

'SHAMANISM' comes to Northern Ireland

The Belfast Telegraph of 11 January 2014 contained a supplement called **'Change for Life'** and on page 6 there was an advert offering a number of upcoming courses in February and August 2014.

The first course in February offered
'Advanced SHAMANIC training for healing land, houses and people'.

The second course in August offered
'SHAMANIC practitioners Medicine Wheel to heal ourselves and to deepen the connection to nature while learning the ways of the SHAMAN from one of the oldest traditions on Earth'.

In the **'Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs'** by John Ankerberg and John Weldon there is a 30-page section on **'SHAMANISM'** and I would like now to quote what I hope will be some helpful extracts that will illustrate the dangerous 'spiritual nature' of what is being put on offer by these courses.

From **'Info at a glance'** we read (p 532)

'SHAMANISM is an occult path claiming contact with supernatural entities for a variety of religious, or today, even secular purposes. *Traditional* shamanism is where the shaman functions as healer, spiritual leader, and mediator between the spirits and people... Shamanistic medicine includes the application of animistic and various ancient witchcraft techniques to health care. It may involve either shamanism itself as a means to health and enlightenment or the varied use of specific shamanistic techniques in conjunction with a particular health program (e.g. visualisation, altered states of consciousness, dream work, or the use of power animals which are spirits that appear in the form of animals, birds or other creatures in order to instruct the shaman)'.

Just diverting briefly to the secular **'Collins English Dictionary'** their definition of **'Shamanism'** makes for interesting reading as follows – **'1. The religion of certain peoples of northern Asia based on the belief that the world is pervaded by good and evil spirits who can be influenced or controlled only by the shamans. 2. Any similar religion involving forms of spiritualism'**.

In the first quotation I gave from the **'Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs'** there was a reference to **'power animals which are spirits that appear in the form of animals, birds or other creatures in order to instruct the shaman'**. In his book **'Occult Invasion'** the late Christian apologist, Dave Hunt wrote this on page 138 –

'The comments by anthropologist Michael Harner, one of the world's leading authorities on shamanism and a practicing shaman himself are very revealing:'

"The connectedness between humans and the animal world is basic in shamanism ... The shaman has to have a particular guardian in order to do his work ... (and) the guardian spirit is sometimes referred to by Native North (and South) Americans as the power animal ... The capability of the guardian animal spirits to speak to a human or to manifest themselves sometimes in human forms is taken as an indication of their power ...

The belief by shamans that they can metamorphose into the form of their guardian animal spirit or power animal is widespread and obviously ancient ... In the course of the initiation of a shaman of the Wiradjeri tribe in Australia, he had the nonordinary experience that feathers emerged from his arms and grew into wings. Then he was taught to fly" (Harner: *Shaman*; pp 58-59).

Right at the outset it is patently clear that **'SHAMANISM'** represents a dark occult spiritual philosophy that poses a real danger to the eternal spiritual well-being of any who may be tempted to follow its path and is something that no true and obedient Christian should be tempted to dabble with particularly in the light of Exodus 20:3-4 and Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

Returning to the **'Encyclopedia of New Age Beliefs'**
we read under **'Introduction and Influence'** (p 533)

'The term "shaman" is apparently a derivative of the vedic *sram*
(linked to Sanskrit – the 'religious' language of India – endemic to Hinduism) **meaning "to heal oneself or practice austerities"'. Shamanism is, in some form, indigenous to nearly all cultures... Today shamanism is making a significant resurgence'.**

Under **'Shamanism in Contemporary Medicine'** we read (pp 537- 538)

'The influence of shamanism in New Age medicine is significant... The burgeoning field of holistic medicine shows a tremendous amount of experimentation involving the reinvention of many techniques long practiced in shamanism such as visualisation, altered states of consciousness, aspects of psychoanalysis hypnotherapy, meditation... Not surprisingly then shamanistic techniques are now increasingly used at modern medical health centres... Introducing shamanism into modern medicine is ironic because of its essentially antiscientific nature such as its occultism and irrationalism.'

Under **'Characteristics'** we read (p 541)

'The shaman works in darkness. The shaman must enter a trance state in order to "control" the spirit world and function effectively. The shaman employs specific methods for entering this trance state ... Two of the common methods are ritual dancing with drum music or ingesting hallucinatory drugs... The shaman employs "spirit flight" or out-of-the-body travels into the spirit world... The shaman is equally proficient in the practice of "good" or "evil" e.g. "healing" or cursing work'

For some strange reason as I typed that last section on 'healing or cursing' and 'out of the body travels' people from the **'Word of Faith Movement'** like Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland and Jesse Du Plantis came to mind – I wonder why?

In the concluding section **'Dangers and Degradations'** (pp 542-552) the authors identify a number of dangerous consequences that can potentially arise from involvement in shamanism and these are

'Amorality: Sexual Immorality; Drug Use; Death Magic and other forms of Murder; Spiritual Blackmail; Psychopathology; Demonism and Health.'

The authors conclude with these sombre but also **'Good News'** words (p 552)

‘The result of all this keeps the shamanistic practitioner in a primitive state spiritually and often morally with little hope of escape. The ritual and practices of shamanism reinforce its belief system and vice versa through powerful supernatural manifestations that are difficult if not impossible to counter. Only the power of Jesus Christ can break into the dark world of shamanism and deliver those held in its bondage. Shamans and shaman apprentices who desire deliverance must turn to the living Jesus Christ, for He and He alone can save them.’

Many years ago I remember watching and recording a TV program that looked at Shamans in South America (probably Peru) and how they entered ‘trances’ and ‘altered states of consciousness’ through imbibing or inhaling certain drugs. I have searched in vain amongst my many videos to unearth that program but sadly without success. However a search on the Internet has led me to a video that shows a number of the same shamanistic experiences that I recall from the program that I watched and recorded and so it will give a flavour of shamanism in action. For those who want to see (52 minutes) one man’s return journey into the world of Shamanism, as practiced in this case in Ecuador, you can do so by going to

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ca1TGqODjzM>

For me this video does very much expose the spiritual darkness at the heart of Shamanism. Central to shamanism is entering into ‘**an altered state of consciousnesses**’. In his book ‘**Death of a Guru**’ Rabi Maharaj gives this interesting definition in the Glossary at the end of the book. Under a heading ‘**Higher Consciousness**’ he sets out the following definition

‘There are various “levels” of consciousness opened up in Yoga and meditation called “higher” states because they differ from one’s normal consciousness and are supposedly experienced on the road to nirvana. Different schools of Eastern mysticism define them in different ways. Typical states would be “unity-consciousness” where one experiences a mystical union with the universe, and “God-consciousness” where one experiences that he himself is actually God. Similar “states of consciousness” are experienced through hypnosis, mediumistic trance, certain drugs, witchcraft ceremonies, voodoo etc, and all seem to be slight variations of the same occult phenomenon.’

The advert for these **Shamanic** courses in the supplement of the Belfast Telegraph was appealing, claiming '**Healing for the Heart and Soul**'. Sadly, the spiritual reality where **Shamanism** is concerned is very different – listen again to these words of shaman **Michael Harner** as quoted by Dave Hunt on page 150 of '**Occult Invasion**'

'Each shaman generally has at least one guardian spirit in his service... The guardian spirit... is the fundamental source of power for the shaman's functioning... The shaman frequently sees and consults with his guardian spirit, travels with it on the shamanic journey, has it help him and uses it to help others... In addition to the guardian spirit, a powerful shaman normally has a number of spirit helpers ... In some cultures, shamans take mind-altering substances... Some degree of alteration of consciousness is necessary to shamanic practice.' (Harner: *Shaman*; pp 20; 42-44; 49).

Far from bringing '**Healing for the Heart and Soul**' these courses will only serve to introduce people to a '**spirit world**' that God has, in the Bible, clearly identified as being '**out of bounds**' and so they should be studiously avoided at all costs.

Cecil Andrews 'Take Heed' Ministries – 14 January 2014