

Channeling

By Dr. John Weldon

(excerpted from *The Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs*, Harvest House, 1996)

Info at a Glance:

Description: Channeling occurs when someone permits a spirit entity to possess him or her usually for some form of psychic knowledge or power, e.g., psychic diagnosis or healing, or to use the person's vocal cords to speak in order to give spiritual teachings or practical advice. Various forms of spirit communication by channeling exist, such as automatic writing, narrated visions, and inner voice dictation. In addition, many people say they channel entities who claim to be angels, even though these "angels" are indistinguishable in their methods and teachings from the spirits channeled by occultists in general.

Founder: The first recorded incident of channeling per se is found in Genesis 3:1 (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:5, 13-16).

How does it claim to work?: Channeling claims to work through a variety of means. For example, through meditation, relaxation, visualization, hypnosis, altered states of consciousness, and other methods, channelers claim the spirits are able to enter, possess, and control them much in the same manner as a puppeteer controls a puppet. Channelers claim that by permitting spirits to possess and speak through them, mankind can attain a wealth of spiritual and practical wisdom directly from spirits, who have "passed on" and are highly evolved. The spirits claim they can assist people toward true individual, social, and spiritual enlightenment.

Scientific evaluation: Certain aspects of the practice can be scientifically examined, as in parapsychological research, but science cannot evaluate the specific claims made by channelers concerning the spirit's existence, nature, or purpose.

Examples of occult potential: Channeling is chiefly used for an endless number of occult purposes, from realizing so-called "higher" states of consciousness, to developing psychic powers, to attaining new revelations.

Major problem: Channeled spirits who claim to be wise and loving entities, or angels sent from God, are lying spirits which the Bible identifies as demons. Despite their seeming charm and benevolence, this is only a ruse to establish trust. As one channeler points out, "Guides have a vested interest in being friendly" (Laeh M. Garfield, Jack Grant, *Companions in Spirit: A Guide to Working with your Spirit Helpers*, Berkeley, CA: Celestial Arts, 1984, p. 42).

Biblical/Christian evaluation: Channeling is part of what the Bible calls Christians to stand against in spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18). And under the name "mediumship," it is a practice specifically forbidden (Deut. 18:9-12). The hidden purpose of the spirits is to gain the confidence of men so they can influence and control them to bring their eventual spiritual ruin (2 Cor. 4:4).

Potential dangers: Spiritual deception, occult bondage, demon possession, mental breakdown, physical harm, shortened life, financial and other risks perpetuated by fraudulent channelers, and other consequences.

Note: The New Age Movement as a whole is largely undergirded by channeled revelations and activities (cf., our *The Facts on Spirit Guides*, Harvest House, 1988).