

IX - The Occult & New Age

(Michael & Joy Morgan - 1981 1982)

9.1. Resume:

Initial research was on 'witchcraft'...but it led inexorably to the 'New Age Movement'.

Blurred distinctions....Areas for study included white and black witchcraft, pagan rites, ancient mythology (Greek and Roman) and Eastern religion and mysticism.....but often difficult to distinguish between them....lines of separation 'blurred'.....

The 'occult' is alive and well in Sydney e.g.

- * Annual Bachannalia Dance held to celebrate the ancient spirit of ecstasy
- * Pagan rituals performed in Waverley Cemetery and in disused railway tunnel at St James Station (popular retreat for occult groups)
- * Traditional witches covens (eg Bilgola Plateau)
- * Occult based organisations (Theosophy, Ascended Masters cult etc) e.g. The Summit Lighthouse in Killara
- * Visiting 'teacher' (1989) from US - Jim Harvey - on modern shamanism. He goes by the name Black Bear, the 'power animal'.
- * A proliferation of occult bookshops/paraphernalia (eg The Orb Bookshop and in particular Darling Harbour)
- * "The Missing Dimension" conference coming up at NSW University on 25th March 1990....open discussion on occult....eg "The Way of the Mystic", "A Shamanic Drum Journey" etc....introduced by occult researchers Nevill Drury, Steve D'Alton and Tom Jagtenberg.

Sydney's firm roots in ancient mythology.....Sydney's major parks (Hyde Park and Botanical Gdns) are littered with statues of Greek gods and goddesses. They are monuments that declare our heritage.

Connecting link to New Age.... was Freemasonry, itself steeped in the occult. It is rooted in the same Greek mythology as Theosophy which itself is one of the powerful roots of the New Age Movement.

Most deadly and insidious influence on society.....is The New Age 'religion'

OCCULT-PAGAN ROOTS

IMPACT

Business.....Church.....Media.....Education.....Health Care.....Society.....

N E W A G E

Freemasonry

Theosophy

Modern Science

Paganism

Secret Society

Occult Organns

Parapsychology
Metaphysics

Occultism
Nature Worship

Eastern
Religions

Western
Religions

ROOTS

Gods of Ancient
Egypt & Greece:

Appollo
Osiris
Isis
Bacchus
Mithras

Ancient Eastern
Religions:

Hinduism
Buddhism
Gnosticism
Taoism
Spiritism

Ancient Gods:

Bacchus
Dionysius
etc

Conspiracy of Evil since the Fall ?

The New Age Movement is:

- * A potpourri of ancient and modern mysticism (Buddhism, Hinduism, Gnosticism, Taoism, Theosophy, Spiritism etc)....or if you like...
- * A synthesis of the philosophical and religious and thought systems opposed to the Truth of the Lord Jesus Christ and His World.
- * A Deception, a Counterfeit....the New Age influence almost always hides under the cloak of the good and positive...
- * A Conspiracy of Evil....a deliberate Plan to wrest power and worship from God
- * The most brilliant and undetected assault that the world has yet known upon the one true faith, Christianity.

Influence of New Age in Sydney is all pervasive....it's clarion call to various aspects of our society is as follows:

- * *To Education & Business - "Tap your inner potential - man is in control"*
 - Personal development/self awareness
 - Vision 2000 Prog/TM Organisation/Pacific Institute/
 - Conflict Resolution
 - 'Megatrends' (John Naisbitt)
 - Networking
 - Stress Management/Relaxation
- * *To Health Care - "Our healing is within ourselves"*
 - Holistic Health
 - Eastern meditation/medecine
 - Self Awareness
 - Healthy Lifestyle (Yoga, Tai Chi, Relaxation etc)
- * *To the Churches - "Broaden your minds - be tolerant and understanding" (ie Compromise)*
 - Half truth to total error/compromise
 - Liberal Theology/Social Gospel
 - One World Government
 - Ecumenism - conspiracy
 - Holistic Health (yoga, tai chi etc in church halls, ret homes)
- * *To Society - "The Planet's destiny is in our hands together"*
 - Networking
 - Alternative energy sources (ley lines, harmonic convergence)
 - World Peace
 - Environmental Control (eg Greenpeace, Green Movement)
 - Transpersonal/Transformational Conferences

The Secular Humanist, New Age and Christian World Views

	Secular Humanist	New Age	Christian
1. Metaphysics			
God and the world	Universe is self-existent, no God	God is the world, pantheism	Creator/creation distinction
Nature of God	God is a superstition	God is impersonal/amoral	God is personal/moral
Nature of world (<i>cosmology</i>)	Matter/energy, atomistic	All is spirit/consciousness, monistic	Creation of God upheld by God, interconnected but not monistic
2. Epistemology (basis for knowledge)	Man is measure of all things, reason and science	Man is all things, truth within	Truth revealed in the Bible
3. Ethics	Autonomous and situational (relative)	Autonomous and situational (relative)	Based on the revelation of God's will, absolute
4. Nature of Humans	Evolved animal	Spiritual being, a sleeping God	Made in the image of God, now fallen
5. Human Problem	Superstition, ignorance	Ignorance of true potential	Sin—rebellion against God and his law
6. Answer to Human Problems	Reason and technology	Change of consciousness	Faith in and obedience to Christ
7. History	Linear but chance	Cyclical	Linear and providential
8. Death	End of existence	Illusion, entrance to next life (reincarnation)	Entrance to either eternal heaven or hell
9. View of Religion	Superstition, some good moral teaching	All point to the One (syncretism)	Not all from God, teach different things
10. View of Jesus Christ	Moral teacher	One of many avatars (periodic manifestations of God-guru)	The unique God-Man, only Lord and Savior

Scriptural Response:

" Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain ?
The Kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together
against the Lord and against his Anointed One.....

(Psalm 2)

" The earth belongs to God ! Everything in all the world is his !

Open up, O ancient gates, and let the King of Glory in.
Who is this King of Glory ? The Lord, strong and mighty, invincible in battle.
Yes, open wide the gates and let the King of Glory in.

Who is this King of Glory ? The Commander of all of heaven's armies !

(Psalm 24)

Bibliography:

Highly recommended.....written specifically for Australia.....is "The New Age: Christ or Counterfeit ?" by Morag Zwartz, published by Paranesis Publishing. It is introduced as a "Warning to the Churches in Australia and New Zealand".

Other useful material from:

" In Search of Magic & Witchcraft " by Alan Landsburg (Corgi).....*a general introduction to the subject*

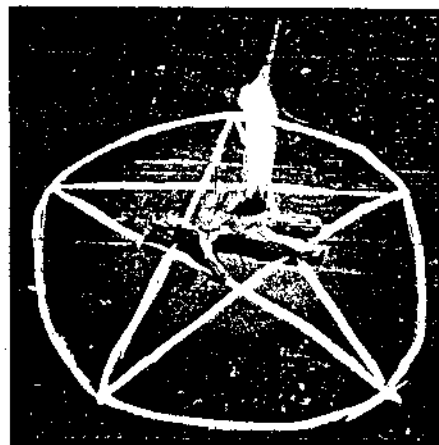
" The Occult Experience " by Neville Drury (Fontana).....*an account of contemporary occult practices by an Australian author*

" Gods Demigods & Demons " by Bernard Evslin (Scholastic Book Services)... *a reference book of Greek mythology*

" Understanding The New Age" by Russell Chandler (Word Publishing).....*a comprehensive coverage by a journalist from the Los Angeles Times*

" Gods of The New Age" by Caryl Matrisciana (Harvest House)... *an investigation of the roots, progress and probable future of the New Age phenomenon by a Christian author with an initial background in drugs and Eastern mysticism.*

" Unmasking the New Age" by Douglas Groothuis (Inter Varsity Press).....*an analysis by a Christian researcher whose specialty is the New Age movement.*



9.2. Modern Witchcraft in Australia

(From Nevill Drury's book "The Occult Experience" - page 58/68)

In Australia, modern witchcraft has had a very different history (to England and Ireland). Here it was the controversy aroused through works of supernatural art that led to interest in paganism and earned witchcraft a mixed reputation.

For most Australians in the post-war generation, Rosaleen Norton was the first witch they had ever heard of. An exotic and bohemian artist, she aroused a considerable public outcry by exhibiting paintings of naked gods and goddesses, proclaiming her allegiance to the Great God Pan, and describing herself as 'the Witch of Kings Cross' - a reference to Sydney's colourful red-light district.

Rosaleen Norton was born in Dunedin, New Zealand in 1917 and migrated with her family to Sydney when she was still a child. As early as the age of three she had been drawing ghosts and shining dragons, and as a precocious secondary school student she alarmed her fellow pupils with her drawings of vampires, ghouls and werewolves.

After being expelled by her headmistress for her 'corrupting' influence on the other children, young Rosaleen studied art at East Sydney Technical College and then took a job with Smith's Weekly as a writer and junior artist. Eighteen months later she abandoned this to become a pavement artist and studio model, working also as a waitress in night clubs and as a designer for a toy manufacturer.

When she was 23 she had her first mystical experience - 'a feeling of disintegration and ecstasy' in which her spirit seemed to soar into the sky before returning to her body again. This led her to explore the available literature on magic, trance states, comparative religions and Jungian psychology. She soon became totally intrigued by the potential of the human mind.

Rosaleen was now drawing pictures of the gods and spirits she was contacting in trance. Sometimes she would spend several days in a state of dissociation, guarded by her sister Cecily, and then return to capture her visions on canvas. The result was an exhibition of paintings which would earn her public notoriety almost overnight.

In 1949 Rosaleen's work came to the attention of Professor Oeser, then head of the department of psychology at the University of Melbourne. An exhibition of her paintings was arranged and Rosaleen was interviewed for her thoughts on trance states, her exploration of the subconscious, and her contact with what she called 'god-forms'. She was evaluated as having a 'schizophrenic personality' but also very high intelligence. However, it was her art that made the most impact of all. Critics who visited the exhibition were horrified by her paintings which had titles like 'Merlin', 'The Gnostic', 'The Initiate' and 'Pan' - and they described them variously as 'stark sensuality running riot', 'the result of a night-mare dipped brush' and 'as gross a shock to the average spectator as a witch's orgy'. Accused of producing pornography, she was now experiencing public wrath for the first time. But she was a match for her critics. 'Obscenity', she countered, 'like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. This fig-leaf morality expresses a very unhealthy attitude'.

Rosaleen returned to her life as a bohemian artist in Kings Cross and it was just a few years later, accompanied by poet Gavin Greenlees, that she met journalist and editor Walter Glover. Appalled by their 'squalid circumstances' Glover offered to finance Rosaleen's art with a view to publishing it some day in book form, and this led, in due course, to the publication in 1952 of "The Art of Rosaleen Norton". It was a handsome limited edition,

bound in red leather and embossed with gold lettering, but like Rosaleen's earlier exhibition in Melbourne it provoked a fierce outcry from the media. Newspapers around the country denounced the book as 'the most blatant example of obscenity yet published in Australia' and the Post Master General threatened prosecution for registering an indecent publication.

These days the works of Rosaleen Norton seem harmless enough. Admittedly, a strong pagan current runs through her work, there are hints of both evil and visionary excitement in her compositions, and many of the gods and spirits depicted are naked. But the public reaction to her paintings in the 1950's was out of all proportion to their content. It was as if a deep pagan pulse had been tapped and mainstream morality was offended.

Walter Glover came before a magistrate and was fined five pounds plus costs. But far worse than this, the book had drained his resources. Within a few years he was in a state of financial ruin.

Rosaleen meanwhile had become a national celebrity and a spate of magazines ran gaudy headlines announcing exclusive interviews with an authentic pagan witch. This newfound curiosity in her work allowed Rosaleen to explain to the public her belief in pantheism, in the ongoing 'reality' of the ancient gods, and the value of Nature-worship. There were further court cases and accusations of obscenity, but the point had been made. A deep occult current had bubbled to the surface in seamy Kings Cross.

Rosaleen Norton found an interesting ally, however, in the distinguished musician Sir Eugene Goossens - at the time Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Perhaps bored by his staid and conservative work colleagues, he found Rosaleen and Gavin exciting to be with, and joined the small witchcraft coven they had established in Kings Cross. But controversy erupted yet again when Sir Eugene returned to Sydney Airport from an overseas trip laden with ceremonial tribal masks and pagan art-objects. Customs officials were intrigued by the nature of his purchases and wondered what use they could possibly have; it was not long before he was dismissed from his post at the Conservatorium of Music and obliged to return to England. Rosaleen meanwhile continued with her bohemian lifestyle, painted numerous occult murals on the walls of coffee shops and restaurants in Kings Cross, and became a celebrated and well known eccentric. She died in a hospice in December 1979.

It is fair to say that Australian witchcraft has not seen such a colourful and exotic pagan personality since Rosaleen's death, but covens continue to flourish in several Australian cities, especially Sydney and Perth. Most witches keep to themselves, meet on the sabbats and take a low public profile. There are several small occult magazines, like Kindred Spirits Quarterly, The Source and Shadowplay which allow pagans to keep in touch with each other, but the witchcraft movement as a whole remains informal and decentralised; very much a case of individuals doing their own thing.

One of the better known covens in Australian witchcraft is based in Perth. Comparable in style to the groups established by Alex Saunders in the 1960's, it is still somewhat hierarchical and continues to emphasise the idea of magical lineage - a feature noticeably less prevalent in American neopaganism. The Coven of Lothlorien, however, has two strong personalities at the helm, which goes some way to explaining its structure.

Now aged 40, Gwydyon is a well-built, handsome man of German extraction. He is High Priest of the coven and shares an equal role with his wife, Lady Tanith. Both are professional entertainers by day - specialising in a spectacular fire-eating act which has

taken them on tour as far afield as Las Vegas. But their witchcraft is also a major part of their lives and, like the Farrars, they take a keen responsibility for the welfare of other members of their group.

Gwydyon was born in Victoria and learnt a blend of Freemasonry and magic from his father. He had another teacher as well - Gwydyon prefers that he remains anonymous - and this person had trained with Dion Fortune: a leading English occultist and psychotherapist who had been a member of one of the splinter orders descended from the Golden Dawn. There is no doubt that Gwydyon likes to feel he is carrying on an occult tradition and that he can share this knowledge now with other members of the coven.

After a variety of occupations, including working as a paramedic on the Bass-Strait oil fields and later as an ambulance driver, Gwydyon came to Perth in 1971 and met Tanith 4 years later.

Shewas an emigre from Scotland, a vivacious and cheerful woman with rich amber hair and a colourful personality. Her background was quite different to his. Educated in a convent and brought up as a strict Roman Catholic, she had dserted the fold by marrying a Jehovah's Witness, but the marriage was shortlived and she found herself looking for a new perspective. Her forst contact with the occult - books on astral travel and witchcraft - 'terrified' her but she was intrigued by spiritualism and the interpretation of dreams. When she met Gwydyon she was still not sure whether Wicca was really some form of devil-worship - her religious upbringing had warned her specifically against encounters of this type. However Tanith says that, at heart, she was really goddess-oriented and it was comparatively easy switching from the Virgin Mary to the White Goddess. And her personal attraction to Gwydyon was also very strong. She was totally drawn to him - even if he was a witch !

Gwydyon became Tanith's manager, arranging her fire-eating engagements, and the couple also started an occult shop. The Sorceress, in Fremantle. They had now formed a coven and were alternating their evenings between floor shows and craft workings, as well as ordering stocks of incense, books and ritual equipment for the shop.

Gwydyon agree that their coven is unconventional, even a little conservative. Tanith says she does not like to take the dominant role for herself - preferring an 'equal polarity' between Gwydyon and herself. While she is not herself a feminist, she does see her role primarily as 'reawakening the Goddess' for members of her group. However she recognises Gwydyon's considerable knowledge of magic, witchcraft and the Kabbalah, and many of the distinctive aspects of the coven are more due to his influence than to hers. Gwydyon calls his orientation Modern Wicca - a blend of witchcraft and Kabbalistic magic - and there is also a Celtic flavour to many of the rituals. But there is a srong martial arts input as well - a reflection of Gwydyon's personal interest in Kung Fu and Ninja techniques. All members of the coven have some acquaintance with Bando Banshay, a Burmese form of Kung Fu, and Gwydyon maintains this is particularly useful because the 'warrior priest' was an important role in ancient Celtic tradition. All rituals performed in their temple room therefore includea guard armed with a spear, and this figure also personifies the idea of 'psychic defence' - maintaining the spiritual integrity of the ritual.

The Coven of Lothlorien divides its three Wiccan initiates into 18 month periods and members learn not only about Wicca but also about Celtic mythology, Egyptian magic and the Kabbalah, as well as how to conduct wiccanings and handfastings. The coven, they say, is a family and the lives of all the participants interconnect on a social as well as a magical level.

Gwydyon believes it is not without reason that Perth is known as the 'City of Light', for there are more occultists in this city per capita of population than in any city in the southern hemisphere ! He is convinced there is an ongoing occult revival:

"In the last 9 years, Wicca in Perth has expanded considerably. All the original members of our coven are now running their own groups.....and with very few exceptions all the people that we've assisted in putting through the Craft have worked very hard to establish a coven and help build the movement in a positive way."

But the Coven of Lothlorien also has its problems - and these have mostly to do with stereotyping and cheap publicity in the media. They still get mistaken for Satanists:

"The Sunday press finds it easy to sell papers if they can mix sex, drugs and nudity under the usual heading of witchcraft - 'The Wicked in the West'. Because the way we work has been secret for so long, people are very suspicious."

Admittedly many of the Wiccan practises, especially spellcraft, do look a little odd and could easily be mistaken for fetish worship or black magic.

One of these rituals involves forming a small doll from clay and then connecting it with a cord to Tanith's mouth. Symbolically this brings life from the Great Mother, and the doll represents the principle of welcoming life from the earth. The doll is drawn down from over the High Priestess' womb, which as Gwydyon explains, 'is the ancient altar in the matriarchal faiths', and the figurine is then used in a magical ceremony to focus the coven's powers of healing. But as in all types of magic, the symbolic form is simply representative of something broader and more intangible: in this case the mysteries of the creation of life and the emergence of mankind 'from the dust of the earth'.

Spells, says Gwydyon, can be used for both positive and negative magic but in this case the intent is a positive one. 'Spells can be used to help, heal, bless or hinder. The Wiccan spell, the witch's spell, the blessing - these are no different to a church's blessing. The spells we do are simply to help someone.....a blessing is a good spell.'

If Gwydyon and Tanith, and the Reverend Gordon Melton are right, however, Wicca still has a long way to go before its integrity is established in the eyes of the public. For most people the witch is still a sinister figure, a strange being performing even stranger rituals in the shadows of a dusty room. It is an image which even the witches of the City of Light will find difficult to eradicate.

9.3. Sydney - A Pagan Place ?

(The following article appeared in an early 1989 edition of 'City Life', a Sydney publication)

A Pagan Place ?

What has Bacchanalia, computer programming and a derelict tunnel in the CBD got to do with Sydney's witches, shamens and pagans ? Helen Marie Dickenson uncovered the connections during her own inquisition of the otherworld's escalating population.

Next time you gaze at a full moon sailing above Sydney's skyscrapers, spare a thought for the solitary pagan, down on Bondi Beach, well after the last bus has left, pouring an offering of wine to her favourite goddess.

Or think of the coven of traditional witches in the flower-festooned living room of the group's high priestess, solemnly acting out a ceremony marking the turning of nature's cycle. Or you might even drink a toast to the would-be shaman camping out under the same moon in the nearest National Park, fighting off hunger, boredom and the odd creepy-crawly as he fasts and waits for his moment of spiritual revelation.

Nobody knows exactly how many Sydneysiders are involved in the current upsurge of ancient nature religions but members of occult circles and New Age healing groups say the pagan revival is more widespread than one may think. One of Sydney's initiated witches claims, "it's not a small religion, it's just undercover".

And that's *literally* under cover, because some groups hold pagan rituals in a disused railway tunnel within half a kilometre of Sydney's St Mary's Cathedral. But some nature-worshippers are breaking cover, with a series of Dance Parties having been designed as a mass ritual to celebrate the ancient spirit of ecstasy.

Witches in Sydney fear misunderstanding and persecution, so they keep their beliefs quiet, discussing them only with those who have sympathy for mystical and occult practices. Nature worshipping pagans, who do not bear the stigma of centuries of witch-hunting hysteria, are less cagey. But they still fear being labeled eccentric because of their devotion to those graceful deities whose statues dot the Botanic Gardens and NSW Art Gallery.

Shamans, called 'witch doctors' in less enlightened times, are still little-known in Australia. They are interested in healing, and are gaining respect from New Age converts. They claim that modern shamanism is based on sacred American Indian rituals, rituals that are said to relate to Aboriginal belief in dreamtime spirits.

Officially pagans, witches and shamens don't even rate their own category in the last National Census, and an Australian Bureau of Statistics spokesman estimated there were less than one thousand self-identified pagans in Australia. Meanwhile the Catholic Church is so out of practise in the pursuit of witches and other such heretics that their media office was unable to quote off-hand the official line on these matters. Spokesman Barry Morris was quite surprised at City Life's enquiries and didn't believe the Christian Churches had anything to fear from a sudden outbreak of paganism in Sydney.

Yet it seems to be wide-spread disillusionment with traditional Christianity that's leading people to religions that were supposedly consigned to the history books centuries ago. Some young people look for feelings of closeness, ecstasy and spiritual power in born-

The God Pan meets an outback gentleman at the premiere Bacchanalia Party



CITY 16 LIFE

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Yet it seems to be widespread disillusionment with traditional Christianity that's leading people to religions that were supposedly consigned to the history books centuries ago. Some young people look for feelings of closeness, ecstasy and spiritual power in born-again or charismatic Christian groups. Others want to explore their unexpressed feminine side, or their animal and physical nature.

Most modern pagans, or neo-pagans, believe these qualities have been repressed so strongly in Christianity that the whole planet is out of balance from too much macho thinking in politics and industry. Many pagan rituals are designed to balance feminine and masculine energies, and there is a growing movement of feminist spirituality which invokes only goddesses. One Sydney pagan is Alistair Roberts, a 26-year-old rock band manager. He claims to have had a perfectly normal boyhood, as well as a sceptical scientific training at university. Three years ago he was invited to join a group deeply involved in a playing game, somewhat like Dungeons and Dragons, but set in 'middle earth', a magical world created by Tolkien in Lord of the Rings trilogy.

Alistair says "everyone involved in white witch-paganism and goddesses. It made sense to me, saying things I anyway, on a subconscious level. The group eventually decided modern goddess rituals, performed them in an abandoned railway tunnel in the CBD - a popular retreat for as it turned out.

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Alistair says "everyone involved was knowledgeable in white witchcraft, paganism and goddesses. It made a lot of sense to me, saying things I believed anyway, on a subconscious level."

The group eventually decided to create modern goddess rituals, performing one of them in an abandoned railway tunnel under the CBD - a popular retreat for occult groups, as it turned out.

" On the walls down there was a Star of David, a yin/yang sign, the Eye of Horus, - of course, the Eye of Horus is everywhere you go these days," says Alistair. The group of two men and two women lit candles and, led by a white witch initiated by the Sydney branch of the occult group O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis) started with a ritual to banish negative influences.

" We danced in a circle, we said a few Latin phrases - I don't know what they meant, but I'm sure the white witch did. At the end we drank white wine and ate bread - it's like the Christian myth of the blood and the body of Christ, which is in many religions under a different name. It was a seasonal ritual and on a full moon as well, so it was extra powerful." Asked whether his group had ever invoked any evil spirits, Alistair said "there are quite enough demons in the world already without creating more. I have no idea what black witches do, not having done it".

Like many neo-pagans, Alistair is interested in the philosophy of Karl Jung, who spoke of archetypal forces within each person, as well as the balance of feminine and masculine. " I used to be very skeptical, having had a rigid scientific training, I was only interested in logic. But I've managed to balance the symbolic side of things."

Alistair performs complex rituals occasionally and in that is like the Christian who goes to church for special festivals. " I don't walk down the street muttering and invoking things under my breath," he says, though he still believes the strong undercurrent of paganism in his thinking has made his life more fulfilling.

One person who has extended rituals from his everyday life into huge public celebrations is 30 year old Mark Raylich, the designer of Sydney's Bacchanalia Dance Parties. Mark explains that ancient Roman festivals celebrated the generosity of the wine god Bacchus with plenty of drinking, dancing and merry-making. " He was called the god of ecstasy and worshipping him gave one a mystical experience, so divinity could be achieved in this world, not in the afterlife".

Describing himself as a Dionysian Kabbalist, Mark identifies strongly with Dionysius, the Greek form for Bacchus while also studying the branch of esoteric Hebrew wisdom called the Kabbalah. Like almost all pagans, Mark respects the teachings of Jesus but rejected the Christian Church before he reached his teens. "Christianity is totally morally bankrupt. After 2000 years look at the results, look at the situation of the world - established religion is totally disgraced."

"It's far better for young people to come to my dance parties than to go to church. At our parties, often for the first time, people let go - they transcend their bigotry and self-consciousness, they see people from a different perspective, and they experience real joy, real ecstasy and real sensuality with thousands of people in a mass celebration."

"I feel that sexuality is the core to all great religions, but it's been stamped out and repressed over the last 2000 years. That's why Dionysius is such a good metaphor - whereas Christ is wrongly perceived as the sexless god. Dionysius was worshipped for his sensuality. The Greeks understood that the body is as much of a God as the spirit, and that to evolve you have to treat the body as a temple, which means honouring the god by indulging the senses."

Mark takes rituals very seriously, using them to focus his spiritual awareness. So as well as creating Bacchanalia parties as huge public rituals, he improves himself through good diet and fitness routines, as well as listening to enlightened music, such as Prince.

"Music is used for consciousness focusing, and each song contains a different part, like a series of physical and emotional exercises." After several peak experiences at dance parties and during meditation, Mark decided "I knew deep inside of me, from my own experience that all this spiritual, occult, mystical stuff was real."

Life has become much more dramatic and intense as well as more meaningful since Mark created Bacchanalia. He says the effort is worthwhile because dance parties are creating a positive group energy in Sydney. At the same time, as he brings joy and ecstasy to others, he had sped up his own development.

"I trained as an architect and was always scientifically based. There used to be whole areas of my consciousness that I didn't deal with. I didn't know if they existed so I never missed them. But I couldn't go back to that lifestyle, because I'd be totally miserable."

Personal misery or life threatening illness are usually the forces that get a shaman on the path of healing. This is the opinion of musician Jim Harvey, visiting Australia to teach modern shamanism. Jim, who hails from the thriving New Age town of Boulder, Colorado, also goes by the name Black Bear, the 'power animal' that came to him in a vision.

"Before becoming shamans, people might get sick and almost die, but they can make the decision to change their lives. To achieve anything worthwhile calls for a sacrifice, and you can either choose to make the sacrifice, or the universe will send it to you," he said.

Shamans are healers, and the modern lifestyle of the United States has led to a sudden interest in traditional shamanism, formerly practised by North American and Canadian Indians, and in Siberia and in Africa.

To make contact with the nature spirits, an apprentice shaman has to go on a 'vision quest', where he or she spends three days in the wilderness. During this time of fasting, the initiate finds a 'power spot' where the energy levels feel strong, and then builds a circle of stones and awaits a vision. This might include a meeting with a frightening spirit, the mystical experience of being stripped down to the skeleton, or a feeling of spiritual ecstasy when the shaman receives a new identity related to a friendly animal spirit such as a bear, dog or a dragon.

Black Bear, who is in Australia as a guest of Sydney's Orb Bookshop, says the shamanic experience is like Jesus' encounter with the devil while fasting in the wilderness. "You make a sacrifice with, or through, the Tree of Life to achieve unitary ecstatic consciousness. It's something you are compelled to do and words cannot really describe it, because it's your own personal experience. Each vision quest is unique."

Shamans who have completed their quest usually receive healing powers. This means they can journey to the spirit world and bring back a new power animal for another person who is feeling sick or dispirited. Such shamans resist being classed as pagans though this is simply an old Latin word meaning country dwellers, used now to describe someone who follows a pre-Christian religion. Yet there are parallels between pagan and shamanic beliefs, and Mark Ravelich has had visionary experiences like Black Bear's while on meditation retreats in the desert. However one local shaman did not want to be categorised with pagans and witches, saying that shamanism is spiritual but not religious. "We recognise Christ consciousness, and don't like New Age healing to be lumped in with witches and pagans because it gives us a bad name" he said.

Sydney's white witches are well aware they are still misunderstood and feared. One initiated Sydney witch is Mishka 21, a musician and temporary factory worker. She always questioned her Catholic upbringing and feels that she was meant to be a witch.

"I always got kicked out of religious classes. I used to bring in the communist manifesto just to shock them. Since I can remember, I've always believed that religion is something inside yourself. Becoming a witch was like fate. I heard a message while I was meditating," Mishka said. Having met some members of a traditional coven only the day before, she rang them at once to have the message explained, and soon she was invited to join the group. The coven is led by a hereditary witch from Europe, and performs formal rituals that mark eight festivals of the year, including Hallowe'en. Though this occurs on October 31st in the Northern Hemisphere, the seasons are reversed for the Southern Hemisphere. Hallowe'en or 'Samhain' is held at the end of May in Australia.

Sensation-seekers would probably be disappointed by the formality of most modern witchcraft rituals, which usually involve drawing a protective magical circle, raising a 'cone of power' in group meditation and sending out healing energy to either humans or the planet as a whole. These events have set rules of conduct, and their circle dances and wine-drinking rituals are tame when compared to what one can see any night of the week in Sydney's pubs and clubs.

Witches consider themselves to be spiritual seekers who must progress through degrees of initiation and follow a strict code of ethics.

"We have to be healthy of mind, body and soul, which means no drugs and no bad influences, so we're very careful of the people we attract. Even alcohol is limited. This makes us a pure healing force," says Mishka.

The balancing of female and male power in witchcraft ceremonies is a big attraction for people drawn to it. "Most religions after witchcraft turned patriarchal, and that's been the downfall of this society: we have no matriarchal or goddess force," said Mishka.

Though she talks very little about her beliefs to outsiders, she has experienced religious persecution: "I've had born-again Christians screaming at me, saying I'm evil for believing in goddesses and calling me Satan's daughter."

One of the leaders of Mishka's coven is Silver Ankh, a hereditary witch, born in the Dutch countryside during the 'hunger winter' of 1944. After he had stumbled on his grandmother's ritual tools of witchcraft when he was a child, granny decided too much and started his witchcraft training when he was seven. Training for the craft of the wise is quite rigorous, including meditation and visualisation to contact the nature spirits and, as a boy, he found "there is nothing more affirmative than a good old-fashioned witches broom applied to the backside to assist concentration."

Silver Ankh says that today's witches are a force for good, especially as their worship is ecologically-based. The word witch means 'wise one' and a person learning the craft learns of the hidden forces within themselves and is said to be capable of working in harmony with the universe.

He described himself as a bohemian and a 'jack of all trades', saying: "People like us don't like to be bound, especially by society's rules. Not that we're anti-social, but we just don't fit into the pretence society we live in today". Fear of witchcraft is caused by ignorance, superstition and fear but Silver Ankh feels that this is inevitable, because only those few people who have confronted their own fears - the demons within the self - will be unafraid of what they do not know.

Silver Ankh says witches are prepared to defend themselves these days: "The witches are not going to stand and wait for the Inquisition to come to our door. This time we'll fight in any way necessary to retain our rights to worship our gods and to remain in a peaceful co-existence with the rest of society."

Silver Ankh is concerned that some theatrical performances of black magic rites held in the last few years in Sydney are bringing all the "respectable" witches into disrepute, and he has publicly offered to help the authorities weed out such groups. "We call them paperback witches, followers of Alistair Crowley, and they are nothing but a bunch of frustrated misfits," he says.

Some groups, such as those associated with the occult magazine Dark Cycle, have held rituals to raise spirits in Waverley Cemetery and in the same tunnel where Alistair's group held its goddess circle.

Asked whether the performers in Waverley cemetery actually managed to raise the reputedly fictional spirit Cthulu, Silver Ankh drily commented "Of course not - the only thing they managed to raise was the Tactical Response Group. And a lot of anger from the decent pagan groups, who were horrified that the craft was thrown back 50 years by the behaviour of characters like this.

"Raising Cthulu was a piece of theatre, so it would have been more effective in Hyde Park, where the reporters could have come running more easily. Any decent witch doesn't want to be associated with this sort of garbage."

Silver Ankh believes that only a minority of the population can achieve the self-awareness necessary for the craft, and he says one should not go looking for a group, because you are most likely to stumble into a circle of paperback witches. "The trap in the occult is very dangerous - to sort out the sheep from the goats. If someone is meant to join, the god or goddess will lead them that way and they will end up in the proper group. The sensational groups, those interested in drug abuse and sadistic rituals, will only attract thrill seekers - vicious, lonely and mentally disturbed people."

Silver Ankh's group continues to perform it's rituals to honour their nature god and goddess, and to send out healing energy to clean up the planet's ecology. They do not actively recruit new members and you will probably never meet them unless you happen upon Silver Ankh's little shop in Marrickville for a tarot reading.

'City Life' readers seeking spiritual ecstasy and enlightenment can try the next Bacchanalia dance party and ponder the words of Mark Ravlich as they get down: "Something quite remarkable is happening with a large proportion of the young people in this city, and I think Sydney is going to be one of the capitals of the New Age. People in Australia don't have many higher ideals or old traditions, and the upper realms of people's consciousness are quite blank."

"I think this gives us the opportunity in Australia - not to revive Christianity or the ancient Greek religion - but to formulate a whole new way of living. It's more ready to take off here in Sydney because this is new, fertile ground," Mark said.

Sydney's nature worshippers agree a change of mass consciousness is essential if the planet is to survive. As Silver Ankh comments: "Money is the modern God, but the government doesn't have the right to cut down trees without the permission of the people. We raise power and send it out to preserve the dignity of nature and ecology for our children, because what is being practised by organised society is a criminal offence."

Media responses to the Anglican Commission enquiry: 'The occult is dangerous'

9.4. Church Response to the Occult:

The Church would appear to have been involved itself some 100 plus years ago.....in Sheila Bowden's initial research she had the following comments..

"Involvement in table-turning or planchette by leading citizens of the day seems to indicate the Church had no power to stop the onslaught of the occult as it was undoubtedly widespread at the time. Most serious point so far is evidence that planchette was played at Greenoaks, home of Thomas Sutcliffe Mort, now Bishopscourt, home of Archbishop of Sydney. Rev Horatio Walsh of Christ Church St Lawrence, a close personal friend of Mort, was said to be a regular participant in planchette at Greenoaks. Walsh built up a large successful church...of prominent citizens and poorest members of society....had constructive ministry to under-privileged.....Mort gave him his friendship....eventually Walsh lived in retirement with the Mort family at their home in Bodalla..."

More recently the Church has publicly warned against the occult. Some 15 years ago the Anglican Church established a Commission of Enquiry into the Occult. This was written up in Nevill Drury's book "Approaching The Occult" pages 5/13 as follows: (the underlining is mine as researcher not Drury's)

"The Christian response to occult belief has varied in different western countries and appears to be directly related to the degree of liberal thought found in different religious institutions. In Britain, the Churches' Fellowship for Physical and Spiritual Studies was founded in 1954, on an interdenominational basis, to explore the possibility that the study of parapsychology and mysticism might throw light on Christ's miracles and other aspects of the faith. It's patrons have included several leading English clerics, among them Canon Pearce-Higgins, the Rev Dr Leslie Weatherhead and the Rev Lord Soper, as well as the distinguished Australian-born physicist, Dr Raynor Johnson, and the philosopher, Sir George Trevelyan.

In Australia, however, the official Church response has been more guarded. In 1974 the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Marcus Loane, agreed to the establishment of a Commission of Enquiry into the occult - only the second such enquiry in a Protestant country since the Middle Ages. A board of investigators was duly assembled - including several prominent theologians, two academics and a psychiatrist, and the Report of the Commission was released in 1975. According to the authors of the report, the occult was potentially Satanic and linked to decadent tendencies in modern society. In particular, it was claimed that 'occultism may provide pornography with a religious base to work from'. There was concern at the widespread incidence of belief in astrology, Tarot cards and spiritualism, and the Commission advocated protective legislation to prevent children from being exposed to ouija boards and other occult paraphernalia.

Ten years later Dean Shilton - a member of the Anglican Commission - still holds substantially to the fundamentals of that position: 'The Church does regard the occult as dangerous....because it can lead people into all kinds of difficulties,' says Shilton. But he does not deny the existence of the supernatural - indeed he believes it to be central to the Christian viewpoint. The occult itself, though, is potentially in league with the Devil, who is himself a supernatural being with a real and tangible existence.

(Drury then goes on to talk about demon possession and describes in some detail the Christian 'deliverance sessions' run by Ruth and Garry Penhall in Burwood.....he then continues.....)

" Ruth Penhall is adamant that the occult attracts a wide range of devils: 'Occult demons are very prevalent because many people go to palm readers, or they have their Tarot cards read, or they go to spiritualist churches, or worship foreign gods. Because these people don't worship the One True God they are not protected from the onslaught of demons and spirits that come in to torment them.'

This is unquestionably an extreme viewpoint - even within the Christian Church. While the Penhalls categorise Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Islam, Bahai'ism, Theosophy, Freemasonry and Occultism as 'false religions', Dean Shilton is less dogmatic on this score. Occult beliefs, he says, may be inferior to the Christian perspective but they nevertheless belong somewhere on a religious spectrum:

' I think there is a spiritual dimension in the pagan approach because I believe we all have a soul or spirit and this seeks to express itself in some way. That can be in a variety of forms - such as spiritism, animism, Buddhism, Islam - or Christianity. At least the other religions give expression to a spiritual dimension....'

Drury is obviously influenced by his own bias towards things of the occult and must be read in that context. However one gets the impression that the official Church response - and the alleged views of Dean Shilton - fell somewhat short of the firm unequivocal response from the Penhalls. An American theologian, Dr Gordon Melton, in agreeing with Shilton's views expressed above is reported to have said:

" I would wish and hope that people could have found what they have found in paganism, in the Christian Church, but not having found it there I'm glad they have found it somewhere. They're tapping a mystical depth that is present in all humanity. It certainly is present in the Church, although it is not as visible as we'd like it to be."

There is disturbingly evident in all this a 'liberal' response from the Church.....and this too in regard to something as 'extreme' as the occult. It leaves the door wide open for the 'soft' and insidious influence of the New Age. A personal example may help illustrate this. On hearing of the introduction of Tai Chi classes to the Church Retirement Village where my mother is resident, I wrote a note of concern to the Administrative Director, an ordained Minister, and received this reply:

" The Village Chaplain has referred to me your letter relating to Tai Chi classes. I have discussed this matter with staff and residents and also had conversations with senior clergy of the Diocese.

I am assured that no matter what religious significance may lie behind the exercise, there has been no evidence of this in the Villages.

I have indicated my concern and have received assurance that, should any religious connotation become evident, I shall be informed.

Thank you for bringing this matter to our attention."

It may be pure coincidence but the year 1975 - the year the Sydney Anglican Church reported its findings on the Occult - was also the year that effectively the New Age movement 'went public'.

" For 100 years from 1875, theosophists worked quietly and effectively to....prepare those with vision for their utopian dream of world brotherhood. Then in 1975, 100 years after the Theosophical Society was formed, the initiates of its Grand White Brotherhood were permitted to make their teachings public, and at this time - not coincidentally - the New Age Movement began to emerge as a recognisable entity. Constance Cumbey, the Christian lawyer from the US who has researched the New Age movement writes - 'The movement was to keep a low profile until 1975. Then it had permission to take everything public, including the fact and nature of 'The Plan' itself. Everything hidden was to be revealed and there was to be a no-holds barred propaganda drive after that time, spreading the previously esoteric teachings of the New Age along with the anticipation of a New Age Christ by every media vehicle available.' "

("The New Age Gospel: Christ or Counterfeit ?" by Morag Zwartz page 14)

A WARNING TO THE CHURCHES IN AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

The New Age Gospel: Christ or Counterfeit?

Ten New Directions
Transforming
Our Lives

MEGATRENDS MEGATRENDS

There is an unparalleled mystical
conspiracy threatening today's world...

GODS OF THE NEW AGE

"This well-researched book convincingly articulates
the spiritual and social dangers inherent in New Age thinking."
Walter Martin, author of *Kingdom of the Cults*

UNMASKING THE NEW AGE

Is There a New Religious Movement
Trying to Transform Society?
DOUGLAS R. GROOT

UNDERSTANDING
THE

NEW AGE

9.5. Roots of the New Age Movement

(Extracts taken from Morag Zwartz's book "The New Age Gospel: Christ or Counterfeit ?")

Origins of the movement....step one in this journey of discovery leads us right into Hinduism, because no attempt to define the New Age religion would be possible without reference to theosophy, which in turn could not be defined without reference to Hinduism.....

.....every path in my study of the New Age movement has led sooner or later to the Theosophical Society, a world-wide organisation whose three stated objectives are:

- * To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, or colour
- * To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy, and science
- * To investigate unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man

In this definition alone, we have a valuable framework for understanding the New Age movement as well as its forefather, theosophy. Under the entry 'theosophy' in the Encyclopaedia Britannica we read: "India has been the mother of most theosophical speculations....they are reflected in the systems of Brahmanism, the Vedanta, Yoga, Hinduism." We also learn that Madame Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophical Society in 1875, in one of her major works "Isis Unveiled", sought to establish that the one source of all the wisdom of the past is India. Christianity, according to Blavatsky, copied all its rites, dogmas and ceremonies from paganism.

In Australia, the Theosophical Society advertises its meetings in newspapers under the church notices, while claiming to be neither church, nor sect, nor religion. Its bookshops and libraries in major cities contain thousands of books on philosophy, religion, astrology, health, education, ancient civilisations, science, healing, psychic research, yoga, mysticism and the occult.....

The word 'theosophy' comes from the Greek theos (god), and sophia (wisdom), and theosophists claim special insight into the divine nature through intuition, or through revelation from Masters or Avatars (spirit beings or men who have attained a highly evolved level of consciousness).....

Despite this noble sounding ideology, the occultic nature of theosophy is obvious, most notably in its written revelations of secret knowledge and wisdom concerning the nature of the universe and the destiny of man, on cosmology, astrology, the physical sciences and spirituality. Ancient gnosticism, a cult which threatened the early Christian Church, is also in evidence in theosophy's root system, emerging in the form of avatars, initiates and adepts. It is little wonder then that as a religious system theosophy has done more than any other to marry the religious philosophies of east and west, Greece and Rome, ancient and modern. In short, it has been the seedbed of today's world-wide religious syncretism.

...has nurtured a proliferation of cults...the I AM and Ascended Masters cults are the biggest, represented by churches such as Elizabeth Clare Prophet's Church Universal and Triumphant.....Some of the Ascended Masters groups in Australia and New Zealand are of Kosmon Church stock, basing their beliefs on the Oahspe Book 'The Kosmon Bible - Oahspe', which translates to mean 'a revelation of the Universe and its Creator' and which the author claims was dictated to him by 'angelic beings'. Sydney saw the establishment of our first Kosmon Church in about 1928, and today there are various

offshoots and networks of the Ascended Masters movement throughout both countries. Tess Van Sommers' book 'Religions in Australia' (published 1966) lists Shalam in Perth, Heralds of the New Age in Auckland, the Prophet Tabuse, The Summit Lighthouse (Killara) the Unification Church, the Mark-Age, Solaga, the Magnificent Consumption, The White Star, The Christ Ministry Foundation and the Bridge to Freedom.

The common belief of theosophists and Ascended Masters groups is that the world is to be prepared by initiates, or disciples of the Ascended Masters, for the Aquarian Age, an age in which Christ-consciousness will reign supreme. Messages from Maitreya the Christ, Hilarion, and El Morya, as well as those from the unnamed angelic beings of the Oahspe Book and the Urantia Book and others, fill theosophical and mystical/occult bookshop shelves in the main cities.....

Theosophy, like Transcendental Meditation, has managed a clever conjuring trick to bridge the gap between east and west, science and mysticism, karma and common sense.....

Books such as Dave Rudhyar's 'Occult Preparations for a New Age' indicate the new tolerance and openness in western minds.....

H. G. Wells was the author of what is known as the manual for the New Age Movement.....called 'The Open Conspiracy - Blue Prints for a World Revolution'.....published in 1928.....essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the theories behind globalisation and the need for a New World Order.....it makes easy reading and comes across as the early model of Marilyn Ferguson's 1981 handbook of the New Age Movement, 'The Aquarian Conspiracy'.....

With almost frightening accuracy and foresight, Wells outlined his plans for a world revolution.....makes it clear that his Open Conspiracy is a spiritual movement and that the eradication of traditional religions with their resistance to change is essential.....set out to 'take possession of the whole world'.....no one could deny the astonishing success to date of his blueprints, from the small grassroots movements he advocated to the now global network called the New Age movement.....

...one quotation will settle any doubts concerning the religious nature of the Open Conspiracy: "The character of the Open Conspiracy will now be plainly displayed. It will have become a great world movement as widespread and evident as socialism and communism. It will largely have taken the place of these movements. It will be more, it will be a world religion....."

The Mark II model of 'The Open Conspiracy', Ferguson's 'The Aquarian Conspiracy', was first published in 1981.....anyone convinced that the New Age movement or the transformation movement are merely the indulgences of a small alternative fringe, or a few idealistic academics may find this highly popular book rather alarming...."

Perhaps the movement was best described by the American writer Tom Wolfe one of the first to note the obsession with self in the 70's. In an essay "The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening", published in the late 70's, Wolfe pointed out that self-obsession amounted to a new religious awakening of enormous proportions. "Where the Third Great Awakening will lead - who can presume to say? One only knows that the great religious waves have a momentum all their own. Neither arguments nor policies nor acts of the legislature have been any match for them in the past. And this one has the mightiest, holiest roll of them all, the beat that goes.....Me.....Me.....Me.....Me.."

9.6. Influence of New Age in Sydney

A lead article in the Sydney Morning Herald of 14th May 1988 was introduced as follows:

"The New Age is booming. Australians spend \$50 million a year on it - from crystals to float tanks. In Sydney alone, 25,000 people have hugged and cried their way through transformational courses. Phillip Clark investigated 'the movement' and found doctors, lawyers and ordinary people - with extraordinary beliefs...."

Some extracts from that article are as follows:

"When former American housewife Mrs J. Z. Knight stood in the ballroom of Sydney's Hyatt-Kingsgate Hotel late last year and warned that a tidal wave 'higher than your highest building' would overwhelm Sydney, some of her audience of 500 were so alarmed that they sold their homes and moved to higher ground...

'Jayzee' Knight - a channel for the spirit of Rathma, a 35,000 year old male barbarian warrior from Atlantis - is one of the more controversial manifestations of...the New Age movement...It's adherents like floating in tanks, using crystals for healing, taking flower essences for their health and undergoing 'rebirthing' and past-life therapies for their emotional well-being....

But the movement is no longer part of the looney fringe.....it is mainstream and it is big business....an estimated 400,000 Australians spend up to \$50 million a year in New Age bookshops, therapies, healings, courses, crystals and essences....

The movement also has a national newspaper....(New Age News, editor John Esam...based in Sydney).....

More than 100 people a day are climbing into Sydney float tanks in an industry turning over almost \$1 million a year...Two of the three life skills courses have put more than 25,000 people through their paces in the past few years at an average cost of \$300.....

Companies such as the retailer Grace Bros and Girvan Corporation put their staff through seminars run by New Age marketers....advertising executives and creative staff are also encouraged to take the seminars.....

The three major transformational groups in Sydney are Self-Transformations, run by the Walter Bellin Partnership, Insight and The Forum - the new name for the old EST, founded by Werner Erhardt.....

One of the hallmarks of the New Age is its comfortable relationship with capitalism. Far from feeling guilty about making money, the New Age almost encourages it....James Caldwell runs a seminar series in Sydney called 'Money and You'. Taught by the American-Japanese Robert Kiyosaki, the course has attracted 700 participants in two years....using New Age notions of tapping hidden creativity and increasing personal initiative, courses promise to tell you 'How not to become shark bait', 'How to become wealthy', 'How to remove fear and panic around money' and 'Clearing subconscious blocks to wealth and success'.....

The New Age dawns

The Northern Beaches has become a gathering place for a new breed of person — with the environmental concerns of a greenie, the spirituality of an Eastern-inspired hippy and the profit-gathering capacity of some of the city's most ferocious yuppies.

By FIONA SMITH

These people group themselves under the label of New Age. They are employed, self-employed or the heads of large companies. They have a politician in the Legislative Council, their own magazines and a national newspaper.

Most of them have done a self-development course and they believe in natural healing, astrology and often make their decisions while relaxing in a float tank.

Manly's Denis Cooney, 36, drives a BMW and proudly describes himself as a New Ager. He also promotes and

organises a seminar series called Money and You and is marketing director of the movement's newspaper, New Age News.

A recent survey in his newspaper shows New Ager's to be earning an average of \$25 000 to \$40 000 a year; to be self-employed or in a professional position; more likely to be a woman; regularly participating in self-growth programs; often vegetarian and usually in the 25 to 40 age range.

Denis said New Ager's tend to live in traditional yuppie strongholds — the

lower North Shore, eastern suburbs, inner west and, increasingly, the northern beaches.

"We are constantly striving, we don't know our own limits, how easy life could be," he said.

Torrey Hills Democrat Member of the Legislative Council Richard Jones has been gathering enormous amounts of publicity for New Ager's with his float tank decisions and revelations to the State's upper House about swimming nude.

"I love the New Age," he said. "I am a vegetarian, use my float tank, live in peaceful natural surroundings, don't use pesticides and I have a huge 400mm crystal in my office to radiate positive energy through Parliament House."

Mr Jones said he uses his New Age principles to



Richard Jones, national Party senator, Australia Party senators. Head of the peninsula-based Blackmores vitamin and health food company, Marcus Blackmore, cautiously admitted membership to the ranks of New Ager's.

He graduated from the Money and You course, which he said had benefited him, but did not change his life, and is concerned about the emergence of charlatans and bogus New Age products.

He has implemented some enlightened management schemes for his staff. About 60 per cent of his workers use the Blackmores gymnasium, and service of 10 years is rewarded with a car parking space and diamond jewellery.

The company has in-

Change and challenge on cards

By TIM LANE

Manly was first sighted in the early part of 1978, the newspaper was incorporated in January-February of 1977.

Manly therefore has a strong aquatic character. It is a New Age newspaper and is located in a new development on the northern shore of the peninsula.

Manly is a New Age newspaper for a long time. It is a New Age newspaper for a long time. It is a New Age newspaper for a long time.

Manly is a New Age newspaper for a long time. It is a New Age newspaper for a long time. It is a New Age newspaper for a long time.



Manly, "psychic consultant" Adrienne von Kussler.

I was born again in Balmain

MY LIPS are going numb, there is an incredible pain in my hands and I feel extremely dizzy. I am being reborn. But not in hospital. I am in a small, dark room in Balmain.

Two hours before I arrived at the rebirthing centre. I was given a pre-natal cup of tea and ushered into the rebirthing chamber.

It's a small room: sandstone walls, one window, berber carpet, a mattress on the floor and a cassette player.

My rebirther asks why I've come and what I expect to gain. I find this difficult to explain — telling another of one's anxieties and fears isn't easy.

He tells me what

are perfect?" he asks. Reluctantly, I resist from this description. He says that everyone is perfect at the moment of birth. It's what follows that causes problems. We shield ourselves and build up walls and defences against our emotions and our true selves.

I give my history. When I explain that I was a cæsarian birth, he smiles. "Caesars," he says, "tend to have an attitude that everything is done for them." They just breeze through life. Or at least that's the theory.

We discuss my relationship with my parents and my brothers. "Now we will do the breathing," he says.

I remove my shoes, and

The pain in my hands and arms gets worse. My lips and face have gone quite numb. My tongue feels thick and I cannot speak. I try to mumble a few words. He reassures me and massages some of the pain from my hands. I am in my inward world, totally

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Inside Sydney's float tanks

NEW Ager's like to relax in float tanks. These are large, coffin-like structures made of plastic and filled with about 30 centimetres of a saturated Epsom salt solution. In such a soup, the body floats without effort.

The Balmain Float Tank Centre is completely decorated in placid pastels. It's very quiet. The floating room contains one tank for singles or two separate tanks if you like floating with a partner. The tanks are enclosed.

The room is softly lit and staff request that you shower before commencing a float. The tank is entered via a hatch in the side that slides up like a roll-top desk. Earplugs are supplied so that your hearing is diminished and to protect against the extremely salty water.

Once inside, floating in complete darkness with the hatch rolled down and the lights dimmed, there is almost total sensory deprivation.

The normal float period is an hour at the end of which New Age members are piped through the water to remind you that your time is up.

After the float you are shown to a comfortable lounge room in order to sit quietly for a few minutes before leaving.

It is said to be at the very least relaxing and at best offers deep emotional and spiritual refreshment. Whether this is so may depend on your expectations. Or perhaps on the number of floats you take. The Balmain centre recommends at least three to realise the full benefit. At \$25 a time (cheaper if you buy sets of three or more), it is not a cheap way of unwinding.

In the New Age, even relaxation is a product. Many may find a good lie down at home at least as relaxing and certainly a lot more economic.

The first float can be pretty boring if you are not properly tuned into the universe. It is also not as comfortable as it sounds, as the neck muscles can become painful and the salty water irritates the eyes.

Nevertheless, floating is big. There are more than 12 float tank centres in Sydney similar to Balmain. Several have opened in the past six months. Even the Institute of Sport in Canberra has installed tanks as an aid to athletes' relaxation. It's the New Age way.

(There is also something deeply ironic about the fact that the Balmain Float Centre is housed in what was once the Balmain Workingmen's Institute.)



A float session ... a means to "connect with our heritage".

A leaflet at the Balmain Centre explains that there are no fewer than eight theories as to the efficacy of floating. These range from a view that the lack of gravity releases "vast amounts of energies" to deal with matters of mind and spirit, through to a theory that floating encourages greater right hemisphere brain activity.

Another hypothesis is that millions of years ago we were all "aquatic apes" and that floating helps us to "connect with our heritage".

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THE CRYSTAL VISIONARY HEALING SEMINAR

with Magda Palmer, Michael Ney and Boris Branwhite

Presentations are for anyone interested in learning many aspects of Crystal Visions like THE CRYSTAL VISIONARY have shown, there is a multitude of an enormous range of experiences as testimony to the effectiveness of Gemstones, coupled with "spiritual healing", in enriching our lives. We're invited to experience this for yourself in a relaxed and supportive

in Australia have three people of such dedication and well experience presented a more valuable opportunity for us to take you through your own experiences understanding of the phenomena, with three views and practical tuition.

light and sound, deep meditations, personal crystals. You can expect to easily contact a the communications available from the is so important with today's need for all matters pertaining to spiritual life. d mining techniques.

ast have enjoyed the teachers individually, love, together they

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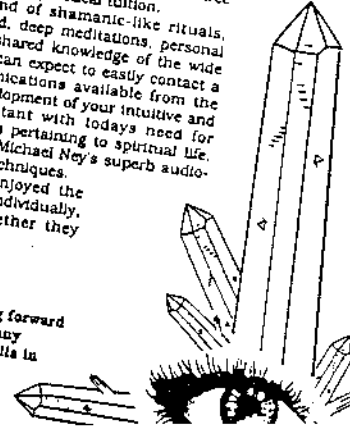
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MAGDA PALMER, MICHAEL NEY AND BORIS BRANWHITE are looking forward to sharing this special opportunity with many people throughout the East Coast of Australia in June and October. Early booking is advised for you to secure a position, as space is often limited to enable you to receive maximum personal attention in a family atmosphere.



Although it is difficult to gauge the precise level of support for New Age ideas in the community, recent findings from the respected National Social Science Survey - conducted by the Research School of Social Sciences at the Aust National Uni - point to a higher level of confidence in astrology, a standard New Age belief.....

...there was also a correlation between readers to an intensive seminar on 'the metaphysical understandings of ancient Europe, Taoist philosophy and the battle plan of the Mongol warriors.'

In the Blue Mountains last weekend 160 participants in 'Warriors Wisdom' were busy 'facing their own death' by abseiling down a cliff face. The night before they had been taught to walk on fire. After several hours of intensive psychological preparation, the participants claimed that they walked across a two-meter long bed of hot coals without injury...

The originator of the course, Mr Stuart Wilde, claims to have studied the techniques which enabled the Mongols to devastate Western Europe and herald the Dark Ages.....



AN EXPERIENTIAL EVENT
SPOTLIGHTING PERSONAL
SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL
ISSUES IN THE 1990S.

SUNDAY 25TH MARCH 1990
CLANCY AUDITORIUM, UNIVERSITY OF NSW,
HIGH STREET KENSINGTON, SYDNEY
BOOKINGS: THE QUEENSTREET GROUP
TELEPHONE (02) 360 3555 FAX (02) 360 3505



IAIN FINLAY

Anchorman for The Missing Dimension
Well-respected journalist and adventurer, Iain Finlay has worked as a lumberjack in Norway, a seaman on Scandinavian ships, a miner in Zambia and a life-saver in South Africa. As a presenter on *Beyond 2000* he makes technology accessible and interprets future developments for a worldwide audience of millions in over 40 countries.



DR HELEN CALDICOTT

Ecology and the Future
Best known as an anti-nuclear campaigner, Helen founded 'Physicians for Social Responsibility', which today has 25,000 members. Author of two books — *Nuclear Madness* and *Missile Envy* — she is a powerful speaker on political and social issues, her current concern being in the environmental arena. In 1985 she was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.



ROBERT MEREDITH

Going Within — The Unwavering Mind
One of Australia's most respected bodywork and meditation teachers. Expertise in transpersonal psychology, gestalt, bioenergetics, bio-dynamics and Chinese yoga. A charismatic speaker and motivator in the field of consciousness and physical well-being. A Director of 'People Knowhow' and a course leader of *The Turning Point*.



BARBARA MCGREGOR

Breaking Through Your Own Barriers
Founder, publisher and editor of *Australian Well-being* magazine, a bi-monthly devoted to personal and planetary healing, now in its 6th year. A much sought after speaker on personal growth, alternative health and ecology.



DIANE CILENTO

Sufism: The Way of the Mystic
Actress, director, author, and initiator of 'Karnak', organic rare-fruit farm and esoteric school in Far North Queensland. Internationally acclaimed actress, Diane returned to Australia in 1975 and since then has conducted courses at Karnak. She has built a theatre complex, Karnak Playhouse, on her property in the rainforest which will be launched later this year.



NEVILL DRURY

Exploring Human Potential
An internationally published author in such diverse fields as holistic health, western esoteric traditions in contemporary art and ambient music. Former editor of *Nature & Health* magazine. Nevill is a leading figure in the human potential movement.



KAREN SCHAEFER

Expanding Dimensions of Relationship
Fifteen years experience in transformational and personal development work. Before studies in psychology, she lived for six years as a monk and meditation teacher in India. Karen practices as a psychotherapist and as a professional development consultant, working consistently towards integrating the psychologies of the East and West.

The Missing Dimension will showcase a range of views by acknowledged experts: leading therapists, authors, mystics, esoteric practitioners, psychologists, academics and media personalities.

Through lectures, workshops and question and answer sessions:

- ◆ Experience new ways of relating to your world and each other.
- ◆ Explore inner pathways.
- ◆ Understand how different visions interconnect.
- ◆ Broaden your perspective on emerging social and personal structures.
- ◆ Discover what the 90s have in store for you.

A powerful line-up of speakers at a day long conference with both an intellectual and spiritual focus.

An event not to be missed.

PROGRAM

The program includes a choice of lectures and workshops, each followed by a question and answer session.

Setting the Stage

Iain Finlay. Anchorman for THE MISSING DIMENSION
Presenter of *"Beyond 2000"*

The Challenge of Change

Tom Jagtenberg
Sociologist, Author

Ecology and the Future

Dr Helen Caldicott
International Public Speaker & Author

Exploring Human Potential

Nevill Drury
International Author, Publisher

Hidden Religion of the New Age

Dr David Millikan
Director of Religious Broadcasts, ABC

Sufism: The Way of the Mystic

Diane Cilento
Actress, Director and Initiator of "Karnak", Author

Going Within — The Unwavering Mind

Robert Meredith
Seminar Leader, 'People Knowhow'

Expanding Dimensions of Relationship

Karen Schaefer
Therapist, Relationship Counsellor

Breaking Through Your Own Barriers

Barbara McGregor
Publisher & Editor, *"Australian Wellbeing"*, Public Speaker

Astrological Predictions for the 1990s

Helen Hope
Astrologer

Understanding & Esoteric Knowledge

Steve D'Alton
Occult Researcher

A Shamanic Drum Journey

Discover Your Visionary Potential
Nevill Drury
International Author, Publisher

What they're into

Astrology: Still going strong after all these years is the notion that the stars and planets influence our lives and destinies. Fairly workaday belief for many New Agers. Palmistry (palm reading) and Tarot cards are widely used to predicting the future.

Back flowers: A popular remedy. Flower essences are taken in small drops to cure a range of ills.

Bodywork: A New Age term to describe various therapies which concentrate on loosening up the body, stretching and generally getting people to feel more at ease with their bodies. Includes techniques such as "re-balancing" and "joint release".

Creative visualisation: "If I think hard enough, I'll get it." Popular technique based on the belief that what you think you are going to get is likely to be what you actually do get. Therefore goals can be achieved by imagining what it is like to achieve them. Instruction Courses and books are available.

Channelling: Process where "channellers" (once called mediums) relay the voice and personality of the dead. The spirits may be those who once lived or extraterrestrial beings. The spirits advise on personal problems and sometimes make predictions.

Crystals: Natural crystals are believed to have healing powers and the ability to transmit messages. It is said their crystalline structure can be made to resonate in tune with people's natural "vibrations" and thus amplify and enhance natural energy.

Dolphins: Quite popular. Whales are also well regarded. Believed to have a high level of intelligence and communication skills. Some New Agers believe you can. Dolphins and whales are at one with the environment.

Ecology: The New Ager is usually interested in conservation, "deep" ecology and environmental issues.

Float tanks: Popular. New Age recreation. Immersion in a tank of a saturated salt solution which enables free flotation. Sometimes New Age music is played. Said to be deeply relaxing. Some claim greater benefits including meditative astral travel.

Healing: The term New Agers use for repairing physical, emotional and spiritual problems. Various forms of

diagnosis can be used, including iridology (through the observation of patterns in the iris) and reflexology. Also aromatherapy (cure by smelling various nostras) and massage.

Naturopathy: The preferred system of health care for the New Age. It involves treatment of illness by the use of herbs and natural remedies. There are a range of treatments that can be listed under this category including homeopathy, acupuncture, Chinese medicine and therapeutic massage. Sydney has three main training centres for alternative health care practitioners: Nature Care College in Artarmon, Australasian College of Natural Therapies, Harris Street, Ultimo, and Sydney College of Natural Therapies in Glebe. Total enrolment of full-time naturopaths in Sydney is about 300, compared with 2,000 conventional doctors.

Numerology: Predictions and greater understanding can be achieved by studying the numerical patterns underlying names and places. Letters are assigned a number to assist interpretation.

Past lives: A therapeutic technique involving a type of hypnosis which enables contact with previous incarnations. This is said to help understand current fears and anxieties.

Personal development: A cardinal principle, often thought of as the Human Potential movement. A range of courses and weekend workshops are available to help people feel more confident and at home with their emotions.

Pyramids: Pyramids are believed to possess mystical powers which can heal, preserve and give out positive energy. The idea stems from the Egyptian pyramids. The best pyramids are made with the same ratio of the great pyramids like Cheops. Some build pyramid houses, rebirthing therapists practise inside them, and they can be used in the home.

Rebirthing: Therapeutic technique designed to bring up old memories, fears and anxieties. Involves hyperventilation. Popularised by American Leonard Orr in the 1970s.

Reiki: Therapy of "Universal Light Energy". Taps into energy system to enhance well-being.

