



STATEMENT DN-074

WITNESSING TIPS

Breaking Through the "Relativity Barrier": How to Make Points Effectively with New Agers

by Elliot Miller

Ever wonder what trying to communicate with someone from a different planet would be like? Christians who try to share their faith with New Agers may have some idea. This communication gap runs deeper than mere terminology: it involves outlooks on the world that are themselves *worlds* apart.

One major reason for this is what I have termed the "relativity barrier." Underlying much New Age thinking is a relativistic assumption that *anything* can be true for the individual, but *nothing* can be true for everyone.

To many New Agers, truth is intensely personal and entirely subjective. In their view, it is the height of presumption to think that one knows *the* key truth for all people. On the other hand, it is the apex of love to "allow" others to have their own "truth." "Thou shalt not interfere with another's reality" might be called the First Commandment of New Age revelation. Thus, the New Ager views him or herself as open-minded, tolerant, and progressive, while viewing the Christian evangelist as narrow-minded, intolerant, and repressive.

The "relativity barrier" is therefore a great obstacle to Christian evangelism. No matter how carefully the Christian directs his or her testimony, it is deflected with the reply, "That's *your* truth."

It is important first of all to demonstrate that the difference between Christians and New Agers is not a question of tolerance. A conversation between the channeled spirit "Ramtha" and one of his "masters" (disciples) will help the reader see what I mean:

RAMTHA: Now, if one believes in the devil and another doesn't, who is right, who is true?

MASTER: Both of them are.

RAMTHA: Why?

MASTER: Because each one of them has their own truth.

RAMTHA: Correct. Correct.

Up to this point we are witnessing classic New Age relativism. But in the comments which immediately follow Ramtha gives away the larger metaphysical context behind this seemingly impeccable tolerance:

RAMTHA: Now, the devil was a masterful ploy by a conquering institution to put the fear of God, most literally, unto [sic] the hearts of little ones — that God had created a monster that would get them lest [sic] they be good to Him. The devil was used to control the world most effectively and even today it is still feared and believed. Someone conjured it up — a God — and

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thus it became, but only to those who believed. *That is how it is.* (emphasis added) ("Ramtha" with Douglas James Mahr, *Voyage to the New World* [Friday Harbor, WA: Masterworks, 1985,] 246.)

Ramtha's explanation illustrates what is generally the case in New Age thinking: it really isn't a matter of each person's "truth" being *equally* true. At a deeper level, we are all gods creating our own realities. Some, blind to this truth, have created some rather unfortunate "realities." When they become "enlightened" they will drop these creations and see things as New Agers do.

By bringing this larger picture to the New Ager's attention we can demonstrate that the New Age world view is based on an absolute "truth" after all — pantheism (i.e., God is all). This just allows them to acknowledge multitudinous private "truths" at lower levels.

It turns out that it's impossible to make *everything* relative. Some ultimate view of reality must be assumed, and whichever we choose (including pantheism) will necessarily exclude all others. Therefore, the real question New Agers and Christians should be addressing is not whether there *is* a universal truth, but rather, *which* "universal truth" is true, pantheism or theism?

One good approach to determining this is to ask ourselves if either one is compatible with life and the world as we find them. Can they be consistently lived out?

After securing the New Ager's approval of this approach, the Christian can proceed to demonstrate that 1) we all *inescapably* live by a belief that certain things are right and wrong, and 2) New Age pantheism cannot supply sufficient basis for this belief, while Christian theism can.

Since New Agers often avoid critical thinking in favor of an intuitive approach to truth, the Christian should not expect cold logic to suffice. To make a point, it is important to impact their emotions as well as their minds. This explains the rather shocking and disturbing approach of the following demonstration.

CHRISTIAN: Do you mean that there are no moral principles that are absolutely true and right for everyone?

NEW AGER: We each create our own reality and have our own truth.*

CHRISTIAN: OK, let's pretend I'm a "pedophile" — it's part of my reality to "love" children in every way possible, including sexually. So, while you're at work I'm going to invite your children into my home to play a "game" that I've made up. Is that all right with you?

NEW AGER: It most certainly is not! It would be part of my reality to report you to the police.

CHRISTIAN: Why? After all, it's the reality I've sovereignly chosen to create for myself. What gives you the right to interfere in the reality of another god?

NEW AGER: Simple. Your reality is infringing on my children's reality.

CHRISTIAN: But according to your belief, before they incarnated *they* chose you as their parent and they also chose whatever happens to them, including my act, and you've no right to interfere.

NEW AGER: I do too, in *this* case.

CHRISTIAN: Can you see my point now? Something within you *knows* that such an act is wrong in and of itself.

NEW AGER: You're right.

CHRISTIAN: But that can *only* be so if there are absolute rights and wrongs *independent* of our personal realities. Yet, try as you may, you will not find a ground for such moral absolutes in your world view. Your God is impersonal, "beyond good and evil." And, since in your view we are all *equally* gods, my truth about any subject is as good as your truth. So, New Age beliefs fail the test of human experience. But Jesus said in John 14:6 "I am *the* truth." As the unique, infinite, and holy God incarnate He provides a sufficient basis for saying that certain acts such as child molestation are *absolutely* wrong.

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NEW AGER: Hmm. I see your point.

CHRISTIAN: Now let me share with you what the Bible says about Jesus. * A less consistent relativist might invoke a universal law of love or karma. To this the Christian could reply: "First of all, if there are such universal laws which are absolutely true for everyone, why should you take offense when I say the gospel is not just my truth but *the* truth? But second, if everything is God, then karma is as much an illusion to be transcended as the world, and there is ultimately no one for my Self (which is God) to love. So why should I take such illusory 'absolutes' seriously?"