



STATEMENT DN081

Your Child and the New Age

by Berit Kjos (Victor Books, 1990)

The problem of New Agers attempting to proselytize or influence children has become so rampant that it is no longer sufficient for authors to devote sections or chapters of books to it — *entire books* are needed on this subject alone. The first respectable book to appear on this comes from Berit Kjos, a Norwegian-American author and speaker at Christian women's gatherings.

Your Child and the New Age is by no means limited to the New Age *per se*, unless we mean by "new age" the new, unchristian cultural situation into which we are rapidly moving. Along with the New Age movement Kjos deals with secular humanism, hedonism, and the non-New Age, "dark" sides of occultism (e.g., Satanism).

Kjos covers all the bases in terms of areas in which the young are being profoundly affected by unchristian values: the schools, films, television, books, music, even the local toy store.

Although her research is generally accurate, sources often are not cited fully enough, and on a few occasions facts appear to be skewed such as her using *Humanist Manifesto II* to represent the beliefs and goals of the National Education Association (NEA) (p. 40), even though the NEA was not a signatory of the document.

Kjos's approach to these issues of discernment can at times be simplistic (e.g., p. 44, where she warns that values clarification in the schools often uses names such as "decision-making" and "interpersonal relation skills" without clarifying that legitimate, non-humanistic programs could also go by the same names). Some will find her views too politically conservative and reactionary (e.g., pp. 74-75). Some will find them overly apocalyptic (e.g., p. 121).

On the other hand, several of her warnings that many would label "narrow" or "reactionary" are actually quite legitimate. She clearly demonstrates, for instance, the dangers involved in several of the fantasy gamebooks found in toy stores (pp. 142-43).

The flaws noted above are easy to forgive because, to her credit, Kjos never really succumbs to sensationalism and tries hard to remain balanced. This is not a sophisticated scholar writing, but a concerned mother who is also a committed disciple of Jesus Christ. These two qualifications are what make the book eminently practical and useful — far more so than what most scholars would be capable of producing.

For every chapter of information, there is a chapter of practical strategies, advice, and Scripture references on the same subject: "What Can Parents Do About..?" Kjos's vast experience and wisdom in the things of which she writes will prove immensely profitable to bewildered parents. Her strategies incorporate a sound grasp of child psychology and effective parent-child communication (*see*, e.g., p.31).

Those looking for simple or instant solutions to the problem of unchristian influences on their children will be disappointed; since no such solutions exist, this book cannot provide them. The challenge of raising godly children in this age is extremely formidable, requiring huge investments of time and effort on the part of parents, and even then with no guarantee of success. But for those whose love for their children motivates them to accept this challenge, *Your Child and the New Age* provides more-than-adequate direction and resources.

— Elliot Miller

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