



STATEMENT DN-388-1

## VISUALIZATION: God-Given Power or New Age Danger? (Part One)<sup>1</sup>

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### Summary

Visualization is the use of mental concentration and directed imagery in the attempt to secure particular goals, whether physical, psychological, vocational, educational, or spiritual. Visualization attempts to program the mind to discover inner power and guidance. It is often used as a means to, or in conjunction with, altered states of consciousness (e.g., as produced by meditation), and is frequently used to develop psychic abilities or make contact with spirits. There are at least four identifiable types of visualization in our culture: academic, popular, occult, and Christian. Although there are boundaries separating these types, they are usually fairly fluid, and there is much potential for interrelationships between them. The practice of visualization, a directed form of mental imagery and concentration, is having broad and substantial impact in our culture.

It involves the deliberate manipulation of the mind, individually or in conjunction with an assistant, to alter one's consciousness toward a specific goal — often the seeking of some form of secret knowledge or power. Perhaps the most authoritative general text on the subject, *Seeing with the Mind's Eye: The History, Techniques and Practices of Visualization*, observes, "If there are two important 'new' concepts in 20th century American life, they are meditation and visualization."<sup>2</sup>

The book's authors continue, "The growth of interest in visualization since the 1960s is part of a new climate of thought in the West. This new climate has manifested in an interest in all forms of imagery, in the experience of Eastern religions and philosophy, in hypnotism, and in hallucinogenic drugs and altered states of consciousness in general."<sup>3</sup>

Visualization is prominent in modern humanistic/transpersonal education and increasingly finding its way into even conventional educational curriculum. Jack Canfield is Director of Educational Services for Insight Training Seminars in Santa Monica, California, past president of the Association for Humanistic Education, and consultant to over 150 schools, universities, and mental health organizations. In "The Inner Classroom: Teaching with Guided Imagery," he asserts: "Guided imagery is a very powerful psychological tool which can be used to achieve a wide variety of educational objectives: enhance self-esteem, expand awareness, facilitate psychological growth and integration, evoke inner wisdom, increase empathy, expand creativity, increase memory, facilitate optimal performance, evoke a more positive attitude, and accelerate the learning of subject matter."<sup>4</sup>

The reason visualization is being lauded today as an extremely powerful psychological tool for inner healing and personal transformation is that proponents claim it works dramatically. In this first of a two-part series, we will examine the nature and influence of visualization, the reasons people use it, and the different kinds of visualization. In all of this we will see that the spiritual implications of visualization practice are significant.

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## THE NATURE OF VISUALIZATION

New Age visualization claims to work by using the mind to influence one's perceptions and personal reality. Proponents claim that by properly controlling each person's alleged mental power, they can influence and change a person's ideas, consciousness, and even his or her physical and spiritual environment.

For example, visualization can supposedly be used to change one's self-image from negative to positive by holding a positive image of oneself in the mind. Visualization may also serve to uncover a claimed "inner divinity" that can allegedly manipulate reality. By creating the proper mental image and environment and then holding it or projecting it outward, practitioners claim they can exercise mental power over every aspect of their lives. Related practices are also used in magic ritual to call on spirits in order to secure such goals.

Because the mind is potentially so powerful, proponents say, proper visualization methods can affect health, finances, educational abilities, relationships, vocation — and even one's destiny. In many Hindu and Buddhist religions, for example, the thought or image one holds at death is believed to powerfully influence one's next life. This is one reason given for adopting mental training exercises such as visualization.

## THE INFLUENCE OF VISUALIZATION

Visualization and imagery practices are being pursued by millions of people in America. These practices are having a growing impact in diverse fields, from New Age medicine and education, to a variety of occult practices, to certain schools of psychotherapy (i.e., the Jungian, humanistic, and transpersonal schools), to human potential seminars. The text *Seeing with the Mind's Eye* observes the following: "In the last hundred years spec-specialists in different fields have begun to rediscover the existence and meaning of visualization. Historians, religious scholars, archaeologists, physicians, and psychologists have begun to study the nature of the inner image as it relates to their area of specialization. There is no widely accepted overview of visualization at this time. There is only a general striving toward understanding in many fields, from many viewpoints."<sup>5</sup>

Many scientific journals on visualization have emerged, such as the *Journal of Mental Imagery*. They document the impact of visualization in psychology, education, the arts and literature, linguistics, mythology, anthropology, sociology, religion, and even thanatology (the study of death and dying).<sup>6</sup>

Different forms of visualization exist, with different goals. But even a brief perusal of the general influence of visualization is impressive.

**Medicine.** Visualization is used widely in New Age medicine. The relevance of visualization techniques here will become evident as we proceed. For now, we may observe that a central tenet of much New Age medicine is the manipulation of mystical life energies such as *chi* and *prana*. Visualization promoters also claim that the practice of visualization can "produce" and manipulate this energy:

Physicists have also begun to study subtle body energies and their effect on the world outside the body. Throughout history, philosophers have recognized this energy and given it many names. The Chinese called it *chi*, and the Indians *prana* or *kundalini*, the Japanese *ki*; 20th century parapsychologists have referred to it as *bio-plasmic energy*....Russian and Czechoslovakian scientists have studied bio-plasmic energy in association with healing, telepathy and psychokinesis. They have found that through visualization a woman named Nelya Mikhailoya can change her bio-plasmic energy fields....Studies like this tend to confirm occult belief in such concepts as auras and astral bodies. These experiments demonstrate how a visualization [technique] can produce energy which directly affects objects in the external world.<sup>7</sup>

**Education.** Visualization is now employed in education, such as in counseling, creative writing, and problem-solving courses. It is also used to develop altered states of consciousness in students in order to acquire the capacity to reach "inner guides" or allegedly tap the "higher self" and its powers. It is used for enhanced learning potential, self-esteem, and stress reduction.

**Occultism.** Shamans, spiritists, magicians, and witches routinely use visualization. Many people are familiar with American shamans Carlos Castaneda and Lynn Andrews, whose books have sold in the multiple millions. Their writings stress that visualization is a key ingredient for success as a shaman. According to hypnotherapists Richard

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Dobson and Natasha Frazier, "In the last few years shamanic trance techniques have been taught or explained almost entirely as a form of visualization."<sup>8</sup>

Visualization is widely used in psychic healing. For instance, psychic healers Amy Wallace (granddaughter of Irving Wallace) and Bill Henkin observe in *The Psychic Healing Book: How to Develop Your Psychic Potential Safely, Simply, Effectively*: "Visualization is one of the most potent and widely used techniques in [psychic] healing. It has been stressed for centuries in schools of Eastern mysticism and is used in nearly every contemporary school of 'consciousness-raising.'"<sup>9</sup>

Visualization is common to numerous occult religions. These include Rosicrucianism, Tantrism, and the mind sciences (New Thought, Divine Science, Unity School of Christianity, Religious Science, etc.).

In essence, occult practitioners of all stripes use visualization. For example, Kreskin, the psychic and famous "mentalists," confesses he "rehearses constantly through mental imagery."<sup>10</sup>

**Psychotherapy.** Visualization is also widely used in psychotherapy. According to one source, "The use of the imagination is one of the most rapidly spreading new trends in psychology and education....It is interesting to notice that many of the modern pioneers of imaginative techniques, Hans Karl Leuner and Robert Desoille among them, have stressed the compatibility of such techniques with all main schools of psychology."<sup>11</sup> Mike Samuels, M.D., who coauthored *Seeing with the Mind's Eye* with his wife, is a committed spiritist and author of *Spirit Guides: Access to Inner Worlds*.<sup>12</sup> In their book, Mike and Nancy Samuels devote almost two hundred pages to the use of visualization in modern psychology, medicine, parapsychology, art and creativity, and the occult or, as they call it, "the spiritual life."<sup>13</sup> They discuss visualization techniques used within many psychological disciplines and methods, including Freudian, Jungian, induced hypnagogic reverie, aversive training, implosion therapy, hypnotherapy (the spiritistic ability of automatic writing is classified here), behaviorist systematic desensitization, induced dream work, Kretschmer's meditative visualizations, Leuner's guided affective imagery, Gestalt psychodrama, psychosynthesis, and others.<sup>14</sup>

The *Journal of Mental Imagery* is sponsored by the International Imagery Association which conducts regular meetings for the academic community. The brochure for the Sixth American Imagery Conference held in San Francisco, "Timeless Therapeutic Images," observed:

A rapidly growing body of scientific findings from psychology, psychiatry and neuropsychology has found that fast and extensive emotional, physiological and psychological change can occur through mental imagery....The image resides at the core of consciousness....It effortlessly joins the inner self with the outside world, permits the positive to confront and overcome the negative, leads us to an appreciation of art in Nature, [and] forges new paths in consciousness through new perception.<sup>15</sup>

As the Spiritual Counterfeits Project in Berkeley, California warns, many such conferences "may best be described as an amorphous blend of secular scientific materialism and a (sometimes) disguised brand of occult philosophy....[At one conference attended] the primary focus during the conference...was on the use of imaging in order to contact one's personal inner advisor or spirit guide."<sup>16</sup>

The practice of psychosynthesis is a fringe psychotherapy blending various Eastern and Western methods of self-awareness. It was developed by Robert Assagioli, who for years was the Italian director of Lucis Trust, the occult organization founded by New Age leader Alice A. Bailey.<sup>17</sup> It makes extensive use of visualization and imagery in order to contact the "higher self," which can become the means for psychic development and spirit contact.

Along similar lines, a psychic named Bob Hoffman (with the supposed help of a dead friend, Dr. Siegfried Fisher) and a psychiatrist named Ernest Pecci, developed a system of psychic psychotherapy called the Fischer-Hoffman technique, later renamed the Quadrinity Process. "This system involves imagining an inner sanctuary and a spirit guide in order to aid in receptive visualization."<sup>18</sup> One Quadrinity teacher, Jean Porter, reveals its occult application through her book, *Psychic Development* (Random House, 1974).

An early pioneer in the academic use of visualization was German psychiatrist Johannes H. Schultz. From his clinical experience with hypnosis,<sup>19</sup> he developed what is called "Autogenic Training." This is a form of therapy using autosuggestion, visualization, deep relaxation, and other techniques. According to visualization authority Samuels, it "is the most thoroughly researched and widely applied of all the systems of visualization in healing.

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Autogenic training has many characteristics in common with hypnotherapy (especially autosuggestion), certain psychic healing techniques, relaxation healing techniques...ancient yogic techniques, and the more recent healing techniques taught in mind-control courses."<sup>20</sup>

In fact, some enthusiasts promote Autogenic Training as a method of developing occult states of consciousness for those who don't want to take the time to follow an Eastern path:

Persons who, for whatever reasons, are not inclined to engage in any of the Eastern meditative techniques...might do well to consider autogenic training. It is a remarkably thorough and systematically designed practice with an end result comparable to that of diligent meditation....

In essence, the final stages of autogenic training may be compared to the breakthroughs of consciousness obtained through meditative techniques of various kinds.<sup>21</sup>

Wolfgang Luthe, one of Schultz's students is "now the acknowledged authority on Autogenic Training."<sup>22</sup> He is author of *Autogenic Training* and, with Schultz, the technical seven-volume *Autogenic Therapy*, which cites some 2,400 case studies. Schultz observes that the autogenic program of visualization exercises may be improved by the use of meditation: "All the positive effects of the standard exercises are reinforced by this meditative training."<sup>23</sup> One part of the meditation has the patient "ask questions of his own conscious inner self,"<sup>24</sup> a technique which has not infrequently become the means to spirit contact.

The influential psychoanalyst Carl Jung, himself a student of the occult,<sup>25</sup> developed his own visualization method called "active imagination." This potentially dangerous technique is considered a "powerful tool in Jung-ian psychology for achieving direct contact with the unconscious and obtaining greater inner knowledge."<sup>26</sup>

Jungian analyst Barbara Hannah is a teacher at the prominent C. G. Jung Institute. In *Encounters with the Soul: Active Imagination as Developed by C. G. Jung*,<sup>27</sup> she frankly admits the danger of active imagination and reveals in detail how it can powerfully influence the mind. She urges "great caution" before anyone employs this method.<sup>28</sup> Hannah also confesses that active imagination employs a time-honored method to contact the "gods."<sup>29</sup> Indeed, there is little doubt that it may facilitate contact with what can only be termed spirit guides.<sup>30</sup> However, these spirits are typically internalized as powerful psychodynamics; that is, they are conceptually normalized as part of the internal "structure" of the unconscious mind.

**Human Potential Seminars.** Most of the popular "think yourself rich" (or healthy, sexy, happy, etc.) seminars and texts endorse and use visualization. Modern New Age seminars, such as Silva Mind Control<sup>31</sup> and the Forum (formerly "est"), collectively have millions of graduates, on whom they have used varying visualization techniques. In one's mind, one can create "projection screens" on which to picture desired images — whether seeing oneself with greater self-confidence, learning abilities, or less weight, or imagining one's white blood cells warding off viral invaders or specific illnesses. Further still, a secret inner sanctuary or mental laboratory may be constructed where one may contact "inner advisors" or spirit guides for assistance in decision making and direction in life.

**The Church.** Not unexpectedly, the modern impact of visualization in health, science, education, psychotherapy, and other areas has resulted in visualization techniques being used by more and more Christians. Jon Trott and Eric Pement note that "visualization exercises are increasingly finding their way into Christian churches."<sup>32</sup> In *The Seduction of Christianity*, author Dave Hunt devotes two chapters to the harmful influence of visualization within the church. He observes, "'Visualization' and 'Guided Imagery' have long been recognized by sorcerers of all kinds as the most powerful and effective methodology for contacting the spirit world in order to acquire supernatural power, knowledge and healing. Such methods are neither taught or practiced in the Bible as helps to faith or prayer."<sup>33</sup>

Hunt distinguishes visualization proper from the nonoccult use of the imagination. He observes:

The visualization we are concerned with is an ancient witchcraft technique that has been at the heart of shamanism for thousands of years, yet is gaining increasing acceptance in today's secular world and now more and more within the church. It attempts to use vivid images held in the mind as a means of healing diseases, creating wealth, and otherwise manipulating reality. Strangely enough, a number of Christian leaders teach and practice these same techniques in the name of Christ, without recognizing them for what they are.<sup>34</sup>

As more people turn inward or seek "enlightenment," as interest in parapsychology and psychic development increases, as mind-altering techniques are utilized more and more in the medical, educational, sports,<sup>35</sup> and psychotherapeutic communities, and as mind science philosophies and human potential New Age seminars grow in impact, the use of visualization will increase proportionately. Such an influence will continue impacting the church. But as Part Two will document, the world view of the visualization promoters is rarely Christian. Instead, it is often blatantly occult or humanistic. As Stanley Dokupil comments, "Imagination is fast becoming the focus of much of New Age thought and method."<sup>36</sup>

## WHY PEOPLE USE VISUALIZATION

We now turn to the claims visualization proponents have made. They can be summarized under three dominant themes: (1) the quest for personal power; (2) the quest for inner knowledge or spiritual enlightenment; (3) the quest for physical health. The following citations are representative for each category.

**1. The Quest for Personal Power.** Psychic Harold Sherman says, "There is tremendous power in imagery."<sup>37</sup> Andrew Wiehl claims in *Creative Visualization*: "Wonders have been performed, seeming miracles wrought, through visualization. It is a God-given power available to anyone."<sup>38</sup>

**2. The Quest for Spiritual Enlightenment.** Jack Canfield remarks, "To me the most interesting use of guided imagery is the evocation of the wisdom that lies deep within us." He proceeds to discuss how students can contact their own spirit guides as "wisdom counselors."<sup>39</sup>

Mike Samuels observes, "Philosophers and priests in every ancient culture used visualization as a tool for growth and rebirth....Most religions have used visualization as one of their basic techniques in helping people to realize their spiritual goals. Visualization intensifies any experience."<sup>40</sup> In *Visualization*, est-graduate Adelaide Bry asserts that the practice has the power to "reveal our hidden truths" and to allow us to experience personal connections to "cosmic consciousness."<sup>41</sup>

A journal devoted to Robert Assagioli's method of psychosynthesis claims, "Imagination is superior to all nature and generation, and through it we are capable of transcending the worldly order, or participating in eternal life and in the energy of the super-celestial. It is through this principle, therefore, that we will be liberated from the bonds of fate itself."<sup>42</sup>

**3. The Quest for Physical Health.** Consciousness researcher Kenneth Pelletier of the Langley Porter Neuropsychiatric Institute in San Francisco teaches: "The greatest potential of autogenic training and visualization [is as]...a potent tool in a holistic approach to preventative medicine."<sup>43</sup> In his *Positive Imaging* the late popular "positive thinker" Norman Vincent Peale cites shamanistic researchers Jeanne Achterberg and G. Frank Lawlis as stating: "Imagery may well prove the single most important technique for modern health-care."<sup>44</sup>

Unfortunately, people may get more than they bargained for when they use visualization techniques for personal power, spiritual/educational enlightenment, or physical/mental health. Visualization programs usually come with additional baggage — various accompaniments, world views, and physical and spiritual dangers. But before we examine this additional baggage, we will first note the different varieties of imagery and visualization. This will help us to avoid confusing related, but distinct, practices.

## TYPES OF VISUALIZATION

Visualization is essentially a powerful and directed use of the imagination with a wide variety of specific goals and methods. One problem in writing briefly on this topic is that the many different types of visualization make a general analysis difficult. The academic varieties do not have the same goals or necessarily the same methods as do the occult or Christian forms of visualization, so a valid critique in one area will not necessarily be valid in another. For example, those interested in imagination in the context of an occult world view do not have the same purposes or even practices as Christians who may attempt to use the imagination for what they see as godly purposes.

The chart on this page helps distinguish the types of visualization. It reveals that boundaries between the categories are rarely absolute; often it is more a matter of degree.

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## FOUR TYPES OF VISUALIZATION

### **1 Academic:**

- \*Autogenic Training
- \*Jungian methods
- \*Imagery studies
- \*Secular or Transpersonal Psychotherapy

### **2 Popular:**

- \*New Age therapies
- \*Mind Science practices
- \*Personal or business-oriented motivational/achievement programs and seminars

### **3 Occult:**

- \*Ritual magic
- \*Shamanism
- \*Psychic healing
- \*Spiritism
- \*Hinduism
- \*Buddhist practice (such as the use of mandalas)

### **4 Christian:**

- \*Christian psychotherapy
- \*Inner healing
- \*Jesus visualization
- \*Visualization with Scripture<sup>45</sup>

- Between types 1 and 3, and 3 and 4, some boundaries are concrete, but potential interrelationships exist.
- Between types 2 and 3, boundaries are fairly fluid.
- Between types 1 and 4, and 2 and 4, boundaries are more fluid; potential and actual interrelationships exist.

## VARIETIES OF VISUALIZATION

There are three general varieties of visualization:

**1. Programmed Visualization** is an *active* process used individually; for example, the practitioner holds a positive image in the mind in order to "create" the desired object or situation. It can be performed on the psychiatric couch or in magic ritual.

**2. Receptive Visualization** is a *passive* process; it "lets the movie roll" after an initial theme, setting, or the like is developed in the consciousness. The method is passive in that it receives whatever comes into the mind, which is usually interpreted as special guidance of some kind, such as instructions from one's "higher self," "inner guide," or "divine consciousness."

**3. Guided Visualization**, also termed guided imagery, employs a friend, counselor, or family member in either a therapeutic or occult, New Age context. The therapist suggests a scene — such as a meadow or a forest — and the patient imaginatively elaborates upon the scene as a key to his or her own "inner processes" and "unconscious conflicts." Guided imagery may also be done by a leader of a New Age seminar or practice who helps the audience construct a particular mental environment for contacting a spirit guide. Silva Mind Control, with some eight million graduates, is one example.

These general types of visualization can be described loosely under a number of terms: guided fantasy, mental imaging, active imagination, directed daydreaming, inner imagery, and so forth. But it should be remembered that

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visualization is not the same thing as imagery. Visualization *involves* imagery, but the imagery is purposely directed toward a particular goal.

How does imagery differ from visualization? There are different forms of imagery, many of which we all experience. For instance, a "memory image" is a reconstruction of a genuine past event tied to a specific occasion, like the vivid recollection of one's first date retained over a period of many years.

An "imagination image" is the construction of an imaginary image that may or may not contain elements of past perceptions or events but in any case is arranged in a novel way. One might, for example, imagine how one's home would look with a new car parked in front, or how the living room would look with the furniture rearranged. One might also imagine what it would be like to be in heaven (or hell), or how one of the biblical prophets dealt with a difficult situation — or what one would do in his place. This is similar to "daydream fantasy" in which there is a combination of memory and imagination images.

In the sleep imagery of dreams we also find past perceptions reconstructed in novel arrangements.

Other types of imagery are experienced only rarely. In hallucinations we find internal imagery that is wrongly believed to be external. In supernatural visions we find externally induced, internally occurring imagery. These revelations may be either true or false, depending on whether they are from God or the devil (Matt. 4:8; Ezek. 1:1).

There are many other varieties of imagery. Typically, however, these kinds of imagery are not visualization. They lack the accompaniments, commitment, and trust involved in the visualization process and its specific techniques. All this is why it is important to distinguish imagination and imagery from visualization proper.

## ACCOMPANIMENTS OF VISUALIZATION

Visualization is rarely used by itself. The typical accompaniments of visualization include: (1) relaxation, (2) meditation (sometimes accompanied by yoga-like controlled breathing and postures), (3) the cultivation of will power, (4) various forms of self-hypnosis, and (5) faith or trust in the "guide" (whether human or spirit) and in the process of visualization itself.

**Relaxation** is, of course, a vital and necessary part of everyday living. But when combined with visualization and meditation techniques, it can be transformed into an occult process. In "Relax Your Way to ESP," a well-known psychic researcher, the recently deceased D. Scott Rogo, refers to the research of parapsychologist Rhea White, who discovered that of the greatest psychics "by and large many of [them] began with relaxation."<sup>46</sup> These psychics also stress the importance of suggestion and visualization.<sup>47</sup>

In *Creative Visualization*, New Age psychic Shakti Gawain observes, "It's important to relax deeply when you are first learning to use creative visualization."<sup>48</sup> Jack Canfield even encourages classroom students to practice a variety of occult or potentially occult relaxation techniques just prior to the visualization process, including breath awareness, breath imagery, breath control, progressive relaxation, autogenic training, polarity, and chanting.<sup>49</sup>

In the following excerpt from *Opening to Channel*, two spirit-guides, "Orin" and "DaBen," offer advice for relaxation which "helps you become accustomed to the state of mind that is best for a [spirit] guide's entry."<sup>50</sup>

### *Exercise from Orin and DaBen*

#### **Achieving a Relaxed State**

**Goal:** This exercise is basic preparation for going into trance. We want your experience of channeling to be relaxing, easy, and joyful....

#### **Steps:**

1. Find a comfortable sitting position, either on a chair or the floor, which you can easily hold for ten or fifteen minutes.

2. Close your eyes and begin breathing calmly and slowly, taking about twenty slow, rhythmic, connected breaths into your upper chest.

3. Let all your concerns go. Imagine them vanishing. Every time a thought comes up, imagine it on a blackboard, then effortlessly erase it, or imagine putting each thought into a bubble that floats away.

4. Relax your body. Feel yourself growing serene, calm, and tranquil. In your imagination, travel through your body, relaxing each part. Mentally relax your feet, legs, thighs, stomach, chest, arms, hands, shoulders, neck, head, and face. Let your jaw be slightly open, and relax the muscles around your eyes.

5. Put up a bubble of white light around you. Imagine its size, shape, and brightness. Play with making it larger and smaller until it feels just right.

6. When you are calm and relaxed and ready to return, bring your attention slowly back into the room. Savor and enjoy your state of calm and peace. . . usually it is sufficient to practice every day for twenty minutes or so for one to two weeks to grow accustomed to deeper relaxation and inner stillness. This regime is not absolutely essential, but helps you become accustomed to the state of mind that is best for a guide's entry.<sup>51</sup>

Relaxation, then, is an important component of successful visualization.

**Meditation** is a second component. Visualization is often conducted within a meditative environment, such as a structured program of internal concentration using a mantra or word of psychic power. As we have shown elsewhere,<sup>52</sup> almost all meditation other than biblical meditation develops psychic powers, inculcates a nonbiblical, occult world view, and can open the door to spirit contact. Gawain observes that "almost any form of meditation will eventually take you to an experience of yourself as source, or your higher self."<sup>53</sup> What she means by "source" here is ultimate reality or God.

The systematic use of **will power** for effective visualization is stressed in magical and occult texts, particularly for ritualistic purposes. To a degree it parallels the popular usage, although often for different goals.<sup>54</sup> Regardless, without willful intent and commitment, visualization does not exist. Thus,

*Programmed visualization...is the deliberate use of the power of your own mind to create your own reality....there is nothing too insignificant or too grand for you to visualize. Our lives are limited by what we see as possible....A basic rule of visualization is: you can use visualization to have whatever you want, but YOU MUST REALLY, REALLY WANT WHAT YOU VISUALIZE. (emphases in original)<sup>55</sup>*

**Hypnosis** can be another component of visualization. In fact, some visualization and progressive relaxation methods are indistinguishable from hypnosis.<sup>56</sup> Hypnosis may be part of or joined with visualization in both the popular and the academic varieties. As far as the latter are concerned, interest in hypnosis is usually sparked by the fact that one's ability to visualize and one's susceptibility to hypnosis are related: "Imaginative involvement, or absorption in fantasy experiences, and high imagery are known to be positively related to measured hypnotizability....Today the intimacy between imagination and hypnosis are [*sic*] clearly recognized and studied by appropriate scientific methods."<sup>57</sup>

**Faith** or trust is held to be an integ-integral factor regulating the effectiveness of visualization. As is clear from the material cited below, without such trust a person cannot expect much in terms of results. Yet, faith is rarely placed in the biblical God or Christ but rather in one's own alleged inner powers, mental capacity, or "intuitive" abilities; or in cosmic energy, the universe, and so forth. The following statements note the importance of faith: "To put it another way, in attempting this or any other technique for self realization, one needs to trust that it can work."<sup>58</sup> "Have faith that it will materialize as you picture it, and *never* for a moment doubt it....Just as an attorney must understand law in order to practice it...so must we understand the law of the Universe and co-operate with it in order to have our desires realized. The more faith and enthusiasm we put into our mental imaging, the sooner it will work out for us."<sup>59</sup>



## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Our discussion of visualization thus far suggests a number of conclusions: (1) We all routinely experience certain types of imagery. (2) Imagery is a component of visualization but may be studied in and of itself, apart from visualization. In other words, imagery studies may be strictly scientific and neutral, or they may be placed into a larger metaphysical world view. (3) Imagery is therefore not necessarily visualization. Visualization demands the exercise of will and faith within a context of relaxation, meditation, and often self-hypnosis. (4) In general, the classes, types, and methods of visualization can be, to one degree or another, fluid in their interrelationships. (5) The components of visualization often regulate its outcome. That is, they place it within a certain context, a certain world view, and to that degree influence the method's effectiveness, impact, and spiritual implications.

In Part Two we will examine the world view that commonly accompanies the practice of visualization. We will also consider the dangers associated with visualization, its occult aspects, and the question of whether Christian visualization can be a safe and biblical practice.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>This article is excerpted with minor changes from the authors' *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs* (Harvest House, 1996).

<sup>2</sup>Mike Samuels, M.D. and Nancy Samuels, *Seeing with the Mind's Eye: The History, Techniques and Uses of Visualization* (New York: Bookworks/Random House, 1983), 34.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>4</sup>Anastas Harris, ed., *Holistic Education: Education for Living* (Del Mar, CA: Holistic Education Network, 1981), 27.

<sup>5</sup>Samuels and Samuels, 21.

<sup>6</sup>A. A. Sheikh, "Mental Images: Ghosts of Sensations," *Journal of Mental Imagery* 1 (Spring 1977): 1-2.

<sup>7</sup>Samuels and Samuels, 70-71.

<sup>8</sup>Richard Dobson and Natasha Frazier, "Trance, Dreams and Shamanism," *Shaman's Drum*, Spring 1986, 39.

<sup>9</sup>Amy Wallace and Bill Henkin, *The Psychic Healing Book: How to Develop Your Psychic Potential Safely, Simply, Effectively* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1978), 43.

<sup>10</sup>Kreskin: Mind Star in a Universe of Realities: Who or What Is He?" *New Realities*, February 1978, 14.

<sup>11</sup>James Vargiu, ed., *Psychosynthesis Institute, Synthesis Two: The Realization of the Self* (San Francisco: Psychosynthesis Institutes of the Synthesis Graduate School for the Study of Man, 1978), 119-20.

<sup>12</sup>Mike Samuels, M.D. and Hal Bennett, *Spirit Guides: Access to Inner Worlds* (New York: Random House, 1974).

<sup>13</sup>Samuels and Samuels, 162-323.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 180-206.

<sup>15</sup>International Imagery Association, Sixth American Imagery Conference, "Timeless Therapeutic Images," brochure describing proceedings of the November 5-7, 1982, Conference in San Francisco, CA. Distributed by Brandon House, Box 240, Bronx, New York, NY 10471.

<sup>16</sup>Stanley Dokupil, "Seizing the Power: The Use of the Imagination for Healing," *SCP Newsletter*, vol. 8, no. 6, 1982, 3.

<sup>17</sup>Alice Bailey, *The Unfinished Autobiography* (New York: Lucis Publishing Co., 1976), 224-25.

<sup>18</sup>Samuels and Samuels, 276.

<sup>19</sup>Kenneth Pelletier, *Mind as Healer Mind as Slayer: A Holistic Approach to Preventing Stress Disorders* (New York: Dell, 1979), 229.

<sup>20</sup>Samuels and Samuels, 226.

<sup>21</sup>Pelletier, 229, 233.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 237.

<sup>23</sup>Samuels and Samuels, 225.

<sup>24</sup>Sheikh, 225.

<sup>25</sup>Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1965), 180-200.

<sup>26</sup>Barbara Hannah, *Encounters with the Soul: Active Imagination as Developed by C. G. Jung* (Santa Monica: Sigo, 1981), 23.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 5-6, 11-12, 18-20, 27.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 3-51.

- <sup>31</sup>A video debate between Jose Silva, John Weldon, Dave Hunt, and George DeSau is available from *The John Ankerberg Show*, P. O. Box 8977, Chattanooga, TN 37411.
- <sup>32</sup>Jon Trott and Eric Pement, "Visualization and Imaging: Dangerous Trends in Christian Meditation," *Cornerstone*, vol. 14, issue 74, 19.
- <sup>33</sup>Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1984), 123.
- <sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 124.
- <sup>35</sup>The use of visualization/imagery in sports is usually but not always innocuous.
- <sup>36</sup>Dokupil, 2.
- <sup>37</sup>Harold Sherman, *Your Power to Heal* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1973), 99.
- <sup>38</sup>Andrew Wiehl, *Creative Visualization* (St. Paul: Llewellyn, 1958), 11.
- <sup>39</sup>Harris, 38-39.
- <sup>40</sup>Samuels and Samuels, 21, 28.
- <sup>41</sup>Adelaide Bry, *Visualization: Directing the Movies of Your Mind* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1979), 14.
- <sup>42</sup>Vargiu, 119.
- <sup>43</sup>Pelletier, 262.
- <sup>44</sup>Norman Vincent Peale, *Positive Imaging: The Powerful Way to Change Your Life* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1982), 94.
- <sup>45</sup>Carolyn Stahl, *Opening to God: Guided Imagery and Meditation on Scripture* (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1977).
- <sup>46</sup>D. Scott Rogo, "Relax Your Way to ESP," *Psychic*, September/October 1976, 18.
- <sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 19.
- <sup>48</sup>Shakti Gawain, *Creative Visualization* (Mill Valley, CA: Whatever Publishing, 1983), 31.
- <sup>49</sup>Harris, 30-31.
- <sup>50</sup>Sanaya Roman and Duane Packer, *Opening to Channel: How to Connect with Your Guide* (Tiburon, CA: H. J. Kramer, 1987), 69.
- <sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 68-69.
- <sup>52</sup>See John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996), 379-98.
- <sup>53</sup>Gawain, 57.
- <sup>54</sup>Colin Wilson, *Mysteries: An Investigation into the Occult, the Paranormal and the Supernatural* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1978), 244-45; Vargiu, 120; David Conway, *Magic: An Occult Primer* (New York: Bantam, 1973), 60-69.
- <sup>55</sup>Bry, 40.
- <sup>56</sup>Harris, 34.
- <sup>57</sup>K. P. Monteiro, et. al., "Imagery, Absorption and Hypnosis: A Factorial Study," *Journal of Mental Imagery* 4:2 (1980), 63-64.
- <sup>58</sup>Vargiu, 128.
- <sup>59</sup>Wiehl, 72-73.