



The New Age Movement

Lecture notes by [Charlie Campbell](#)
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Unlike many religions like Islam or Buddhism, the New Age Movement does not trace its roots back to a human founder. It is actually a diverse blend of ancient religions like...

- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Taoism
- Gnosticism
- The occult

So, despite its title, the *New Age Movement* is not new.

The title “New Age” has been around for more than sixty years and was first popularized by a woman named Alice Bayley (1880-1949).

The New Age Movement and its beliefs were widely introduced to thousands of young people in the U.S., England, and Europe in the 1960’s. It was then, during the sixties, that a band known as “The Beatles” were influenced by a Hindu spiritual guru by the name of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. They appeared with Maharishi on the news, at Transcendental Meditation conferences, seminars and lectures and went to India to spend time with him in the late sixties. From then on, there was a surge of interest in the West in:

- meditation
- yoga
- and eastern philosophy

That interest continues to this day. The New Age Movement has made great inroads all across North America. Surveys show that millions of Americans have adopted New Age beliefs.

- 25% say they believe in reincarnation
- 42% say they believe they have been in contact with someone who has died
- 15% endorse the work of spirit mediums or channelers
- 67% read astrology columns
- 50% believe in ESP (extrasensory perception)

[Statistics above are cited in: [So What’s the Difference?](#) by Fritz Ridenour; [They Can’t All Be Right](#) by Steve Russo, p. 67; and a 2009 Pew Forum survey: <http://www.pewforum.org/Other-Beliefs-and-Practices/Many-Americans-Mix-Multiple-Faiths.aspx>]

One of the persons who is fueling the ongoing growth of the New Age worldview is a man by the name of Deepak Chopra. Deepak an alternative medicine guru, a spiritual counselor, a number one selling author, and a huge hit in North America. *Time Magazine* said, “Deepak Chopra is one of the top 100 heroes and icons of the century.” [*Time*, June, 1999].

His list of friends and admirers runs from Hollywood movie stars to the Dalai Lama. Chopra's 65 books have sold millions of copies in English alone and have been translated into more than 30 languages. His overall yearly profit, according to Time magazine exceeds \$15 million. ["New Age Supersage," [Time Magazine](#), Nov. 2008]

Some of his books include *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* and *How to Know God*. He's very popular and unfortunately leading multitudes into a New Age view of God and reality.

Now, unlike many religions, the New Age Movement has no:

- sacred text
- central organization
- membership
- formal clergy
- geographic center or headquarters
- official website
- or creeds

The New Age Movement is sort of a free-flowing spiritual movement, made up of believers and practitioners who share somewhat similar beliefs and practices, which many just add on to their previously held religious beliefs.

Seminars, conventions, magazines, books and informal groups replace the use of sermons and religious services.

So, that's a bit of an overview of what the New Age Movement is. Next, let's consider what New Agers believe. Of course, there are a variety of beliefs within the movement, but generally, most people who would consider themselves part of this movement hold to eight common beliefs.

Eight New Age Beliefs

1. The Belief that "All is One"

New Agers believe that everything and everyone is interrelated and interdependent. Individuality is considered an illusion. Ultimately, to New Agers, there is no real difference between humans, animals or rocks.

According to the New Age way of thinking, all of these are of the same substance. Any differences between these entities are considered only *apparent*, not real. This belief (that "all is one") is also called "Monism" (based on the prefix *mono* meaning one, or single).

New Agers believe we are one with everything. Even golf balls! In his book, *Golf For Enlightenment*, Deepak Chopra shares spiritual tips for improving your game, including "Be one with the ball." Deepak believes we are one with everything, "You can talk to trees and stars, everything is part of your body." [Source: [LA Times](#)]

So as odd and foreign as that may sound to you, that is the first belief common to New Age adherents.

2. The Belief that "All is God"

New Agers believe that everything that exists is God. This belief that all is God and God is all is also called *pantheism* (pan = "all" and theism = "god"). Pantheism is similar to monism. As we just noted, monism is the belief that all is one. Well, pantheism takes monism a step farther. Pantheism says that that oneness is deity.

The god of the New Age is more of an “it” than a “He.” New Agers reject the idea of a personal creator who exists outside of creation and exercises control and authority over His creation.

Most New Agers believe that God pervades all things, contains all things, and is found within all things. In other words, the *universe* is God and God is the universe.

Well, in response to this monism and pantheism of course all of this is unscriptural. The Bible says that the heavens and the Earth are *creations* of God.

Genesis 1:1 doesn't say: “In the beginning God *was* the heavens and the earth.” No. It says, “In the beginning God *created* the heavens and the earth.” God is distinct from the universe. He *isn't* the universe, He *created* the universe.

John 1:3 says, “All things were made through Him [a reference to Jesus], and without Him nothing was made that was made.” The things we see around us are things that “were *made*” by God (John 1:3).

Colossians 1:16b-17 says, “All things were *created* through Him and for Him. And He is *before* all things...” God is separate from His creation. He was around before all these things even existed.

Pantheism and the idea that creation *is* God is unbiblical and untrue.

3. The Belief in Human Deity

If “all is one” (monism) and “all is god” (pantheism) then it logically follows from the first two beliefs that “*We* are gods.” And that is what New Agers believe: Humans are divine. And we thought the Mormons were way off for saying that we can *become* gods! New Agers say we *already* are gods!

According to New Agers, there is no supreme being to whom worship is due because we are *all* supreme. Shirley MacLaine, the famous movie star turned evangelist for the New Age movement, said, “I know that I exist, therefore, I AM. I know that the god-source exists. Therefore, IT IS. Since I am part of that force, then I AM that I AM.”

In this quote Shirley MacLaine hijacks the title that God ascribes to Himself (“I AM”) in the burning bush (Exodus 3:14) and applies it to herself! She says, “I AM that I AM.” And that is what New Age adherents commonly do. They claim to be God! New Agers believe everyone is God! You're God. I'm God. We're all God.

You probably recall the lie Satan told Eve in the Garden of Eden. He told her that if she ate the forbidden fruit she could become “like God” (Gen. 3). Well, he's pulled off a real doozy with the people in the New Age Movement. He's convinced them that they *are* God. Not *like* God, but God!

I fear for these people. This is a serious sin! If there is one thing the Bible is clear on, it is this:

Man is not God.

The Bible condemns the belief that humans are divine. Far from being God the Bible says quite the opposite.

The Bible teaches that man is ungodly. Romans 5:6 says, “For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the *ungodly*.” Jesus tells us how ungodly we are in Mark 7:21-23: “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”

That is ungodliness! And those are the things you find mankind doing. So man is not God. And if that's not clear enough, the Bible also says: "God is not a man" (Numbers 23:19).

So, standing on the Word of God, we are confident that those who believe they are God have made a serious error.

4. We Need to Experience a Change in Consciousness

In the New Age Movement, salvation from sin and a coming judgment is considered totally unnecessary. What *is* needed, New Agers say, is a change in consciousness. Why?

According to the New Age Movement, we have forgotten that our true identity is divine. New Agers say that the human race suffers from a collective form of “metaphysical amnesia.” That is what has led many of us to be ignorant of our divinity. So what is the cure?

According to New Agers we must undergo a change of consciousness to discover our divinity and achieve our true human potential. *That* is the goal of the New Age Movement.

New Agers say that the ultimate goal of life is “to awaken the god within” and “realize our unlimited potential.”

How does one “awaken the god within”?

New Age groups encourage a variety of practices and techniques to enable individuals to make that discovery. These practices and techniques include:

- **Meditation**

(wherein the person seeks to achieve an altered state of consciousness)

- **Yoga**

(The poses and breathing are said to aid the meditation and increase a person's awareness of their divinity. For a good article on Christians practicing yoga, see: ["Do Yoga Exercises Work With Christianity?"](#) by Elliot Miller)

- **Crystals**

(Crystals are thought to be great reservoirs of energy that can be released to purify our body and mind's energy systems)

- **Channeling**

(Contacting spirit guides)

- **Creative visualization**

(where one uses mental imagery to imagine himself in the presence of a divine being or being healed of sickness, etc.)

- **Visiting psychics**

- **Past life therapy**

- **Acupuncture**

- **Astral projection**

(Training your soul to have out-of-body experiences)

Well, my friends, their insistence that we need to do these kinds of things to remind ourselves that we are God actually helps to prove—at least to me—that we aren't God! What kind of a God forgets He's God? Not a God I want to know.

I'd far rather know the all-knowing, omniscient God, who knows the number of hairs on my head and

forgets not the smallest sparrow (Luke 12:7). I don't want to know a God who needs crystals and acupuncture to remind Him of who He is. And in addition to that many of the practices used by New Age adherents to "realize their divinity" are condemned by Scripture. Take, for example, the practice of "channeling spirit guides." Over and over in the Bible, God condemns seeking to contact the dead. For example:

Leviticus 19:31 and 20:6 say: "Do not turn to mediums [a person who seeks to consult the dead] or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God....As for the person who turns to mediums [a person who seeks to consult the dead] and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people."

Deuteronomy 18:10-11 says: "There shall not be found among you anyone...who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead."

5. The Belief in the Oneness of Religions

Most adherents to the New Age Movement believe that the world's religions are simply different ways of putting us into contact with the "ultimate reality" or "god-force." This belief is called "religious syncretism."

Many New Agers visualize the religions of the world to be a mountain, with many spiritual paths to the summit. Some paths are hard, others are easier they say. According to New Age philosophy, there is *no* one correct path. New Agers generally believe that all paths can reach the top (the top for them being the realization of divinity and then the kind of life that that will result in).

Well, as you know, the Bible (which we believe to be trustworthy in all matters) teaches otherwise. Click here for [reasons to trust the Bible](#).

The top of our our hill (so to speak) is not "awakening the God within." It is knowing the true and living God, the only God, in this life and throughout eternity. And to the top of that hill, the Bible says there is only one path.

Jesus Himself, God in the flesh, said "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

The apostle Peter said, "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name [than Jesus] under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God and *one Mediator* between God and men, the man Christ *Jesus*." A mediator is a person who is able to intervene between two parties who are involved in a dispute and bring about reconciliation. Well, according to the Bible (Isaiah 59:1-2) humanity has been separated from God because of our sin. Well, the Bible says here in this verse that there is only one person who can help us: "Christ Jesus."

John the Baptist said, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; and he who does not believe the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" (John 3:36).

The Bible is crystal clear on this issue. If you want to have your sins forgiven, if you want to be rescued from spending eternity in Hell, if you want to go to Heaven, you must turn from your sin (Acts 17:30) and put your faith in Jesus Christ. And its important to note that the Bible doesn't just make these claims.

The Bible demonstrates itself, unlike any other ancient religious writing, to be trustworthy with...

- Hundreds of fulfilled prophecies
- Its amazing unity
- Its amazing scientific accuracy and foresight

- Thousands of archaeological discoveries
- And so on

It's important, if we're going to quote Scripture, that we be able to explain to a person why we are confident the Bible can be trusted. So, because we are confident in the Scriptures, we reject this fifth belief of the New Age Movement (the belief in the oneness of religions). They do not all lead to the summit. Jesus Christ alone takes us there.

6. The Belief in Reincarnation

Many adherents to the New Age Movement believe in an endless cycle of life, death and reincarnation (similar to [Hinduism](#)).

In contrast with the Hindu view of reincarnation, in the New Age Movement it is rarely believed that you can actually go backwards upon death and become an animal, insect, etc. In the West, most people who believe in reincarnation believe they are going to come back after death as a princess or something else very noble. That's not the way most people in Eastern religions view reincarnation. Many of them fear that they will come back as lesser creatures to suffer for their bad "karma." A Hindu's ultimate goal is to get *out* of the cycle of life, death and rebirth.

Well, in response to this belief in reincarnation, we believe that reincarnation is unbiblical and untrue. The Bible knows nothing of reincarnation. Resurrection? Yes (1 Corinthians 15). Reincarnation—coming back as another living creature? No.

Notice what Jesus said in John 5:28-29: "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who have done good, to a [Notice that. Just once!] resurrection [not a reincarnation] of life, those who have done evil, to a resurrection of judgment."

All people—the saved and unsaved—will have their bodies resurrected, believers to everlasting life with the Lord and the unsaved to a resurrection of judgment. This will happen in a person's life only once. Notice what Hebrews 9:27 says:

"And as it is appointed for men to die *once*, [And what happens after that?] but after this the judgment."

So, we reject the New Age teaching on reincarnation.

7. The Belief in Moral Relativism

Moral relativism is the belief that there are no objective (real) moral laws, or sins. New Age adherents reject the existence of any firm, real moral laws that govern all humans. To many New Agers, truth regarding morality and spirituality is intensely personal and entirely subjective. In their view, it is the height of presumption to think that one knows of key truths for all people, or that certain behaviors are sinful.

This reminds me of that time in Israel's history back in the time of the judges, where it is written: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:2)

Well, in response to the moral relativism of the New Age Movement, the Bible, of course, teaches that there *are* absolute truths and moral laws that are binding on all people. The Bible has instruction in both the Old and New Testaments on lying, murder, stealing, adultery, etc.

SKEPTIC: "But, what about people who have never had access to the Bible where those things are taught? They can't be expected to know those things are wrong."

They can. Why? Because they were created with a God-given conscience, where God wrote His moral law. This is something Paul wrote about in Romans 2:14-15:

"...Gentiles, who do not have the law [the Bible, the Old Testament], by nature do the things in the law,

these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them.”

God’s moral law has been written on the hearts of all mankind. And on the day of judgment no one will be able to say, “I didn’t know that stealing or lying, etc. was wrong.”

So, standing on the Word of God, we reject moral relativism. According to the Bible, there *are* objective moral laws.

8. The Belief in a Coming “New Age”

Many adherents to the New Age believe that the human race is progressing toward a “New Age” of peace and prosperity. This is where the movement gets its name.

This “golden age,” according to New Age literature, will be a time without hate, violence, wars, crime, racism, sickness, hunger or death. They believe this will be a glorious time on Earth—a time, in which there will be one nation, one language, one government and one religion. Hmm. That’s interesting. (And you Bible students know why I would find this very interesting). This isn’t the place to break down the Book of Revelation or what the Antichrist will seek to do, but this is very interesting.

What’s going to usher in this "new age"?

They believe that this age will be ushered in when more of the human race realizes their divinity. They really believe this!

Well, we hate to rain on their parade. A world without crime and wars all sounds very nice and the Bible *does* say that a glorious future is coming on the Earth. But, it makes it clear that it is not going to happen until Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom on Earth (Revelation 19-20).

And the Book of Revelation tells us that this is going to be preceded by a great time of trouble, a time of “great tribulation” (Matt. 24:21), when God will pour out His judgment on a sinful world.

In Matthew 24:21, Jesus said: “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

1 Thessalonians 5:3 says, “For when they say, “Peace and safety!” then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.”

Some of the judgments that will be poured out on the Earth will include:

- An outbreak of wars (Rev. 6:4)
- Deadly famines (Rev. 6:8)
- Fires (Rev. 8:7)
- The oceans becoming blood (Rev. 8:8)
- Everything alive in the ocean being killed (Rev. 16:3)
- An asteroid hitting the earth (Rev. 8:10-11)
- A third of the ships being destroyed (Rev. 8:8-9)
- Demons will be unleashed and permitted to torment unbelievers for five months (Rev. 9:1-5)
- Incurable, open, oozing sores on the worshipers of the Antichrist, people who take the mark of the beast (Rev. 16:2)
- A prolonged drought (Rev. 11:6)
- Great heat that scorches the earth’s inhabitants (Rev. 16:8-9)
- 100 pound hail that will pound the Earth (Rev. 16:21)
- A worldwide earthquake so powerful, the Bible says the cities of the nations will fall (Rev. 16:19)
- Islands are going to disappear and mountains are going to crumble (Rev. 16:20)
- Darkness across the planet (Rev. 16:10)

The Earth, its environment, and its population are going to be devastated. The Book of Revelation tells us that more than half of the world's population will die during this time (See Revelation 6:7-8 and 9:13-15).

Can you imagine the fear that is going to come upon the people of the Earth under this enormous display of God's power? The Bible says in Revelation 6:15 that the people of the Earth (including kings and military commanders) will try to hide themselves in caves and among the rocks of the mountains, even crying out to the rocks to "Fall on us."

Now, some of our New Age friends would say: "Charlie! The god I believe in would never do those kind of things!"

And we would have to agree with them. The god they believe in would never do these kinds of things because:

THEIR GOD DOES NOT EXIST.

New Agers have made a god up in their mind who couldn't care less about sin. Imaginary deities can't do anything. The true and living, holy God of the Bible is going to judge sinners. One only need read the account of the Flood in Genesis 7 and 8, to see that God hates sin and follows through on His prophecies about coming judgment.

So, when it comes to the New Ager's vision of a coming "new age" we disagree. What's coming is going to be better than what they are envisioning—read Revelation 21-22—but it's going to be preceded by the events described in Revelation 6-18.

Suggestions on Being More Effective Reaching Out to those With New Age Beliefs

A. Love them

We need to remember that all the people we talk to are human beings that God loves and we are to love as well.

2 Timothy 2:24-25 says, "Be kind to all...patient...with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition."

This is easier said than done, but that is one of the reasons God has given us His Holy Spirit!—to empower us to love people who disagree with us. Our witnessing efforts will be much more effective if all the truth we speak is spoken lovingly.

B. Ask questions about their beliefs

Just because a person is reading a book by a certain author or taking a yoga class or is wearing a crystal, doesn't mean that he is also a pantheist or holds to the common beliefs of the average New Age adherent. It's unwise to jump to conclusions about what people believe. There are a variety of different beliefs in the New Age Movement. So, it's wise to ask friendly questions about the person's beliefs. Questions like...

- Do you have any spiritual beliefs?
- What do you believe happens to a person after they die?
- Who do you think Jesus was or is?

Their answers to these kinds of questions will give you some insight into what direction you might take the conversation.

C. Point out common ground

When I talk with people of other religious persuasions, I have found it helpful to point out some *common* ground before I talk about where I *disagree* with them. You will have a much more receptive audience if you start off this way, rather than immediately jumping into areas of disagreement. Paul did this in Acts 17 with the men at Mars Hill ("I observe you are very religious!").

With a New Ager, you might point out that you agree with them in having rejected atheistic explanations for the existence of the universe. You might commend them on their love of reading or their search for the truth...or maybe just their love of coffee. Find something!

D. Ask loving but challenging questions about the credibility of their beliefs.

If your New Age friend can see that there are problems with his or her viewpoint, he or she may become more interested in Christianity. Asking questions is a great way to help people think. Some possible questions would include...

- How did you come to that conclusion?
- Why should I believe that?
- What evidence do you have that what you believe is actually true?
- If we are God, how did we become ignorant of that fact?
- If we are God, why do we act so badly?

For more help talking to New Agers, see "[Evangelizing New Agers](#)" by Doug Groothuis.



About Charlie Campbell:

Charlie Campbell is the Director of The Always Be Ready Apologetics Ministry, the author of [One Minute Answers to Skeptics' Top Forty Questions](#), and a popular guest speaker at churches around the United States on issues related to the defense of the Christian faith. His teachings and resources have been endorsed by Dr. Norman Geisler, Charles Colson, Chuck Smith, Nancy Leigh DeMoss, Jeremy Camp, and Brian Brodersen. He resides in southern California with his wife and five children.

Scheduling Charlie to Teach:

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