### New Age

**1. Description**

The New Age Movement, also known as the “New Era,” is associated with astrology, where periods of time are correlated with the signs of the zodiac. It is claimed that in recent times humanity has shifted from the Age of Pisces to the Age of Aquarius, that is, humanity has entered a “New Age.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

The movement itself embraces a great variety of views and practices. Clark writes, “The New Age movement is not a view or a school, it is a movement, a loosely related network of people and ideas that share a web of common characteristics.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Groothuis similarly states, “*The New Age movement* is an umbrella term referring to a variety of people, organizations, events, practices and ideas. Sociologically speaking, it is not a centrally organized movement with one human leader.”[[3]](#footnote-3)

New Age is a pantheistic worldview, that is “monistic.” Like Hinduism, New Age teaches the essential oneness of all things, and that Ultimate Reality is impersonal. In addition, it accepts the existence of the universal “I,” reincarnation, and potential unification with Ultimate Reality.[[4]](#footnote-4)

New Age also holds to the evolutionary model – humans are in a process of development from lower to higher levels of consciousness in route to utopia. At the end of this process a great world leader will arise, who will unify all under himself. All religions will unite. Proponents of New Age sometimes identify this leader as Maitreya, the supposed future manifestation of Buddha.[[5]](#footnote-5)

By means of meditation, each person must participate in ushering the world into this New Age, characterized by perfect unity. Clark describes this claim: “A New Age of international peace, ecological sensitivity, and social enlightenment can be inaugurated.”[[6]](#footnote-6) Groothuis relates the New Age view that through meditation, people may “harmonize their positive energy” to attain a “critical mass,” which would “catapult us into a New Age.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

Since the guiding principle of the New Age movement is complete world transformation into a condition of utopia in the Age of Aquarius, practitioners of New Age engage in efforts to improve conditions on the planet, in particular, in ecology and the preservation of wildlife.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Beyond meditation, several other practices supposedly lead to higher levels of consciousness: martial arts, visualization, yoga, hypnosis, New Age music and biofeedback. Due to the influence of this movement, the worlds of business, psychotherapy and medicine have adopted some of these practices. Other practices “beneficial” for attaining higher levels of consciousness include use of crystals, narcotics, astrology, Tibetan bells, and herbal teas.[[9]](#footnote-9)

It is claimed that meditation (particularly with crystals) “will increase your intuition, increase your abilities of concentration and focus, stimulate creativity and originality, and increase psychic abilities.”[[10]](#footnote-10) In addition, harmonization of vibrations is thought vital. The vibration that holds the cosmos together, supposedly, is the sound “om,” which one should pronounce during meditation.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Moreover, New Age embraces the phenomenon of “channeling,” that is, communication with spiritual “masters” through mediums. Some claim in this way to contact Christ. Other, supposedly, contact aliens from outer space. New Age practices may also include worship of pagan gods, such as Isis.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Practitioners of New Age claim to have contact with spiritual world and supernatural experiences, such as healings, recollections of previous lives, and mind control over events and natural phenomena. The magic power behind all this is called “wicca.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

As a rule, followers of New Age teaching live in countries where the Judeo-Christian worldview is dominant. Consequently, they hold to a unique interpretation of the Bible. According to their view, during the early years of Christianity, the Church removed from Scripture references to reincarnation. Nonetheless, some indications of that teaching remain – John the Baptist is thought to be the reincarnation of Elijah. Jesus is believed to be simply an exemplary teacher or guru.[[14]](#footnote-14)

In New Age teaching, evil is simple ignorance of our divine potential. There is no clear distinction between right and wrong. Truth is relative.[[15]](#footnote-15)

**2. Evaluation**

Like every pantheistic worldview, New Age suffers from the same defects that Hinduism, Buddhism and similar faiths suffer from: inconsistency with human experience. People do not think of themselves as part of an all-encompassing entity. Also, the idea that the essence of reality is impersonal contradicts human sensibilities – people prefer the personal to the impersonal. Furthermore, people in a normal psychological condition have no recollection of previous lives. Finally, like Hinduism and Buddhism, New Age has no reliable source for its teachings. Who exactly founded this system?

In their treatment of the Bible, proponents of New Age commit serious errors. Ancient copies of the New Testament exist that show that, in the founding years of Christianity, there was no alteration in its basic teachings, including on reincarnation (see chapter 15). The early Church Fathers without exception taught against reincarnation, and in this regard we may cite Origen, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenaeus, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory of Nyssa. We also note that John the Baptism never claimed to be a reincarnation of Elijah, but flatly denied it (John 1:21).[[16]](#footnote-16) Finally, the Bible categorically condemns astrology and spiritism (see. Deut 18:9-12; Isa. 47:13-16).[[17]](#footnote-17)

Groothuis subjects New Age to the following criticisms.[[18]](#footnote-18) Since the Absolute is impersonal, this system cannot offer its followers personal fellowship with God. Instead, it offers contact with “masters,” who lead them down the path of spiritism and the occult. In addition, this system embraces relativity, that is, the rejection of absolute truth. Yet, as we discussed previously, the rejection of truth is, in itself, an affirmation of truth. Those who affirm that there is no truth are actually claiming to know the truth about truth – that it does not exist. Finally, modern history does not confirm the claim that humanity will reach utopia in the Age of Aquarius. In many respects, conditions in the world are not improving, but getting worse.

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### E. Conclusion

In spite of the enormous popularity of the *Star War* series and its promotion of the idea of the Ultimate as an Impersonal Force that is beyond the categories of good or evil, on closer investigation, as we have seen, this theory is fraught with logical, historical, theological, and ethical shortcomings. The preferred option is clearly understanding the nature of the Ultimate as a personal Being. Therefore, we will continue our search for the Ultimate by viewing options promoting the latter perspective.

**Resources Used:**

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Groothuis D. Confronting the New Age. – Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988.

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1. Matrisciana P. Gods of the New Age. – Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1985. – P. 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Clark D. K., Geisler N. L. Apologetics in the New Age: A Christian critique of pantheism. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990. – P. 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Groothuis D. Confronting the New Age. – Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988. – P. 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Groothuis, p. 18; Tucker R. A. Another Gospel. – Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986. – P. 331. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Groothuis, p. 20-21, 31; Tucker, p. 336-337. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Clark, p. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Groothuis, p. 15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid, p. 207. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Clark, p. 9; Groothuis, p. 156-180; Tucker, p. 333. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Silbey U. Meditation and quartz crystals // Meditation. 87 Winter 88. P. 42. Quoted in Tucker, p. 333. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Tucker, p. 350-351. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Groothuis, p. 23-30; Tucker, p. 326-327, 340-341. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Tucker, p. 330-332. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Groothuis, p. 102. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ibid, p. 113, 136-139. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Groothuis, p. 100-103. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Tucker, p. 333. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Groothuis, p. 105-116, 200-201. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)