liberates the individual to be what he/she is. According to Fox homosexuality is natural. This too is in direct conflict with biblical morality which states that such behaviour is unacceptable:

Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

6. A further concession of those who have gone “native” is exampled in the theme of doing away with dualism. Fox claims his creation-centred spirituality would alleviate the need for any dualism between salvation and creation. Nature is deified therefore humanity need only become self-aware of its place in creation and in that awakening is the power of transformation. At the foundation of the dismissal of dualism is the above-stated wholesale

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68 Romans 1:26-27.
rejection of the fall/redemption model. In Fox’s view creation-centred spirituality is a liberation theology which removes the dualism of saved/unsaved, fallen/redeemed and releases humanity into Eros as love.\textsuperscript{69} Spink agrees that the “old dichotomy between the material and the spiritual” should disappear.\textsuperscript{70}

However, the merging of the New Age and its interconnections with theologies such as Process Theology, Narrative Theology, Feminist Theology, etc. are but examples of what is being done with Fox’s theology. Theology is allowed to evolve into whatever seems right to the individual or group and Biblical theology is reinterpreted to suit the times. Christianity is tailored to fit the times rather than the times being challenged by the Biblical revelation toward repentance. All of the ten themes which Fox cites as evidence of the need for a paradigm shift could be cited by any theology, but that does not necessitate that theology as the answer to human need. The evolution of Christian Theology says progress is going ever forward. Something new is to be arrived at from the old. Strangely the New Age keeps referring to "our roots". Forward is not better if it is "over the cliff or waterfall." Progress is not always "new and improved." These theologies are challenged to hold forth something that would meet the deep needs of humanity which a Biblical Gospel could not offer. This challenge could be the source of an entire work in itself and suggests the need for a second volume beyond the limited length of this dissertation.

7. New Age, it has been seen, is based on a foundation of variations in the theory of evolution. This is conceded by the “native” to the degree that Fox’s \textit{Original Blessing} could not have been written without the presupposition that there has been twenty billion years of evolution with over nineteen billion of those years of Creation existing before Adam and Eve’s sin. Reeves too says the “process started over 20 million years ago when the universe first began, and then some four million years later when the Earth was formed, and humankind emerged.”\textsuperscript{71} This assumes the claim that these variations of the theory of evolution are scientifically proven, whereas in fact they are belief systems without proof. Take for example James Lovelock’s

\textsuperscript{71} Reeves, Donald. \textit{Making Sense of Religion: A Fresh Look At Christianity}. \textit{Op. Cit.} p. 36.
statement that “for this to have happened by chance is as unlikely as to survive unscathed a drive blindfold through rush-hour traffic.”  

However instead of opting for faith in God as Creator, Lovelock follows the lines of many scientists who simply will not accept the biblical God as Creator, therefore in place of that belief is substituted Gaia. Lovelock continues, “Let us at least assume that it happened in this way rather than by the mysterious planting of a seed, or drift of spores from elsewhere or indeed by outside intervention of any kind.”

8. Fox bypasses special revelation of the Biblical kind and finds access to the divine through the beauty of nature, art and the imagination. While accepting that creation is beautiful and should be considered sacred, it does not have to be divine to be sacred. The Biblical view would be to hold creation as sacred because it is here for our pleasure, it is beautiful and because it belongs to God who created all that is beside himself. While affirming the need for awakening that Fox avers, the conclusions of how to arrive at that awakening and the desired results remain in question.

These eight themes are offered as illustrations of the kind of conflict which could be demonstrated as indicative of the compromising attempts of Fox, Spink, Reeves and others who in attempting to dialogue with the New Age have become dialectic. This dialectic compromise in Christian theology has sacrificed the foundations of biblical Christianity to the New Age thus eliminating the Bible as the only authority for the church, the biblical concepts of the presence of evil in the world and in human nature, the uniqueness of Christ as “no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved,” the biblical concept of creation, and the need for the grace of God in judgement.

Rather than exchange the biblical view of God and Christ for what Reeves concedes are bizarre androgynous analogies such as Edwina Sandy’s *Christa* — the crucified woman which hung in a chapel in the Cathedral of St

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74 Acts 4:12.
John the Divine in New York, it would be better to change from what humanity and its religions have done to the concept of patriarchy, the Fatherhood of God and the male Christ. Otherwise churches and individuals will compromise the theology of the New Testament and allow an extra-biblical Christology that concedes to the New Age God/ess and Christ/ess. In this sense the evolution of Christian theology would parallel the New Age Movement, having no boundaries. Reeves’ argument, along with examples of the more benign critics in the New Age, is more against the abuse of the biblical framework and the misappropriation of the churches. The question is then raised as to whether one should dismiss the biblical point-of-view or look again more carefully at the stories within the pages—at its exegesis, its meaning for today and its application in theology and the body-life of the church. Therein is the continued incarnation of freedom and love.

The Importance of the New Age for Christians—The Way Forward

A final response would be accepted in the softer approach illustrated briefly in the introductory chapter and from which material has been quoted in this dissertation. Such responses as illustrated by Drane, Osborn, Miller and others appear to seek a true dialogue which acknowledges the legitimate criticism of modern Christianity by the New Age, while at the same time challenging the New Age to acknowledge those beliefs which would pale in the light of the Gospel. One more reason among many that could be worked through is the evident confusion and disharmony within the so-called “Christian community.” As Lawrence Osborn says in his book Angels of Light?: The Challenge of the New Age, in a search for renewal and a search for inclusiveness people “who feel marginalized by Christian orthodoxy, but who still long for a spiritual dimension to their lives are made to feel welcome by the New Age. It appears more liberal than Christian orthodoxy

and more spiritual than Christian liberalism." A further reason discussed by Osborn is the evangelistic outreach which makes an alliance with the New Age in order to assist it in the direction of its spiritual journey while at the same time giving a fresh approach to the Christian story. What is needed is dialogue with the New Age without compromising Christian theology. The beginnings of such dialogue is being seen in the examples of those like Drane, Miller and Osborn. These make a start. However, confidence in the Christian story and its evangelistic appeal should be accented further and with greater detail to challenge the New Age in a compassionate way with what may be called a “soteric dialogue,” meaning an up-front focus on the need for salvation and what that means in terms of New Age and biblical themes. In addition the church and Christian theology has some repenting to do, and this also needs greater emphasis.

This soteric dialogue would not denigrate the New Ager, but would seek with an open mind to better the Christian walk by allowing the New Age to bring alive such themes as are within the Christian scriptures yet for one reason or another have been forgotten or allowed to sleep within the pages of sacred text. Examples of these themes have been offered under the section entitled “Challenges of the New Age.” This does not mean that hard evidence cannot be presented which would conflict with certain aspects of the New Age, but at the same time this response would acknowledge hard evidence in favour of change within the present structures of modern churchianity. Such a response is the way forward and needs expanding to accept a new age in the church without sacrificing the Christian Gospel to the New Age. A baseline must be established, which for Christian theology and the body-life of the church should be the Bible and since a resonant theme of the New Age is Christ-consciousness, a soteric dialogue could begin with the person of Christ.

The beginnings of a truer dialogue with the New Age, such as those illustrated above would hold forth a soteric appeal with the intent that both the church and the New Age could learn from each other. The challenge of sincere dialogue is to understand one another, to discern truth wherever it may be found and apply that to life. Thus the way forward in the Christian

response is to take on the challenges of the New Age, examine the criticisms of the church and at the same time challenge the New Age with its own sincere criticism. It has been demonstrated that the rise of the New Age’s “other gospel” is symptomatic of changes in modern western culture that are exampled in the failure of churches to properly demonstrate the Gospel of Christ. This has left the door open for “another gospel” which proclaims virtually the same promises, yet whose saviour is self.

The underlying foundations of mythology, spirituality, and evolution as seen in this exposition of the New Age are important to the Christian community as they affect challenges from the New Age. These foundation stones of the New Age address the major questions rising within individuals and the global community. Though it can be seen that the themes intertwine, mythology can be seen as the New Age attempt to find stories which illustrate hope. Spirituality illustrates the journey toward that hope, and evolution is the process by which hope and the journey are assured of unending progress toward a better world and beyond. Though foundationally different to the biblical Gospel of Christ, they hold some common themes which need taking on by the church.

**Soteric Dialogue**

Going beyond this acknowledgement of valid issues as illustrated in the writers above, this dissertation presents a selective synthesis of valid points in the several responses and sets forth the thesis that the New Age is symptomatic of the greater breakdown of Christian theology and the body-life in the church; and while it is necessary to take on the challenge of the New Age in dialogue, it is imperative that transformation take place in the church and in Christian theology which will manifest a genuine love and concern for relationships with God, nature and people as found in reaffirming biblical authority, creation and the Gospel as the missing links of grace and hope. In this dialogue the church collectively and Christians as individuals will be challenged to recognise the various themes listed above which are biblical yet have been allowed to sleep in the texts rather than live in the lives of those espousing the Christian faith. This will yield
opportunity for transformation. While other responses to the New Age have suggested dialogue which acknowledges some of the challenges of the New Age, there is a need for a more confrontive yet compassionate challenge to New Age, the church and Christian theology with regard to three main areas exposed in this dissertation— the challenge of Creation, the challenge of biblical authority and the challenge of the Gospel of Christ. These are the foundations without which Christian theology and the church would have no apologetic response to the New Age. A soteric dialogue would point out the inconsistencies in both camps and the need for metanoia in both that the two may become one. Rather than being dialectic a soteric dialogue would be metanoiatic. Going forward means exposing these themes in greater detail and with soteric outreach to the New Age as well as the church, open to the criticism of the New Age, but asking the same integrity of those who enter into dialogue. The focus should be soteric dialogue rather than dialectic discourse. Three foundational principles in this dialogue are an established biblical authority, a Creator and creation over unfocused evolution, and the Gospel story. Other principles laid out in this dissertation are built upon these foundations. Former responses to the New Age may become side-tracked in dealing with various issues without addressing the foundation stones of the New Age. The New Age holds forth these supportive issues with which one might agree while at the same time undermining the very principles that are foundational to the Christian message.

1. **Biblical Authority**— The New Age challenges authority, yet at the same time establishes its own authority. In attempting to allow no set doctrine it establishes its own doctrine. For example at the Findhorn Community there was initially the belief that all religious views should be accepted. However, though that is still stated, in practical terms it presented a “crystal incident” which brought great unrest to the community. Carol Riddell openly relates the incident which occurred in 1978. Due to the “open door” policy of allowing all beliefs, there arrived at Findhorn a number of psychics and occult followers. Riddell mentions those of “psychic glamour,” wide spread in the New Age Movement, “who are dissatisfied with the cruder aspects of materialism, but who still retain a desire to purchase personal transformation quickly for a fee.”77 At any rate the occult following

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decided to place a specially cut quartz crystal suspended on gold wires and grounded to the foundations of the new Hall in alignment with other crystal and meteoric iron emblems. The invocation and special ceremony to inaugurate the energy transfer caused upheaval in the community and a “walk out” by the community focaliser, Craig Gibsone. Eighteen months later the wires suspending the central crystal snapped and the “tools” were shattered, much to the relief of many. As a result of this occult “take-over” the Findhorn Community is now cautious of psychics. When Riddell arrived at the Community in 1983, she was advised to lay aside her “psychic healing” for a few years.78 Later when a rose-coloured crystal was placed in one of the Cullerne gardens, guests started “doing rituals around it and it had to be removed once more.”79

The “crystal incident” is referred to as an illustration of the point made that eventually some standard has to be set, some baseline upon which to discern subjective experience. Some authority has to be accepted. Like many theories of the New Age the theory of having no set dogma does not hold true in practice. In practice one can hold any belief as long as he or she follows the rules of Rome when in Rome. This surely is no different than what is being castigated by the New Age as “biblical bigotry.” Dialogue should acknowledge that the premise of having no set doctrine is inconsistent. This same contention would have to be taken on by those professing Christian theology in dialogue with the New Age. The idea of ecumenism and further pushing of liberal theology to pluralism will be as inconsistent as the New Age.

The New Age does not espouse the Bible within the Christian context as a lone authority for salvation, nor is the Christian church accepted as the only family of the saved, nor is Jesus Christ the ιδανύς; yet the New Age like Assyria of old is used by God to judge His people and awaken them to their true purpose and relationship with Him. The churches are in effect judged by the New Age and found wanting in respect to the valid themes of relationship to creation and people, the need for acceptance and grace, understanding and community, the need to be free of materialistic and capitalistic views which lose regard for the innate value and purpose of life.

78 Ibid. p. 88.
79 Ibid.
However, while churches and modern theologies may not have been giving credence to these themes, examples from biblical authority show that they are well represented as mandates of God.

The challenge then to Christian theology and the body-life of the church is toward transformation. As the New Age often draws from history and ancient texts in an attempt to validate its response and offer its plethora of techniques for transforming the world, Christian theology and the body-life of the church has its biblical authority from which to draw wisdom, enlightenment and transformation. As without an anchor a ship is adrift and is without direction, so also the New Age and the church without an ultimate standard beyond themselves cannot establish the validity of the challenges of each to the other, since both would be based on subjective and speculative argument. If experience alone is to be the validator of Christianity or the New Age, then neither has an argument against the other, and by the same line of thinking Hitler’s holocaust was just as valid and so was the murder of James Bulger. None of that makes sense. Therefore even experience though perhaps real must be validated by a standard beyond itself.

2. **Being Reasonable**— The New Age approach is beyond optimism. The intuitive right-brain becomes dominant over the left-brain rational. This is also unprovenly transferred onto right-brain feminine and left-brain male activity. Suddenly everything male is unacceptable and female intuition is adopted. Intuition and logic have no gender, except in the New Age interpretation. However, because male/rational is considered authoritarian, in its extreme the New Age in theory rejects reason altogether. The classic statement is Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh’s claim, “It is not that the intellect sometimes misunderstands. Rather, the intellect always misunderstands. It is not that the intellect sometimes errs; it is that the intellect is the error…”80 Consequently subjective personal experience is authoritative over objective facts. What is amazingly inconsistent is that the New Age accepts without question the non-verifiable and totally subjective channelled messages and other “going within” revelations while at the same time dismissing the validity of the biblical revelation of Jesus. This inconsistency is allowed

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because nothing has to be reasonable to be believed. Whatever one feels is right is right whether or not it fits the facts or stands to reason. This unreasonable notion suggests a deeper meaning behind the New Age’s rejection of the biblical story and Christianity. While theology and the body-life of the church is challenged to feel its faith, at the same time without an anchor for both reason and faith, feeling and fact one could never be certain of any path. If that is what the New Age is saying then there could not be any hope for peace and harmony, only a sea of doubt tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine and every emotion, and without ever knowing whether one was right or wrong, good or evil. Without a standard, nothing can be measured and without measures there are no laws and without laws there is no order and without order there is chaos, yet the New Age says there is order in chaos. So the line of thinking returns to its beginning, that there is an ultimate standard even for the New Age.

3. Sharing The Gospel Story— The mythologies of the New Age challenge the churches to rethink their story and proclaim that story as the foundation of identity instead of being identified by the organised structures which have alienated people. The world is crying out for a story which can yield an authentic life. It is not a time to accept silence and pass time in a post-Christian society, but to rise to the challenge of presenting the Christian story in such a way as relates it to people without sacrificing its message of salvation. The difference is that the Christian story acknowledges the need for unity with nature without union with nature. The biblical mandate makes the distinction between that which God created in his image and the rest of creation.

The Christian story also recognises the need for salvation outwith itself, whereas New Age psycho-spirituality is a follow-on from the Human Potential Movement which as Paul Vitz says is a “humanistic model of human behaviour [which is] fundamentally narcissistic, and that has resulted in its widespread appeal in our culture.... focused on the individual’s glorification of his or her own self.” The failure of humanistic psychology with the high expectations of Maslovian self-actualisation and Jungian individuation against the experiential failures in people’s lives left a

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"credibility gap." The New Age followed with a spiritual twist to the same approach. As Vitz points out the New Age could not turn to the Christian Gospel because of "the restraints on narcissism, especially moral restraints." The New Age has not dealt with the need for grace. The bottom line of the New Age is that self is still on the throne. The epitome of this is Shirley MacLaine who says, "Each soul is its own god. You must never worship anyone or anything other than self. For you are God. To love self is to love God." This is the Genesis complex which is expressed in the biblical creation story as the fall of humanity—the desire to become like God. The Gospel on the other hand actually fulfils this desire in a pure sense by grace in the Christ event with the promise to redeem a people in whom the divine nature will dwell. In this case the transformation is not karmic but soteric—God who is other can loose and lift humanity and creation from its bondage. However, the New Age is not content with this transformation by grace. The New Age hope rests on being God in the most blatant sense or in a milder form realising one's own deity. Psycho-spiritual techniques may well provide a journey toward self-actualisation, but a soteric dialogue would establish the need ultimately for a Saviour outwith the Self.

4. Recognising Evil and Dualism— There is a presence of evil that is opposed to God. The answers to all the questions may not be evident concerning pain and suffering and the presence of evil forces outwith the human consciousness, but the evidence of such power is everywhere present. In the Christian story instead of dressing sin up as innocent ignorance, amnesia or illusion, sin is to be humbly recognized. Metanoia means repentance which leads to transformation. In this forgiveness is to be sought beyond the forgiveness of oneself. Concurrent with this theme of sin and grace is the evidence of implicit hierarchy which the New Age strives to deny. Even in the New Age there are those who have and those who have not reached enlightenment, those who channel and those who pay channellers, those who have been contacted by "other beings" and those who have not. Like wise a disciplined life is required of both New Age and the Christian. However, in New Age teaching there is no certain way; there is nothing of which one can be sure except the premise that there is nothing.

82 Ibid. p. 125
sure. The illusionary world of the New Age is inconsistent in claiming realities. However, the Christian story claims a real world both visible and invisible.

5. Establishing Care—In the Christian story Jesus says humans are more important than the birds yet God wants neither to be without care. The New Age would flinch at the evident differences in plant, animal and human life. There is a chain of being, even for the New Ager, though differently interpreted. Compassionate and loving soteric dialogue holds pre-eminent the attitude of concern for others. The way of biblical Christ-consciousness is the way of Christ-centred love. That is perennial. It is foremost as the way Jesus said people would identify themselves with Him. It may appear a simple solution, but making genuine love the aim is evidenced in getting to know what a person believes and why they believe it. At the same time as love willingly and openly listens to understand, love also compassionately and patiently seeks to be heard in word and deed—bridging the gap with good news.

For the New Age all is one and all is God, therefore humanity is god and the transformation that is necessary will come from within the evolutionary optimism of humanity. In the Christian story God is immanent in the sense that He became incarnate, His word of power upholds the universe and He loves, provides for and cares about the world and people. Yet in another sense God is “totally other” in the sense that God is not a process of evolution, not an impersonal force or energy permeating the universe but is above the natural order. For this reason God can create, sustain, and redeem creation by grace, whereas in the New Age it is to be done through endless evolution or karmic reincarnation. A soteric dialogue will share Christ’s way, not as a religion but as a relationship, not as an institutional church but as a community which brings blessing to all, not as an insider’s club but as a serving family to all its neighbours.

6. Being Transformed—In the Christian story as in the New Age a key word is transformation. The difference is that the biblical transformation is

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an act of grace carried out by God who is in control of the future of the planet and the cosmos. The Gospel in the Christian story is:

that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.85

In this Gospel it is God “that in everything works for good to those who love him, who are called according to his purpose;”86 and in the Christian story it is through the church that the manifold wisdom of God is to be made known to the powers and principalities in the heavenly places.87 In the New Age story, depending on the version, it is Gaia or humanity which will control destiny for the good; and it is New Agers themselves who will make known and lead the world to a utopian society. The Christian story speaks of being with the Lord in a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells after this world is finished, whereas for the New Age heaven is to be the evolved earth. The key to transformation of the churches is transformation of those who profess Christianity. As the New Age ecology urges a “back to basics” approach, so theology is encouraged to simplify, start over with a fresh look and as much as possible clear the heart and mind of the burden of twenty centuries of theology and philosophy without the pretence that evolution is a forward process of improvement. This dissertation and its thesis shows that for all its theologies and philosophies, things are not getting better. Looking forward optimistically relates to the story of old wine in new wine skins. When a thing is patched and patched, it eventually comes apart at the seams. Better to let it go and start with a new cloth. This may infer a dismissal of the Christian story, but in fact it refers to the remake, not the original. The original story is simple, and full of renewal and transformative power. That story is not matched by the New Age. What New Age successfully rejects is the old cloth of religion, not Christ and not His story.

A soteric dialogue with the New Age as demonstrated in this dissertation is the way forward. This dialogue will allow exposition and criticism without

85 I Corinthians 15:3-5.
86 Romans 8:28.
87 Ephesians 3:10
feeling threatened. It will clear away the cobwebs of theology and apathetic non-spiritual nominal Christianity. It will teach Biblicists that knowing the text is not the same as knowing God. At the same time it will challenge spirituality not to be an end in itself. Spirituality still needs a Saviour. That is the focus of soteric dialogue. The journey still needs a safe harbour. The New Age is the blast needed to shake the barnacles and corrosion lose. The New Age is not going to go away, nor should the Christian message be sacrificed upon the altar of organised religion or allowed to sink into silent witness. Christian theology and the body-life of the church should rise willingly to the challenges of the New Age, to know what both believe and why it is believed. It is a great adventure and opportunity for sharing in an age where people are groping for hope and are once again accepting the presence of other-worldly supernatural and spiritual activity in their lives. It is a challenge to take the message out of the pages of scripture and live them in the streets. It is a time for both sides to recognise one another and dismiss egotism. It is a time to establish authority, creation and the Gospel. These three principles are foundational. The other themes and principles are supportive. The New Age is a time to be tested and to give a reason for the hope that is in Christ, yet with compassion and patience. People are searching and are listening for a voice in the wilderness. It is time to be like Jesus, to reach out to those who are reaching in and encourage them in their quest by allowing the light to shine. When light shines darkness retreats.


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