



STATEMENT DN-077

## WITNESSING TIPS

### **Evangelizing New Agers**

**by Doug Groothuis**

Christians are called to proclaim the true gospel of Jesus Christ to New Agers by developing appropriate evangelistic strategies. This article will make some suggestions along these lines. But first it will be helpful to summarize the New Age world view. (Biblical references which are helpful in refuting these ideas also follow).

- A. All is one (monism). Reality is a seamless garment. (Gen. 1:1ff.)
- B. All is God (pantheism). God is an all-pervading impersonal Energy, Force or Consciousness. (Rom.1:18-32)
- C. Self-deification/self-salvation. We look within for power, knowledge and healing. (Ezek. 28:1-9; Eph. 2:8-10)
- D. Paranormal potential. We can experience ESP, telepathy, spirit-contact (spiritism), etc. (Deut. 18:9-14)
- E. Ethical relativism. Moral absolutes can be transcended. (Matt.5:17-20; Rom. 13:8-10)
- F. Cosmic evolutionism. The human race is progressing toward a "New Age" of planetary peace and prosperity. (1 Thess. 5:3; Matt. 24:3-31).
- G. Religious syncretism. All religions are really one, and teach the above (A-F). Jesus was just one of many mystical masters. Reincarnation is stressed. (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Heb. 9:27)

With this outline in mind, let's briefly explore evangelistic strategies.

1. Be prepared for spiritual battle. Realize that an evangelistic or apologetic encounter involves a clash between God and Satan. Both spiritual and intellectual weapons should be readied. But also remember that the enemy is Satan, not the New Ager (Eph. 6:12).
2. Don't stereotype people. Every New Ager is different. The person should be honored and not just classified as "a New Ager." Find out what he or she thinks.
3. Clearly define your terms. The New Ager believes that at the core of all religions is pantheism. Therefore, you need to counter the New Age tendency to "pantheize" Christianity. For example, when New Agers speak of "Christ consciousness" they refer to a mystical state of "enlightenment," that we can attain, as Jesus supposedly did. It is asserted that Jesus was an ordinary person who became "the Christ." Luke 2:11 refutes this by saying that Jesus even as an infant was at that time "the Christ."
4. Point out common ground with New Agers. This can open a door for evangelism (see Acts 17). We are free to recognize and honor truth wherever it appears (always taking God's Word as our authority). The New Ager, for instance, has rightly rejected atheistic secular humanism.
5. Show weaknesses in the New Age world view itself. If the New Ager sees problems with his or her viewpoint, he or she may

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become more interested in Christianity. Several areas could be spotlighted:

A. The New Age view of the divinity of humanity must neglect the reality of human evil. The biblical view of our finitude and our fallenness as sinners better explains the human condition than the New Age idea that we are all really God.

B. The concept of an impersonal God is unsatisfying because it allows no ultimate personal relationship. Tuning in to "the Force" pales in comparison with loving and being loved by our Heavenly Father. Jesus Christ should be exalted as the supreme revelation of God's love.

C. Furthermore, the idea that the Ultimate Principle of the universe is impersonal is logically troublesome. It makes better sense to say that a *personal* God created *personal* beings in His image (Gen. 1:26).

D. The New Age offers no spiritual discernment. It opens a Pandora's box of paranormal poisons with no reliable antidote in sight, and ignores the fact that Satan himself masquerades as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 10:14-15). The many writings of Kurt Koch make plain the spiritual dangers of occultism.

What's more, the "altered states of consciousness" desired and/or experienced by New Agers are often considered to be "beyond reason." The danger of this irrationalism should be highlighted (compare Rom 12:2).

E. The New Age's ethical relativism ("we create our own reality/morality") is illogical. A consistent ethical relativist is hard to find because our natural and logical tendency is to make absolute moral statements. The New Ager contradicts himself when he states absolutely that "there are no absolutes"! The New Ager who says that morality is relative because we all "create our own reality" will most likely not be content with such relativism if someone steals her car under the pretension that stealing "was part of his own reality." Christianity provides the moral absolutes the New Age lacks.

F. New Agers frequently warp history because of their desire to justify their beliefs on the basis of authorities of the past. This is especially the case when they try to argue that New Age pantheistic religion is compatible with faith in Christ by claiming to have discovered an "esoteric Christianity" — supposed inner teachings of Jesus later rejected and suppressed by the church. New Agers should be encouraged to face facts and be honest in their examination of history. Christians should be prepared to demonstrate the truth of Christianity through the use of historical apologetics.

G. The New Age doctrine of reincarnation is not only unbiblical (Heb. 9:27) but logically untenable and ethically unsatisfying:

1. So-called evidence of reincarnation derived from hypnosis ("past-life regression") can be better explained as psychological aberrations or even demonic involvement.

2. It is difficult to view the law of karma as just, or reincarnation as a "learning experience" (as New Agers view it), if rewards and punishments are given without the conscious knowledge of those being rewarded or punished. If a fifteen-year-old girl dies an agonizing death from leukemia because she was Josef Stalin in a previous life, but never comes to know that fact, how can that be considered just? What can her leukemia teach her about her past life behavior, if she can't remember her past life?

3. If all is *one*, and individuality is ultimately illusory (monism), how can *individual* souls be reincarnated from one body to another? The "oneness" teaching contradicts the concept of the individual; yet individual souls are required for a coherent doctrine of karma and personal responsibility. Some *one* has to reincarnate.

4. The biblical teaching of the historicity of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection is well established factually, unlike speculations concerning supposed past lives. We have better evidence for Christ's *resurrection* than for *reincarnation*.

The New Age movement challenges us to reach out to those intoxicated by spiritual deception. We must seek the Holy Spirit concerning how He would have us witness of His saving truth to those in darkness.

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