

Neopagan Religions

Objectives

To understand the rapidly emerging social movement of neopaganism and their underlying occult practices. This movement tries to convey itself to the general public as a benign, environmentalist and feminist religion while denying its Pagan roots and Satanist practices.

References

1. Holy Scriptures
2. <http://www.religioustolerance.org/witchcra.htm>
3. www.wikipedia.org
4. http://forerunner.com/champion/X0042_What_is_the_Wiccan_r.html
5. Michael Thorn, "A Portrait of Wicca," A Sourcebook for the Community of Religions, The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions.
6. Jan Phillips, "The Craft of the Wise," Ms., January/February 1993
7. Gods, Demigods and demons; An Encyclopedia of Greek Mythology; Bernard Evslin 1975
8. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition

Scriptural Verse

“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” Colossians 2:8-10

Lesson Outlines

History of Paganism and Practices:

- † **pa·gan** (pā'gən) n. :One who is not a Christian, Muslim, or Jew, especially an adherent of a polytheistic religion in antiquity.
- † An *animistic* religion, spirits-and-essences filled belief systems. These are 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.
- † Belief in the holiness of animals and nature.
- † 1 King 18: 28

Current Paganism Practice:

- † Pagan Pride Day:®
- † The term "*Pagan Pride*" was apparently inspired by the Gay Pride movement.
- † Celebrations in North America held annually, within two or three weeks of the Autumn Equinox.

- ✚ Celebrations of public ritual open to the public, press releases and public relations activities to encourage a positive portrayal of Paganism in the media.
- ✚ The first Pagan Pride Day was held on 1998-Sep.19 with 18 celebrations. By 2003, this had grown to over 117 events. Celebrations in 2004 involved over 44,000 people attending Pagan Pride events in six countries. They collected almost 15 tons of food and almost \$10,000 for local charities.
- ✚ Modern day Pagan's Quote:
"When one defines oneself as Pagan, it means she or he follows an earth or nature religion, one that sees the divine manifest in all creation. The cycles of nature are our holy days, the earth is our temple, its plants and creatures our partners and teachers. We worship a deity that is both male and female, a mother Goddess and father God, who together created all that is, was, or will be. We respect life, cherish the free will of sentient beings, and accept the sacredness of all creation." Edain McCoy

Neopaganism:

- ✚ Even though they like to think that they are a "New" religion....they are a reconstruction of ancient, extinct religions.
- ✚ The umbrella term "*Neopagan*" includes followers of many other earth-centered faith traditions, based on the symbols, seasonal days of celebration, beliefs and deities of ancient Celtic society.

Wicca Religion:

- ✚ The term *Wicca* first appears in the writings of Gerald Gardner (*Witchcraft Today*, 1954, and *The Meaning of Witchcraft*, 1959). The word seems to be based on the Old English word *Wicca* (which meant "wise". Old English *wicca* and its feminine *wicce* are the predecessors of the modern English: *Witch*
- ✚ Wiccans Practice witchcraft and sorcery.
- ✚ Many Wiccans continue their practices in secrecy. Revealing oneself as Wiccan to family, friends or colleagues is often termed "coming out of the broom-closet"
- ✚ Quote from a renowned Wiccan Priestess: Margot Adler: *"We should educate people that 'Witch' is not evil but ancient and positive. The first time I called myself a 'Witch' was the most magical moment of my life."*
- ✚ Wicca, is the religion and Witchcraft, is the practice of "magick".
- ✚ MagicK with K is differentiated from "magic" which is the entertainment magic. It is referred to as the art of energy manipulation, the art of altered states of consciousness (The Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with will).
- ✚ Wiccans deny that they are evil and "claim" that they deny the existence of Satan and evil.
- ✚ Their Moral code is: "what you believe is right, but let no one be harmed by your actions." Or "Do what you want and do no harm".
- ✚ **Wicca is duotheistic:** Wiccans often worship a female goddess and a male god, often called the Lady and Lord; the Horned God and the Earth/Mother Nature.
- ✚ **Wicca is polytheistic:** Wiccans recognize the existence of many ancient gods and goddesses, including Pan, Diana, Dionysius, Fergus, etc.

“Christian” Wicca:

- † Attribute the Holy Spirit as the goddess: Many even take it farther, saying the Holy Spirit was embodied in the person of the Virgin Mary.
- † The claim that “Mother Earth” and God are one and the same.

What does this mean for me?

- † “And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in *knowledge and all discernment*....” Philippians 1:9
- † “But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” 1 Corinthians 2:14
- † “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15
- † “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” Colossians 2:8-10:
- † “Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” Colossians 2:15
- † “Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,” Colossians 2: 18
- † Don’t be deceived: Divination is Satanic: Acts 16:16-18
- † The Power of the Holy Spirit: Acts 13:6-12
- † I Samuel 28: 3-19: Saul continued to move farther and farther from God to the extent that he used the occult in search for answers; but God allowed it to happen to send him the message that he was walking in spiritual deception
- † God views the occult as connected to demonic powers and opens people to forces of evil; that’s why He forbids sorcery.
- † “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies.” Galatians 5:19-20
- † “You shall not permit a sorceress to live.” Exodus 22:18
- † “...nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying.” Leviticus 19:26
- † God forbids Sorcery: Ezekiel 13: 18-23, Luke 11:24-26
- † God: He is Lord: “And when they say to you: Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” should not a people seek their God? *Should they seek* the dead on behalf of the living?” Isaiah 8:19
- † “Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:31
- † “And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people.” Leviticus 20:6

Conclusion:

- † “There would be no need for sermons, if our lives were shining; there would be no need for words, if we bore witness with our deeds. There would be no pagans, if we were true Christians.” Saint John Chrysostom

Discussion Questions:

- † What do you think of when you hear the word “witch”?
- † What do you think of when you hear that there exists a witch religion?
- † Have any of us come across people in college or work who practice Wicca or similar religions?
- † Have any of us come across media or books or festivals in the community that have pagan influence?
- † Are we able to, as St. Paul said, to ‘look intently’ at such practices and differentiate and discriminate the Truth from the false gods and deities in the world?