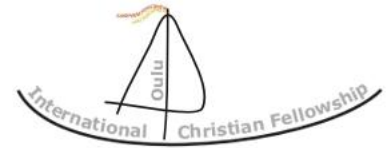


International Christian Fellowship of Oulu Info Session



Date & Time: Sunday, 8.3.2009 at 15.30
Place: Chapel of St. Luke
Info Session: New Age
Author: David Mathew

INTRODUCTION TO NEW AGE

1	A movement with a mix of ideas drawn from Naturalistic, Pantheistic and Christian world views.
2	While the basic beliefs are fairly ancient, the term 'New Age' refers to the belief that when there are enough enlightened men, the world will enter a Utopian age of Aquarius. Some estimate that this could happen around AD 2200!
3	Though this movement has no single headquarters, there are certain beliefs that are held common among its followers. These beliefs are autonomous and sometimes contradictory.
4	While 'secular humanism' views man as a highly evolved animal with no spiritual capacity, New Age brings the spiritual aspect into focus but with a huge difference as compared to the Bible. Earlier the catch phrase was "There is no God" and now it is "You are god / All is god."
5	New Age teachings have increasingly infiltrated every aspect of human life – education, culture, religion, history, politics, psychology, science and health.
6	Most of the New Age teachings are equivalent to blasphemy when compared with the Bible.
7	By claiming that humanity is divine, there is an attempt to remove any accountability to God – Our Maker.

COMMON BELIEFS OF NEW AGE PHILOSOPHY

	All is One.	All is God.
	Humanity is God.	Evolution of man into Godhood.
	All religions are one (syncretism).	Occult practices (astrology, channeling).
	Illusory nature of matter.	Enlighten through meditation.
	Necessity of reincarnation.	One world order, Vegetarianism, Holistic health.

SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>New Age View</i>
1	<u>Scripture (BIBLE) alone</u> is God authored, eternal and worthy of total trust. (2Tm 3:16, I Pt 1:22). Revelation of God is complete in Scripture. Heaven and earth will pass away but not the Word of God.	No external authority is accepted but only an 'internal' authority (that is subject to feelings, dreams, etc..)
2	The message revealed by God through the Holy Scriptures is more trustworthy than the message of men and angels. (Gl 1:6-9)	The supernatural experiences/visions of people (such as Shirley MacLaine) model their beliefs.

GOD

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>New Age View</i>
1	Clear distinction between God and His creation (heaven, earth, angels, men, etc..) (Is 44:6)	God is not a supreme being distinct from creation. He is creation.
2	God is distinct from His creation. While God has no beginning, creation was brought about by God.	Monism – There is only one essence in the universe and everything and everyone is part of that essence..
3	Forever God is God. (Ps 90:2, Gn 1:1, Jn 1:1) while man will always be man.	Pantheism – All creatures and inanimate objects are viewed as part of the divine essence. All is God.
4	A personal God with intellect, emotions and will.	God is viewed as an impersonal presence/force.

JESUS CHRIST

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>New Age View</i>
1	Jesus the Christ is eternally God (Jn 1:1)	Denies the Biblical view of the deity of Christ by

	Jesus is the Creator of all things. (Jn 1:1-3; Col 1:16-17)	distinguishing 'Jesus' and 'Christ'. Jesus was an unusual man who was enlightened
2	Jesus Christ is God who took upon human nature to redeem mankind from the penalty of sin.	Each person is 'god' and needs to have his consciousness enlightened. The means to enlighten is by mediation.
3	When Jesus was born, He was called 'Immanuel' (God with us). (Mt 1:22-23)	Every person needs to recognize the Messiah within.
4	Salvation is entirely based on Christ's work (death, burial & resurrection). If Christ did not exist, then faith in Him is vain.	Existence of Christ is not important but just the principle.
5	Jesus is the Messiah/Christ foretold by the prophets, witnessed by Israel, crucified, rose again and ascended to the Father.	Though there are many leaders, yet there is none whose life can be compared with that of Jesus Christ.
6	Jesus Christ is the ONLY mediator who restores the relationship between God and man.	There is no concept of sin and hence nothing to bridge the gap.

MAN

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>New Age View</i>
1	God created man in the image of God (refers to man's morality, creativity) capable of fellowshiping with Him. Sin has marred this relationship.	Man is divine (god). Thereby, removing the place of the true God. Or sometimes put as 'Man is part of god'

SIN / SALVATION / GOSPEL

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>New Age View</i>
1	Sin is very real. All have sinned against the Holiness of God.	God is impersonal and since each person is 'god', there is no concept of 'sin'.
2	Sin brings about bitterness, guilt, curse, separation from God and death.	Any lack is due to the imperfection of a person's consciousness. There is also no concept of 'death'.
3	The Bible speaks of Satan as the Evil One, Murderer, Deceiver	Satan is either ignored or glorified. Benjamin crème said "Lucifer ..is the sacrificial lamb and prodigal son ..made an incredible sacrifice for our planet"
4	Salvation only by His grace, through faith, apart from ALL works. (Ep 2:8)	The remedy is to alter one's consciousness by meditation
5	Jesus Christ frees us from the guilt, power and punishment of sin because of His own sacrifice.	Salvation could only mean more complete unification with the 'Force'.
6	Salvation is the gift of God. We cannot earn it.	Any improvement is solely by your efforts - 'karma'.

GOOD & EVIL

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>New Age View</i>
1	God is Holy. His morality never changes.	Good and evil is a matter of perception,
2	Since God does not change, there are absolutes to distinguish righteousness and sin.	One could reach a state of consciousness that is beyond any moral bindings.
3	There is no communion between light and darkness, between good and evil.	The philosophy of 'One is All' & 'All is One' causes all ethical distinctions to disappear. So opposites can merge and fuse.

AFTER LIFE

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>New Age View</i>
1	There's only one life here on earth and after this the judgment.	The cycle of reincarnations allows for many 'births'.
2	All are sinners and therefore rightfully deserve God's condemnation and eternity in hell.	The way you live in this life determines the reincarnation in the next.
3	Though man deserves punishment, yet God has displayed His mercy by the gift of Jesus Christ.	The doctrine of karma - law of sowing and reaping is essential for determining the after life.

4	Repenting of our sins and trusting in Christ as Saviour restores our relationship with God and assures us of an eternity in heaven.	There is no help to be expected from 'outside'. All one has to do is to look within ('inside').
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GENERAL OUTLOOK

	<i>Biblical View</i>	<i>New Age View</i>
1	Look to God – Man cannot free himself from slavery of sin. Only Jesus can set us free. Jn 8:34-36	Look inside – for solution to your problems. Think of yourselves as god. Lot of emphasis on feelings.
2	Relationship with God – God reaches out to man through Christ offering forgiveness, reconciliation, eternal life and heaven.	A system of beliefs - with no basis or authority.

Summary: The New Age teachings cannot be reconciled with the Bible's teaching about the salvation of our souls. New Age teachings are inspired by the devil to deceive people. We are created by God and one day shall stand before Him in judgment. Humanity is NOT divine. We are all sinners. Jesus Christ came to the earth out of His love for perishing mankind and gave His life as a ransom for our souls. In Christ alone, we find forgiveness of sins, peace, joy, love, hope and heaven. God loves you and calls you to Him. Your eternal destiny is at stake. Either you choose to believe in Christ who died for us or reject Him and take your place in the lake of fire. The choice is yours!

The plan of salvation in the Bible

Rm 3:23 – All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; *Rm 6:23a* – The wages of sin is death.
Jn 3:16 – For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever BELIEVES in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.
Rm 5:8 – But God demonstrates His love towards us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
Rm 10:9 – That if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. *Rm 10:13* – For who ever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
Ep 2:8,9 – For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast.
Rm 6:23b – but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.