

Without the Church of Christ, Peace is Unattainable

In 1968, to the surprise of many, the Beatles went to India to seek spiritual peace through a modernized form of Hindu religion. This turning away from the religious traditions of the West was a major sign of the times.

North America is becoming increasingly interested in Oriental religions and the occult, The new religious trend emphasizes astrology, flamboyant symbolism, occult power, witchcraft and mysticism.

The rise and influence of astrology is phenomenal. The existence of over 10,000 full-time and 175,000 part-time astrologers in America indicates that this ancient practice and belief exerts a powerful influence on the outlook and lifestyle of the average citizen.

The drug culture has also influenced and slain its thousands. In 1966, Timothy Leary founded the League for Spiritual Discovery and became the drug movement's famous advocate. However, Leary himself has warned against the use of hard drugs (aside from marijuana) and urged the disciplines of the Eastern religions.

One writer on astrology has sold 20 million copies of his books around the world, Special works on astrology exist for parents to help them train their children. Decision making of thousands of teen-agers is determined by the Ouija board, a divination ; mechanism that has had sales of 2-million in the United States in three years. Sorcery is widely practised. A T.V. commentator interviewed a sorceress who manufactures and sells voodoo dolls by mail. You read in the newspapers about white witches, covens, and Satan worship. You see and hear the Hare Krishna people in every major city in North America.

When travelling in Europe just recently, I was surprised to see them making their propaganda. Did you know that the "world's most experienced airline" offers tourists a Psychic Tour of Great Britain? The cost is \$629. Each participant in the tour will receive his own astro-numerology chart and the experience of a seance. Occultism as such is dedicated to a private and subjective world of meaning. It is a flight from and hate-of - the material world into the ocean of consciousness and mystic experience.

We should not be too surprised about this development. Our world is filled with people hungry for spiritual reality, for something that eludes them. The search is on to meet the need of the restless heart. It is a religious search.

Many want to flee the prison-like character of modern technocratic society. They feel boxed in. They cannot find a point of contact in this universe. Rationalism and secularism have excluded God from this world, God has been pronounced dead!

Nitsche describes in his famous parable "*The Gay Science*" how a madman enters a market place with a lantern, crying, "I seek God. I seek God." But the busy crowd is

unconcerned at his outbursts and laughs at his comical antics. Turning suddenly on them, he demands: "Whither is God? I shall tell you. We have killed him, you and I!" Yet, man knows in his heart that he cannot be satisfied with the material. The soul still seeks affinity.

How has the church reacted? What guidance is she providing? The church has by and large surrendered to the spirit of the age. Feeling and experience are increasingly replacing the content of faith.

Os Guinness remarked in his provocative work *The Dust of Death*: "When the crisis came in Europe and there was less to believe, people felt there was no point in going to church. Attendance dropped drastically, and the outlines of truly believing communities were starkly delineated. But in the United States, when the crisis came and there was less to believe, church going became all the easier and churches became community centers, part and parcel of the American way of living."

The church can meet the need if she is willing to take up the offense of the cross and spread the gospel. She must show that the gospel gives concrete answers to intellectual questions and that the search of man must end in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus Himself has said: "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

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