



Starting with alternative therapies, all the way to witchcraft - the spectrum of offers displayed in esoteric shops is widely encompassing

Why have esoteric ideas also spread among Christians?

It is seldom that the esoteric world view is taught openly. Above all it is indirectly disseminated in diverse every day practices and concepts. Over time, such practices will suggest the kind of thinking, which in reality they are built upon. Through the multitude of offers, which can be found in today's society all coming from this background, an atmosphere and a basic general feeling has permeated our society, whose pull has touched many, without their having noticed this fact. Thus the esoteric ideas have subtly spread and today are strongly influencing many people. Many have accepted esoteric ideas within their world view without having recognised them as such,.

What can be done?

Since the confusion is great among Christians, the Faithful should:

- not go along with fashionable ideas concerning diverse world views, but should critically examine new developments
- unmask irrational ideas helped by their logic
- discover anew and more deeply the precious treasure of their Christian faith.
- strengthen their Christian identity
- courageously demonstrate a Christian profile and openly witness their faith
- develop understanding for those who are seeking and to offer them answers based on their own Christian faith

- encounter the living God each day anew through a sincere practice of their faith, by daily receiving the grace of the sacraments and by nourishing themselves with the word of God

More than 1500 years ago, St Augustine – when confronted with the challenge of people, who thought differently – wrote the following: “Much of what belongs to the Christian faith, is carefully observed, understood more clearly and proclaimed more impressively, when it is questioned by the clever unrest of the heretics and when it has to be defended against them, so that the questions raised by them become the cause for an increase in learning” (De civitate Dei, XVI, 2)

On the subject of New Age, there is an informative document issued by the Church:

“Jesus Christ, the bearer of the waters of life”. Considerations on New Age from a Christian viewpoint. Rome 2003. This document can be downloaded via the following internet address: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_20030203_new-age_en.html

Other writings on the subject:

- Baer, Randall N., Inside the New Age Nightmare, Louisiana 1989
- Benkovic Johnette S., The New Age Counterfeit, Milford 1995
- Pacwa Mitch SJ, Catholics and the New Age, Michigan 1992
- Reck William, An Overview of the New Age Movement, Milford 1995

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Catchword

Esoterism

Esoterism – What exactly is it?

- The word comes from the Greek and means “Inner, inward...”

Originally it was used to talk about secret lore, concerning spiritual, extrasensory things, which cannot be understood by sheer logic alone

- From the 19th century onward, esoteric ideas were published openly and gained wide publicity in the western world in the wake of the New Age Movement

Today esoteric ideas and practices are present in the everyday life of many, without being recognised as such.

Is Esoterism a Religion?

- No, esoterism is no religion, but rather a collective term for many trends, all of which - in a certain way - have to do with issues falling within a spiritual, religious or world view spectrum.

A typical sign for the esoteric environment is a mixture of religious concepts coming from diverse historical (and modern) times and cultures.



What are the basic assumptions of the esoteric world?

- The universe itself is said to be eternal and divine. It is described as an impersonal divine energy or power – often words or concepts coming from the Far East are used for such energy (Chi, Qi, Prana...).



The Chinese character or letter for the universal cosmic power Chi.

- All that exists is said to be an effluence of a condensed divine energy. Even gods, angels, spirits are all an expressions of this energy.

- Everything within the universe is said to be connected via this energy through a network of similarities and analogies. Man himself is a part of this divine energy. In the final analysis each human being is his or her own God.

- The well-being of each individual and of the

cosmos as such depends on this harmony of energies

- On a spiritual way of self-perfection, man is meant to raise his energies until he experiences a merging of his innate energies with the higher vibrations – the divine energy.

- Spirits and angels, fairies, pixies, elves and elemental beings surround man and can help him

- Each human being is totally responsible for him or herself, for his or her fortune or suffering, for sickness and health. Wrong thinking leads to ill health and misfortune. Positive, correct thinking leads to a successful life.

- Man does not live just once in this world, but returns again and again in many reincarnations

while continually further developing and perfecting himself.

- All religions are the same, there is no absolute truth. Each man or woman should choose for themselves what suits him or her most. At need, religious ideas can also be changed and combined or mixed at will.



Nowadays many offers from this esoteric world are not only found in esoteric shops, but in many other locations as well, whether in bookstores, drug stores or in health food stores.

Where do you find esoteric items in everyday life?

Today esoteric ideas can be found in virtually all areas within our society. In many diverse practices, concepts, and symbols, and through the practice of combining diverse religions the basic tenets of the esoteric world are spread widely. We find esoteric ideas within the health sector, within education, within lifestyles, partnerships, management etc. Part of this are practices and concepts like: Feng Shui, Bach Flower Therapy, Reiki, Qi-Gong, Tai Chi, Astrology, Pendelling, Kinesiology, Precious Stones Therapy, Yoga, Prana Healing and many more.

The Esoteric World and Christianity – do they go together?

The Christian Faith differs fundamentally from the concepts and beliefs of the esoteric world view.

- A Christian believes in the personal God. God is a You, somebody to whom one can speak.

- God has created the whole universe, yet He Himself is above the universe.

- Each human being is a unique image of God. Life is given to each individual human being by God Himself.

- “Life force” is no power, originating from nature, but a gift, given to everyone at every moment of existence by the Creator Himself.

- The final goal of man is the eternal dialogue of love with God and with all other human beings.

- The original cause for suffering comes from the damaged relationship between man and God, and between man and man (sin).

- Salvation is being granted by God and consists of grace alone. It means the repaired relationship and friendship between God and man.

- Life in this world is unique, it will not come a second time. The Christian hopes for the resurrection of the body and eternal life in the community of saints.

- The baptised has basically reached his goal. He or she no longer has to search for a way of redemption, because he or she has arrived at his or her salvation. During the course of his or her earthly life however, he or she will try to get to know Christ, the redeemer better, and too love him more.

- There is an absolute truth – and this truth can be recognised. There is no other way to the Father apart from Christ.

Christian Faith and esoteric thinking are incompatible on central issues.