

Review: JAC925

A SUMMARY CRITIQUE

CONSTANCE CUMBNEY'S NEW AGE CONSPIRACY THEORY

a book review of

The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow

by Constance E. Cumbey
(Huntington House, 1983)

and

A Planned Deception

by Constance E. Cumbey
(Pointe Publishers, 1985)

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Most JOURNAL readers will need little introduction to Constance Cumbey, Christian attorney turned ardent opponent of the New Age movement (NAM). During the years 1983-1985 Mrs. Cumbey and her bestselling book *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow* were perhaps the *greatest* cause of controversy within the evangelical church.

What *would* be appreciated by JOURNAL readers, I expect, is an explanation as to why this review is coming so late, at a time when it would seem that both the controversy, and Cumbey's popularity, have waned.

In mid 1984, after two years of looking into Cumbey's claims and related New Age themes, I decided that I would *first* write a thoroughgoing analysis of the NAM (the six-part series which concluded with the previous issue of the JOURNAL) *before* directly responding to Cumbey. Why? The debate that took shape around Cumbey at the time had one side arguing that Cumbey was wrong and therefore the NAM was no serious threat, while the other side argued that Cumbey was right, and therefore the NAM was the *very kind* of threat she said it was. Both groups needed to be addressed, but if I addressed the second group first and showed that Cumbey had exaggerated the movement, the first group would likely come away falsely satisfied that they had been completely right. It was better to show first in what ways the NAM *is* a threat, and then with a clear picture of the NAM as a backdrop, point out the errors in Cumbey's rendition of it.

As to Cumbey's declining influence, it is true that some of her former supporters have become disillusioned with her methodology. But nonetheless even such people often continue to bear the marks of her influence. This is because, having received their first exposure to the NAM through her, they unconsciously retain many of her most basic assumptions. Thus I have observed a *continuing*, widespread distortion in the American church's perception of the NAM. One of many possible examples is a new

book by Texe Marrs, *Dark Secrets of the New Age* (Crossway Books). It is a less controversial but nonetheless almost exact reproduction of Cumbey's original thesis. It is my hope that this review will help to clear up this distortion by casting a light on these unwarranted assumptions. (Due to space limitations, I must regretfully refrain from addressing Cumbey's claim that the NAM is a revival of Nazism, and her implications of several prominent Christians with a New Age conspiracy.)

THE HIDDEN DANGERS OF THE RAINBOW

As Cumbey represented it in *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*, the leadership of the entire NAM had been united for decades in following the instructions of esotericist and former Theosophist Alice A. Bailey (d. 1949):

One familiar with the Movement and the Bailey teachings cannot help but note the close patterning of developments within the New Age Movement along the lines set forth by Mrs. Bailey. She is literally followed like a recipe (p. 90).

The writings of Alice Bailey, which have been followed meticulously by the New Age Movement . . . (p. 115).

In addition to Bailey, Cumbey cited British author H. G. Wells (d. 1946) as the second major source for this New Age conspiracy:

The esoteric thrusts of the Movement as well as the aims of its groups are largely derived from the Alice Bailey books. Its overall direction and tactical strategy may be found in *The Open Conspiracy: Blueprints for a World Revolution* by H. G. Wells (p. 55).

In Cumbey's view, at some point Wells's "Open Conspiracy" had merged with Bailey's New Age conspiracy, so that both were working toward the exact same ends, and those participating in one were also participating in the other:

There is other evidence that Wells was an insider and that the present structure is no coincidence. The first clue that one investigating the Movement should look for in Wells' writings comes from *The Aquarian Conspiracy*.

Wells is mentioned in that work as an author of importance in at least three places.

A more important clue comes from the presses of Lucis Trust [founded by Bailey] with its subsidiary Lucis Publishing Company. In their official organ, *The Beacon*, on page 310 of the May-June edition of 1977, appears an article entitled "H. G. Wells, a Forerunner" (p. 124).

The New Agers/Open Conspiracy people were more interested in a dictatorship of the "Hierarchy" headed by Maitreya the "Christ" (p. 123).

The blueprint that this conspiracy had long been executing was known as "the Plan." Intricately detailed, it involved major behind-the-scenes manipulation of seemingly unrelated and spontaneous world events and cultural developments. Thus, the growing influence of Eastern religions, the nuclear freeze movement, and virtually everything leading in the direction of the New Age were carefully engineered events. The world was to be secretly prepared until 1975, and then the movement was to go entirely public. Its ultimate goal was to conquer the world for its true god, Lucifer. This would be accomplished by the enthronement of a "New Age Christ" named "Maitreya" (actually the Antichrist). The Plan's final stage, she warned, was nearing completion:

Step by step they plotted the coming "New Age," . . . Plans for religious war, forced redistribution of the world's resources, Luciferic initiations, mass planetary initiations, theology for the New World Religion, disarmament campaign, and elimination or sealing away of obstinate religious orthodoxies. . . . (p. 50).

Other things were to be taught to prepare the world for the "New Age" and the "New Age Christ" as well. Mind control and meditation were to be taught. Color therapy was to be emphasized. Music therapy and holistic health were additional items to be added to this eclectic diet for a "New Age."

The Movement was to keep a low profile until 1975. Then it had permission to take everything public — including the very 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. However, even before 1975, the stage had been carefully set (p. 12).

Her disciples are now on the last stage of the New Age scheme to take the world for Lucifer (p. 50). An *imminent* coup by a New Age cabal is not outside the range of *probability* (p. 58) (emphases added).

Contributing to Cumbeys sense of imminency was a media campaign being conducted by esotericist Benjamin Creme. His Tara Center ran an advertisement that appeared in major newspapers on April 25, 1982, proclaiming that "THE CHRIST IS NOW HERE," and affirming that his appearance would be forthcoming. Creme followed this up with a press conference in which he predicted that "Maitreya" would appear before summer arrived. Since Cumbeys was convinced that the entire NAM was working in concert, Creme's declarations were not to be taken lightly:

The Movement is even bold enough to run full-page newspaper ads proclaiming "THE CHRIST IS NOW HERE" (p. 41) (emphasis added).

Benjamin Creme's announcement of "Maitreya the Christ" is the culmination of over 100 years of meticulous planning and labor by those seeking this "Age of Aquarius" (p. 17).

The reader should note that the NAM cannot be as Cumbeys portrayed it in *Hidden Dangers* and at the same time be the loosely structured, uncentralized metanetwork (network of networks) that both New Agers like Marilyn Ferguson (*The Aquarian Conspiracy*) and Christian observers like myself have claimed. For the entire movement to be following one detailed Plan "like a recipe" it would *have* to be tightly organized and hierarchical. Such perfectly coordinated activity is unheard of (among occultists, Christians, or anyone else) where such controls do not exist.

More than that, for the NAM to be coldly orchestrating major developments on every level of society and capable of an imminent world takeover, it would have to be almost omnipotent and omnipresent! In short, we would no longer be talking about a *movement* but a conspiracy in the most subversive and menacing senses of the word, similar to the all-pervasive, monolithic conspiracies attributed by some to the Illuminati, Jesuits, international bankers, etc.

In such a scenario, Marilyn Ferguson would be deliberately concealing information in her book (which Cumbeys has in fact claimed), and someone like myself would likely be a "plant," deliberately spreading disinformation (which Cumbeys has also suggested). In other words, any information which seems to counter the conspiracy theory can easily be viewed as deliberate cover-up work by the all-powerful conspiracy. But when a theory can no longer be *disproved*, neither can it ever be *proved*. It loses all possible value as a source of useful and reliable knowledge.

If, on the other hand, a theory is to have potential value it must be made *testable* — certain evidence must be determined which would be sufficient to disprove it. I contend that sufficient evidence against Cumbeys theory would be to show that *all* New Age leaders have not been following one detailed blueprint — that, in fact, the movement is not tightly organized and hierarchical. If that can be proved, Cumbeys entire conspiracy theory would necessarily be *disproved*.

A PLANNED DECEPTION

Self-published and difficult to read for its obvious lack of professional editing, *A Planned Deception* is largely devoted to defending the thesis of *Hidden Dangers* against the criticisms of "Christian cult 'experts.'" Both by name and by allusion, Walter Martin in particular is berated on several occasions.*

Little new is added to Cumbeys original theory, although new documentation is brought forth to support old claims. There are a few slight but detectable changes in Cumbeys overall presentation. Maitreya, to whom she devoted an entire chapter in her first book, is never referred to as an actual, living man, and receives passing mention only twice. Benjamin Creme, who occupies a central place in *Hidden Dangers*, is only referred to a few times incidentally.

Also, Cumbey is ready to qualify some points which were stated as absolutes in *Hidden Dangers*. For example:

At any rate, it is clear that there has been much working out of "The Plan" — consciously or *unconsciously*. It appears that much more of it is conscious that [sic] Christian cult "experts" wish to concede (p. 46) (emphasis added).

As the tone of the above quote indicates, however, such qualifications are always made in a grudging manner, while in the same breath the basic thesis of the original conspiracy theory is upheld. Although some of its points are stated less forcefully, none are retracted; there is no admission of past error. Rather, the original thesis is assumed and defended throughout the book.

It needs to be recognized why it would be difficult for Cumbey to retract openly any of her original unqualified claims about the NAM. Her conspiracy theory was pieced together from a multitude of New Age sources under the assumption that whenever one New Age leader spoke, he/she did so for the entire movement. If it were to be allowed that this is not at all the case, that in fact the movement is not nearly so organized as she first thought, then Benjamin Creme's announcement of Maitreya's soon appearing would not necessarily mean that the NAM was ready to take over the world. David Spangler's references to a "Luciferic initiation" would not prove that all New Age leaders hold to a positive belief in Lucifer. Alice Bailey's anti-Semitic statements, her reference to the atomic bomb as the "saving force," even her belief in the "Masters" and a coming "New Age Christ," could no longer be indiscriminately attributed to the entire movement. Ultimately, Cumbey's distinctive conspiracy theory would entirely unravel.

PROBLEMS WITH CUMBEY'S THESIS

Particularly for those lacking much prior exposure to the NAM, Cumbey's presentation can be very persuasive. Since she is a trial lawyer, one naturally assumes that she must follow the rules of logic and know how to interpret evidence. And *evidence* she appears to have — thousands of New Age books out of which she can endlessly cite quotes and facts in seeming support of everything she says. Christians are usually unable to check out this overwhelming amount of bizarre material, but often reason that since it all seems to fulfill biblical prophecy, it *must* be true. But, those who *are* familiar with the evidence do not need to be trained logicians to see that Cumbey's thesis is riddled with mishandled facts and logical fallacies. To prove this we will now apply the aforementioned "test" and see if all New Age leaders have unitedly been following one detailed blueprint.

Concerning Bailey and the Plan

It must first be acknowledged that Cumbey often displays excellent instincts as a researcher. She has tracked down just about all of the important players in the NAM. Alice Bailey is the best example of this. If we were to call H. P. Blavatsky (the founder of Theosophy) the "Grandmother of the New Age movement," Alice Bailey would be its "Mother." It was she more than any other adherent of Blavatsky's teachings who took those ideas and shaped them into the ideological/mythological system we now call "New Age."

It must also be recognized that in the Alice Bailey writings a "Plan" for preparing the world for the New Age and a New Age Christ *is* described in much detail. And, for nearly 70 years there *have been* self-conscious disciples of the "Master D.K." (the supposedly advanced being who Bailey claimed telepathically wrote almost all of the books through her) working to further the Plan.

The following questions remain to be answered: 1) Is the Plan essentially like Cumbey described it? 2) Did the present New Age movement arise out of a step-by-step following of the Plan? 3) Are all (or even most) New Age leaders self-conscious followers of Bailey and the Plan?

Regarding the nature of the Plan, Cumbey fails to make clear that the Plan is never described as *a* complete blueprint held in human hands. Rather, it is in the possession of the "Hierarchy," a group of "Masters," and most of its details have not been revealed to human beings. It is largely carried out by the Masters themselves, without the assistance of self-conscious disciples.¹

There are, however, specific instructions in the Bailey books on how the disciples can help with the Plan's outworking. A major focus was the forming of an international "network of light and service" by organizing "triangles": groups of three who would use and promote the Great Invocation (a "world prayer" which invokes the return of the "Christ" and the establishing of the Plan on earth).² They were also to teach the principles of good will or "right human relations" and spread the hope of the "coming one" to the general public.

On the whole, the instructions for working out the Plan are not nearly as many as Cumbey implies. It is true that "D.K." describes the future work of the disciples in a manner that at times strikingly parallels what has actually been done by various movements over the past couple decades (e.g., in education, religion, health, politics). However, the very source from which Cumbey draws most heavily in support of her thesis can also be used to destroy it.

In Bailey's *The Externalization of the Hierarchy*, the same book in which the year 1975 is given significance in the Hierarchy's Plan, we are also told (p. 530) that "in 2025 the date in all probability will be set for the first stage of the externalization [bodily appearances] of the Hierarchy" (emphasis added). Later, on p.559, we are told that *after* these first Masters appear, "If these steps prove successful, other and more important reappearances will be possible, *beginning with the return of the Christ*" (emphasis added). Obviously, if Bailey's disciples are following her "like a recipe," and this is why 1975 is important, then the "Christ" *cannot* appear until some time after 2025. In context 1975 only represents a stepping-up of preparatory activity over a 50-year period, and yet Cumbey has used it sensationally to argue for an *imminent* appearance of Maitreya.

Also, even according to Bailey or "D.K.," most of the disciples who would really be working out the Plan in the world would *not* be doing so consciously. They would be "disciples" purely on the basis of *reincarnation* (which means from our standpoint they would not be disciples at all!):

The disciples sent out from the various ashrams [i.e., reincarnated] do not arrive on earth conscious of a high mission or knowing well the nature of the task to which they have been subjectively assigned....They will find their way into politics, into the educational movement and into science; they will work as humanitarians, as social workers and in the field of finance, but they will follow these lines of activity through natural inclination and not because they are being "obedient" to instruction from some Master....They will work....in response to impression from the Ashram, but of this, in their physical brains, they know nothing and care less.³

On the other hand, those disciples who were aware of the Hierarchy and the Plan (i.e., *true* disciples from our perspective) *were not asked to do that kind of work*:

Disciples who are intensely interested in personal responsiveness to the soul, who work diligently at the problem of soul contact, who are busy with the art of serving consciously and who make service a goal, who are keenly alive to the fact of the Ashram and to the Master, *will not be asked to do this work of preparing for the externalization of the Hierarchy*. Advanced disciples [i.e., those unconscious of the Plan] . . . can be trusted to work along right lines in the world and do the work of preparation. They cannot be sidetracked or deflected from one-pointed attention to the task in hand by any soul call to urge: hence they are free to do the intended work (emphasis added).⁴

So what have those who we would all agree are Bailey's disciples been doing for these past several decades? Mainly occult work (using the Great Invocation, chanting various mantras, etc.).⁵ According to their world view, that's the most effective line of activity they could pursue, but it lends little support to Cumbey's thesis.

No doubt, Bailey's followers would be happy to take credit for the rise of the NAM. They would point to their occult activity and say that they unleashed the energy that brought it about. They might also point to the second major thrust of their work, the widespread promotion of the Great Invocation, Bailey's books, and related teachings, as a way in which they have helped bring the NAM about.

This latter claim would be legitimate. Many New Age leaders have been directly influenced by Bailey's teachings (e.g., Donald Keys, David Spangler, Robert Muller), and many more indirectly. But even Bailey's followers would readily admit that most who have been influenced by her are not following her

“meticulously.” New Agers are typically eclectic, drawing on many sources and combining them in their own personal mix. Furthermore, there are many New Age leaders who show little or no Bailey influence at all (e.g., Marilyn Ferguson, Fritjof Capra, Mark Satin).

The evidence indicates that true disciples of Bailey, those who would follow her every word, are small in number and *not* united (several splinter groups formed off the original organization, Lucis Trust, after Bailey died).⁶ One thing is certain: her followers by no means encompass the entire New Age leadership, as Cumbey’s theory *requires*.

Concerning H. G. Wells

In singling out H. G. Wells, Cumbey again put her finger on someone of undeniable importance. If Bailey might be called “the mother of the New Age movement,” Wells is certainly “the father of the world-state movement” (two distinct though overlapping movements). At the turn of the century Wells began to preach his gospel of world government with missionary zeal, and through his great popularity (which lasted until the mid 1920s) as an author and social “prophet” the minds of an entire generation were taught to think in global terms. Even today his indirect influence is widely evident.

Again, it is Cumbey’s *interpretation* of her research findings with which issue must be taken. In particular, she is seriously mistaken about Wells’s “Open Conspiracy.” It is not that he did not outline several practical steps toward a world revolution — he did, much more so than Bailey. Nor is Cumbey wrong in saying that much of what Wells suggested has come to pass. Where Cumbey makes a critical error (as she does also with Bailey) is in concluding that these correspondences between Wells’s blueprint and subsequent history are so strong that the case is closed — no further evidence is needed to prove that Wells has been followed by the NAM.

In fact, the evidence Cumbey cites is purely circumstantial, and crumbles under the weightier evidence of the historical record, and the context of Wells’s own words.

Published after Wells’s popularity began to decline, *The Open Conspiracy* did not sell particularly well — maybe a little over 30,000 in its three editions. Reviews from critics were mostly unenthusiastic.

In the Depression-struck 1930s, interest in revolutionary programs of all kinds was great, and thus a couple of efforts *were* made to organize the Open Conspiracy. However, the right kind of people (industrialists and scientists) did not become involved, and so these amateurish attempts floundered, and completely disappeared amid the chaos of the late 1930s.

The Open Conspiracy failed partly because Wells failed to give it strong leadership:

A disillusioned Wellsian, Odette Keun, complained in 1934, it was tragically disconcerting “to expect from a social thinker a system to which you can rally and which you can put into execution, and receive instead a swamping cataract of rushing broken notions.” Wells shifted and changed, she said, “almost from one moon to another, his ground, his angle, and his solutions,” shattering the confidence of “the men and women who aspired to be his disciples.”⁷

As Wells approached the end of his life he viewed his mission as a complete failure. This despair is evident in his final book, *Mind at the End of Its Tether*.

W. Warren Wagar’s book *H. G. Wells and the World State* is the authoritative work on the Open Conspiracy. Wagar, himself a disciple of Wells and later a member of the Institute for World Order, was writing to people of sympathetic mind when he made the following observations. It would be a case of “invincible ignorance” to assume he was *not* telling the truth.

Wells’ warnings and proposals and Utopias were not accepted as a single system by a self-consciously Wellsian intellectual movement (emphasis added).⁸

The Open Conspiracy will probably go down in history as a curiously interesting failure, a creed that never caught hold, although it was by no means the most wild-eyed of twentieth-century creeds (emphasis added).⁹ All of his attempts to proselyte the intellectual avant-garde of the generations which came to maturity in the years after 1914 had failed. The Open Conspiracy

had not materialized, either directly in answer to his books or as a great spontaneous wave of enlightened militant action. . .since his death in 1946, *his already declining prestige has dwindled to almost nothing* (emphasis added).¹⁰

Wagar's evaluation is confirmed by virtually every other authority on Wells.¹¹

Wagar's book was written in 1961. Over the past 20 years there has been a great resurgence of interest in global government. H. G. Wells has been rediscovered by some in this movement, and therefore Cumbey can cite references to him in *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, and a Lucis Trust article calling him a "forerunner" (which indeed he was). That is to be expected. But surely it offers no proof that the entire NAM is closely following his blueprint. There is much that indicates otherwise.

Cumbey and I would both agree that the Club of Rome's Aurelio Peccei is a guiding force in the current move toward "planetization." Peccei granted an interview with cultural historian and leading New Ager William Irwin Thompson. Thompson reports that "Peccei had said that he was *not familiar with the work of H. G. Wells*; nevertheless Peccei and the Club were the very men Wells had been waiting for [i.e., industrialists and scientists]" (emphasis added).¹²

In truth, the world-state called for by Wells and the "planetary guidance system" envisioned by New Ager thinkers are worlds apart, both in structure and in underlying values. There was no place in Wells's world-state for mysticism,¹³ and he was extremely critical of the leading "New Age" thinkers of his time.¹⁴ Consequently, Wells's appeal even today is limited.

How then can we explain the remarkable similarities between Wells's blueprint and what has actually happened?

H. G. Wells was, perhaps, the greatest social prognosticator in history (the word "prognosticator" not applying to the biblical prophets). His mind had a phenomenal capacity to foresee the natural lines along which history would likely move. At the turn of the century he predicted aviation and its strategic use in warfare. In 1933 he foretold the outbreak of World War II, just missing the date by a few months. In 1913 he described the invention and use in war of the atomic bomb! He also perceived the increasingly global character of our age, and predicted the natural emergence of an "open conspiracy" similar in several respects to what we now have with the NAM.

In reading *The Open Conspiracy* Cumbey failed to pay sufficient heed to Wells's own clarifications:

In such terms we may sketch the practicable and possible opening phase of the open conspiracy. We do not present it as a movement initiated by any individual or radiating from any particular center. It arises naturally and necessarily from the present increase of knowledge and the broadening outlook of many minds throughout the world. It is reasonable therefore to anticipate its appearance all over the world in sporadic mutually independent groups.¹⁵

Wagar accurately comments:

The movement Wells envisioned could not have thrived as a "society" in any case, however vigorous or articulate. It had to be a movement in the historical sense, a tidal wave, an irresistible and spontaneous outbreak of understanding. When Wells groped for words to describe his Open Conspiracy, he was in effect trying to say that unless the idea occurred independently and simultaneously to tens of thousands of able men in responsible positions all over the world, there was no hope for it. *Wells had too much fatalism in his blood to expect history to obey H. G. Wells* (emphasis added).¹⁶

Having looked carefully at the two primary sources for Cumbey's conspiracy theory, the following comments can be made. While some New Agers have certainly acted on the suggestions of Alice Bailey and H. G. Wells at times (Donald Keys of Planetary Citizens being a likely example), the NAM is best understood as a dynamic, spontaneous cultural development, not the deliberate execution of an elaborate plan. Though there are elements of conspiracy (as described in Parts Five and Six of my series), the word can conjure up misleading images. New Agers themselves believe the very force of evolution is the *prime mover*, carrying them along. They see (all too correctly) a spontaneous social transformation occurring,

and they do what they can to help further it. No doubt Satan has a well-defined “plan,” but it is almost sure folly to think it can be learned by studying Alice Bailey, H. G. Wells, or any other ungodly source. The Bible is the only reliable source for learning the truth about the “father of lies.”

Concerning New Age Organization

I have already described the nature and extent of New Age organization in my series. I will only reemphasize here that the NAM is a network, and that means, by the common usage of the term, that it is *not* centralized and tightly organized. As New Agers Jessica Lipnak and Jeffrey Stamps explain it:

Bureaucracies tend to bring parts together through *centralized* control and to *maximize* the dependency of parts on the whole. Networks tend to bring parts together under *decentralized* cooperation and to minimize their dependency on the whole. Network parts are dispersed and flexibly connected, whereas bureaucratic parts are concentrated and rigidly connected.¹⁷

Cumbey seems to be profoundly confused on this point. On the one hand she will make completely accurate statements like this: “It should also be kept in mind that the Movement is not a hierarchical structure, per se, but is composed of thousands of networking organizations” (*Hidden Dangers*, p. 193). And then on the same page she will affirm:

It may safely be said that Lucis Trust is truly the brains — at least from an occult planning basis — of the New Age Movement. One only has to study the course of the Movement to see that her instructions to New Age “disciples” have been followed like recipes (*Hidden Dangers*, 193-94).

But if Lucis Trust is the “brains” of the movement, and the NAM has followed Bailey “like a recipe,” then it *must* be a hierarchical structure with tremendous control.

That New Agers have not always been organized as a conspiracy, but are *becoming* organized as a network, is evident in the following quotes from Donald Keys and Fritjof Capra:

Thousands of organizations of concerned people throughout the world have been conscious of the global crisis and have been responding with activities to increase awareness and to propose positive alternative suggestions for a human world. However, *these significant efforts have usually been unrelated*. Their convergence can greatly strengthen their impact (emphasis added).¹⁸ The philosophical, spiritual, and political movements generated in the ‘60s and ‘70s all emphasize different aspects of the new paradigm and all seem to be going in the same direction — though so far, most of these movements still operate separately and have not yet recognized how their purposes interrelate.¹⁹

Cumbey has read these statements and many more like them. Why doesn’t she believe them? Undoubtedly it is because she believes she has more reliable evidence to the contrary. And yet all of her evidence for a monolithic conspiracy (e.g., “organizational charts, matrixes, statements of purpose, and directories” — *Hidden Dangers*, p. 6) could just as easily be interpreted by the network model, especially when one realizes that such evidence invariably refers to organizations and networks *within* the movement, and not the movement as a whole.

Why is this important? The main reason Cumbey’s vision of the NAM is distorted is because she has failed to grasp this point. She saw the degree of organization that *does* exist and jumped to the conclusion that when one teacher or group says or does something, all must be involved. For examples:

The New Age Movement . . . seeks to replace the cross with. . . the swastika (*Hidden Dangers*, p. 118).

They openly propose to give every world resident a number and require the usage of this number in all financial transactions of any sort (*Ibid.*, p. 256).

It is bad enough that these incredible claims are not documented, but even if they were, since the NAM is a loose network and not a centralized organization, what one member says or does is not necessarily representative of the whole. The last quote cited illustrates a seemingly simple but nonetheless serious flaw in Cumbey’s entire representation of the NAM — her frequent use of the word “they.”

This approach can be evangelistically self-defeating because it alienates most New Agers. They feel they are being maliciously misrepresented by a “reactionary type” who does not care enough to take the time to understand them.

Space permits only one example. I once conversed with the minister of a New Age “church” who explained to me that he had been regularly watching a local Christian talk show, and was being drawn away from his New Age beliefs to the gospel. Then Constance Cumbey was a guest on the program and managed to alarm the hosts about the NAM. Afterward they began to preach regularly about the threat of the New Agers — how they worship Lucifer and want to take over politically so they can exterminate Jews and Christians. When this man heard the hosts making charges his own experience told him were false, he recoiled against them and everything they stood for. His offense was so great that I am not sure that any of my words succeeded at reconciling him.

I do not mean to deny that *Satan's* goal in all of this New Age activity is the establishment of the Antichrist. Nor do I wish to deny that persecution is in store for Christians if the “New Age” becomes a reality. But it is simply erroneous to say that all New Agers *now* are looking for a “New Age Christ,” or that violent repression of Christians is part of a widely accepted “Plan.”

My concern is that Christians strive for truth and accuracy. I cannot stress enough that when I criticize Cumbey’s depiction of the movement’s size and dangers, I am not advocating the *opposite* position — it is big and it is dangerous.

Some Christians have replied, “If you agree that the movement is a serious threat, then why criticize brave Christians like Constance who are taking an unpopular stand and sounding the warning? You should be supporting them.” My reply is that, for a Christian, means (in this case *how* a message is presented) are as important as ends. I criticize for the same reason that Christians will criticize other believers who speak about the dangers of communism, Satanism, or Satan himself in such a simplistic and sensational manner that the skeptics are only made *more* skeptical about the dangers of these things. Although not referring to Cumbey, Dave Hunt put the matter well:

Exaggerated reports like the above play into the hands of the internationalists by causing reasonable persons to doubt the whole idea of a conspiracy to set up a world government. That could be dangerous.²⁰

It is very real concerns such as these, and not “jealousy” (as Cumbey has suggested), that prompt these criticisms. I freely acknowledge that, in spite of the problems noted above, Constance Cumbey has made several valuable contributions to the Christian church. Her enterprising research has brought to light many important organizations and personalities within New Age politics, and I myself am indebted to her for this. By her own report, many New Agers have become Christians through her ministry. Certainly, she has alerted many Christians to the subtle dangers of programs like est, Silva Mind Control, A Course in Miracles, etc. And, while her treatment of Christians whom she believes have New Age connections (sometimes rightly, sometimes wrongly) has been anything but conciliatory, at least she has taken a stand for biblical doctrine in an age of growing apostasy. Her warnings against such men as Matthew Fox, Rodney Romney, Thomas Merton, and Robert Schuller have no doubt saved many believers from deception.

For all these contributions and more, Constance Cumbey deserves credit and appreciation. But, although she has succeeded more than anyone else at waking the church up to the New Age movement, the “New Age movement” that the church awoke to is decidedly different from the New Age movement that is really out there, as our “test” of Cumbey’s theory has shown. It is time for the church to wake up *fully*, shaking off its dreamy fantasy of a monolithic New Age conspiracy. Only then can it truly rise up to the very real and formidable challenges of the New Age movement.

— reviewed by Elliot Miller

NOTES

- * It would go beyond the scope of this review to reply here to Cumbey's charges against Walter Martin and CRI. Those readers who are aware of Cumbey's charges and would like to know CRI's response may write us for our statement, "A Reply to Constance Cumbey's Charges Against Walter Martin and CRI."
1. See, for example, Alice Bailey, *The Externalization of the Hierarchy* (New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1957), 664, and Benjamin Creme, *The Reappearance of the Christ and the Masters of Wisdom* (London: The Tara Press, 1980), 249.
 2. Bailey, 312.
 3. *Ibid.*, 582-85.
 4. *Ibid.*, 586.
 5. *Ibid.*, 104.
 6. Accounts of this can be found in the following authorities: J. Gordon Melton, *The Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 2d ed. (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1987), 126-27, 607-610; J. Stillson Judah, *The History and Philosophy of the Metaphysical Movements in America* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967), 119-33.
 7. W. Warren Wagar, *H. G. Wells and the World State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), 265-66.
 8. *Ibid.*, 269.
 9. *Ibid.*, 174.
 10. *Ibid.*, 246.
 11. See, for examples, Lovat Dickson, *H. G. Wells: His Turbulent Life and Times* (New York: Atheneum, 1969) and Mark R. Hillegas, *The Future as Nightmare — H. G. Wells and the Anti-Utopians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 79-80.
 12. William Irwin Thompson, *Passages About Earth* (New York: Perennial Library, 1973), 79.
 13. Wagar, 258.
 14. Wagar, 255-56.
 15. H. G. Wells, *The Open Conspiracy* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1928), 144-45.
 16. Wagar, 202-203.
 17. Jessica Lipnak and Jeffrey Stamps, *Networking* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1982), 225.
 18. Donald Keys, *Earth at Omega — Passage to Planetization* (Boston: The Branden Press, 1982), 106.
 19. Fritjof Capra, "The Turning Point — A New Vision of Reality," *New Age*, Feb. 1982, 30.
 20. Dave Hunt, *Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1983), 48.

Constance Cumbey (born February 29, 1944) is a lawyer and activist Christian author. Cumbey offered the first major criticism of the New Age movement from a Christian perspective in *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow: The New Age Movement and Our Coming Age of Barbarism* (1983), but quickly lost academic credibility due to her promotion of conspiracy theories linking the New Age movement to Benjamin Creme, theosophy and Nazism. Scholar of New Age religion James R. Lewis describes this book as containing Constance Cumbey is a legend among conspiracy theorists, but most famous, perhaps, for having repeatedly accused Texe Marrs and Pat Robertson of stealing from her. The New Age cult's alleged tenets are ecumenism, holistic health, New Thought, humanistic psychology, Montessori schools, modernism, secular humanism, and zero population growth, and any advocate for any of these is obviously a member of a hierarchically organized cult. Unitarian churches and health food stores are the "New Age recruiting centers," the Guardian Angels is the New Age movement's paramilitary organization, and "the New Age Movement has complete identity with the programs of Hitler." Indeed. (She has a blog where she expands on these issues, but I am not inclined to link to it.) Constance Cumbey is a lawyer and activist Christian author. Her contention is that the New Age movement is not simply expressing a naive or unscriptural interest in metaphysics, but that it is an organized conspiracy overthrow the [United States](#) and replace it with a Nazi-like regime.