

Astrology - An Inside Look - Part 2

by John Weldon

In Part One I explained that I had attended the 50th anniversary of the largest, most influential and one of the most scientific of U. S. astrology organizations, The American Federation of Astrologers Convention held in Las Vegas, Nevada. At that Conference over 1,000 astrologers attended some 450 seminars and workshops offered by 200 professional astrologers. I attended seminars, distributed 100 surveys, conducted interviews and talked with numerous astrologers.

I asked three basic questions, two of which were presented in Part One. First, the claims of astrology to being a scientific discipline were examined and the conclusion reached that astrology had little to do with science per se. Secondly, we found astrology failed the tests for internal consistency. Aside from the fact that it sometimes “works,” the astrologers evidenced a wide range of methodology and theory, much of which was contradictory.

Now, in Part Two, we ask the third and final question and examine the spiritistic associations in astrology.

Is there evidence for spiritistic influence in astrology?

This Conference revealed a very important fact: What many astrologers will **not** reveal to the public they **will** reveal to other astrologers.

For example: We encountered a number of astrologers who were also mediums but who preferred to keep this information secret. I talked with the sister of one astrologer who told us her sister’s mediumism was known only to the immediate family. Even her clients did not know that much of the astrological information they were getting originated, in fact, from the spirit world.

Evidence of Spiritism

At the Conference I became aware of a great deal of spiritism. Most of the 300 different astrology books examined dealt with spiritistic and occultic themes. Of the nine seminars I attended, in eight of them the professional astrology instructors admitted to having spirit guides or to being spiritists (that is, one who accepts the teachings of the spirits). The ninth astrologer was more scientifically oriented and would not necessarily accept spiritistic information as being from a genuine spirit world. Most of the nine classified themselves as psychic.

As for the astrologers I talked with, most of them were into other forms of the occult such as palmistry, numerology, psychic healing, crystal power, Tarot cards, and occult societies (Rosicrucians, Theosophy, the Church of Light, etc.). Most astrologers also accepted the idea that psychic abilities were necessary to “properly” interpret the horoscope.

In addition, many of these astrologers had degrees in psychology and had redefined their occultism along psychological and parapsychological lines, thereby masking its true nature. (Jung’s theories were especially useful for this reinterpretation, but even here we talked with one Jungian astrologer [with two Ph.D.’s] who admitted that the Jungian “archetype” was really a spirit guide that some people merely chose to interpret as a psychological power.)

A brief sampling of the other interests of just a few of the 200 astrologers teaching at the Conference include the following spiritistic connections:

- Rev. Rene Anderson—astrologer, medium, psychic healer, Tarotologist, and channeler.
- Arlene de Angelus—astrologer, medium and psychic healer.
- Elizabeth Gauerke—astrologer and shaman
- Brett Bravo—astrologer, psychic and crystal healer.
- Christopher Gibson—astrologer and “minister and hermetician” of the spiritistic Church of Light.
- Glenn Malec—astrologer with a “Ph.D. in occult science” who has written *Basic Astrology*, a Correspondence Course for a School of Witchcraft.
- Mae R. Wilson-Ludlam—astrologer and member of the spiritistic National Federation of Spiritual Healers and the Rosicrucian Order, an occult society accepting spiritistic contacts.

Collectively, in addition to their private practices the above astrologers have appeared on many radio and TV programs (David Suskind, Sally Jessie Rafael, etc.), in national news media (“Time,” “People,” “Esquire,” etc.), and taught astrology and other subjects at high schools and colleges.¹

American Federation of Astrologers History

Although the American Federation of Astrologers (AFA) prefers to be seen as a scientific, progressive and research-oriented society, its own history is nonetheless replete with spiritistic ties.

For example, many of its leaders were, or are, spiritists who are involved with spiritistic organizations. Consider the Brotherhood of Light/Church of Light which was founded in 1932. “The Brotherhood of Light” refers to the “heavenly” organization of spirit beings who direct or advise the earthly organization known as “The Church of Light.” The AFA has had a close association with this group since the 1940’s and has even publicly acknowledged that “The Church of Light is an affiliate of the AFA.”²

The Church of Light was founded by the spirit world specifically to promote

astrology and other forms of the occult, hence the link between itself and the AFA is not surprising. It offers a series of 21 courses on many aspects of astrology and the occult such as: “Laws of Occultism, Spiritual Alchemy, Ancient Masonry, Esoteric Psychology, Sacred Tarot, Spiritual Astrology, Horary Astrology, Delineating [Interpreting] the Horoscope, Progressing the Horoscope, Divination and Character Reading... Mundane Astrology, Occultism Applied... Stellar Healing... The Next Life, etc.”³

Many AFA members have taken these lessons, including AFA president, Doris Chase Doane, who acknowledged in her seminar that she has been psychic from childhood. She noted that as she lectured, “There is inspiration coming into me.” Doane is an ordained minister with The Church of Light, having served it in leadership positions for over 40 years, including teaching classes from 1944 to 1968.⁴ At the time of the 1988 Convention, she had been president of the AFA for almost 10 years and personally told us after her seminar titled “The Art of Transmutation” that the spirits who work through The Church of Light are “very important to the work of astrology.” During her seminar, the two books Doane recommended as being key to the study of astrology were C. C. Zain’s *Occultism Applied* and his *Spiritual Alchemy*, both spiritistically-inspired texts.

In addition, the AFA’s own publications document their close ties to many forms of the occult. Their 50th Anniversary Convention program contained over 100 pages of advertisements by astrologers and has many references to the occult.

Their publication *Astrological Pioneers of America* (AFA, 1988) also indicates that many AFA leaders are into various forms of the occult. To cite a few illustrations:

- (1) Ernest A. Grant is termed “the single most important figure in the 50-year history of the [AFA].” He was one of the three incorporators of the AFA in 1938 and served as its first president. Besides being an astrologer, he was also a Rosicrucian and a Mason (p. 63).
- (2) Howard Duff was president of the AFA from 1952 to 1953 and from 1959 to 1962. He studied with the Rosicrucian Fellowship and the spiritistic Church of Light (p. 48).
- (3) Edward Strater, president in 1957, was a Theosophist.
- (4) Maxine Taylor was at that time the third vice president of the AFA. I attended her seminar entitled “Can I Rise Above My Chart?” I asked her what her views were on spirit guides and “channeling” (spirit possession). She said, “I have many experiences in the spirit world—and I think channeling is very important.... Channeling is wonderful if you have a [spirit] guide that you can trust and [who] is spiritual.” She is also co-founder of the Atlanta Institute of Metaphysics. (Like many astrologers she admitted that astrology texts were often so contradictory “you don’t know which to believe.”)

Seminar Content

In addition, consider the following illustrations of “state of the art” astrology encountered in the AFA seminars.

Briefly summarized below are three of the nine seminars which I attended at the AFA Convention.

1. Astrologer Rev. Irene Diamond’s seminar was the first I attended. She is also a “prosperity” teacher, a Catholic, a reflexologist, and uses Tarot cards. She is the author of four books on astrology, and has a daily 3-hour radio show. She gives lectures on astrology around the country.

Like millions of others today, a spiritistic near-death experience (at age 42) introduced her to spirit guides who in this case personally guided her into the study of astrology. She says it was through this near-death experience that she was “born again.” The spirits have since guided her life, including her literary endeavors. In fact, she became a medium and the spirits wrote four books on astrology through her, (either by spirit-dictation or automatic writing.) This includes *A New Look at 12 Houses*, *Astrology Coloring Book*, and *Astrology and the Holy Bible*. She defines astrology as “the progressive, active system of Divination.”⁵

She gave a lecture entitled “Let’s Talk About God.” In her lecture, she told the class that everyone was psychic and that the spirits had directed her to dedicate her life to the task of preaching the truth of who God is: that God is everyone. Thus, when she told the class to say, “I am God,” the entire class responded enthusiastically with “I am God.” I abstained, and she noticed this. She looked at me and said, “Pisces, I didn’t hear you say it. Please say, ‘I am God.’” I replied, “I don’t believe I am God,” but this did not seem to bother her. (Since the astrological “key words” for a Pisces are “I believe” and yet I **didn’t** “believe,” I was told I must have “some Gemini” in me preventing me from believing that I was God). It was clear that I was “living in darkness,” a spiritual “Cro-magnon” of sorts. Several in the class extended their sympathies to me.

2. Our second instructor was Randall Leonard, who lectured on “The Crystal and Astrology” to about 75 people in an over-crowded room. Besides his astrology, he was involved with yoga, palmistry, psychic healing, numerology, runes, astral travel, spirit guides, and the psychic power of crystals. He was also a New Age musician who used music to open people up psychically. The class began with a visualization exercise in psychically manipulating “crystal energy.” (Afterwards about a third of the class claimed to have had a psychic experience). He said the crystals could be used for everything from financial prosperity to accelerating spiritual development by developing psychically, for raising Kundalini power, and contacting the spirit world. (Raising the Kundalini is a form of Hatha-yoga that characteristically induces symptoms of demonization.) He believed that there was some kind of “life force in the crystal.” He said that when he teaches, it is not him teaching; that the information just “flows out of him.”

In a discussion after class he admitted that crystals themselves had little or no power but were merely tools or vehicles to develop psychically or to establish

contact with the spirit world. Once a person was psychically developed, the crystals were no longer necessary.

3. Having taken two seminars that were **not** advertised as having anything occultic in them (on “God” and “crystals”), I next took a course on “Esoteric Astrology” to see if the content varied. This one—taught by Capel McCutcheon—turned out to be a blend of astrology, psychology and occultism by a professional psychotherapist and astrologer.

Class began with a “centering” exercise. In the lecture a distinction was made between “exoteric” (or outer, allegedly non-occultic) and “esoteric” (or inner) astrology. Although I understood this distinction, it was not discernible at all at the Conference. (As far as I can tell, so-called “esoteric” astrology freely admits its occult nature while so-called “exoteric” astrology merely attempts to be scientific.) Exoteric astrology may not deal with the same form of occultism found in esoteric astrology, but it is occultism nonetheless. Even the instructor admitted there was common ground between the two forms and that they “are and say the same thing from a different viewpoint.”

Esoteric astrology was defined as the occult side of astrology: “Astrology is one of the occult arts... Using the hidden powers latent within man... the occultist attempts to codify [secret laws] and that’s what we are doing as astrologers... Astrology is a yoga, a way of life.” He noted that astrology per se provides a significant correlation to occultic philosophy in general. He said that we are all God and that the planets are connected to gods or spirit beings. Although he had never sought out spirit beings themselves, they had contacted him.

Both the amoral nature of astrology and the endless subjectivity of its concepts were illustrated by the following two comments by instructor McCutcheon: (1) “Enlightenment doesn’t care **how** you get there,” e.g., whether by good or evil means, and (2) his comment that “Venus and Taurus and full moon in Aquarius can mean whatever I damn well want them to mean.” (If the Conference made anything clear, it was that astrologers interpret the same “indicators” in widely different fashion.)

And so went all of the seminars at this “scientifically” oriented AFA congress. Eight of nine instructors in astrology admitted to some form of contact with the spirit world and most admitted they were psychic. All but two admitted psychic ability was important to chart interpretation.

New Age “science”? Yes; True Science? Hardly.

Survey Results

Finally, here are some of the results of interviews in the 100 questionnaires distributed at random, mostly to professional astrologers. Unfortunately, many survey forms were not returned, however additional conversations and interviews during the Convention confirmed the same rough percentages as indicated in the summaries below.

Besides many conflicting answers as to astrological theory (most could not define the exact nature of an astrological influence), we found a high percentage of agreement in the following areas.

- 80 % used one or more **techniques in addition to** astrology (such as numerology, Tarot, I Ching, runes, etc.)
- 80 % felt that astrology may eventually lead to the development of psychic abilities (this was personally true for them).
- 60 % believed proper chart interpretation required psychic or “intuitive” ability.
- 80 % believed the theory of reincarnation was a key element of most modern astrology.
- 60 % listed their personal religious belief as Eastern; 30 percent as Judeo-Christian.
- 90 % believed astrology dealt with predicting the future (i.e.: it involved some kind of divination).
- 80 % believed that ultimate reality was amoral.
- 90 % were pantheists who believed the universe was “living and spiritual” and that God was best defined as “everything that exists.” As to God’s basic, fundamental nature, He was illogically defined as **both** impersonal and personal.
- 90 % believed that **why** or **how** astrology works was unimportant; **that** it works was important.
- 90 % felt that two contradictory systems of astrology could still both be true.

Conclusions

What may we conclude from our “inside look” at astrology? Returning to the examination of our three stated objectives we find the following:

1. Astrological claims to being a true science are false.

2. Astrology as a whole may attempt to present a picture of consistency to the world but in reality this only masks a mass of conflicting theories and practices. The only thing astrologers seem to agree on is that “astrology works”; therefore it must be good (Of course, terrorists’ bombs also work).

3. As has always been true, even today when portrayed as a science, astrology nevertheless continues to be a major social force for promoting the occult. The spiritistic connection seen at this major congress should serve as a warning to the wise.

In conclusion, the words of Isaiah and Paul are relevant. Paul referred to those who were “always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth,” indeed, who “oppose the truth” (2 Tim. 3:7,8). This was a common perception at the Conference. Isaiah spoke of those who listened to the astrologers. He said that all their counsel would only wear them out; that it was as worthless as stubble and that they could save neither others nor themselves from divine

judgment. He concluded that, “Each of them goes on in his error” (Is. 47:13-15).

When astrologers cease worshipping and serving the creation (Rom. 1:25; Deut. 17:2,3) and instead turn to the One who made it, only then will they find lasting peace with God even as Paul referred to the formerly pagan citizens of Thessalonica: “How you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead— Jesus, who delivers us from the coming wrath” (1 Thess. 1:9).

Notes

¹ AFA 50th Anniversary Convention Program (AFA, 1988) under “Faculty Biographies,” pp. 174-199.

² Holden and Hughes, op. cit., p. 13.

³ AFA Convention Program, op. cit., p.102; and information from the Church of Light, Los Angeles, CA.

⁴ Holden and Hughes, op. cit., pp. 44-45.

⁵ Irene Diamond, *Astrology and the Holy Bible* (privately published, 1983), inside front cover.