

# Astrology - An Inside Look – Part 1

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Popular interest in astrology has surged in recent years, due, in part, to revelations concerning the acceptance of astrology even at the White House. The influence of astrology has thus reached into the highest levels of national government; in fact, it has apparently been there for some time.<sup>1</sup>

Gallup Polls consistently reveal that tens of millions of Americans are believers in this ancient and potentially dangerous form of divination. The most recent poll in mid-July of this year indicated that the Church should also take note of its influence. It revealed that at least 10 percent of Evangelical (that is, Conservative) Christians believe in astrology.<sup>2</sup> This figure could translate into several **million** Evangelical believers in astrology! (For a look at the theological, spiritual, psychological and other consequences of astrology see *The Facts on Astrology* by John Ankerberg and Dr. John Weldon.)

With all the interest in astrology we felt it was time for an “inside” look. As a result, I attended the 50th Anniversary Convention of the American Federation of Astrologers (AFA) in Las Vegas, Nevada, July 4-8, 1988. The AFA—based in Tempe, Arizona—is the largest and most influential astrological association in the U.S., and one of the oldest. It claims to be “the nerve center of astrology in America today.” It has members in all 50 states and 38 countries, including all U.S. possessions. It is also one of the most “scientifically” oriented groups.

Modern astrology often claims to be a scientific enterprise having nothing to do with the realm of the occult. I deliberately selected the AFA Convention in order to give the best opportunity possible to verify these claims of modern astrology. Thus, if a scientific and non-occultic approach is not found here, it is unlikely it will be found elsewhere in the world of astrology.

The AFA brochure entitled “Aims and Objectives of the American Federation of Astrologers” includes the following: (1) “to clarify Astrology...as a science...for professional use” and “to give Astrology the prestige and standing to which it is entitled as a science”; (2) “to arrive at a **standard system of study and practice**” and “to unite all astrologers”; and (3) “to protect the public by encouraging ethical practices, by eliminating charlatans and also to promote the education of the public towards accepting astrology as a means to a ‘fuller and richer life.’”<sup>3</sup>

Our purpose in attending the Convention was to examine these claims. I

attended as many seminars as possible, examined the literature offered, conducted a “survey of astrologers’ beliefs” and talked with as many astrologers as time permitted.

I had three specific objectives in mind, each correspondingly related to the above three “aims and objectives” of the AFA.

### **Objective One: Is astrology a factual science?**

The first goal was to examine the claim of astrology to being a factual scientific enterprise in the sense of a biological or astronomical science. Thus, astrologers often claim to be engaging in a “scientific” practice, one that has replaced the older astrological behavior of divination of the future. They may, for example, claim that divination has been replaced with mere discernment of “psychological indications.” How legitimate is such a claim, and do astrologers themselves really believe astrology is a science and not divination?

### **Objective Two: Is astrology internally consistent?**

My second goal was to examine the internal consistency of astrology concerning its theories and practices. Is it really possible to have a “standard system of study and practice”—or is astrology as a whole so contradictory that it cannot possibly be true?

### **Objective Three: Is modern astrology non-occultic?**

The third goal was to examine the extent of occult influences (if any), at the Conference. We also wished to “test” the theory of some former astrologers that the real power behind astrology was not derived from a coherent system of truth, but rather from contact with the spirit world, whether or not the individual astrologer was aware of this.<sup>4</sup> In other words, I wished to determine the extent of spiritistic and other occultic influence within the largest, most influential and scientifically-oriented association in America.

The issue of spiritistic connections in astrology is crucial for a number of reasons. Since all of Part Two deals with documenting this connection, we will only briefly summarize some of our concerns here.

If astrology is a fundamentally spiritistic practice, then it can never **deserve** “the prestige and standing” of a science. Spiritism deals in the realm of religious phenomena, not science. Also, because spiritism is in fact contact with lying spirits which the Bible calls “demons,” God forbids spiritism as something “detestable” to Him (Deut. 18:9-12; c.f., 1 Cor. 10:20; 1 Tim. 4:1). Historically, spiritistic activity and the doctrines characteristically taught by these spirits or demons (such as reincarnation, pantheism, gnosticism, amorism, etc.) have been associated with spiritual deception and ruin, emotional damage, unethical practices and fraud, the denial of morality, demon possession and a host of other evils. If astrology is indeed a spiritistic practice, then it will never be able to logically maintain ethical and moral standards. Once deceiving spirits and “doctrines of demons” (1 Tim. 4:1) are listened to, they will only bring eventual ruin to others,

both morally and spiritually. Nor can astrology ever become the stated means to “a fuller and richer life” for the reality of spiritistic deception means astrology will only lead a person away from the one true God. The end result of this, apart from repentance, is to lead a person to eternal judgment in hell (Rev. 20:10-15).

Thus, far from protecting the public from fraud and deception, etc., promoting astrology and its spiritistic influences would only **cause** the above evils to proliferate within society.

### **Gathering the information and compiling the results.**

At the Convention some 450 seminars and workshops were offered by almost 200 professional astrologers during a period of 4 days. (Thus, one could take up to 4 seminars out of the 115 offered each day.) To secure the objectives identified above I (1) attended 9 seminars (at random), (2) distributed 100 questionnaires, (3) conducted interviews and (4) briefly examined over 300 of the 500 different astrology texts placed on sale at the Conference.

My basic conclusions are as follows:

#### **1. Is Astrology a Factual Science?**

Astrologers are divided as to whether or not astrology can properly be termed a science. Clearly, many wished it to be a science. (But even the AFA itself dropped the word “scientific” from its title in 1945<sup>5</sup>.) If astrology is really a science, one can only wonder why this was done. It goes without saying, but our conclusion is that astrology cannot be a science based on fact or experimental replication. Rather, it is a religious belief system based on pseudo-science, a belief system which all genuine scientific testing continues to disprove. Those who think otherwise simply are misinformed.

In addition, the claim to have substituted mere astrological discernment of “psychological indications” of behavior for divination of the future is largely a semantic distinction. It is true that the influence of modern psychology in astrology is great (especially through Jungian and transpersonal psychology), and that astrology may properly be classified as a “New Age” psychology. But this has not diminished its occult nature or proclivity for divination, however modern astrologers may psychologically choose to redefine the term. Most astrologers we talked with believed that a legitimate part of astrology did involve predicting the future, including general trends and specific events.

#### **2. Is Astrology Internally Consistent?**

Even more than its scientific status, astrologers are divided on the issue of what astrology is and how it works.

Almost every astrologer we talked with admitted that if one merely examined the literature on astrology, he would only end up confused. This was because as a whole there were so many contradictory theories and practices within astrology. Indeed, the massive amount of literature displayed at the Conference was often written by leading astrologers. They themselves admitted this. For example, L.

Edward Jondro states in *A New Conception of Sign Rulership* that “the thoughtful student...[using] standard astrological texts... [encounters a] maze of ridiculous contradictions that confront him...”<sup>6</sup> Another leading astrologer observes, “There are as many views of aspects [aspects deal with the angular relationships between planets] and how they are used in the chart, as there are astrologers.”<sup>7</sup> And we must also agree with two astrologers who compiled a bibliographical history of modern astrology, *Astrological Pioneers of America*, to celebrate AFA’s 50th year. They acknowledged that “disproven theories, unsupported theories, or even mutually contradictory theories may flourish indefinitely.”<sup>8</sup>

Considering astrology as a whole, we find little more than contradictions. Thus, even though different systems of astrology must by definition give different interpretations (for the same client’s astrological chart), this does not seem to bother the astrologers.

Some astrologers say the “aspects” of astrology are vital, while others downplay or disregard them. Thus, some say the aspects are more important than the houses; others say the houses are more important than the aspects; some do not use the houses or aspects at all.

Some calculate only the influence of the nine traditional “planets,” while others calculate the influence of the asteroids, planetary moons and even black holes and other galaxies! Others even attempt to calculate the “influence” of invisible (spiritual) planets!

Some astrologers use different “house” systems (the topocentric, placidian, campanus, alcabitius, etc.).

Many astrologers say that traditional astrology is simply **incomplete** without integrating it to Jungian or other modern psychologies.

Still others say that integrating astrology with other occult arts such as Tarot cards, numerology, the I Ching, etc., is what gives the best reading.

Still others say that astrology works best only when it is combined with Hindu, Chinese, Draconic or some other form of ancient or modern astrology. (For example, there is Arabian astrology, Hindu astrology, Hermetic astrology, Pythagorean astrology, Rosicrucian astrology, Theosophical astrology, Sabian astrology, Uranian astrology, etc.)

In addition, many different Zodiacs can be found (for example, there is the Tropical Zodiac (which starts at a given point); the Sidereal Zodiac (beginning at yet another point); and the Draconic Zodiac (which begins at still another point). The issue is important because different starting points on the chart lead to entirely different interpretations. One astrologer even told us that it made no difference at all what one’s starting point was—an astrologer could start at any point on the chart at all!

In addition, all astrologers agreed that when you pick up any dozen texts on astrology you get a dozen different answers. This became painfully obvious at the Conference book tables. The more we read the literature, the more confused matters became.

Judging from the lectures it was also painfully obvious that what “worked” for one astrologer would not work for another. Some teachers had successful results while others openly admitted they had done their research based squarely on astrological theory and found a zero percent correlation. (But all of them had an “explanation” for their failures.)

Perhaps the greatest harmony encountered was in the area of general religious belief, but even here there were serious differences.

Almost all the astrologers accepted at least some form of New Age occultism—they believed in reincarnation; they accepted psychic development (many **were** psychic), and because they were pantheists, most felt they were God. Almost all rejected any form of absolute morality. But some also rejected reincarnation and some rejected the idea they were God. Some attempted to be wholly scientific. One Catholic astrologer did charts for a number of priests. Most admitted that whatever astrologers **said** concerning the issue of fate versus free will, that in actual practice most astrologers were fatalistic, or largely so.

There was one, and only one area of agreement. All astrologers said the truly important issue was simply that astrology worked, not **how** it worked. This was the single most cited reason for a person being an astrologer.

Our own conclusion was that even if it worked, as a whole, astrology was in a state of such total disarray that it could never be true. As a coherent system of belief, it did not exist. In other words, astrology did not need to be true in order to work, and therefore the fact that it could work must be accounted for by recourse to a non-astrological theory. Often this could be attributed to normal psychological factors such as the client’s will to believe or an astrologer’s psychologically-correct “reading” of a client prior to doing his chart. But psychological factors could not explain what can only be termed genuine supernatural self-disclosures that may occur in astrology. This is where spiritism enters the picture.

## Conclusions

From our time at the Conference and our own study of astrology, three facts are clear:

**Fact One:** Any given form of astrology will not necessarily work for any given astrologer; yet, **all** forms of astrology, no matter how contradictory, can produce “amazing results” for some astrologers. This suggests the power of astrology is not from astrology itself. Yet, powerful supernatural information is sometimes provided by astrologers. This leads us to our second fact.

**Fact Two:** Because supernatural information is given, a supernatural source is demanded. The real source of power in astrology originates from the spirit world, whether or not the astrologer accepts this or is even aware of it. Indeed most are not. In the world of the occult it is often acknowledged that spirits have the ability to work inconspicuously through a person so that their presence is not felt.

**Fact Three:** This means that the horoscope itself is merely a convenient tool for spiritistic powers to work through. Thus, the horoscope may become an

occultic device through which and **behind** which the spirits can **focus** their activity. It does not operate by indicating alleged celestial influences. It operates in the same manner as dozens of similar devices which have no power on their own but become powerful when the spirit world chooses to use them. Such devices typically have clear spiritistic connections, as any in-depth reading of the relevant literature reveals. In all instances, the devices themselves contain no power, whether they are simple rocks, dice or gems (amulets, runes, crystals), cards or sticks (Tarot, the I Ching), playing boards or human hands (Ouija board or palmistry), so-called “scientific” devices (the radionic “black box”), or an elaborate chart (an astrological horoscope). The inanimate device merely becomes a tool of the spirit world to work through. When the spirits choose to use such devices, they can be quite effective and give startling results. However, when the spirits do not choose to use them, they will not work. The operators are then left without power, so they must either engage in fraud, or in astrology, guess or use whatever normal psychological powers of discernment or interpretation they can muster.

In Part Two we will document this spiritistic influence within astrology. But for the Christian the point should already be clear: Astrology is an occult “art” and God has warned (in the Bible) against the practice of astrology as that which “is evil in the sight of the Lord” (Deut. 17:2-3; 18:9-12).

### Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Bernard Gittelson is a psychic investigator and former public relations consultant for several governments. He states that several astrologers “claim that Ronald Reagan has long been [astrologer Carroll] Righter’s client. Sidney Omarr told me, ‘I would say one of the world’s worst kept secrets is Ronald Reagan’s interest in astrology’” (Bernard Gittelson, *Insubstantial Evidence*, p.348). At least one knowledgeable source at the AFA Conference confirmed this and said that Reagan had been interested in astrology and/or had an astrologer since his acting days. Allegedly, his previous astrologer was Ralph Kraum, a recognized authority on older horoscope methods. When Kraum died, Righter took over. *Time Magazine*, May 16, 1988, p.41, listed prominent astrologer Joan Quigley as admitting she was the astrologer who, based on the President’s horoscope, helped Mrs. Reagan to formulate and regulate the President’s schedule. She claims the President did accept her advice through Mrs. Reagan. The President himself has denied that astrology influences his decisions, yet has also admitted to an interest in astrology and a fascination with horoscopes (Joyce Wadler, “The Presidents Astrologers” in *People Weekly*, May 23, 1988, pp. 107-108; *Moody Monthly*, July/August, 1988, p. 10). In *For the Record* former White House chief of staff Donald Regan has claimed that astrology exerted a great influence at the White House. We did contact the White House, who referred us to the executive office, who referred us to the press office. We were unable to receive any official position on the matter.
- <sup>2</sup> Cited in *National and International Religion Report* for July 4, 1988, p. 1.
- <sup>3</sup> “Aims and Objectives of the American Federation of Astrologers,” 1988 publicity brochure Nos. 2, 6; 1, 5; and 3ac, respectively.
- <sup>4</sup> e.g., Charles Strohmmer, *What your Horoscope Doesn’t Tell You* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), pp. 39-60; and e.g., former astrologer and channeler Karen Winterbaum, personal conversation.
- <sup>5</sup> James H. Holden, and Robert A. Hughes, *Astrological Pioneers of America* (Tempe, AZ: AFA, 1988), p. 48.
- <sup>6</sup> L. Edward Jondro, *A New Conception of Sign Rulership* (Tempe, AZ: AFA, nd.), p. 1.
- <sup>7</sup> Joan McEvers, *Spiritual, Metaphysical and New Trends in Modern Astrology* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn, 1988), p. 5.
- <sup>8</sup> Holden and Hughes, op. cit., page 10 of Preface.