



STATEMENT DH020

HOLISTIC HEALTH

The term "holistic health" refers to a wide range of alternative approaches to health care which emphasize spiritual and psychological as well as the physical dimensions to personal health. The holistic health movement sees itself as a corrective response to traditional medicine's almost exclusive focus on the physical dimensions of health and healing.

Unfortunately, the holistic approach to health errs at a different extreme. There is significant evidence that the techniques used in holistic health are often doors through which Eastern mysticism and occult practices gain a foothold. The holistic health practices are particularly popular in the "New Age" movement. Many Christians are exposing themselves to these dangers due to lack of clear teaching and discernment.

The holistic health practices which can involve such dangers include acupuncture, biofeedback, chiropractic, homeopathy, iridology, psychic healing, reflexology, shiatsu, therapeutic touch techniques, etc. Some of these practices may have therapeutic value within a limited range of application (e.g., biofeedback, chiropractic). Other practices are basically pseudo-scientific medical quackery (e.g., iridology), and may not be occultic at all. Still others are essentially occultic in nature (e.g., psychic healing).

Christians are therefore urged to exercise extreme caution with regard to holistic health. We would advise Christians not to go to holistic healers, even in such widely-accepted and sometimes innocuous practices as chiropractic, without first inquiring as to their beliefs and practices. For example, do they believe healing is facilitated by releasing pent-up "universal energy" in the body? If so, this is a clear signal that their holistic health is tied to pantheistic or New Age thought and may be occultic.

For further study materials, consult the following:

Ankerberg, John and John Weldon. *Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs*. (B372/19.00)

Miller, Elliot. "Crystals and the New Age." (DC820/.25)

Miller, Elliot. "The Christian, Energetic Medicine, and 'New Age Paranoia.'" (DN068/.25)

Reisser, Paul M.D. "Alternative Medicine: The Mainstreaming of the Holistic Health Movement." (DN395/.25)

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