FROM: Phyllis Schlafly
68 FAIRMOUNT, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002 / (618) 462-5415

RELEASE: OCTOBER 16, 1986

WHERE THE "NEW AGE" MOVEMENT CAME FROM

A remarkable piece of investigative reporting appeared recently on the front page of the New York Times. It opened the closet door on a cult that is growing in influence in our nation's cultural, social, economic, and political life.

As the Times described it, this new cult is a curious blend of Eastern mystical religions and Western occultism. Its indicia are psychological techniques such as meditation, hypnosis, chanting, biofeedback, the occult, reincarnation, psychic healing, satanism, prolonged isolation, mediums, and "spirit guides."

Collectively, these strange currents are called the New Age movement. Its avowed purpose is to try to transform people's thought processes. Its foundation, according to the Times, is a complete rejection of Judeo-Christian belief in God as the author of eternal moral values, and a substitution of a sort of "create your own religion" orthodoxy in which man can do no wrong, so there is no sin or reason for guilt.

Participants in the New Age movement freely admit that it brings about an "altered state of consciousness" during which leaders can implant new ideas and change thinking processes. Some admit that these psychological techniques create a euphoria similar to drug use and that "cosmic consciousness" may be the trendy drug of the 1980s. Like the early use of cocaine, the New Age techniques are directed at the smart and the affluent.

The reason that news about this cult was on page one of the New York Times instead of on the religion page or in a box of trivial events was that the New Age movement has swept into corporate America, starting with programs such as Lifespring, Insight, Silva Mind Control, and the Forum. The premise that man himself is a deity who can create his own reality is attractive to those promoting "human potential" as a faith to life by.

A survey of 500 California companies showed that more than half have resorted to some of these consciousness-raising techniques. Ford, Westinghouse, and Calvin Klein are among the corporations that have sent employees for training in "human potential" techniques.

Stanford University's Graduate School of Business has a seminar on "Creativity in Business" which includes meditation, chanting, "dream work," the use of tarot cards, and

discussion of the New Age Capitalist. Among the books which the Times asserts promote the New Age vision are "Megatrends" by John Naisbitt and "The Aquarian Conspiracy" by Marilyn Ferguson.

The Times reporter looked for the roots of the New Age movement but apparently couldn't come up with anything more tangible than "the maturing of the hippie movement of the 1960s." However, there is no evidence that hippies have grown up to become corporate executives or best-selling authors.

Those who want to discover the roots of these strange currents should do an investigative reporting job on what is taught in the public school classroom. As the U.S. Department of Education hearings in March 1984 proved, the public school classrooms during the 1970s were hotbeds of all these strange currents that the Times has just discovered.

Parents testified at those hearings that their children had been subjected to practices of Eastern mystical religions, such as Transcendental Meditation, yoga, hypnosis, and guided imagery. Other classroom practices included fantasy role-playing, sociograms, sociodrama, psychodrama, para-psychology, blindfold walks, isolation techniques, sensitivity training, self-revelation, group encounter sessions, self-disclosure strategies, and psychological and psychiatric exercises designed to affect behavior, emotions, or attitudes.

It's no wonder that some adults in 1986 are blending Eastern religions with Western occultism, because that has been done in public school classrooms for many years. At the 1984 Department of Education hearings, parents complained about the preoccupation in many subjects with the occult, satanism, and witchcraft. This type of teaching is frequently found in the Gifted and Talented classes.

In recent years, many schools have put in "stress" courses in the early primary grades, in which the children are compelled to engage in strange Eastern religious practices. Some are taught that they should consult with "a wise man living inside you" instead of with God, parents or clergy.

This type of pseudo-psychology practiced by unlicensed psychologists on a captive audience of children in the public school classroom, without the knowledge or informed consent of their parents, is a clear violation of the children's First Amendment rights. Parents should investigate if any of these strange courses are in their local schools.