

Chapter 1

Topic 4 Religion, renewal and choice

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Activity: Research

Mind, body and spirit

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Identify the range of mind, body and spirit activities taking place in a local area.
- Assess whether mind, body and spirit may be taking over from traditional religion.

Divide into groups of four. In this activity you will carry out a research project similar to that of part of the Kendal Project. This activity focuses on the Project's research into the holistic milieu.

- A. Visit the Kendal Project website (below) and look through their research. Make notes on the research they carried out on the holistic milieu (mind, body and spirit).

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fss/projects/ieppp/kendal/sixthform.htm>

B. Each group will carry out research into mind, body and spirit (MBS). You may want to carry out some tasks in pairs or individually.

1. Bookshop survey

Visit local bookshops and count the number of books devoted to MBS. Now count the number of books on traditional religions, copies of the Bible etc. How does this compare?

2. New Age advertisements

Visit the questionnaire from the Kendal Project. It can be found at

<http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fss/projects/ieppp/kendal/methods.htm>

Read sections A and B. Section A lists a range of MBS activities. Section B gives you some idea of the kinds of 'buzz words' used in association with MBS activities. Use these two sections as the basis of your research for a and b below.

- a. Find local adverts for any of the activities listed. These may be in local papers, newsagents' windows, Yellow Pages, Thompson Local directory etc, or you could search on the internet.
- b. What use do the adverts make of MBS buzz words? Give some specific examples of any that you find interesting or typical.

C. Each group should report its findings to the whole class. As a class, discuss the importance of mind, body and spirit in our lives.

1. Does your evidence support the existence of the spiritual revolution suggested by Heelas and Woodhead?
2. How far do you think the beliefs and practices you have investigated in this activity are in fact spiritual as defined by Heelas and Woodhead? (See page 32 of your textbook.)

D. Bruce criticises the idea of the spiritual revolution. Bruce says that people may participate in MBS activities without seeing these as spiritual. Instead these are leisure, recreational or 'pampering' activities (e.g. massage). Some may be based on healing rather than spirituality. Look back at the activities you have researched. Do you agree with Bruce's opinion that these are leisure-based rather than spiritual?

E. Using evidence from your research, write a paragraph to summarise this debate.