The New Age Movement

- Very broad social/spiritual movement
- Very individualistic
- Some recent avoidance of “new age” label
- Major spiritual movement – much larger than pagan movement
- According to a journalistic article (Publisher’s Weekly) in 2010, New Agers are part of a larger lifestyle/spirituality movement worth $300 billion annually, and consisting of approximately 68 million Americans.
Historical Precursors: Spiritualism

- Kate, Margaret (&Leah) Fox
- March 31, 1848
- “Mr Splitfoot, do as I do”
- Charles Rosna
- Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

3. Margaret Fox (1833?–93), Catherine Fox (1839?–92), and Leah Fox Fish (1818?–90).
Spiritualism

- Mediumship
- 2 kinds:
  - Physical Mediumship: apports, automatic writing, spirit photography, electrical phenomena, fire immunity, levitation, magnetic phenomena, materialization, psycho-physiological phenomena (shrinking/elongation of body, stigmata, trance, ectoplasm), telekinesis
  - Mental Mediumship: clairvoyance, clairaudience, healing, premonition, psychometry, telepathy, glossolalia
- Andrew Jackson Davis – medical medium

Spirit photo from former student in this course
Spiritualism

• Impact on New Age:
  – God as creative force, but not Christian God
  – Optimistic doctrine of spiritual progress (progress continues after death; no hell)
  – No original sin (optimistic doctrine of human nature)
  – No external (substitutionary) salvation – you are responsible for your own spiritual state
Theosophy

- Helena Petrovna Blavatsky
- Theosophical Society (1875)
- Mahatmas (highly elevated souls)
- Reincarnation
- Human souls “sparks” of God
Theosophy

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

Master Morya, one of Blavatsky’s “mahatma” spirit guides
Theosophy

- Impact on New Age
  - All world’s religions have part of spiritual truth: all are fair game to draw upon to create individual spirituality
  - Universe, humans just manifestations of God
  - Enlightened spiritual masters who “channel” spiritual wisdom to people on earth
  - Existence & need to explore “latent” powers of humans
Parapsychology

- Society of Psychical Research (SPR) – early research into paranormal
- William McDougall @ Duke University – first “parapsychology” department
- J.B. & Louisa Rhine – standardized field of parapsychology
  - Classified two fields of study
    - ESP (Extrasensory Perception)
    - PK (Psychokinesis)
  - Standardized testing equipment
    - Zener Cards
    - Automatic dice throwers
  - Universal applicability: anyone can be tested
Parapsychology

- J.B. Rhine’s *Extrasensory Perception* (1934)
- Zener Cards (5 Suits, 25 cards)
- Agent, percipient
- PK experiments
- Psi Phenomenon
Parapsychology

• Impact on New Age
  – Single unified spiritual force
  – Scientific legitimacy for New Age phenomena
  – Wholism – spiritual phenomena part of same whole system as scientific phenomena
New Age Worldview

• Monistic – universal energy, all is one
  – “vertical” and “horizontal” models
  – Cosmic energy = God (God-consciousness, divine energy, creative force)
  – Universe=God=Love=Human Beings
  – Synchronicity - everything happens for a reason, universe communicates to us to help us find our path
  – Universe is conscious and purposeful
  – All world’s religions hold some glimpses of truth
Worldview

• Wholistic
  – Biological holism
    • Body as a “whole system”
    • Environmental wholism - Earth as a whole ecosystem
    • Gaia hypothesis
    • Environmentalism
  – Social wholism
    • Hundredth Monkey concept
    • Lyall Watson
    • Critical mass
  – Human wholism
    • Body/Mind/Spirit view of humanity
    • Preventative rather than interventionist approach to health

Japanese Macaque – 100th Monkey concept
Worldview

- **Individualistic**
  - Radical mystical transformation of individual consciousness
  - Multiple paths, multiple techniques to achieve
  - Whole brain approach

  - We create our own reality

- **Evolutionary**
  - Evolution of consciousness
  - Evolution of human form?
  - Planetary consciousness
Worldview

• Millenial
  – Coming of “New Age” of spiritual enlightenment
  – Age of Aquarius
  – Jose Arguelles
  – Harmonic Convergence
    • August 16-17 1987.
    • Aztec calendar came to an end.
    • The planets in the solar system aligned within 123 degrees of one another for the first time in 23,412 years.
    • More than 144,000 people journey to “power spots” throughout the world to help usher in a New Age
  – Dawning of New Age – Dec. 21, 2012
    • 5,125-year-long Mayan Calendar ends
    • New age of spiritual harmony begins to emerge
Case Study in New Age Worldview: The Celestine Prophesy

- JAMES REDFIELD (1993)
- #1 bestselling American book in the world, 1995 & 1996
- 3 years on NY Times bestseller list (23 million copies sold as of 2008)
- Translated into 40 languages
- Celestine Prophesy study groups in more than 100 cities worldwide
- Film independently produced, (rejected Hollywood offers to buy/produce) - released 2006
Case Study in New Age Worldview: The Celestine Prophesy

NINE SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS:

1. CRITICAL MASS - SYNCHRONICITY OF EVENTS
2. THE LONGER NOW - HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF PURPOSE
3. A MATTER OF ENERGY - LIFE = ENERGY
4. THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER - STEALING ENERGY
5. THE MESSAGE OF THE MYSTICS - GOD IS ENERGY/LOVE
6. CLEARING THE PAST (CONTROL DRAMAS AND EVOLUTIONARY PURPOSE)
7. ENGAGING THE FLOW - BEING OPEN TO ENERGY/SIGNS
8. THE INTERPERSONAL ETHIC - (SHARING WISDOM/COMMUNICATION)
9. THE EMERGING CULTURE - (THE NEW AGE/NEW EVOLUTIONARY MODE OF BEING)