

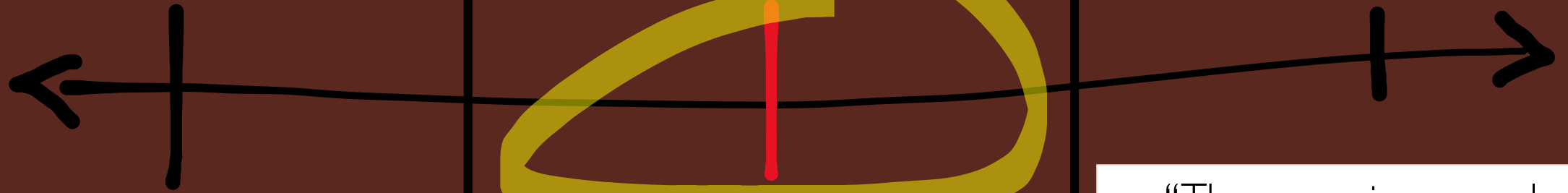
Thinking Christianly:
NEW AGE
SPIRITUALITY
AND THE
OCCULT



Triumphalist Extreme:
Overconfident,
defensive, dismissive

“There’s good reason to think
this is a real challenge.”

Blasé Extreme:
Carefree, apathetic,
dismissive



“It’s not really an issue at all
when we think about it.”

“This is the correct way for
Christians to respond.”

“There are several ways to
understand these issues.”

“These are issues only for
staunch traditionalists.”

“It doesn’t really matter how
we respond.”

“All this stuff is just crazy
anyway.”

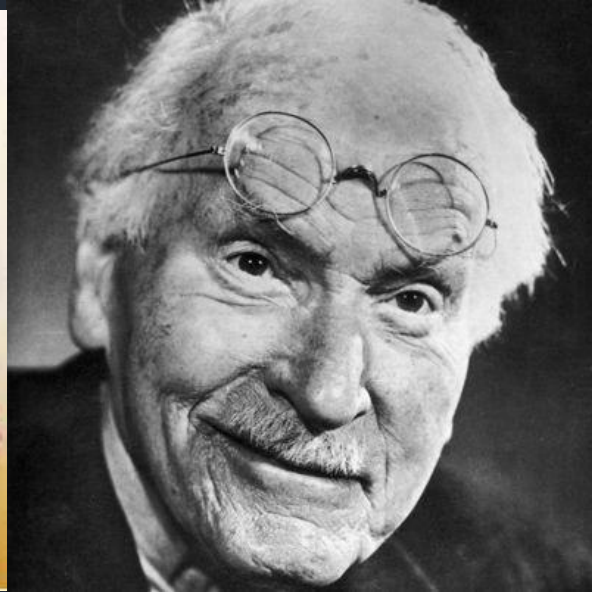
DEFINITIONS - NEW AGE

- *Alternative spirituality*
 - Alternative approach to religion, Western culture

- Which alternative?
 - Loose cluster of beliefs and practices often involving, drawing from, or blending:
 - Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism), mysticism, meditation, yoga, divination, holism, pantheism, higher self, astrology, pop-science/psychology, esotericism, sometimes psychedelics



DEFINITIONS - NEW AGE



- Sources

- Swedenborg, Jung, neo-Hinduism (Vivekananda), Spiritualism, Theosophy (Blavatsky), counterculture of 60s and 70s (think Beatles)



- *But the bulk of New Age practitioners may not be aware of influences*



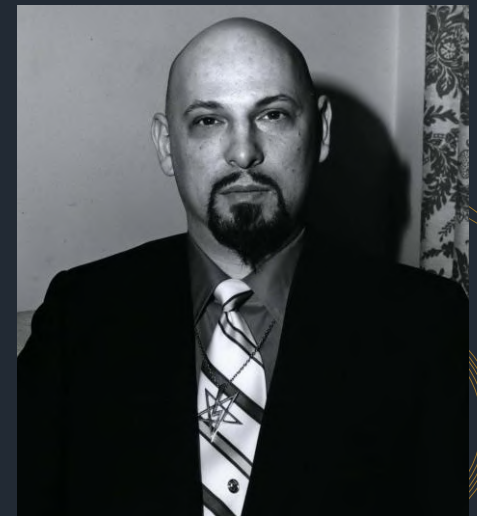
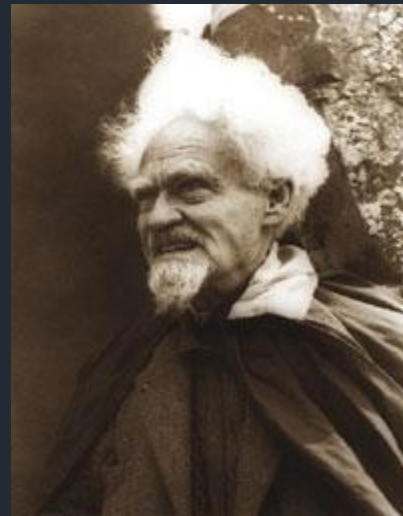
DEFINITIONS – NEW AGE

- Beliefs
 - Anti-institutional; no ‘official’ doctrine – authority resides in the self*
 - *ego-consciousness is a big part of the problem. Realize deeper, higher, truer Self
 - Pan(en)theistic: divinity flows in and through all things; *is* all things at some level
 - Cosmic energy; love; infinite spirit; the whole (typically more impersonal)
 - We are all divine (at some level)
 - What/who you really are doesn’t need remaking or redeeming, only *uncovering*
 - Spiritual worlds peopled with angels, demons, ‘ascended masters’, gods, ‘spirit guides’
 - Can be accessed via ‘astral travelling’ or channeling
- Often but not always: pre-existence of soul; reincarnation. Heavy communal focus.



DEFINITIONS - THE OCCULT

- Occult - Latin *occultus*, hidden, secret
 - Knowledge of the paranormal, supernatural, etc.
- 16th c. – astrology, alchemy, magic
- Mediumship, fortune-telling, clairvoyance, remote viewing, astral travelling, ghost hunting, telekinesis, telepathy, astrology, UFOs, Freemasonry, etc.



NEW AGE AND OCCULT: *ALTERNATIVE*

- Different to what? ‘Hidden’ relative to what?
 - Enlightenment philosophy: scientific revolution and naturalism
 - Materialism, consumerism, individualism, ‘techno-utopianism’ of Western culture
 - Traditional and/or institutional religion as popularly understood - *experience*

“There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy” – Hamlet

- Note, in passing, how New Age/Occult beliefs both reject *and* conform to enlightenment, consumerist thinking in different ways



STATS, ETC.

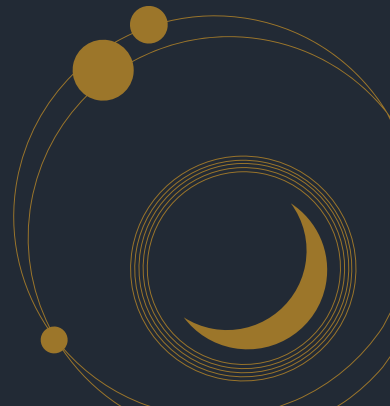
Secular,
wealthy
Westerners!

- 53% of Brits say they belong to no religion
 - But of these only half say they don't believe in God
- 'Spiritual but not religious' – 10%? 15%?
- 68% of Brits believe in ghosts (12% claim to have seen one)
- 19% of Brits believe in reincarnation

- "Good vibes" or "good energy"
- "The universe _____"
 - ★ • Mainstreaming of yoga, reiki, tarot cards, astrology, etc.
 - "Everything happens for a reason"
 - ★ "Manifesting"

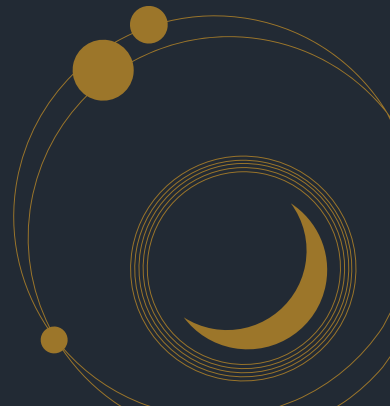


DISCUSSION: WHAT
EXPERIENCE DO YOU OR
OTHERS YOU KNOW HAVE
WITH ANY OF THIS SORT OF
THING?



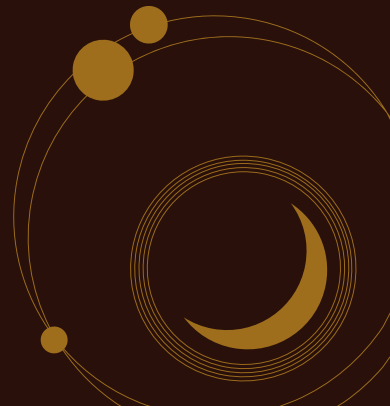
SO WHAT? OLD TESTAMENT

- Leviticus 19:31; 20:6, 27 (banning mediums, spiritists, magicians)
- Deuteronomy 18:10–12 (omens, witchcraft, spells, sorcery, divination)
 - Prophets instead!
- Deuteronomy 32:8–9 – Sons of God?
 - Daniel 10:13 – prince of Persia?
- Exodus 7–8 – Egyptian magicians
- 1 Samuel 28 – Saul and the medium of Endor



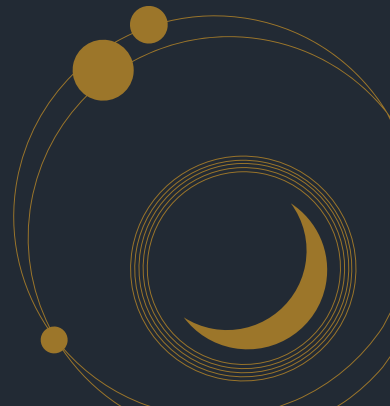
SO WHAT? NEW TESTAMENT

- 1 Peter 3:18, 4:6 and the ‘Harrowing of Hell’
- Ephesians 4:9 (descended to lower parts of earth)
- Matthew 12:40 – Jonah comparison
- 2 Corinthians 12:2–4 – ‘caught up in paradise’ (cf. ‘today you will...’)
- Many angels, demons, healings, etc.
 - Resurrection and appearances!
 - Galatians 5:20 (*pharmakeia*)



SO WHAT?

Scripture is suffused with the Supernatural



“There are more things in Heaven and Earth,
Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy”

Questions?

SOME TESTIMONIES

- Guy on the right from video
- J. B. Phillips on C. S. Lewis
- Craig Keener
- J. P. Moreland
- Os Guinness
- Paul Kingsnorth





INTO THE
MULTIVERSE
WITH JOSH PECK

INTO THE MULTIVERSE

REAL DEMONIC ASTRAL TRAVEL EXPERIENCES WITH STEVEN BANCARZ

(DON'T FORGET TO SUBSCRIBE!) - TWITTER: @SWTV_MULTIVERSE - EMAIL JOSH PECK AT JPECK@SKYWAT



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
US ARMY OPERATIONAL GROUP
US ARMY INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY COMMAND
FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755

9 June 1983

SUBJECT: Analysis and Assessment of Gateway Process

TO: Commander
US Army Operational Group
Fort Meade, MD 20755

1. You tasked me to provide an assessment of the Gateway Experience in terms of its mechanics and ultimate practicality. As I set out to fulfill that tasking it soon became clear that in order to assess the validity and practicality of the process I needed to do enough supporting research and analysis to fully understand how and why the process works. Frankly, sir, that proved to be an extremely involved and difficult business. Initially, based on conversations with a physician who took the Gateway training with me, I had recourse to the biomedical models developed by Itzhak Bentov to obtain information concerning the physical aspects of the process. Then I found it necessary to delve into various sources for information concerning quantum mechanics in order to be able to describe the nature and functioning of human consciousness. I had to be able to construct a scientifically valid and reasonably lucid model of how consciousness functions under the influence of the brain hemisphere synchronization technique employed by Gateway. Once this was done, the next step involved recourse to theoretical physics in order to explain the character of the time-space dimension and the means by which expanded human consciousness transcends it in achieving Gateway's objectives. Finally, I again found it necessary to use physics to bring the whole phenomenon of out-of-body states into the language of physical science to remove the stigma of its occult connotations, and put it in a frame of reference suited to objective assessment.

2. I began the narrative by briefly profiling the fundamental biomedical factors affecting such related techniques as hypnosis, biofeedback and transcendental meditation so that their objectives and mode of functioning could be compared in the reader's mind with the Gateway experience as the model of its underlying mechanics was developed. Additionally, that introductory material is useful in supporting the conclusions of the paper. I indicate that at times these related techniques may provide useful entry points to accelerate movement into the Gateway Experience.

3. Niels Bohr, the renowned physicist once responded to his son's complaints about the obtuse nature of certain concepts in physics by saying: "You are not thinking, you are merely being logical." The physics of altered human consciousness deals with some conceptualizations that are not easily grasped or visualized exclusively in the context of ordinary "left brain" linear thinking. So, to borrow Dr. Bohr's mode of expression, parts of this paper will require not only logic but a touch of

- "Sound, rational basis"
- Curriculum of meditative/hypnotic techniques
- Goal to "gain out-of-body state under conscious control"; "escape from time-space and interact with new dimensions"
- "Be intellectually prepared to react to possible encounters with intelligent, non-corporal energy forms when time-space boundaries are exceeded"

WHAT'S THE ISSUE? (IS THERE ONE?)

- Depends on which path we take – is there truth to these claims?
- Conflict?
- Convergence?
- Non-overlapping magisteria?
- Case by case – fourth option?

Discuss. Once we have shared answers, discuss:

How do we respond *pastorally*? (a) to non-Christians involved with New Age or the occult? (b) to Christians involved?



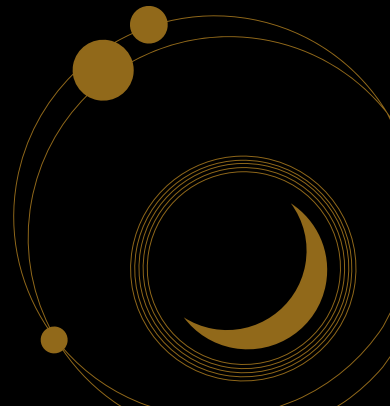
PASTORAL RESPONSE

- Common ground
 - reject materialism, naturalism, consumerism, individualism, etc.
 - affirm more to reality than what the physical sciences can account for (inc. self!)
 - agree we may be sometimes be talking about the same sorts of thing
 - encourages deeper psychological engagement
- Honesty about divergences
 - theological adequacy
 - disagree that it is beneficial – God forbids certain occult practices for a reason!
 - disagree that this is God's plan of salvation/self-disclosure



PASTORAL RESPONSE

- *Treat with respect.* Eschew dismissiveness.
 - Listen. Patience. James 1:19: “My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry” [and defensive!]
- Humility: it is ok not to know how it all works!
 - Skepticism *and* skepticism of skepticism



The background is a dark grey space-themed illustration. It features several golden-yellow elements: a large circle with a horizontal line through its center, a smaller circle with a horizontal line through its center, a planet with rings (resembling Saturn) on the right, and several stars of different sizes and shapes. The text 'ONE OTHER THING' is centered in a black rectangular box with green lettering.

ONE OTHER THING

NOT SO 'NEW'

SOME RESOURCES

- *The Other Worldview*, Peter Jones
- *Confronting the New Age*, Douglas Groothuis
- *The Second Coming of the New Age*, Steven Bancarz and Josh Peck
- *Goddess Worship, Witchcraft, and Neo-Paganism*, Craig Hawkins
- *Kingdom of the Occult*, Martin, Martin, and Van Gorden
- *New Age, Paganism and Christian Mission*, Steve Hollinghurst
- <https://ghostsghoulsandgod.co.uk/> - helpfulish website run by an Anglican pioneer minister
- <https://www.christiananswersnewage.com/> - website run by former New Age practitioner
- <https://reasonsforjesus.com/> - website run by former New Age leaders
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelos/article/methods-and-perspectives-in-understanding-the-new-age/> – article from a Christian perspective which gives some historical/sociological background



- Precession of earth video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0qHjtp4cdCA>
- New Age video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-DOgGZ_0Yg
- Stats on New Age: Faraday Institute
<https://www.faraday.cam.ac.uk/news/the-nones-unpacking-non-religious-britain/#:~:text=The%20beliefs%20about%20God%20and,%2C%20at%20heart%2C%20spiritual%20beings.>
- Christian video about New Age:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xWuz3PcuGI>
- CIA Report: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/v7e4g3/found-page-25-of-the-cias-gateway-report-on-astral-projection>

