

The Christian Worldview Compared With Other Worldviews

FCBC Bible Institute

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The New Age [Sire, pp. 162 – 210]

I. New Age: East Meets West

- A. Eastern modes of thinking trump Western rationalism.
- B. Western individualism (egoism) trumps Eastern pantheism.
- C. Naturalism's evolution of mankind trumps Eastern cyclical.

II. The Syncretism of New Age

- A. Naturalism
- B. Theism
- C. Pantheism
- D. Animism

Sidebar – Central Themes of Animism (Basic Paganism):

1. The natural universe is inhabited by countless spiritual beings, often conceived in a rough hierarchy. At the top of this hierarchy is a god (usually associated with the sun or sky) that is more powerful than any other being, somewhat like theism's God, but without his interest in human beings.
2. The universe has a personal dimension, but not an infinite-personal Creator-God.
3. These spirit beings range in temperament from vicious to comic to beneficent.
4. To get by in life, people must placate the evil spirits and woo the good ones with gifts, offerings, ceremonies, and incantations.
5. Through long training, certain individuals have learned to control the spirit world to some extent. These are the witch doctors, shamans, and sorcerers, and ordinary people are much beholden to their powers.
6. The cosmos is unified in a continuum of spirit and matter. Thus, all objects have a soul and may possess "life."

III. How The New Age Addresses Basic Worldview Issues

1. What is the prime reality – the really real? *Whatever the nature of being (idea or matter, energy or particle), the self is the kingpin, the prime reality.*

2. What is the nature of external reality, that is, the world around us? *The cosmos, while unified in the self, is manifested in tow more dimensions: the visible universe, accessible through ordinary consciousness, and the invisible universe (or Mind at Large), accessible through altered states of consciousness.*

3. What is a human being? *As human beings grow in their awareness and grasp that the self is the ultimate reality, the human race is on the verge of a radical change in human nature; even now we see harbingers of transformed humanity and prototypes of the New Age.*

4. What happens to a person at death? *Physical death is not the end of the self; under the experience of cosmic consciousness, the fear of death is removed.*

5. Why is it possible to know anything at all? *Three distinct attitudes are taken to the metaphysical question of the nature of reality under the general framework of the New Age: 1) the occult version, 2) the psychedelic version, and 3) the conceptual relativist version, none of which is any truer than any other.*

6. How do we know what is right and wrong? *The core experience of the New Age is cosmic consciousness, in which ordinary categories of space, time, and morality tend to disappear.*

7. What is the meaning of human history? *See #6 above.*

IV. Problems with the New Age

- A. Its God-less closed system produces a “rudderless” universe, especially as to ethics.

- B. Its embrace of animism opens the long-closed door of paganism.

- C. Its epistemology is formless. All systems of knowledge-acquisition are equally valid; thus, there is really no truth.