



THE NEW AGE TOWER OF BABEL

David Cloud

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THE NEW AGE'S VAIN DREAM

With the turn of the twenty-first century there has been a dramatic increase in the popularity and influence of New Age thought. It is also called Human Potential, New Spirituality, Self Spirituality, Self Empowerment, Alternative Spirituality, and Global Transformation.

Two decades ago the New Age *seemed to be* more the doctrine of Hollywood movie stars (Shirley MacLaine's "I am God") and *Star Wars* enthusiasts ("may the force be with you") and the magic-crystal pop culture of rock & roll hippies than the philosophy of the average person or something to be taken seriously in churches.

As we will see, this wasn't true then and it definitely isn't true today. The New Age is on the move!

The New Age philosophy has permeated the self-help, personal transformation field; it has leavened education and reached deeply into business, health care, psychological counseling, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, politics, government, sports, even the military.

Neil Anderson says: "It is safe to say that the prevailing religion in America ... is no longer Christianity but is instead New Age" (*Christ Centered Therapy*, 2000, p. 61).

A trip to the average national-chain book store will verify this. New Age philosophy is found not just in the religious, spiritual, and metaphysical sections. Ray Yungen, who has done extensive and excellent research into the New Age, observes:

"If the self-help and personal growth sections of most secular commercial bookstores were examined, the only conclusion to come away with would be that New Age mysticism is the prominent spiritual viewpoint of this country. A case in point. One day while strolling through a shopping mall, I noticed a New Age bookstore and a secular bookstore just around the corner from each other. Upon examination, it was clear the

secular bookstore had far more New Age books than the New Age bookstore did--hundreds more. Moreover, *the vast majority were not in the New Age section but in the self-help, health, and other sections. Thus, New Age bookstores have almost been rendered obsolete by the explosion of practical mystic books stocked in traditional bookstores*" (*A Time of Departing*, p. 20).

Yungen continues:

"It would not surprise me if the majority of people in America have a family member or close friend who does mantra meditation, practices yoga, has either encountered Reiki or Therapeutic Touch, or is an avid fan of the Oprah Winfrey show" (p. 108).

This reminds us of the urgency for Bible-believing Christians to know the foundational principles of the New Age so they can protect themselves and warn their friends and neighbors.

At its essence the New Age is a bold rejection of the Bible's doctrine that God is the Almighty thrice-holy Creator, that man is a sinner estranged from God, that salvation is only through the cross-work of God's Son Jesus Christ, and that heaven or hell is man's eternal destiny, depending upon what he does with Jesus Christ in this life.

The New Age is casting off God's restraints. It is a fulfillment of the ancient prophecy in Psalm 2:

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalms 2:1-3).

In reference to the New Age, this vain dream began in the 19th century with the rise of such things as critical philosophy, unitarianism, evolution, atheistic communism, spiritualism, and humanistic psychology.

Theosophy brashly said that the Mosaic account of creation was “imposed” upon the West by “ignorant monks and theologians” and that it has been a drag on man’s evolution (William Judge, *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 18). Theosophy proclaimed that the idea that man is “bad, sinful, weak from their birth” is a lie, that actually man is “the most intelligent being in the universe” and an “immortal thinker.” Theosophy claims that the doctrine of original sin is “no light at all” and the idea that there is an Almighty God who judges men on the basis of their actions in this life is “a huge and cruel joke” that has plunged mankind into darkness (pp. 76, 93, 101).

The vain dream gained more ground in the first half the 20th century. In 1935, for example, Harvey Hardman, one of thousands of New Thought metaphysics teachers promoting the same vain dream, proclaimed:

“Modern man, released by science from his prison of fear; no longer harassed by the spectre of hell; freed from the hypnotic spell of the belief in Satan, is moved by the impulse of a searching curiosity about religions. He is examining the foundations of the ancient faiths in the light of a new conception of the universe” (*Making Yourself the Master*).

The vain dream put on a little more steam with the 1950s Beat Generation. Its guru, Alan Watts, observed that Zen Buddhism “appealed to the youth because it did not preach or scold as did Hebrew-Christian beliefs” (David Stuart, *Alan Watts*, p. 181). Watts’ biographer described the mood of the post-World War II generation:

“A new generation of Americans had weighed the old, found it wanting in a sense never before seen on the American shore, and in rejecting the old ways of the generation above thirty-five, had turned to a freedom that the older people called license. ... And high among the leaders of this new society, foremost among the gurus who would convert the youth to new ideas about religion and philosophy, was a slender, youth-oriented Englishman by the name of Alan Wilson Watts—one of the first ... to be an advocate of free love and free wine and free spirit, and NOW—which he called Zen Buddhism” (Stuart, pp. vii, viii).

The Watts' way was "women and ideas, and liquor and LSD and pot and irreverent people who were all doing their own thing" (Stuart, p. 205). His Zen was "me, myself, and I," and as such he was a fitting guru for the ME generation.

That was the 50s Beat Generation, which became the 60s Hippie Generation, which is still with us today.

In about 1965 "Jesus" allegedly told Helen Schucman:

"Do not make the pathetic error of 'clinging to the old rugged cross.' ... This is not the gospel that I intended to offer to you."

She wrote this message down in *A Course in Miracles*, which has since become a best seller.

In 1992 God allegedly told Neale Walsch:

"I have never set down 'right' or 'wrong,' a 'do' or a 'don't.' To do would be to strip you completely of your greatest gift--the opportunity to do as you please, and experience the results of that" (*Conversations with God*, book 1, p. 39).

In 1994 Robert Aitken and David Steindl said:

"Unfortunately, over the course of the centuries [the idea developed that] there was this gap between us and God, somebody had to make up for it--all that business. WE CAN DROP THAT" (*The Ground We Share*, p. 45).

In 1997 Frank Tuoti said:

"... the quotation 'No one comes to the father except through me' (John 14:8) is often used to declare that no one except the Christian can attain to God--or for that matter be 'saved.' THIS WE KNOW IS NONSENSE" (*The Dawn of the Mystical Age*, p. 86).

In 2005 the New Age Group of 1000 proclaimed:

"We believe that divinity does not judge, and neither does it condemn or punish. We believe that we have been given the

power by God to create our own reality, individually and collectively. ... We are committed to creating a Civil Rights Movement for the Soul, freeing humanity at last from the oppression of its belief in a violent, angry, and vindictive God" (<http://www.thegroupof1000.com/Belief.htm>).

In January 2008 Oprah Winfrey said:

"The old way is the ... Church authorities tell you how to worship and how to behave outside of church. The new spirituality is that you are your own best authority as you work to know and love yourself, you discover how to live a more spiritual life."

With each passing decade the vain dream grows stronger and gains more adherents.

It is indeed the dawning of the Age of Aquarius, and the Age of Aquarius is the age of ME!

The New Age says that sin is not real, that man is not separated from God, that, in fact, man is God, and there is therefore no need for guilt or fear. Man can tap into his Higher Self and create his own reality and enjoy life to the fullest, and death is simply a transfer to a higher realm.

At its heart is the devil's age-old lie, "*ye shall be as gods*" (Gen. 3:5).

It is indeed a New Age, and God's people need to understand something about it in order to protect themselves, their children, and their grandchildren from its tempting heresies.

OPRAH WINFREY: THE NEW AGE HIGH PRIESTESS

Few things illustrate the dramatic increase in New Age influence over the past two decades than Oprah Winfrey.

Winfrey (b. 1954), the highly successful television talk show hostess, has been called “a really hip and materialistic Mother Teresa,” “a symbolic figurehead of spirituality,” a “moral monitor,” “America’s pastor,” “today’s Billy Graham” (*USA Today*, May 10, 2006).

Her syndicated program is the highest-rated and longest-running television talk show in the United States, having run since September 8, 1986, for over 22 seasons and 3,000 episodes (“The Oprah Winfrey Show,” *Wikipedia*). Her show has 49 million viewers in 122 countries and practically any book that she recommends rises to the top rung of the sales charts. Her *O* magazine readership is about 3 million. She has a daily satellite radio program called *Oprah and Friends*. She receives 10,000 letters and 4,000 e-mails a week. Her web site is visited 1.3 million times per day. A Gallop poll survey ranked her the number 4 most important woman in history.

Winfrey is one of the most influential promoters of New Age themes in the world today, and the thing to understand is that she also does not totally renounce her Christian heritage. She often talks about her upbringing and how churches shaped her life, but she intermingles Christian faith with paganism. She was raised in a Baptist church in Mississippi, the daughter of a deacon. After a rebellious youth she “repented” and joined a Baptist church in Nashville and spoke frequently in churches at that time.

Oprah is a New Age Christian, and as such she represents multitudes of professing Christians, particularly in Western countries. She rejects the “negatives” of the biblical faith such as man being a fallen sinner that needs redemption through

Calvary, but she tries to hold on to the more “positive” aspects of love, hope, peace, grace, and blessing (divorced from biblical meaning). She rips the heart out of the gospel while still claiming to believe it!

She says that the New Age and the Bible are saying the same thing, as long as one doesn’t have a literalistic mindset:

“As I study the New Age movement, it all seems to say exactly what the Bible has said for years, but many of us were brought up with a restricted, limited understanding of what the Bible said.”

She uses biblical terms but defines them according to the New Age dictionary. On one show with Shirley MacLaine, Oprah said that being born again is the same as being “connected to the higher Self” and that “ask and it shall be given” is the same as seeking answers from your “intuitive Self” (“The Gospel according to Oprah,” *Vantage Point*, July 1998).

Oprah’s objective is not merely entertainment. The Oprah Winfrey Show Fact Sheet says:

“Our mission statement is to use television to transform people’s lives, to make viewers see themselves differently and to bring happiness and a sense of fulfillment into every home.”

Oprah’s 2005 book *Live Your Best Life* describes her philosophy that everything is one and because man is divine he create his own reality. Her gospel is that man is not a sinner, God is not a judge, all is well with the universe, and I just need to surrender to the *flow*. She encourages people to meditate and pray (and it doesn’t matter to what you pray, to *God* or to *Glorious Future* or to *All that is Divine* or to *All that is Love*, or whatever) and say:

“My heart is open to find the flow, the flow, the flow, the flow that is my life. I am willing to surrender to the flow that is my life.”

In a nutshell, Oprah's gospel is ME. She says, "God wants you to love yourself. It starts with you." Her web site shouts the good news: "Discover, embrace and nurture yourself ... celebrate and honor you!"

She says that gurus are here "not to teach us about their divinity but to teach us about our own" (Wendy Kaminer, "Why We Love Gurus," *Newsweek*, Oct. 20, 1997).

In February 2008 singer Natalie Cole told Oprah and her audience how that when she turned 58 she decided to pay tribute to herself. "I put on a luncheon and I gave myself a cake, and on that cake it said, 'Happy birthday to my best friend, me.' I thought that was the coolest thing that I could have done" (http://www2.oprah.com/spiritself/slide/20080228/slide_20080228_284_101.jhtml).

Oprah has paraded a steady stream of New Age thinkers before the world:

One of Oprah's regulars is **Della Reese**, star of *Touched by an Angel*. This television show preaches the New Age doctrines that men are not estranged from God by sin, that they do not have to be reconciled through Christ's Atonement, that God is the Father of all men, that angels are not perfect, and that salvation is by human kindness. Reese is the co-founder with Johnnie Coleman of the Understanding Principles for Better Living Church. Coleman is a New Thought minister of the Unity School of Christianity, which teaches, "We are Divine through the Christ within, the individualization of God in us."

Oprah's audience has followed movie star **Shirley MacLaine**'s journey into the New Age, beginning with her television mini-series *Out on a Limb*, which promotes such things as spirit channeling, mental telepathy, astral projection, and reincarnation. It even describes Shirley's alleged out of body trip to beyond the moon. In the movie she stands before the ocean and shouts, "I am God! I am God! I am God!" Twenty years later, Oprah is still promoting MacLaine. In 2007 she had

her on the program to discuss the book *Sage-ing While Age-ing*. The book and interview prove that MacLaine is still pushing the New Age.

In February 1988 Oprah featured Satanist **Michael Aquino**, who said, “We are not servants of some God; we are our own gods.”

Oprah has promoted several psychics. **Raymond Moody**, author of *Life after Life*, has been on Oprah’s show to tell her audience that communication with the dead is possible.

Psychic medium **John Edward** told Oprah and her audience: “I act as a conduit between the physical world and what I call ‘the other side.’ I act as that conduit, like a bridge, and I bring through their information. So it’s like they beam me their energy, I interpret it in my frame of reference, and I pass it on to the person I’m sitting with.”

Oprah has also promoted psychic medium **James Van Praagh**. He claims to receive messages from spirits that provide “detailed evidential proof that a loved one survived death.” He says, “I think that all things are spirit and are derived from spirit.”

In 1987 Oprah featured **Wayne Dyer**, **Shakti Gawain** and **Arnold Patent** as expert panelists on the New Age. Dyer told Oprah’s audience, “You are what you think about, that’s all you are, you’re purely your thoughts.”

During that program Oprah said:

“Isn’t it just spiritual evolverment; isn’t it coming closer to the force that is God whether you call it God or not, isn’t that what it is?”

“And so what you can create for that day you can also create for your life. I realized this and say this often in speeches, too. I am where I am because for as long as I was cognizant I believed in my possibilities. ... I allowed myself to move with the flow of the universe even before I read any of these books. I

understood that is what I was doing. Once you get this and you understand what God is then you never had to be unhappy ever--ever."

"What God really is, is God manifests himself--herself--itself through your breathe through your conscience and through your intuition. And as long as you have that, you have the presence of God and you also have power and it is acknowledging and realizing that that's what it is instead of looking out here to find it, you already have it."

Shakti Gawain's book *Creative Visualization* describes her New Age doctrine. She says we should be open to "receiving the blessings of this abundant universe" (p. 52). She encourages people to trust their inner selves. "Make contact with your inner Child, your Mentor within. That teacher knows which fork in the road to follow. And you know when you have chosen right, because then you feel alive. Start exercising your intuition by letting it guide you on issues of less importance. For instance, shall I go to that party or not? What feels best? And then act on it, like if you never had a doubt in your mind" (<http://shaktigawain.wwwhubs.com/>). Trusting oneself is actually a blind leap into the dark.

Another panel of Oprah guests who discussed the New Age consisted of **Don Curtis** (Unity ministry and channeler), **Kevin Ryerson** (Shirley MacLaine's channeler), and **Marilyn Ferguson**. Curtis claimed that the doctrine of reincarnation was originally believed by Christians but was thrown out at the Council of Nicea in the 4th century. (This Council had nothing to do with deciding what was in the Bible and did not address the issue of reincarnation; it was about the Arian controversy and the battle over the doctrine of Christ's divinity.) Curtis said that there is a spiritual awakening occurring in America and it is about "the awakening of that divine self within individuals."

Oprah said that if Jesus claimed exclusive divinity, "It would make Jesus the biggest egotist that ever lived" (<http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/Wolves/oprah-gospel.htm>).

On that program Oprah said:

"We are talking about the new age movement, which in essence a lot of people are now believing, but you have to take, you are responsible for your life is one of the philosophies, the power of God lives in you as well as above and around and through you and with that power you control your life" ("The Universe according to Oprah," <http://www.letusreason.org/Popteac36.htm>).

In 1998 Oprah featured another panel composed of **Betty Eadie, Sophy Burnham, and Dannion Brinkley**. On that show Oprah said:

"... one of the biggest mistakes humans make is to believe that there is only one way. Actually, there are many diverse paths leading to what you call God."

When an audience member disagreed, testifying that she believed that Jesus Christ is the only way to God, Winfrey got upset and said that she didn't think that someone would go to hell because they don't believe in Jesus. She stated emphatically, "THERE COULDN'T POSSIBLY BE ONLY ONE WAY." She argued that it is the heart that matters to God, not faith in Christ. When the audience member tried again to testify for Jesus, Oprah cut her off and said, "I'm not going to get into a religious discussion." The fact is that she gets into religious discussions all of the time. There is only one religion she avoids, and that is Jesus Christ as THE way, THE truth, and THE life. For a video clip of this episode see <http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/Wolves/oprah-fool.htm> or <http://www.watchman.org/oprah.htm>.

On the same program Oprah said:

"I was raised a Baptist and we were too hung up on traditional ways. I was sitting in church and heard that God is a jealous God. I asked 'Why? Come on-let's get over it!' ... I believe in the FORCE--I call it God" ("The Gospel according to Oprah," *Vantage Point*, July 1998).

Betty Eadie, a New Age Mormon and the author of *Embraced by the Light*, has described her personal trip to heaven to

Oprah's audience. She said that when she had a near death experience, three spiritual beings who were her guardian angels appeared and guided her to heaven. Oprah said: "I believe that there are many paths to God, or many paths to the light. I certainly don't believe there is only one way..." Eadie replied that she talked to Jesus in heaven and he also said that there are many paths! Eadie said: "But he [Jesus] said about the other faiths that it didn't really matter, that love was the ultimate. That if we love one another that everything else would be okay (<http://www.letusreason.org/Popteac36.htm>).

Let's see, now. The Jesus of the Bible said that no man comes to God but by Him (John 14:6), whereas the Jesus Eadie talked to said there are many paths. Obviously one or the other of them is a false christ! Oprah and her audience like to think that they can believe the Bible and the New Age, too, but believing in opposites is not reality; it is an exercise in futility.

Oprah has featured **Sarah Breathnach**. In 1996 Oprah promoted Breathnach's *Simple Abundance*, which encourages journaling as a tool to "dig below the secret wounds of the soul" to discover "your authentic self." Breathnach tells her readers that they are "asleep in God." In 1998 Oprah promoted Breathnach's *Something More: Excavating Your Authentic Self*, which is "a life bible for women around the world." Breathnach says, "Whatever we are waiting for--peace of mind, contentment, grace, the inner awareness of simple abundance--it will surely come to us, but only when we are ready to receive it with an open and grateful heart."

Oprah has often promoted **Caroline Myss** (pronounced mace), the author of *Anatomy of the Spirit: The Seven Stages of Power and Healing*. She teaches the divinity of man and the power of positive confession. She claims that "all circumstances can be changed in a moment, and all illness can be healed" (*Anatomy of the Spirit*, 1996, p. 286). She says, "Act on your inner guidance, and give up your need for 'proof' that your inner guidance is authentic" (daily message on her web site for April 5, 2008). She says, "For me, the spirit is the vessel of divinity.

Its language is intuitive. Its truth is rooted in ancient wisdom” (“Caroline Myss’ Journey,” *Conscious Choice*, September 2003).

Deepak Chopra received a great boost after his appearance on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* in 1997. His book *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind* sold 130,000 copies in one day. Chopra says, “In reality, we are divinity in disguise, and the gods and goddesses in embryo that are contained within us seek to be fully materialized” (*The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, p. 3).

Debbie Ford, another New Age guru promoted by Oprah, preaches the gospel of “self-love and emotional freedom.” Her philosophy is the typical New Age synthesis of eastern mysticism, Jungian psychology, hypnosis, and more. She says: “You must go inside and get the answers because that will move it from your head to your heart” (Linda Richards interview with Debbie Ford, *January Magazine*, www.januarymagazine.com/profiles/debbieford.html). She teaches that people don’t have to be ashamed of seeming bad traits like selfishness or laziness or greed or lying because they can be good things in their proper place. She says, “I found out what people hated about themselves and I taught them how to embrace it and to love that part of themselves and have compassion” (interview). She calls the dark side of one’s self “the shadow,” and encourages individuals to learn how to make peace with it. “Most people think that our shadow side is something to fear, run from, hide or suppress. But our shadow side, when it’s reclaimed, when it’s brought into the light, can give us all the gifts we are looking for” (“Debbie Ford on the Shadow Process,” *Innerchange*, Feb. 1, 2004). She is not saying that the dark side of man is sin and that sin must be repented of and forgiven by God. To her, the biblical concept of sin does not exist and darkness can simply be embraced for the “good” it can do.

Ford believes in the divinity of man. The front flap to her book *The Secret of the Shadow: The Power of Owning Your Whole*

Life says that once we learn to integrate the shadow side we “return to our Divine essence.”

Ford says:

“There is a Rumi quote that I heard many years ago that really drove my spiritual search: ‘By God, WHEN YOU SEE YOUR BEAUTY, YOU’LL BE THE IDOL OF YOURSELF.’ Somehow, I knew that was the truth. When we have the courage to become intimate with all of ourselves--the dark as well as the light--we come face to face with our authentic selves. And we discover that we are absolutely lovable, even though we are flawed human beings” (*Innerchange* interview).

That’s the message that resonates with Oprah and her friends so very, very deeply!

Dannion Brinkley has told Oprah’s audience about his near death experiences and the spiritual power and truth he gained from these. He describes this in his books, beginning with *Saved by the Light* (1994). He says that he met Thirteen Beings of Lights within the Hall of Knowledge and was given a mission, a message, and prophecies of the future. His web site says: “This new millennium holds more power than any other in history. We are all great, powerful, mighty spiritual beings for choosing to be part of this most special time on Earth.”

New Ager **M. Scott Peck** promoted his book *The Road Less Traveled* on the Oprah show. He wrote: “God wants us to become Himself (or Herself or Itself). We are growing toward God. God is the ultimate goal of evolution” (*The Road Less Traveled*, 1978, p. 270).

Oprah has promoted **Jack Canfield**, “America’s Success Coach,” who says, “The power of your mind is unlimited.” Canfield is the co-editor of the seemingly endless *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series of self-help books. Canfield says that through meditation the individual can hear the voice of God. “As you meditate and become more spiritually attuned, you can better discern and recognize the sound of your higher self or the

voice of God speaking to you through words, images, and sensations” (*The Success Principles*, 2005, p. 317).

Oprah has promoted **John Gray**, the self-help guru who authored the popular *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* series. Gray spent nine years as a monk and secretary to the Hindu guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and earned degrees in the “Science of Creative Intelligence” from the Maharishi European Research University. This so-called science is the New Age practice of “developing higher states of consciousness” through Transcendental Meditation. In his book *Practical Miracles for Mars and Venus*, he says that “everyone now has the power to create practical miracles in their own lives.” His nine steps for creating the miraculous include meditation, visualization, focusing, and positive thinking.

Oprah has highly recommend Unity pastor **Eric Butterworth**. Of his book *Discover the Power within You*, which teaches the divinity of man, Oprah said: “This book changed my perspective on life and religion.” Butterworth taught that God isn’t “up there.” “He exists inside each one of us, and it’s up to us to seek the divine within.” On a 1987 television program Oprah said, “What Eric Butterworth says in that book is that Jesus did not come to teach how divine he was but came to teach us there is divinity within us, so that is essentially what we are offering.” Butterworth, the author of 16 best-selling books, was the senior minister of The Unity Center in New York City from 1961 until his death in 2003. He wrote: “We must begin to see Jesus as the great discoverer of the innate Divinity of Man, the supreme revealer of the truth about man, the pioneer and way-shower” (*Discover the Power within You*, pp. 23, 137). Butterworth’s “Jesus” learned how to recognize his divinity through contact with eastern gurus. Butterworth denied sin and the devil. One of his books was titled *Celebrate Yourself*.

Maya Angelou has appeared on Oprah numerous times. She promotes unity, tolerance, and the divinity of man. She and Oprah share affection for the New Age teaching of the late Eric

Butterworth. Angelou said of him, “He has been, is now, and shall forever be my teacher” (http://ericbutterworth.com/html/eric_bio.html).

Gary Zukav has been a regular guest on Oprah’s program since his first appearance in 1998. He is the author of *The Seat of the Soul*, which shot to the top of the New York Times bestseller list after Oprah recommended it. She called it “one of my favorite books.” Zukav teaches karma-driven reincarnation and promotes attunement to spirit guides. He says, “Each human soul has both guides and Teachers.” Zukav says Jesus is “the most evolved of our species” (*The Seat of the Soul*, p. 21). Zukav encourages his readers to “dwell in the company of your nonphysical Teachers and guides” (p. 239).

In August 1999, Oprah featured **Iyanla Vanzant**, a New Age “life coach” who preaches a gospel of self-esteem. She has published a number of self-help books, has her own institute, Inner Visions Worldwide, and a line of Hallmark cards. Oprah says Vanzant is “one of the world’s most admirable spiritual leaders.” She is an ordained minister in the Yoruba priesthood. This is a polytheistic, ancestor-worshipping religion of western Africa. Vanzant recommends the spirit-channeled *A Course in Miracles*. Vanzant says: “Universal love, God’s love, is the only real love that exists. ... Universal love has no conditions. It accepts all as is, because All is the true identity of God” (*In the Meantime: Finding Yourself and the Love You Want*, 1998, p. 190). On page 6 of her book, in the acknowledgement section, Vanzant acknowledges her Self.

In 2001 **Cheryl Richardson** promoted centering meditation on Oprah’s show. She described it as “spending time with yourself just turning your vision inward.” Oprah calls this “centering up for myself.” It uses guided visualization in an attempt to connect with one’s higher self or spirit guides for wisdom and direction. Richardson suggests that the practitioner relax and then, “imagine that you are inhabiting yourself ... imagine someplace where you feel comforted ... Just relax into this place ... As you rest in this place, just ponder the question: Why

am I here? ... You may see an image or hear a word. Just sit with this question: Why am I here? What are you called to do? What's calling you in your life. Simply notice anything that comes to mind, and enjoy this time with yourself." The meditation concludes with praising oneself. "When you're ready, thank that wise part of you for being there, for allowing you these few moments of peace and connection."

In February 2007 Oprah featured **Brian Weiss**, a psychiatrist and the author of *Many Lives, Many Masters*. He uses regression therapy to help patients heal in the present by digging up events from their past lives. He said that his New Age journey began when he put a female patient under hypnosis 27 years ago and asked her to describe when her psychotic experiences began. She described a past life 4,000 years ago. Weiss became a firm believer in reincarnation and has since helped more than 4,000 patients dredge up alleged past life experiences. When Oprah described the criticism she received when she first started interviewing New Agers, Weiss replied that "it's fear that keeps minds closed" and likened the resistance to New Age doctrine to the idea that the earth is flat. Weiss says that heaven is all around us and hell is "something that you don't experience after you die unless you expect it" (http://www.oprah.com/xm/oprah/200703/oprah_20070301.jhtml).

I guess you would call that the ultimate in the power of negative thinking!

In July 2007 Oprah had a conversation with **Laura Day** about the power of intuition. Day is the author of *The Circle: How the Power of a Single Wish Can Change Your Life*. She claims that one's intuition is "unmistakable" knowledge and "direct oneness with the energy that is in all of us." She says that once you start listening to your intuition, you will tap into abilities you never knew existed and thus improve your life. Oprah responded enthusiastically to this teaching, saying that "intuition told me that I needed to own myself."

In April 2007 Oprah had a channeling session with **Esther Hicks**, author of *The Law of Attraction*. While Hicks channeled her “spiritual teachers” known collectively as “Abraham,” Oprah asked them questions. Hicks told Oprah, “Everyone gets to create their own reality and Abraham’s not interested in telling us what we should create--they’re only interested in showing how we go about creating what our life path is about” (http://www.oprah.com/xm/oprah/200704/oprah_20070405.jhtml).

In March 2007 Oprah interviewed **James Hillman**, author of *The Soul’s Code*. He teaches that the soul is a product of reincarnation and that it chooses its parents, circumstances of birth, and type of body in order to fulfill its purposes. Hillman applies this New Age doctrine to child training, claiming that training should be aimed at helping the child to find his evolutionary “calling.” Children’s behavioral problems are seen as “signs of their calling.”

In October 2007 **Wayne Dyer** appeared on back to back Oprah shows to explain the teachings of Taoism. Oprah’s objective with this type of interview is to “distill the spiritual similarities and lessons between them and elevate our own spiritual consciousness” (http://www.oprah.com/xm/oprah/200710/oprah_20071004.jhtml).

In his book *Wisdom of the Ages: A Modern Master Brings Eternal Truths into Everyday Life* (1998), Dyer quotes from about 50 “teachers and spiritual leaders.” In the chapter entitled “Divinity” he quotes Epictetus, “You are a distinct portion of the essence of God in yourself. ... You carry a God about with you” (p. 31). Dyer then comments:

“If God is everywhere, then there is no place that God is not. And this includes you. Once you connect to this understanding you regain the power of your very source. ... you claim your divinity and reclaim all the potency that God is. When you are eating you are ingesting God and replenishing God. When you sleep you breathe in God and allow God to rest. When you

exercise, you move about on God and strengthen God at the same time" (p. 32).

That month Oprah also interviewed Buddhist teacher **Pema Chodron**. Her original name was Deirdre Bloomfield-Brown, but after two divorces she became a Buddhist nun in her mid-30s. She has since worked to "bring the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism to Western audiences." Oprah is helping her immensely in that work.

In January 2008 Winfrey began broadcasting **Marianne Williamson's** 365 lessons on *A Course in Miracles* on her XM Satellite Radio program. *A Course in Miracles* was allegedly channeled to the atheist Helen Schucman over a course of seven and a half years. It purports to be a new revelation from Jesus for these troubled times and claims that there is no sin and that each person is God. Winfrey interviewed Williamson on her television program and said that *Return to Love* was one of her favorite books. In fact, she bought 1,000 copies to distribute to her studio audience. Because of Oprah's recommendation, the book sold 200,000 copies that same day! In her book *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles*, Williamson says, "Jesus and the other enlightened masters are our evolutionary elder brothers" (p. 42), and, "To remember that you are part of God, that you are loved and loveable, is not arrogant" (p. 30). The "entity" that delivered the messages channeled in *A Course in Miracles* said, "Do not make the pathetic error of 'clinging to the old rugged cross.' ... This is not the gospel that I intended to offer to you," and, "There is no sin. It has no consequence" (textbook, pp. 52, 183).

Each day throughout the year on Oprah's radio program, one lesson will be covered from Williamson's *A Course in Miracles* workbook. The course includes statements that the student is instructed to repeat as positive confessions. For lesson #29 the affirmation is "God is in everything I see." For Lesson #61 it is "I am the light of the world." For Lesson #70 it is "My salvation comes from me."

Warren Smith observes:

“By the end of the year, ‘Oprah & Friends’ listeners will have completed all of the lessons laid out in the *Course in Miracles Workbook*. Those who finish the Course will have a wholly redefined spiritual mindset--a New Age worldview that includes the belief that there is no sin, no evil, no devil, and that God is ‘in’ everyone and everything. *A Course in Miracles* teaches its students to rethink everything they believe about God and life. The Course Workbook bluntly states: ‘This is a course in mind training and is dedicated to thought reversal’” (Smith, “Oprah and Friends to Teach Course on New Age Christ,” *The Berean Call*, Nov. 19, 2007).

Rhonda Byrne’s *The Secret* was featured on two episodes of Oprah’s show on February 8 and 16, 2007. Byrne says, “You are God in a physical body” (p. 164). Both shows featured glowing testimonies by people who had found some kind of success through practicing *The Secret*. The second show began with the following recommendation:

“On February 8, 2007, millions tuned in to *The Oprah Winfrey Show* to learn the mystery of *The Secret*. Since the show aired, our message boards have been buzzing with people who want to know more. *The Secret* is defined as the law of attraction, which states that like attracts like. The concept says that the energy you put into the world--both good and bad--is exactly what comes back to you. This means you create the circumstances of your life with the choices you make every day. To help answer your burning questions, two teachers of *The Secret*, James Arthur Ray and the Rev. Dr. Michael Beckwith, are back” (Oprah’s web site).

Winfrey has promoted at least two of **Eckhart Tolle’s** books. She said his 1999 book *The Power of Now* was one of her favorites. She chose *A New Earth: Awakening to Your Life’s Purpose* as a January 2008 selection for her book club and followed this up with a 10-week web seminar featuring a live discussion of the book by her and Tolle. She called this, “a classroom larger than anyone could imagine.” It was said that a half million people logged on to the first segment, resulting in 242 Gbps of information moving through the Internet. It was described as one of the largest single events in Internet history.

On January 30, 2008, Winfrey said, “Being able to share this material with you is a gift and a part of the fulfillment of my life’s purpose. It was an awakening for me that I want for you, too.”

The students are encouraged to get the companion workbook and answer the questions. But the good news is that “THERE ARE NO RIGHT ANSWERS” (http://www.oprah.com/obc_classic/webcast/workbook/anewearth_workbook_main.jsp)!

In the book *The New Earth: Awakening to Your Life’s Purpose* (2006), Tolle defines salvation as “a radical transformation of human consciousness” (p. 13) and the rebirth as “reincarnation” (p. 252). He also says: “God, the scripture is saying, is formless consciousness and the essence of who you are” (p. 219). In *The Power of Now*, Tolle says, “Christ is your God-essence or Self” (p. 104).

Referring to Tolle’s books, Winfrey told her audience:

“Jesus came to show us Christ-consciousness ... Jesus came to show us the way of the heart ... Jesus came to say, Look I’m going to live in the body, in the human body and I’m going to show you how it’s done. These are some principles and some laws that you can use to live by to know that way. ... I don’t believe that Jesus came to start Christianity. What Jesus said is much deeper than what you, how the church interprets it. There’s a depth to it. And it reflects your own depth when you read it. So there’s no conflict between this teaching, which is purely spiritual, and any religion. ... THE OLD WAY IS THE HIERARCHY HAS THE AUTHORITY. CHURCH AUTHORITIES TELL YOU HOW TO WORSHIP IN CHURCH AND HOW TO BEHAVE OUTSIDE OF CHURCH. THE NEW SPIRITUALITY IS THAT YOU ARE YOUR OWN BEST AUTHORITY AS YOU WORK TO KNOW AND LOVE YOURSELF, you discover how to live a more spiritual life.”

That is Oprah’s message to her generation, and it is receiving a resounding Amen.

By the way Oprah claims that she is *not* New Age!

“On one recent show a Christian in the audience challenged Oprah about being a ‘New Ager.’ Oprah responded, ‘I am not new age anything and I resent being called that. I am just trying to open a door so that people can see themselves more clearly and perhaps be the light to get them to God, whatever they may call that. I don’t see spirits in the trees and I don’t sit in the room with crystals’” (“The Gospel according to Oprah,” *Vantage Point*, July 1998).

This exchange reminds us that only a few of the New Agers call themselves New Age. They use many other terms, but New Age is New Age regardless of the name!

SAMPLE