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## INTRODUCTION

### *A Changing View of the Spiritual World*



*We are only at the threshold of a new spiritual epoch.*

CARL JUNG,

*"The Difference Between Eastern and Western Thinking"*

*These modern movements may be harbingers of a newly dawning and more adequate myth and spirituality.*

JOHN P. DOURLEY,

*The Illness We Are*

*We are persuaded that gradually, in religious thought as in the sciences, a core of universal truth will form and slowly grow to be accepted by everyone. Can there be any true spiritual evolution without it?*

PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN,

*The Future of Man*

*We are at the dawn of a new consciousness, a radically fresh approach to our life as the human family in a fragile world. . . . Perhaps the best name for this new segment of historical experience is the Interspiritual Age.*

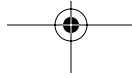
WAYNE TEASDALE,

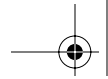
*The Mystic Heart*

*The idea of changing culture is important to me, and it can only be done in a popular medium.*

JOSS WHEDON,

*creator of Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

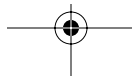


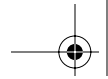


Harvard graduate and former Green Beret Gary Zukav, a frequent guest on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, is just one of dozens of popular writers currently promoting an emerging new spirituality. Zukav confidently anticipates nothing less than the “birth of a new humanity,” which even now is apparent in “new perceptions and new values” including the insight that “the Universe is alive, wise, and compassionate.” Members of the new humanity are currently participating in “a learning process” that is contributing to “the evolution of our souls.” Zukav’s books are part of his effort to “serve the needs of the emerging multisensory humanity,” for which “current social structures” are inadequate. Thus, these outdated structures “are dissolving” while Zukav and a growing number of like-minded individuals are busily “creating their replacements—seven billion of us, together.”<sup>1</sup>

Zukav’s *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, winner of an American Book Club award in 1979, explored the intersection of quantum physics and emerging spiritualities. Like many contemporary writers on spiritual topics, Zukav finds in science a key to human spiritual awareness and development. Science is no longer confined to only physical phenomena, but is the source of a new theology. In his bestselling *The Seat of the Soul* (1989) Zukav writes that the “discoveries of science illuminate both inner and outer experiences,” that is, both “physical and nonphysical dynamics.”<sup>2</sup> Science has even suggested a new understanding of God, not as the personal Deity of the Judeo-Christian tradition, but as “conscious light” and “Divine Intelligence” that animate, not a single entity, but the universe itself.<sup>3</sup>

The individual spiritual seeker exercising innate rational power is central to the new spiritual views. “The intellect is meant to expand perceptions, to help you grow in perceptual strength and complexity.”<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the spiritual seeker may acquire hidden knowledge from “nonphysical Teachers,” or spirit entities equipped to assist the process of spiritual evolution to higher levels of awareness. The capacity to “communicate consciously with a nonphysical Teacher, is a treasure that cannot be described, a treasure beyond words and value.”<sup>5</sup> Such guidance is crucial, for the “advanced or expanding mind” does not find answers “within the accepted understanding of truth.” The old paradigms do not take into account the most important fact about the human race—its continuing evolution.<sup>6</sup> “Our species is evolving,” writes Zukav, and this evolutionary process will result in a species that is “more radiant and energetic,” more “aware of the Light of its soul,” and





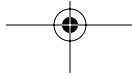
more capable of communicating with “forms of Life that are invisible to the five-sensory personality.”<sup>7</sup> Many members of the human race already exhibit some of these signs of ongoing evolution, and further progress is assured under the guidance of both science and “spirit Teachers.”

Gary Zukav is just one example of dozens of writers and media celebrities who have helped both to shape and popularize a medley of religious ideas that I will be referring to throughout this book as the New Religious Synthesis. Such public religious advocates have had enormous influence in the past fifty years, and the audience for their ideas grows steadily. Zukav’s books alone, for example, have sold in excess of five million copies worldwide and have been translated into sixteen languages. His appearances on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* have made his ideas available to an estimated twenty-two million viewers.

The new spiritual outlook Zukav and many other talented advocates are promoting stands in sharp contrast to its predecessor, the Judeo-Christian worldview. Proponents of this ancient and venerable worldview have long insisted that it is, not a human discovery, but rather a revelation from a living and personal God. For this reason I will be referring to the tradition emerging from the pages of the Old and New Testaments as the Revealed Word. What I take to be the fundamental, and fundamentally opposed, components of two perspectives currently competing for the Western religious mind—the New Religious Synthesis and the Revealed Word—will be set out in detail below.

So substantial has been the shaping influence of the New Religious Synthesis on contemporary religious thought that it has now displaced the Revealed Word as the religious framework of a large and growing number of Western people. This powerfully persuasive synthesis blends strands of religious thought that began to appear, or reappear in Western religious writing around 1700. Over the past three centuries, and under the guidance of scores of gifted public advocates working in a number of genres and media, the New Religious Synthesis has now successfully colonized Western religious consciousness. The intriguing migration of these provocative ideas from the fringes of religious exotica to Western spirituality’s Main Street is the story told in this book.

“One cannot but feel,” wrote the famous scholar of religions Joseph Campbell in 1989, that there is a “universally recognized need in our time for a general transformation of consciousness.”<sup>8</sup> In a similar fashion, Marilyn Ferguson maintained in her bestselling *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (1980) that scientific and spiritual breakthroughs



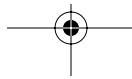
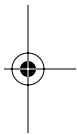


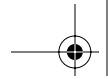
would soon “thrust us into a new, higher order” of consciousness.<sup>9</sup> As noted in the quotations at the opening of this chapter, the enormously influential psychoanalyst Carl Jung remarked more than seventy years ago that the Western world was “at the threshold of a new spiritual epoch.”<sup>10</sup> In apparent agreement, Catholic lay brother Wayne Teasdale has written that “we are at the dawn of a new consciousness, a radically fresh approach to our life as the human family in a fragile world.”<sup>11</sup> Though he is deeply concerned about some of its implications, historian of religion Carl Raschke has also noted the recent emergence of a “new religious consciousness.”<sup>12</sup> Have we, in fact, now entered a new spiritual era?

For many Westerners, the long-prophesied new spiritual age certainly has arrived. The Revealed Word and its busy, personal God have faded into our collective spiritual memory, and bright new spiritual commitments encourage fresh religious thought. The New Synthesis appears less rigid and systematic than a worldview, less august and enduring than a tradition. And yet, its basic components are considerably more integrated than the simple “toolbox” of religious ideas that French scholar Daniele Hervieu-Leger referred to in 1999 as characterizing the contemporary religious mind.<sup>13</sup> This emerging outlook provides a new theological hypothesis for a dawning age, a user-friendly alternative to the doctrinally insistent Revealed Word. For the spiritual seeker, the New Religious Synthesis has become the Other Spirituality.

In the following pages I want to explore just how this massive transformation in Western spiritual thought has occurred, taking as my focus the work of public religious advocates. At this juncture in the religious history of Western culture, it also seems timely to ask what is gained and what is lost in the dramatic shift now occurring from one spirituality to another. I will begin with the assumption that, in a society accustomed to the free and public exchange of ideas, it takes a great deal of time and enormous effort to replace that society’s spiritual base with a wholly new one. After all, two major tasks are involved: dismantling the old view by revealing its inadequacies and fashioning a new and presumably better one in its place. Thus, this act of changing Western culture’s religious beliefs has meant going repeatedly before the public in broadly accessible settings and by means of popular religious media—books, speeches, magazines and pamphlets to be sure, but also movies, plays, music, radio interviews, television programs and websites.

In the following chapters I will be drawing attention to a number of authors and artists who have been important to this effort to accomplish the twin tasks of razing





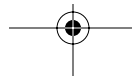
the Western world's old spiritual edifice and publicly constructing a new one in its place. What follows, however, is not a comprehensive catalog of the efforts that brought either task to completion. Rather, I have chosen what I take to be representative examples of spiritually influential works from a three-hundred-year-long public persuasive process. Some of the works selected are quite famous and their impact widely recognized. Others were well known in their own day but are now virtually forgotten. In such cases it has seemed to me that the work's influence has nevertheless persisted in the public mind as beliefs, ideas, assumptions, convictions and images. While not including a number of major milestones of religious thought because their influence seems to have been greatest among scholars, I do focus attention on several important intellectual figures who possessed the rare talent for impressing both their academic colleagues and the wider public.

I have been asserting that a massive shift in Western religious attitudes has taken place. Perhaps some basic evidence of such a change is in order before considering the historical sources and impact of the New Religious Synthesis on our religious thought. Even a brief survey of events on the recent Western religious stage suggests that something like a fundamental shift in spiritual assumptions has transpired, almost without our noticing it.

### SPIRITUAL CHANGES: A NEW AGE OF BELIEF?

Observers of the religious scene have for some time now noted that an extraordinary redefinition of fundamental religious belief has occurred in the West and that the resultant spiritual transition has been stunning in its rapidity, scope and impact. A decade ago journalist Michael D'Antonio wrote that "sociologists at the University of California, Santa Barbara estimate that as many as 12 million Americans could be considered active participants [in alternative spiritual systems] and another 30 million are actively interested."<sup>14</sup> Perhaps 1,000 to 2,000 new religious movements have arisen in the United States alone in the twentieth century, and few of these are rooted in traditional Judeo-Christian theological assumptions.

The diverse manifestations of the emerging spirituality "obscure its size and its impact on the larger society." Nevertheless, that impact is felt "in public schools, hospitals, corporate offices, and the popular media."<sup>15</sup> And, we might add, in politics. The pervasiveness of alternative spiritualities forcefully confronted Americans with revelations that Ronald and Nancy Reagan sought advice from an (expensive) astrologer and that Hillary Rodham Clinton solicited contact with Eleanor Roosevelt



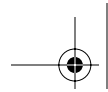


through the offices of psychic researcher Jean Houston. Spirituality, it seems, is no longer confined to the sanctuary and the synagogue, but has now moved into the lecture hall and the classroom, the movie theater and the surgical theater, the corporate office and the Oval Office.

In his book *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (1999) Wade Clark Roof suggests that, unlike old established religious denominations, “popular religious culture is more diffused, less contained by formal religious structures.” The evidence for a new Western spirituality includes “widespread belief in angels and reincarnation; the appeal of religious and quasi-religious shrines, retreat centers, and theme parks; interest in metaphysical and theosophical teachings; prosperity theology and ‘possibility thinking’; and large proportions of Americans reporting mystical experiences.” At the level of popular belief, Roof concludes, “we observe an eclectic mix of religious and spiritual ideas, beliefs, and practices.”<sup>16</sup>

The success of this “eclectic mix” of ideas is not due to its being “institutionalized,” that is, propagated and maintained by formal organizations. Rather, these once exotic but now commonplace notions have pursued a different route into public consciousness. “They persist,” writes Roof, “largely as a result of loosely bound networks of practitioners, the publishing industry, and the media.” Even the names of many new religions practiced by Westerners are not widely recognized by either government record keepers or scholars in religion. Roof’s examples of the new spiritual systems existing just off official radar screens include “the paranormal, Neo-Paganism, astrology, nature religion, [and] holistic thinking,” often collected under broader headings such as “New Age, or New Spirituality.”<sup>17</sup>

Wayne Teasdale applauds this new Great Awakening noted by D’Antonio, Roof and many others, finding it marked by such positive signs as greater “ecological awareness,” a recognition of “the interdependence of all domains of life and reality,” as well as “a deep, evolving experience of community between and among the religions.” Teasdale writes that more and more of us are becoming aware that “the earth is part of the larger community of the universe.”<sup>18</sup> He adds that “each of these shifts represents a dramatic change,” and that “taken together, they will define the thought and culture of the third millennium.” Teasdale recommends dubbing the new religious era the “Interspiritual Age,” and he maintains that new “awarenesses” will profoundly affect all areas of our personal and social lives.<sup>19</sup> “All of these awarenesses are interrelated, and each is indispensable to clearly grasping the greater shift taking place, a shift that will sink roots deep into our lives and culture.”

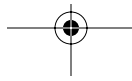
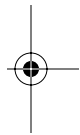


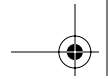
Remarkably, Teasdale believes the new spirituality is “preparing the way for a universal civilization.” The basis of this new, universal civilization will be what Teasdale terms “perennial spiritual and moral insights, intuitions and experiences.” Moreover, “these aspects of spirituality will shape how we conduct politics and education, how we envision our economies, media, and entertainment; and how we develop our relationship with the natural world.”<sup>20</sup>

No assessment of a sea change in religious perspective could be more sweeping than is Teasdale’s. Is he overstating the case? Perhaps, but certainly interest in new spiritualities is extraordinarily high if we are to judge by one rough indicator of public interest—book sales. Teresa Watanabe, writing for the *Los Angeles Times*, notes that “sales of religious books skyrocketed 150% from 1991 to 1997, compared to 35% for the rest of the industry.” She adds, “Ingram Book Co., the nation’s largest book distributor to retail markets, reported a cumulative growth in religion titles of nearly 500% from June 1994 to the third quarter of 1996, an additional 40% increase in 1997, and a 58% rise in the first quarter of 1998.”<sup>21</sup> And these figures do not reflect the enormous sales of books on spiritual themes that are ostensibly devoted to business success, medicine and healing, relationships and science.

Clearly, spiritual books sell, as do spiritually oriented seminars, movies and an extraordinary array of personal spiritual products ranging from clothing to candles. However, the beliefs energizing this vast cultural phenomenon are not those of the Revealed Word perspective that held sway in the West for most of two millennia. In fact, our basic spiritual assumptions have changed so dramatically in the past fifty years that sociologist of religion Robert Wuthnow notices nothing less than a “transformation of American spirituality.”<sup>22</sup> Wuthnow remarks that “a majority of the public has retained some loyalty to their churches and synagogues, yet,” he adds, “their practice of spirituality from Monday to Friday often bears little resemblance to the preachments of religious leaders.”<sup>23</sup> Similarly, historian of religion Philip Jenkins has written recently of the New Age phenomenon that “the vast majority of people holding New Age beliefs do not identify themselves as representing a distinct denomination, but describe themselves as Unitarians or Jews, Methodists or Catholics.”<sup>24</sup>

It is relevant to note here that self-professed belief in astrology, reincarnation and a non-personal divine energy characterizes upwards of 30 percent of Americans, and these concepts are viable spiritual options for many more. One popular astrology website created for Time Warner Electronic Publishing attracts 1.3 million visitors every month. Another similar site, AstroNet, established with the support of America





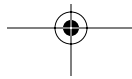
Online, attracts an astonishing 300,000 visitors each day.<sup>25</sup> Thus, though church and synagogue attendance remains strong, this fact may not accurately portray the spiritual convictions and practices of millions of Americans and Europeans. Wuthnow writes that whereas “95 percent of the U.S. population claims to believe in God,” the nature of that divinity is defined in widely divergent ways.<sup>26</sup>

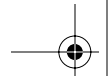
It seems that the God (or gods) in whom many today believe is not the biblical Yahweh, even for self-identified members of traditional faiths.<sup>27</sup> D’Antonio notes that millions of devotees of new religious systems still “consider themselves Christian, Jewish, Muslim” because they “hold to much of their old religious identity” while at the same time “adopting any number of . . . ideas about health, politics, psychology or spirituality” from new spiritual movements.<sup>28</sup> D’Antonio sees this mixing of spiritualities as “enriching.” Whether enriching or simply an expression of spiritual wanderlust, the evidence of spiritual experimentation in the contemporary West is present virtually anywhere one cares to look. Whence this new spiritual orientation?

## BESTSELLERS AND BLOCKBUSTERS: SPIRITUALITY GOES PUBLIC

As might be expected when assessing such a massive change in public attitudes, several explanations have been advanced to account for this seismic shift in Western spiritual attitudes. Some observers subsume all of the observed changes under the heading the New Age movement, and find its sources in the experiments of the hippie culture of the 1960s and 1970s. However, the spiritual changes afoot in the West are broader than even the broadest definitions of a so-called New Age movement. By the same token, to emphasize the drug, rock and spiritual experimentation subculture of the 1960s as the principal source of a new Western spiritual paradigm is to risk overlooking the long historical development of the Other Spirituality and to isolate it within a relatively small and easily dismissed subculture.

A longer historical view reveals that major spiritual changes have been afoot in the Western world for some time and that they correspond roughly with scientific advances, corrosive biblical criticism and rising awareness of other faiths on the part of Westerners. Thus, a second explanation of sweeping religious change in Europe and the United States is that it reflects an attempt to “fill the spiritual vacuum” created as Christian assumptions inexorably disintegrated under pressure from cultural pluralism, Enlightenment criticism of the Judeo-Christian tradition and the staggering successes of modern science. This common explanation of re-





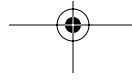
cent religious change has merit; the loss of a cherished and ennobling understanding of transcendence leaves one longing for a substitute. But this account's inactive root metaphor of a vacuum being filled distracts attention away from the concerted and highly successful efforts of a host of skilled advocates who have for more than three centuries actively and persistently promoted alternative spiritualities in broadly public settings and through powerful popular media.

Because I have been placing such heavy emphasis on religious advocates as agents of spiritual change, it may be helpful to illustrate their important role by considering several recent examples of their work. Surveying these cases of public spiritual advocacy does reveal that a large number of Western people have indeed been seeking answers in the spiritual realm by moving outside the boundaries of what I have termed the Revealed Word. But this survey also indicates, I believe, something more—that the public spiritual advocate has also functioned importantly to suggest the direction and the destination of our vast cultural quest for spiritual satisfaction.

***Spirituality's surprising successes.*** In the 1980s many commentators noted the stunning popularity of actress Shirley MacLaine's accounts of her spiritual journeying in books such as *Going Within* and *Dancing in the Light*.<sup>29</sup> "God lies within," she taught, "and therefore we are each part of God."<sup>30</sup> It is estimated that fifty million viewers watched her television special based on the book, *Out on a Limb*, the central message of which was the divinity of the individual. "MacLaine's books," writes one observer, "have introduced millions to psychics and channelers, healers and spirit guides."<sup>31</sup> At the same time her captivating narratives made a persuasive case for a new worldview standing in direct opposition to the Revealed Word.

Numerous earlier writers in the genre of the personal spiritual narrative paved the path to MacLaine's astounding popularity. For example, the drug-enhanced mysticism and magic of Carlos Castaneda's phenomenally popular *The Teachings of Don Juan* series, beginning in 1968, fascinated and often convinced college-aged readers that there was more to the spiritual world than the church had suggested.<sup>32</sup> Castaneda's appealing stories related what he claimed were actual experiences under the tutelage of a Mexican shaman named don Juan, a medicine man and sorcerer who taught him how to use hallucinogenic plants to acquire "wisdom, or knowledge of the right way to live."<sup>33</sup> Through arduous training involving intense inner exploration, Castaneda learned the powers and secrets of an alternative spiritual world.

In the nonfiction realm, works like Marilyn Ferguson's *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (1980) set about "challenging our old assumptions" which are "the air we breathe,



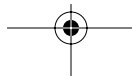


our familiar furniture.”<sup>34</sup> Ferguson argued that the prevailing Western paradigm, founded on the Judeo-Christian worldview, had run its course. A new way of thinking about nature, the divine and human potential had arrived. Ferguson celebrated a growing “conspiracy” of the spiritually informed, a massive collaboration that was changing the way we thought about spiritual matters. *The Aquarian Conspiracy*’s dust jacket confidently announced that “a great, shuddering, irrevocable shift is overtaking us. It is not a new political, religious, or economic system. It is a new mind—a turnabout in consciousness in critical numbers of individuals.”

Indeed, even a cursory glance at recent artifacts of popular culture suggests that something *was* overtaking us as the twentieth century ended. James Redfield’s New Age adventure story, *The Celestine Prophecy*, turned down by publishers but successfully promoted by its determined author, made *The New York Times* best-seller list 165 consecutive weeks starting in 1994. Again, Redfield’s path into the public mind was prepared by works like Richard Bach’s proto-New Age bestseller *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*—the simple story of a seagull with a profound faith in his capacity to overcome personal limitations. Bach’s book sold a surprising three million copies in the mid-1970s. In the cinematic realm, George Lucas’s staggeringly successful *Star Wars* movies recently have marketed a decidedly non-Western religious philosophy to their audiences of millions worldwide. Similarly, phenomenally popular television series such as *The X Files* have recently attracted highly receptive, mainly younger audiences as the programs explore alternative understandings of the spiritual realm.

**Witches and goddesses.** The “great, shuddering, irrevocable shift” in spiritual attitudes has been equally apparent from various cultural vantage points. Many ancient religious traditions, for example, have recently been refurbished and popularized for a new generation of spiritual seekers. Contemporary reworkings of pre-Christian pagan religions, including Wicca, goddess worship, Native American religions, Druidism and the worship of ancient Norse gods are enjoying great popularity. Carol P. Christ writes, “One of the most unexpected developments of the late twentieth century is the rebirth of the religion of the Goddess in western culture.”<sup>35</sup> The goddess being worshiped was, in some cases at least, quite close to home. Ms. Christ writes, “I found God in myself, and I loved her fiercely.”<sup>36</sup>

One prominent proponent of the goddess revival was the cultural anthropologist Marija Gimbutas, author of *The Language of the Goddess*. Gimbutas hoped for a return to a tradition far older than the Judeo-Christian, a faith she calls “Old Euro-



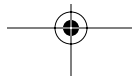


pean.<sup>37</sup> “We are still living under the sway of the aggressive male invasion [of Europe] and only beginning to discover our long alienation from our authentic European Heritage,” which, Gimbutas contends, was “nonviolent,” “earth centered” and “gylanic,” that is, making no social or political distinctions between males and females.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Barbara Walker urges a Western “return” to goddess worship. Her book, *Restoring the Goddess*, calls on women and men to leave the patriarchal religion of the Revealed Word, and to embrace a Nature-centered religion that worships Gaia—the spirit of the earth—as Goddess. Walker finds that goddess worship is more “an evolution than a revolution” in religious thought.<sup>39</sup>

In a similar vein, Akasha Gloria Hull’s book *Soul Talk* explores a “new spirituality [that] has arisen among black women.”<sup>40</sup> For Hull, spirituality involves “conscious relationship with the realm of the spirit, with the invisibly permeating, ultimately positive, divine, and evolutionary energies that give rise to and sustain all that exists.” Though the new spirituality of African American women may draw upon “traditional Christian religions,” Hull affirms that it also “freely incorporates elements popularly called ‘New Age’—Tarot, chakra work, psychic enhancement, numerology, Eastern philosophies of cosmic connectedness, and others.”<sup>41</sup>

Relearning goddess worship has been linked to a striking revival of interest in a related pre-Christian spiritual tradition. Books on witchcraft, both fiction and nonfiction, move briskly from the shelves of the largest bookselling chains. Von Braschler, director of trade sales for the largest occult publishing house, Llewellyn International of St. Paul, Minnesota, states that the “typical reader” of books on witchcraft “is a very young woman in her teens.” So intense is the interest in these books that “more than half of the 100 titles that Llewellyn publishes revolve around Wiccan themes.”<sup>42</sup> Estimates of actual practitioners of the pre-Christian, nature-based spiritualities known generally as Wicca or witchcraft range up to 1.5 million.<sup>43</sup> Popular teen websites such as Bolt.com direct their mainly female visitors to a wide array of links dealing with witchcraft and the occult.<sup>44</sup>

An example of the many popular books in this genre is Phyllis Currott’s *Book of Shadows*.<sup>45</sup> Rejecting what she calls “the Church’s crusade to suppress the Old Religion of the Goddess and to establish religious hegemony,” Currott writes that she is contributing to “a renaissance of a pre-Hebraic, pre-Christian, and pre-Islamic Goddess worship” through her advocacy of witchcraft.<sup>46</sup> She asks, “How can we rediscover the sacred from which we have been separated for thousands of years?”<sup>47</sup> Old spirituality is suddenly new again.



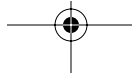


This is the message of Ashleen O’Gaea’s *The Family Wicca Book* as well. Noting that in “pre-patriarchal primal cultures . . . the first human beings were cooperative and gentle with each other,” O’Gaea shows families how to return to the Old Religion of our ancient ancestors.<sup>48</sup> Wicca develops around honoring the Great Mother, but acknowledges a large number of gods. It also teaches reincarnation and incorporates rites, spells and holy days from early European tribal groups. With chapters including “Raising Children to the Craft,” O’Gaea instructs parents on how to teach basic witchcraft to their children. “Our life as a family of witches is full and satisfying,” she writes. “Wicca permeates our lives, enriches our lives, guides our lives.”<sup>49</sup> O’Gaea claims that Wicca is gaining wide acceptance, and that growing numbers of covens of practicing witches now meet in many American cities.

Of course, no discussion of the renewed interest in witchcraft and magic can exclude the current international sensation, J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series. With four books and two movies in release at this writing, the Potter phenomenon is unparalleled. The four books have been translated into two hundred languages, and sales are now in excess of \$110 million. The first of the *Harry Potter* movies, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*, smashed box office records in its first week of release with ticket sales of more than \$97 million. After only twenty days in theatres, box office receipts were well in excess of \$220 million, putting the Potter movie on a trajectory to match the enormous success of George Lucas’s *Star Wars* blockbusters. Though controversy has raged around the witchcraft themes in Rowling’s literary and cinematic stories, the public has found little reason to resist the appeal of these captivating supernatural tales created against a backdrop of magic.

**Hidden Judaism, emerging Buddhism.** This rising tide of interest in “new” religious traditions with ancient roots is not limited to disaffected Christians fleeing Protestantism and Catholicism for refreshingly unfamiliar spiritual territory such as goddess worship and Wicca. Rabbis David A. Cooper and Leibl Wolf, among many others, have successfully revived interest among upwardly mobile American, Australian and European Jews in the ancient mystical Jewish teachings of the kabbalah. Cooper’s *God Is a Verb* and Wolf’s *Practical Kabbalah* offer popular, simplified treatments of a highly complex and traditionally secret system of textual interpretation.<sup>50</sup> But Yahweh and the increasingly popular deity of kabbalah—an impersonal force known as Ein Sof—appear to be two different entities.

Of course, ancient Eastern traditions have shaped the new spirituality even more dramatically than have ancient Middle Eastern ones. Buddhist influence is evident



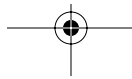


virtually everywhere on the contemporary cultural scene. Rodger Kamenetz's book *The Jew in the Lotus* affirms the relevance of Buddhist thought and practice for modern Jews.<sup>51</sup> Motivational seminars emphasizing elements of Buddhist thought attract hundreds of thousands of business leaders at great cost by promising power, peace, mystical experience and business success. As early as 1985, John Heider's *The Tao of Leadership: Leadership Strategies for a New Age*, popularized for the business community the teachings of fifth-century B.C. Chinese sage Lao-Tzu.<sup>52</sup> The book taught executives "how to govern or educate others in accordance with natural law." Among the foundational principles of this natural law are "I am one with everything else" and "all creation is a single whole that operates according to a single principle."<sup>53</sup>

Buddhist thought has received a boost from perhaps the most popular person in contemporary America, Oprah Winfrey. Through her television program, website and magazine, Winfrey has introduced her audiences to a variety of new spiritual approaches. The August 2001 edition of *O: The Oprah Magazine* features an upbeat interview with the Dalai Lama. Oprah asks if "there wasn't part of you that had always known you were different?" The Dalai Lama replies, "Sometimes I do feel that, yes, I may feel some effect of previous lives. . . . I have had glimpses of memory from past lives in which I identify with those from, in some cases, one or two centuries ago. I once had the feeling that I may have been in Egypt 600 years ago."<sup>54</sup>

The Dalai Lama himself has had an inestimable impact as a proponent of Buddhist values and practices in the West. One of the nation's most popular business books in 1999 was the Dalai Lama's *Ethics for the New Millennium*, selling more copies than popular books for executives by Bill Gates and Stephen Covey. The Dalai Lama's book resided near the top of *The New York Times* bestseller list for nine weeks, and "was listed as that paper's number two business book for six weeks."<sup>55</sup> In fact, the Dalai Lama has produced a steady stream of popular books for Western readers over the past several years. His recent titles include *Transforming the Mind*, *The Art of Happiness* and *The Path to Tranquility*.<sup>56</sup> Even the Dalai Lama's mother has become an author of note with her recent release of *My Son: A Mother's Story*, which is edited by her grandson, Khedroob Thondup.<sup>57</sup> Of late, the Dalai Lama's spiritual perspective has received a crucial assist from Hollywood as well. A host of recent popular movies including *Seven Years in Tibet* and *Kundun* have presented Buddhist ideas in a sympathetic and persuasive fashion to millions of viewers.

Has all of this emphasis on the wisdom of the Buddha had any particular effect in the traditionally Christian United States? By one estimate, the number of





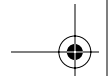
American adherents to some aspect of Buddhist teaching now exceeds ten million. This number represents an incredible increase from the estimated 200,000 Buddhists residing in the United States in 1960, most of them Asians living in California or Hawaii.<sup>58</sup>

***Spiritual science and scientific religion.*** On the contemporary religious scene, spiritual insights arise nearly as often in the arena of science as in that of religion. Fritjof Capra helped to popularize the idea that science reveals the spiritual nature of the physical universe in books such as *The Tao of Physics* (1975) and his 1982 bestseller, *The Turning Point*.<sup>59</sup> In his recent book *The Web of Life*, Capra contends that science proves that “living nature is mindful and intelligent.” Thus, there is no need to maintain the old notion of a specially created universe with “overall design or purpose.”<sup>60</sup> Similarly, the notion of “self” or individual identity, a mainstay of Western metaphysics, has yielded to Buddhist-inspired scientific thinking. “The Buddhist doctrine of impermanence includes the notion that there is no self,” he writes. “Cognitive science has arrived at exactly the same position . . . our self, our ego, does not have any independent existence.”<sup>61</sup>

The New Science often has arrived at conclusions paralleling Eastern religious thought, such as the illusional nature of physical matter. Thus for Fred Alan Wolf the new physics demonstrates that “reality is not made of stuff, but is made of possibilities that can be coherent so that possibility forms into matter” under the direction of consciousness, including even human consciousness.<sup>62</sup> He declares that new scientific findings suggest that “the universe is being created in a dream of a single spiritual entity,” and that each individual human consciousness may reflect that entity. “Are we the dreamer?” he asks.<sup>63</sup> Another physicist, Amit Goswami, contends that “science proves the potency of monistic philosophy over dualism—over spirit separated from matter.”<sup>64</sup> That is, for these writers science disproves the Judeo-Christian notion of a personal God existing distinctly separate from his creation.

This trend toward spiritualizing science continues in books by a host of contemporary writers working the New Science beat. Examples include Gary Zukav’s *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics* and, more recently, Fred Allen Wolf’s *The Spiritual Universe: How Quantum Physics Proves the Existence of the Soul*.<sup>65</sup> Capra and Wolf are physicists who claim that the findings of a spiritualized science will be crucial to the next wave of religion in the West. In several important respects this “new wave” actually reflects a return to ancient spiritual traditions. Similarly, in *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, Ferguson presented her readers nothing less





than “a startling worldview that gathers into its framework breakthrough science and insights from the earliest recorded thought.”<sup>66</sup>

Turning this idea of a spiritualized science on its head, some anthropologists are now suggesting that we look to the spiritual world for scientific insights. In his essay, “Shamans and Scientists,” Canadian anthropologist Jeremy Narby reports a fascinating encounter between three molecular biologists and a shaman residing in the Peruvian Amazon.<sup>67</sup> Each of the biologists voluntarily enters a drug-induced trance under the guidance of the shaman, and each puts several questions to various entities encountered in this state. For instance, one of the scientists specializing in reproductive research asked the spirit guide, “was there a key protein that makes sperm cells fertile?” The answer he received was, “No, there is not a key protein. In this organ there are no key proteins, just many different ones which have to act together for fertility to be achieved.”<sup>68</sup>

Narby comments that “in interviews conducted in their respective laboratories four months after the Amazonian experience, the three biologists agreed on a number of key points. All three said that the experience of ayahuasca shamanism changed their way of looking at themselves and at the world.”<sup>69</sup> Moreover, all three scientists said they are “planning to return to the Amazon at some point” to pursue further understanding of how shamanism might contribute to scientific knowledge.

**Psychology, psychiatry and medicine: insight, healing and alien voices.** A sharp tension between science and religion often characterizes public debates about educational policy. Surprisingly, many of today’s popular religious works suggest a different picture—the alleged spiritual wasteland of the sciences is, on closer inspection, replete with oases to refresh the spiritual seeker, deep pools furnished by hidden and unstaunchable springs of religious insight.

It is perhaps less surprising that psychology, psychiatry and medicine have recently provided alternatives to traditional Western religious thought for the modern thirster after spiritual truth. For instance, popular psychoanalyst Mark Epstein, in books such as *Buddhism and the Way of Change: A Positive Psychology for the West* and *Going to Pieces Without Falling Apart: A Buddhist Perspective on Wholeness* presents a Buddhist approach to psychology and counseling. Epstein affirms that “within psychotherapy lies the potential for an approach that is compatible with Buddhist understanding, one in which the therapist, like the Zen master, can aid in making a space in the mind.”<sup>70</sup> Far from occupying the fringe of psychotherapeutic practice, the *Chicago Tribune* has written that “Epstein is on the cutting edge of change as psycho-





therapy and spirituality, once antagonistic, move toward a rapprochement.<sup>71</sup>

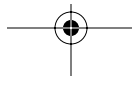
These particular spiritual springs started flowing early in the twentieth century. Carl Jung, a founder of psychoanalysis, introduced ancient Gnostic and Eastern religious thought to Western psychoanalytic theory and practice. Richard Noll argues in *The Jung Cult: Origins of a Charismatic Movement* that Jung's ideas are steeped in the gnostic teachings that Jung so admired. He is today a more potent influence in counseling circles than is Sigmund Freud, and Jung reading groups meet across the Western world to cultivate spiritual insight.<sup>72</sup>

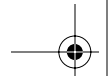
Navigating rather more alien waters, Harvard professor of psychiatry John Mack attributes shamanic religious insight to the scores of UFO abductee claimants that he has counseled. His original alien abduction book, *Abduction: Human Encounters with Aliens*, was a bestseller.<sup>73</sup> More recent titles include *Secret Life: Firsthand, Documented Accounts of UFO Abductions* and *Passport to the Cosmos: Human Transformation and Alien Encounters*.<sup>74</sup> Mack insists that we must study and heed the spiritual truths being taught us by extraterrestrial visitors through their abductee messengers.

Helen Schucman (1909-1981), a professor of medical psychology at Columbia University's College of Physicians in New York City in the late 1960s and early 1970s, also asks us to listen to the spiritual wisdom of voices from beyond. She and colleague William Thetford, disillusioned with traditional psychological and psychiatric techniques, began to seek "another way." Over a period of three months, Schucman claims to have experienced a virtually uninterrupted flow of "highly symbolic dreams and descriptions" as well as "strange images." For seven years from 1965 through 1972 "a Voice" attributed to Jesus Christ delivered to her a long series of messages which she dictated to Thetford.

The result of this lengthy process of spiritual wisdom transmission was the ponderous bestseller *A Course in Miracles*.<sup>75</sup> The wild popularity of this channeled mix of advice and spiritual insight is indeed surprising to any objective observer who has attempted to wade through its nearly incomprehensible prose. Nevertheless, that humans possess divinity, that sin is an empty concept, that the creation is an illusion, that we save ourselves from spiritual darkness, that "there is not past or future," that "birth into a body has no meaning," that sickness is the result of faulty thinking, and that death is "the central dream from which all illusions stem" are all repeated themes.<sup>76</sup>

This sort of approach to the mind and its latent powers has driven the phenomenon of schools for psychic development. In January 2000 the Associated Press



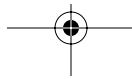
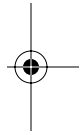


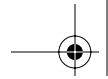
reported “a nationwide surge in facilities known as enlightenment schools and metaphysical institutions.” These schools include The Advanced Metaphysical Studies Center in New York, The Berkeley Psychic Institute and the College of Metaphysics in Clearwater, Florida. Students learn to “develop their psychic abilities” and “read the thoughts of others.” The Berkeley Psychic Institute has taught classes in “meditation, healing and intuition” to more than 100,000 students over the past twenty-five years.<sup>77</sup>

The body as well as the mind is a subject of interest to practitioners of alternative spiritualities. “Alternative medicine,” healing practices often based on a spiritual paradigm rivaling the traditional Western worldview, has now become as popular as more conventional medical treatment with the general public. In 1999, Americans spent as much money out of their own pockets on alternative medical products and services as they did on conventional medical treatments. To satisfy this vast market, numerous authors have advocated healing techniques ranging from “visualizing” health to deep massage. Medical students today are encouraged, and sometimes required, to explore the possibilities in alternative healing techniques such as therapeutic touch, while prominent medical schools have now established centers for the study of the mind-body healing connection. Ruth Walker of *The Christian Science Monitor* reports that “the trend toward inclusion of some form of spiritual practice in healthcare appears to be accelerating.” She adds that “this year, 72 medical schools—well over half of those in the United States—have offered some kind of course on spirituality and healing. This represents an increase from only three such courses in 1992.”<sup>78</sup>

Works devoted to alternative healing have steadily increased in popularity. Books by authors such as Yale surgeon Bernie S. Siegel, author of *Love, Medicine, and Miracles* and *Peace, Love, and Healing*, have sold millions of copies and occupy dozens of feet of shelf space in book stores. Other prominent figures in the alternative medical field include Indian physician Deepak Chopra, author of *The New York Times* number one bestseller *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*, and Andrew Weil, author of *Spontaneous Healing* and many other related titles. Journalist Peter Fenton has retrieved the medical secrets of the East for Western readers in his popular book *Tibetan Healing: The Modern Legacy of Medicine Buddha*.

Meditation techniques derived from Eastern religious practices and physical regimens such as yoga have become an integral part of the stress reduction for millions of Westerners. Readers of Stephen Cope’s *Yoga and the Quest for the True Self*





learn how to employ ancient Hindu religious exercises to alleviate modern Western consumerist stress. And the *Tantric Toning* videotape series brings Hindu insights to physical training for the aerobically inclined.

Finally, we might note that neurologist and Zen practitioner Dr. James H. Austin has suggested that our study of the sources of altruism and other “higher motives” in the human brain might be guided by the insights of ancient Zen masters. “Perhaps we would be advised to begin our searching for their subtler, deeper networks in the limbic system, thalamus, basal ganglia, and brain stem,” he writes. “Indeed, there will always be multiple levels of interpretation of Master Chi-chen’s statement, ‘The way upward is by descending lower.’”<sup>79</sup>

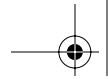
## TALKING ABOUT SPIRITUALITY

Though goddess worship, the New Science, Buddhist-inspired motivational seminars, UFO abduction reports, spiritually oriented psychology and alternative medical practices may seem at first glance to have little to do with one another, each phenomenon reflects changes in the Western world’s basic spiritual orientation. It is my view, as noted above, that such phenomena also betoken a concerted and successful effort on the part of a large number of spiritual advocates, including writers, speakers and performing artists, to open new religious pathways in the Western mind.

Shaping a society’s thinking on an important topic such as religious belief is a complex process involving many sources, pressures and influences. One often-neglected but important force shaping our spiritual views is public religious discourse, that is, the many ways we communicate about and seek to persuade one another regarding spiritual matters. Public religious discourse includes speeches, essays, fiction and nonfiction books, self-help manuals, television programs, movies, plays and other forms of communication about religion. Such communication often is intentionally persuasive, and the success of this persuasive effort is particularly likely when similar messages are encountered repeatedly in various media—print, film, music, television, magazines and so on.

Spiritual advocates engaged in public religious discourse have constituted a powerful force shaping Western religious thought since their first prominent public appearance around 1700, and that shaping influence has continued unabated to the present day. Popular books, widely circulated periodicals and public lectures carried religious ideas in the eighteenth century. To these were added mass circu-





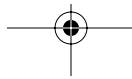
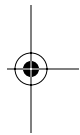
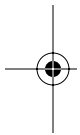
lation magazines and the enormously popular American public lecture circuits in the nineteenth century. Movies, popular music, radio and television and other mass media provided additional avenues for disseminating religious ideas in the twentieth century. Advocates of religious ideas—believing and skeptical, orthodox and heterodox—have exploited each medium as it has appeared. That is to say, advocates engaged in public religious discourse have never simply *reflected* what the public was thinking. They have also persuaded us, changed our minds, shaped our views of what is true or false, right or wrong, assumed or questioned in religion.

In the following chapters I highlight some of these persuasive efforts on behalf of a particular set of religious ideas constituting the New Religious Synthesis. Most of my examples are from the print media, especially books, both fiction and nonfiction. Books have remained a constant source of public discussion of religious ideas since 1700, and books have been the characteristic medium of Western contention over religious ideas. I have also included a number of tracts and pamphlets, some popular movies, several speeches, one or two plays and the occasional television program. The works examined by no means exhaust the important public statements on spiritual themes in the modern period. Rather, they are merely representative examples, occasionally odd ones, of important efforts to persuade the reading and viewing public to new ways of thinking about spiritual matters. This synthesis of concepts now constitutes a widespread framework for understanding ourselves and the spiritual world.

## THE REVEALED WORD AND THE NEW RELIGIOUS SYNTHESIS

I referred earlier to two comprehensive spiritual views or systems. One I have termed the Revealed Word, the other the New Religious Synthesis. It may be helpful at this point to outline these perspectives. Some readers will take issue with my characterization of the principal components of either system, but the following overviews will at least serve to express in general terms what I intend by these labels. Subsequent chapters will clarify the contours and expand on the content of each perspective.

Religious thinking is a trait of virtually all human beings. For much of the last two millennia that thinking in the Western world typically has been informed by biblical presuppositions, even when biblical *piety* was notably absent. And yet, the working religious assumptions of many, perhaps most, Western people today are





not the assumptions of what I have called the Revealed Word. Though it would be difficult to achieve agreement on the point even within the Christian community, the following tenets provide a recognizable sketch of the Revealed Word perspective. I recognize that not all Christians at all times have accepted this entire set of beliefs. With the exception of the reference to Jesus Christ as God incarnate and the authority of the Christian Scriptures, many orthodox Jews would affirm these propositions as well, though certainly disparity of belief marks the Jewish community as it does the Christian. The following, then, are a reasonable approximation of the commitments making up the spiritual perspective I have called the Revealed Word, the spiritual outlook dominant in the Western world until relatively recently.

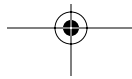
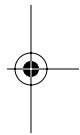
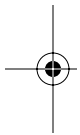
**The Revealed Word.** I will begin with the very notion of a word from God, which is, not surprisingly, at the center of the Revealed Word view.

1. *The supernatural authority of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures.* The Bible is taken to be divinely delivered and thus uniquely authoritative as a source of religious truth. The Scriptures record messages delivered to humanity by God through various means—prophetic utterance, the traditions and wisdom of Israel, the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. The Revealed Word perspective is based on this written record. Where the record relates events, including miraculous events, these are usually assumed to be historical and not symbolic or mythological.

2. *A personal, creating and wholly other God.* The traditional attributes of God present him as all-knowing, present everywhere and all-powerful. That this God is also personal is assumed in these attributes, meaning that he possesses traits of a personality—thoughts, motives, emotions and the capacity to form relationships. This personal, all-powerful God is credited with creating the physical and spiritual worlds ex nihilo or out of nothing. Moreover, he remains “wholly other,” neither contained in nor equivalent with the created order.

3. *God’s creation of the human race.* Assumed in the concept of God’s creative activity is his creation of the human race. However, it needs to be noted that the Revealed Word alleges that the human race is a special creation of God, the only part of the creation said to bear “his image.” This commitment to the special creation of the human race has historically been taken to imply that humans are not a product of strictly natural processes.

4. *An intervening God.* The Revealed Word affirms that God’s activity includes





involvement in the lives of individual human beings. On occasion, this intervening God communicates directly with human beings and at other times miraculously alters the ordinary course of cause and effect. Though this personal and active God invites address and petition through prayer, this does not imply that the divine is a power at the command of human beings.

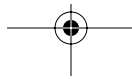
5. *Humankind's Fall.* The human race experienced a Fall into sin early in its existence, a consequence of the earliest humans' refusal to recognize a divinely mandated limitation on their activities. This Fall carried with it various catastrophic consequences, including spiritual confusion, a state of spiritual separation from God and the inevitability of physical death.

6. *Jesus Christ as God Incarnate.* The historical figure of Jesus Christ uniquely manifested God in human form. Jesus is a revelation of God's nature in a person and the only human being ever to express fully the divine nature. Moreover, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are uniquely redemptive of fallen humanity. These events are the sole provision by God for the salvation of the human race.

7. *Human destiny and divine judgment.* The Revealed Word insists that the destiny of the human race is to be determined by God. Neither the present earth nor the human race exists indefinitely. A final judgment of the human race will occur, and each individual human being will be held accountable for the life lived. It should be noted that the Revealed Word perspective maintains that each human lives only one life.

***The New Religious Synthesis.*** As already noted, the past three centuries have witnessed a stunning shift in Western religious thinking away from the tenets outlined above. For many of us a new set of religious commitments has now replaced the fundamental claims of the Revealed Word. The following are, I will maintain, the basic components of this New Religious Synthesis. This alliance of available, complementary spiritual commitments constitutes the background assumptions currently shaping much of our contemporary religious thought. Moreover, at every critical juncture these new presuppositions pose a dilemma: either the New Synthesis correctly describes reality or the Revealed Word does. But on no crucial point can both systems be true at the same time. Here, briefly stated, are the components of the Other Spirituality.

1. *History is not spiritually important.* History as a record of events in space and time has no particular significance to the spiritual understanding or progress of the





individual human being or of religious communities. In fact, history as traditionally understood may be a hindrance to spirituality by tying people to local beliefs, particular places and individual teachers. Records purporting to be spiritual histories, the prime example being the Bible, are not principally historical. Rather, such sacred texts are largely symbolic, allegorical or mythic.

2. *The dominance of reason.* Reason—also mind, consciousness, intellect, awareness or imagination—is the divine characteristic in humans. It is virtually unlimited in its potential for development through scientific study, mystical experience and evolution. Reason is the principal means for human apprehension of spiritual truth, with the most substantial spiritual insights coming to those with the greatest awareness, the most highly evolved consciousness or the most capacious reason.

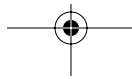
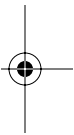
3. *The spiritualization of science.* Science, the empirical study of the material universe, is the principal instrument reason employs to acquire spiritual knowledge. Science is both the source and the test of theology—it discovers new spiritual truths and confirms what has long been known to human beings through certain spiritual traditions.

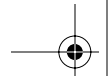
4. *The animation of nature.* Nature is infused with a divine spirit, consciousness or life force. Physical nature is thus alive with divine energy or soul. In short, nature is divine. This fact about physical nature warrants its study by science as a source of spiritual knowledge.

5. *Hidden knowledge and spiritual progress.* Knowledge is the key to spiritual insight and human progress. Such knowledge comes by means of reason employing science, but it may also come through certain individuals specially gifted to understand and directly experience the spiritual realm. Spiritual knowledge, then, is the special preserve of extraordinarily gifted individuals including some scientists, but also a new class of shamans, mediums between the physical and spiritual realms. Because this spiritual knowledge is not immediately accessible to all people, it is, at least initially, hidden or secret.

6. *Spiritual evolution.* Human beings are destined to realize unimaginable spiritual advancement through a process of spiritual evolution. Spiritual evolution is not simply change, but advancement that occurs incrementally over time. The eventual result of this process of spiritual evolution will be actual human divinity. Through science, the means of directing and hastening this process is now within our grasp.

7. *Religious pluralism as rooted in mystical experience.* The only universal religious experience is the mystical experience. Thus, mysticism provides a basis for reli-





gious pluralism, for the uniting of disparate spiritual traditions around common mystical insights. There is a steadily increasing awareness of this fact within each religious tradition.

## GOALS OF THE STUDY

This book examines certain representative and highly influential statements that have contributed to a radically new way of thinking about religion in the West. These statements have contributed importantly to the twofold public activity of religious criticism on the one hand and spiritual invention on the other. My goal is to trace the historical trajectory in popular religious discourse of a set of religious ideas that, though once considered exotic or even heretical, now hold sway in the Western religious mind. I hope not only to clarify the sources and interconnections of the ideas making up the New Religious Synthesis, but also to assess the implications of our new spirituality for human happiness. After all, the goal of true spirituality ought to be contributing to our fulfillment, freedom and contentedness as people. Thus, the concluding chapter offers my own assessment as to which system—the New Religious Synthesis or the Revealed Word—is a preferable guide to human spirituality.

The great psychoanalyst Carl Jung, himself an important proponent of a new way in religion, noted in 1933 that a new religious mind was rising in the West as Judeo-Christian thought waned correspondingly. He evaluated the situation as the simple outworking of a powerful psychic law. “I cannot take it as an accident,” he wrote. “It seems to me rather to satisfy a psychological law.” And what was Jung’s law? “For every piece of conscious life that loses its importance and value—so runs the law—there arises a compensation in the unconscious. . . . No psychic value can disappear without being replaced by another of equal intensity.”<sup>80</sup>

Jung was right that a fundamental shift in Western religious attitudes was occurring in the twentieth century. However, as indicated above, I do not believe the available evidence supports the notion that this change resulted from the operation of a mindless principle analogous to “the conservation of energy in the physical world.” The rise of the Other Spirituality is not so much the outworking of a psychic law as the result of sustained, intentional and successful public efforts to change the Western religious mind. The next chapter surveys some spiritual movements occurring prior to 1700 that helped to prepare the ground for the long program of spiritual persuasion that followed, and of which we are the inheritors.

