



STATEMENT DN-118

PUBLIC EDUCATION OR PAGAN INDOCTRINATION? A Report on New Age Influence in the Schools

by Craig Branch

Summary

Public schools and children in America have become strategic targets for conversion to the ideology of the New Age movement. It can be conclusively demonstrated that occult, New Age philosophy and practices have been integrated into public educational curricula and programs.

This intrusion is especially evident in certain health, guidance counseling, gifted, sex, and drug education programs. The use of New Age psychotherapeutic programs is usurping parental authority.

The imposition of these harmful techniques and programs violates federal laws and constitutional protections. As well, it can be shown that these techniques actually increase problem behavior.

Even though there will be much resistance, parents can prevail at stopping this trend if they are motivated and prepared.

"See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the traditions of the world, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ" (Col. 2:8, NASB).

While driving her children to school one morning, Nancy noticed that her daughter Kim was unusually quiet as her brother was picking on her. Nancy was alarmed that Kim's eyes were closed and that she didn't respond to her name being called. Upon stopping the car and shaking her daughter to alertness from a trance state, Kim replied, "Don't worry Mommy, I was relaxing, painting my mind picture and was with my friend Pumsy." Nancy asked where she learned this, and the second grader answered, "From school."

One state textbook review committee eliminated nine textbooks from use — including health texts from two major publishers — because they blatantly promoted Eastern religious practices. One popular textbook devoted twenty pages to teaching yoga, self-hypnosis, meditation, and the altered states of consciousness induction techniques of deep breathing and progressive relaxation.¹

In a popular, federally funded and developed health program for grades 7-12 concerning smoking, drinking, and drugs, teachers are told not to teach negatively about the dangers of drinking, but to *present all these as legitimate options*, defending everyone's right to choose, developing an enhanced sense that they can make a responsible choice about drinking that is *right for them*. This same program teaches that positive ways to express anger include sex, screaming, locking oneself in a room, meditating, slamming doors, and throwing things (unbreakables).

As is her weekly custom, a guidance counselor enters a second grade classroom, turns off the lights, has everyone lie down and close their eyes, and goes through slow, deep breathing exercises while slow, rhythmic music plays. After

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the children are deeply relaxed, the counselor leads them through a guided visualization, taking them to a secret place where they are to meet a wise white rabbit who can telepathically answer any question they ask.

"What did you learn in school today?" used to be a fairly benign question to ask one's children, but this is no longer the case. Thousands of parents around the country are awakening to the startling reality that there is something terribly wrong infecting public education.

What these parents are beginning to understand is that the New Age movement has made significant inroads into the educational establishment and has infused many curricula and programs with its practices and ideology. The most prominent areas of contamination are health courses, gifted curricula, guidance counseling, some literature and creative writing courses, and most sex and drug education programs.

Are public schools actually teaching the ideology and practices of the New Age movement? Are our children being taught that they can autonomously decide what is right or wrong, including whether to use alcohol and drugs, or engage in sex? Are such occurrences anecdotal and sporadic, or are they systemic? Who actually does have the right and authority over the education of our children — the state or the parents? What can we do about it?

These are some of the questions this article broaches. Parents, grandparents, and ultimately, all Christians have the duty to responsibly act on this issue. Apathy, ignorance, notions of helplessness, or lack of spiritual maturity are all that stand in the way of winning this important and strategic battle for our children and the future of America.

ADRIFT WITHOUT A MORAL COMPASS

Education is a very hot topic. It is at the forefront of most political campaign issues. It produces lead stories in local newspapers and television broadcasts. It has been the cover story of many major magazines. It is foundational to our culture's future. It is also controversial.

American schools are in danger of shipwreck. With its progressive expunging of God and Judeo-Christian foundations, education is mirroring our culture — adrift without a moral compass.

Much has been written about the slide of our country into humanism and paganism and the resultant culture wars — often viewed by the media as a conservative and Christian backlash. Predictably, all of the social ill indicators have sharply escalated in our post-Christian or postmodern culture. Much of the blame for this slide can be laid at the steps of a dormant, isolationist church.

William Bennett points out that between 1960 and 1990, violent crime increased 560 percent, illegitimate births increased by 400 percent, divorce rates quadrupled, the number of children living in single parent homes tripled, teenage suicide increased by 200 percent, and there's been a drop of 80 points in the average S.A.T. scores.

Between 1972 and 1990, teenage pregnancy climbed from 49.4 to 99.2 per thousand girls. Child abuse escalated from 101 to 420 per thousand in reported cases from 1976 to 1991. Alcohol and drug use is unacceptably high, with alcohol usage averaging around 90 percent for high school students since 1975.²

A 1993 U.S. Department of Education survey indicated that two-thirds of our high school students cannot read at their own grade level. Furthermore, 9.3 million Americans are functionally illiterate.³

Most educators are in their profession because they care about children and want to make a difference. However, because schools are inheriting the behavioral problems and other residue from broken homes, dysfunctional families, abuse, and so forth, they are assuming — and in most cases, are being *given* — the responsibility to fix the children. I have had many teachers look me sternly in the eye and claim, "We *are* the childrens' surrogate parents!"

Tragically for everyone, though, some of the strategies and "remedies" that are being employed to respond to this crisis actually are counterproductive and even very destructive for the child, family, and society. The self-indulgent philosophies and ideologies of many of these new programs are alien and hostile to Christ and His truth, and they are perpetuated by individuals and institutions that have their own social and political agendas. These strategies and ideologies have only one formidable opponent — Christ and His church.

There are many issues of concern in education, some of which have generated books. These issues include Outcome Based Education, globalism, multiculturalism, historical revisionism, Goals 2000, and others that are often

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interrelated. Because these issues appear to be of such mammoth proportions, many parents are too intimidated to tackle them. For those activists who have a larger vision, let me recommend two books: *Outcome Based Education* by Ron Sunseri (Multnomah Books), and *Brave New Schools* by Berit Kjos (Harvest House). In addition, let me recommend two groups that have much information as well as success in dealing with Outcome Based Education and Goals 2000: Concerned Women for America, 370 L'Enfant Promenade S.W., Suite 800, Washington D.C. 20024; and Eagle Forum, P.O. Box 618, Alton, IL 62002-0618.

The scope of this article, however, will focus on one major trend — *transpersonal education*. This is a winnable battle if — and this is a big *if* — parents and responsible educators will take the time, become thoroughly informed, and then persevere in the sometimes long process of eradicating this resistant, deadly virus from our educational system.

Some Christian writers have given up on the public educational system and counsel parents to either home school their children or move them to private Christian schools. These are very viable and necessary options for many families. There are numerous schools that are so dangerous and degenerate that children need to be protected.

Nonetheless, the fact is that 88 percent of children still attend public schools, with an almost equal percentage of children from Christian homes. Many evangelicals believe they have a responsibility both to love their neighbor and to be faithful to the cultural mandate to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-14), affecting and preserving our culture with God's truth. Whether we have children in public school or not, we as Christians have the duty and responsibility to engage the enemy in this very important, strategic battlefield.

IN THE BEGINNING

To best understand both the issue of transpersonal education and its permeation of our schools, allow me to describe the genesis and exodus of my own involvement. In 1988, during the normal course of my responsibilities as Regional Director of Watchman Fellowship in Birmingham, Alabama, I was reading, researching, analyzing, and responding to the issues of New Age alternative thought and its increasing penetration of our nation's (and others') cultural, religious, social, economic, and political life. I read an occasional Christian journal article or book chapter revealing incidents of New Age encroachment in schools, mainly focusing on California schools.

Then the May 1, 1988 issue of *The New York Times Magazine* got my attention. In its cover story, "Colorado's Thriving Cults," there was a detailed portion describing how the New Age had begun to affect public education. I was astonished to read the caption under a large picture of what looked like children taking a nap: "Third graders listen quietly while a teacher leads a 'visualization.' Vocal parents groups have protested the encroachment of New Age practices in school curricula."

Even more surprising was the statement, "Meditational techniques have become *common fare* in the state's public and private schools" (emphasis added). Common fare? We cannot pray in schools, but Eastern meditation is allowed?

One sentence in the article encapsulated the problem then, and now, in schools all over the U.S.: "Many Colorado schools, public and private, utilize practices adapted from Eastern meditation under the rubrics [disguise] of 'centering, stress reduction, or guided visualization,' usually with the aim of enhancing students' self-esteem and creativity, or presenting an alternative to alcohol and drugs."⁴

In the fall of that year, I became painfully aware that this philosophy had taken a firm root in the broad educational establishment. I received a course listing of a Birmingham Community School program that offered classes on "spirit journeying, spiritual guidance through meditation, psychic development, metaphysics, Seneca tradition [Shamanism], trance-channeling, communicating with spirits, healing with crystals, Tai Chi — meditation in motion and Taoist philosophy, and Kundalini Yoga."

In addition to this blatant promotion of occultism in a state-run institution, two parents in different school districts in Alabama approached me, concerned over programs to which elementary school children were being exposed. Both programs were part of their schools' guidance counseling curricula. One was called *Pumsy: In Pursuit of Excellence*, which is used in *over 40 percent of our nation's schools*. The other was called *Peace, Harmony and Awareness*.

These programs involved progressive relaxation techniques that are also standard induction methods of hypnosis and meditation. They also brought the children into contact with an "imaginary friend" through the use of guided imagery (fantasy, visualization) to help them solve problems caused by stress or confusion.

A process of research, education, mobilization of parents, and addressing these concerns eventually brought these wrong-headed and illegal activities to an end. Much was learned in this process, both about the educational community's attitude and relationships with its parental constituency, and what is needed to resolve the issues. I also discovered what precipitated the establishment of these ideas and strategies in varying degrees throughout the educational system.

WHAT IS THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT?

Before I discuss the New Age influence in education, it might be useful to give a summary of New Age philosophy. The New Age movement is a synthesis of many religious traditions and practices, especially Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Western esoteric and metaphysical cults, and classic occult practices and philosophy (including spiritism and witchcraft).

It denies a personal, transcendent, sovereign God who rules over and defines the limits of His separate creation. Instead, the many expressions or groups within the New Age movement commonly hold the belief that there is only one reality (*monism*) and this one essence is composed of consciousness or energy, often called God. The idea that all is God and God is all is termed *pantheism*.

J. Gordon Melton notes that "the central vision of the New Age is one of radical, mystical transformation on an individual level. It involves an awakening to such new realities as a discovery of psychic abilities, the experience of physical or psychological healing, the emergence of new potentials within oneself...[and] the imposition of that personal vision onto society and the world."⁵ The technique most often utilized to achieve this mystical awakening is the inducement of altered states of consciousness, usually by means of meditation or self-hypnosis.

The New Age movement is often referred to as *cosmic humanism*, as it is a descending step from humanism. Secular humanism, or practical atheism, maintains that man is ultimately the determiner or measure of all things. Cosmic humanism agrees with this premise, but spiritualizes it, adding that this is because man is god.

It is therefore not difficult to understand the receptivity and shift from our secular humanistic culture to cosmic humanism. Secular humanism and cosmic humanism are compatible, and both are hostile to a Christian world and life view, as demonstrated by John Dunphy in *The Humanist* magazine: "I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classrooms by teachers who correctly perceive their role as proselytizers of a new faith...[one that recognizes] Divinity in every human being....The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new — the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith."⁶

TRANSPERSONAL EDUCATION

Jack Canfield is a prominent education leader. He was chairman of the California Task Force on Self-Esteem and is a frequent headliner in education seminars and workshops, especially in those with a focus on the multimillion dollar industry of self-esteem.

In February 1978 Canfield wrote in *New Age* magazine, "In a growing number of classrooms throughout the world, education is beginning to move into a new dimension. More and more teachers are exposing children to ways of contacting their inner wisdom and their higher selves...New Age education has arrived....An influx of spiritual teachings from the East, combined with a new psychological perspective in the West has resulted in a fresh look at the learning process."⁷

In a lead article of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, Frances Clark wrote,

Increasing interest in transpersonal psychology has led to innovative programs in higher education which are called transpersonal. Transpersonal education is concerned primarily with the study and development of consciousness, particularly with those states commonly called higher states of

consciousness and with the spiritual quest as an essential aspect of human life....It focuses on the process of discovery and transcendence of self which results from spiritual practice, affirming subjective experience as valid and even essential for determining the nature of reality and the relative validity of revealed truth.⁸

In other words, subjective experience, especially acquired through altered states of consciousness, is a higher source of truth than objective revelation, such as the Bible.

Dr. Barbara Clark is a professor of education at California State University who wrote the popular and widely used textbook for teachers, *Growing Up Gifted*. It is a New Age catechism. In it, she promotes "integrative education" or "transpersonal learning" where "guided fantasies and dreams, recognition and use of altered states of consciousness and centering activities will develop more of our intuitive [psychic] abilities....Reality is seen as an outward projection of internal thoughts, feelings and expectations. Energy is the connector....Creation which is everybody else's SELF....You create your own reality."⁹

PSYCHOTHERAPY IN THE CLASSROOM

What did Jack Canfield mean by a "new psychological perspective in the West" to which the New Age philosophy so easily adhered? How did this psychological perspective facilitate the inclusion of New Age practices into public education, and why is it problematic?

As was earlier noted, schools have been experiencing the problems of children who have been raised in a post-Christian culture. So where did educators look for help in the face of increasing behavior problems and lack of performance? They went to the fields of educational, therapeutic, and developmental psychology. Prominent in these fields were Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow.

Psychological theory in education emerged from the search to understand the learning process in order to develop better teaching methods. The convolution of psychology and education escalated in the early 1970s.

This new approach combined Rogers's humanistic, client-centered, adult psychotherapy model with Maslow's focus on the "self-actualization" drive. These models stressed "self-determination" and "freedom to choose," believing that adult clients must be allowed to arrive at and solve their own problems with little or no outside direction (nonjudgmental). This therapy model was adapted to become a student-centered education model in which students explore feelings (affective) in order to gain a level of comfort with themselves (self-esteem) and the world around them.

A high level of self-esteem has become the panacea to cure almost any problem. Many in the educational establishment embraced the self-esteem theory as the most effective remedy for poor student behavior and performance. They engineered most states to mandate self-esteem curricula in the schools.

Many of the self-esteem products being generated are by those 1960s New Age "flower children" whose motto was, "Do your own thing." They have come of age and settled into mainstream positions in education, both in administration and in curriculum development. The transpersonal model of affective, nondirective decision-making is the basis of most of the drug and sex education courses, as well as many of the gifted courses and guidance counseling programs. They are based on the idea that if one can help the child to feel good about himself/herself (self-esteem), then he/she can be empowered to make the right choices about sex and drugs according to what the child *feels* most comfortable with — what's best for *him/her*.

In her popular 1980 book, *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, respected New Age leader Marilyn Ferguson surveyed and presented an anthology of goals, accomplishments, and strategies of New Age thinkers and activists across the social and technical spectrum. She asked the respondents "to name individuals whose ideas influenced them."

Psychologists Carl Jung, Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow ranked two, three, and four among writers from every kind of background and discipline.¹⁰

Rogers's and Maslow's New Age connection can be seen in their own writings. Rogers wrote: "The basis of values will need to be recognized as discoverable within....The rich resources of the inner world need to be explored and utilized...in our expansion into alternate states of consciousness, to our growing use of psychic forces and psychic energy."¹¹

Maslow wrote: "I consider Humanistic, Third Force Psychology to be transitional, a preparation for a still 'higher' Fourth Force Psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centered in the cosmos rather than in human needs and interest, going beyond humanness, identity, self-actualization and the like."¹²

In response to all this, concerned parents are pointing out that school personnel are subjecting their children to objectionable New Age religious material as well as unauthorized group psychotherapy in the classroom. Many educators are very resistant to this concern, however. Rather than deal honestly with the facts, they typically caricature the parents as being censors and part of the "Radical Right."

WHERE'S THE EVIDENCE?

Marilyn Ferguson spells out her findings in *The Aquarian Conspiracy*:

You can only have a new society, the visionaries have said, if you change the education of the younger generation....Of the Aquarian Conspirators surveyed, more were involved in education than any other single category of work. They were the teachers, administrators, policy makers, educational psychologists...Only a new perspective can generate a new curriculum....The radical center of educational philosophy — the perspective typical of the Aquarian Conspiracy — is a constellation of techniques and concepts sometimes called transpersonal education. The name derives from a branch of psychology that focuses on the transcendent capabilities of human beings....the deliberate use of consciousness expanding techniques in education, only recently well under way, is new in mass schooling.... Altered states of consciousness are taken seriously: "centering" exercises, meditation, relaxation, and fantasy are used to keep the intuitive pathways open. These are techniques to encourage this awareness: deep breathing, relaxation, yoga movement, biofeedback....¹³

The clear facts prove what she says is true. I recommend that you consult my book, *Thieves of Innocence* (Harvest House), coauthored by John Weldon and John Ankerberg, for massive amounts of documentation on all this. The evidence is there. Many of the educators' own journals, in fact, have acknowledged and promoted the use of the transpersonal education model in the public schools, including meditation and guided imagery.

For instance, Dr. Stewart Shapiro, New Age professor of education at the University of California, argues for the need for scientific proof to justify the widespread use of these beliefs and techniques in schools. He writes in the *Educational and Psychological Measurement* journal:

A transpersonal orientation to learning was detected in the writings of 89 well-known representatives of humanistic education....According to the Transpersonal Orientation, schools and other settings for learning are environments for the development of spiritual potential. Intuitive and receptive modes of consciousness are considered equal in importance to cognitive, rational, logical, and active modes...Since various practices in the public schools ranging from the so-called religions of secular humanism on the one hand and to meditation, the use of fantasy and imagery, and references to magic, the occult, or witchcraft, on the other have become so controversial of late that an objective, reliable, and valid measure of the degree of endorsement of such topics was considered both practically and theoretically timely.¹⁴

Numerous college textbooks and courses are teaching prospective teachers this theory and its techniques. Leading New Age educators such as Gay Hendricks, Deborah Rozman, Thomas Roberts, and Barbara Clark have been featured as conference and workshop leaders for leading educational establishment meetings, and in leading education journals. Dr. Jean Houston has been the keynote speaker at the American Association of Counseling and Development and, more recently, the keynote speaker at the prestigious Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

It was to the latter convocation that Houston declared that the 6,000 school principals, administrators, and curriculum developers attending were the change agents for the future, to usher in a paradigm shift, a "whole system transition — the birth of planetary society." She announced she had gotten her inspiration while meditating in India and contacting the Hindu wisdom goddess, Sarasvati.¹⁵

I continue to be contacted by parents all over the country describing course after course, situation after situation. I have traveled to communities in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, conducting community-wide informational meetings for parents, educators, and school board members. Some districts have responded appropriately, but there has also been much resistance from segments of the educational establishment.

Of course there are many programs themselves that can be used as direct evidence (*see* "Problem Programs"). There is a long, bloody trail and a smoking gun.

Unfortunately, most educators actually do not perceive that these techniques or approaches are based in the New Age and the occult. Part of this is due to the fact that most people in the West do not have a sophisticated understanding of the New Age or Eastern mystery religions.

The other reason is that the developers and promoters of these programs are purposely attempting to mask or disguise what they are doing. Consider a typical statement made by one of the leaders in her teacher training book. To the rhetorical question, "Can we really use altered states of consciousness in the classroom? What will the parents say?" Barbara Clark responds, "The phrase altered states of consciousness may sound too strange...use other terminology that better communicates what you intend to do."¹⁶

This strategy is articulated by New Age leader Dick Sutphen as he writes, "One of the biggest advantages we have as New Agers is, once the occult, metaphysical and New Age terminology is removed, we have concepts and techniques that are very acceptable to the general public. So we can change the names and demonstrate the power. In so doing, we open the New Age door to millions who would not be receptive."¹⁷

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

The proliferation of these wrong-headed approaches points out general weaknesses in the body of Christ — *ignorance* and *apathy*. When I initially challenged the blatantly occultic nature of the Birmingham Community School courses mentioned earlier, the response was that this was only the second complaint they had received in two years. What can and should Christian parents do?

1. Parents must not only be well-informed, but closely involved with their children and teachers and what they are doing.
2. Along with being informed, parents should approach the teachers or principals or possibly board members, not with an adversarial attitude, but as concerned and involved parents who want to help protect the school and help make it the best place of learning it can be.
3. Parents should do their homework. They should be intimately acquainted with the course or program material(s) being used in their childrens' school and be able to objectively demonstrate all problems.
4. It is important for parents to be able to show that New Age programs are religiously based. If the school personnel have a difficult time acknowledging that, then parents can add that the program constitutes psychotherapy in the classroom and that teachers are not qualified or licensed mental health professionals, nor do they have informed consent from parents to do this. Thus, it is a violation of the Protection of Pupil Rights Act (Hatch Amendment) and the recent Parental Rights Restoration Amendment (Grassley Amendment). These amendments prohibit schools from any examination, testing, treatment, survey, analysis, or evaluation — psychological or otherwise — which deals with sex, attitudes, values, or family matters without the informed, written consent of the parents.
5. The self-esteem oriented programs, or drug, alcohol, and sex education curricula using the affective, nondirective, decision-making model have no empirical justification. Parents should ask school personnel for any scientific research that these approaches actually work. *There is none*. What parents *do* have, however, is substantial research from many peer review, referred, educational journals which demonstrate that these programs not only do *not* succeed, but that *they are actually producing an increase in problem behavior*. They are, therefore, a controversial waste

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of valuable classroom time and money, and are encumbered with all kinds of other legal liabilities and potential harm to the children.

6. If there is resistance or stonewalling from school administrators, parents should begin to hold informational meetings, organize, and select the most articulate and influential individuals among them to take the lead.

7. As a group (the larger the better) parents should take the issue and their well-documented objections to the local (or state) school board. School boards have the authority and responsibility to review and set policy on the selection of education materials.

8. Rather than singling out a particular program or curriculum, parents should go for establishing a regulation or policy that is worded to eliminate *all* group psychotherapy in regular classrooms, meditation and hypnosis, and the nondirective decision-making model in sex and drug education programs.

9. Finally, parents need to be prepared to respond to organized counterattacks from liberal groups.

LIBERAL COUNTERATTACKS

Because of some successful attempts of parents to remove these techniques and approaches, a liberal counteroffensive has been organized. Prominent in this counterattack are the National Education Association (NEA), People for the American Way, the American Civil Liberties Union, American Library Association, and various educational fraternities. Such groups typically caricature and slander parents using *ad hominem* arguments, rather than dealing factually with the issues.

The NEA has published manuals and organized workshops on dealing with the "Radical Right" extremists. Materials are circulated that attempt to recast the issue into a censorship debate.

Ironically, the attack is pressed from a group that claims that these programs have no connection to them — the New Age movement. A recent issue of *New Age Journal* featured a major article that began with the words, "Citing everything from environmental curricula to self-esteem programs, the religious right has launched a holy war against the supposed influence of 'new age' ideas in the classroom. In school districts all across the country, the battle lines are being drawn."¹⁸

And indeed, battles have already broken out. There have been skirmishes in local districts that have escalated into legal and legislative actions on state and national levels. The *New Age Journal* article continued, "So-called new age influence has been perceived and attacked in a host of cutting-edge educational programs....The conflict that's being played out in dozens of communities around the country is far more than a battle over mere educational ideology: it's a full-fledged 'culture war' for the hearts and minds of America's next generation."¹⁹

These comments from one of the leading New Age representative journals should be a chilling wake-up call for not only Christians, but every parent in the country. If that were not quite enough, the article quotes a spokesperson from a chief anti-conservative Christian organization, People for the American Way: "What's really at stake are the core values of our society."²⁰

BE ENCOURAGED

When parents become informed, organized, have their documentation, and persevere, victories have been, and continue to be, won. Local school districts are eliminating these objectionable programs and some protective policies are being established.

In Alabama, we organized a task force composed of a number of local parents' groups, conservative groups, and Christian organizations, and lobbied the State School Board to hold hearings prior to the adoption of a state regulation. Two days of hearings were held and we presented parents, psychologists, teachers, school counselors, PTA officers, local school board representatives, doctors, and lawyers as witnesses. The other side was there in full

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force presenting their case. We met with each state school board member and presented them with over 800 pages of documentation, anticipating and answering all objections.

We won! Now there is a good precedent established for other local and state districts to follow.

In another example, parents in Michigan petitioned their state senate, which held twelve hearings around the state with hundreds testifying on both sides. The Senate Select Committee issued a scathing indictment against the educators, including findings such as, "The Boundaries Between Church and State were Violated with New Age Teachings," the programs "Never Received Appropriate Evaluation to Determine [Their] Efficacy in the Classroom," "The Michigan Department of Education and Public Health Organized a Campaign to Discredit Concerned Parents," and many other findings critical of the educational establishment for its hostility, arrogance, and attitude of elitism concerning parents.²¹

Yes, there is a culture war — a spiritual war, and Christians must realize that we are in it. As evangelist E. V. Hill once said, "All leaves are canceled." The fight is just and right. Our children and culture are in the balance. In this regard, the words of Scripture are both instructive and consoling:

"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

"And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary" (Gal. 6:9).

Craig Branch is vice-president and regional director of Watchman Fellowship in Birmingham, Alabama, and coauthor of *Thieves of Innocence* (Harvest House), an effective response to the New Age in education. (Although out of print, copies of the book may still be purchased from Watchman Fellowship, P.O. Box 530842, Birmingham, AL 35253.)

NOTES

¹*Health: Choosing Wellness Teacher's Edition.*

²William J. Bennett, *The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Empower America, The Heritage Foundation, 1993), March 1993, 1.

³David Jeremiah, *Invasion of Other Gods* (Dallas: Word, 1995), 85.

⁴Fergus M. Bordewich, "Colorado's Thriving Cults," *The New York Times Magazine*, 1 May 1988, 36, 42.

⁵J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults in America* (New York: Garland, 1986), 113.

⁶John Dunphy, "A Religion for a New Age," *The Humanist*, Jan./Feb. 1983, 26.

⁷Jack Canfield and Paula Klimek, "Education for a New Age," *New Age*, Feb. 1978, 27.

⁸Frances Clark, "Rediscovering Transpersonal Education," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, vol. 1, 1974, 1.

⁹Barbara Clark, *Growing Up Gifted* (Columbus, OH: Merrill Publishing Co., 1990), 582-83.

¹⁰Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s* (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, 1980), 420.

¹¹Quoted in John Carlson, "Health, Wellness, and Transpersonal Approaches to Helping," *Elementary School and Guidance Counseling*, vol. 14, no. 2, Dec. 1979, 91.

¹²Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 2d ed. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968), iii-iv.

¹³Ferguson, 281, 287.

¹⁴Stewart Shapiro, "The Development of an Objective Scale to Measure a Transpersonal Orientation to Learning," *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, vol. 49, 1989, 47, 375

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹"FINAL REPORT: The Senate Select Committee to Study the Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education, Senator Gilbert J. DiNello, Chairman," Dec. 1992.

SIDEBARS:

FORTIFYING YOUR CHILDREN AGAINST THE NEW AGE

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If your children attend public school, their faith *will* be challenged. Will they cling to truth when teased for their beliefs or pressured to conform? If you are not sure, consider these suggestions for training your "child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6).

Pray! Pray that your children will have *discernment* to recognize deception, *strength* to stand firm in truth, and *faith* to persevere in Christ through every kind of opposition.

Let your family conversations communicate your trust in God. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 reminds us to talk about God and His ways when we sit, walk, lie down, and get up. When your daily conversations demonstrate your confidence in God's faithfulness, your children begin to see reality through the filter of truth. When you show your gratefulness for His constant care and answered prayer, they learn that God is more real than any counterfeit. Start early. If the Christian world view is being formed in their minds, they will see New Age practices from God's perspective. But if games and cartoons with occult themes mold their world view, they may reject truth. It wouldn't fit their perception of the supernatural.

Help your children put on "the full armor of God." Read Ephesians 6:10-18 together. Memorize Scriptures that show the truth about God and His righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation. These verses are Scripture *swords* that counter the main lies of the enemy. For when children know the truth about God, they won't trust popular counterfeits. Knowing the source of their righteousness, they won't believe in sanctification without the cross. Knowing God's way to peace and salvation, they won't choose occult paths.

To put on the armor, simply thank God for what His Word has taught you about each piece. Make sure your children know the Scriptures behind the prayer so that their faith is grounded in the authority of the Bible. Then pray something like this:

- **The belt of truth:** Thank you, God, for showing me the *truth* about you — that you are my Father, my Shepherd, my Lord, and my strength.
- **The breastplate of righteousness:** Thank you for telling me that I can't be good on my own. Please show me any sin I should confess. Thank you for forgiving me and filling me with your *righteous* life.
- **The sandals of peace:** Thank you for the *peace* you give me when I trust and follow you. Show me how to help others find that peace.
- **The shield of faith:** Thank you for teaching me to *trust* you. I will count on everything you have told me through your Word.
- **The helmet of salvation:** Thank you for promising me *salvation* both for today and forever.
- **The sword of the spirit:** Thank you for your Scripture swords. Please show me which one(s) to use in any battle I may face today.

Teach your children to examine today's culture in light of God's Word. As a family, read Isaiah 5:20 and compare it with today's values. Read Deuteronomy 18:9-13 and guard against the occult practices listed. Discuss the problems mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:1-13 and 4:2-5. Follow the guidelines in Ephesians 5:1-21. Thank God for the timeless relevance of the *whole* Bible.

Discuss the seductive vision of global oneness. Today's Outcome Based Education (OBE) means that most local schools *must* train students to meet national standards (or outcomes) mandated by law for *all* states receiving federal education funds. Children will be tested for global citizenship and work skills that involve respect for *all* lifestyles and openness toward New Age beliefs that supposedly promote unity.

- How does this vision line up with God's Word? (See John 17:14-16 and 2 Cor. 6:14-18.)
- What happened in Old Testament days when God's people imitated their pagan neighbors? (See Deut. 8:7-20 and Ps. 106.)

- What will happen to us if we conform to the beliefs of the world around us? (See Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 10:6-12; 2 Kings 17:7-22.)

- How can we live among pagans and still follow God without compromise? (See Gal. 2:20; Rom. 12:1-3; 2 Cor. 12:9-10.)

Teach your children Scriptures that counter accusations. God tells us to avoid corrupting influences — an attitude that is no longer allowed in our classrooms. Your children need to know reassuring Scriptures when accused of violating the "new" social standards. Use the following chart, adapted from my book *Under the Spell of Mother Earth*:

ACCUSATIONS	PEOPLE SAY	GOD'S TRUTH
Intolerant	"You should be more tolerant of different beliefs and lifestyles."	Ephesians 5:3-11, 15-17
Judgmental	"You think we're sinners because we don't want your God."	Romans 3:23-24
Arrogant	"You believe your religion is better than ours."	John 14:6
Narrow-minded	"You're not open to other spiritual traditions."	Deuteronomy 4:39
Ignorant	"You don't understand the new paths to enlightenment."	2 Timothy 4:3-4
Old-fashioned	"Your religion doesn't work anymore."	Hebrews 13:8

Don't compromise. Psalm 1:1 shows a downward progression that traps many children today:

1. Following the unwise counsel of anti-Christian teachers and peers.
2. Condoning their beliefs and imitating their behavior.
3. Joining those who mock God.

Encourage your children to take God's warning seriously — and to enjoy verses two and three.

Prepare your children to face persecution. Persecution seems remote to most children. When they face it in their schools, many feel confused, hurt, and angry. Few understand how it can strengthen their faith.

To help them value the faithfulness of people who were persecuted for their faith, read biographies. The Bible is full of believers who would rather die than dishonor God: Daniel, Deborah, Esther, Paul, and more. Stories about other courageous Christians who were martyred for their faith help build an eternal perspective that treasures the nearness of Jesus *forever* more than being comfortable today. Read Matthew 5:11, 6:19-34, and Hebrews 11. Glimpse the wonders God has planned for those who put Him first.

Share God's love with everyone. Jesus provided the only way to oneness across cultural and racial barriers: the cross. Pray with your children that His life in them will touch the hearts of the needy in their school. As His special missionaries, they won't become a mission field for the New Age.

— Berit Kjos

Berit Kjos is the author of *Your Child and the New Age*, *Under the Spell of Mother Earth*, and *A Wardrobe from the King*. This article is an excerpt from *Brave New Schools*, scheduled for release by Harvest House Publishers in January 1996.

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PROBLEM PROGRAMS

The following popular courses, curricula, and programs contain various transpersonal education elements. It is important to understand the issues and techniques rather than identify a problem just by a program's name, as the names may change, new ones are developed, and there are many others that are not listed.

Bridges	Letting Go of Stress
Choosing Wellness (by Prentice Hall)	Life Education Centre
Coping with Kids	Mac's Choice
Coping with Stress	Magic
DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education)	Michigan Model for Comprehensive Health Ed.
Delphi Foundation Institute	PALS
Discipline Skills for Life	Peaceworks
Dungeons and Dragons	Positive Action
Flexing Your Test Muscles	Project Aware
Flights of Fantasy	Project Rainbow
Free the Horses (Active Parenting)	Project Strain
Get Set	Quest
Green Circle Program	S.O.A.R.
Growing Healthy	Self Concept
Health: A Wellness Approach (by Merrill Pub.)	Small world: (Strengthening of Skills)
Heart to Heart	Tactics for Thinking
HeartMath	TAD (Toward Affective Development)
Here's Looking at You	The Centered Student
Holistic Learning	Visual Thinking: A Scamper Tool
Impressions	Waldorf Schools

Integrated Thematic Instruction

Whole Mind Learning

Know Your Body

Wizards

Kreative Kids

Workshop Way

Yoga programs