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POST SCRIPT

Special Note On Witch Trails of Salem

My paper was finished on 2 May 2001 but the following experience has greatly changed my view of and feelings about the Wicca community and the role the Church played in the burning of innocent people during the time of the Inquisition and in Salem, Massachusetts in the late 1600s.

July 2001 – PBS just aired a special on the Salem witch experiences. Dr. Linda Caporael, a behavioral psychologist, has been doing research for years on the witch trails and, it seems, she has uncovered the facts of rye poisoning from a fungus called ergot. Her extensive research shows that this substance can produce LSD like hallucinations when it is ingested. The fungus grows on rye plants when the spring and summer are especially damp. Her research indicated that the summers of 1691-92 in Salem were exactly what the ergot needed to invade the rye. Connected research and an illness that occurred in a town in France in 1951 where infected persons displayed the symptoms described in the Salem trials, seem to confirm that ergot was present in Salem where it caused severe convulsions, hallucinations including that of blood flowing from walls, people turning into animals and prickly sensations all over the body. The doctors at the time in 1692 had no idea about the fungus and so were forced to choose a label of “bewitchment” for the disease of the people. The symptoms of the people in France matched those described in Salem. 100 years earlier, circa 1590, in Europe the same symptoms were reported in a location where people were described as being “bewitched.”

After seeing this special I was transformed. My worldview shifted. I don't know what else to say about that right now. I feel even sadder now, than before I heard of this research finding, for those who died then – from the illness itself and from the ignorance of those who had no science to help them. Sad also that the spirit was blamed and for what we lost as a result. In another way, I'm pleased to know that it was a disease. We can manage a disease now with antibiotics and the fear of “bewitchment” does not have to take hold.

I imagine that this news should mean something to the Wiccan community – I haven't seen any word of response from them on it however.

Chaplain Linda Olson, USAF

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## **PART I ☞ Introduction**

### **Process**

The study of Wicca that I have undertaken over the past ten months has been eye-opening and incredibly interesting. The religion is complex and the notions are thought-provoking. To think of people in this day and age believing in magic and spells seemed a bit out of sync with our scientific age. But the need for personal power, a source of strength beyond oneself, and connection with others, is ageless in a world where we know that we are vulnerable to each other, and the whims of nature and will ultimately leave this life through death. For those who follow the path of Wicca, there is tremendous comfort, which they take from the presence of each other and the Earth herself. The imminence of “Mother Earth” makes Wicca a very concrete religious belief system at a moment in time when humanity finds itself awash in the intellect and non-concrete world of electronics, genetically engineered foods and a pace of life that can be dizzying. Ecological concerns also serve to make Wicca an appealing way of life.

In preparing and researching this document on Wicca I found I had to tend carefully to my own spiritual life. There were times when I was swayed by my readings and other times when I knew directly that I was in disagreement with the tenets of the Wiccan faith. When I first decided to visit The Witches Museum in Salem, Massachusetts and speak to real Witches, I felt fearful. I was confronted by my own inner warnings about witchcraft based upon the teachings I have had from scripture and from my own family’s advice, as I was growing up and even recent warnings from Christian friends who were wary of the search upon which I was embarking. All of this personal process served to remind me to take care of my own spiritual life and remain grounded in my own Christian faith. To assist myself with my own process, I have sought to look at Wicca as a worldview perspective rather than religious truth that I might feel compelled to argue against. In doing this, I was able to overcome my fears and see the faith as a workable practice for those who use it.

I would encourage each Chaplain who reads this paper to also be focused on his or her own spiritual center. It is out of a grounded faith that each of us comes to be involved with caring for other members of the military community. If you choose to read further to understand the tenets of Wicca, you may want to meet

with a spiritual director of your own faith to follow you in the process. To be pastoral to the “other,” one must also be pastoral to him or her self as a caregiver.

In preparing this paper I wanted to create a practical document that anyone could use to inform oneself and to teach others. To do this, the paper is broken into four parts. The first describes the mechanics of the research; the second describes the legal demands of the Chaplaincy to ensure free exercise of religion according to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This requirement is a given and leads us to the awareness that in order to accommodate a group we must know something about them. The third section then begins the sharing of definitions about Wicca community and pastoral concerns. Finally, in the fourth section, I have designed a curriculum outline that can be used in a classroom setting.

#### **Issues to be Addressed:**

The central question and purpose of my paper is focused on the fact that Chaplains must accommodate the religious needs of Wiccans within the Air Force. “Serving the Stranger in Our Midst” is written to educate and assist in the formation of Chaplains’ thinking and response to Wicca practitioners in the military. To do this I provide some historical information about witchcraft, facts about current practices in Wicca (witchcraft), then look at some of the issues faced by our military members who are Wiccan, and finally provide some pastoral approaches to meeting their needs and our obligations for religious accommodation within the Air Force.

#### **Pastoral Issues and Concerns for the Chaplains:**

While these concerns cannot be *fully* addressed within the confines of this paper, nor under my own authority as a Chaplain, I raise them here for our mutual awareness and consideration. In a classroom setting with a group of selected Chaplains the issues could be raised for the same purpose of awareness and to address those concerns that can be corrected. I have included this list under the section of discussion questions for Chaplains.

- There are no Wicca Chaplains serving in the U.S. military.

- There is expressed fear from some military members regarding the practices and beliefs of the Wiccans.
- The Air Force seems to have a growing population of practicing Wiccans who are “underground” and who may be fearful of discrimination.
- Current parishioners within the Air Force community chapels may react negatively to accommodation provided for Wiccans.
- What will chaplains need to do for themselves to meet their own spiritual needs?

### **Research and Methodology**

While my research is not exhaustive, it is extensive. I have looked at the work of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century leaders of the Wiccan community including Starhawk, and Scott Cunningham, 1970-Present, and Gerald Gardner and Margaret Murray, 1930-1950’s, as well as many other lesser-known writers on the subject, who are included in the partially annotated bibliography at the end of this paper.

To more thoroughly study the history of witchcraft I traveled to Cornell University to visit the Kroch Library of Rare Books and Manuscripts to look at the 3,000-title collection on witchcraft. This collection dates from 1489 to the present. Cornell University’s first President, Dr. Andrew Dickson White (1832-1918), brought this amazing assemblage of books to Cornell with the intention of having the works available as proof of the witch hunts, documenting the church’s role in that evil time, clarifying the actual practices of witchcraft, and highlighting the need for science and religion to dialogue in the hope that with awareness no such horror would occur again in human history.

In addition to researching books I searched the World Wide Web via the Internet and obtained and reviewed a set of video tapes on Women and Spirituality, which contain information about witchcraft past and present along with a focus on the belief in the Goddess.

Conversations with Wicca practitioners were kept within the confines of public meetings such as attendance at the Witch’s Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, and a presentation and discussion within the Women’s Inter-religious Action Group (WIAG) at Boston University.

In addition, I have attended a celebration with members of the Boston Wicca community on May Day, or Beltane, which was held at Boston Common on the evening of 1 May 2001.

**The audience for this paper may include the following:**

1. Instructors at Boston University
2. Students at Boston University
3. Pagan / Wiccan groups / leaders
4. Chaplains / Endorsers / Officers / other military Chaplains
5. Pastors, Priests, Rabbis
6. Universities

**Outcome:**

The findings of my research, case studies, curriculum design, reading list, video tapes and human resources provide a practical means to enlighten Air Force Chaplains to make informed, and appropriate decisions for accommodation of Wiccan troops stateside and deployed in compliance with the Chief of Chaplains and the Department of Defense Directive 1300.17, Accommodation of Religious Practices within the Military Services.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense Directive 1300.7, Position Paper on the Free Exercise of Religion and Requirements for Religious Accommodation 3.1 can be found in this paper in Appendix I

## **PART II ✎ Requirements of the Chaplaincy**

### **Chaplains are Sworn to Defend the Constitution**

Given the fact that we as Chaplains swear to protect and defend the Constitution, we must, by this obligation, look at the needs of the practitioners of all faiths. Accommodation of religious belief falls under the First Amendment. It reads: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceable to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” Accommodation of another person’s right to freely practice her or his faith does not imply agreement with that practice or that faith. Accommodation means that we, as Chaplains, have met our Air Force and constitutional obligations.

The Air Force recognizes all major religious groups and some individually distinctive groups, which include Wicca. These religious groups are described in the U.S. Army Chaplains Handbook which is used by all branches of the military Chaplaincy. Recent statistics show that Wiccans may in fact be the fastest growing religious group in America.<sup>2</sup> There is no estimate as to the number of Wiccans within our military community since they are often not self-revealing due to fear of and actual discrimination. The central “clearing house” organization for autonomous Wiccans is the Covenant of the Goddess. Their recent poll of World Wide Web users and Wiccans who knew of the survey indicates that they count as many as 768,400 Wiccans and Pagans together.<sup>3</sup> They state that the majority of witches and pagans are between the ages of 18 and 39 which makes them a very young group; 86% are registered voters and 71% are women. The statistics they show for military members show only that there are more women than men who call themselves Wiccans.

As Chaplains we are called upon to understand who these individuals are on the basis of the beliefs they hold sacred and we are bound by our own oath of allegiance to the Air Force as well as our denominational connections and personal religious and ethical convictions. To help the reader understand

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<sup>2</sup> See Chart and information in Appendix IV

<sup>3</sup> [www.CovenantoftheGoddess.com](http://www.CovenantoftheGoddess.com) Statistics on numbers of Wiccans in the military.

what this entails, the three official documents in Appendix I, II and III should be read in order to understand fully our requirements. The following excerpt is taken from a position paper on the free exercise of religion through worship in Air Force Chapels. The quote begins in section 4, dealing with pluralism and a request from a group for accommodation, highlighted in blue. The section essentially says that to say “No,” to someone seeking accommodation under the auspices of the Chapel and Chaplains at a given base is not an acceptable answer. Personal acceptance or rejection, or fear and misunderstanding of a religious belief are not the criteria for making an accommodation decision. It simply must *be* done. A request by a Wiccan would most likely fall under this section of the regulations since they are, at this point, without Chaplains and without an endorsing agency, though there are two organizations which serve as umbrella / clearing house groups for Wicca. Those are: The Covenant of the Goddess and The Council of American Witches.<sup>4</sup> The Covenant of the Goddess was “incorporated as a nonprofit religious organization in 1975 and serves as an umbrella organization of cooperating autonomous Witchcraft congregations / covens with the authority to confer credentials on its qualified clergy”.<sup>5</sup>

“4. Pluralism and the demands of accommodation make it impossible to state a singular canon for determining the acceptability of a non-chaplain to lead a worship service. The following is offered as a deliberate way to address this issue.

a. First, consult the standards and guidance provided by the religious endorsing agencies recognized by the Department of Defense. Many endorsing agencies are quite specific in authorizing lay leaders. When using denominational/faith group titles for worship services, confirm that the worship leaders are, in fact, recognized. This has legal as well as theological implications. If the request comes from an individual or a group not having an endorsing agency recognized by the Department of Defense:

b. Consider if the request requires authorization through licensing or other similar means. This is applicable to worship, which is particular to groups or para-church organizations that have copyright claims to names, titles or resources. Be certain that a worship service is not given a name/title that implies a contractual agreement with an incorporated body unless that agreement has been accomplished legally. If this approach does not apply:

c. Seek to obtain a letter of certification from the appropriate faith group or religious authority. Assure that the certifying agent is accurately identified (this should be done in consultation with the person requesting an appointment to lead worship). Avoid misleading uses of names or identifiers in reference to specific religions or traditions. When a request for accommodation comes to us and it is difficult to determine faith group or denominational authority, care should be taken. With an emphasis on pastoral concern, seek a common understanding for determining who might be appropriate to contact for

<sup>4</sup> The Council of Witches has a website at [wrfc@wrfc.org](mailto:wrfc@wrfc.org) and their address is: 3208-C East Colonial Dr. #202, Orlando, FL 32803  
Phone: 407-262-3491

Covenant of the Goddess website is: [www.cog.org.com](http://www.cog.org.com)

<sup>5</sup> Grimmasi, Encyclopedia of Wicca & Witchcraft, page 85-86

certification. This should be clearly represented as a way to enable accommodation rather than a roadblock erected to discourage religious expression. It may become clear that obtaining certification is excessively complex or impossible. Do not assume, in these instances, that you cannot accommodate the need presented. Saying, "I do not have an acceptable certification for you" is not the last word to a sincere request for accommodation. If this approach does not apply:

- a. One person must be identified as the "leader" of the worship to provide the Chaplain Service with a responsible point of contact. The identified worshippers can choose a worship leader. There should be clarity concerning the style, practices of worship and beliefs to allow for agreement among those who will gather. The worship service must not be given a name or title that is confusing or misleading to those outside of the group. If this does not apply:
- b. Consider other avenues for the religious accommodation of the individual making the request.<sup>6</sup>

To reiterate that members of the Wicca faith must be provided for under the Constitution I share this statement by Chaplain, Major General William J. Dendinger published in "The Leading Edge" Vol. 48, No. 10 July/August 1998, he says,

"Providing for the free exercise of religion is not just a Constitutional Mandate, it is a complex and demanding responsibility particularly entrusted to the Wing Chaplain. It is one thing to manage programs or organize Sunday worship, but it is quite another to accommodate the religious need of an increasingly diverse population. It is up to the Wing Chaplain to coordinate the work of the chapel staff incorporating the needs of individual faith groups into an overall pastoral response. This means setting priorities, knowing strengths, facing limitation, and maximizing efforts through teamwork."<sup>7</sup>

While we are not all Wing Chaplains in charge of others, we all work on the same team to keep the Air Force functioning at optimum level. Our job is to make sure those who must bear arms are spiritually ready to do so. It is in the fulfillment of that duty that we learn about the religious needs and rules of accommodation for others. As members of that team, let us turn our attention, for a moment to a case study from the United States Air Force Academy.

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<sup>6</sup> Full document can be found in Appendix II of this paper.

<sup>7</sup> The Leading Edge, AFRP 52-1 Official Publication of the Office of the Chief of Chaplain Service, Vol. 48, No. 10, July/August 1998.

## Who Are the Wiccans and What Do They Believe?

### Defining Terms

To help Chaplains understand the beliefs and religious needs of the Wiccans this section of the paper will focus on who they are by looking at some dictionary definitions, assertions from their own community, statements from the official military handbook on religions, and through an overview of the history they claim, and their practices including symbols, deities, and ritual.

To begin our process of clarification, the definitions that follow are from the Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 10<sup>th</sup> edition. Included in this list are *Wicca*, *witch* (as a noun and a transitive verb), *witchcraft*, and *pagan*. Also included are the terms *devil* and *Satanism*, not because these are part of Wiccan practice. They are not! But these words are those most often associated with the practice of Wicca. I offer these definitions as a starting point in understanding their colloquial use, and to give us grounds for comprehending their misuse when applied to Wicca. These are offered as a point of reference because Wiccans often find themselves defending against these characterizations. Wicca claims no belief in Satan and therefore no loyalty to a demonic force. Though some who write against Wicca claim that there is a connection to black magic<sup>8</sup>, Wicca practitioners and writers of today are very careful in their use of magic to focus on kind, unselfish and loving actions.<sup>9</sup>

#### Definitions:

“*Wicca* n.[prob. Fro. OE *wicca* wizard – more at WITCH] (1959): a religion influenced by pre-Christian beliefs and practices of western Europe that affirms the existence of supernatural power (as magic) and of both male and female deities who inhere in nature, and that emphasizes ritual observance of seasonal and life cycles – Wiccan, adj or n”

“*Witch* n. – 1: one that is credited with usu. malignant supernatural powers; esp: a woman practicing with usu. Black witchcraft often with the aid of a devil or familiar: SORCERESS – compare WARLOCK 2: an ugly old woman: HAG 3: a charming or alluring girl or woman 4: a practitioner of Wicca

“*Witch* vt. 1: to affect injuriously with witchcraft 2 archaic: to influence or beguile with allure or charm  
“*Witchcraft* 1a: the use of sorcery or magic b: communication with the devil or with a familiar 2: an irresistible influence or fascination 3: WICCA”

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<sup>8</sup> Ellis, *Raising the Devil*, 144-148.

<sup>9</sup> Grimassi, *Encyclopedia of Wicca & Witchcraft*, page 312

*pagan* n. [ME, fr. LL *paganus*, fr. L, country dweller, fr. Pagus country district; akin to L *pangere* to fix – more at PACT] 1: HEATHEN 1; esp : a follower of a polytheistic religion (as in ancient Rome) 2: one who has little or no religion and who delights in sensual pleasures and material goods ; an irreligious or hedonistic person – pagan, adj.

*devil* n. [ME *devel*, fr. OE *deofol*, fr. LL *diabolus*, fr. Gk *Diabolos*, lit., slanderer, fr. *Diaballein* to throw across, slander, fr. *Dia* + *ballein* to throw; prob. Akin to Skt *gurate* he lifts up] 1: often cap : the personal supreme spirit of evil often represented in Jewish and Christian belief as the tempter of mankind, the leader of all apostate angels, and the ruler of hell – usu. Used with the; often used as an interjection, an intensive or a generalized term of abuse <what the ~ is this?> 2 : an evil spirit : DEMON 3a: an extremely wicked person : FIEND . . . (The definition continues -)

*Satanism* n, often cap (1565 – Note: this date connotes the first English use of the word) 1: innate wickedness: DIABOLISM 2: obsession with or affinity for evil; specif: the worship of Satan marked by the travesty of Christian rites.<sup>10</sup>

For the sake of argument, and setting the stage for understanding the community of the Wiccans, we can say that an inquiring person who knew nothing about the belief system might turn to a dictionary to begin to learn what the terms mean and would find fairly harsh definitions of the representative words of Wicca. It seems to me that when we look deeply into the faith and practices, meet the people who follow the practices and we read the literature, we have to come to a less harsh conclusion than the dictionary definitions present. However, not all people who make judgments about an unknown faith take the time to look behind the curtains, if you will, to discover the truth!

The subsequent commentary comes from the Wiccan community via one of their members. The article presents from the perspective of those within the community, some misunderstandings and prejudicial notions of Paganism in general, and Wiccans in particular. As you read, you may want to refer back to the dictionary definitions for comparison. Doing so will, I believe, help to reveal the difficulty members of the community face when they present themselves as practicing Wiccans.

As stated above, the word *pagan* actually means one who lives in the countryside or from the Latin *paganus*, meaning rustic. While Wiccans are members of the Pagan, or earth religions group, they are not the same as all Pagans. The following definitions are taken from a document by Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance and are given here to illustrate some of the stigma and confusion about this particular group of

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<sup>10</sup> Dictionary pages 1347, 1354, 832, 316. 1035

people and what they believe and practice. Please note that *Satanism* is not a Pagan religion because it is distinctly an anti-Christian belief system and does not honor nature or the nature gods of the Pagans.

### **"WHAT IS A "PAGAN?"**" <sup>11</sup>

There is no generally accepted, single definition for the word "Pagan."

The main definitions are listed below:

#### 1. PAGANS ARE WICCANS AND OTHER NEOPAGANS:

Wiccans and other Neopagans sometimes treat Pagan and Neopagan (a.k.a. Neo-pagan) as synonyms. There seems to be a trend towards the use of "Pagan." Neopagan religions are modern faiths that have been recently reconstructed from beliefs, deities, symbols, practices and other elements of an ancient religion. For example, the Druidic religion is based on the faith and practices of the ancient Celtic professional class; followers of Asatru adhere to the ancient, pre-Christian Norse religion; Wiccans trace their roots back to the pre-Celtic era in Europe. Other Neo-pagans follow Roman, Greek, Egyptian and other traditions.

Some typical quotations that demonstrate this meaning of "Pagan" are:

"Witchcraft, or Wicca, is considered part of the occult, but has little relationship to Satanism. Wicca is pagan (pre-Christian, as opposed to anti-Christian) and is currently gaining popularity."

"Witches do not worship the devil... Witches are more interested in magical arts and the divinity of nature... Wiccans are considered pagans because they worship several nature gods instead of a single god."

The World Christian Encyclopedia estimates 6 million Americans profess to be witches and engage in practices like these. They are a sub-group of over 10 million persons the encyclopedia says call themselves pagans, who practice "primitive" religions such as Druidism, Odin worship and Native American shamanism."

#### 2. PAGANS ARE PEOPLE TO HATE:

Religious and social conservatives sometimes use "Pagan" as a general purpose "snarl" word to refer to cultures or religions that are very different from the speaker's.

There is no general consensus as to meaning. It can be seen directed at any religious or cultural group that the speaker hates. Some examples:

"Gods and goddesses are beginning to re-inhabit the Western world. Infant sacrifice -- there are 52 million a year. It is paganism." Dr. John Patrick, professor at the University of Ottawa, Canada. (He was referring to the number of abortions performed worldwide). 4

"We went into post-Christian and neopaganism very quickly... We want the culture to change, we want some spiritual sanity, but we need to understand that this is a pluralistic and even neopaganist society." Dr. Richard Swenson, director of the Future Health Study Center.

#### 3. PAGANS ARE ANCIENT POLYTHEISTS:

The term "Pagan" is sometimes used to refer to ancient polytheistic religions:

The Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) contains many references to the societies surrounding the Israelites. These are commonly referred to as Pagan:

Their altars were often referred to as "high places:"

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<sup>11</sup> Copyright © 2000 by Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance – Footnotes in the text of the article were not included with the article as I received it via email. A full copy of the article can be retrieved through the organization. Originally written: 2000-JUL-28 Latest update: 2000-OCT-25 Author: B.A. Robinson Contact us: <http://religioustolerance.org/mail.htm> Mailing address: OCRT, PO Box 514, Wellesley Island, NY, 13640-0514

II Kings 16:4: "And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree."

Surrounding tribes were viewed as committing idolatry by worshiping golden images of animals:

II Kings 17:16: "And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal."

Some examples of this usage are:

Referring to sun wheels and obelisks: "...These symbols of pagan sun worship were associated with Baal worship, or Balaam, which is strongly condemned in scripture.

So why are they so prevalent in the Roman Catholic Church, if they are associated with paganism and apostasy?" An anti-Catholic essay on a conservative Christian web site.

Ancient faiths of ancient Celtic, Egypt, Greece, Norse, Rome, and other cultures are frequently referred to as Pagan religions.

Even though many of these religions had strict social and sexual behavioral codes, their followers are often portrayed as hedonist and immoral:

I Peter 4:3: "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, reveling, banqueting, and abominable idolatries."

#### 4. PAGANS ARE ABORIGINALS:

Paganism is occasionally used to refer to animistic, spirits-and -essences filled belief systems.

It is based upon direct perception of the forces of nature and usually involves the use of idols, talismans and taboos in order to convey respect for these forces and beings.

Many native, aboriginal religions fit this definition.

#### 5. PAGANS ARE NON-ABRAHAMICS:

A rare use of "Pagan" is to describe a person who does not follow an Abramic religion.

That is, their faith does not recognize Abraham as a patriarch.

*The individual is neither Christian, Muslim nor Jew.*

This includes Agnostics, Atheists, Buddhists, Hindus, Humanists,

Taoists, etc. About 45% of the people of the world are Pagans, by this definition."

## Official Chaplain Handbook Statement on Wicca

To continue defining our terms, I have included an excerpt from the U.S. Army's Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups: A Handbook for Chaplains (pgs 231-236). This is the handbook used by all branches of the United States military and is provided by the United States Air Force Chaplain's Service Institute.<sup>12</sup> The entry follows a standard format for all faith groups that are listed. The entry is quoted as found in the handbook. While the citation is long it is included here to tie together the definitions we are building to describe and understand Wicca. The presence of this citation also declares for the Chaplain that Wicca is a bona fide religious group. The citation also tells us a great deal about the faith,

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<sup>12</sup> Resource Division, 525 Chenault Circle, Maxwell AFB, Montgomery, AL 36112-6429

and augments the findings of my own research. The citation, however, does not list the Council of American Witches nor does it specify what to do for sacred needs at critical times in life such as births, and deaths. I include this information later in the paper for classroom work where we will more fully discuss the faith and its practice, expanding on what is written in the citation.

## WICCA

**ADDRESS:** No central address. Wiccan worship groups, called covens, are essentially autonomous. Many, but far from all, have affiliated with:

Covenant of the Goddess: P.O. Box 1226, Berkeley, CA 94704

**OTHER NAMES BY WHICH KNOWN:** Witchcraft; Goddess worshippers; Neo-Paganism, Paganism, Norse (or any other ethnic designation) Paganism, Earth Religion, Old Religion, Druidism, Shamanism. Note: All of these groups have some basic similarities and many surface differences of expression with Wicca.

**LEADERSHIP:** No central leadership. The Covenant of the Goddess annually elects a First Officer and there is a constitutional limit of two consecutive terms, but in practice officers have almost always served for one year only. In 1991, there are two co-First Officers, Phoenix Whitebirch and Brandy Williams.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Because of the complete autonomy of covens, this cannot be determined. There are an estimated of 50,000 Wiccans in the United States.

**HISTORICAL ORIGIN:** 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 worshippers. In 1962, two of his students, Raymond and Rosemary Buckland (religious names: Lady Rowen and Robat), emigrated to the United States and began teaching Gardnerian Witchcraft here. 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. non-denominational).

**BASIC BELIEFS:** 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.

**PRACTICES AND BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS:** 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 will regard all living things as Sacred, and 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 should participate in wars that they conscientiously consider to be just. The religion does not dictate either position, but requires each member to thoughtfully and meditatively examine her or his own conscience and to live by it. 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 the result of public confusion between Witchcraft and Satanism. Wiccans in the military, especially those who may be posted in countries perceived to be particularly intolerant, will often have their dogtags read "No Religious Preference." Concealment is a traditional Wiccan defense against persecution, so non-denominational dogtags should not contravene a member's request for religious services. Wiccans celebrate eight festivals, called "Sabbats," as a means of attunement to the seasonal rhythms of Nature. These are January 31 (Called Oimelc, Brigit, or February Eve), March 21 (Ostara or Spring Equinox), April 30 (Beltane or May Eve), June 22 (Midsummer, Litha or Summer Solstice), July 31 (Lunasa or Lammas), September 21 (Harvest, 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.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:** 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. At that size covens form a close bond, so Wiccans in the military are likely to maintain a strong affiliation with their covens back home. 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. These distinctions are not particularly important to the military chaplain, since it is unlikely that enough members of any one Tradition would be at the same base. Worship circles at military facilities are likely to be ad-hoc cross-Traditional groups, working out compromise styles of worship for themselves and constantly adapting them to a changing membership. Therefore, the lack of strict adherence to the patterns of any one Tradition is not an indicator of invalidity. 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 other Wiccans to celebrate the festivals or to attend the various regional events organized by the larger community.

**ROLE OF MINISTERS:** 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.

**WORSHIP:** Wiccans usually worship in groups. Individuals who are currently not affiliated with a coven, or are away from their home coven, may choose to worship privately or may form ad-hoc groups to mark religious occasions. Non-participating observers are not generally welcome at Wiccan rituals. 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 should 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 artwork 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 congregative rituals.

DIETARY LAWS OR RESTRICTIONS: None.

FUNERAL AND BURIAL REQUIREMENTS: None. Recognition of the death of a member takes place within the coven, apart from the body of the deceased. Ritual tools, materials, or writings found among the effects of the deceased should be returned to their home coven (typically a member will designate a person to whom ritual materials should be sent). It is desirable for a Wiccan priest or priestess to be present at the time of death, but not strictly necessary. If not possible, the best assistance would be to make the member as comfortable as possible, listen to whatever they have to say, honor any possible requests, and otherwise leave them as quiet and private as possible.<sup>13</sup>

MEDICAL TREATMENT: No medical restrictions. Wiccans generally believe in the efficacy of spiritual or psychic healing when done in tandem with standard medical treatment. Therefore, at the request of the patient, other Wiccan personnel should be allowed visiting privileges as though they were immediate family, including access to Intensive Care Units. Most Wiccans believe that healing energy can be sent from great distances, so, if possible, in the case of any serious medical condition, the member's home coven should be notified.

OTHER: With respect to attitude toward military service, Wiccans range from career military personnel to conscientious objectors. 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 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.<sup>14</sup>

### **Starhawk's Definition of Wicca**

Starhawk, Miriam Simos is her birth name, is one of the founding mothers of Wicca in the United States. She lives in the San Francisco area of California and has authored numerous books on the subject of her beliefs since the mid-1970. Her books are revered and used as guides by the majority of Wiccans for their own practice and understanding of the faith. In her book Dreaming the Dark, Starhawk clearly defines Wicca in the following paragraph.

“The Old Religion – call it Witchcraft, Wicca, the Craft, or with a slightly broader definition, Paganism or Neo-Paganism – is both old and newly invented. Its roots go back to the pre-Judeo-Christian tribal religions of the West, and it is akin in spirit, form and practice to Native American and African religions. Its myths and symbols draw from the woman-valuing, matristic, Goddess-centered cultures that underlie the beginnings of civilization. It is not a religion with a dogma, a doctrine, or a sacred book; it is a religion of experience, of ritual, of practices that change consciousness and awaken power-from-within. Beneath all, it is a religion of connection with the Goddess, who is immanent in

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<sup>13</sup> The author Starhawk has published The Pagan Book of Living and Dying a book containing the rituals, prayers, blessings and meditations used by Wiccans and Pagans for celebrations of death, or crossing over.

<sup>14</sup> GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS: Adler, Margot. Drawing Down the Moon. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986. 595pp Starhawk. The Spiral Dance. New York: Harper & Row, 1979. Farrar, Janet, and Stewart Farrar. Eight Sabbats for Witches. London: Robert Hale, 1981. 192pp The Witches' Way. London: Robert Hale, 1984. 394pp.

nature, in human beings, in relationships. Because the Goddess is *here*, She is eternally inspirational. And so Witchcraft is eternally reinvented, changing, growing, alive.”<sup>15</sup>

## **An Argument About Roots of the Faith**

We turn our attention in the direction of the historical roots that Starhawk claims, for a moment now, as we consider one argument posed by writer Charlotte Allen. In an article from the Atlantic Monthly magazine, January 2001 issue, found on the World Wide Web, Allen disputes the claims that Starhawk and others make to roots in the Goddess traditions of ancient times. To this point in our archeological discoveries, says Allen, there is no proof of a Goddess religion as such.

“In all probability, not a single element of the Wiccan [history] story is true. The evidence is overwhelming that Wicca is a distinctly new religion, a 1950’s concoction influenced by such things as Masonic ritual and a late-nineteenth-century fascination with the esoteric and the occult, and that various assumptions informing the Wiccan view of history are deeply flawed. Furthermore, scholars generally agree that there is no indication, either archaeological or in the written record, that any ancient people ever worshipped a single, archetypal goddess – a conclusion that strikes at the hart of Wiccan belief.”<sup>16</sup>

The entire article written by Allen can be found in Appendix VI of this document. Her claim is significant and meritorious, though she herself introduces the “Mysteries of Çatalhöyük”<sup>17</sup> and the female representations found there which seems to refute her own premise, or at least raise it into question. The truth is, we don’t know and no one alive now can bear direct witness to what occurred on the face of the earth so many centuries ago. So, I find in my own heart a need to remind the reader that all religious zeal is born out of emotional / spiritual experience and that myth and explanation then grows up around that experience. We find this with Abraham who “hears” the voice of God telling him he will become the father of a great nation.

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<sup>15</sup> Dreaming the Dark page xxvi

<sup>16</sup> Atlantic Monthly website: [www.theAtlantic.com](http://www.theAtlantic.com) (Full article is contained in the Appendix section of this paper.)

<sup>17</sup> Mysteries of Çatalhöyük An online exhibit about the excavation at Çatalhöyük presented by the Science Museum of Minnesota. The site offers information about the area, archeological findings, and the researchers involved. One section of the site is devoted to photographs and discussion of goddess figurines.

Archaeological expeditions even in the latter half of the century bolstered the notion of a single goddess figure from antiquity. In 1958 a British archaeologist named James Mellaart made a major find: a 9,000-year-old agricultural settlement that once housed up to 10,000 people at Çatalhöyük, one of the largest of several mounds near the modern-day town of Konya, in southern Turkey. Mellaart unearthed a number of female figurines that he deemed to be representations of the mother goddess. One was a headless female nude sitting on what appears to be a throne and flanked by leopards, with a protuberant belly that could be interpreted as a sign of pregnancy. The Çatalhöyük settlement contained no fortifications, and its houses were nearly all the same size, seemingly implying just the sort of nonviolent, egalitarian social system that Goddess-worshippers believe prevailed. Çatalhöyük became the Santiago de Compostela of the Goddess movement, with hundreds of pilgrims visiting the settlement annually. The enthroned nude is a revered Goddess-movement object.

“Now the Lord had said to Abram: Get out of your country, from your family and from your father’s house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Genesis 12:1-3<sup>18</sup>

Do we accept the story of Abraham as valid? Yes, those of us in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths do. We accept it by faith and through generations handing it down to us as a story we should accept. There is no proof (physical evidence) of the existence of Abraham or his early civilization at this time in our discoveries. We keep looking for proof because we live in a scientific age that demands hard facts and physical proof. In the formation of Wicca, I believe, we are seeing first hand the birth of religious understanding. The definition offered by Starhawk clearly shows that it is a faith for our times, born out of experience. Abraham’s faith was born out of the experience of “hearing” God speak to him and making him a promise. How is that different from the formation of a belief in the “speaking of nature” to those who are willing to hear and respond with concern and involvement?

Charlotte Allen says herself that “Wicca . . . appears to be the fastest-growing religion in America. Thirty years ago only a handful of Wiccans existed. One scholar has estimated that there are now more than 200,000 adherents of Wicca and related “Neopagan” faiths in the United States.”<sup>19</sup>

Concern for the environment, the ability to annihilate humanity and all living creatures, the sense of a shrinking globe and need to connect with each other is very rich ground for a faith built upon nature, connection and freedom of the individual. The very fact of Wicca’s focus on a “magical” use of energy also fits with our new understanding of the nature of reality and Einstein’s theory of sub-atomic particles and the indestructible nature of energy. Wicca gives space for personal power in a world that can seem too powerful and out of control for some individuals.

Again the words of Starhawk –

“It is not a religion with a dogma, a doctrine, or a sacred book; it is a religion of experience, of ritual, of practices that change consciousness and awaken power-from-within. Beneath all, it is a religion of connection with the Goddess, who is imminent in nature, in human beings, in relationships.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> New King James Version

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix VI for chart and data on Wicca population

<sup>20</sup> Dreaming the Dark, page xxvi

My tongue in cheek response to Charlotte Allen, who seems to want to debunk the religion on the basis of “no clear” history, is that every community of faith creates it’s own myths and beliefs based upon experience, tradition and, I say, need. Why not this one? We can learn from the notions that Wicca puts forth and perhaps be more inclined to respect the finiteness of our world and be drawn to keeping it alive for our children and grandchildren.

For my own definition, Wicca seems to me to be a practical, pragmatic religion, which fits the century for and works well for people seeking personal power and the close community that covens can provide in what is, for some, a time of alienation. It also allows for the solitary practitioner. Answers are available and ready at hand via magic and magical belief.

### **The Importance of a History**

Refuted or not, the majority of Wiccans have embraced the idea of the Old Religion, at least in part due to the rituals they perform, as their own. Scott Cunningham, however, looks more to the connection with the archetypal deities and connection with nature as the ground and reason for Wicca.<sup>21</sup> Though I have a definite feminist bent toward cheering a religion born out of the suffering of women through the centuries, I do find it curious that a group *would* choose to call themselves Witches when the connotations are so negative and another word *could* have been used, or a new one coined, but, be that as it may, the name *Witch* brings a problem. Does having a persecuted past make a credible present or future? So, the important notion about a history for Wicca, or a history about witches, and the feminine representation there, is that what is currently recorded and drawn from, by each of us, to create a framework of thinking about witches, does determine how we respond to members of this growing faith group. As Chaplains who provide pastoral care to individuals of Wicca and of many other religious backgrounds, I believe it is important for us to be cognizant of the emotional impact of the word “witch” and to be able to shed light on the reason for that negativity, first, to ourselves, to discard our own misconceptions, and then for others to be informed and therefore able to become empathetic or at least sympathetic.

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<sup>21</sup> Cunningham, Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner, pages 9-10 ff.

## **The Malleus Maleficarum and The Salem Witch Trails**

To further understand the emotional impact of the name *Witch* and the pastoral needs of the members of our military community it is necessary to look deeper into the emotional impact our dictionary definitions can have on this group within our Air Force family. Language is formative to how we see and relate to another person. The definitions we have listed above are rooted in Middle English and Old English and connected to the practices of witchcraft and pagan life back to the language in use during the 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and from “the time of earliest document in the 7<sup>th</sup> century to 1100.”<sup>22</sup> Those definitions were influenced by the times in which they were written and those times were brutal in many respects. The Inquisition<sup>23</sup> took place in Europe roughly from the year 1215 under Pope Innocent III until under Pope Sixtus IV on July 15, 1834 it was declared ended. During this period of 619 years the earliest and best-known document dealing directly with witches and witchcraft is the *Malleus Maleficarum*, sometimes known as the *Witches Hammer*. It was written by two Dominican monks and has a publication date of 1487. The *Malleus Maleficarum*, the basis of which centers on the scripture passage from Exodus 22:18, states “You shall not permit a sorceress to live,”<sup>24</sup> teaches the inquisitor how to discover the identity of a witch and bring about a confession. A copy of the first page of the English translation of the document follows below. The full document can be found on line.<sup>25</sup> This document is well known by the Wicca community and has served to sensitize them to the horrors of the past. It is worth the effort of a Chaplain acting as a pastor to his or her military community to be aware of the document and the devastating effect it had in human history.

In addition, the Salem witch trials are an important American twist on the persecution of individuals who were suspected of holding beliefs and practices contrary to the faith of the Puritans in early New England. Within the city of Salem, Massachusetts the tourist economy thrives because of the trials and the Wiccans have established their own museum to tell the story from their perspective.

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<sup>22</sup> Dictionary pages 735, 807

<sup>23</sup> The Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume VIII, on line edition copy write 1999 by Kevin Knight. To find this document look up Inquisition through the Yahoo search engine.

<sup>24</sup> The New King James Version

<sup>25</sup> *Malleus Maleficarum* on line – search Yahoo for *Malleus Maleficarum*

The Salem witch trials includes the story of one John Alden, son of John and Priscilla Alden, accused of witchcraft. In her book about the trials, author Marion L. Starkey from Worcester, Massachusetts tells a portion of the story this way.

“The afflicted girls stood all about him, [Alden] wincing away from him and whimpering that in spite of all precautions he was pinching them. Alden, forbidden to so much as look at them, turned irascibly to the magistrates.

“Just why do your honours suppose I have no better things to do than to come to Salem to afflict these persons that I never knew or saw before?”

The magistrates silenced him coldly. Facts interested them, not words. It was time for the demonstration. Let him look at the girls.

Alden looked; the girls fell in a heap at his feet.

“Set his hand to theirs,” a magistrate called to the officer. The wizard on the chair had difficulty keeping his face straight. He turned to the magistrates and stared hard at his friend Gedney.

“What’s the reason *you* don’t fall down when I look at you,” he demanded. “Can you give me one?” Gedney said nothing. His eyes were hard. He had come to court really anxious to help an old friend. Not for a moment had he believed Alden capable of such conduct until with his own eyes he saw him knock the girls down with a look and raise them again with a touch. Sophistries were of no use against such facts.”<sup>26</sup>

From reading the rest of the story we know that the girls confronting Alden were pretending the uncontrolled responses to Alden. They needed someone to be guilty. But by this time the mania was in place and had a life of its own as one can easily see from just this passage. The eyes of reason, even of Alden’s closest friend, were blinded by a need to believe otherwise.

If the reader wonders why I focus on this episode of the Salem witch trials and the need to understand the impact of the *Malleus Maleficarum* it is because we, today, still can be influenced to believe that those who choose to practice the rituals of witchcraft are somehow evil persons. They are not. The author / anthropologist Margaret A. Murray reminds us “It must be remembered that all the accounts of the witches were written by members of a fiercely hostile religion; there are no records made by the witches themselves.”<sup>27</sup> You or I may believe differently than they do, but it is our sworn oath to facilitate their freedom of religious expression. To try to thwart this freedom is to fall prey to the inhumanity that can grow into “reasonless” action. As Chaplains we are bound by our oath of allegiance to the Constitution and our ordination vows.

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<sup>26</sup> Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts*, pages 144-145

<sup>27</sup> *The God of the Witches*, Margaret A. Murray, *Journal of the Manchester Egyptian and Oriental Society* 1916-1917, page 49

In addition to the “antics” of children, the witch trials became a means of eliminating from the community someone who was not well liked or someone who’s property was desired. In a story related by Ann Braude in her book Women and American Religion we learn of the widow Katherine Harrison. Braude writes:

“She was first accused shortly after her husband’s death, which had left her with substantial property. John Harrison died in 1666 with not male heir. He left all his property to his wife and three daughters, making his widow the wealthiest woman in Wethersfield, Connecticut. Unlike most widows in colonial America, Katherine chose not to remarry. For Puritans, this meant that she did not serve the purpose for which God had created her. If she remarried, all of her substantial estate would become the property of her new husband. Katherine Harrison posed a substantial threat to the order that Puritans believed represented the will of God.”

As we read on we learn that Katherine was not burned at the stake because she was able to escape to another town but was not free of harassment until her daughter married and the inheritance was again in the hands of a man.<sup>28</sup>

It is stories like these that give concern to today’s practicing witches. They desire only to practice in freedom, as our national laws permit.

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<sup>28</sup> Braude, Women and American Religion, pages 23-24.

## **Addressing Pastoral Concerns**

To this point, all the issues that have been raised lead us to focus on the pastoral concerns for our Wiccan military members. We have seen from the definitions that prejudice is easy to raise in the reader. We've seen that the chosen history and the feminist Goddess slant to the faith can also raise resistance. We have not begun to look at the practices of magical spells and the mystery surrounding such actions that can also bring about prejudice because people are uninformed and perhaps fearful of what they do not know.

## **Concerns of Wiccan / Pagan Practitioners Within the Air Force**

The article excerpt that follows is taken from the Air Force Times. The date of this article is 1987. The entire article can be found in Appendix IV. Perhaps some of the issues have been addressed since the article was written, but from my conversations with practicing Wiccans, I am aware that they still experience some pressure to conform to the religions of others or find themselves the *focus* of fear and confusion. As Chaplains, when someone presents us with these concerns, vis-à-vis, articles like this one, or mentions a problem to us, we have a constitutional obligation to provide for *their* free expression. Following the article we'll look at some suggestions for bringing a pastoral perspective to the issues for the sake of our functioning as a military governed by our Constitution and as Chaplains required by our own religious affiliation to adhere to our own commitments. This short portion serves to illustrate for the reader the kind of "feeling" a Wiccan may have to endure if their true religious preference for Wicca is made known. As Chaplains we are responsible to provide for free exercise of religion and for the pastoral needs of our military members.

"WASHINGTON - Military members who practice witchcraft and paganism are emerging from secrecy to demand respect for their civil rights and increased recognition from the armed services.

In interviews with Air Force Times, military witch and pagan activists said they want time off for their major religious holidays. Some said they want dog tags that state "Pagan" or "Wicca" as their religious preference. Other pagans and witches said they need chaplains who understand pre-Christian beliefs and who can help them form worship groups at remote duty locations.

Signs of the new assertiveness appeared this fall in Europe, when some witches and pagans formed a network called the Farwanderer Military Pagan Fellowship. Air Force SSGt Lorie A. Johnson said she placed an announcement in European Stars and Stripes to recruit fellowship members.

"The goal is to let military pagans know they're not alone," Johnson said, and "to show the military that we're not just a bunch of scattered weirdos."

Wiccans and pagans don't try to convert others to their religion, but many feel harassed by the well-intentioned efforts of some Christians to "save" them from sin, said Kim Rayworth, the wife of an Air Force major at Incirlik AB, Turkey. Rayworth said she and her husband have been Wiccans since 1970.

Last summer, Rayworth said, she woke up one morning to find a large wooden cross planted in the front yard of her on-base home. She could have made a formal complaint to the base commander but chose to ignore the incident, she said. A neighbor also tried to hang crosses around Rayworth's daughter's neck, Rayworth said.

"At the age of 7, she had accumulated nine crosses from (the) neighbor," Rayworth said. "I finally told her, 'I don't need your crosses. Please don't push your religion on my daughter.'" "

Here is the main point for belaboring you, the reader, with all the definitions and clarification: for *anyone* to have to tolerate the thought of being called a "weirdo" or to have their children pressured about religious issues is not conducive to the highest functioning in the military member. To keep a person *combat ready* we must care for the Wiccans and their families as we would for any person who felt beleaguered by the system, or unfairly treated, by providing support and help to overcome obstacles in a healthy manner. Our Wiccan members should feel as free to come to us for counseling as any of our Christian members do. There can be no hint of prejudice from within the Chaplain corps.

### **Suggesting a Cure**

One way to eliminate prejudice, misunderstanding and fear among people of different faiths, including ourselves, is to create educational opportunities on our bases. Bringing in qualified speakers from the religious groups that are experiencing difficulties could easily open up a dialogue and an exchange of mutual understanding to lead to respect rather than fear, confusion or pressure from each other.

Similar dialogue groups, as well as providing space and time to meet the religious needs of Air Force community members, could be constructed at any base. Accommodation does not imply a personal / religious agreement with practices of particular groups that are deemed legal and have specific approval as valid religions within the Air Force community.

### **Case Study**

While I was stationed at the Air Force Academy during 1997-2000 I was confronted with the need to provide pastoral care to a practicing Pagan. To avoid risking a breach of confidentiality, I share the following sketchy events with you. A young Cadet was seeking to be faithful to established religious pagan ritual beliefs

and was finding unsympathetic roommates who were fearful and confused. The emotional tension among the three Cadets broke and I was called in to speak to them. We settled the dilemma by sharing information about personal beliefs and looking for understanding by focusing on the facts. We clarified the tenets of the belief system being practiced and came to understand that there was no evil intended on anyone's part. The situation was diffused and in the long run everyone involved grew emotionally and spiritually from the experience.

Once this situation was over I realized there was a greater need for all the Cadets who were interested in learning about these non-mainstream religions. Specifically for the Cadets who were interested, I created a Monday night gathering called "Exploring Many Faiths" and invited local practitioners from the Colorado Springs community. Each week during the semester we gathered about 15 to 20 Cadets to learn about a variety of religious practices including: Native American religions, the Baha'i Faith, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Asatru, Wicca, Jehovah's Witness, Islam and others. There was a small core group that came each week and others filtered in, as they wanted. The discussion was always fruitful in that new understanding was achieved. No one tried to convert anyone; it was simply a matter of sharing information to inform and clarify the focus of each faith group and their particular beliefs.

During the following months at the Academy, Chaplain (Rabbi) Kalman Dubov, became involved with the Islamic community when the Cadets needed special meals provided for the celebration of Ramadan. He met this need and went a step further to also provide space and set aside time for their worship. As the Buddhist Cadets noticed the arrangements being made for the Muslims, they approached Chaplain Dubov to ask for permission and help in finding a leader for their faith group. Through the community contacts I had gained with "Exploring Many Faiths" the Rabbi was able to arrange for the Buddhist community to meet weekly with a highly qualified leader from the local community.

The Buddhists and the Muslims have been provided for under our constitutional obligation, without loss of denominational/religious affiliation or our personal beliefs on the part of the Rabbi or myself. Through our open discussions with the Cadets and our willingness to support them, other people began to understand and dialogue with each other about different faiths. I always stressed with the Cadets at our weekly gathering

that understanding others did not mean agreement, but that in understanding they would become better commanding officers. A commanding officer that understands the religious convictions of his or her troops is, I believe, a better leader. Our activities and arrangements met the pastoral needs of a substantial number of Cadets at the Air Force Academy.

#### **Part IV ☞ Classroom Component for USAF -**

In order to convey the bulk of detailed information of the Wicca faith, I have chosen to create a practical application for the research and new understanding I have gained from my study. Below, I have outlined a curriculum for use with Chaplains in one of our weeklong familiarization classes at Maxwell, AFB in Montgomery, Alabama.

When teaching the class, this Fourth Section of the outline will incorporate the information shared in Sections II and III. They must be used along with the outline so that each person has the same starting point. The information in Sections II and III can be read in class or given as a handout for the students to read on their own. Highlighting the definitions and the articles, I believe, is critical for establishing a pastoral understanding of our Wicca military members.

The desired outcome for the class is that the participants would gain new awareness about Chaplain requirements under the Constitution and within Air Force regulations regarding freedom of religious expression, increased knowledge of the beliefs of practicing Witches and insight in to addressing pastoral issues for Wicca practitioners and how to meet those needs without compromise of personal beliefs.

Throughout the class, the discussion of Chaplain's personal beliefs and struggles would be a part of the ongoing dialogue with the subject matter. I feel quite certain that those issues would surface and could be addressed as the class unfolded. If an instructor felt that this would not happen naturally, then some questions that directly focus on the Chaplain's personal beliefs must be introduced. The most likely place for this would be at the very beginning or at the close of the training.

## Outline for Classroom Work –

### Constitutional and Air Force Requirements for Chaplains (See Appendices)

Each member of the class will be supplied with a copy of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America as it reads below, and copies of Air Force Regulations, Requirements Appendices I, II and III

*“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceable to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”<sup>29</sup>*

Familiarization with these documents will be required for class discussion and to insure a full understanding among chaplains of the requirements of their oath to “support and defend the Constitution.”

Students will be provided copies of

- Sections II and III of this paper
- All the articles in the Appendix of this document
- All sheets marked handout
- The Spiral Dance and The Pagan Book of Living and Dying: Practical Rituals, Prayers, Blessings, and Meditations on Crossing Over by Starhawk
- Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner by Scott Cunningham

Students will be informed that current methods of providing for Islamic / Buddhist practices at the US Air Force Academy are currently through “adjunct” teachers & theologians who provide ongoing, weekly services for members of the Buddhist and Islamic faith. The provisions work well and meet the Four Degree Cadets’ requirements to remain on base during the week.

### Day 1 -Worldviews

To begin the learning process as we look at the Wiccan religion we will use the lens of the worldview to more fully understand why they believe what they believe. This tool will make our journey into a new territory easier and unthreatening. Using the following list, students will discuss the notion of religion as worldview with the class. Participants will use the outline to determine their own worldview in connection with their own religious beliefs

When we speak of religious perspective we also speak of worldviews, or how a person perceives the order of one’s life. In the pages that follow I will explore the worldview of the group of individuals who call themselves Witches and who are members of the pagan group called Wicca. A person’s worldview answers

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<sup>29</sup> Tedschi, Robert F. Jr. Supplemental text Sixth Edition. The U.S. Constitution and Fascinating Facts About It. Oak Hill Publishing Company. Naperville, IL. 1996. page 33.

the following basic questions:<sup>30</sup> This list of questions a useful tool to discover what one really believes and to assist others to do the same or to understand the worldview of another religion.

1. Who or What is ultimate reality?
  - One God, many gods, Goddess, Spirit, Ideas, Electrons
2. Is that ultimate reality good, bad or indifferent to human needs?
3. Is it (he or she) transcendent (far away) or immanent (near by)?
4. What is the universe like?
  - Centric or acentric, Hierarchical, Cyclical, Democratic, Autocratic, Orderly / disorderly, containing only matter, only spirit or both, or something else
5. Is there good and or evil?
6. How do we know something?
  - Experientially, through our five senses, empirically through rational reflection, by faith
7. Who are we and what are we doing here?
  - Created being, beings produced by natural selection, a mixture of natural selection and creation, we are good, evil or a mixture of both, we have a mission / purpose given to us or chosen by us
8. What's the problem and what's the solution?
  - Human ignorance, death, suffering
9. Who or what will solve the problem?
  - Humanity, God / gods / Goddess
10. How does it all end or where will it all end?
  - Progression of humanity, cyclical repetition, downward spiral, new creation
11. In the mean time who or what ought to be in charge here?
  - Science, religion, spirituality, government, individuals, God, gods, goddess, angels, nothing

A. Discussion Topics for the Chaplains -- Divide into small groups then bring results back to larger group.

- What do you know about Wiccan beliefs and practices? How do you know this?
- If you accommodate someone else's beliefs by providing opportunities for worship, are you compromising your own religious beliefs, the requirements of your denomination or your relationship with God?
- Are you sworn to protect first amendment rights or religious convictions or both?
- Will accommodating another person's religious freedom cause you to lose your own religion?
- There are no Wicca Chaplains servicing in the U.S. military.
- There is expressed fear from some military members regarding the practices and beliefs of the Wiccans.
- The Air Force seems to have a growing population of practicing Wiccans who are "underground" and who may be fearful of discrimination.
- Current parishioners within the Air Force community chapels may react negatively to accommodation provided for Wiccans.
- What will chaplains need to do for themselves to meet their own spiritual needs?

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<sup>30</sup> This particular method of understanding a worldview was introduced to me by Chaplain Scott Ruthven, USAFR. I have added my own ideas into the list.

## Day 2 - Case Studies and Introduction to Wicca Beliefs

B. Students will share incidents of their own, or ones they know of, involving Chaplains and the needs of non-mainline religious practitioners.

C. Students will have read one of the following books before class and be prepared for discussion:

The Spiral Dance and The Pagan Book of Living and Dying: Practical Rituals, Prayers, Blessings, and Meditations on Crossing Over by Starhawk and  
Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner by Scott Cunningham

D. Students will be introduced to the following Websites:

The Witches Voice <http://www.witchvox.com/>

The Covenant of the Goddess – <http://www.cog.org>

Military Pagan Websites

<http://www.milpagan.org/articles/AFToct87.htm>

<http://www.angelfire.com/nc/5s/me.html>

<http://www.freep.com/news/religion/wchap8.htm>

<http://hometown.aol.com/LadyRowann/armywicca.html>

<http://hometown.aol.com/LadyRowann/milinfo.html>

## Day 3 – Video On Goddess Religious Concepts & Witchcraft

E. Students will view all or parts of the videotape series called “Women and Spirituality<sup>31</sup> –

The Goddess Remembered

The Burning Times

Full Circle

## Day 4 – Guest Speakers will be invited to the class to address the question

F. –What do Wiccans really believe? – Based on the questionnaire and outline below.

- Guest Speakers – Qualified guest speakers from the local community or Air Force members willing to speak authoritatively for the Wiccan community to explain practices, beliefs and concerns.
- The questionnaire on the following page will be provided to both speaker and student prior to the day of discussion.

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<sup>31</sup> Women and Spirituality: Part I Goddess Remembered, Part II The Burning Times, Part III Full Circle. Videotapes by WinStar TV & Video. Wellspring Media. New York. 1999.

**Day 5 – This part of the outline is designed for an instructor or the invited guest speaker to use to teach the details of Wicca. Follow up and expand on information from a guest speaker**

**A. Structure of the Community**

- 1) Leadership – Who and How? Women and men are both involved but women have the dominate role in some cases and the leadership is shared in others – Certain stages of progression lead to priestess level but all are considered equal in practice.<sup>32</sup>
- 2) Scriptures: – none – this is a taught tradition and is flavored with everyone’s ideas and beliefs. The histories are mixed in origin from Celtic, Roman, Greek, Norse (to name a few) and New Age - the religion is evolving with time as new members bring new ideas – According to Raven Grimassi, older practitioners want to hand down the traditions that are theirs but younger people want to bring themselves into it. However, there are basics that remain for each coven. (See Appendix VII)
- 3) Numbers - One of fastest growing “religions” – Reason: Perhaps because it is earth based and claims tangible results, provides strong community identity and trust (See Appendix V)
- 4) Locations: Witchcraft is practiced worldwide, but Wicca is centered mostly in England and the US.

No central authority – groups are self-styled and autonomous but certain practices are followed. There are many solo practitioners who are not members of covens but when discovered are usually encouraged to become connected with a coven. However, in “April, 1974, the Council of American Witches adopted a set of Principles of Wiccan Belief.” Carl L. Weschcke, one of the founders and the first chairperson of the Council wrote the 13 Principles. The document is a significant contribution to modern Wicca.<sup>33</sup>

- 5) Covens – usually contain 13 members who are sworn to loyalty and truth among the group. They become like family to each other and join in the celebrations of the cycle of the year

**B. Practices and Basic System of Belief (See Appendix VII – 13 Principles of Wiccan Belief)**

(Overhead pages and charts are arranged to follow in the order needed for presentation)

- 1) Moral Code: (use overhead slide)
  - The Wiccan Rede –“Do as you will and harm none.”
  - The rule of 3’s -- The notion behind this rule is that anything you do will come back to you three-fold. So it is not wise to curse someone because that curse will come back to you three times – perhaps not in this life but another
  - Know yourself and Love yourself
  - The Golden Rule of most religions
- 2) Yearly Cycles: (use chart on calendar overhead slide)
  - Earth based, Moon & Seasonal connections
  - Sabbat – means to rest and is a holiday --

<sup>32</sup> Cunningham, Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner, page 13.

<sup>33</sup> Grimassi, Encyclopedia of Wicca & Witchcraft, pages 361-362. See Appendix.

3) Deities: God and Goddess are the Divine Totality personified into masculine and feminine aspects. (See charts on overhead slide for Goddess and God)

- **Goddess** – The Triple Goddess – Maiden, Mother, Crone<sup>34</sup>– She represents the feminine energy in all forms of life. Her presence is emphasized in Covens, which are based on a feminist perspective of Witchcraft and claim that it is a Goddess based religion. In Celtic cultures, the young maiden was seen as the flower; the mother, the fruit; the elder woman, the seed. The seed is the part that contains the knowledge and potential of all the other parts within it. The role of the Crone is to go forth and reseed the community with her concentrated kernel of truth and wisdom, to collect the dying for return to the life in the spring (reincarnation). The Goddess is associated with the Lunar Cycle.<sup>35</sup>
- **God** –Horned One (stag horn, goat horn) “is the Stag-Horned God of the Old Religion. As such his is the Lord of the Animal Kingdom, the primal force. He is a symbol of fertility, virility, and of all that is wild and undomesticated. Over the course of time this god image evolved to include the Bull Horned God and the Goat-Horned God. The stag represented the god when humans were hunter-gatherers. The bull became a Horned-God image when humans were pastoral nomads. The Goat-Horned God emerged when humans settled into agricultural communities. In Wicca/Witchcraft this concept led to the practice of wearing a set of stag horns as a symbol of the priesthood. Prior to the religious symbolism of this crown, it was worn by the leader of the hunter society as a sign of his personal power and authority.”<sup>36</sup>
- **Holly King and Oak King** – The Holly King (Lord of the Winter) is defeated in ritual combat at the Winter Solstice by his brother, the Oak King, who then rules the following season.<sup>37</sup>

#### 4) Ritual Practice:

- Occurs in private or within the coven or the larger community.
- Some community rituals are open for public to attend and some are not. These would most likely be the *celebration rituals, such as the holidays and for marriage/Handfasting*<sup>38</sup> (Handfasting ceremony can be shown from the segment on Full Circle)
- Rituals are for celebrating the important moments in life – birth, death, marriage and the cycles of the year and for doing Magick in a safe place on behalf of the group and for individuals– they are designed to be joyous and fun – lots of dancing and singing<sup>39</sup>

#### 5) Sacred space:

- Called “casting the circle,” it is defined at each gathering with a specific ritual using each of the following symbols as seen on handout chart<sup>40</sup>
- Symbols: See chart on symbols (overhead slide) (Include some pictures or actual items)

<sup>34</sup> Starhawk, The Spiral Dance, page 26. (Other writers who lean toward a feminist approach also speak of the Triple Goddess)

<sup>35</sup> Morgan, Simple Wicca, pages 66-69

<sup>36</sup> Grimassi, Encyclopedia of Wicca & Witchcraft, pages 188-189.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., page 186.

<sup>38</sup> Skelton The Practice of Witchcraft Today, page 91.

<sup>39</sup> Morgan, Simple Wicca, page 113.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pages 73-74.

6) Magick: (sic)

- (A different spelling of the word is sometimes used, according to Starhawk in The Spiral Dance, to differentiate the magic of witchcraft from slight of hand magic).
- Energy Direction: All things vibrate at the molecular level and the belief is that this vibration can be influenced by focused thought. According to Grimassi<sup>41</sup> one must live a very moral life – keeping all promises to oneself and others and controlling one's own will.
- The Eight-Fold Path<sup>42</sup> resembles that of the Tibetan Buddhist.
- Sexual magick has to do with combining the male and female energies to garner greater strength for directing energy.

7) Spells and Readings:

- May be somewhat like prayer but one cannot cast a spell without the other person's permission. They are mostly done to achieve a desired goal such as getting a job or securing a home or the health of someone – much the way Christians would pray for these things.
- Curses – Not to be done. The only exception would be if you are someone you know is going to be harmed by another person. Then you must be prepared for the consequences, to have the curse returned 3-fold. In other words you can curse in self-defense but it is not wise to even do this (See the Wiccan Rede).

8) Divination: Tarot cards and runes are thought to contain the energy of the owner who can use that energy to divine things for another. You can use them to divine for yourself too, but it is not the best practice.

- Tarot Cards<sup>43</sup> (Allow class to see and explore cards and explain their use).
- Runes (stones used by the Celts) are used to look into the future or to determine the next step in a person's life.<sup>44</sup>

C. Needs of the community / marriage / funerals / worship / chaplains - Students will become familiar with The Pagan Book of Living and Dying: Practical Rituals, Prayers, Blessings, and Meditations on Crossing Over by Starhawk

Wiccans believe in reincarnation. Starhawk says,

“ Our approach to death is shaped by the ways we experience the sacred in life. A spiritual tradition provides a framework for our encounters with the great forces of birth and death. Through ritual, ceremony, personal meditation, and spiritual practice we make room in our lives for moments of wonder and connection. Our sacred calendar of holy days brings alive the mythology of birth, death and rebirth and allows us to experience the mystery of regeneration in the turning of the wheel of the year.”<sup>45</sup>

As chaplains we must be sensitive to the needs of the Wiccans at critical times in life just as we are of people in our own religious group.

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<sup>41</sup> Grimassi, The Wiccan Mysteries: Ancient Origins & Teachings, page 151.

<sup>42</sup> Grimassi, Encyclopedia of Wicca & Witchcraft, page 112-113

<sup>43</sup> Dee, Tarot: An Easy to Follow Illustrated Guide, Pages 1 – 63.

<sup>44</sup> Cunningham, Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner, page 177-184

<sup>45</sup> Starhawk, The Pagan Book of Living and Dying, page 16.

**Day 5 – Students will attend a ritual celebration as a group, if possible.**

Final class discussions will center on new awareness of Chaplain responsibilities, Wicca practitioner needs and the meaning of accommodation within the Air Force

- Students will be able to describe the worldview of the Wiccans
- Students will understand connecting points, if any, with Wicca and their own faith.
- Students will have resolved their personal beliefs with the need to accommodate others

Tie up loose ends from previous days discussion before attending a celebration in the local community.

## Handout

**Questionnaire:** Questions in the “Personal Experiences” category are designed for use in my own future research with members of the military community who are willing to share their stories. Questions in the remaining categories were used as a research guide for my own focus but would also be useful for a class meeting with a guest speaker to guide discussion.

### What does the Wiccan religion teach about?

- 1) Helping others / ethical issues / social issues
- 2) Marriage /Raising children / Sex
- 3) Politics
- 4) Gender issues
- 5) Dietary restrictions
- 6) Special clothing for worship or daily life
- 7) How was the world created / formed?
- 8) What happens when we die?
- 9) Where do we exist before birth?
- 10) The human soul? Do animals have souls?
- 11) Is there a heaven / hell? Where is it?

### Who should be worshiped and how?

- 1) Do you believe in a supreme being?
- 2) Who or what is God?
- 3) Does God have gender?
- 4) Are there angels? If so what is their role or function?

### Rituals and Rites

- 1) What ritual celebrations do you follow?
- 2) Do you have a rite of marriage?
- 3) Are there rituals for entering the faith?
- 4) Are miracles a part of your practice / faith?
- 5) Does magic play a role in your faith?
- 6) Do you pray?
- 7) Who hears your prayers?
- 8) Do you cast spells?

### Leadership

- 2) Who is permitted to hold leadership positions?
- 3) What are those positions?
- 4) How long does it take to move into leadership?

### Personal Experiences

- 1) How long have you been a Wiccan?
- 2) Are your family members Wiccan?
- 3) When and how did you begin your Wiccan practice?
- 4) Do you ever personally feel discriminated against because of your beliefs?
- 5) Has anyone ever threatened you because of your beliefs?
- 6) Are you a member of the US military?
- 7) Did you grow up with a different set of beliefs?
- 8) What religion do you publicly profess?

**The Athame:** knife, ritual dagger or sword. The blades are dull, double edged and not used for cutting. Represents the male energy or God and the element of fire, placed on the right side of the altar (male side).

Purpose: – to direct and manipulate the energy conjured in ritual and spell work

**The Bolline:** knife with a curved blade and white handle Purpose: – used for cutting things in ritual such as wands (tree branches most likely), herbs or cords, and for inscribing symbols in candles or other ritual tools. Represents male energy.

**The Book of Shadows:** record of all things magical in life practice. Purpose: to keep needed information on how rituals are performed and the outcome to refine abilities.

**The Broom:** Purpose: used for spell working and “sweeping” the ritual area clean of negative energy, for marking a “doorway” to the circle.

**Candles:** represent the deities: green or silver for the Goddess and red or gold for the God also represent the four elements – earth (solid wax), air (oxygen to feed the flame), water (melted wax), and fire.

Purpose: A charged candle (one imbued with energy) carries the intent of the spell to the heavens on its flame

**The Cauldron:** ultimate symbol of the Goddess—the womb of life, the tomb of death and the legendary rebirth of the phoenix from the ashes. Made of cast iron, 3 legs and many sizes – placed on the alter or floor to the left (female side).

Purpose: to hold water in spring rites or fire in winter to represent the returning Sun who is held in the belly of the Mother Goddess (pregnant with new life). Used for mixing oils and potions, divination with water and for burning parchment scrolls with written spells.

**The Censor:** an incense burner represents the elements of fire and air. Placed near the center of the altar.

Purpose: to purify the ritual area and to help achieve full sensory connection to the magic.

**The Chalice:** symbolic of the Goddess, fertility and water of emotion, place on the right for the female.

Purpose: holds Holy Water for blessing and consecrating, wine, cider or ale for drinking at the end of a ceremony and for the Great Rite – lowering the athame into the chalice symbolizing the union of God and Goddess.

**The Pentacle:** flat disk inscribed with a pentagram, the five-pointed star within a circle, placed in the center of the altar, representing the five elements – fire, water, earth, air and spirit.

Purpose: for magical protection and invocation

**Symbols of Deity:** colored candles, statues, sun and moon shapes, seashell or feather and stones or deer antler.

**Symbols of the Elements:** four directions – North/earth – salt, crystals, a bowl of soil, figures of a bear, wolf or stag, small potted plant. South/fire – candle, oil lamp, cactus or figure of a dragon, snake or lion. East/air – feather, incense, bell or figures of birds or butterflies. West/water – cup or bowl of water, seashells or symbols of fish and other water creators

**The Wand:** projector of energy, an instrument of invocation and healing -Purpose: used for casting and opening the circle The wand usually “finds” the owner.

<sup>46</sup> List is adapted from all sources.

**Handout / Overhead**

**The Wiccan Calendar**

- \*31 October – 1 November  
21-22 November
- \*20-23 December  
24-25 December  
15-16 January  
31 January-1 February
- \*2 February  
28 February –1 March
- \*20-23 March  
20-21 March  
31 March-1 April
- \*30 April-1 May  
29-30 May
- \*23-24 June  
19-20 July
- \*31 July-1 August  
12-13 August  
24-25 August
- \*21 September  
1-12 October

- Samhain /Halloween (a Sabbat)  
Musmass / St Cecilia – patron saint of music
- Yule / Winter Solstice (a Sabbat)  
Modranect  
Skillfest  
Brigid’s Day
- Imbolc (a Sabbat)  
Hearthday
- Ostara / Easter / Spring Equinox (a Sabbat)  
Alban Eilir  
Vertmass
- Beltaine /May Day (a Sabbat)  
Memory Day
- Midsummer (a Sabbat)  
Sunfest
- Lammas (a Sabbat)  
Diana’s Day  
Day of Tides
- Mabon Fall Equinox (a Sabbat)  
Eldmas

Phases of the moon are celebrated with Sabbats (holidays) shown below in the chart

**Yule (Winter Solstice)**

Circa December 21

**Year Begins Here**

Samhain Oct. 30  
(Halloween)

Imbolc Feb. 2  
(Spring Break)

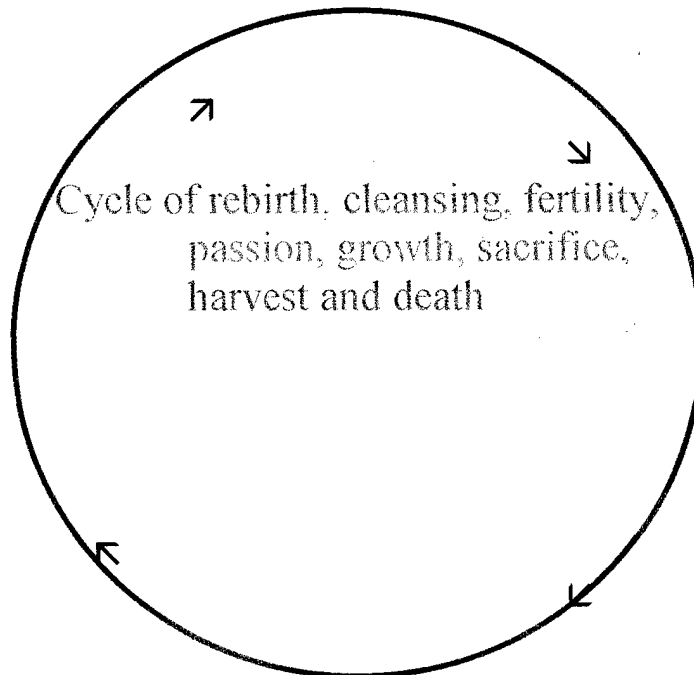
Mabon (Fall Equinox)

Circa Sept 21

Ostara(Spring  
Equinox)  
Circa March 21  
(Easter)

Lughanasadh August 1  
(Lammas / Harvest)

Beltaine May 1  
(May Day)



Mid-Summer (Solstice) Circa June 21

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# MALLEUS MALEFIC ARUM

THE FIRST PART TREATING OF THE THREE NECESSARY CONCOMITANTS OF WITCHCRAFT, WHICH ARE THE DEVIL, A WITCH, AND THE PERMISSION OF ALMIGHTY GOD

★

## PART I QUESTION I

*Here beginneth conspicuously the first part of this work. Question the First.*

**W**HETHER the belief that there are such beings as witches is so essential a part of the Catholic faith that obstinately to maintain the opposite opinion manifestly savours of heresy. And it is argued that a firm belief in witches is not a Catholic doctrine: see chapter 26, question 5, of the work of Episcopus: "Whoever

believes that any creature can be changed for the better or the worse, or transformed into another kind or likeness, except by the Creator of all things, is worse than a pagan and a heretic. And so when they report such things are done by witches it is not Catholic, but plainly heretical, to maintain this opinion.

Moreover, no operation of witchcraft has a permanent effect among us. And this is the proof thereof: For if it were so, it would be effected by the operation of demons. But to maintain that the devil has power to change human bodies or to do them permanent harm does not seem in accordance with the teaching of the Church. For in this way they could destroy the whole world, and bring it to utter confusion.

Moreover, every alteration that takes place in a human body—for example, a state of health or a state of sickness—can be brought down to a question of natural causes, as Aristotle has shown in his 7th book of *Physics*. And the greatest of these is the influence of the stars. But the devils cannot interfere with the movement of the stars. This is the opinion of Dionysius in his epistle to S. Polycarp. For this alone God can do. Therefore it is evident the demons

*"Cap. Episc. 26, qu. 5" — i.e. the Canon Episcopi*

Handout

Malleus Maleficarum – Scanned document is from an actual copy of the 1928 translation.

<http://malleusmaleficarum.org>

# Three Faces of the God<sup>47</sup>

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Association</b>	
The Horned One	Represents the Sun/Animal Life Mates with the Mother aspect of Goddess	Ensures another year of new life in the earth.
The Holly King		Ruler of the Winter
The Oak King		Ruler of Summer

<sup>47</sup> Adapted from <http://paganwiccan.about.com/religion/paganwiccan/library/weeklyaa071298.htm>

# Three Faces of the Goddess

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Association</b>	<b>Goddesses</b>
The Maiden	Young, unattached, full of potential. New Projects New moon, waxing to full moon.	Persephone (Goddess of spring) Diana (Moon Goddess - Huntress) Athena (Goddess of Wisdom, Love & War)
The Mother	Pregnant, fruitful, nurturing. Plans actualized Full moon	Demeter (Goddess of fertility) Gaia (Earth goddess) Isis (Mother of all creation)
The Crone	Wisdom Experience Widowhood Natural decline Death Waning moon - return to new moon	Hekate (Goddess of witchcraft & the night) Kali (Wife of Shiva she "eats" the negative) Cerridwen (Goddess of Reincarnation & brilliance)

Adapted from <http://paganwiccan.about.com/religion/paganwiccan/library/weeklyaa071298.htm>

**A Comparison Between Christianity and Wicca<sup>48</sup>**

God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit Patriarchal / Paternalistic	Triple Goddess – Maiden, Mother, Crone / God Matriarchal / Maternalistic (gender equality)
Tends to be exclusive – one true faith	Recognizes pluralism – all faiths are valid
Clergy are separate from laity	All are a part of the priesthood
Divine is separate from the world	Divine is inseparable from the world – all is divine
Belief in Resurrection	Belief in Reincarnation
Heaven – destination of saved souls	Summerland – resting place between incarnations
Baptism	Initiation
Hell - Satan	No equivalent / No Satan
Original Sin	No equivalent
Evangelism	No equivalent
Confession / Atonement / Redemption	Karma / 3-Fold Law – all actions for good or evil are returned to the doer three times.
Christening	Wiccanning
Hierarchical / Authoritarian	No hierarchy / Autonomous
Bible / Sacred Texts / Rituals	No sacred text / Rituals
No equivalent	Book of Shadows (notes on how magic is done)
Sabbath / Church Year	Sabbat / Lunar Festivals / Equinoxes
Marriage	Handfasting
Prophets / Saints /Messiah	No Equivalent
Daylight worship	Nocturnal worship– often outdoors
Churches / Congregations / Small Groups	Covens / Circles cast where convenient
10 Commandments	Wiccan Rede: “An it harm none, do what thou wilt.”
Visions / Dreams / Miracles / Prayer Psychic phenomenon generally discouraged	Psychic ability encouraged in the form of magic spells

<sup>48</sup> Provided by Earth Spirit Pagans of Colorado Springs, Colorado with some adaptations.

## Handout

### Ethical Principles of Wicca<sup>49</sup>

Wiccans agree on an ethical code of conduct described by the following sayings. A serious Wiccan holds these notions to be sacred in the sense that to harm others brings harm to oneself and destroys the ability to cast a spell that will be effective. A Witch who does not keep his or her word and actions pure is no Witch at all.<sup>50</sup>

#### **The Wiccan Rede –**

“And ye harm none, do as ye will.”

“Bide within the Law you must,  
In perfect Love and perfect Trust.  
Live you must and let to live,  
Fairly take and fairly give . . .”

#### **The Threefold Law –**

“What you do comes back to you threefold.”

#### **The Golden Rule –**

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Some criticism of the Rede comes from a misunderstanding that it allows one to do what feels good without responsibility. This is not the case. Harm is defined as physical, mental or psychic damage. A Witch believes in Karmic repercussions, the 3-Fold Law, which says that whatever act one commits that will return 3 times to the doer. Witches also believe that all things in the universe are connected and that what we do effects all of Life. While Wiccans are free to influence energies to accomplish a purpose, they are not free to manipulate people. The question, is it for the good of all, should be answered in the affirmative as the true measure of its worth.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Morgan, *Simple Wicca*, pages 9, 37, 150.

<sup>50</sup> Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, pages 35, 36, 265.

<sup>51</sup> From an unpublished paper courtesy of Heckate's Broom via Earth Spirit Pagans in Colorado Springs, Colorado

## Handout

### Rite of Consecration<sup>52</sup> -- Charging the Symbol with Magical Power

Supplies:

- Your ritual tools or any other objects that need charging (consecrating).
  
- The four symbolic elements used in consecrating
  - a. Incense
  - b. A red candle
  - c. A bowl of water
  - d. A dish of salt

### Body of the Ritual

Pass the tool through the smoke of the incense and say,  
“Inspired with air.”

Pass the tool (quickly!) through the flame of the candle and say,  
“Enlightened with fire.”

Sprinkle the tool with water and say,  
“Cleansed with water.”

Sprinkle the tool, or simply touch it to the salt and say,  
“Strengthened with earth.”

Hold the tool up in salute; picture the energy of the heavens permeating  
it with light and say,  
“Infused with Spirit.”

Set the tool down on the altar, and hold your hands over it in blessings and say,  
“By art made, by art changed.”

“This pentacle shall serve me in this world, between the  
worlds, and in all the worlds. In the name of the  
Goddess and of the God, I hereby consecrate the  
pentacle. So Mote It Be!”

This rite of consecration may remind the reader of the rites of the Church or synagogue when we dedicate our buildings, alters, and other items for use in our religious practice. While we do not see the articles as imbued with magical powers we do respect them as set aside for the holy work of the people.

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<sup>52</sup> Morgan, Simple Wicca, pages 133-134

## Handout / Overhead

### Songs and Blessings

#### For Musemass

Maiden, Mother, Wise One  
Goddess, Lady,  
Let your threefold grace  
Enfold our spirits  
And grant us threefold vision,  
Threefold truth,  
That we may praise  
Life's radiance in your ways.  
Sing in our minds and spirits.  
Bring us song.

#### For Yule      The Winter Solstice

This night once more  
The wheel begins  
The turning year  
Of the whole

That is of Earth,  
Air, Water, Fire,  
That is of Body  
And of Soul,

That is of all that lives above,  
Below, within,  
And near and far,

That is of Sun  
And of the Day,  
That is of Night  
And Moon and Star

And all the Names  
And all the Words

And all the breath  
Of all that breathes  
And that has breathed

All life, all life,  
And all is Life  
And is the Wheel  
That turns again.

Refrain:

We bless the turn that turns again.  
We praise the turn that turns again.  
We bless the turn in her Name and through  
ours in her we bless.

For further study see the Birth Blessing spell on page 90 of The Practice of Witchcraft Today by Robin Skelton)

## Bibliography – Partially Annotated

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2. Beth, Rae. The Wiccan Path: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner. Freedom, California The Crossing Press, Inc. 1990 and 1995 first U.S. edition.  
Rae Beth instructs two would be witches in the lunar year practices, the philosophy and magical understanding of Wicca. I found this book quite intriguing and informative especially regarding the more “magical” thinking involved in the practice.
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4. Bowman, Meg. Goddesses, Witches and the Paradigm Shift: Dramatic Readings of Feminist Issues, Vol. II. Sponsored by Women and Religion Task Force, A Committee of the Pacific Central District Unitarian Universalist Association. 1994.  
Self published works for congregational use. Contains readings, songs, ritual, dialogue, liturgies, poems, methods for casting a circle all of which are designed to teach the participants about the fundamentals of Goddess worship. This is a handbook for those who would like to learn about and incorporate Goddess understanding into their worship.
5. Christ, Carol. The Laughter of Aphrodite.  
Carol Christ tells her own story of moving from beliefs in the patriarchal God of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures to a new understanding of the Goddess and the need for her among women of today.
6. Cunningham, Scott. Wicca: A Guide for The Solitary Practitioner. St. Paul, Minnesota. Llewellyn Publications. 1988.  
This well written book is easy to follow and is recommended by many practitioners as a manual for learning the craft. Cunningham is clear and thoughtful in his representations of Wicca and especially in his explanation of magic and spells. The book contains symbols for spells and understanding divination by Runes.
7. Dee, Jonathan. Tarot: An Easy to Follow Illustrated Guide. Haldane Mason, London. Barnes & Noble Books. 1998.  
Tarot Cards and a simple guide to using them.
8. Ellis, Bill. Raising the Devil: Satanism, New Religions, and the Media. Lexington, Kentucky. The University Press of Kentucky. 2000.
9. Gray, William G. Evoking the Primal Goddess: Discovery of the Eternal Feminine Within. St. Paul, Minnesota, Llewellyn Publications, Inc. 1989.  
Gray writes about the biological finding that each individual is initially female prior to testosterone entering the fetus. He believes that we retain this internal feminine nature. The book contains references to rituals the practice of MEMAME (Blood mother).
10. Grimassi, Raven. The Wiccan Mysteries: Ancient Origins & Teachings. St. Paul, Minnesota, Llewellyn Publications. 2000.  
A how-to book that is somewhat confusing to a non-practitioner seeking to understand the religion.

11. Grimassi, Raven. Encyclopedia of Wicca and Witchcraft. St. Paul, Minnesota. Llewellyn Publications. 2000.  
This is an excellent resource for understanding the entirety of the Wicca system of belief and those who have shaped it. The book covers all aspects of ritual, belief, practice and history by alphabetical listing. Explanations are clear and straightforward. An extensive bibliography, publishers, web sites and organizations along with shops and mail order houses are listed in the back.
12. Lopez-Corvo, Rafael E. God is A Woman. Northvale, New Jersey, Jason Aronson, Inc. 1997.  
Part of the Gender in Crisis Series, Lopez-Corvo puts forth some unusual psychological reasons for women being involved in hurtful relationships and from that extrapolates that women do this because of something very mysterious and powerful. The need for reaction formation, says Lopez-Corvo, ameliorates this power. He makes the point of "Mary as Goddess" and the pagan women responding to Christianity because they could still worship the Goddess – Further reading is needed.
13. McGrath, Charles, trans. The Other Covenant: A Theology of Paganism by Maurier, Henri. New York, N.Y., Newman Press. 1965.  
Stamped by the Catholic Church as having sound Christian doctrine but not necessarily agreement with the ideas expressed. Maurier, a missionary, sees the need to educate Christians in the "Paganisms" so that naïve understanding does not lead one astray and can provide a bridge for discussion. – Further reading is needed.
14. Molnar, Thomas. The Pagan Temptation. Grand Rapids, Michigan, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1987.  
Molnar discusses the Pagan-Christian conflict, Neopagans, the occult.
15. Morgan, Michele. Simple Wicca. Berkley, California. Conari Press. 2000.  
This book is the clearest of current Wicca practices that I have found. The book is broken into eleven chapters that cover philosophy, history, basic beliefs and the holidays of the lunar year. There is also description of magical spells and the structure of ritual, rites and circles. Additional information is provided on websites. I have found this to be an excellent "handbook" for understanding the belief system.
16. Person, Joanne; Roberts, Richard H. and Samuel, Geoffrey eds. Nature Religion Today: Paganism in the Modern World, Edinburgh University Press, 1998
17. Russell, Jeffrey Burton. Witchcraft in the Middle Ages. Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London. 1972.  
Russell presents a historical perspective on Wiccan practice
18. Skelton, Robin. The Practice of Witchcraft Today: An Introduction to Beliefs and Rituals. New York. Citadel Press, Kensington Publishing Corp. 1990.  
This book answers a series of questions, which are generally asked about Wicca including such questions as "Do witches ride brooms?" and more serious inquires about the practice of magic. He also includes complete rituals, chants and spells. The book reminds me of those written about Judaism and Christianity, which try to answer basic questions of the faith and then offer some "standard" prayers and orders of worship.
19. Smith, John Holland. The Death of Classical Paganism. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons. 1976.

20. Tedschi, Robert F. Jr. Supplemental Text Sixth Edition. The U.S. Constitution and Fascinating Facts About It. Oak Hill Publishing Company. Naperville, IL. 1996.
  
21. Walker, Barbara G. The Skeptical Feminist: Discovering the Virgin, Mother, and Crone. San Francisco. Harper & Row, Publishers. 1987.  
Walker writes, "A feminist believes a world where socioreligious and legal systems are governed by women would be a more humane world than the present one, which is governed by me. There would be less greed, injustice, exploitation, and warfare. There would be more concern for posterity and also for the quality of life in the here and now." -- Further reading is necessary
  
22. Starhawk. Dreaming the Dark. Boston, Beacon Press. Boston, Mass. 1982, 1997.  
This work by Starhawk, one of the "Mothers" of the faith since it's resurgence in the early 1970's, is focusing on the philosophy of Wicca, it's magic and political / gender identification. Wicca is grounded in the lunar cycle and the earth differing from the "sky" religions, such as Christianity, which are simply spirit based and cut off from earth's grounding forces and necessity of nature and natural phenomenon.
  
23. Starhawk. Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess. San Francisco. Harper & Row, Publishers. 1989.
  
24. Starhawk. The Pagan Book of Living and Dying: Practical Rituals, Prayers, Blessings and Meditations on Crossing Over. San Francisco. Harper & Row, Publishers.
  
34. Starhawk. Circle Round: Raising Children in the Goddess Tradition. San Francisco. Harper & Row. Publishers. 1997.
  
35. Starkey, Marion. The Devil in Massachusetts. Garden City, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1949.

### **Web sites**

The Witches Voice <http://www.witchvox.com/> This site was recommended by many of the Wiccans I met and talked with about web sites.

The Covenant of the Goddess – <http://www.cog.org>

Military Pagans – <http://www.milpagan.org/articles/AFToct87.htm>

Military Pagans – <http://www.angelfire.com/nc/5s/me.html>

Free Press – <http://www.freep.com/news/religion/wchap8.htm>

Army – <http://hometown.aol.com/LadyRowann/armywicca.html>

Military Pagans – <http://hometown.aol.com/LadyRowann/milinfo.html>

### **Videotapes**

Women and Spirituality: Part I Goddess Remembered, Part II The Burning Times, Part III Full Circle. Videotapes by WinStar TV & Video. Wellspring Media. New York. 1999.

# Appendix

## Appendix I

Department of Defense DIRECTIVE NUMBER 1300.17 February 3, 1988

Administrative Reissuance Incorporating Change I, October 17, 1988

ASD(FM&P)

SUBJECT Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services

References: (a) DoD Directive 1300.17, subject as above, June 18, 1985 (hereby canceled)

(b) Public Law 98-525, section 554(d), DoD Authorization Act, 1985, October 19, 1984

(c) Public Law 100-180, section 508, DoD Authorization Act, 1988-89, December 4, 1987

(d) Title 10, United States Code, chapter 47, Uniform Code of Military Justice

### 1. REISSUANCE AND PURPOSE

This Directive reissues reference (a) and, pursuant to references (b) and (c), prescribes policy, procedures, and responsibilities for the accommodation of religious practices in the Military Services.

### 2. APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

2.1. This Directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Military Departments (including their National Guard and Reserve components), the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (OJCS), and DoD Field Activities.

2.2. The policies and procedures prescribed herein apply solely to the accommodation of religious practices in the Military Services and in no other context.

### 3. POLICY

3.1. A basic principle of our nation is free exercise of religion. The Department of Defense places a high value on the rights of members of the Armed Forces to observe the tenets of their respective religions. It is DoD policy that requests for accommodation of religious practices should be approved by commanders when accommodation will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, or discipline.

3.2. The following goals are to be used by the Military Departments in the development of guidance on the exercise of command discretion concerning the accommodation of religious practices. Nothing in these goals or in the implementing rules of the Military Departments (except when expressly provided therein) shall be interpreted as requiring a specific form of accommodation in individual circumstances.

3.2.1. Worship services, holy days, and Sabbath observances should be accommodated, except when precluded by military necessity.

3.2.2. The Military Departments should include religious belief as one factor for consideration when granting separate rations, and permit commanders to authorize individuals to provide their own supplemental food rations in a field or "at sea" environment to accommodate their religious beliefs.

3.2.3. The Military Departments should consider religious beliefs as a factor for waiver of immunizations, subject to medical risks to the unit and military requirements, such as alert status and deployment potential.

3.2.4. The Military Departments should include relevant materials on religious traditions, practices, and policies in the curricula for command, judge advocate, chaplain, and similar courses and orientations.

3.2.5. The Military Departments should develop a statement advising of DoD policy on individual religious practices and military requirements to applicants for commissioning, enlistment, and reenlistment.

3.2.6. Religious items or articles not visible or otherwise apparent may be worn with the uniform, provided they shall not interfere with the performance of the member's military duties, as discussed in subparagraph 3.2.7.5., below, or interfere with the proper wearing of any authorized article of the uniform.

3.2.7. Under Public Law 100-180, section 508 (reference (c)), members of the Armed Forces may wear visible items of religious apparel while in uniform, except *DODD 1300.17, February 3, 1988* under circumstances in which an item is not neat and conservative or its wearing shall interfere with the performance of the member's military duties.

3.2.7.1. Under this Directive, "religious apparel" is defined as articles of clothing worn as part of the doctrinal or traditional observance of the religious faith practiced by the member. Hair and grooming practices required or observed by religious groups are not included within the meaning of religious apparel. Jewelry bearing religious inscriptions or otherwise indicating religious affiliation or belief is subject to existing Service uniform regulations just as jewelry that is not of a religious nature.

3.2.7.2. In the context of the wearing of a military uniform, "neat and conservative" items of religious apparel are those that:

3.2.7.2.1. Are discreet, tidy, and not dissonant or showy in style, size, design, brightness, or color.

3.2.7.2.2. Do not replace or interfere with the proper wearing of any authorized article of the uniform.

3.2.7.2.3. Are not temporarily or permanently affixed or appended to any authorized article of the uniform.

3.2.7.3. The standards in subparagraph 3.2.7.2., above, are intended to serve as a basis for determining a member's entitlement under Public Law 100-80, section 508 (reference (c)), to wear religious apparel with the uniform. For example, unless prohibited by subparagraph 3.2.7.6., below, a Jewish yarmulke may be worn with the uniform whenever a military cap, hat, or other headgear is not prescribed. A yarmulke may also be worn underneath military headgear as long as it does not interfere with the proper wearing, functioning, or appearance of the prescribed headgear.

3.2.7.4. Exceptions to the standards in subparagraph 3.2.7.2., above, and other special accommodations for members of particular religious groups may be granted by the Military Departments under section 4., below.

3.2.7.5. Whether an item of religious apparel interferes with the performance of the member's military duties depends on the characteristics of the item, the circumstances of its intended wear, and the particular nature of the member's duties. Factors in determining if an item of religious apparel interferes with military duties include, but are not limited to, whether the item may :*DODD 1300.17, February 3, 1988*

3.2.7.5.1. Impair the safe and effective operation of weapons, military equipment, or machinery.

3.2.7.5.2. Pose a health or safety hazard to the wearer or others .

3.2.7.5.3. Interfere with the wearing or proper functioning of special or protective clothing or equipment (e.g., helmets, flack jackets, flight suits, camouflaged uniforms, gas masks, wet suits, and crash and rescue equipment).

3.2.7.5.4. Otherwise impair the accomplishment of the military mission.

3.2.7.6. A complete prohibition on the wearing of any visible items of religious apparel may be appropriate under unique circumstances in which the member's duties, the military mission, or the maintenance of discipline require absolute uniformity. For example, members may be prohibited from wearing visible religious apparel while wearing historical or ceremonial uniforms; participating in review formations, parades, honor or color guards, and similar ceremonial details and *functions*.

3.2.7.7. *The* authority to approve the wearing of an item of religious apparel with the uniform, under the guidelines of this paragraph, shall be exercised at the command level specified by each Military Department. Denials of requests to wear religious apparel shall be subject to review at the Service

Headquarters level. Final review shall occur within 30 days following the date of initial denial for cases

arising in the United States, and within 60 days for all other cases. Exceptions to these deadlines shall be limited to exigent circumstances, such as extended deployment. Service members shall be obliged to comply with orders prohibiting the wearing of questionable items of religious apparel pending review of such orders under regulations issued by the Secretaries of the Military Departments.

3.2.8. Notwithstanding paragraphs 3.2.6. and 3.2.7., above, chaplains may wear any required religious apparel or accouterments with the uniform while conducting worship services and during the performance of rites and rituals distinct to their faith groups.

#### 4. PROCEDURES

4.1. Under rules prescribed by the Secretary of the Military Department *DODD 1300.17, February 3, 1988*

4 concerned, military commanders should consider the following factors along with any other factors deemed appropriate in determining whether to grant a request for accommodation of religious practices addressed in section 3., above:

4.1.1. The importance of military requirements in terms of individual and unit readiness, health and safety, discipline, morale, and cohesion.

4.1.2. The religious importance of the accommodation to the requester.

4.1.3. The cumulative impact of repeated accommodations of a similar nature.

4.1.4. Alternative means available to meet the requested accommodation.

4.1.5. Previous treatment of the same or similar requests, including treatment of similar requests made for other than religious reasons.

4.2. The factors in subsection 4.1., above, are intended to promote standard procedure for resolving difficult questions involving accommodation of religious practices. In view of the different mission requirements of each command, individual consideration of specific requests for accommodation is necessary. With the exception of requests involving the wearing of visible items of religious apparel with the uniform, denials of which must be reviewed at the Service Headquarters level, the appropriate

level of command for resolution of these issues shall be determined by each of the Military Departments, based on its particular requirements and circumstances.

4.3. When requests for accommodation are not in the best interest of the unit and continued tension *between the unit's requirements and the individual's religious beliefs is apparent*, administrative actions should be considered. These actions may include, but are not limited to, assignment, reassignment, reclassification, or separation. Nothing in this Directive precludes action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (reference (d)) in appropriate circumstances.

#### 5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. The Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Personnel) shall be responsible for the administration of this Directive and may modify or supplement this Directive, as appropriate.

5.2. The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall be responsible for issuance of appropriate implementing documents and administration of the rules thereunder *DODD 1300.17, February 3, 1988* within their respective Departments.

#### 6. EFFECTIVE DATE AND IMPLEMENTATION

This Directive is effective immediately. The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall forward two copies of implementing documents to the days of the issuance of this Directive or any subsequent change.

*DODD 1300.17, February 3, 1988*

## Appendix II

### Official Documentation from the Air Force Regarding Free Exercise and Accommodation

#### POSITION PAPER ON THE FREE EXERCISE OF RELIGION

#### THROUGH WORSHIP IN AIR FORCE CHAPELS

1. Compliance with AFI 52-101, Chaplain Service Responsibilities and Procedures is mandatory. Our response to an increasingly pluralistic Air Force community is framed by the constitutional mandate to provide for the free exercise of religion. While our opportunities increase due to diversity, so do challenges in fashioning comprehensive chapel programs. Worship - central to who we are and what we offer - needs to be an area of depth and clarity. This paper outlines considerations consistent with AFI 52-101 regarding chapel worship services.
2. The Chaplain Service is solely responsible for worship on Air Force bases, installations and sites. Worship should address faith group requirements, local needs, Chaplain Service staff capabilities and available resources. Whenever possible, chaplains conduct the worship. To lead worship whenever possible should be the mindset of all chaplains. This is certainly applicable in regard to those worship services regularly encountered as part of a "basic" chapel program. For Protestant chaplains, special care must be given to the types and styles of worship commonly offered in response to a broad population. These include: Gospel, Contemporary, Liturgical, Praise and others. Similarly, Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox and Islamic chaplains personally lead worship to the fullest extent possible. Instances where assigned chaplains cannot personally conduct the worship due to ecclesiastic prohibitions or clearly defined matters of conscience, should be exceptions to the rule. Convenience and personal inclination are not appropriate considerations.
3. In circumstances when it is not possible for a chaplain to conduct a particular worship service, the chaplain's responsibility for the worship service is not diminished. Therefore, it is mandatory that a member of the Chaplain Service be present or available to monitor all worship services and to offer support or assistance as needed. This is not a "policing" function. Rather, we express good will by our willingness to facilitate the religious requirements of our people. We are committed to the goal of free exercise of religion, and we respond through active involvement by directly supporting that which we cannot directly provide. We must not walk away from, or set on "auto-pilot," any assembly of persons gathered for worship. Chaplain Service support and oversight must be clearly determined and provided by the Wing Chaplain or equivalent. The worship leader, if other than a chaplain, must be identified and appointed by the Wing Chaplain or equivalent.
4. Pluralism and the demands of accommodation make it impossible to state a singular canon for determining the acceptability of a non-chaplain to lead a worship service. The following is offered as a deliberate way to address this issue.
  - a. First, consult the standards and guidance provided by the religious endorsing agencies recognized by the Department of Defense. Many endorsing agencies are quite specific in authorizing lay leaders. When using denominational/faith group titles for worship services, confirm that the worship leaders are, in fact, recognized. This has legal as well as theological implications. If the request comes from an individual or a group not having an endorsing agency recognized by the Department of Defense:
  - b. Consider if the request requires authorization through licensing or other similar means. This is applicable to worship which is particular to groups or para-church organizations that have copyright claims to names, titles or resources. Be certain that a worship service is not given a name/title that implies a contractual agreement with an incorporated body unless that agreement has been accomplished legally. If this approach does not apply:
  - c. Seek to obtain a letter of certification from the appropriate faith group or religious authority. Assure that the certifying agent is accurately identified (this should be done in consultation with the person requesting an appointment to lead worship). Avoid misleading uses of names or identifiers in reference to specific religions or traditions. When a request for accommodation comes to us and it is difficult to determine faith

group or denominational authority, care should be taken. With an emphasis on pastoral concern, seek a common understanding for determining who might be appropriate to contact for certification. This should be clearly represented as a way to enable accommodation rather than a roadblock erected to discourage religious expression. It may become clear that obtaining certification is excessively complex or impossible. Do not assume, in these instances, that you cannot accommodate the need presented. Saying, "I do not have an acceptable certification for you" is not the last word to a sincere request for accommodation. If this approach does not apply:

c. One person must be identified as the "leader" of the worship to provide the Chaplain Service with a responsible point of contact. The identified worshippers can choose a worship leader. There should be clarity concerning the style, practices of worship and beliefs to allow for agreement among those who will gather. The worship service must not be given a name or title that is confusing or misleading to those outside of the group. If this does not apply:

d. Consider other avenues for the religious accommodation of the individual making the request.

5. In those instances where someone other than a chaplain is authorized to conduct worship, the Wing Chaplain or equivalent should also:

- a. fully brief the worship leader on requirements, restrictions, prohibitions and expectations;
- b. meet regularly with the worship leader, at least monthly;
- c. continually review the level of chaplain involvement in the worship;
- d. consider auxiliary support and USAFR/ANG chaplains-;
- e. convey unique and enduring requirements to HQ AFPC/DPAH;
- f. maintain a spirit of accommodation by facilitating and improving worship opportunities (for example, PTDY may be authorized for worship leader enrichment).

## **Appendix III Air Force Chaplain Regulations on Accommodation**

**3.1. Religious Accommodation:** Chaplains accommodate requests for chaplain services and/or support for religious practices unless the specific accommodation is logistically impossible or prohibited by law or policy (See Para 5, Advising Leadership). If a specific request is denied, the chaplain remains pastorally responsible for pursuing alternative means for accommodation.

### **3.2. Religious Observances:**

**3.2.1. Religious Holy Days:** Chaplains perform or provide Holy Day observances and advise commanders, first sergeants, and other military and civilian leaders regarding these observances.

**3.2.2. Worship:** Wing chaplains (or chaplains-in-charge) with their staffs, plan and implement worship opportunities and schedules in response to local needs assessments, religious requirements, staff capabilities, and available resources.

**3.2.2.1.** Chaplains will conduct services that are within the scope of their personal faith tenets and religious convictions.

**3.2.2.2.** Worship services may be designed by chaplains in response to a broad population possessing common beliefs and desiring a specific style of worship. The terms "liturgical," "traditional," "contemporary," "gospel," and "praise" are exclusively used to identify chaplain-led worship of a particular style designed to meet the needs inclusive of several denominations and/or a broad population. Chaplain leadership ensures attentiveness to needs and sensitivity to the diversity of those attending these worship services. Services must be advertised and promoted by style, character, and doctrinal content.

**3.2.2.3.** Where there is a need for worship that the assigned chaplains cannot provide, the Chaplain Service staff will be augmented with qualified and capable personnel. Following is the process to obtain worship leaders:

**3.2.2.3.1.** Consult the standards and guidance provided by the religious agencies certified by the Department of Defense. When using denominational/faith group titles for worship services, confirm the worship leaders are certified. If this does not apply, go to 3.2.2.3.2.

**3.2.2.3.2.** Determine whether the religious organization requires authorization through licensing, certification, or other similar means, and obtain documentation from the appropriate religious organization or authority. Ensure the certifying agent is accurately identified. If this does not apply, go to 3.2.2.3.3.

**3.2.2.3.3.** Worshippers may, in consultation and with approval by the Wing chaplain (or chaplain-in-charge), choose a leader to serve as the Chaplain Service point of contact. There must be clarity concerning the belief and practices of worship to allow for agreement among those who will gather. The worship service must not be given a name or title that is confusing or misleading to those outside the group.

**3.2.2.3.4.** In those instances where someone other than a chaplain is authorized to conduct worship, the Wing chaplain (or chaplain-in-charge) will:

**3.2.2.3.4.1.** Fully brief the worship leader on requirements, restrictions, prohibitions, and expectations.

**3.2.2.3.4.2.** Meet at least monthly with the worship leader to review programs and enhance worship opportunities

## Appendix IV

### Witches, Pagans Cast Aside Shroud Of Secrecy

Copyright © Air Force Times -- October 26, 1987

"WASHINGTON - Military members who practice witchcraft and paganism are emerging from secrecy to demand respect for their civil rights and increased recognition from the armed services.

In interviews with Air Force Times, military witch and pagan activists said they want time off for their major religious holidays. Some said they want dog tags that state "Pagan" or "Wicca" as their religious preference. Other pagans and witches said they need chaplains who understand pre-Christian beliefs and who can help them form worship groups at remote duty locations.

Signs of the new assertiveness appeared this fall in Europe, when some witches and pagans formed a network called the Farwanderer Military Pagan Fellowship. Air Force SSGt Lorie A. Johnson said she placed an announcement in European Stars and Stripes to recruit fellowship members.

"The goal is to let military pagans know they're not alone," Johnson said, and "to show the military that we're not just a bunch of scattered weirdos."

Johnson is assigned to the 601st Tactical Control Wing at Sembach AB, Germany. She said she is a witch, but added that witches prefer to call themselves Wiccans. Their religion is called Wicca.

Wiccans are considered pagans because they worship several nature gods instead of a single god, according to the Army's chaplain handbook. They also believe in psychic powers and hold rituals according to lunar cycle. Other pagan groups include Druids, who base their rituals on solar cycles, and worshippers of the Norse gods, of the ancient Vikings.

Military witches and pagans have tended to practice their religion secretly - so secretly, in fact, that many people outside the pagan subculture are startled to learn that it exists. Some people deny that paganism is a religion find pagan rituals offensive. *But the pagans who were interviewed said their religion is serious and their problems are real.* Those problems include choosing whether to keep their beliefs a secret from commanders and co-workers, unwelcome solicitations from people who try to convert them to Christianity, and harassment by those who erroneously regard pagans as devil-worshippers.

No one knows how many of the estimated 30,000 to 40,000 pagans in the United States are military members. In a December, 1986 Department of Defense survey, 10,487 military members marked "other religion" as their preference instead of choosing one of the 250 faith groups on the questionnaire. That was less than 1 percent of the 2.1 million who responded. Officially, the military takes a neutral view of pagan activity in the ranks. "We acknowledge their right to exist," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) William L. Hugham, a spokesman for the Army chief of chaplains office at the Pentagon.

A 1984 Department of Defense directive allows any religious faith group to apply for recognition as an "ecclesiastical endorsing agent." This status allows a faith to seek chaplain commissions, among other things. Pagan and Wiccan groups are welcome to apply to the Armed Forces Chaplains Board for endorsing status, said Chaplain (Col.) John Mann (USAF), the board's executive director. However, Wiccans and pagans acknowledge that their groups probably are too loosely organized to meet DoD criteria.

Even without official recognition, Mann said, military pagans are entitled to support from more than 3,400 active-duty Catholic, Protestant or Jewish chaplains. "The military chaplaincy exists to provide for the free exercise of religion," he said. But as long as the armed services don't count pagans, separately, they can continue to ignore pagans' needs, Johnson said. The military also tolerates a climate that makes many pagans afraid to exercise their rights openly, said Sgt LaVern Bentz (USArmy), a Wiccan assigned to the 284th Military Police Company in Frankfurt, Germany. "You have these commanders who don't want to rock the boat," Bentz said. "So they tend to look at (paganism) as not part of the norm - is not uniform."

"Then your assignments start getting changed. They put you on the back burner somewhere in a nice little office... To me, this is very wrong."

Bentz, a four-year Army veteran, said he started getting "rotten" job assignments after he revealed his beliefs to his previous unit commander. Then enlisted soldiers stopped listening to what Bentz said, or jokingly asked if he could cast a good-weather spell for their next field exercise, he said.

Despite the problems, Bentz said, he managed to get transferred to a unit where no one cares that he is a witch. he has since joined the Farwandere Fellowship and hopes that other pagans will follow.

"Most of them are finally coming out of the closet and saying: The military is the pinnacle of what we believe in - freedom of religion - so why are we afraid to reveal our beliefs?" Bentz said.

But other pagans have chosen to keep a low profile. Jack (not his real name), a Navy hospital corpsman second class stationed in the Deep South, said secrecy protects his family.

"If I were a civilian and things got hot, I could always pick up and leave," he said. "Being in the Navy, I can't do that." Jack said he might consider practicing Wicca openly if he were stationed on a ship, because everyone aboard would be subject to Navy discipline and regulations that protect freedom of religion. On shore, however, Jack said he feels intimidated by vocal Christian fundamentalists on and off base. The Klu Klux Klan is still active in the civilian community, he added.

Jack and his wife did attend a workshop for military pagans last summer at Barneveld, Wis. The worship had about eight participants and was sponsored by Circle Sanctuary, a 10-year old Wiccan church that claims 15,000 members.

Some pagans find that their religious implements are banned in barracks, said J. Gordon Melton, a professor who heads the University of California at Santa Barbara's Institute for the Study of American Religion.

For example, Melton said, some bases ban incense because it is sometimes used to cover the smell of marijuana. Candles may be considered a fire hazard. And the Wiccan ritual knife, the athame, may be considered an unauthorized weapon.

The estimate of 30,000 to 40,000 pagans in the United States comes from Melton's research.

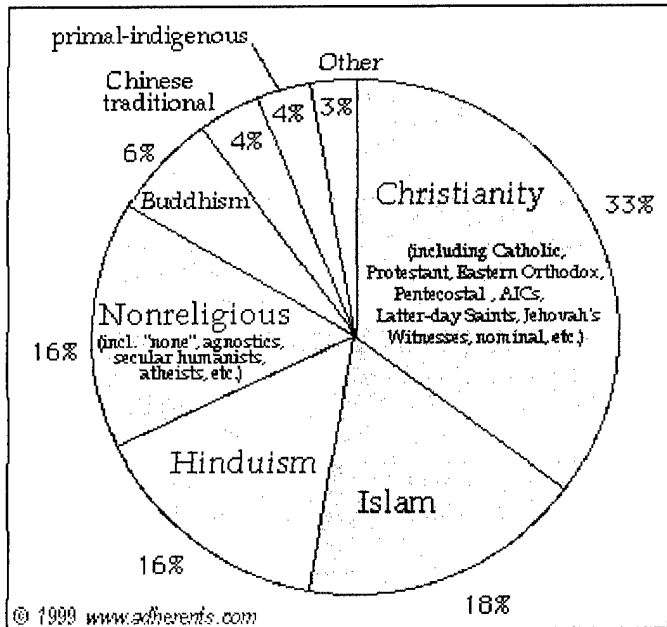
Wiccans and pagans don't try to convert others to their religion, but many feel harassed by the well-intentioned efforts of some Christians to "save" them from sin, said Kim Rayworth, the wife of an Air Force major at Incirlik AB, Turkey. Rayworth said she and her husband have been Wiccans since 1970.

Last summer, Rayworth said, she woke up one morning to find a large wooden cross planted in the front yard of her on-base home. She could have made a formal complaint to the base commander but chose to ignore the incident, she said. A neighbor also tried to hang crosses around Rayworth's daughter's neck, Rayworth said.

"At the age of 7, she had accumulated nine crosses from (the) neighbor," Rayworth said. "I finally told her, 'I don't need your crosses. Please don't push your religion on my daughter.'"

## Appendix V Chart<sup>53</sup> Major Religions of the World

Ranked by Number of Adherents



Last modified 28 January 2001.

*(Sizes shown are approximate estimates, and are here mainly for the purpose of ordering the groups, not providing a definitive number. This list is sociological/statistical in perspective.)*

1. Christianity: 2 billion
2. Islam: 1.3 billion
3. Hinduism: 900 million
4. Secular/Nonreligious/Agnostic/Atheist: 850 million
5. Buddhism: 360 million
6. Chinese traditional religion: 225 million
7. primal-indigenous: 190 million
8. Sikhism: 23 million
9. Yoruba religion: 20 million
10. Juche: 19 million
11. Spiritism: 14 million
12. Judaism: 14 million
13. Babi & Baha'i faiths: 6 million
14. Jainism: 4 million
15. Shinto: 4 million
16. Cao Dai: 3 million
17. Tenrikyo: 2.4 million
18. Neo-Paganism: 1 million
19. Unitarian-Universalism: 800 thousand
20. Scientology: 750 thousand
21. Rastafarianism: 700 thousand
22. Zoroastrianism: 150 thousand

<sup>53</sup> [webmaster@adherents.com](mailto:webmaster@adherents.com). This document is copyright © 2001 by Adherents.com.

The adherent counts presented in the list above are estimates of the number of people who have at least a minimal level of self-identification as adherents of the religion. [Adherents.com](http://Adherents.com) database

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**Neo-Paganism:** Neo-Paganism is an umbrella term for modern revivals of ancient ethnic and magickal traditions. These are usually polytheistic, but many Neo-Pagans consider their faith pantheistic. Subdivisions within Neo-Paganism include Wicca, Magick, Druidism, Asatru, neo-Native American religion, Demonology and others.

Only recently has Neo-Paganism become a movement of any significant size and visibility. Solid statistics on Neo-Paganism on a worldwide scale are essentially non-existent, but it is a rapidly growing religion/religious category. Estimates regarding its worldwide size range widely--from under one hundred thousand to over four million. Independent surveys and government-based figures are not indicative of the higher estimates provided by Neo-Pagan and Wiccan organizations, but there may be a variety of reasons for this.

There are two reasons why some might argue that Neo-Paganism should not be listed as a major religion on this page: 1) It might be said that *Neo-Paganism is not a single religion, but an umbrella term for many disparate religions*. But upon closer examination of the movement, one finds that despite drawing upon such disparate sources as European witchcraft, Norse mythology, Druidism, and Egyptian, Greek, and Native American ancient religions, Neo-Pagans as a whole have a remarkably cohesive, identifiable culture and generally shared value set, even more so than religions such as Christianity, Islam or Judaism when taken as a whole. 2) It could also be said that *Neo-Paganism could be classified as a subset of primal-indigenous religion*. Though it has roots in primal ethnic religions, Neo-Paganism is something distinct, clearly drawing much of its identity from Gardnerian principles introduced in the 1930s. Neo-Paganism is distinct from the primal ethnic religions of ancient pre-industrial societies just as Buddhism has roots in, but is distinct from, Hinduism (or Baha'i Faiths and Islam). So we are including Neo-Paganism on this list because the most recent sociological work in the field indicates it is a distinct religion, and because it is increasingly significant.

There were 768,400 Neo-pagans (largest subset were Wiccans) in the U.S. in the year 2000, according to the Wiccan/Pagan Poll, conducted by the Covenant of the Goddess (CoG) beginning in late July, 1999. [Online source: [http://www.cog.org/cogpoll\\_final.html](http://www.cog.org/cogpoll_final.html)]

**New Age:** New Age is an incredibly eclectic category, not a single religion. Although a large number of people hold beliefs which have been categorized as New Age, or participate in New Age practices, only a tiny percentage of people actually identify "New Age" as their religion. At this point "New Age" is more the umbrella term for a broad movement, rather than a religion. Some previous enthusiasts of New Age movements now prefer to be called pagans or Neo-Pagans.<sup>54</sup>

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## Appendix VI

JANUARY 2001

The Scholars and the Goddess

Historically speaking, the "ancient" rituals of the Goddess movement are almost certainly bunk

by Charlotte Allen

WICCA, sometimes known as the Goddess movement, Goddess spirituality, or the Craft, appears to be the fastest-growing religion in America. Thirty years ago only a handful of Wiccans existed. One scholar has estimated that there are now more than 200,000 adherents of Wicca and related "neopagan" faiths in the United States, the country where neopaganism, like many formal religions, is most flourishing. Wiccans -- who may also call themselves Witches (the capital W is meant to distance them from the word's negative connotations, because Wiccans neither worship Satan nor practice the sort of malicious magic traditionally associated with witches) or just plain pagans (often with a capital P) -- tend to be white, middle-class, highly educated, and politically involved in liberal and environmental causes. About a third of them are men. Wiccan services have been held on at least fifteen U.S. military bases and ships.

Many come to Wicca after reading *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (1979), a best-selling introduction to Wiccan teachings and rituals written by Starhawk (née Miriam Simos), a Witch (the term she prefers) from California. Starhawk offers a vivid summary of the history of the faith, explaining that witchcraft is "perhaps the oldest religion extant in the West" and that it began "more than thirty-five thousand years ago," during the last Ice Age. The religion's earliest adherents worshipped two deities, one of each sex: "the Mother Goddess, the birthgiver, who brings into existence all life," and the "Horned God," a male hunter who died and was resurrected each year. Male shamans "dressed in skins and horns in identification with the God and the herds," but priestesses "presided naked, embodying the fertility of the Goddess." All over prehistoric Europe people made images of the Goddess, sometimes showing her giving birth to the "Divine Child -- her consort, son, and seed." They knew her as a "triple Goddess" -- practitioners today usually refer to her as maiden, mother, crone -- but fundamentally they saw her as one deity. Each year these prehistoric worshippers celebrated the seasonal cycles, which led to the "eight feasts of the Wheel": the solstices, the equinoxes, and four festivals -- Imbolc (February 2, now coinciding with the Christian feast of Candlemas), Beltane (May Day), Lammas or Lughnasad (in early August), and Samhain (our Halloween).

This nature-attuned, woman-respecting, peaceful, and egalitarian culture prevailed in what is now Western Europe for thousands of years, Starhawk wrote, until Indo-European invaders swept across the region, introducing warrior gods, weapons designed for killing human beings, and patriarchal civilization. Then came Christianity, which eventually insinuated itself among Europe's ruling elite. Still, the "Old Religion" lived, often in the guise of Christian practices.

Starting in the fourteenth century, Starhawk argued, religious and secular authorities began a 400-year campaign to eradicate the Old Religion by exterminating suspected adherents, whom they accused of being in league with the devil. Most of the persecuted were women, generally those outside the social norm -- not only the elderly and mentally ill but also midwives, herbal healers, and natural leaders, those women whose independent ways were seen as a threat. During "the Burning Times,"

Starhawk wrote, some nine million were executed. The Old Religion went more deeply underground, its traditions passed down secretly in families and among trusted friends, until it resurfaced in the twentieth century. Like their ancient forebears, Wiccans revere the Goddess, practice shamanistic magic of a harmless variety, and celebrate the eight feasts, or sabbats, sometimes in the nude.

Subject to slight variations, this story is the basis of many hugely popular Goddess handbooks. It also informs the writings of numerous secular feminists -- Gloria Steinem, Marilyn French, Barbara Ehrenreich, Deirdre English -- to whom the ascendancy of "the patriarchy" or the systematic terrorization of strong, independent women by means of witchcraft trials are historical givens. Moreover, elements of the story suffuse a broad swath of the intellectual and literary fabric of the past hundred years, from James Frazer's *The Golden Bough* and Robert Graves's *The White Goddess* to the novels of D. H. Lawrence, from the writings of William Butler Yeats and T. S. Eliot to Jungian psychology and the widely viewed 1988 public-television series *The Power of Myth*.

In all probability, not a single element of the Wiccan story is true. The evidence is overwhelming that Wicca is a distinctly new religion, a 1950s concoction influenced by such things as Masonic ritual and a late-nineteenth-century fascination with the esoteric and the occult, and that various assumptions informing the Wiccan view of history are deeply flawed. Furthermore, scholars generally agree that there is no indication, either archaeological or in the written record, that any ancient people ever worshipped a single, archetypal goddess -- a conclusion that strikes at the heart of Wiccan belief.

In the past few years two well-respected scholars have independently advanced essentially the same theory about Wicca's founding. In 1998 Philip G. Davis, a professor of religion at the University of Prince Edward Island, published *Goddess Unmasked: The Rise of Neopagan Feminist Spirituality*, which argued that Wicca was the creation of an English civil servant and amateur anthropologist named Gerald B. Gardner (1884-1964). Davis wrote that the origins of the Goddess movement lay in an interest among the German and French Romantics -- mostly men -- in natural forces, especially those linked with women. Gardner admired the Romantics and belonged to a Rosicrucian society called the Fellowship of Crotona -- a group that was influenced by several late-nineteenth-century occultist groups, which in turn were influenced by Freemasonry. In the 1950s Gardner introduced a religion he called (and spelled) Wica. Although Gardner claimed to have learned Wiccan lore from a centuries-old coven of witches who also belonged to the Fellowship of Crotona, Davis wrote that no one had been able to locate the coven and that Gardner had invented the rites he trumpeted, borrowing from rituals created early in the twentieth century by the notorious British occultist Aleister Crowley, among others. Wiccans today, by their own admission, have freely adapted and embellished Gardner's rites.

In 1999 Ronald Hutton, a well-known historian of pagan British religion who teaches at the University of Bristol, published *The Triumph of the Moon*. Hutton had conducted detailed research into the known pagan practices of prehistory, had read Gardner's unpublished manuscripts, and had interviewed many of Gardner's surviving contemporaries. Hutton, like Davis, could find no conclusive evidence of the coven from which Gardner said he had learned the Craft, and argued that the "ancient" religion Gardner claimed to have discovered was a *mélange* of material from relatively modern sources. Gardner seems to have drawn on the work of two people: Charles Godfrey Leland, a nineteenth-century amateur American folklorist who professed to have found a surviving cult of the goddess Diana in Tuscany, and Margaret Alice Murray, a British Egyptologist who herself drew on Leland's ideas and, beginning in the 1920s, created a detailed framework of ritual and belief. From his own experience Gardner included such Masonic staples as blindfolding, initiation, secrecy, and

"degrees" of priesthood. He incorporated various Tarot-like paraphernalia, including wands, chalices, and the five-pointed star, which, enclosed in a circle, is the Wiccan equivalent of the cross.

Gardner also wove in some personal idiosyncrasies. One was a fondness for linguistic archaisms: "thee," "thy," "'tis," "Ye Bok of ye Art Magical." Another was a taste for nudism: Gardner had belonged to a nudist colony in the 1930s, and he prescribed that many Wiccan rituals be carried out "skyclad." This was a rarity even among occultists: no ancient pagan religion is known, or was thought in Gardner's time, to have regularly called for its rites to be conducted in the nude. Some Gardnerian innovations have sexual and even bondage-and-discipline overtones. Ritual sex, which Gardner called "The Great Rite," and which was also largely unknown in antiquity, was part of the liturgy for Beltane and other feasts (although most participants simulated the act with a dagger -- another of Gardner's penchants -- and a chalice). Other rituals called for the binding and scourging of initiates and for administering "the fivefold kiss" to the feet, knees, "womb" (according to one Wiccan I spoke with, a relatively modest spot above the pubic bone), breasts, and lips.

Hutton effectively demolished the notion, held by Wiccans and others, that fundamentally pagan ancient customs existed beneath medieval Christian practices. His research reveals that outside of a handful of traditions, such as decorating with greenery at Yuletide and celebrating May Day with flowers, no pagan practices -- much less the veneration of pagan gods -- have survived from antiquity. Hutton found that nearly all the rural seasonal pastimes that folklorists once viewed as "timeless" fertility rituals, including the Maypole dance, actually date from the Middle Ages or even the eighteenth century. There is now widespread consensus among historians that Catholicism thoroughly permeated the mental world of medieval Europe, introducing a robust popular culture of saints' shrines, devotions, and even charms and spells. The idea that medieval revels were pagan in origin is a legacy of the Protestant Reformation.

Hutton has also pointed out a lack of evidence that either the ancient Celts or any other pagan culture celebrated all the "eight feasts of the Wheel" that are central to Wiccan liturgy. "The equinoxes seem to have no native pagan festivals behind them and became significant only to occultists in the nineteenth century," Hutton told me. "There is still no proven pagan feast that stood as ancestor to Easter" -- a festival that modern pagans celebrate as Ostara, the vernal equinox.

Historians have overturned another basic Wiccan assumption: that the group has a history of persecution exceeding even that of the Jews. The figure Starhawk cited -- nine million executed over four centuries -- derives from a late-eighteenth-century German historian; it was picked up and disseminated a hundred years later by a British feminist named Matilda Gage and quickly became Wiccan gospel (Gardner himself coined the phrase "the Burning Times"). Most scholars today believe that the actual number of executions is in the neighborhood of 40,000. The most thorough recent study of historical witchcraft is *Witches and Neighbors* (1996), by Robin Briggs, a historian at Oxford University. Briggs pored over the documents of European witch trials and concluded that most of them took place during a relatively short period, 1550 to 1630, and were largely confined to parts of present-day France, Switzerland, and Germany that were already racked by the religious and political turmoil of the Reformation. The accused witches, far from including a large number of independent-minded women, were mostly poor and unpopular. Their accusers were typically ordinary citizens (often other women), not clerical or secular authorities. In fact, the authorities generally disliked trying witchcraft cases and acquitted more than half of all defendants. Briggs also discovered that none of the accused witches who were found guilty and put to death had been charged specifically with practicing a pagan religion.

If Internet chat rooms are any indication, some Wiccans cling tenaciously to the idea of themselves as institutional victims on a large scale. Generally speaking, though, Wiccans appear to be accommodating themselves to much of the emerging evidence concerning their antecedents: for example, they are coming to view their ancient provenance as inspiring legend rather than hard-and-fast history. By the end of the 1990s, with the appearance of Davis's book and then of Hutton's, many Wiccans had begun referring to their story as a myth of origin, not a history of survival. "We don't do what Witches did a hundred years ago, or five hundred years ago, or five thousand years ago," Starhawk told me. "We're not an unbroken tradition like the Native Americans." In fact, many Wiccans now describe those who take certain elements of the movement's narrative literally as "Wiccan fundamentalists."

An even more controversial strand of the challenge to the Wiccan narrative concerns the very existence of ancient Goddess worship. One problem with the theory of Goddess worship, scholars say, is that the ancients were genuine polytheists. They did not believe that the many gods and goddesses they worshipped merely represented different aspects of single deities. In that respect they were like animistic peoples of today, whose cosmologies are crowded with discrete spirits. "Polytheism was an accepted reality," says Mary Lefkowitz, a professor of classics at Wellesley College. "Everywhere you went, there were shrines to different gods." The gods and goddesses had specific domains of power over human activity: Aphrodite/Venus presided over love, Artemis/Diana over hunting and childbirth, Ares/Mars over war, and so forth. Not until the second century, with the work of the Roman writer Apuleius, was one goddess, Isis, identified with all the various goddesses and forces of nature.

As Christianity spread, the classical deities ceased to be the objects of religious cults, but they continued their reign in Western literature and art. Starting about 1800 they began to be associated with semi-mystical natural forces, rather than with specific human activities. In the writings of the Romantics, for example (John Keats's "Endymion" comes to mind), Diana presided generally over the woodlands and the moon. "Mother Earth" became a popular literary deity. In 1849 the German classicist Eduard Gerhard made the assertion, for the first time in modern Western history, that all the ancient goddesses derived from a single prehistoric mother goddess. In 1861 the Swiss jurist and writer Johann Jakob Bachofen postulated that the earliest human civilizations were matriarchies. Bachofen's theory influenced a wide range of thinkers, including Friedrich Engels, a generation of British intellectuals, and probably Carl Jung.

By the early 1900s scholars generally agreed that the great goddess and earth mother had reigned supreme in ancient Mediterranean religions, and was toppled only when ethnic groups devoted to father gods conquered her devotees. In 1901 the British archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans excavated the Minoan palace at Knossos, on Crete, uncovering colorful frescoes of bull dancers and figurines of bare-breasted women carrying snakes. From this scant evidence Evans concluded that the Minoans, who preceded the Zeus-venerating Greeks by several centuries, had worshipped the great goddess in her virgin and mother aspects, along with a subordinate male god who was her son and consort. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s archaeologists excavating Paleolithic and Neolithic sites in Europe and even Pueblo Indian settlements in Arizona almost reflexively proclaimed the female figurines they found to be images of the great goddess.

The archaeologists drew on the work of late-nineteenth-century anthropologists. A belief that Stone Age peoples (and their "primitive" modern counterparts) did not realize that men played a role in human procreation was popular among many early British and American anthropologists. Female fertility was an awesome mystery, and women, as the sole sources of procreation, were highly honored. This notion -- that hunter-gatherer societies couldn't figure out the birds and the bees -- has since been discredited, but "it was very intriguing to people mired in Victorianism," according to

Cynthia Eller, a professor of religious studies at Montclair State University, in New Jersey, who is writing a book on the subject. "They wanted to find a blissful sexual communism, a society in which chastity and monogamy were not important," Eller says. It was the same general impulse that led Margaret Mead to conclude in the 1920s that Samoan adolescents indulged in guilt-free promiscuity before marriage.

### **Mysteries of Çatalhöyük**

An online exhibit about the excavation at Çatalhöyük presented by the Science Museum of Minnesota. The site offers information about the area, archeological findings, and the researchers involved. One section of the site is devoted to photographs and discussion of goddess figurines.

Archaeological expeditions even in the latter half of the century bolstered the notion of a single goddess figure from antiquity. In 1958 a British archaeologist named James Mellaart made a major find: a 9,000-year-old agricultural settlement that once housed up to 10,000 people at Çatalhöyük, one of the largest of several mounds near the modern-day town of Konya, in southern Turkey. Mellaart unearthed a number of female figurines that he deemed to be representations of the mother goddess. One was a headless female nude sitting on what appears to be a throne and flanked by leopards, with a protuberant belly that could be interpreted as a sign of pregnancy. The Çatalhöyük settlement contained no fortifications, and its houses were nearly all the same size, seemingly implying just the sort of nonviolent, egalitarian social system that Goddess-worshippers believe prevailed. Çatalhöyük became the Santiago de Compostela of the Goddess movement, with hundreds of pilgrims visiting the settlement annually. The enthroned nude is a revered Goddess-movement object.

Mellaart's conclusions were bolstered by the work of the late Marija Gimbutas, a Lithuanian-born archaeologist who taught at the University of California at Los Angeles until 1989. Gimbutas specialized in the Neolithic Balkans. Like Mellaart, she tended to attach religious meaning to the objects she uncovered; the results of her Balkan digs were published in 1974 under the title *The Gods and Goddesses of Old Europe*. In 1982 Gimbutas reissued her book as *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe*, and she began seeing representations of the Goddess, and of female reproductive apparatus (wombs, Fallopian tubes, amniotic fluid), in a huge array of Stone Age artifacts, even in abstractions such as spirals and dots.

In 1993 Ian Hodder, a Stanford University archaeologist, began re-excavating Çatalhöyük, using up-to-date techniques including isotopic analysis of the skeletons found in the graves. "Your bones reflect what you eat, even if you died nine thousand years ago," Hodder says. "And we found that men and women had different diets. The men ate more meat, and the women ate more plant food. You can interpret that in many ways. A rich protein diet is helpful for physical activity, so you could say that the men ate better -- but you could also argue that the women preferred plant food. What it does suggest is that there was a division of labor and activity" -- not necessarily the egalitarian utopia that Goddess worshippers have assumed.

Hodder's team also discovered numerous human figurines of the male or an indeterminate sex, and found that the favorite Çatalhöyük representation was not women but animals. None of the art the team uncovered conclusively depicts copulation or childbirth. Hodder, along with most archaeologists of his generation, endeavors to assess objects in the context of where they were unearthed -- a dramatic change from the school of archaeology that was in vogue at the time of Mellaart's and Gimbutas's excavations. He points out that almost all the female figurines at Çatalhöyük came from rubbish heaps; the enthroned nude woman was found in a grain bin. "Very little in the context of the find suggests that they were religious objects," Hodder says. "They were maybe more like talismans, something to do with daily life." Furthermore, excavations of sites in Turkey, Greece, and Southeastern Europe that were roughly contemporaneous with the Çatalhöyük settlement have yielded evidence -- fortifications,

maces, bones bearing dagger marks -- that Stone Age Europe, contrary to the Goddess narrative, probably saw plenty of violence.

Lynn Meskell, an archaeologist at Columbia University who has published detailed critiques of Gimbutas's work, complains that Gimbutas and her devotees have promoted a romanticized "essentialist" view of women, defining them primarily in terms of fecundity and maternal gentleness. "You have people saying that Çatalhöyük was this peaceful, vegetarian society," says Meskell. "It's ludicrous. Neolithic settlements were not utopias in any sense at all."

The research of archaeologists like Hodder and Meskell has sparked heated rebuttals from Goddess theorists. "We know that even in the West most of art is religious art," says Riane Eisler, the author of the best seller *The Chalice and the Blade* (1987). "Don't tell me that suddenly these are dolls. Give me a break! You have a woman at Çatalhöyük sitting on a throne giving birth, and you want to call it a doll?" In her introduction to a new edition of *The Spiral Dance*, Starhawk -- who is working on a film about Gimbutas -- complains about "biased and inaccurate" academic scholarship aimed at discrediting her movement. Perhaps the most painful attack, as far as many Wiccans are concerned, came last June, with the publication of Cynthia Eller's *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory*. In 1993 Eller had published a sympathetic sociological study of feminist spirituality, *Living in the Lap of the Goddess*, which many in the movement put on their required-reading lists. Her recent work thus carries a tinge of betrayal, inasmuch as it puts her firmly in Hodder and Meskell's camp. Eller points out that almost no serious archaeologist working today believes that these ancient cultures were necessarily matriarchal or even woman-focused, and most do not interpret any of the things unearthed by Mellaart and Gimbutas as necessarily depicting goddesses or genitalia.

Despite their ire, both Starhawk and Eisler, along with many of their adherents, seem to be moving toward a position that accommodates, without exactly accepting, the new Goddess scholarship, much as they have done with respect to the new research about their movement's beginnings. If the ancients did not literally worship a mother goddess, perhaps they worshipped her in a metaphoric way, by recognizing the special female capacity for bearing and nourishing new life -- a capacity to which we might attach the word "goddess" even if prehistoric peoples did not. "Most of us look at the archaeological artifacts and images as a source of art, or beauty, or something to speculate about, because the images fit with our theory that the earth is sacred, and that there is a cycle of birth and growth and regeneration," Starhawk told me. "I believe that there was an Old Religion that focused on the female, and that the culture was roughly egalitarian."

Such faith may explain why Wicca is thriving despite all the things about it that look like hokum: it gives its practitioners a sense of connection to the natural world and of access to the sacred and beautiful within their own bodies. I am hardly the first to notice that Wicca bears a striking resemblance to another religion -- one that also tells of a dying and rising god, that venerates a figure who is both virgin and mother, that keeps, in its own way, the seasonal "feasts of the Wheel," that uses chalices and candles and sacred poetry in its rituals. Practicing Wicca is a way to have Christianity without, well, the burdens of Christianity. "It has the advantages of both Catholicism and Unitarianism," observes Allen Stairs, a philosophy professor at the University of Maryland who specializes in religion and magic. "Wicca allows one to wear one's beliefs lightly but also to have a rich and imaginative religious life."

"Diotima Mantinea," age forty-eight, is the associate editor of the Web site *The Witches' Voice*, found at [witchvox.com](http://witchvox.com) (she would not divulge her real name, partly because she lives in a southern town that she believes is unfriendly to neopagans). She summed up her feelings on the debunking of the official Wiccan narrative this way: "It doesn't matter to me how old Wicca is,

because when I connect with Deity as Lady and Lord, I know that I am connecting with something much larger and vaster than I can fully comprehend. The Creator of this universe has been manifesting to us for all time, in the forms of gods and goddesses that we can relate to. This personal connection with Deity is what is meaningful. For me, Wicca works to facilitate that connection, and that is what really matters."<sup>55</sup>

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Charlotte Allen is the senior editor of Crisis magazine and is a contributing writer for Lingua Franca. She is the author of *The Human Christ: The Search for the Historical Jesus* (1998).

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The Atlantic Monthly; January 2001; The Scholars and the Goddess - 01.01; Volume 287, No. 1; page 18-22.

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#### <sup>55</sup>Covenant of the Goddess

"An international organization of cooperating, autonomous Wiccan congregations and solitary practitioners. Here, you'll find information about the COG organization and activities, as well as the religious beliefs and practices which comprise Wicca."

#### The Witches' Voice

An online resource for Wiccans. The site offers message boards, a guide to covens throughout the United States, articles, news, descriptions of rituals, seasonal messages, and related links.

#### Goddess and Witchcraft

A comprehensive overview of "the beliefs, ceremonies and practices of Goddess worship and witchcraft." Posted by The Mystica. "an online encyclopedia of the occult, mysticism, magic, and paranormal." "The Witch-Cult in Western Europe," by Margaret Alice Murray (1921)

A study of witchcraft in Great Britain. Posted by The Sacred Text Archive, a collection of digitized religious writings in the public domain. <sup>55</sup>

#### Çatalhöyük

"This Web site is designed for those interested in the ongoing excavations at Çatalhöyük." The site offers photographs, archaeological information, papers, related links, and suggested reading. One page is devoted to discussion of "The Goddess Community."

"False goddess," by Lawrence Osborne (Salon, June 28, 2000)"Despite what believers in prehistoric matriarchy proclaim, women never ruled the Earth." A review of Cynthia Eller's *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory*

**Appendix VII --13 Principles of Wiccan Belief -- Encyclopedia of Wicca & Witchcraft page 361-362**

1. We practice rites to attune ourselves with the natural rhythm of life forces marked by the phases of the Moon and the seasonal Quarter and Cross Quarters.
2. We recognize that our intelligence give us a unique responsibility toward our environment. We seek to live in harmony with Nature, in ecological balance offering fulfillment of life and consciousness within an evolutionary concept.
3. We acknowledge a depth of power far greater than that apparent to the average person. Because it is far greater than ordinary it is sometimes called "supernatural," but we see it as lying within that which is naturally potential to all.
4. We conceive of the Creative Power in the universe as manifesting through polarity – as masculine and feminine – and that this same Creative Power lies in all people, and functions through the interaction of the masculine and the feminine. We value neither above the other. We value sex as pleasure, as the symbol and embodiment of life, and as one of the sources of energies used in magical (sic) practice and religious worship.
5. We recognize both outer worlds and inner, or psychological, worlds sometimes known as the spiritual world, the collective unconscious, inner planes, etc. – and we see in the interaction of these two dimensions the basis for paranormal phenomena and magical exercises. We neglect neither dimension for the other, seeing both as necessary for our fulfillment.
6. We do not recognize any authoritarian hierarchy but do honor those who teach, respect those who share their greater knowledge and wisdom, and acknowledge those who have courageously given of themselves in leadership.
7. We see religion, magick and wisdom in living s being united in the way one views the world and lives within it – a worldview and philosophy of life which we identify as Witchcraft – The Wiccan Way.
8. Calling oneself "Witch" does not make a Witch but neither does heredity itself, not the collecting of titles, degrees, and initiations. A Witch seeks to control the forces within her/himself that make life possible in order to live wisely and well without harm to others and in harmony with Nature.
9. We believe in the affirmation and fulfillment of life in a continuation of evolution and development of consciousness giving meaning to the universe we know and our personal role within it.
10. Our only animosity toward Christianity, or toward any other religion or philosophy of life, is to the extent that its institutions have claimed to be "the only way" and have sought to deny freedom to others and to suppress other ways of religious practice and belief.
11. As American Witches, we re not threatened by debates on the history of the Craft, the origins of various terms, the legitimacy of various aspects of different traditions. We re concerned with our present and our future.
12. We do not accept the concept of absolute evil, nor do we worship any entity knows as "Satan" or "the Devil," as defined by the Christian tradition. We do not seek power through the suffering of others, nor accept that personal benefit can be derived only by denial to another.
13. We believe that we should seek within Nature that which is contributory to our health and well-being.