

# Neo-Paganism Today: Its Rise, Beliefs, and Current Influence

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[ Prepared for the WELS AZ-CA District Pastoral Conference, October 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007 ]

## Prologue –

### For Gods and Country

#### The Army Chaplain Who Wanted to Switch to Wicca? Transfer Denied.

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Monday, February 19, 2007

SCHERTZ, TX

The night wind pushes Don Larsen's green robe against his lanky frame. A circle of torches lights his face. "The old gods are standing near!" calls a retired Army intelligence officer. "To watch the turning of the year!" replies the wife of a soldier wounded in Iraq. "What night is this?" calls a former fighter pilot. "It is the night of Imbolc," responds Larsen, a former Army chaplain.

Of the 16 self-described witches who have gathered on this Texas plain to celebrate a late-winter pagan festival with dancing, chanting, chili and beer, all but two are current or former military personnel. Each has a story. None can compete with Larsen's.

A year ago, he was a Pentecostal Christian minister at Camp Anaconda, the largest U.S. support base in Iraq. He sent home reports on the number of "decisions" -- soldiers committing their lives to Christ -- that he inspired in the base's Freedom Chapel.

But inwardly, he says, he was torn between Christianity's exclusive claims about salvation and a "universalist streak" in his thinking. The Feb. 22, 2006, bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, which collapsed the dome of a 1,200-year-old holy site and triggered a widening spiral of revenge attacks between Shiite and Sunni militants, prompted a decision of his own.

"I realized so many innocent people are dying again in the name of God," Larsen says. "When you think back over the Catholic-Protestant conflict, how the Jews have suffered, how some Christians justified slavery, the Crusades, and now the fighting between Shiite and Sunni Muslims, I just decided I'm done. . . . I will not be part of any church that unleashes its clergy to preach that particular individuals or faith groups are damned."

Larsen's private crisis of faith might have remained just that, but for one other fateful choice. He decided the religion that best matched his universalist vision was Wicca, a blend of witchcraft, feminism and nature worship that has ancient pagan roots.

On July 6, he applied to become the first Wiccan chaplain in the U.S. armed forces, setting off an extraordinary chain of events. By year's end, his superiors not only denied his request but also withdrew him from Iraq and removed him from the chaplain corps, despite an unblemished service record.

Adherents of Wicca, one of the nation's fastest-growing religions, contend that Larsen is a victim of unconstitutional discrimination. They say that Wicca, though recognized as a religion by federal courts and the Internal Revenue Service, is often falsely equated with devil worship.

"Institutionalized bigotry and discriminatory actions . . . have crossed the line this time," says David L. Oringderff, a retired Army intelligence officer who is an elder in the Sacred Well Congregation, the Texas-based Wiccan group that Larsen joined.

Larsen, 44, blames only himself. He said he was naive to think he could switch from Pentecostalism to Wicca in the same way that chaplains routinely change from one Christian denomination to another. Chaplain Kevin L. McGhee, Larsen's superior at Camp Anaconda, believes a "grave injustice" was done. McGhee, a Methodist, supervised 26 chaplains on the giant base near Balad, 50 miles north of Baghdad. He says Larsen was the best.

"I could go on and on about how well he preached, the care he gave," McGhee says. "What happened to Chaplain Larsen -- to be honest, I think it's political. A lot of people think Wiccans are un-American, because they are ignorant about what Wiccans do."

What Larsen does is eclectic, to say the least. Some spiritual seekers perpetually try new things, never finding one they like. Larsen has sampled many faiths, and liked them all.

Raised as a Catholic, he became a born-again Christian at a Billy Graham crusade and began preaching at a Baptist church in Garrison, Mont., while still in high school. Later, he pastored two messianic congregations, which blend Jewish traditions with a belief in the divinity of Jesus. In church, he spoke in tongues. In private, he read heavily in Buddhism.

He learned about Wicca, ironically, from the Army, in an overview of various faiths at the Chaplain's Basic Training Course at Fort Jackson, S.C., in 2005.

Sporting a military high-top haircut and Converse high-top sneakers, Larsen appears closer to 24 than 44, and it is easy to see why he was popular with the troops. Earnest without appearing pious, he tears up when he describes a chaplain's duty to ensure the dignified handling of soldiers' remains.

In a single sentence, he links Native American sweat lodges, Saint Francis of Assisi and the Hindu leader Amma -- the common thread being his reverence for each. When he mentions the late Lubavitcher rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson, he quickly adds the traditional honorific "of blessed memory."

He cites Dr. Seuss as readily as the Bible. "If these guys," he says, referring to Wiccans, "had told me that 'We are the one path, the Star-bellied Sneetches, the true vessels of enlightenment for the lost world' -- I'm so tired of all that, I would not even have slowed down to take a second look."

### **[Feel free to read the rest at your leisure.]**

He says he understands why strangers might think "a mortar round must have landed too close to this guy." He recalls, with a chuckle, that a friend once gave him a diagnosis of "multiple religions disorder." But the struggle between his ardent Christianity and his willingness to see equal value in other faiths was no joke -- it was a painful, internal conflict that came to a head after he arrived in Iraq in early 2006.

"In Iraq, I saw what was happening in the name of Allah and I thought, 'This has got to stop.' . . . The common core of all religions, we're saying the same stuff," he says. "I just decided that the rest of my life I will encourage people to seek out the light however they see fit, through the Bhagavad-Gita, the Torah, the writings of prophets and sages -- whatever path propels them to be good and honorable and upright."

Larsen now draws freely from all those traditions. He meditates daily, concentrating on the seven chakras that Hindus believe are the body's centers of energy.

At times, he tries to free his mind from his physical being, a New Age practice he calls "astral travel." With his 19-year-old daughter and 14-year-old son, he reads the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament. Following the Wiccan calendar, he observes eight major holidays tied to the seasons and the right times to plant, harvest and tend a flock. Imbolc, for example, is when gestating ewes begin producing milk, signaling that winter is almost over.

Wearing the kind of fanciful robes you might see at a Renaissance fair, Larsen and other members of the Sacred Well Congregation greeted Imbolc this year in a circle of stones behind Oringderff's ranch house in Schertz, near San Antonio. Under a pair of gnarled mesquite trees was an altar; in the middle of the circle, a bonfire.

Eight women and eight men, mostly middle-aged couples, held hands. They danced in circles and figure eights, passed a large goblet of wine and pressed closer to the flames as the night grew chilly.

There was no nudity. No blood. No mention of the devil.

But there was a ceremonial dagger, a dish of salt, burning incense and a 35-minute service full of abstruse allusions to Celtic and Norse gods and goddesses. The part assigned to Larsen included such lines as: "Hail Sudri, and the Spirits and Creatures of Fire! Guardians of the Southern Gates of Gorias. We call upon you. . . . Salamanders of Fire, join us here!"

Some Wiccans believe these rites are truly ancient. Academic experts think they were invented in the 20th century, chiefly by Gerald Gardner, a British novelist and folklorist who claimed he was initiated into a secret coven in the Hampshire woods in 1939.

Larsen shares the scholars' skepticism. But he also contends that Wicca is "as close as you can get to the standing stones and sacred wells and river spirits" of pre-Christian Europe.

The Sacred Well Congregation, which has about 950 members across the country, prides itself on being an intellectual group. Ron Schaefer, a retired lieutenant colonel who flew F-4s and F-16s during a 26-year Air Force career, says Wicca "meshes perfectly with string theory." Dea Mikeworth, wife of an Army sergeant wounded by a roadside bomb in Iraq, says it reflects "archetypes in the collective unconscious."

But Larsen is unabashed about the faith's central appeal. "You can't intellectually talk about witchcraft. You gotta show up," he says. "What Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell and a lot of us universalists think is, people need the magical side, the mythological side, of religion.

"We don't need more Calvinist rationalizing. We need mystery. We need horizons. We need journeys." Something about Wicca clearly fills a niche. According to the American Religious Identification Survey, a widely respected tally, the number of Wiccans in the United States rose 17-fold -- from 8,000 to 134,000 -- between 1990 and 2001.

By the Pentagon's count, there are now 1,511 self-identified Wiccans in the Air Force and 354 in the Marines. No figures are available for the much larger Army and Navy. Wiccan groups estimate they have at least 4,000 followers in uniform, but they say many active-duty Wiccans hide their beliefs to avoid ridicule and discrimination. Two incidents may bear them out.

When a Texas newspaper, the Austin American-Statesman, reported in 1999 that a circle of Wiccans was meeting regularly at Lackland Air Force Base near San Antonio, then-Gov. George W. Bush told ABC's "Good Morning America": "I don't think witchcraft is a religion, and I wish the military would take another look at this and decide against it."

Eight years later, the circle at Lackland is still going strong, and the military permits Wiccans to worship on U.S. bases around the world. But when Sgt. Patrick D. Stewart was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2005, the Department of Veterans' Affairs refused to allow a Wiccan pentacle, a five-pointed star inside a circle, to be inscribed on his memorial at the Fernley, Nev., veterans' cemetery. Ultimately, Nevada officials approved the pentacle anyway.

For Wiccans seeking public acceptance, obtaining a military chaplain is the next major goal. More than 130 religious groups have endorsed, or certified, chaplains to serve in uniform. But efforts by Wiccan organizations to join the list have repeatedly been denied by the Pentagon.

Lt. Col. Randall C. Dolinger, spokesman for the Army's Chief of Chaplains office, said the Sacred Well Congregation has met all the requirements to become an endorser, except one: It has not presented a "viable candidate." The group's previous nominee was turned away because his eyesight was not correctable to 20-20.

When Larsen came along last spring, Sacred Well's leaders thought they finally had someone the military could not possibly reject: a physically fit 6-foot-4 clergyman originally ordained as a Southern Baptist minister, who holds a master's degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Moreover, Larsen had spent 10 years as an officer in the National Guard, finished near the top of his class in chaplain's training and was already serving as a chaplain in Iraq.

But Oringderff said that his group, like Larsen, underestimated the institutional resistance. "Each time we advance to a scoring position, they change the rules," he said.

Once chaplains are accepted into the military, they are paid, trained and deployed by the government. But they remain subservient to their endorsers, who can cancel their endorsements at any time. That is what happened to Larsen, according to unclassified military e-mail messages obtained by The Washington Post.

When the Sacred Well Congregation applied on July 31 to become Larsen's new endorser, the Army initially cited a minor bureaucratic obstacle: It could not find a copy of his previous endorsement from the Chaplaincy of Full Gospel Churches, a Dallas-based association of Pentecostal churches.

The following day, a senior Army chaplain telephoned the Full Gospel Churches to ask for the form and, in the process, disclosed Larsen's plan to join Sacred Well. Within hours, the Pentecostal group sent Larsen an urgent e-mail saying it had received a "strange call" from the Army Chief of Chaplains office. The caller "mentioned that a Donald M. Larsen . . . was requesting a change-over . . . to Wiccans," the e-mail said. "Please communicate with this office, as we do not believe it is you."

Larsen pleaded in his reply for the Full Gospel Churches not to cancel his endorsement until he could complete the switch. "Being here in Iraq has caused me to reflect on a great many things. However, as long as CFCG holds my endorsement, I teach and practice nothing contrary to your faith and practice," he wrote, adding: "It is all about the soldiers, please help me to continue to minister to them during this transition."

The Chaplaincy of Full Gospel Churches immediately severed its ties to Larsen. The Sacred Well Congregation could not renew his papers, because it was not yet an official endorser. Lacking an ecclesiastical endorsement, Larsen was ordered to cease functioning immediately as a chaplain, and the Pentagon quickly pulled him out of Iraq.

Dolinger, the Army Chief of Chaplains spokesman, denied that any discrimination was involved. "What you're really dealing with is more of a personal drama, what one person has been through and the choices he's made. Plus, the fact that the military does have Catch-22s," he said.

Jim Ammerman, a retired Army colonel who is president and founder of the Chaplaincy of Full Gospel Churches, acknowledges that there is a longstanding agreement among endorsers not to summarily pull the papers of a chaplain who wants to make a valid switch.

"But if it's not a valid thing, all bets are off," Ammerman says, adding that Wiccans "run around naked in the woods" and "draw blood with a dagger" in their ceremonies. "You can't do that in the military. It's against good order and discipline."

That description drew a laugh from Brig. Gen. Cecil Richardson, the Air Force's deputy chief of chaplains. "He's right, we can't have that in the military, but I don't think we've had any of that in the military," Richardson says.

Richardson says there are simply too few Wiccans in the military to justify a full-time chaplain. According to Pentagon figures, however, some faiths with similarly small numbers in the ranks do have chaplains. Among the nearly 2,900 clergy on active duty are 41 Mormon chaplains for 17,513 Mormons in uniform, 22 rabbis for 4,038 Jews, 11 imams for 3,386 Muslims, six teachers for 636 Christian Scientists, and one Buddhist chaplain for 4,546 Buddhists.

Since returning from Iraq and visiting Texas, Larsen has gone home to Melba, Idaho. Divorced since 2004, he is living with his teenage children and serving as an artillery officer in the Idaho Army National Guard. He said he knew from the start that converting to Wicca would raise questions but never expected the reaction to be so fierce. "It's not my place as a little captain to challenge the decisions or policies or motives or actions of my superiors," he says. "I got to come home and resume my career in the Guard. I'm very thankful for that. Understand, it's all I've got left. . . . This was a big blunder. I barely survived it. I don't have another one in me."

## Who Are These People, And From Where Did Their Beliefs Come?

At its most basic, the term Paganism, is an umbrella term covering all religions that are not related to the Judeo-Christian family of religions. The word itself once denoted those “country folk” who were not up on, or didn’t care about, the fashions of the day, including the state religion. Since Judeo-Christianity has been the dominant, indeed, only acceptable religious choice for some time, it has come to mean those who aren’t Judeo-Christian. This would include all “Primitive” animist and polytheistic religions that are common among native groups as well as the Classical religions of ancient Greece and Rome (though it wouldn't have in their heyday). It does not include Hinduism or Buddhism because those religions are dominant in their native areas and socially acceptable choices elsewhere. It would also exclude all religions that have stemmed from Judeo-Christianity, including Satanism and various syncretic religions. However, when most people say the word “Pagan”, they really mean “Neo-Pagan”. Neo-paganism is really a subset of the larger term “Pagan” and is itself an umbrella term covering a wide range of beliefs.

Now that I have thoroughly confused you, I will attempt to unravel my meaning into something that makes sense.

Neo-paganism is a form of paganism, and there are many forms of Neo-paganism. Neo-paganism is either the modern practice and adaptation of an ancient religion, or a new religion based on either ancient or new religious concepts; but usually based on a combination of these. Neo-paganism means simply modern, or contemporary paganism and there are many varieties, although they do tend to share some characteristics.

Most Neo-Pagan religions share a combination of one or more of the following characteristics, but none have them all:

➤ **A belief in multiple deities, including male and female deities.**

Sometimes the female is dominant, sometimes male and female deities carry equal status, but only rarely does a female deity carry lesser importance to a male deity. More rarely, there is a single deity who is quite often female or a main deity (usually female) with one or more helpers of somewhat lesser importance, usually a male consort. In those cases where a single deity is worshipped, it is quite often either sexless or androgynous; made up of both male and female aspects. Pagans with predominantly female deities may tend to be more feminist, and occasionally may even seem to be somewhat anti-male, but this is not always the case. Some on the other hand are proponents of 'traditional' gender roles and have strong beliefs that a woman's place is in the home. Perhaps surprisingly often, there is a combination of the two.

➤ **A revival of ancient or ancestral beliefs.**

Many modern Pagans strive to rekindle the beliefs of their ancestors or of an ancient (non-Abrahamic) culture to which they feel an attraction. Their beliefs and practices may be shaped by the oral tradition of their families, archaeological evidence, scholarly research, the myths and legends of their chosen culture or a combination of any of these. Some strive to keep their beliefs as close to those of their ancient forbearers as possible while others blend these practices with modern ones. Some may combine the beliefs of different cultures or study many cultures and select common threads on which to base their religious observances.

➤ **Animism and a belief in spirits.**

Quite often a Pagan faith will include the belief that spirits inhabit natural objects, plants and animals and these things will be treated accordingly. There may also be a belief in free roaming nature spirits and house spirits as well as the belief in the presence of spirits of the dead, especially ancestors. These

spirits may be helpful or harmful and people are usually able to communicate with them in one way or another, usually through some sort of ritual, to appease them or ask for their aid. Offerings may be left for them. Often Gods or other spirits are believed to inhabit, or are represented by certain things in nature such as the sun, moon, sea, rivers, springs, lakes, mountains, forests, etc. or certain places.

➤ **A belief in the soul.**

Most Pagans believe in a soul and some believe in a large collective soul that all beings are a part of. Thus, many pagan religions have a firm belief in either an afterlife or reincarnation, or both. Your behavior in this life may or may not affect what comes after, depending on the specific path. Exactly who has a soul may differ. Many Pagans believe that plants, animals and sometimes even inanimate objects have souls. Others may believe that only humans have souls. Note however, that there are rare groups who do not believe in the soul at all. In which case, returning to the Earth, decaying and returning to the bottom of the food chain may take on a mysticism of its own. This same type of mysticism exists among many who believe in the soul as well.

➤ **A sense of equality or brotherhood with other living things.**

Many modern pagans believe that all people, animals, plants and even some inanimate objects possess a soul, and a specific place in the world That is; we all exist for a reason. Some may not take the belief so far, but may still believe that every living thing is just as important as any other. As such, all people, animals, plants, ect. are created equal and must be afforded respect. Because of this, you may see pagans performing such odd (to the outsider) behaviors as asking a tree for permission to pick a fruit, or apologizing for uprooting an herb they grew themselves, or thanking their food for allowing them to eat it. Pagans with political activist tendencies may be more likely to support programs that align with this belief and oppose policies that do not. For example, many Pagans are environmentalists, human rights activists, or animal rights activists. Some are also vegetarians, but again, many are not. Eating an animal places one in the food chain, the natural order of things, and this is also part of Pagan mysticism. Likewise, if plants have souls as well as animals, and are just as important, how do we choose which we eat and which we don't? We would starve.

➤ **A belief that your actions will return to you in kind.**

There are many versions of this. Karma (in a new westernized form), the Wiccan Rede, ect. are some examples. Most Pagans generally believe it is not their place to pass judgment on others, that the natural results of their choices will afford the proper reward or punishment through the natural progression of time. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction? This is often, however, dichotomized by the belief that allowing a wrong to go unanswered is dangerous. After all, if someone hurts you, they could hurt someone else. The action of natural reward or punishment may take a very long time, and often may not even manifest in this lifetime. Therefore, many Pagans may feel morally obligated to enact revenge for a wrong done to themselves or, more often, a loved one; especially if they are responsible for the victim through familial ties.

➤ **An observance of the cycles of Nature.**

Many pagans time their religious observances to coordinate with the phases of the moon. Also, many of our holidays are associated with seasonal changes and are calculated astrologically, though many people have established fixed dates on the modern calendar for these holidays. Much of our myth and folklore has to do with the changing of seasons and other natural events. In addition, those cycles that mirror the cycles of Nature which take place within the human body may be more carefully observed and revered than they would be among other groups.

Not all of these features are found in all Neo-Pagan religions. Usually you will find a combination of two or more. Thus, one cannot accurately state that a Neo-Pagan religion is always an Earth-based or Goddess-centered one. Nor can one state that Neo-Pagan religion is always based on ancient religion. Neo-Pagan religions include Wicca, Modern Druidry, Hellenismos (Reconstructionist and Neo-Hellenism), NeoShamanism, and others. Heathenry, including Odinism and Asatru is often placed in a separate category. Although many will agree that they are in the same religious family as Paganism, many Heathens will balk at being referred to as NeoPagan and only a few of the generalizations made for Neo-Paganism will apply to Heathenry.

Similarities between Neo-Pagan religions are cosmetic and their differences become more pronounced the more you learn about them. For instance, there are more similarities between the morality and practices of Islam and Judaism than between Wicca and Neo-Hellenism, even though both are modernized versions of ancient practices. Pagans today manifest the wide variety of religious options. They draw upon several distinct religious impulses, each with a long heritage.

## **The Main Armies of Paganism**

### **METAPHYSICAL PAGAN GROUPS**

Within the Western religion there is an alternative tradition which might be termed mystical, Platonic, or idealistic. This tradition emerged in force in the nineteenth century in philosophical idealism which in America became visible in the movement called Transcendentalism. What has been termed the Metaphysical movements in America represent a blossoming of this old alternative tradition in the atmosphere of religious freedom and relative secularity of nineteenth century America. The three main branches of metaphysical religion emerged in the nineteenth century as Spiritualism, Theosophy, and New Thought. Each affirmed the reality of a spiritual reality of which the visible material world was but a pale reflection.

Spiritualism was built around the belief in the possibility of contacting the spiritual world, specifically the spirits of the departed, through the use of the talents of very special people called mediums. Spiritual became a fad in the 1850s and then settled into a quieter existence as a new religious movement. The Universal Church of the Master is a typical Spiritualist group.

Theosophy grew out of spiritualism but directed its contact to a more evolved group of spiritual being who comprise what was thought of as the Spiritual Hierarchy of the cosmos. These masters spoke to the leaders of the Theosophical Society which became the source of a number of groups as new claims to contact with the Masters were put forth. The "I AM" Religious Activity and the Church Universal and Triumphant are two contemporary groups which have claimed contact with the Spiritual Hierarchy through their founder/leaders.

New Thought grew directly out of Christian Science. Christian Science had asked the question of healing within the context of an idealist philosophical framework. New Thought, begun by one of Mary Baker Eddy's students, Emma Curtis Hopkins, differed from Christian Science at first over organizational disputes, but has during the twentieth century developed in various new perspectives which have taken it some distance from Christian Science. The United Church of Religious Science is one form of New Thought, as is the Unity School of Christianity.

## PSYCHIC PAGAN GROUPS

From ancient times, people have claimed powers of mind and spirit far surpassing those recognized by modern science. In years past, these phenomena (e.g., spiritual healing, telepathy, clairvoyance, mind over matter) were termed "supernatural; they are now known as "psychic," and studied by scientists.

The growth of psychic practitioners led to the development of psychical research. The British Society for Psychical Research was established in 1880, and the American Society in 1882. In studying psychic phenomena, Dr. Rhine of Duke University coined the term "extra-sensory perception (ESP)" and helped make "parapsychology" a discipline of study. The growth of parapsychology, including its membership in the American Association for the Advancement of Science, provided a dynamic base upon which psychic groups could build.

Religious groups with an essential element of belief and practice in psychic phenomena, including the Church of Scientology and the Foundation Faith of the Millennium, continue the older metaphysical tradition and cannot be sharply distinguished from the older metaphysical groups.

In general, they believe in the reality of the phenomena studied by parapsychologists. They usually offer members various ways to develop their powers, and some have members with special abilities which can be used by individuals to aid in dealing with personal problems. There are several hundred psychically-oriented religious groups today.

## MAGICK PAGANISM

Magick (not "magic," which is considered a stage performer's art and not a religion) groups have experienced considerable growth since the 1960s. These groups are distinguished by their use of occult practices (astrology and divination) and magick (the ability to willfully change the world by manipulating the cosmic forces). While like the psychic dimension, magick is as old as known history. Its contemporary revival, however, began in the early 1900s.

The most popular form of magical religion is a nature-oriented religion based on the worship of the male-female polarity, the observance of the agricultural seasons, and magic. Worship of the male-female aspects of nature usually is expressed as allegiance to the Horned God and the Great Mother Goddess. Ritual follows the movement of the sun and moon. These neopagans see themselves as reviving the pre-Christian religion of Europe and the Mediterranean Basin and manifest as Norse, Druid, or Egyptian in format. By far the Wiccans compose the largest segment of the neopagan community. Wicca or Witchcraft is derived from the ancient paganism practiced in Western Europe, especially the British Isles.

Magick, an essential element in modern Wicca, seeks mastery of all the cosmic forces believed to control the world. Witches believe in the ancient principal of "as above, so below," and in their worship seek to create a microcosm, a magical image of the whole. The universe is generally viewed as a sphere. The magical circle, drawn at the beginning of all magical rituals, is the outline of the microcosm intersecting the floor.

Witchcraft had grown slowly until the repeal of the last of England's anti-witchcraft laws in the 1950s. Growth accelerated in the 1960s and 1970s. There are no less than thirty different Wicca groups and hundreds of independent covens functioning in the United States. The Gardnerians are one of several modern Wicca groups. They trace their history to Gerald B. Gardner who initiated the current Wiccan revival. However, most Wiccans now follow an eclectic practice which values creativity and is constantly changing and altering ritual while remaining within the basic nature Goddess orientation. Secrecy is a major element of the existence of both Witchcraft and Satanism. Secrecy is protective, and serves to guard the sacred mysteries of the group.

## SATANIC PAGANISM



Often confused with Neo-Paganism and Wicca, Satanism is the worship of Satan (also called Baphomet or Lucifer). Classical Satanism, often involving "black masses," human sacrifice, and other sacrilegious or illegal acts, is now rare. Modern Satanism is based on both the knowledge of ritual magic and the "anti-establishment" mood of the 1960s. It is related to classical Satanism more in image than substance, and generally focuses on "rational self-interest with ritualistic trappings." Modern Satanism began with the Church of Satan, founded by Anton LaVey in 1966. From it, in the 1970s, several groups emerged and quickly disappeared. The Temple of Set is the only substantive offshoot to survive.

Modern Satanists have found it relevant to distinguish themselves from what is termed contemporary devil-worship. By Devil-worship is meant the various informal activities which have appeared in the 1980s around teenage use of Satanic symbols, killings of serial killers professing to have been worshipping the Devil, and various reports of "Satanic" crime. Modern Satanists (i.e., the Church of Satan and Temple of Set) profess a pro-life philosophy and do not condone illegal action by people affiliated with those organizations.

Is that clear to everyone? Any Questions?

**[N.B. – From this point forward, I will not be reading every word of the rest of paper, but I will highlight the main points. However, I included much of my research for your information and possible future use. In addition, I will not claim every word in this section as exclusively mine. Some comes from the sources I site, in re-worded or edited form, and some comes from my interview notes. Also, you will find no footnotes or endnotes. Whatever additional explanations I felt were needed will be included at that place in the text. Finally, in place of one long Bibliography, I have placed specific short Bibliographies after each major neo-pagan group. I have also added contact information. This should make it easier for you to do further research on a particular group, should you so desire to do so.]**

Now – on to the Pagans!

## **The Major Distinctive Pagan Groups**

## **ASATRU and THE ODINIC RITE**

Asatru (Icelandic for “Aesir faith,” pronounced [au-sa-tru in Old Norse) is a polytheistic reconstructionism movement whose focus is reviving the Norse paganism of the Viking Age - as described in the Eddas - prior to the Christianization of Scandinavia.

Asatru was established in the 1960s and early 1970s in Iceland. This religion officially recognized by the governments of Iceland (since 1973), Norway (since 1994), Denmark (since 2003) and Sweden (since 2007). The United States government does not officially endorse or recognize any religious group, but numerous Asatru groups have been granted nonprofit religious status going back to the 1970s.

Asatru is an Old Norse term consisting of two parts. The first denoting one of the group of Norse pagan gods called Aesir. The second part, trú, means "faith, word of honor, religious faith, belief"(similar to the archaic English word “troth,” “loyalty, honesty, good faith”). Thus, Asatru means “belief & faith in the Aesir gods.”

While the term Asatru as introduced in the 1970s referred specifically to the Icelandic adherents of the religion, Germanic neopagan and reconstructionist groups widely identify themselves as Asatru. In this wider sense, the term Ásatrú is used somewhat synonymously with Germanic neopaganism or Germanic paganism, along with the terms Forn Sed, Odinism, Heithni, Heathenry, and others.

The core belief of the Asatru is the worship of the Norse gods as living, real, super-human entities. Such worship is done in both private and public. The Asatru believe the Norse gods can and do wield power in world today. Some Asatru believe that certain runes can channel the power of the gods, controlled, to a degree, by the rune carver. The main gods which are worshiped are:

- Thor - slayer of giants, protector of humanity. Thor’s hammer is the most common symbol of the Asatru religion.
- Odin - master of magic, poetry, as well as chaos and death.
- Tyr - a god of justice, order, and war.
- Freyr - a god of fertility and good fortune.

A few Asatru also worship Loki, although others within the movement oppose worshipping a god who is dedicated to the destruction of the Earth.

A major event for the Asatru is a Blot, usually held in the fall and again around the December solstice. Historically the Blot was a yearly gathering when many animals and in some places, humans were sacrificed to the gods. The animals were cooked in large pots and then eaten by the whole community. Modern blots are gatherings where much food is cooked and much beer or ale or mead is drunk while the gods are praised and their aid is sometimes requested.

A Gothi is the historical Old Norse term for a priest and chieftain in Norse paganism. Gyoja signifies a priestess. Gooi literally means “speaker for the gods,” and is used to denote the priesthood or those who officiate over rituals in Asatru. Several groups, most notably the Troth have organized clergy programs. However, there is no universal standard for the Gooar amongst organization, and the title is usually only significant to the particular group they work with.

Kindred is a local worship group in Asatru. Other terms used are garth, stead, sippe, skeppslag and others. Kindreds are usually grassroots groups which may or may not be affiliated with a national organization like the Asatru Folk Assembly, the Asatru Alliance, or the Troth. Kindreds are composed of hearths or families as well as individuals, and the members of a Kindred may be related by blood or marriage, or may be unrelated. The kindred often functions as a combination of extended family and religious group. Membership is managed by the assent of the group.

Kindreds usually have a recognized Gooi to lead religious rites, while some other kindreds function more like modern corporations. Although these Gooi need only be recognized by the kindred itself and may not have any standing with any other Kindred.

Asatru organizations have memberships which span the entire political and spiritual spectrum. Many adherents are solitary practitioners who practice their religion alone with their family or a small local community, and are not involved with organized Asatru. Despite the wide divergence of beliefs and politics, the sole common denominator amongst adherents of Asatru is the goal of reconstructing and practicing the historical pre-Christian religion of the Eddas.

While Ásatrú is generally a tolerant religion, it is sometimes erroneously identified with neo-Nazi and “white power” organizations which also use the same symbolism. The three largest American Asatru organizations have specifically denounced any association with racist groups. There is actually an antagonistic relationship between many neo-Nazis and the membership of most Asatru organizations in the USA, who view “National Socialism” as an unwanted totalitarian philosophy incompatible with freedom-loving Norse paganism. There is nevertheless a significant number of self-described adherents of Asatru or Odinism who hold racist or white power ideologies.

Members of the Odinic Rite are encouraged to live their lives according to the Nine Noble Virtues:

- Strength is better than weakness
- Courage is better than cowardice
- Joy is better than guilt
- Honor is better than dishonor
- Freedom is better than slavery
- Kinship is better than alienation
- Realism is better than dogmatism
- Vigor is better than lifelessness
- Ancestry is better than universalism

and the Nine Charges:

- To maintain candor and fidelity in love and devotion to the tried friend: though he strike me I will do him no scathe.

- Never to make wrongsome oath: for great and grim is the reward for the breaking of plighted troth.
- To deal not hardly with the humble and the lowly.
- To remember the respect that is due to great age.
- To suffer no evil to go unremedied and to fight against the enemies of Faith, Folk and Family: my foes I will fight in the field, nor will I stay to be burnt in my house.
- To succour the friendless but to put no faith in the pledged word of a stranger people.
- If I hear the fool's word of a drunken man I will strive not: for many a grief and the very death groweth from out such things.
- To give kind heed to dead men: straw dead, sea dead or sword dead.
- To abide by the enactments of lawful authority and to bear with courage the decrees of the Norns.

Odinic Rite claim that the swastika, which they consistently refer to as the fylfot, is one of the most holy symbols of Odinism. To back up this claim, they refer to swastika-like shapes in rock carvings of the Nordic Bronze Age, where they appear as one among many ornamental symbols.

An extensive Asatru Calendar has been prepared to aid members of the Asatru Faith properly schedule Feast Days and days of mandatory ritual observance. Some Feast Days may be observed on the nearest Saturday to the actual observance. However, the High Feast days of Ostara, Midyear, Winter Finding, and Yule must be observed on the listed dates because of their solar significance.

**[The Pagan calendar below is based on the Runic holidays as found on the web page of the Asatru Alliance - <http://www.asatru.org/> Read on when you have time. It's quite fascinating. ]**

## **SNOWMOON (JANUARY)**

Snowmoon 3, Charming of the Plow: This is the date of an agricultural ritual performed in Northern Europe from ancient times. Grains and cakes were offered for the soil's fertility, and the Sky Father and Earth Mother were invoked to that end. Meditate upon your dependence on the soil, and crumble upon the earth a piece of bread as you call upon Odin, Frigga and the Land Spirits to heal the Earth and keep it from harm.

Snowmoon 9, Day of Remembrance for Raud the Strong: Raud was a landowner in Norway who was put to death by (St.) Olaf Tryggvason for his loyalty to Asatru by having a snake forced down his throat. Raud's lands were then confiscated in the name of the king and his monks. Raise a horn in honor of Raud and all of his kinsmen who gave their lives, rather than submit to the enforced love of the accursed "kristjan" empire.

Snowmoon 14, Thorrablot: This holiday began the Old Norse month of Snorri. It is still observed in Iceland with parties and a mid-winter feast. It is of course sacred to Thorr and the ancient Icelandic Winter Spirit of Thorri. On this day we should perform blot to Thorr and invite the mighty Asaman to the feast.

## **HORNING (FEBRUARY)**

Horning 2, Barri: This is the day we celebrate the wooing by Ingvi Freyr of the maiden Gerd, a symbolic marriage of the Vanir God of Fertility with the Mother Earth. It is a festival of fertility, the planted

seed and the plowed furrow. For those of you who garden, this is the time to plant seeds indoors, to later be transplanted in the summer garden.

Horning 9, Day of Remembrance for Eyvind Kinnrifi: Olaf tortured him to death by placing a bowl of red-hot embers on his stomach until his body burst open. Eyvind's crime was a steadfast loyalty to the Old Gods. A good day to reflect on kristjan kindness.

Horning 14, Feast of Vali: This feast originally celebrated the death of Hothr at the hands of Vali. This late winter festival relates to the triumphant return of the light of the sun over the dark days of winter. Today it is traditional celebration of the family. A time for the customary exchange of cards and gifts with loved ones. It is also a time for the renewal of marriage vows and an occasion for marriages.

## **LENTING (MARCH)**

Lenting 9, Day of Remembrance for Oliver the Martyr: He was an adherent of Asatru who persisted in organizing underground sacrifices to the Gods and Goddesses despite decrees by St Olaf the Lawbreaker forbidding such activities. Betrayed by an informer, he was killed by Olaf's men while preparing for the Spring sacrifice in the village of Maerin Norway. Many other men whose names are lost to us were also killed, mutilated, or exiled for taking part in such sacrifices.

Lenting 15, High Feast of Ostara: This is the Spring Equinox. The end of Winter and the beginning of the season of rebirth. Today we honor Frigga, Freya and Nerthus with blot and feast. Pour a libation of mead onto the Earth; celebrate the rebirth of nature, Asatru, and the new hopes of our Folk.

Lenting 28, Ragnar Lodbrok Day: Ragnar was one of the legends most famous Vikings. On this day in Runic Year 1145 he raided Paris. It just happened to be Easter Sunday. Today toast Ragnar and read from his Saga.

## **OSTARA (APRIL)**

Ostara 9, Day of Remembrance for Jarl Hakon of Norway: As ruler of the western part of the realm, Hakon restored the worship of the Old Gods and cast out the alien religion. In the process, the common folk regained political liberties which were erased under the kristjan yoke, and the flame of our Troth burned brighter in an era of gathering gloom. It may be that Hakon's defense of our ancestral ways helped encourage the survival of our traditions in Iceland, where they eventually became the seeds of modern day Asatru. On this day reflect on how the actions of the individual can impact world events and the future of Odinn's Nation.

Ostara 15, Sigrblot/Sumarsdag: Today we celebrate the first day of Summer in the Old Icelandic calendar. In Iceland it had strong agricultural overtones, but elsewhere in the Nordic world, it was a time to sacrifice to Odinn for victory in the summer voyages and battles.

Ostara 22, Yggdrasil Day: On this day we realize the great significance that the World Tree plays in our culture, heritage, and native spirituality. It is from the World Tree that we came, and it shelters and nurtures the Asatru today, and will offer refuge to the Folk come Ragnarok. Trees are the lungs as well as the soul of Midgard. Plant a tree today, nurture it, and protect it. In this act the Folk must abide.

Ostara 30, Walburg: this is better known as Walpurgisnacht or May Eve. Walberg is a goddess of our folk combining some of the traits of Her better-known peers. Reflect on this day on Freya, Hel, and Frigga as the repository of the glorious dead, and you will have an idea of Walburg's nature. On this day pour a horn of mead upon the earth in memory of our heroes.

## **MERRYMOON (MAY)**

MerryMoon 1, May Day: The first of May is a time of great celebration all across Europe, as the fields get

greener and the flowers decorate the landscape with colorful confusion. Freya turns her kindly face to us after the night of Walburg. Celebrate the birth of Spring and the gifts of Freya on this day.

Merrymoon 9, Day of Remembrance for Guthroth: One of the upland minor kings. Guthroth had to the audacity to make a speech opposing the policies of Olaf Tryggvason, who at the time was busy killing people who did not want to become kristjans. For exercising his Gods given rights to worship his tribal Gods, Guthroth was captured and his tongue was cut out. Use your tongue for the Gods today! Sing their praises and recite some heroic poetry, tell someone of the Gods glory, and call a kinsman to keep in touch.

Merrymoon 20, Frigga Blot: Today we rejoice in the warmth and splendor of Spring. A traditional time for a Kindred campout, perform blot to honor the All-Mother and thank Her for the health and vitality of the Family, Kindred, and Tribe.

## **MIDYEAR (JUNE)**

Midyear 8, Lindisfarne Day: On this day in the year 1043 Runic Era (793 CE) three Viking ships raided the Isle of Lindisfarne, officially opening what is the Viking Age. Toast these brave warriors who began the noble resistance of the alien invasion of the Northlands and sought rightful revenge for the slaughter of the Saxons by Charlamange.

Midyear 9, Day of Remembrance for Sigurd the Volsung: He is the model Germanic hero. His wooing of the Valkyrie Brynhild, the winning of the treasure of the Nibelungs, and the constant theme of Odinic initiation that weaves itself throughout his story are priceless parts of our Asatru heritage, that provide endless material for contemplation and inspiration for action.

Midyear 19, Asatru Alliance Founding Day: On this date 2238 R.E. seven Kindreds of the former Asatru Free Assembly joined together by ratifying a set of By Laws to preserve and continue to promote the cause of the AFA and Asatru in Vinland. On this day reflect on just what YOU can do to preserve our Folk Ways.

Midyear 21, Midsummer: This is the longest day and the shortest night of the year: Now Sunna begins its slow decline, sliding into the darkness which will culminate six months from now at Yule. Identifying the sun with the brightness of Baldur, we celebrate in honor of both. Hold blot to Baldur and High Feast. This was the traditional time for holding the Althingi (annual parliament) in ancient times.

## **HAYMOON (JULY)**

Haymoon 4, Founder's Day: On this day we honor the unselfish personal sacrifice and unswerving dedication to our Folk exemplified by the founders of modern era Asatru, H. Rud Mills of Australia, Sveinbjorn Beinteinsson and Thorsteinn Guthjonson of Iceland. On this day reflect on just what YOU can do to promote the growth of our ancestral religion and protect our sacred heritage and traditions.

Haymoon 9, Day of Remembrance for Unn the Deep Minded: Unn was a powerful figure from the Laxdaela Saga who emigrated to Scotland to avoid the hostility of King Harald Finehair. She established dynasties in the Orkney and Faroe Islands by carefully marrying off her grand daughters. As a settler in Iceland she continued to exhibit all those traits which were her hallmark-strong will, a determination to control, dignity, and a noble character. In the last days of her life, she established a mighty line choosing one of her grandsons as her heir. She died during his wedding celebration, presumably accomplishing her goals. She received a typical Nordic ship burial, surrounded by her treasure and her reputation for great deeds.

Haymoon 29, Sticklestad Day: Olaf the Lawbreaker ("St. Olaf") was killed at the battle of Sticklestad on this date in the year 1280 R.E. Olaf acquired a reputation for killing, maiming, and exiling his fellow Norwegians who would not convert to Christianity, and for carrying an army with him in violation of

the law to help him accomplish his oppression. Today honor the Asatru martyrs who died rather than submit to gray slavery. Also honor the warriors who brought justice to the Lawbreaker.

## **HARVEST (AUGUST)**

Harvest 9, Day of Remembrance for Radbod: On this date we honor Radbod a king of Frisia what was an early target kristjan missionaries. Just before his baptism ceremony, he asked the clergy what was fate his befallen ancestors who died loyal to Asatru. The missionaries replied that Radbod's heathen ancestors were burning in Hell – to which the king replied: “Then I will rather live there with my ancestors than go to heaven with a parcel of beggars.” The baptism was cancelled, the aliens expelled, and Frisia remained free. Drink a horn this day in memory of Radbod.

Harvest 19, - Freyfaxi: Freyfaxi marked the time of the harvest in ancient Iceland. Today the Asatru observe this date as a celebration of their harvest with blot to Freyr and a grand Feast from the gardens and the fields.

## **SHEDDING (SEPTEMBER)**

Shedding 9, Day of Remembrance for Herman of the Cherusci: Few mortals have privileged to serve our Folk as did Herman, a leader of the tribe called the Cherusci. He defeated Varus' three Roman Legions in 9 C.E. and blocked our amalgamation into the Mediterranean morass. Herman was very aware of his duties not only as a member of his tribe but also as an Asaman - indeed the two were probably inseparable with him. Shedding is the ideal time to give him praise, because the crucial battle for which he is remembered was fought during this month.

Shedding 23, Winter Finding: The Fall Equinox; Summer and Winter balance for a moment and the cold, old man wins - for now. Brace yourself for longer nights and the onset, eventually, of the cold and darkness of Winter. Do blot to Odin for inspiration to get through your personal lean times, whenever they may strike. This is the traditional time for Fall Fest and the Second Harvest Feast.

## **HUNTING (OCTOBER)**

Hunting 8, Day of Remembrance for Erik the Red: Praise the stalwart founder of Greenland, and father of Leif, the founder of Vinland. Erik remained loyal to Thor even when his wife left the Gods and refused to sleep with her Heathen husband. Pause in memory of Erik today; drink a toast to his honor. No doubt he gets enough warmth now in Har's Hall to make up for his wife's coldness.

Hunting 9, Day of Remembrance for Leif Erikson: this is a day that even the U.S. Government admits we should dedicate to the man who beat Columbus to the shores of Vinland by over 500 years. Don't let it slide quietly. Write your local newspapers and share the word of the Norse colonies with neighbors and friends.

Hunting 14 - Winter Nights/Vetrablót: In the Old Icelandic Calendar, winter begins on the Satyrday between Hunting 11th and 17th. Winter Nights celebrates the bounty of the harvest and honors Freya and the fertility and protective spirits called Disir, that She leads (often the Disir are seen as our female ancestors). Give glory to Freya and pour a libation of ale, milk, or mead into the soil an offering to the Disir and the Earth itself.

## **FOGMOON (NOVEMBER)**

Fogmoon 9 - Day of Remembrance for Queen Sigrith of Sweden: When Olaf the Lawbreaker had been

king of Norway for three years, he asked Queen Sigrith of Sweden to marry him. She agreed, but when he insisted that she give up her ancestral Gods Sigrith replied, "I do not mean to abandon the faith I have led, and my kinsmen before me. Nor shall I object to your belief in the god you prefer." As usual Heathen tolerance was met with kristjan imprecations and a blow to the face. The wedding was off – depriving Olaf of political power that could have sped the christianization of Scandinavia. As it were, history tells us that the Heathens held on for over 300 more years in the Northlands. Hail Sigrith, defender of Asatru, and women of stubborn virtue!

Fogmoon 11 - Feast of the Einherjar: The chosen heroes who sit in Odin's Hall are the Einherjar. Today we honor those dead kin who gave their lives for Family and Folk. If you have friends or family who died in battle, visit their graves today, if that is not possible, drink a libation in their memory.

Fogmoon 23 - Feast of Ullr: The Feast of Ullr is to celebrate the Hunt and to gain personal luck needed for success. Weapons are dedicated on this day to Ullr, God of the Bow. If your hunting arms were blessed by the luck of the God of the Hunt, your family and tribe shared the bounty with a Blot and Feast to Ullr.

## **YULE (DECEMBER)**

Yule 9 - Day of Remembrance for Egil Skallagrimsson: Odin was his God, and the blood of berserks and shape-shifters ran in his family. His lust for gold and for fames was insatiable. Yet the same man was passionately moved by the love of his friends and generously opened handed to those who found his favor. The same brain that seethed with war-fury also composed skaldic poetry capable of calming angry kings. Can it be by accident that Egil worshipped Odin, the great solver of paradoxes and riddles? Indeed all Asafolk - but especially those who follow the one-eyed God of battle and magic – can learn much from the life of this amazing man.

Yule 21 - Mother Night: As the night before the Winter Solstice, this is the time when the New Year is born. We honor the beginning of Sunnas return and the breaking of Winter's spell. This is a time to honor Thor and Freyr, celebrate by Blot, Sumbel, and High Feast. Burn a Yule Log and jump the flames for luck and purification.

Yule 22 - High Feast of Yule - Beginning of Runic Year - Sacred to Thorr and Freyr

Yule 31 - Twelfth Night: This culminates the traditional twelve days of Yule. Each day of which is a month of the preceding year in miniature. Reflect on the past year. Take stock and lay a course for the future. Make New Years resolutions in the old way by swearing your oath on Freyr's boar or on your Hammer.

GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:



Lindow, John. Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2001

Mirabello, Mark. The Odin Brotherhood. 5th edition. Oxford, England, 2003.

Richard Rudgley, Pagan Resurrection, A Force for Evil or the Future of Western Spirituality? Arrow Books Ltd, London, UK 2006

Tolkien, J. R. R. The Return of the Shadow, Ed. Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Asatru Alliance of Independent Kindreds

P.O. Box 961

Payson, AZ 85547

Additional notes:

**CHURCH OF SATAN**

The Church of Satan is an eclectic body that traces its origin to many sources--classical voodoo, the Hell-Fire Club of eighteenth century England, the ritual magic of Aleister Cruelly, and the Black Order of Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. It departs from its predecessors by its organization into a church, and the openness of its magical endeavors. The current Church of Satan itself was formed on Walpurgisnacht, April 30, 1966, in San Francisco, California, when Anton LaVey proclaimed the beginning of the Satanic Era.

The Church of Satan worships Satan, most clearly symbolized in the Roman God Lucifer, the bearer of light, the spirit of the air, and the personification of enlightenment. Satan is not visualized as an anthropomorphic being, rather he represents the forces of nature. To the Satanist, the self is the highest embodiment of human life and is sacred. The Church of Satan is essentially a human potential movement, and members are encouraged to develop whatever capabilities they can by which they might excel. They are, however, cautioned to recognize their limitations – an important factor in this philosophy of rational self-interest. Satanists practice magic, the art of changing situations or events in accordance with one's will, which would, using normally accepted methods, be impossible.

The ethical stance of the Church of Satan is summarized in the Nine Satanic Statements.

- (1) Satan represents indulgence, instead of abstinence!
- (2) Satan represents vital existence, instead of spiritual pipe dreams!
- (3) Satan represents undefiled wisdom, instead of Hypocritical self-deceit!
- (4) Satan represents kindness to those who deserve it, instead of love wasted on ingrates!
- (5) Satan represents vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek!
- (6) Satan represents responsibility for the responsible, instead of concern for psychic vampires!
- (7) Satan represents man as just another animal, sometimes better, more often worse than those that walk on all fours, who because of his "divine and intellectual development" has become the most vicious animal of all!
- (8) Satan represents all of the so-called sins, as they lead to physical, mental, sexual, or emotional gratification!
- (9) Satan has been the best friend the church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years!

Beyond these principles, Satanists generally oppose the use of narcotics which dull the senses, and suicide, which cuts off life (the great indulgence), and stand firmly for law and order. The Church of Satan is not part of the many "Satanist" groups which have been found to engage in all kinds of illegal activity. Thus, the Church of Satan and its members are not to be confused with contemporary devil worshippers. In fact, participation in any illegal acts of these cults are grounds for dismissal from the Church of Satan.

Rituals are conducted by a de facto priest, i.e., a celebrant member who has evidenced a working knowledge of and ability to conduct services. Worship in the Church of Satan is based upon the belief that man needs ritual, dogma, fantasy, and enchantment. Worship consists of magical rituals and there are three basic kinds: sexual

rituals, to fulfill a desire; compassionate rituals, to help another; and destructive rituals, used for anger, annoyance, or hate.

Worship is strongly encouraged but not required. Minimum equipment for worship varies with the type of ritual performed but is likely to include a black robe, an altar, the symbol of Baphomet (Satan), candles, bell, a Chalice, elixir (wine or some other drink most pleasing to the palate), a sword, a model phallus, a gong, and parchment. For proper worship, any private place where an altar can be erected and rituals performed is necessary.

#### GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

LaVey, Anton S. *The Complete Witch* New York: Lancer Books, 1971.

*The Satanic Bible*. New York: Avon,, 1969.

*The Satanic Rituals*. Secaucus, NJ: University Books, 1972.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Church of Satan  
Box 210082  
San Francisco, CA 94121

Additional notes:

**CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY**

L. Ron Hubbard, philosopher and writer, resigned his commission as a U. S. Naval Officer in the 1940s to devote his time to producing a study of the human mind. His efforts resulted in a book, *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*. Further study into the spiritual nature of man, including a primary emphasis on Eastern religious perspectives, led to the discoveries which were then collectively named Scientology.

Hubbard founded the Hubbard Association of Scientologists International (HASI) in Arizona in 1952. HASI's efforts led to the overseas expansion of Scientology to England. Further organizational development led to the incorporation of the Founding Church of Scientology in Washington, D. C., in 1955. Later expansion saw the U. S. headquarters move to the present California location as the Church of Scientology of California.

Scientology is a religious philosophy which has roots in Eastern religious perspectives, which start with the concept of Man as a spiritual agent and deal with man's many encumbrances, his aspirations, and the practical means through which he then attains individual salvation. From self-realization and spiritual awareness comes harmonious integration with other Life Forms, the Physical Universe, and the Supreme Being.

Basic to the teachings of Scientology are the concepts of soul and mind. Each person in Scientology discovers himself to be a Thetan, a soul, an individual force. The Thetan is the person himself, immortal, and fully responsible. The Thetan controls the Body.

Scientology teaches that people are basically good and seeking to survive, but are hindered from doing so by painful past experiences and harmful acts against others. To the degree that they attain self-knowledge, they will increase their ability to survive. The mind is the storehouse of mental pictures and all the Thetan has ever seen, felt, heard or done, and is used by the Thetan for evaluation and computation. Mental image pictures containing elements of pain and unconsciousness ("engrams") are stored in that part of the mind called the Reactive Mind. The engrams, when reactivated, can reimpose their tensions in the present. By pastoral counseling ("auditing"), engrams can be removed, and a state of self-determination ("clear") can be acquired. The Creed of Scientology strongly opposes the treatment of mental illness in a non-religious context.

Scientology's ethical codes are found in the "Code of a Scientologist" and in the "Code of Honor." Both are based upon the principle of "Reason and contemplation of optimum survival." Any ethical decision considered "right action" would at the same time enhance survival for the maximum area of life, i.e., the individual, family, group, mankind, other life forms, spiritual awareness, and the Supreme Being. This doctrine is an expansion of the principle of "the greatest good for the greatest number" to include all sectors of existence.

Two holidays are celebrated annually by the Church of Scientology: International Scientology Day, September 1st, and International Auditors Day, September 14th. At irregular intervals, Prayer Day is held as a time to reaffirm faith in the principles of Scientology, and to celebrate growth and progress.

The international leadership of the Church is located in the International Board of Scientology Organization and the Board of Directors of the Churches of Scientology. The International Board is concerned with the worldwide propagation of the faith and its viability, issues doctrinal directives, and advice of a technical nature. It sets ministerial standards and administrative policy. The Board of Directors appoints local directors of Scientology Churches.

In the United States, the Church of Scientology of California functions as headquarters and senior ecclesiastical body. Each local Church of Scientology is headed by an independent Board of Directors. Though autonomous in organization, each Church shares a common doctrine, practice, and belief.

Ministers perform wedding ceremonies, naming ceremonies, and funerals. Ministers also conduct Sunday Church Services and deliver pastoral counseling to the Church's parishioners. There are no worship requirements, but regular weekly services are offered at the local Churches of Scientology.

GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

Hubbard, L. Ron. Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health. Los Angeles: Bridge Publications, 1985.

Self Analysis. Los Angeles: Bridge Publications, 1982.

Science of Survival: Predictions of Human Behavior. Los Angeles: Bridge Publications, 1951.

What Is Scientology? Los Angeles: Church of Scientology of California, 1978. 347pp.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Church of Scientology International

6331 Hollywood Blvd., Ste. 1200

Los Angeles, CA 90028-6329

Additional notes:

**CHURCH UNIVERSAL AND TRIUMPHANT**

This group is also sometimes known as Summit Lighthouse, Summit University, Summit University Press. In the United States there are approximately ninety formal Church congregations, and there are congregations in approximately twenty-five other nations, including most prominently Canada, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Nigeria, Ghana, Australia, Holland, Sweden, Spain and Portugal. The Church was formally established by Mark L. Prophet, the late husband of Elizabeth Clare Prophet, in Washington, D.C., in August of 1958.

The basic beliefs of the group are as follows:

- That each man and each woman has the spark of Life which is God resident within his or her heart.
- That spark represents the potential of the Christ.
- Just as Jesus, our Lord and Savior, became the Christ, which is that Light, so each of us as God's children, through a path of spiritual discipline and service to life, in emulation of Jesus and his great life and service, may come to share in his Christhood as sons and daughters of God, and return to God and the heaven world in the ritual known as the ascension.

Man is the product of his karma, the effects, both good and bad, of causes set in motion in this and previous lifetimes, hence re-embodiment is a central belief of the Church. Believing in Saint Paul's admonition that "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," the Church considers that it is each man's obligation to balance his debts to life (karma) and fulfill his "divine plan." The divine plan is unique to each soul, and it is what God has ordained that the soul accomplish prior to the ascension.

Karma can be expiated through good works, the rendering of service to life to make up for past wrongs. A major tool in the balancing of karmic debts is the use of what the Church calls the "science of the spoken Word." This science combines prayer, meditation, and visualization with what are called "dynamic decrees." These are affirmations using the name of God "I AM THAT I AM," to call to God to direct His light into the solving of both personal and planetary problems. Examples of specific problems for which Church members decree are: crime, pollution, drugs, official corruption, child abuse, abortion, the economy, AIDS, and the threat of war and cataclysmic earth changes.

Church members observe the Sabbath, which is a period of time from dusk on Saturday until dusk on Sunday. This period is generally set aside on a weekly basis for the giving of religious services, although there is no specific policy regarding avoidance of work. A member in good standing of the Church participates in three formal services weekly: a Wednesday evening service, a Saturday evening service, and a Sunday service some time during the day. Members also practice a daily ritual of prayers, invocations and dynamic decrees, alone if necessary, or with a Church group when possible.

The Wednesday evening service is dedicated to both personal healing of the individual, loved ones, family members, friends or anyone requesting and requiring physical or other healing, such as the healing of mental or emotional problems.

The Saturday evening service is dedicated to freedom and involves the giving of decrees and prayers for the preservation of individual freedom and liberty and for the solving of problems in society such as drug abuse, organized crime, etc., as well as the overcoming of world communism and tyranny.

The Sunday service includes the giving of the Sacred Ritual for Keepers of the Flame, and is dedicated to the expansion of illumination and understanding among all peoples. The most common "equipment" used in worship is what is known as the "decree" (prayer) book and the song book. Also recommended is an altar,

consisting of the chart of the "I AM Presence" (the Divine Self of man), images of Jesus Christ and Saint Germain, a crystal chalice, and candles and other sacred articles if desired.

The Church conducts quarterly conferences to which all members are invited. These quarterly conferences occur on the New Year, during Easter time, over the Fourth of July, and in October at the time of Columbus Day. These conferences last anywhere from five days to a period of two weeks. Members worldwide are encouraged to attend at least one of these events annually. The Church also conducts weekend seminars throughout the year.

The following are Church holy days during the year at which special services are given and in which members are encouraged to participate.

January 1 -- New Year's Day

February 26 -- Ascension of the Church's founder, Mark L. Prophet

The Holy Week of Easter, particularly Easter Sunday

April or May -- Ascension day of Jesus the Christ (approximately 40 days after Easter on a Thursday)

May -- Wesak Day Honoring Lord Buddha

July 4th -- Independence Day (1776)

August 15 -- The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

November 1 -- All Saint's Day

4th Thursday in November -- Thanksgiving

December 24 -- Christmas Eve

December 25 -- Christmas Day

The Church is a non-profit, tax-exempt religious corporation functioning under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Its administrative affairs are operated by a Board of Directors appointed under the organization's legal charter and bylaws. Church sacraments are administered by ordained and lay ministers, and religious services are conducted by both ministers and missionaries.

The Church has ordained as well as lay ministers, and an active missionary program. Ordained ministers are authorized to administer the sacraments of the Church; lay ministers are considered ordained ministers in training and administer some sacraments and conduct the rituals and services of the Church; missionaries of the Church conduct outreach programs in the United States and in various countries around the world. The Church does not engage in proselytizing, but rather reaches prospective members through the publication of its teachings in books, periodicals and audio and video tapes which are distributed in book stores, and are widely aired on television and radio.

**GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:**

Elizabeth Clare Prophet. The Astrology of the Four Horsemen: How You Can Heal Yourself and Planet Earth. Livingston, MT: Summit Univ. Press, 1991.

“The Lost Years of Jesus. Malibu, CA: Summit Univ. Press, 1984.

“Saint Germain On Prophecy. Livingston, MT: Summit Univ. Press, 1986.

Prophet, Mark. Saint Germain, Studies in Alchemy: The Science of Self-Transformation. Los Angeles, CA, Summit Univ. Press, 1962.

Mark Prophet and Elizabeth Clare Prophet. Climb the Highest Mountain, Colorado Springs, CO: Summit Lighthouse, 1972.

“Lords of the Seven Rays. Livingston, MT: Summit Univ. Press, 1986. 608pp.

“The Lost Teachings of Jesus. Livingston, MT: Summit Univ. Press, 1986. 4 Vols.

“The Science of the Spoken Word. Colorado Springs, CO: Summit Lighthouse, 1965. 82pp.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Church Universal and Triumphant  
Box A  
Corwin Springs, Montana 59021

Additional notes:

**GARDNERIAN WICCA**



Otherwise known simply as Witchcraft, Paganism, or Neo-Paganism. Witchcraft or Wicca is a reconstruction of the so-called "Old Religion," that is, the tribal worship of ancient peoples based in magic, herbology, healing, and the worship of the Mother Goddess and her consort, the Horned God. Witches believe they have existed throughout known history in many parts of the world. The term "witch," more properly "wicca," comes from the Anglo Saxon word for "wise." Wicca's marked revival in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is due largely to the work of such scholars as Margaret A. Murray, who traced the existence of the Old Pagan Religion in pre-historic Europe. At the forefront of this revival was Gerald Gardner, the famous witch of the Isle of Man.

After years in the East, Gardner returned to England in the 1930s, located a Wicca group, and was initiated by "Old Dorothy" Clutterbuck. He participated in the "Operation Cone of Power" during World War II, in which English witches joined their magical energies with the prayers of all other religious groups to turn back Hitler's invasion of England. In 1949, he published *High Magic's Aid*, a novel about Medieval Wicca based on his growing knowledge of 14th Century Witchcraft. After repeal of the last anti-Witchcraft law in Britain in 1951, Gardner became publicly prominent. He opened a Museum of Witchcraft on the Isle of Man, and in 1954 published *Witchcraft Today* in which he attacked the idea that Wicca was the worship of Satan and declared himself a witch, devoted to the Mother Goddess. As a result, many witches associated with him and other people contacted him to join the Craft. Those who associated with Gardner, who shared his views of Wicca, and who started to use the rituals he used have come to be called "Gardnerians."

Gardnerians worship the Mother Goddess and the Horned God, symbols of the basic male/female polarity of all nature. They seek the balance within themselves, and with their environment. Worship is often done in pairs, masculine and feminine, and the power which is produced by magical ritual is directed by the High Priestess for its desired purpose.

While devotion to the Wiccan deities is the main coven activity, magic, the control and use of natural cosmic forces which emanate from the human mind and body, is the secondary activity of the coven. It is done for healing and for aiding members in various endeavors. Most Witches believe in reincarnation; i.e., that the soul or spirit of the individual will progress through a number of subsequent Earthly lives as it evolves. Retribution for acts in this life will be returned threefold, good or evil, in this life. A reincarnated spirit starts afresh.

Contrary to popular media representations, the Wiccan neither worships nor believes in "the Devil," "Satan," or any other similar entities. They point out that "Satan" is a belief associated with the Judaeo-Christian Tradition, while the Wiccan beliefs are based upon a pagan mythos which predates the Judaeo-Christian era.

Only one book used by Gardnerian Wicca is authoritative: *The Book of Shadows*, or book of ritual. In the Gardnerian tradition, each new book is hand copied from High Priestess to High Priestess. Each High Priestess then shares the information with her coven. They are part of the traditional teachings of the Craft, and are available only to initiates. From coven to coven, the rituals vary slightly. The Gardnerian tradition is an evolved and evolving tradition. Hence, each coven will start with the materials passed on to its High Priestess, and then experiment with new emphases, magical formulas, and rituals.

Gardnerian Witches live by the Wiccan Creed: "An Ye Harm None, Do As Ye Will." Within this general concept is the Law of Retribution, by which witches can expect to receive threefold return on their actions.

Current social stigma generally does not yet allow witches to publicly declare their religious faith without fear of reprisals such as loss of job, ridicule, etc. Rituals, many teachings, and even acknowledgement of affiliation with the Craft are generally not discussed with non-initiates. Ritual instruments are generally hidden and protected.

Eight sabbats, or festivals, important for witches to gather and attune themselves to natural rhythms and forces as the seasons change, are followed:

February Eve (January 31),

Spring Equinox (March 21),

Beltane or May Eve(April 30),

Summer Solstice or Midsummer (June 22),

Lammas (July 31),

Autumn Equinox (September 21),

Samhain (October 31)

and

Yule or Winter Solstice (December 21).

Each coven is autonomous, headed by a High Priestess and her High Priest. Covens vary in size from approximately 8 to 14 members. The High Priestess heads the coven. The High Priestess who trained her is recognized as a Queen to whom she can turn for counsel and advice, thus maintaining a lineage of High Priestesses throughout Gardnerian Wicca. Members pass through three initiations, each of which is normally at least a year and a day apart.

The High Priestess and her High Priest are responsible for coven activities, serving both as leaders in the rituals and as teachers for coven members. Only a High Priestess, or a woman she has delegated, can cast a circle.

Wiccans usually worship as a group. Individual worship is possible, but not generally practiced. Worship takes place in a private location in which a circle can be drawn according to prescribed ritual formulas. Covens meet either weekly or bi-weekly (at the full and new moon), always in the evening. Worship in most, but not all, groups occurs almost always in the nude, as the Wicca would say, "sky-clad."

Minimum items for worship include an athame (ritual knife), a bowl of water, a censer with incense, salt, an altar and 6 candles in candlesticks. A sword and pentacle (talisman) are optional. All tools must be ritually consecrated by a High Priestess.

Wicca is open toward other faiths, recognizing that the Principles of the Great Mother appears in a great many faiths under various names and symbolisms. Because of the persecutions of past years, Wiccans take a guarded relation to groups which claim to possess "The Truth" or to be the "Only Way." Wicca is only one path among many, and is not for everyone. Members are encouraged to learn about all faiths, and are permitted to attend services of other faiths, should they desire to do so.

## GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

Margot Adler. Drawing Down the Moon. Boston: Beacon Press, 2nd, ed., 1986.

Janet and Stewart Farrar. Eight Sabbats for Witches. London: Robert Hale, 1981.

“The Witches' Way. London: Robert Hale, 1984.

“The Witches' Goddess. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing, 1987.

“The Witches' God. Custer, WA: Phoenix, 1989. 278

## FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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Additional notes:

**"I AM" RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY aka Saint Germain Foundation.**

The "I AM" Religious Activity was initiated by Guy W. Ballard. In the late twenties Mr. Ballard traveled to Northern California for business. Having heard of the Brotherhood of Mount Shasta for years, he felt guided to the slopes of this great mountain and visited it repeatedly.

In August of 1930, while hiking he encountered the Master Saint Germain; and his remarkable experiences began. Over the following months Mr. Ballard recorded the messages he received from Saint Germain and his many experiences on the mountain. He later published these as Volumes I & II of the Saint Germain Series. In 1938 Mr. & Mrs. Ballard established the Saint Germain Foundation and shortly thereafter, the Saint Germain Press, Inc.

After returning to Chicago Mr. Ballard at first shared his experiences with friends and then the local community. As his followers increased, the Ballards began lecturing across the country, holding classes throughout the United States. They soon repeatedly filled the Chicago Auditorium, Chicago Civic Opera House, and the Los Angeles Shrine Auditorium.

Mr. Ballard passed away in December of 1939. Following his passing and Ascension, Mrs. Ballard became head of the movement. In the early 1940s, various lawsuits were filed by several ex-members against Mrs. Ballard and members of her staff. Mrs. Ballard was criminally charged by the United States Government. After four years of litigation, Mrs. Ballard was declared innocent, and all remaining criminal charges were dropped.

One of the most important aspects of this extended conflict was the benchmark Supreme Court decision in United States vs. Ballard, (April 24, 1944) which firmly asserted that people could not be tried on the basis of the supposed "irrationality" of their religious beliefs (i.e., in the words of Justice Douglas, "Heresy trials are foreign to our Constitution.").

After this fractious period ended, Mrs. Ballard continued to lead the Saint Germain Foundation and its Teachings. The movement continued to grow and expand from the late 1940s. Mrs. Ballard passed away in February, 1971. Following her Ascension, the movement has been governed by a Board of Directors. The movement continues to prosper. Congregations are located throughout the United States, Canada, and many foreign countries.

The "I AM" Religious Activity teaches that Perfection comes only from the Ascended Masters' Octave of Light. For one to obtain spiritual growth, one must seek Instruction from the Ascended Masters, including Jesus and Saint Germain. The "I AM" Activity shows the way to obtain personal growth by being aware of and developing one's own relationship with God. Believers become better persons and citizens of the world.

The Teachings are true education of Life and the Spiritual Culture of the people. They are brought forth in the interest of the public good. This Understanding teaches the use of the Great Creative Word of Life, "I AM."

Every person on earth has an individualized Flame of God anchored within his or her heart. Not only does everyone have this Divine Spark of the "I AM" within, but above each form is the individualized focus of the Godhead, referred to as the "Mighty I AM Presence," or as often called, the "Guardian Angel.

The "I AM" Religion claims to be a Christian Religion, taking some of Its Teachings from the New Testament. It recognizes all of the Christian Holidays; and the Saint Germain Foundation presents an annual Pageant depicting the Life of Christ at their 1500 seat outdoor amphitheater in Mount Shasta, California.

Worship services are held several times weekly, generally in small groups. Quiet contemplation, repetition of Affirmation, Decrees, singing, and listening to recorded lectures by Mr. and Mrs. Ballard comprise these services. Readings are also given, which are taken from the books of the Saint Germain Series. Affirmations generally are individual attunements to God. Decrees request the Blessings, not only for the individual and followers, but for America and all mankind.

Its members are taught they can individually worship God through silent communication and prayer; and they often attend inter-denominational services which are offered. No religious symbols are required. The members believe that by obtaining goodness in life they may eventually ascend from the earth, following Jesus' Example. If the Ascension is not obtained, the person is reincarnated in human form (re-embodied), and experiences the wheel of birth and rebirth until the final goal of the Ascension is attained.

The Religion is governed by a Board of Directors, which sponsors Temples and Sanctuaries in most of the large cities in America and Canada, as well as in more than fifty cities in foreign countries. The Board of Directors oversees the work of the Appointed Messengers and Field Workers; Sponsors of the various Temples work under the sole jurisdiction of Saint Germain Foundation.

Ministers known as Messengers and Field Workers conduct Classes in America and foreign countries. Sponsors also serve in a ministerial capacity. They hold services in local Temples, and participate in both Leadership Seminars and the annual Pageant on the Life of Christ. There is no active proselytizing. The church has grown by the strength of its own beliefs.

Members are taught to maintain the God Ideals by worshiping God in the highest and most powerful way possible. However, church services are not required by its members, as the individual student is taught that through silent communication and prayer, he/she is always in touch with the God-Divinity.

#### GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

- Ballard, Guy W. through Godfre Ray King. Unveiled Mysteries. Saint Germain Series, Vol. 1. Schaumburg, IL: Saint Germain Press, 1982. 14th ed.  
 “The Magic Presence. Saint Germain Series, Vol.2. Schaumburg, IL: Saint Germain Press, 1982.  
 Saint Germain through Godfre Ray King. The "I AM" Discourses. Saint Germain Series, Vol. 3. Schaumburg, IL: Saint Germain Press, 1940.

An introduction to the Teachings is set forth in pamphlets published by the Foundation.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Mr. Lyle Schrock, Vice-Chairman  
 Saint Germain Foundation  
 1120 Stonehedge Drive  
 Schaumburg, IL 60194

Or

Saint Germain Foundation  
 1120 Stonehedge Dr.  
 Schaumburg, IL 60194

Additional notes:

### **NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH (“Peyote Users”)**

The use of various drugs that alter the consciousness of the worshiper has a long history in world religion. In Pre-Columbian America, the peyote cactus, which contains mescaline, a consciousness-altering substance, was used by the Aztecs and their descendants.

By the nineteenth century the practice was firmly entrenched in the Indian tribes of Mexico and in the years following the War For Southern Independence, spread to the tribes of the southwest – Apache, the Kiowa, and the Comanche. From these it spread to the tribes of the Plains and into Oklahoma, where its use aided the “vision search” so integral to Plains Indians' religious quest.

As its use grew, two trends emerged. One set of peyote users has a traditional orientation, while a second group is nominally Christian. Both groups function within the Native American Church, and their existence accounts for the wide variety of practices encountered.

The formalization of a "church" among peyote users came in direct response to growing opposition from the government, the Indian missionaries and certain fellow-tribe members. As early as 1896, the Oto Church of the First Born was incorporated, the first of several like bodies among various tribes. Then in 1918 an intertribal group led in the formation of the Native American Church in response to a proposal by the Bureau of Indian Affairs to have Congress pass an anti-peyote law. By 1944 the Church had spread across the United States and became the "Native American Church of the United States."

The Christian members of the Native American Church acknowledge a Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Traditional members speak only of God. All believe in brotherly love, often expressed as three principles of respect for all people, compassion for all people, and forgiveness for all people.

Peyote is considered a sacrament and is venerated. It is eaten as a means of communing with the Spirit of the Almighty. Christian members refer to Romans 14:6 as related to the taking of peyote. The Native American Church is the only religious body to have received court exemption to use in their religious practices what is otherwise a controlled substance.

The Native American Church has no formal creedal statements or authoritative literature, although the Christian congregations use the Bible extensively. In general, the Native American Church teaches its members to live a high ethical life and is against immoral conduct. Alcohol and "dangerous" drugs are forbidden. They also teach respect and humility in the presence of one's elders.

The Native American Church is organized at three levels. On the national level, an annual convention speaks for the Church and elects officers. The President and other officers serve two-year terms. Representation to the national convention is by chapters, which may consist of all Church members of the Church of one tribe in a single area. The chapter is further divided into congregations (one or more). Each congregation is organized democratically and is the focus of worship.

The organization of local congregations is under the leadership of democratically elected Presidents. Presidents are responsible for all Church activities with the possible exception of the worship service itself.

In some traditions a priest leads the worship and is assisted by the fire chief (who keeps the fire going) and the drummer. In others, the elder men lead. While group worship is not actually "required," it is integral to the regular practice of the faith. Services will be held weekly, biweekly, or monthly in different congregations. They begin in the evening and last until dawn.

Besides the ingestion of peyote, the service includes as a closing act a ceremonial meal in which water, corn, fruit, and dried beef are shared. Items for worship include peyote, fire, water drum, gourd rattle, and staff. Individual congregations may require additional instruments. Facilities vary. Some groups meet in homes, but many groups meet in a designated hogan or tepee. The worship space contains an altar and fireplace. The traditional hogans will have a moon-shaped altar, the Christian ones a cross-shaped altar.

#### GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

LaBarre, Weston. The Peyote Cult. New York: Schocken Books, 1969.

Mount, Guy. The Peyote Book. Arcata, CA: Sweet Light Books,1987.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Friends of the Native American Church  
Box 307  
Arcata, CA 95521

[NB: In recent years the Native American Church has withdrawn from contact with non church members, in part to protect its special status as the sole people able to legally use peyote.]

Additional notes:

## **RASTAFARIANS**

The Rastafarian Movement grew out of one phase of the Black Nationalist movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Among the leaders of the Black Nationalist Movement was Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), who returned to Jamaica in 1927 after a stormy career as a leader of black people in the United States. Here he revived the United Negro Improvement Association to proclaim his major themes of the unity of black people.



In 1930 Ras Tafari Makonnen was crowned Emperor of Ethiopia. He took as his title, "King of Kings, Lord of Lords, His Imperial Majesty the Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Elect of God." He was known to the world as Emperor Haile Selassie (Power of the Holy Trinity).

In Jamaica, followers of Garvey saw Haile Selassie as both fulfillment of Garvey's prophecies and the Biblical one in Revelation 5:2,5: "And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a voice, " is worthy to open the Book and loose the seals thereof...And one of the elders saith unto me, "Weep not: behold the Lion of Judah, the Root of David, heath prevailed to open the Book and loose the seven spirits of God sent forth onto all the earth."

People began to pray to Haile Selassie as a living God and as the central figure in the redemption and liberation of the black people. Among the most prominent of the preachers was L. P. Howell, who in 1940 gathered his followers on a mountain outside Kingston and proclaimed himself Haile Selassie's regent in Jamaica. At this time the growing of long hair (called "dreadlocks") and the frequent smoking of Ganja (marijuana) began.

After the breakup of Howell's settlement, known as the Pinnacle, in 1954, the Rastafarians, who had taken their name from Haile Selassie's real name, scattered throughout Kingston and the rest of Jamaica. Rastamen began to arrive in the United States in the late 1960s as Jamaican immigration increased.

Rastafarians beliefs can be summarized in the following positions:

- 1) Rastafarians are basically defined as those who accept Haile Selassie as the true and living God. Of course, since August, 1975, he has reigned in spiritual body.
- 2) The Black people are the reincarnation of ancient Israel who, at the hand of the white man, were exiled to the New World, especially Jamaica.
- 3) Rastafarians do not necessarily believe white people are inferior to blacks, however they believe white people are products of an evil civilization, with no spiritual basis and also, the white culture is an "unnatural" culture.
- 4) The Jamaican situation is hopeless; Ethiopia is the true home of the black people and heaven.
- 5) The Emperor of Ethiopia is now arranging for the expatriated persons of African origin to return to their home.
- 6) When black people return, white society in the west will collapse and black people will rule the world.

Creedal statements and authoritative literature include the King James version of the Bible, the Twenty-One Points (a semi-political statement summarizing the Rastafarians position in society), and various statements and issues by different leaders, such as the moral code widely used in the ten-point moral code written by Rastafarian leader Sam Brown:

- 1) We strongly object to sharp implements used in the desecration of the figure of Man, e.g., trimming and shaving, tattooing of the skin, and cutting of the flesh.
- 2) We are basically vegetarians, making scant use of certain animal flesh, outlawing the use of swine's

flesh in any form, shell fish, scaleless fishes, snails, etc.

- 3) We worship and observe no other God but Rastafari, outlawing all other forms of Pagan worship yet respecting all believers.
- 4) We love and respect brotherhood of mankind, yet our first love is to the sons of Ham.
- 5) We disapprove and abhor utterly hate, jealousy, envy, deceit, guile, treachery, etc.
- 6) We are avowed to create a world of one brotherhood.
- 7) We do not agree to the pleasures of present day society and its modern evils.
- 8) Our duty is to extend the hand of charity to any brother in distress, firstly, for he of the Rastafari order – secondly, to any human, animal, plants, etc...
- 9) We do adhere to the ancient laws of Ethiopia.
- 10) Thou shall give no thought to the aid, titles, and possessions that the enemy in his fear may seek to bestow on you; resolution to your purpose is the love of Rastafari.

The most important holiday is Haile Salessie's birthday (July 23rd). Other holidays are Marcus Garvey's birthday (Aug-17th) and Jamaican Independence Day (third Monday in August).

The Rastafarians are very loosely organized into "circles," each headed by several "brethren" who assume leadership charismatic ally, that is, due to their personal authority and power. Attachment to a circle is informal.

Any leading brother may conduct worship services. Group worship is not required, but weekly meetings are generally held. Members will at intervals gather for a "yabingi," a convention of Rastafarians in a given region.

Most Rastafarians are vegetarians, eat on natural foods (termed I-Tel foods) fruits, grains, roots, and vegetables, and avoid bleached flour and dairy products. Alcohol is avoided but Ganja is freely used.

Most Rastafarians do not cut their hair and wear it in long braids, called dread locks, symbolic of a lion's mane and strength. Women are required to wear skirts or dresses, no pants, and keep their heads covered in public.

Rastafarians are very evangelical among fellow black people and most recruitment is by word of mouth. Reggae music is very popular and influences many young adults. The only group that the Rastafarians are known to fellowship with is the Ethiopian Coptic Church.

#### GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

Clarke, Peter B. Black Paradise: The Rastafarian Movement. Wellingorrough, Northamptonshire, UK: Aquarian Press, 1986.

Itations of Jamaica and I; Rastafari. New York: Roger Bernhard, 1982.

Nicholas, Tracy. Rastafari: A Way of Life. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1979.

Owens, Joseph. Dread, The Rastafarians of Jamaica. Kingston, Jamaica: Sangster, 1976.

Additional notes:

### **TEMPLE OF SET**

Within this religion its principles are termed "Setian," and individual affiliates are termed "Setians." As the original god Set was later caricatured as the "Satan" of Judaeo-Christianity, Christians often interpret this religion as "Satanism" and its affiliates as "Satanists."

Setians accept such labels only to the extent that the Christian Satan represents certain qualities of individualism and independence. Setians reject any interpretation of Satanism that glorifies or promotes evil or destructiveness.

Together with the Priesthood of Horus, the original Priesthood of Set was the most ancient of the Egyptian religious orders, dating (by surviving predynastic images of Set) to at least 3200 B.C. and by the Egyptians' own astronomically-based records to approximately 5000 B.C. The Setian religion played a prominent role in Egyptian society throughout its development, to include being the state religion of the XIX-XX dynasties of the New Empire. It appears to have been eclipsed approximately 1000 B.C.

Thereafter what may be termed the "Satanic tradition" survived in successive Western civilizations in the form of philosophies and/or god-figures focusing on "awareness and activity beyond the natural order." Such range from the Prometheus of the Hellenes and the Lucifer of Christianity to the individualistic philosophies of Pythagoras, Plato, and Nietzsche.

Many feel that the Romantic movement of the 1800s dramatized the Christian Devil as a quasi-heroic, Miltonian symbol of fortitude and defiance in the face of defeat, thus setting the stage for the eventual formation of the Church of Satan in 1966.

In fact, the Temple of Set was founded in 1975 by the international Priesthood of the Church of Satan. Due to the popularity of all things related to ancient Egypt at the time, the founder of the Church of Satan, Anton LaVey, had intentions to commercialize the Temple of Set, and profit from it. Therefore the Setians" discarded the anti-Christian mythology and orientation of the Church of Satan in favor of the completely distinct character of the original Egyptian Priesthood of Set.

Thus, the Temple of Set was incorporated as a separate non-profit church in California in 1975, and qualified for both U.S. federal and state tax-exempt status that same year.

The Temple considers itself to be consecrated by and dedicated to Set, originally an ancient Egyptian deity. One rival cult, that of Osiris, whose myths were erroneously assumed to be "pan-Egyptian" by later civilizations, portrayed Set as the god of evil. Setians themselves, however, did not then and do not now consider Set an evil figure, nor consider the Setian religion merely a refutation of more conventional faiths.

Setians perceive the universe as a non-conscious but ordered environment within which Set has, over a period of millennia, altered the genetic development of at least one form of life to create a species, humanity, possessing an enhanced, self-conscious intelligence. The techniques and teachings of the Temple are designed to identify and develop this higher evolutionary potential in appropriate individuals.

While Setians focus on their own individual capacities, they are also expected to have an appreciation of and respect for ethical behavior, to include the ideals of whatever social group, or political state, with whom they have chosen to identify themselves.

In addition to conventional means of influencing the environment about them, Setians also employ "magic," by which they mean universal forces and psychological influences generally unknown to or unrecognized by society. Setian magic is referred to as "Black Magic" to distinguish it from "White Magic," which they refer to as the invocation of non-existent forces/influences for purposes of self delusion. It should be stressed that to Setians, the term "Black Magic" carries no connotation of evil or destructive intentions or ends.

The Temple as a California corporation is the property of the international Priesthood of Set, which delegates governing authority to the Council of Nine (board of directors). The Council in turn appoints the High Priest of Set, the Executive Director, and other officers of the Temple.

The Temple includes a number of Orders, each supervised by a Grand Master. These Orders may be somewhat likened to the academic departments of a university, being vehicles for concentration and cooperation in specialized fields of philosophy and magic.

Setians may also interact in Pylons, which are normally under the guidance of a Priest or Priestess of Set. Pylons are normally geographically localized, but also may extend over international distances.

The Priesthood of Set is not understood to be a "leadership" or "pastoral" function in a structural or organizational sense. It is rather the direct, specific, and willful consecration of a particular individual by Set himself, formally recognized as such by the Temple of Set. Each Priest or Priestess of Set thus exercises the full religious authority of the entire Temple, subject only to the guidance of the Masters of the Temple. One member of the Priesthood is determined by the Council of Nine to serve as High Priest or High Priestess of Set.

The Priesthood of Set is responsible to Set for the care of his Temple, and for reasonable guidance of and assistance to individuals who enter the Temple. The Priesthood is also responsible for dismissing from the Temple any person who cannot or will not uphold its initiatory or ethical standards.

There are no regularly-scheduled, group "services" in the Temple. Nor would individual Setians be comfortable with the term "worship," conveying as it does admiration of or devotion to a god or gods based on what they see as fear and faith.

What the Setian performs instead are Workings of "Greater Black Magic," in which the personal consciousness is raised to direct association with that of Set. Collective Workings involve any number of Setians may take place over great distances, or at gatherings called Conclaves.

It is the individual consciousness that is sacred within each Setian. Therefore any substance which impairs or distorts the consciousness, such as hallucinogenic drugs or excessive alcohol, is disapproved of by the Temple. The center of self-consciousness of each initiated Setian, the "ba" of the ancient Egyptians, is perceived to separate from the physical body when the body ceases to be serviceable to it.

The Temple of Set considers a metaphysical philosophy to be an intensely personal decision, and that the Setian state of awareness and being cannot be "advertised" or "merchandised" in any way. An individual either inclines to this state or does not. Therefore the Temple does not "recruit"; rather it simply makes the fact of its existence known and explains enough about itself when approached to interest persons with Setian potential and disinterest those without it.

#### GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

I was told that annotated reading lists of published works in many categories relevant to the Temple of Set may be obtained through the Temple office.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Executive Director  
Temple of Set  
P. O. Box 47037

San Francisco, CA 94147

Additional notes:

### **UNITED CHURCH OF RELIGIOUS SCIENCE or SCIENCE OF THE MIND**

The United Church of Religious Science grew out of the work of Ernest S. Holmes, a metaphysical teacher in Los Angeles, California, during the early 14th century. Holmes was introduced to metaphysics through Christian Science, which he encountered in Boston while he was a student. He was also an avid reader, and expanded his philosophy through his reading in the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ralph Waldo Trine, and Christian D. Larson. After moving to California, he discovered the works of the outstanding British writer Thomas Troward whose approach to New Thought stimulated Holmes to develop the perspective that would become known as Science of Mind.

In 1916 Holmes and his brother organized the Metaphysical Institute, and in 1925 he published his most important work, *The Science of Mind*, a textbook which systematically presented the basic teachings of Religious Science. Religious Science went through a number of organizational stages before reaching its present form.

In 1927 Holmes founded the Institute of Religious Science and School of Philosophy, which became the Institute of Religious Science and Philosophy in 1935. In the Thirties, graduates of the Institute began to open teaching centers, and began meeting as the Annual Conference of Religious Science Chapters and Churches. The conference became the International Association of Religious Science Churches in 1949. In 1953 the Institute of Religious Science became the Church of Religious Science, and the denomination began to be reorganized into its present form. The Church added the word "United" to its name in 1967.

The United Church describes its teachings as a correlation of the laws of science, opinions of philosophy and revelations of religion applied to human need and the aspirations of man. The church's basic philosophy is spelled out in the first four chapters of *The Science of Mind* and is built around the basic affirmations that people are made in the image of God and are thus forever one with the infinite life; that all life is governed by spiritual laws; and that people create their experiences by their thoughts and beliefs.

The teachings of Religious Science differ from the teachings of the larger New Thought movement of the early twentieth century by emphasizing the distinction between objective mind (normal waking consciousness) and subjective mind (or subconscious). The subjective mind, when impressed with the images of healing and wholeness by the objective mind, could bring health to individuals.

Religious Science practitioners are trained in the process of using the Universal Subjective Mind to bring healing to others. The church also teaches a method of affirmative prayer called spiritual mind treatment. Integral to the treatment is a five-step process, developed by Holmes, of accomplishing the desired results. As outlined in the textbook, the five steps are:

- (1) recognition of God as Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Omnipresent;
- (2) unification with the One Reality;
- (3) awareness of God' Presence and Power;
- (4) realization that as one believes, one receives; and
- (5) thanksgiving even before a visible manifestation of healing.

Going through these five steps in relation to specific concerns, which may include a variety of problems from physical sickness, to financial distress, to tension in one's relations with others, is termed "treating" the problem.

Integral to the ministry of the church are the many practitioners, individuals trained in the art of spiritual mind treatment, who make themselves available to assist members and the general public with their problems. Ministers are drawn from the ranks of practitioners. Worship is conducted weekly at the approximately 300 congregations and study groups affiliated with the United Church.

**GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:**

Holmes, Ernest. The Science of Mind New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1944.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

United Church of Religious Science  
3251 W. 14th St.  
Box 72127  
Los Angeles, CA 90075

Additional notes:

**UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF THE MASTER**

UCM consists of two types of members: Minister members and lay members. Lay members are those who formally subscribe to the principles expressed in the UCM Constitution and By Laws and become members of any UCM church operating under a charter issued by the National Headquarters.

The Universal Church of the Master was formed in 1908 in Los Angeles, California, and was incorporated a decade later. While UCM has always emphasized all of the manifestations of Spiritual Gifts, its earliest



attention was focused on the gifts of healing and the healing ministries, as well as the gifts of wisdom and knowledge, prophecy and the discerning of spirits.

Within the last eighty years, UCM has established ministries and churches throughout the United States, with notable concentrations in California and Florida. A few churches have been chartered outside the United States.

The Universal Church of the Master, by its name, recognizes and emphasizes not only the personal mastery that Jesus Christ exhibited over his physical environment, but also the spiritual gifts or powers that He demonstrated during his three years of public ministry.

It is the position of UCM that this same mastery and these same spiritual gifts can be and have been demonstrated by far lesser persons than Jesus Christ, the Great Master. They base this on their interpretation of John 14:12. Therefore, with proper study, self-discipline and training, any truly sincere and devout person can receive and manifest these same spiritual gifts or powers, particularly as outlined in I Corinthians 12. Hence, UCM is appropriately described as a church based upon metaphysical principles, that is, spiritual laws which are beyond and behind physical appearances.

UCM recognizes that Truth, as such, issues forth from a vast spectrum of sources and, therefore, discourages the establishment of narrow creeds, dogmas, and tenets, holding that rigid adherence to strict dogmas and doctrines would restrict each individual who must seek and follow his or her own individual and unique path of spiritual growth. Rigid dogmas severely limit the free exercise of reason for those seeking spiritual truth. UCM seeks to promote the essential Christian principles as set forth in the following statements:

- (1) We believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.
- (2) We believe that all phenomena that occur within the realms of nature, both physical and spiritual, are manifestations of infinite intelligence.
- (3) We believe that true religion is discovered by understanding the laws of nature and of God, and by living in harmony therewith.
- (4) We believe that personal identity and individual memory continue after the transitional experience called death.
- (5) We believe that communication with those in the unseen or ethereal world is a fully proven, scientifically demonstrated fact.
- (6) We believe that the Golden Rule, "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye also unto them," embodies the essence of morality.
- (7) We believe that every individual is morally self responsible and that happiness flows from obedience to the laws of nature and of God, and that unhappiness and misery follow from disobedience to these laws.
- (8) We believe that genuine improvement and the reformation of the human soul are always possible in this world and in the next.

- (9) We believe that the potential for prophecy exists in our times as it did in biblical days.
- (10) We believe that the universe, as a spiritual system expressing divine wisdom, makes possible the eternal progress of the aspiring soul who loves truth and goodness.

Beyond the Holy Bible, authoritative literature used as the basic materials for UCM's teachings includes A New Text of Spiritual Philosophy and Religion, and The Minister's Guide and Service Book, both by B. J. Fitzgerald (second president of UCM), and The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ by Levi Dowling.

UCM seeks to foster the ideal of human brotherhood under the fatherhood of the Supreme Deity, the one Ever-Living God. All men are brothers, and when they hurt one another they hurt themselves. When one segment of the human family is held back, the progress of all is retarded. Nothing will speed the progress of mankind more than the practical implementation of the Golden Rule in all areas of human endeavor – in political and sociological realms as well as in religious expressions and personal conduct.

UCM charters churches and issues ministerial credentials. Credentials are only issued to:

- Licensed Ministers who have qualified as student ministers;
- Healer-Practitioners who have qualified for the healing ministry and have otherwise qualified as student ministers;
- Ordained Ministers who have been granted the full powers of the ministry. Individual church charters are issued to ordained UCM ministers.

The charter authorizes the minister to organize and operate a church or some other religious institution subordinate to the requirements of the corporate Board of Trustees.

An Ordained Minister is authorized to perform all of the religious and temporal duties recognized as those of a minister of the gospel, including, but not limited to:

- Teaching the tenets and objectives of this corporate church;
- giving counsel and spiritual assistance;
- delivering prophesy;
- warning and exhorting any individual for their spiritual and temporal good;
- performing marriage ceremonies, baptisms, and burial services;
- and administering spiritual and divine healing.

There are no specific worship requirements. Most services follow a conventional Protestant service format, with the inclusion of healing, prophecy and messages from spirit.

**GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:**

Fitzgerald, B.J. A New Text of Spiritual Philosophy and Religion. San Jose, CA: UCM, 1954.  
The Minister's Guide and Service Book. Marina Del Rey, CA: DeVorss & Co, 1955.  
Dowling, Levi. Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ. London: L.N. Fowler Co., 14th ed., 1916.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

Rev. Birdie Peterson, President  
Universal Church of the Master  
501 Washington Street  
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Additional notes:

**UNIVERSAL LIFE CHURCH**

The Universal Life Church was born out of the vision of its founder, Kirby J. Hensley. Hensley, born in 1911, was a self educated Baptist minister who was deeply influenced by his reading in world religion. He began to conceive of a church that would, on the one hand, offer complete freedom of religion, and could, on the other hand, bring all people of all religions together, instead of separating them. Out of his growing conviction, Hensley founded the Universal Life Church in 1959.

The Universal Life Church has only one belief. They believe in that which is right and in every person's right to interpret what is right. The Universal Life Church has no creed or authoritative book such as a Bible. Those wishing to learn about the Church can obtain its periodical Universal Life and other materials that it publishes from its international headquarters. No specific ethical guidelines except to do "what is right."

The Universal Life Church has no specific holidays, though local congregations celebrate a wide variety of them. There are two conventions each year in the spring and in the fall, at which the members and ministers meet for celebration and to conduct business.

As you might expect, the Universal Life Church has a very loose structure. The ULC ordains anyone who wishes by presenting them with a certificate and a set of instructions on how to form a congregation. Each member-minister relates directly to The Board of Directors at International Headquarters.

Naturally, congregations are completely autonomous. The Church operates the Universal Life University located in Modesto, CA. The university offers courses by mail as well as classes for resident students.

Ministers ordained by the Universal Life Church may perform any of the functions normally associated with the clergy, including the conducting of weddings, funerals, etc. Specific roles are determined by the minister and the local congregation.

Group worship is not required, but local congregations are required to hold regular meetings. The Universal Life Church allows its congregations complete freedom of Worship. The Universal Life Church is open and accepting of people of all religions. It is opposed only to those religions that attempt to deny religious freedom. Any minister in the ULC can ordain new members.

#### GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

Hensley, Kirby J. A New Life--Do You Want It. Modesto, CA: Universal Life Church, 1983.  
 The Buffer Zone, A History of the Universal Life Church Modesto, CA: Universal Life Church, 1986.  
 The Condensed Bible and Testament of Today. Modesto, CA: Universal Life Church  
 A Textbook about the ULC. Modesto, CA: Universal Life Church

These books are available from ULC International Headquarters.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Lida G. Hensley, Sec. of the Board  
 601 3rd St.  
 Modesto, CA 95351

#### WICCA

Witchcraft; Goddess worshipers; Earth Religion, Old Religion, Druidism, Shamanism. Note: All of these groups have some basic similarities and many surface differences of expression with Wicca. In fact, there are an estimated 250,000 Wiccans in the United States alone.

Wicca is a reconstruction of the Nature worship of tribal Europe, strongly influenced by the living nature worship traditions of tribal peoples in other parts of the world. The works of such early twentieth century writers as Margaret Murray, Robert Graves and Gerald B. Gardner began the renewal of interest in the Old

Religion. After the repeal of the anti Witchcraft laws in Britain in 1951, Gardner publicly declared himself a Witch and began to gather a group of students and worshipers.

In 1962, two of his students Raymond and Rosemary Buckland (religious names: Lady Rowen and Robot), emigrated to the United States and began teaching Gardnerian Witchcraft here (see that listing above).

At the same time, other groups of people became interested through reading books by Gardner and others. Many covens were spontaneously formed, using rituals created from a combination of research and individual inspiration. These self-created covens are today regarded as just as valid as those who can trace a "lineage" of teaching back to England.

In 1975, a very diverse group of covens who wanted to secure the legal protections and benefits of church status formed Covenant of the Goddess (CoG), which is incorporated in the State of California and recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. CoG does not represent all, or even a majority of Wiccans. A coven or an individual need not be affiliated with CoG in order to validly practice the religion. But CoG is the largest single public Wiccan organization, and it is cross-Traditional (i.e. what we might call non-denominational).

Wiccans worship the Sacred as immanent in Nature, often personified as Mother Earth and Father Sky. As polytheists, they may use many other names for Deity. Individuals will often choose Goddesses or Gods from any of the world's pantheons whose stories are particularly inspiring and use those Deities as a focus for personal devotions. Similarly, covens will use particular Deity names as a group focus, and these are often held secret by the groups.

It is very important to be aware that Wiccans do not in any way worship or believe in "Satan," "the Devil," or any similar entities. They point out that "Satan" is a symbol of rebellion against and inversion of the Christian and Jewish traditions. Wiccans do not revile the Bible. They simply regard it as one among many of the world's mythic systems, less applicable than some to their core values, but still deserving just as much respect as any of the others.

Most Wiccan groups also practice magic, by which they mean the direction and use of "psychic energy," those natural but invisible forces which surround all living things. Some members spell the word "magick," to distinguish it from sleight of hand entertainments.

Wiccans employ such means as dance, chant, creative visualization and hypnosis to focus and direct psychic energy for the purpose of healing, protecting and aiding members in various endeavors. Such assistance is also extended to non-members upon request.

Many, but not all, Wiccans believe in reincarnation. Some take this as a literal description of what happens to people when they die. For others, it is a symbolic model that helps them deal with the cycles and changes within this life. Neither reincarnation nor any other literal belief can be used as a test of an individual's validity as a member of the Old Religion.

Most groups have a handwritten collection of rituals and lore, known as a Book of Shadows. Part of the religious education of a new member will be to hand copy this book for him or herself. Over the years, as inspiration provides, new material will be added. Normally, access to these books is limited to initiated members of the religion.

The core ethical statement of Wicca, called the "Wiccan Rede" states "an it harm none, do what you will." The Rede fulfills the same function as does the "Golden Rule" for Jews and Christians; all other ethical

teachings are considered to be elaborations and applications of the Rede. It is a statement of situational ethics, emphasizing at once the individual's responsibility to avoid harm to others and the widest range of personal autonomy in "victimless" activities. Wicca has been described as having a "high-choice" ethic.

Because of the basic Nature orientation of the religion, many Wiccans regard all living things as Sacred, and to show a special concern for ecological issues. For this reason, individual conscience will lead some to take a pacifist position. Some are vegetarians. Others will feel that, as Nature's Way includes self-defense, they can fight and even kill, if necessary. By the same token, many Wiccans see the cycle of life and death, to eat and be eaten, as the norm of nature and thus partake of animal foods.

Social forces generally do not yet allow Witches to publicly declare their religious faith without fear of reprisals such as loss of job, child-custody challenges, ridicule, etc. Prejudice against Wiccans is often the result of public confusion between Witchcraft and Satanism. In fact, Wiccans in the military, especially those who may be posted in countries perceived to be particularly intolerant, will often have their dog tags read "No Religious Preference." Concealment is a traditional Wiccan defense against persecution.

Wiccans celebrate eight festivals, called "Sabbats," as a means of attunement to the seasonal rhythms of Nature. These are:

- January 31 (Called Oimele, Brigit, or February Eve),
- March 21 (Ostara or Spring Equinox),
- April 30 (Bulmetin or May Eve),
- June 22 (Midsummer, Litha or Summer Solstice),
- July 31 (Lunacy or Lammas),
- September 21 (Hanest, Mabon or Autumn Equinox),
- October 31 (Samhain, Sowyn or Hallows) and
- December 21 (Yule or Winter Solstice.)

Some groups find meetings within a few days of those dates to be acceptable; others require the precise date. In addition, most groups will meet for worship at each Full Moon, and many will also meet on the New Moon. Meetings for religious study will often be scheduled at any time convenient to the members, and rituals can be scheduled whenever there is a need (i.e. for a healing).

Ritual jewelry is particularly important to many Wiccans. In addition to being a symbol of religious dedication, these talismans are often blessed by the coven back home and felt to carry the coven's protective and healing energy.

Most Wiccans meet with a coven, a small group of people. Each coven is autonomous. Most are headed by a High Priestess, often with the assistance of a High Priest. Some are headed by a High Priestess or High Priest without a partner, and some regard themselves as a gathering of equals.

Covens can be of mixed gender, or all female or male, depending on the preferences of the members. Every initiate is considered to be a priestess or priest. Most covens are small. Thirteen is the traditional maximum number of members, although not an absolute limit.

There are many distinct "Traditions" of Wicca, just as there are many denominations within Christianity. The spectrum of Wiccan practice can be described as ranging from "traditional" to "eclectic," with Traditions, covens, and individuals fitting anywhere within that range. A typical difference would be that more traditional

groups would tend to follow a set liturgy, whereas eclectic groups would emphasize immediate inspiration in worship. (We might say “High Church” as opposed to “Church Growth.”)

While many Wiccans meet in a coven, there are also a number of solitaires. These are individuals who choose to practice their faith alone. They may have been initiated in a coven or self initiated. They will join with the other Wiccans to celebrate the festivals or to attend the various regional events organized by the larger community.

Within a traditional coven, the High Priestess, usually assisted by her High Priest, serves both as leader in the rituals and as teacher and counselor for coven members and unaffiliated Pagans. Eclectic covens tend to share leadership more equally.

Some, but not all, Wiccan covens worship in the nude ("skyclad") as a sign of attunement with Nature. Most, but not all, Wiccan covens bless and share a cup of wine as part of the ritual. Almost all Wiccans use an individual ritual knife (an "athame") to focus and direct personal energy. Covens often also have ritual swords to direct the energy of the group. These tools, like all other ritual tools, are highly personal and will never leave the possession of the owner.

Other commonly used ritual tools include a bowl of water, a bowl of salt, a censer with incense, a disk with symbols engraved on it (a "pentacle"), statues or art work representing the Goddess and God, and candles. Most groups will bless and share bread or cookies along with the wine. All of these items are used in individual, private worship as well as in congregate rituals.

Wiccans do not proselytize and generally resent those who do. They believe that no one Path to the Sacred is right for all people, and see their own religious pattern as only one among many that are equally worthy. Wiccans claim to respect all religions that foster honor and compassion in their adherents, and expect the same respect. Members are encouraged to learn about all faiths, and are permitted to attend the services of other religions, should they desire to do so.

#### GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

Adler, Margot. *Drawing Down the Moon*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986.

For more specific information about eclectic Wicca, see:

Starhawk. *The Spiral Dance*. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.

For more specific information about traditional Wicca, see:

Farrar, Janet, and Stewart Farrar. *Eight Sabbats for Witches*. London: Robert Hale, 1981.  
*The Witches' Way*. London: Robert Hale, 1984.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Terri Morgan  
 829 Lynnhaven Parkway 114-198

Virginia Beach, VA 23452

Additional notes:

## **Epilogue –**

### **Already Over the Wall and Into Our Backyards!**

Cochise County, and especially the remote areas of Coronado Monument, Coronado National Forest, and Fort Huachuca are a hot-bed of pagan activity, mostly of the Wiccan variety.



In just the past couple of years various civilian and military agencies have discovered numerous sites where witch covens have met and held their rituals. At the suggestion of some of my congregation members, I have been asked to identify and comment on these sites, and any possible danger these groups may pose to the inhabitants of the area, both human and otherwise.

Below is an example of a Wiccan “high place” in the Coronado Forest.



Here is another one near Fort Huachuca.



This pentagram and others like it were found surrounding the Coronado site.



This symbol was found at four separate meeting sites around the county.



As we all know, Pi is the ratio between the circumference and diameter of a circle. It seems that all people with a written language, no matter at what point in history, have had at least a fundamental knowledge of Pi. Pi can also be rendered as 3.14. Making the number more mysterious is that no one has ever been able to locate a repeating pattern in the decimal sequence. Despite having taken pi out to literally hundreds and thousands of places, no pattern has emerged. Thus, it is considered to be a truly unique, infinite, and therefore transcendent number. With Pi the pagan can witness the Macrocosm in the Microcosm; the Infinite within the Finite. It also signifies the mathematical substance to the role of the circle as a symbol of Infinity. The circle is roundly regarded as the single most powerful symbol of all. It is Infinity and the Universe; Alpha and Omega; Beginning and End; Creation and Destruction; Destiny, reincarnation, and Fortune. The circle stands for the sun and moon, the zodiac, power and protection, the crown of kings, the tiara of popes, and halo of Christian saints. It is the only single-line diagram that Witches use to mark the bounds of their sacred, safe, space. In this way, bracelets and rings gain greater significance, especially when and where they are worn and with what inscribed on them. The circle can also represent the eye and, by extension, an omnipotent god. Divine Energy, it is said, always flows in a circular form.

Many Witches also incorporate "calling the corners" into their rituals of setting aside a sacred space. Casting a circle is ritually setting aside a certain space using a symbol that is universal, like Pi. Calling the corners, sometimes called "squaring the circle", orients the circle to the four directions and specifies that the circle and those using the circle are in a specific place upon the earth which spins in space. By calling the corners a Witch is saying that the sacred space is not just a place set apart from the rest of the Creation, but remains an integral part of the whole. It is this place where North is in that particular direction and where one part of the circle is rising, the West, and another part is falling, the East. Thus calling the corners is symbolic of the connection that the circle and the Witch inside the circle have with all of Creation. Calling the corners also has other symbolisms besides those resulting from its usage of the four directions. For some it is connected to the idea of the four elements: air, fire, water, and earth. Some "Christian" Witches invoke the four archangels: Gabriel, Michael, Raphael and Uriel. Others find it helpful to use the symbols from the four suits of the Tarot: Pentacles, Swords, Wands, and Cups. Finally some have four various animal spirit totems associated with the corners. Then of course there are those who combine some or all of the above associations.

Lastly and finally, let's bring it REALLY close to home!

(From Witchvox.com)

## Nevada: Adult Run Groups and Organizations -

There are presently 38 Listings for this Area.

<u>City</u>	<u>Coven/Group/Org</u>	<u>Spiritual Path</u>
Reno	Sisters in Spirit - Vox Sponsor	A Women's Spirituality Circle
Black Rock Desert near Gerlach	Nonfluffy Pagans on the Playa at Burning Man	Eclectic, open to Historical Reconstruct
Carson City	The Pagan Connection	Wide range of traditions.
Elko	Pagan Friends of NV	Old Religion
Elko, NV	Pagan Friends of Nevada	Eclectic
Henderson	Mystikal Explorations	Eclectic
Henderson	Groovy Beat	Eclectic Drum Circle
Henderson	The Coven of the Willow Tree	Pagan/Wiccan
Henderson/Las Vegas	Henderson Witch's Meetup	Paganism/Witchcraft
Las Vegas	The Mages Guild	Celtic
Las Vegas	Sunnasfolk	Asatru
Las Vegas	Tveggja Hrafnar Kindreds	Asatru - Northern Paths
Las Vegas	Las Vegas Pagan Information Exchange (LVPIE)	all paths
Las Vegas	The Temple of the Inner Circle	Gardnerian - Alexandrian Wicca
Las Vegas	Serpentine Splendour Lodge, Ordo Templi Orientis	Thelemic
Las Vegas	Grove of the WhisperingStones	Sidhe Tuatha De Danaan - Brid
Las Vegas	Temple of Nuit Aset Bast	Hermetic - Qabala - Tamerian - Thelemic
Las Vegas	Grove of The Sacred Spring	Eclectic/Celtic
Las Vegas	Druid Order of the Sacred Grove	Reconstructionist Druidism
Las Vegas	Coven of the Sacred Sands	Basis Celtic - Eclectic
Las Vegas	Epona	Celtic
Las Vegas	the Las Vegas pagan Meet up group	Paganism
Las Vegas	Circle Of Witches	All and Egyptian Mysteries
Las Vegas	Temple Per Neheh Egyptian Temple/Coven	Egyptian Mysteries (WitchCraft)

Las Vegas	Nox Noctis Domus (Haven of Kindred Spirits Vamp & Kin House)	all beliefs welcome
Las Vegas	Haven of Kindred Spirits, Inc.	Open
Las Vegas	Theoretical Nondenominational Pagans	Theoretical
Las Vegas	Agave Spirit Grove	Eclectic
Las Vegas	Las Vegas Pagan Meetup	Eclectic
Las Vegas	The House of Ma'at	paganism, vampyrsim
Las Vegas	Society for a Modern Pagan Approach	Modern, Un-Fluffed Paganism
Las Vegas	Children of the Craft	Eclectic
Las Vegas	Las Vegas Pagan and Witches Meetup	Open
Las Vegas, Nevada	Circle Of Witches	Witchcraft
Las Vegas	The Grove of the Green Woods	Celtic Reconstruction/Druidism
Reno	Ring of Akasha	Various
Reno	Pagan Alliance of Nevada	Pagan
V C Highlands	Crystal Rose Coven	Alexandrian Wicca

In addition to these there were 13 “family,” 5 teen, 4 college, and 1 military coven listed, and a total of 10 registered and certified “clergy.”

So, gentlemen, the pagans, or neo-pagans are no longer just coming over the wall of Christian civilization . . . they’re already here! Their numbers are growing daily, especially among the most isolated and vulnerable in our society. Also, they are becoming more and more bold and expressive. They are demanding their “rights,” and insisting on equal treatment along side all the other recognized religions of the world. And while they do not openly carry on active outreach, and frown upon any among them who do, still, they ready, willing, and more than able to watch for weakness among any in our flocks, and steal them away into the clutches of Satan.

Further Acknowledgements:

Websites -

<http://www.beyondweird.com> (you name it, its there)

<http://www.godchecker.com> (currently lists over 2,850 deities)

<http://www.illuminati-news.com> (the conspiracy connection to the occult)

<http://www.nachtkabarett.com> (Marilyn Manson, Art, and the Occult)

<http://www.odinsvolk.ca> (everything Viking and Saxon)

<http://www.wicca.com> (known as “The Witches Voice,” it has everything!)

<http://pagan.wikia.com> (basically a “Wikipedia” for pagans, and quite useful)

Finally, many thanks to those who assisted in gathering much of the information for this paper.

Interviews -

Doug Griswold – NETCARE LAN/WAN Engineer, Raymond W. Bliss Army Health Center













Lorraine Griffin – CIV USA IMCOM, Fort Huachuca, AZ

Kevin Jamka – Deputy Sheriff, Cochise County Sheriff’s Department, Sierra Vista, AZ







Josephine Moore – Outreach Ministries Director, US Army Garrison, Office of the Installation  
Chaplain, Fort Huachuca, AZ

### **Symbols to watch for:**



















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Binding Spell	Jizo	Omamori	Skull bowl	Orans	Corn Dolly
					
Yab-Yum	Web of Wyrd	Cha'i	Peace	Dearinth	Miraculous Medal







### Music and Pop Culture:













					
"Cross of Questioning"	"The Artist"	Heartagram	Zoso	Sigil of Lucifer	Triquetra

### Druid & Celtic Symbols







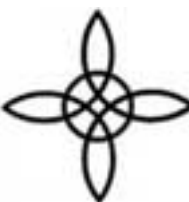



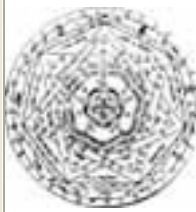









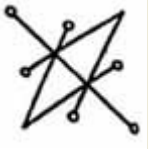



					
Spiral	Sheela-na-gig	Cernunnos	Triquetra	Celtic Knot	Celtic Tree of Life
					
Druid	Green man	Claddagh	Rude Man	Celtic Cross	Brigid's cross
					
Z-Rod	Triskele	Pictish	Shield Knot	Welsh Dragon	Celtic knot

### Christian & Gnostic Symbols:

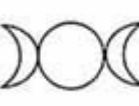
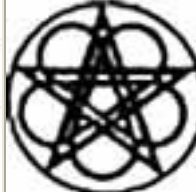
					
Christian	Jerusalem	Cross	Jesus Fish	Triquetra	








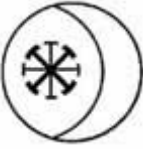


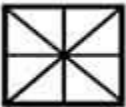

Ankh	Cross	Lorraine	(Ichthus)		Orthodox
					
Reverse cross	Anchor fish	Alexamenos	Serpent cross	Sacred Heart	Christogram
					
IHS	Alpha & Omega	Chi Rho	Crucifix	Messianic	Halo

**Magick, Occult, Satanic Symbols:**




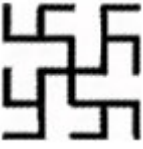












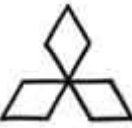

					
Abraxas	Pentagram	Hexagram	Chaos	Mendes Goat	Caduceus
					
Witch's Knot	Necronomicon	Hermetic Seal	Unicursal hexagram	Sigil of Ameth	Baphomet
					
Mark of the Beast	Hand of Glory	GD Lamem	Reverse cross	Melusine	Monad
					
Babalon Seal	Cagliostro Seal	Seal of Saturn	Sulfur	Ouroboros	Kabbalah

**Wiccan/ Pagan Symbols:**

					
Hecate's Wheel	Triquetra	Pentacle	Green man	Triple	


















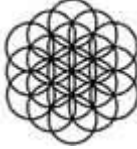
				Goddess	Pentacle
					
Witch's runes	Cauldron	Horned God	Triple crescent	Elven star	Athame
					
Greenman	Seax	Boline	Besom	Witch's Sign	Horned God

### Norse, Asatru, Romuva, and Eastern Europe:










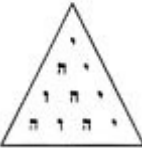


					
Romuva	Odin's horn	Valknut	Thunder Cross	Shield Knot	Helm of Awe
					
Hugin and Munin	Mjolnir	Runes	Sleipnir	Gungnir	Solar cross
					
Irminsul	Jumis	Nidstang	Yggdrasil	Triceps	Wolf's Cross

### Egyptian & Kemetic Pagan Symbols:















					
Uraeus	Winged disk	Ankh	Isis throne	Eye of Ra/Horus	Scarab
					
Lotus	Horus	infinity	Djed	Maat	Sistrum
					
Abraxas	Nuit	Hathor	Ba bird	Akhet	Flower of Life













**Ancient Greek, Roman Symbols:**

					
Mano Fico	Gorgon	Caduceus	Labrys	Minotaur	Willendorf
					
Fasces	Orphic egg	labrynth	Tetraktys	Hygeia	Lauburu













**Assyrian/Babylonian, Phoenician, Syrian, and Zoroastrian:**

					
Inanna's Knot	Assyrian sun disk	Ishtar seal	Kerub	Shamash seal	Farohar
					
"Dagon"	Mesopotamia	Simurgh	Kerub	Tetragrammaton	Tiamat






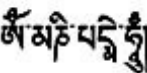






**Islam, Judaism, Sufism, & Baha'i:**

					
Star & Crescent	Magen David	Hamsa	Allah	Sufi	YHVH
					
Druze Star	Baha'i	Menorah	Ringstone	Messianic	Aaronic Blessing













### African, Rasta, Vodou & Santeria:

					
Akua'ba	Veve	Eleggua	Lion of Judah	Agwe	Chiwara
					
Riscados	Rasta	Adinkra	Gya Name	Ethiopian Cross	Adinkra






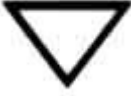
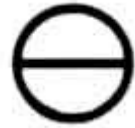





### Taoist, Shinto, Buddhist, and Asian cultural symbols:

					
Maneke Neko	Buddha's Eyes	Torii Gate	I Ching	Endless knot	Om Mani Padme hum
					
Enso	Buddha Footprints	Tomoe	Yin Yang	Manji	Ba Gua

### Hindu, Jain, & Sikh Symbols:

 Kalash	 Garuda	 Khanda	 Vel of Murugan	 Chakra	 Dharma
 Jain Hand	 Shiva	 Tattwas	 Omkar	 Jainism	 Yantra





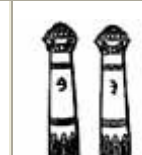







**Alchemical & Astrological Symbols:**

 Scorpio	 Venus	 Mars	 Zodiac	 Greek Cross	 Water
 Alchemical salt	 Fire	 Capricornus	 Sun	 Red King	 Pluto








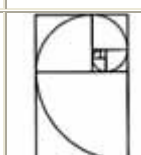

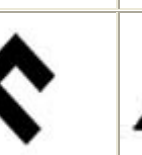
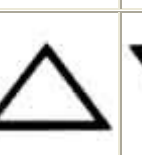
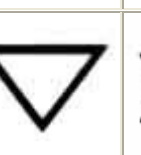
**Shamanic (Native American, Aboriginal, Neolithic):**

 Wasgo	 Shaman of Trois Freres	 Kokopelli	 Man in the Maze	 Hunab Ku	 Dreamcatcher
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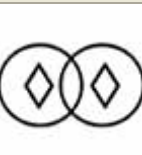


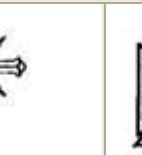








**Masonic, Fraternal Organizations:**


















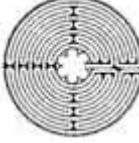


					
Skull & bones	Compass	Eye	Point in Circle	Pillars	Beehive
					
A.A.	Cipher	All Seeing Eye	47th Proposition	Double Eagle	Eastern Star

**Da Vinci Code Symbols:**

					
Vitruvian Man	Fleur de Lis	Rose	Priory of Sion	Ankh	Phi
					
Greek Cross	Golden Mean	Jumis	Fire	Water	Hexagram

**Miscellaneous:**

					
Spiritual Technology	Op. Thetan	Scientology Cross	Scientology	Unity Cross	Atlantis Cross
					
Raelian	Mu	Raelian	Choku Rei	Priory of Sion	Process Church

					
Swastika	Black Sun	Neo Nazi	Hand of Eris	Sacred Chao	Unitarians
					
Romany	Barbury Crop Circle	Healer	Culture	Unicorn	Theosophy
					
"Grail Cross"	Unification	Glastonbury	Death	Bee	labrynth
					
Solomon's knot	Eckankar				