SPIRITUAL ANARCHY - THE NEW AGE THREAT

INTRODUCTION

Is there *really* such a thing as the New Age Movement? Is the New Age *really*_a threat? Do we *really* need to know what New Agers are up to? Aren't most New Age beliefs and practices quite harmless anyway? Well, the answer to these frequently asked questions is...Yes, Yes, Yes, and No respectively. And if it was as simple as that I could end my talk at this point, right now. However, it is *not* as simple as that. In his first letter St.Peter warns his readers to be watchful and he goes on: 'Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in the faith...' St.Peter does not say 'ignore him and hope he goes away.' St.Peter does not say 'pretend he does not exist'. St.Peter says 'resist him' or in some translations the words are 'face him boldly'. Now, if we are going to resist the devil - if we are going to face him boldly - we must recognise his disguises - because as we know he is a master of deception. He can disguise himself as an angel of light. And, with the New Age, deception is the key word. So let's remind ourselves what the New Age is. That is New Age with a capital 'N' and a capital 'A'. In 1993 the Pope issued a warning about New Age spirituality referring to it as a *vague vision of the world expressed in myths and symbols.* Cardinal Ratzinger has defined the New Age as *a multiple and changing phenomenon.* More recently we have become aware of the relentless progress towards a New World Order and a New World Religion - both of which are declared objectives of the New Age Movement. And in both cases the Catholic Church is regarded as a major obstacle to be overcome or removed.

BACKGROUND OF THE NEW AGE

How did all this come about ? To answer that question we need to look for a moment at the history and aims of the New Age Movement The first thing to remember is that the New Age is not 'New'. It goes back to the Garden of Eden with Satan tempting Eve to the forbidden knowledge which would make her like God if she followed his - that is, Satan's - instructions. The second thing to remember is that the 'Age' referred to in the term New Age is the so-called Age of Aquarius which we have now supposedly entered at the beginning of the new millenium. This Aquarian Age is said to represent the age of the 'spirit' and liberated mankind. For the New Agers it also marks the end of Christianity. Now, it is generally understood that there are four pillars on which the New Age stands. Those four pillars are occultism, theosophy, secular humanism and freemasonry. I am now adding a fifth - that is Modernism, although it could be argued that Modernism is simply a mixture of elements from the other four. According to Modernism: religion is essentially a matter of experience - personal and collective *experience.* Faith is from *within* - a part of human nature hidden and unconscious - a natural instinct belonging to the *emotions* - a sort *of feeling* for the divine. Clearly, this is opposed to the Catechism of the Catholic Church which teaches that Faith is a supernatural gift from God enabling us to believe without doubting what God has revealed. Now, keeping that definition of Modernism in mind - that religion is essentially a matter of experience and that faith is just a sort of feeling for the divine - let's relate that to the four pillars of the New Age. *Occultism* is defined as something hidden and mysterious - beyond the reach of ordinary knowledge and available only to the initiated. *Secular Humanism* dispenses entirely with the divine and supernatural and focuses on the self-reliance of man. The Humanist Manifesto calls for a secular system of world law and order and freedom of choice in matters such as abortion, divorce and, what it calls, sexual exploration. *Theosophy* claims access to an Ancient Wisdom, or knowledge, and the Theosophical Society founded in 1875 is committed to bringing about a universal brotherhood, a one-world religion and the development of psychic powers in man. This is known as the Plan with a capital 'P'. *Freemasonry* by its own definition is a primitive religion without a creed, being of no sect but finding truth in all. These, then, are the pillars on which the New Age stands. And there are two key characteristics of the New Age - two basic beliefs - which underpin all New Age aims and activities. The first characteristic is the idea of 'evolutionary divinity'. This includes: altered states of consciousness; spirit guides; visualization; reincarnation (the law of rebirth) and karma (the law of cause and effect). Evolutionary divinity says that the essential nature of man is good and divine - therefore, no sin; no need for confession or forgiveness; no need for salvation. We create our own reality, our own heaven, our own redemption. The second key characteristic is the idea of global unity. This involves: the concept of a universal brotherhood; the pantheistic belief that God is everything and everything is God; and creation-centred spirituality. There is no distinction between Creator and creature - we are one with Nature and, inevitably, the conclusion is reached that Man is God.

NEW AGE ORGANISATIONS

So, who or what is behind all this? And how do we recognise the New Age beliefs and practices which are threatening the Church? To answer these questions we need to take a look at some of the New Age organisations. Around the world millions of people are involved in hundreds - perhaps thousands - of groups and organisations which are promoting New Age beliefs and practices - all with a view to bringing about the New World Order and New World Religion. One of the leading organisations I want to pinpoint here is the Lucis Trust which includes offshoots called World Goodwill, The New Group of World Servers, and Triangles. The Lucis Trust (formerly known as the Lucifer Trust) is a registered educational charity founded in 1922 by Alice Bailey. It is on the official list of organisations for the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The Trust has offices in London, New York, and Geneva. For over seventy years it has held twice-monthly meditation meetings. These meetings are not intended to aid the individual to meditate better - their sole purpose is to 'uplift the consciousness of humanity everywhere'. The Lucis Trust claims that a better way of life for everyone can become a reality if practical techniques in operation today are learned and applied to the fulfilment of the Plan. The Plan they refer to here is the one drawn up by the founders of the Theosophical Society in 1875. This is the Plan which has the three objectives of bringing about a universal brotherhood, a one-world religion and the development of the psychic powers in man. When this Plan was drawn up in 1875 the founders of the Theosophical Society decreed that it should be kept secret for one hundred years. And that is exactly what happened. However, during that time, work was going on to bring the Plan to fruition. As long ago as 1919 Alice Bailey, the founder of the Lucis Trust, had started writing a series of books which she claimed were dictated to her telepathically by a Tibetan teacher known as the Master Djwhal Khul - referred to in her writings as the Master D.K. These writings claim to be a continuation of the so-called Ancient Wisdom. This is esoteric teaching handed down from ancient times in a form suitable to each period. The writings deal with: the path of spiritual evolution; the spiritual hierarchy; the new disciple-ship; and training in meditation. These same writings also deal with the proposed new world religion which emphasises the alleged common thread of truth linking all the major world faiths. Just one quote from one of the books tells us a great deal about what is going on here. This is from The Externalisation of the Hierarchy and is datelined December 1919 - and I quote - *'The three main channels through which the preparation for the new age is going on might be regarded as the Church, the Masonic Fraternity and the educational field....in all of these three movements disciples of the Great Ones are to be found and they are steadily gathering momentum and will before long enter upon their designated task.'*

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The main offshoot of the Lucis Trust is World Goodwill which is an international movement dedicated to mobilising what they call the 'energy of goodwill' towards building right human relations. It was established in 1932 as a service activity of the Lucis Trust. World Goodwill is recognised by the United Nations as a nongovernmental organisation and is represented at regular briefing sessions at United Nations headquarters. Their Newsletter is published four times each year. It is available in many languages and is distributed worldwide. World Goodwill regularly organises seminars which take place simultaneously in its three main centres in London, New York and Geneva. Another offshoot of the Lucis Trust is the New Group of World Servers. This is a group of men and women of all races, classes and creeds who 'serve' the aforementioned Plan. The New Group of World Servers has no apparent outer organisation although they describe themselves as a subjectively organised group. So how does it function? Members carry a green card on which is printed the mantra of the New Group of World Servers. This is what it says: *'A strong relationship exists between all servers of the Plan. This coherent integrated group is transmitting spiritual energy throughout all areas of human thought and action to strengthen world unity. Men and women of goodwill link up in thought every day at five p.m. local time with the world group of servers using the following brief dedication silently and with focused attention. This can be done in a few seconds of time wherever one may be.'* And then follows their six-line mantra appealing to the 'power' that guides them. It was in 1939 that Alice Bailey was recommending the use of a daily mantra for the New Group of World Servers. Surely it is no coincidence that Our Lord Himself had given us the Divine Mercy Prayer and Chaplet only one year earlier through Saint Faustina. The goal of the New Group of World Servers is the emergence of a world community which has discarded its antagonisms and hatred due to ethnic or religious differences. Its members think and act in terms of one humanity which will guarantee a future of peace and progress for the whole human race.

It all sounds very persuasive and very attractive and therein lays its appeal - and its danger. Remember, deception is the key word here. The third offshoot of the Lucis Trust is Triangles. The Triangles Bulletin of March 2001 tells us that the symbol of the triangle has long been associated with spirituality and the revelation of God in the 'outer world'. Triangles was founded in 1937 to stimulate the growth of what they term 'right human relations' by uniting like-minded men and women of goodwill in a spiritual service. The work is done by units of three people who link up in thought and a form of words to create a worldwide network.

INVOCATION - AND EVOCATION

At a World Goodwill seminar in London which I attended, Triangles was described by one speaker in this way - and I quote - *'Three people agree to say the Great Invocation every day and combine this with a simple yet profound idea that may be visualised in many ways - that in their saying of the Great Invocation they form a triangle of light and love which is linked up with the triangles of all others working in this way.'* So, what is the Great Invocation? The Great Invocation is claimed to be the rendering of seven ancient word forms into modern language and, according to the official handout, it represents the supreme achievement of Alice Bailey and the Master D.K. For almost fifty-five years it has been used throughout the world and it has been translated into almost seventy languages and dialects. It is intended that it should replace the Lord's Prayer. This is part of their objective of replacing traditional prayer and worship with invocation and evocation. In the Great Invocation - which runs to four groups of three lines and ends with a single line - reference is made to the return to earth of someone they call 'the Coming One'. The Lucis Trust and its offshoots - World Goodwill, The New Group of World Servers, and Triangles - support and feed into other leading international organisations in the New Age Movement such as The Club of Rome and its associated organisations.

Wherever we look in this demonic affiliation it is clear that the Roman Catholic Church is due for dismantling within the framework of the New World Order. Alice Bailey set out the plan for the New World Order in 1940. The basic principle would be the recognition that all people are equal in origin and aspiration, but - and here is the part that should concern us - but all are at differing stages of evolutionary development. Bailey's plan identified four 'problem' areas: The Racial Problem; The Economic Problem; The Problem of Government; and The Religious Problem. Broadly speaking, it is clear that the first three 'problem' areas would be dealt with by some form of World Government and world system of Law and Order and regulation. I just want to focus here on the fourth so-called 'problem' area - that of religion -because this brings us to the prospect of a New World Religion.

TOWARDS A NEW WORLD RELIGION

In 1998 the deceptively-titled United Religions Organisation was described by one observer as the birth of a Masonic one-world church. It had been set up in 1997 largely at the command of the World Conference on Religion and Peace which is another United Nations N.G.O. headquartered in New York. Its task appears to be to secure the co-operation of all religions for a one-world church. The launch of the United Religions Organisation was led by Episcopalian Bishop William Swing of California. One of Bishop Swing's clergymen is ex-Dominican priest Matthew Fox the original promoter of creation-centred spirituality. One of the delegates present at the launch conference was Robert Muller, one-time Assistant general secretary of the United Nations under Buddhist U Thant. Robert Muller is a member of the New Group of World Servers. In a pamphlet on the New World Religion distributed by World Goodwill, Alice Bailey writes as follows: *'In the future all men of spiritual inclination will keep the same holy days, pooling their spiritual resources in a united and simultaneous spiritual invocation.'* Three annual universal festivals are envisaged - linked to the time of the full moon in three consecutive months. Alice Bailey goes on to state that: *'...the churches in the West have refused to recognise the Law of Rebirth* (that is reincarnation) *and have wandered into a theological cul-de-sac'.* There you have it. This is what we are up against. In the New World Religion the science of invocation and evocation would replace prayer and worship. In this context we are told, the word 'science' means the intelligent organisation of spiritual energy which, when effective, will evoke the response of Spiritual Beings. We are not told which Spiritual Beings. The most recent information I have to hand is that the United Religions Organisation plans to be fully operational by June 2005. Their stated intention is to bring all religions and spiritual traditions to a common table (as they put it) making possible a permanent daily global assembly. Clearly the New World Religion is on its way. Sadly, from a Catholic perspective, false ecumenism, dissident theologians and compromising inter-faith dialogue only contribute to its progress.

CONCERN FOR THE YOUNG

This is a time to 'hold fast to that which is good.' It is a time to stay loyal to the True Church, the Holy Father and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. When writing to Timothy, urging him to preach the word in season and out of season, St Paul points out that: *'...the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but, having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.'*

We need to be especially concerned for our young people at this time and to be aware of how easily they - or indeed any sincere, well-meaning person - can be drawn unsuspectingly into the New Age web of deception. Let me give you a few examples of what I am referring to here. (1) Recently one of Britain's most senior freemasons visited Downside School. Lord Northampton, who is the second most important English freemason after the Duke of Kent, was invited to speak to the pupils about the history and work of this secret order. (2) In June of last year it was made known that the Department of Education had contacted all Local Education Authorities requesting details of every home education family in their areas. This was to do with a new service called Connexions which is designed to provide all 13 to 19 year-olds with a mentor - initially targeting those considered to be at the disadvantage of not attending a regular school. This puts the children of Catholic parents who have chosen to home-school on a par with truants. (3) In January 2001 we were alerted to a new subject called Citizenship being drafted into the National Curriculum to be taught alongside Personal, Social and Health Education from September this year (2002). Assuming this still to be the case, it will mean that pupils at Key Stage 3 - that is the 11 to 14 year-olds -will be required to know about, for example: the world as a global community; expressing their personal opinions on spiritual and moral problems; the importance of contraception; making safer choices about healthy lifestyles; recognising a range of lifestyles and relationships; and using their imagination to consider other peoples' experiences. The accompanying Statement of Values makes it clear that these 'values' do not include religious beliefs, principles or teachings. The only authority claimed for these values is the authority of consensus. (4) In March this year it was revealed that a Catholic primary school in Liverpool had converted one of its rooms into a 'Quiet Place'. No desks or chairs - just New Age paraphernalia including subdued lighting, soft music, running water and a backdrop of rain-forest murals. The therapist in charge of the Quiet Place endorsed enthusiastically her use of techniques involving one-to-one counselling, meditation, massage and group therapy. This is a matter of grave concern. It is totally inappropriate for any child to be exposed to dangerous New Age practices - most of which are rooted in Hinduism and other Eastern religions - none of which has any place in a Catholic school. (5) Still in the area of Education but at an adult level. You may have seen the news item earlier this year about the appointment of a Pagan witch as a visiting lecturer at Heythrop College. Here we have a member of the Pagan Federation Council, who sits on its inter-faith committee, who is also a member of the Buddhist Society, placed in a position of influence in a high-profile Catholic institution. The lady concerned lists among her research interests: Goddess spirituality; Contemporary Paganism; and nature religion. What was not publicised at the time is the fact that this lady's C.V. lists another appointment - that of Consultant Psychologist advising on selection for United Kingdom government posts.

RETREAT PROGRAMMES

Now I want to say a brief word about retreats. In previous presentations about the New Age I have drawn attention to retreat programmes which are not based on the teachings of the Catholic Church. Sadly, things are no better today than they were in the 1990's. In the programme of the Retreat Association for 2002 of the 217 centres listed 65 are shown as Roman Catholic or Roman Catholic/Ecumenical. Looking at the Catholic centres, still in evidence are such topics as: The Enneagram; Eco-Spirituality; Tai Chi; Yoga; Buddhist Meditation; Green Spirituality; Massage; Reiki; and Circle Dancing. All of these activities incorporate New Age beliefs and practices - some of which are more spiritually dangerous than others. If such activities are advertised in your parish newsletter the attention of the parish priest should be drawn to the dangers they represent I would be happy to provide anyone with background information to back up their case. The mis-use of Christian terminology is a common tactic of the New Age Movement. A typical example of this is a study programme called A Course in Miracles. This programme is widely available in books, on audio- cassettes and through an extensive website. The words and phrases it uses appear to be genuine - even including quotations from scripture - but it is counterfeit.

Other examples of this strategy are to be found in the annual Mind, Body, Spirit Festivals which were launched in London in 1977. These events are used as a means of promoting New Age beliefs and practices. The Festivals have spawned many smaller psychic fairs around the country where clairvoyants, spiritual healers and mediums have direct contact with the unsuspecting public in cosy local surroundings.
The New Age has even attempted to hi-jack the angels. Typical New Age books on angels refer to energy fields, astrological connections, the healing power of colour and luck management techniques such as Feng Shui. Most large bookstores now carry many shelves of books on the development of psychic powers, casting spells and learning witchcraft These are often low-cost, how-to-do-it books easily accessible to impressionable teenagers whose curiosity has been aroused by films and magazine articles. It must be made clear to our younger generation that the Catechism of the Catholic Church specifically forbids all forms of divination and magic as sins against the First Commandment.

PRAYER AND ACTION

This is a time when we must uphold, defend and live out Our Glorious Faith boldly. Prayer and action must go hand-in-hand if we are to play our part effectively in resisting the impact of the deceptive New Age Movement on the Church and in society. We thank God for Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and The Magisterium -the teaching authority of the Church - to which we give unswerving allegiance. In the face of the relentless spread of the New Age Movement whether it be through Modernism in the Church; whether it be through false ecumenism or religious indifference; whether it be through dissident theologians or inter-faith dialogue paving the way for a New World Religion; or whether it be through global activities directed to the establishment of a New World Order; in whatever way the New Age of Aquarius manifests itself and infiltrates the Church, our response must be prayer and action - it is an essential combination. As for the prayer, in addition to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and spending time with Our Lord truly present in the Blessed Sacrament we have this great weapon of the Rosary in our armoury - given to us by Our Lady herself. I am sure no-one in this Great Hall needs any encouragement to say the Rosary every day at this critical time. We have the Divine Mercy prayers given to us through St.Faustina. We have recourse to the Saints and our Guardian Angels. We have the Holy Spirit to guide us and inspire us with His gifts - especially the gift of fortitude. As for action, just look at the wonderful apostolates supporting this Conference today. You, too, can contribute to their work and help to defend and spread the Faith. Be informed...Be enthusiastic...Be active....We are involved in a battle - a battle for souls- a battle between Truth and falsehood....So we must use often the prayer to the Patron Saint of Battle - St Michael the Archangel. How encouraging it would be if our priests would once again lead their people in this prayer at the end of every Holy Mass. Perhaps you would join me in reciting it now.....'Holy Michael, the Archangel, defend us in the day of battle; be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust down into hell Satan and all the wicked spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.'
Thank you and God bless you.

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