



South African PAGAN COUNCIL

PAGANISM in
South Africa

PAGANISM in South Africa

An Introduction to the Pagan Religion



Prepared on behalf of the
South African Pagan Council

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“It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”

Aristotle
Greek critic, philosopher and physicist (384 BC – 322 BC)

A Prayer for Peace

Great Goddess,
Lady of Peace
Who hears our prayers.

Come to us as the Maiden,
Grant us enthusiasm to forge new beginnings.

Come to us as the Mother,
Teach us to nurture our growing ground.

Come to us as the Crone,
Instil in us wisdom to create transformation.

Bless us with compassion.
Bless us with strength.
Bless us with perseverance.

Fill our hearts with love and peace
So we may come to understand and accept one another.



South African PAGAN COUNCIL



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Community Based Religious Organisation

The SAPC was the first Pagan organization to be listed as an official Pagan Church in Africa. It is a Registered Religious Organisation, in terms of the Civil Union Act No.17 of 2006, with the Department of Home Affairs and a recognised not-for-profit Community Based Organisation (CBO).

The objects of the SAPC as CBO are to further the religion and philosophical teachings of Paganism in South Africa and to provide assistance where applicable to those members of the SAPC in need.

The SAPC is dedicated towards the promotion or practice of religion which encompasses acts of worship, witness, teaching and community service based on a belief in a divine all.

Vision

The SAPC was inaugurated in 2006 as a unifying body of like-minded Pagans with a vision of cooperative unity. With this in mind, we encourage the cross pollination of groups and individuals, always remembering to respect each other's traditions without attempting to enforce our own. The Pagan Council is formulated on the Arthurian round table principle, all members therefore have equal rights, retaining autonomy and self-definition at all times.

The guiding principle of the Council is "Live and let live". The Council is largely representative of solitary Pagans and affiliates with groups who share the same vision. Paganism is defined by the SAPC as a polytheistic and pantheistic pre-Christian religion, generally nature based, and as a syncretic or genuine revival/reconstruction of national ethnic cultural belief.

The SAPC is an ardent supporter of Earth-based Religions; as such the SAPC promotes ecology and the principle of interconnectedness. To this end the Forum has started "Project Spinning Wheel" for ideas related to ecology. The SAPC is actively involved in the reclamation of "Witchcraft" as a formal Pagan Religion. "Project Hypatia" is related to this subject. The SAPC encourages all SA Pagans to participate in the "Moral Regeneration Movement" and in Inter Religious Debate hosted yearly by South African Academia.

SAPC is a registered Religious Organization with SA Home Affairs and SA Revenue Services. The SAPC aims to facilitate a quorum of self-identified Pagans who wish to ascribe to its' aims, share ideas and philosophies for the furthering of Paganism within our respective communities. SAPC membership is reserved for Pagans only, reserving the right to self-identify as a Council.

South African PAGAN COUNCIL

2.2. The Code of Principles

2.2.1. As Pagans we recognize humanity's duty towards the environment and acknowledge that Nature is our Mother and teacher. We should strive to protect Her and to live in harmony with Nature.

2.2.2. We acknowledge the interconnectedness of everything and should therefore strive to practice kindness, generosity, hospitality and cooperation.

2.2.3. We acknowledge equality of the sexes and should therefore not regard one above the other.

2.2.4. We should honour those who teach and acknowledge those who have given themselves in leadership to the revival and advancement of Paganism.

2.2.5. We should avoid gossip and the repetition of unverified facts, and avoid passing judgment on others. We should not promote a spirit of animosity towards other religious paths.

2.2.6. Honour is a sacred virtue. Let our actions be upright, causing harm to none. We should at all costs, avoid deceit, exploitation of others, fraud, violence, theft, abusive behaviour, substance abuse and any form of action deemed illegal and detrimental to society.

2.2.7. We believe in religious freedom and should therefore be tolerant and accepting of other Pagan and non-Pagan spiritualities and religions.

2.2.8. We should remain true to our highest selves and strive to act with wisdom and strive never to do anything that would bring our religion and spirituality into disrepute.

2.2.9. We should be honest with others and let them know that we expect nothing less from them. Our word should be our bond.

2.2.10. Pagans should strive to obey the just laws of the land and its government.

2.2.11. Pagans should strive to act with dignity. Let our words, thoughts and actions be in line with our philosophy of life, respect and reverence towards all.

2.2.12. Pagans reserve the right to preserve our cultural and Pagan heritage (including the use and carrying of swords, knives and ritual tools) and traditions in the form of rituals, doctrines, practices and religious holy days.

PAGAN PRINCIPLES

What is Paganism?



The words *Paganism* and *Pagan* come from the Latin *paganus* meaning 'country dweller'. Neo-pagans hold a reverence for the Earth and all its creatures, believe that all life is interconnected, and strive to attune themselves to its manifestation by celebrating the cycles of Nature.

A Pagan is a person who feels a strong connection to Nature, who holds the Earth and all its creatures as sacred, and who seeks personal connection with the Divine through the celebration of the Cycles which rule and guide the all-embracing Everything. Traditional and Neo-Pagan religions are generally Nature-based religions and its custom and ways are based on religions that pre-date Christianity.

Modern Pagans are either Reconstructionists, Neo-Pagans or syncretic paths, and attempt to reconstruct the Old World Religions with the information available from Inquisition records, the writings of the Apologists, books and art of the era, as well as the teachings of the Greek, Roman and Egyptian philosophers.

Paganism encompasses the reverence of Mother Nature, the worship of the Divine in its myriad of forms, but particularly as an embodiment of natural forces. For this reason Pagans observe the seasonal cycles and undertake the personal quest for spiritual growth. Most Pagan Paths are pantheistic or polytheistic, celebratory faiths.

What makes a religion Pagan?

The guidelines which enable one to determine if a religion is Pagan are not set in stone. Just as Christianity has many denominations, so Paganism has numerous traditions or paths. Of the characteristics listed below it is important to remember that while some Pagan traditions may have all the characteristics, there are traditions that have only a few or one characteristic. These characteristics are not prerequisites for a belief structure to be considered Pagan.

The common threads running through this complex Pagan tapestry are:

- Divinity displays polarity; it may be female, male and possibly both. In some Traditions *IT* transcends gender. Frequently, the Paths have myriads of gods and goddesses in their pantheon.
- Pagans have strong links to Mother Nature. These can range from active environmentalism to full Nature worship.
- Initiates act as their own priests or priestesses within their rituals.
- A concept of an unseen "energy" is usually evident; however, its utilisation varies among the paths. This energy is primarily used for empowerment, self-realisation and magick. Additionally, it may be viewed holistically as a singular divine entity. It has various names: the power, primal force, cosmic energy, universal force, life force, aura, spirit, manna, etc.

- Pagans believe in "magick" - the ability to affect change both internally and externally by harnessing Will Power through rituals, incantations and spell-working.
- Most, but not all Pagans believe in reincarnation.
- There is no sacred book, tenet or doctrine. Within each tradition, there may exist a writ of their beliefs and tenets but this is not a universal dogma.

How do Pagans view Life?

To Pagans, life is seen as a school where souls have the chance to learn through the physical body; which is an invaluable gift that should be cherished, enjoyed and cared for. And it is not just our physical selves that deserve to be cherished. The various Pagan traditions usually share a belief that all within the universe is connected; therefore everything from plants and animals to the earth itself, is worthy of respect and protection.

From that same perspective, life is seen as something to be experienced fully, to be enjoyed and to be something worth celebrating. This is why within Paganism, worship is a joyous affair filled with celebratory tones. That sense of connection and an ethos of responsibility also sees many Pagan traditions focusing on ecological protection and conservation.

To Pagans, life is a sacred journey and no one life is greater or more important than the other.

Deity in Paganism

Modern Paganism seeks to venerate pre-Christian deities through the cultural and religious practices of the time. As such there are many ways in which deity is perceived in Pagan traditions.

The predominant view of deity is polytheistic, meaning that more than one god/goddess is venerated. Some Pagan traditions adhere to the deities of a specific pantheon, such as Hellenic Pagans venerating the gods and goddesses of Ancient Greece. Other Pagans may be eclectic, meaning they venerate gods and goddesses from multiple pantheons. And within the same polytheistic view, some Pagans view gods and goddesses not as literal deities, but as Jungian Archetypes within the human psyche.

Co-existing with polytheistic beliefs, there is the widely held belief in some Pagan traditions that all within the universe is connected. In this pantheistic view the various gods and goddesses are seen as being facets of a single deity that is neither male nor female and is the primary spiritual 'force' that permeates the universe.

Another view is that of animism, of which there are two views. The first is that everything in the universe is imbued with a 'life force' or spiritual energy that can be 'tapped into'. The second view is that all natural things in the universe possess a spirit, one that is aware and can be communicated with.

Pagan Ethics and Values

A common misconception is that Pagans have no morals or ethical basis because they have no central doctrine, but this couldn't be further from the truth. While each tradition will have its own values and moral codes, there is a common thread that weaves through most Pagan paths- personal accountability.

Most Pagan traditions teach their adherents to be ever aware of their actions and the effect they have on others, and to accept responsibility for the results of those actions. This principle is seen in the Wiccan ethos of, "An it harm none, do what ye will".

And because many Pagan traditions are pantheistic in nature, they see everything as connected. Thus any harm done to the natural world or another living animal is seen as indirectly harming one's self. This is also linked into the common belief of the *Three-fold Law of Return*, which states that whatever you do will be returned to you three times over. From this value we can see that acts of kindness, selflessness and nurturing are encouraged as they are believed to be returned in the future in one form or another.

Other traditions, like Asatru or Druidry, have a code of ethics or values lifted from mythology, ancient texts and lore central to the tradition. In the case of eclectic solitaries, they may form their own ethical code based on a variety of sources.

The Pagan Soul & Afterlife

Within all Pagan traditions and paths, the concept of an individual possessing an eternal soul or spirit is evident. However, what is believed to happen to that soul after death varies from tradition to tradition; as do beliefs on *why* we have a soul.

The belief of reincarnation is common in Paganism; which is the belief that after death the soul is reborn into another physical body. Prior to rebirth there is the popular belief that the soul rests in a spiritual plane called the *Summerlands*. In this spiritual realm, the soul assesses important lessons from the physical life it left and prepares to be reborn into the physical world. Such beliefs are also commonly mingled with the belief in ancestors and the veneration of ancestral spirits.

Within Paganism death is viewed as part of a natural cycle and it is not seen as an end absolute, but rather as a continuation that leads to rebirth.

PAGAN PRACTICES

MAGICK



Spelt with a 'ck' to differentiate it from stage magic, Magick is the ability or act where will/intent is coupled with personal spiritual energy and channelled to bring about a desired outcome. The concept and practice of magick is found in many Pagan traditions, predominantly Wiccan-based traditions.

Unlike Abrahamic religions, Paganism does not view the world in absolute terms of 'right' and 'wrong', or 'good' and 'evil'. As such, magick, is seen as a neutral force that is neither 'black' (evil) or 'white' (good), as inaccurately termed by non-Pagans; however it is the *intent* of the practitioner that could be seen as either 'good' or 'bad'. In that way magick can be likened to electricity, which can be used to kill someone, or power a life-support machine- it's all down to *what* it is used for.

In that regard there are general ethics that concern magickal practice. Commonly held principles of personal accountability, such as the Wiccan Rede of not doing harm and the Three-Fold Law of Return, encourage responsible magickal conduct that is not directed at harming another. And in that same theme, within Paganism 'positive magick' is worked with the consent of the recipient and for the highest positive outcome.

WORSHIP

Due to its rich diversity, there are no standard forms of Pagan worship. There may be similarities between traditions and paths, but each tends to have its own rituals and liturgy. It should also be noted that not all Pagans worship in a group setting with some Pagans preferring to practice their religion alone as solitaries. But while there may be many differences between the ways in which the myriad of Pagan traditions and paths practice their religion and worship, they do have a few similarities.

Worship may take the form of prayer or meditation, formal rituals where participants connect with nature or deities, celebrations of seasonal festivals, initiations into a tradition, or formal rituals for important life phases. The unifying thread through all the different ways in which Pagans celebrate and express their religious beliefs is that worship is the way in which Pagans commune with their Gods and Goddesses, and with the Divinity that exists externally in nature and internally within them.

Unlike most mainstream religions, Pagans believe that Nature is where Divinity and deity are found; and for that reason Pagans have no distinct buildings of worship instead preferring to worship in natural surroundings. Rituals and ceremonies often take place outside in fields, parks, and on beaches; however that's not to say that worship doesn't take place indoors if the weather is disagreeable.

Ritual and worship is open to both genders, male and female, as Paganism enshrines principles of gender equality. Although some traditions devoted to feminine mysteries are only open to women; or may be led by women. Generally in festivities around Sabbats and holy days, children are also

permitted to worship with the adults in rituals, ceremonies and rites if they wish; but no children are ever forced to participate.

Worship in a formal setting usually takes the form of first creating what is termed *sacred space*; by setting a spiritual barrier between the worship area and the rest of the area that is dedicated to the ritual or form of worship.

Within Pagan worship there are three primary forms of formal ritual: magick, seasonal celebrations and rites of passage. Magickal rituals are usually worked in harmony with moon phases and a means for an individual or group to spiritually bring about change in the physical world. Seasonal celebrations take the form of holy days and worship can take various forms, all of which are centered on the symbolic themes of the seasonal celebration in question. The final category of formal ritual is rites of passage; formal rituals to mark important life stages of events. Each tradition has their specific rituals for the various important stages of life, but of the most common are:

- Wiccaning (name blessing ceremony for babies)
- Coming of Age rites (rituals that mark the onset of puberty in girls and boys)
- Handfasting (Wiccan marriage)
- Handparting (Wiccan relationship separation)
- Initiation (ritual to mark entrance into a specific tradition)
- Croning (ritual to mark the transition to the final life stage in women)
- Funeral rites

At the core of Pagan worship are reverence and celebration as it is believed that life is something to be celebrated and honoured, and not a journey of suffering to be mourned. For this reason the majority of Pagan worship is enacted with respect for the deeper symbolism, but with joy in the heart.

HOLY DAYS

As there are so many different paths under the Pagan umbrella, there are also numerous holy days celebrated by adherents. The common theme within Paganism is that religious holy days are seasonally centred and because of that, holy days are held on solstices and equinoxes, or to mark the transition of seasons. Other traditions may celebrate holy days based on religious celebrations of ancient pagan cultures, usually honouring a specific deity or cultural event.

The most common calendar found within Paganism is the Wiccan *Wheel of the Year*, which is itself based on ancient European pagan celebrations. And as the Wheel of the Year is centred on the natural seasons of the year, the dates of each holy day, called a *Sabbat*, differs from Northern Hemisphere to Southern Hemisphere.



Sabbats are celebrated by groups of Pagans and solitary Pagans alike with rituals, special foods, traditional activities and offerings to deities. Some Sabbats are also marked with rituals for important life phases, such as handfastings (marriages) and initiations. However, much like the holy days of other religions, Pagans generally celebrate their holy days with much reverence for the central themes and deities.

Samhain

Southern Hemisphere: 30 April
Northern Hemisphere: 31 October



Pronounced *soween*, Samhain marks the end of the harvest season and the beginning of Winter. In Pagan theology, Samhain represents the end of one cycle and the beginning of a new cycle. At this time of the year it is commonly believed that 'the veil' between the physical world and the spiritual world is thinner. For this reason ancestor veneration is common practice with many Pagans setting an extra place at the table for their deceased relatives, or leaving offerings of food or drink at graves.

Yule

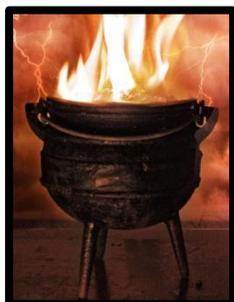
Southern Hemisphere: 21/22 June
Northern Hemisphere: 21/22 December

Yule marks the Winter Solstice and is focused on the rebirth of the sun and solar deities. As the longest night of the year, Yule is usually centred on themes of rebirth and planning for the future. Pagans celebrate Yule in much the same way as Christians celebrate Christmas: they decorate a Yule Tree and exchange gifts with their loved ones. It is traditional at this time of the year to honour the rebirth of solar deities by burning a Yule log.



Imbolc

Southern Hemisphere: 2 August
Northern Hemisphere: 2 February



Pronounced '*em-bolg*', Imbolc marks the first stirrings of Spring. Sacred to the Celtic Goddess Brighid, Imbolc is the time of year to prepare for growth and renewal. Traditionally this Sabbat is marked by the lighting of candles, which are placed in windows to honour the rebirth and strengthening of the sun.

Pagans celebrate Imbolc by creating 'corn dollies' from wheat, straw or corn husks as symbols of Brighid to bring her blessings to the home.

Ostara

Southern Hemisphere: 21/22 September

Northern Hemisphere: 21/22 March

The Spring Equinox is celebrated at Ostara where day and night are in equal balance, with the sun steadily growing in strength. Ostara is a fertility festival that honours Spring and many of the symbols of Ostara speak to this: eggs, chicks, hares, flower buds, seeds. At this time of year Pagans focus on the themes of new growth and honour the examples of growth and beginnings in their own lives. Pagans commonly celebrate Ostara by blessing and planting gardens as a way of caring for Mother Earth. It is also customary to paint hollow eggs and use them to decorate an Ostara Tree.



Beltane

Southern Hemisphere: 31 October

Northern Hemisphere: 30 April



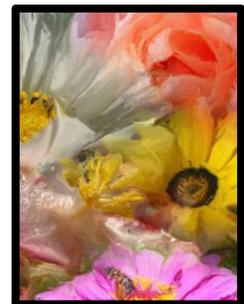
Traditionally the first day of Summer, Beltane is a festival of fertility, life and light. While Beltane is the direct opposite of Samhain, it is another time of the year where the veil between the physical and spiritual worlds is believed to be thin. However, it is more common to make contact with and honour nature spirits at Beltane. Pagans usually celebrate Beltane with much festivity and feasting, and it is a traditional time of year for handfastings. Another primary activity of Beltane is dancing around the maypole; which is seen as a symbol of fertility.

Litha

Southern Hemisphere: 21/22 December

Northern Hemisphere: 21/22 June

Litha is the Sabbat that centres on the Summer Solstice, which is the longest day of the year. At this time of year Pagans celebrate the sun reaching its zenith and the fruit harvest. Litha is heralded as a time of abundance and fertility; however it also marks the point where the sun will begin to wane in power. Pagans usually celebrate Litha with a feast where seasonal fruits and vegetables take centre stage. This time of year is also used to make protection charms and celebrate love.



Lughnasadh

Southern Hemisphere: 2 February

Northern Hemisphere: 2 August



Pronounced '*loo-na-sah*', Lughnasadh is named after the Irish God, Lugh, and marks the first grain harvest. Lughnasadh is the time of year where Pagans count their blessings and honour the sacrifices that led to those blessings. It is traditional to present offerings of breads and grains of the first harvest to the Gods, as well as those foods being central to traditional dishes of this Sabbat. Overall Lughnasadh is a Sabbat of reflection on the past and what is wanted for the future.

Mabon

Southern Hemisphere: 21/22 March

Northern Hemisphere: 21/22 September

Marking the Autumn Equinox where day and night are equal, Mabon is the second harvest celebrated by Pagans. Mabon is the time of year where Pagans prepare for Winter, which represents inner reflection and growth. Some Pagans chose this time of year to clear away the clutter from their homes and do a thorough clean out in preparation for Winter. Traditionally Mabon is likened to Thanksgiving in that Pagans give thanks to the Gods for the bounty in their lives.



CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Unfortunately Paganism has been a favourite scapegoat for the media and authorities for decades, in addition to being a topic guaranteed to boost media readership. Anything with a remotely Pagan or occult angle all too often becomes the primary focus of a story or investigation; much to the detriment of the actual facts surrounding the story or case. As a result of this, there are many misconceptions regarding Paganism; misconceptions that are wholly false and lead to discrimination against Paganism and Pagans.

SEX & NUDITY

Within Paganism, the human body and form is seen as something sacred and pure. Unlike Western perceptions of nudity being exclusively sexual and perverse, within Paganism nudity is viewed as a natural and innocent state of being.

Within Gardnerian and Aradian traditions it is commonplace to perform rituals *skyclad*; a term that means 'clad by the sky' and in truth is ritual nudity. Within these traditions it is believed that clothes impede the natural flow of energy, and to worship nude in our natural state is to be as close as possible to nature and the Gods. It should be noted that the practice of ritual nudity is only observed by a small number of groups and covens, and is almost always restricted to adult members only.

Nudity is not the only aspect of the human body that is viewed as sacred. Within Paganism the act of sex is not the sinful taboo of mainstream religions; instead sex is believed to be something sacred, natural and an expression of divinity when enacted by consenting adults. However this does not permit a free pass to reckless sexual activity as such views on sex are coupled with strong ethics on personal accountability and responsibility.

Paganism is also very welcoming of the LGBT community and individuals as it is generally held that it is not our place to judge who a person may love, but instead to rather celebrate that people have found the love of another and someone to love. There are even traditions that are specifically for gay members, and almost all other traditions are accepting of members' sexual orientation, with many Pagan clergy performing same-sex handfastings.

DRUGS

A common false accusation levelled at Paganism and Pagans is that drug use and alcohol consumption form mandated parts of Pagan rituals. This myth in all likelihood stems from the misunderstanding of the practice of *Cakes and Ale*.

Similar to the Christian Holy Communion, the practice of *Cakes and Ale* is performed towards the end of a formal ritual. In this classic liturgy, the High Priest or Priestess leading the ritual blesses a chalice filled with wine or fruit juice and a plate of bread or biscuits; of which a portion is given as an offering to deity and the rest is shared with the group. The practice of *Cakes and Ale* is found in Wiccan and eclectic traditions and it is not mandated that wine be used- water, milk or fruit juice are perfectly acceptable and commonly used substitutes.

As for the use of drugs; no Pagan organisation, group or coven endorses or condones the use of drugs in ritual, or as a part of Pagan religious practices, as illegal drug use is prohibited by South African law.

While mind-altering substances were used by spiritual leaders in ancient cultures, many of which form the spiritual foundation of modern Pagan traditions; modern Pagan traditions don't endorse drug use for rituals. In fact, almost all Pagan traditions bar entry to a ritual to a person if they are found to be under the influence of any alcohol or drugs; and any coven or group that does claim to endorse drug use is considered to be a major red-flag when seeking out a group or coven to join.

Within Pagan ethics there is the strong theme of personal responsibility, meaning that any activity that causes you to lose control to the point where you may harm others, is viewed negatively; and any such individual expressing such behaviour must be prepared to accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions.

CHILDREN

Just as families of other religions choose to raise their children in the beliefs of their parents, so there are Pagan families who choose to raise their children in their tradition. In such cases Pagan children are taught the basic principles and core beliefs of the parent's tradition, are involved in simple activities surrounding Sabbats and experience the everyday life of Pagan culture.

It is generally accepted that Pagan children are never forced to participate in rituals and are only ever included in festivities and celebrations. Children are never initiated into any tradition, or study the deeper mysteries of a tradition without signed parental consent; and many groups and covens don't accept anyone under the age of eighteen.

There are also many Pagan parents who don't seek to raise their children in their Pagan beliefs, instead encouraging their children to learn about various world religions and leaving the choice of religious belief in the hands of their children. Such parents will often share their beliefs with their non-Pagan children if the children have questions or seem inquisitive; but believe that it is not their place to decide on something as personal as religion for their children.

SATANISM

By far the most common accusation laid against Paganism is that it is 'Satanism'. Unfortunately due to the 'Satanic Panic' that swept through the USA and Britain in the 1980s, and South Africa in the 1990s; Paganism suffered false accusations by Christian individuals and groups who misunderstood Pagan beliefs, worship, symbols and ritual tools. Today, despite public relations and interfaith work by the Pagan community, the false myth that Paganism is Satanism persists and is perpetuated.

Unlike Abrahamic religions, Paganism does not hold the same themes of 'ultimate good versus ultimate evil' within its theology. Instead the common theme of balance between forces is found in the balance between masculine and feminine, chaos and order, light and dark etc; so there are no deities that are ultimately 'evil', such as Satan is perceived to be within Christianity.

It should also be understood that the deity Satan has its roots in Judaic and Christian theology and forms no part of Pagan theologies, which are based on pre-Christian religions. And by that same extension, the principles and practices of Satanism; whether they are Luciferian, LaVeyan Satanism, Theistic Satanism or any other Satan-orientated path, form no part of Pagan worship or belief. In short, saying a Pagan worships Satan is akin to saying an Atheist worships God.

A HISTORY OF PAGANISM IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY Damon Leff

I don't think it is possible for there to be a definitive telling of the birth of public Paganism in South Africa without retelling hundreds, if not thousands of individual accounts from the Pagans who themselves were instrumental in achieving this. These stories remain to be told.

My own piece-meal tale is therefore not in any sense definitive of the momentous 'awakening' that took place in South Africa between 1994 and 1996 and which in many respects is still taking place as South African Pagans strive daily to achieve true equality and dignity in a new and free democracy.

My own involvement in the birth of the public Pagan movement in South Africa began in 1995 with the publication of Penton Pagan Magazine. The first issue in December 1995 featured articles on the Horned God and Nature, the Gardnerian revival of Wicca and Goddess spirituality. Subsequent issues explored Paganism and Pagan related spiritualities and paths.

I saw through Penton an opportunity to connect self-identified Pagans and an opportunity to break the stranglehold of Christian apartheid propaganda on the social and religious psyche. It was and still is a platform to educate, inspire and explore ancient and modern Pagan spiritualities and related religious expressions.

In its second year of publication Penton was approached by Donna Vos to publish a questionnaire on a proposal to form the first representative Pagan Federation of South Africa. The Pagan Federation of South Africa (PFSA) was formed in 1996 with the support of many Pagans. Its first Annual National General Conference took place in Cape Town in June 1996.

Many other diverse Pagan groups have been formed since 1996 reflecting the independent spirit of diversity so characteristic of the modern Pagan movement in South Africa.

The Grove was founded in 1996 in Gauteng by Morgainne Emrhys and myself. The Grove is the oldest South African Pagan Mystery School dedicated to the exploration of Pagan gnosis and the practice of neo-Paganism. The order is an initiatory tradition founded on the praxis of ancient and modern Pagan traditions. The Grove is currently administered by High Priestess Shannon McCardle.

CORD was founded in Gauteng in 1997 by Mayrek, Rufiki, Era and Spiral. In 2000 CORD began networking nationally with the Pagan community, coordinated gatherings with other established Pagan groups and facilitated in the sharing of information and ritual experiences with other groups in Johannesburg and Pretoria. The coven "went public" in 2001 and began publishing the CORD Newsletter. CORD was dissolved in 2003.

The Clan of the ShaddowHorse was founded in Gauteng by Carol Nowlan (Epona Moondancer) in 1998. The Clan is no longer in existence but members went on to form the House and Temple of Ouroborus in Cape Town.

The Clan of Ysgithyrwyn was founded by me in 1998 in the southern Cape. The Hearth of Ysgithyrwyn was formed as a Pagan circle of fellowship and ceremony and is the foundation stone of an eclectic Witchcraft coven.

The Order of the Circle of Stones was formed by Marius Silverwolf Heath in February 2000. The Order has established chapters in South Africa, the Netherlands and New Zealand.

The Lunaguardia Tradition was founded in December 2000 by Aurelius Rex Maximus and Morgause Fontléve in Nelspruit. Lunaguardia is an eclectic coven aimed at personal identification with Divinity and the Solitary path post initiations.

The Circle of the African Moon (CAM) was founded in 2001 by Donna Vos, President of the Pagan Federation of South Africa from 1996 to 2001 and author of 'Dancing under an African Moon' (Struik, 2002). CAM promotes itself as a proactive educational network dedicated to correcting misinformation about Paganism through interaction with the media and engaging in dialogue and interfaith activities.

The Celestine Circle was founded in 2001 by Fey Fand in Kwazulu-Natal. Primarily an environmental Wiccan group who practice magick in order to protect threatened species and areas, they also donate money to Save the Rhino and animal shelters. Members of Celestine Circle participate in protest marches and have an offshoot environmental branch called Gaia's Voice, with 444 members to date, which undertake to raise awareness of environmental issues.

Clan Odha and The House of Ouroboros (THO) was founded in Cape Town by Epona Moondancer and Arias Ndlovu in 2001. In 2002 the Temple Of Epona was registered as the first Pagan Church in South Africa.

In 2002 the Correllian Nativist Church (CNC) was launched in South Africa with a visit from Ed Hubbard, founder of the American Correllian Nativist Tradition.

The Pagan Freedom Day Movement was founded on 11.11.2003 through the cooperative efforts of the Pagan Federation of South Africa, CORD, The Grove, Lunaguardia, The House of Ouroboros and other non-aligned Pagans. The Pagan Freedom Day initiative was launched to facilitate an annual national and regional Pagan celebration of 10 years of Religious Freedom in South Africa on Freedom Day 27 April 2004. In January 2004, this initiative was formerly chartered as the Pagan Freedom Day Movement (PFDM). PFDM is currently administered by the South African Pagan Council.

The South African Pagan Rights Alliance (SAPRA) was founded by me in 2004 as a Pagan human rights activist alliance. In 2006 SAPRA was reformed as a democratically constituted body with an elected executive. The Alliance was constituted to promote the guaranteed liberties and freedoms enshrined for all South African Pagans in the Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996), and to assist South African Pagans, whose constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms have been infringed due to unfair discrimination, to obtain appropriate redress.

The Notrelim Phoenix Tradition was founded by Arch-Priest Martin 'Zeo' Frost. Notrelim Phoenix Tradition is the result of the progression in thought and accumulative development of a Spiritual study group setup in 2004.

The Clan of Kheper Temple was formed by the Rev Raene Adams in Cape Town in 2005. The Clan of Kheper is a Temple of the Correllian Tradition dedicated to the study of Correllian Philosophy and Training in the Correllian degrees of Clergy.

The South African Pagan Council (SAPC) was inaugurated in 2006 as a unifying body of like-minded Pagans with a vision of co-operative unity. The SAPC is a Section 21 Public Benefit religious organisation. The SAPC currently represents the largest number of independent Pagan solitary practitioners, covens /groups, and independent but affiliated Pagan organizations (including SAPRA and CNTSA).

In September 2007, representatives of existing South African Pagan covens and organizations, met in Melville, Johannesburg to discuss the imminent threat of the tabling of a bill known as the (2007) Mpumalanga Witchcraft Suppression Bill. That meeting elected five self-defined Witches to act as representatives, under the auspices of the South African Pagan Council (SAPC), in order to fulfil what has become known as the 'Melville Mandate'.

The 'Melville Mandate' seeks to initiate urgent legislative reform to the Witchcraft Suppression Act in order to prevent any further or future unfair discrimination and prejudice against citizens of a free and democratic country founded on the recognition of human dignity, equality for all – irrespective of religion or belief, and the advancement of human rights and freedoms for all South African citizens equally. The 'Melville Mandate' also seeks to reclaim the terms 'Witch' and 'Witchcraft' within a modern Pagan context and representatives have been tasked with fulfilling the goal of reclamation through various educational and other processes, including the possible establishment of a formal Commission of Enquiry to investigate ongoing violence against innocent persons accused of practicing Witchcraft.

Since February 2008 the South African Pagan Rights Alliance (SAPRA), the South African Pagan Council (SAPC), the Correllian Nativist Tradition South Africa (CNTSA), and CAM have been designated as religious organisations in terms of and in accordance with section 5 (1) and (2) of the Civil Union Act (Act 17 of 2006) and each religious organisation has appointed Pagan 'religious marriage officers' who are legally empowered to conduct both religious / civil marriages and civil unions, for both heterosexual and same-sex couples.

In July 2008 the South African Law Reform Commission (SALRC) began a preliminary investigation, at the request of the South African Pagan Rights Alliance, in order to determine whether or not the Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957 undermines the constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and rights of self-identified Witches in South Africa. SALRC considered the inclusion of a "Review of the Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957 and the Mpumalanga Witchcraft Suppression Bill, 2007" on 1 August 2009 and will recommend that the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development approve the inclusion of this investigation in the Commission's research programme.

In honour of Pagans (Witches, Wiccans, Druids, Asatruans, Shamans and Magicians) who have dedicated their time and energy towards the birth and evolution of the public Pagan movement in South Africa, I offer, in perfect love and perfect trust, a libation of blessing to your continued well-being. May all Pagans and Paganism in South Africa thrive and prosper in peace.

Reference

[0] To date – up to and including the 2001 Census – there is no accurate census of the number of Pagans in South Africa. Official government Censuses have not listed Paganism as a census choice. It may be assumed that Pagans, who registered for the 2001 Census, were collectively lumped with 'others' under either one of these listed figures:
Other beliefs 283815 – No religion 6767165 – Undetermined 610974

PAGAN VOICES

The South African Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to freedom of religion, and freedom from discrimination based on their religious beliefs. As Pagans in South Africa, this is a right which we cherish and honour: we feel free in our beliefs and who we are as individuals shaped by those beliefs. This is what being Pagan means to everyday South African Pagans:

“I was raised as a Catholic. Questioning dogma was not an option until I was an independent adult, when I realized I could not accept any fundamentalist view that regarded other religions as invalid. For a long time, I considered myself agnostic but was nominally Christian as far as those who could not handle the truth were concerned. The freedom to choose my religion means I don't have to pretend to be something I am not, although to be honest I don't advertise my beliefs everywhere as many people still cannot handle religious diversity outside of mainstream religions and being an outcast has negative practical implications in the real world. The freedom to be Pagan means it is not a crime to have beliefs that regard Nature and all of life as sacred and Divine. It means I am able to have spiritual beliefs that make sense to me and uplift me without being bound by dogma and outdated man-made rules in conflict with my personal worldview. Many people who outgrow Christianity become irreligious or atheist, but that doesn't work for me and I am grateful I found something else that does.”

Helen, Western Cape

“I am a Celtic Witch; I serve a God and a Goddess. I practice Witchcraft because it is a part of who and what I am, and also to honour my Lady, who gave me the ability. In my practice I follow the *Witch's Creed* and the *Law of Return*. Yes, I do believe in God, but not as a single male. Marion Zimmer-Bradley describes it perfectly in “The Mists of Avalon” when young Morgaine says to little Arthur that having a God *and* a Goddess is “like having a Father *and* a Mother”. To me, believing any other way would be completely unnatural and untrue to myself. As a Child of the Goddess, I love Nature, and I honour and respect all life. I walk my Path with pride. I love Mother Earth, who nurtures me, because my Earth Mother who birthed us all loves us both. To always be true to myself, to my Witch-kin, to My Patroness and Patron... and to do it all in perfect love and perfect trust, is to be Witch. That is who I am, and I am proud. Blessed be!”

Antoinette Keyser, Gauteng

“What Paganism means to me? The emergence (some would say re-emergence) of Paganism is for me an affirmation of the cyclical nature of all manifestation. The wisdom of our pagan ancestors is not lost, but re-emerging in a world dominated by a largely Judeo-Christian-Islamic world-view. Perhaps the addition of an eclectically diverse Pagan paradigm may act to moderate the excesses of this world-view in the future? Perhaps this is inevitable. I hope that moderation is a peaceful one of mutual cooperation and coexistence.”

Damon Leff, Western Cape

“Being a pagan means to me that I am free from the constraints of conventional religion , that I am free to make my own choices in terms of what is right or wrong guided only by my own sense of morality , and that I am responsible for whatever I path I choose, no matter where it leads, safe in the knowledge that my spirit will not be condemned but rather be reborn to continue its earth bound journey. That I may worship the goddesses and gods with whom I have chosen to do so by

being led by the forces within me and the forces that surround me and by accepting them as they have accepted me as part of the whole.”

Chiron, Mpumalanga

“It is hard to be different. People do not understand you. I could not understand why what I was being taught did not go soul deep. Why did I have so many questions, even then? This made an awkward and confused (excludes the turbulent hormones. The feeling stayed when then the hormones settled) teen of me. My slow evolution from Christian to Paganism has taught me much about life and myself. What I have learned from it is that it is ok to be different. With that I learned to love and accept myself and others, to accept everyone has the right to believe what they want. I accept that I am human and that I have freedom to think for myself and decide what I believe. It is unconventional but it has made me a better and stronger person out of me.”

Debbie, Gauteng

“I am privileged to honour Mother Earth and to walk in the knowledge that the Lady and Her Lord are with me always and all ways. Working with Earth, Air, Fire and Water transforms and empowers me to be an instrument of positive change for myself and everything around me. This brings the responsibility to walk gently upon our planet and to do my best to be the best I am able to be in any given situation. I am not perfect and I often fail, but being Pagan has taught me to regard failure and negative circumstances as life lessons, and to pledge to continue trying and growing and learning all the days of this life. The knowledge that we experience many lifetimes helps greatly during difficult times, and the awareness of the Law of Three helps me to try to stay in balance with myself and All That Is, as much as I humanly am able to. The ability to practice Magick and to see real results makes me conscious of the fact that the mind is very powerful, and that attitude and thoughts should be kept positive. The marking of the Wheel of the Year with the celebration of the eight Sabbats keeps me in tune with the seasons of Mother Earth and the seasons of my own life. Working with the energy of the Moon helps me to understand the ebb and flow of life, and that all things are cyclical and everything returns. I am grateful to be a Pagan, and I like to share this with others, and see them realise their own destinies. I am blessed to live a Magickal Life, filled with reverence and gratitude. Blessed Be.”

Fey Fand, KwaZulu-Natal

“The first small step was under the canopy of a cloudless night, Reece and myself lying on the roof looking at the stars when out of the blue he said " Dah! You must follow your heart ", these were his words four years prior to him following his own path through the teachings offered at Hecate's Loom. These words became my daily mantra growing into “Follow your heart, listen with your soul ". Listening with your soul opens doors which appeared closed before, it's through these doors that the wonders of Universal love walk in inviting the soul, spirit and body on an exciting adventure of discovery where all of nature becomes your garden, the energies of the universe become your tonic, your greatest gifts the experiences of connectivity, where almost everything in your connections to nature and the universe can be used to help others. It was during this period of experience that the realisation of not fitting into the box others thought I needed to be in raised its ugly head, feeling pretty much the outcast during this period I found myself drawn to others who felt they were walking the edges of accepted spiritual ways, the Witches, Shamans, Druids, Light workers, the people who called themselves Pagans and it was here I found my roots, it was here where I was named the dragon, with their help, listening to them, listening with my soul I grew in many ways helping people along the way, failing time after time until the lesson was learned. Been

independent has never been frowned upon, where my theories and experiences are listened to and seldom ridiculed. My brothers and sisters who follow their own paths, those who embrace mine are all Pagan and whenever someone asks me what faith I follow I announce Proudly eclectically Pagan.”

Patrick ‘Dragon’ Rholand

“When I was a teenager, I got kicked out of two churches for questioning their teachings. Later in life, when I discovered the pagan path, I found a spiritual path that made more sense to me. But more importantly, I’ve found a spiritual path where I’m not condemned for questioning or disagreeing with anything.

I love being Pagan as it’s a path which reveres nature and encourages individuality. I’m encouraged to follow my intuition to lead me on my path. No-one tells me what I have to believe. I follow the Wiccan Rede ‘An harm it none, do what ye will’. I follow my own moral compass which uses the Rede as its guideline and use my own judgement. I believe this teaches free thinking, more responsibility and ownership.

If I do something wrong, I would never blame it on ‘the devil’ or ‘Satan’. I take full responsibility for my actions.

And no, I don’t worship Satan. I don’t believe in him. I worship ‘God’. But my belief of what God is, is slightly different from what you believe. I don’t see God as a giant man. I see God as a universal source energy which encompasses both male and female energies. So when I refer to a God and Goddess, I’m honouring both the male and female in the Universal Source.

And yes, I believe in magic. Spellwork is not evil. It is my way of praying to my God and Goddess. Of course I believe in angels and faeries as well as other magical beings.

Being Pagan allows me the freedom to have these beliefs even if they differ from everyone else’s beliefs. Yes, there is commonality between Pagan beliefs, but the details often differ. This is because we all believe that religion or a spiritual path is something personal; that all religions and beliefs are just different ways of experiencing the same spiritual reality.”

Sammi, Western Cape

“To me Paganism means liberation, freedom to fully be myself, complete self-acceptance, a place where I belong, a spiritual home, finding a purpose to my life, being understood and accepted, finding the piece that was missing for very long, knowing there are others like me (like a lost alien finding the mothership), the culmination of a long, difficult and agonising path of self-discovery, growth and individuation.

It provides me with a solid anchor and a belief system to weather the storms in my life, without expecting me to blindly follow rules and give up my autonomy.

I did not simply decide to become a pagan, follow a set of rules, write an exam, gain entrance and pay membership to a club. It was rather the result of years of searching for my missing part, painful self-growth and rejection of what did not fit, alienation of loved ones by forging ahead on this voyage of self-discovery. I suppose it was like peeling an onion. Eventually when I got to the core, I recognised it for what it was. Becoming a pagan is not a deliberate decision and conscious choice, it is rather the surprising destination of a long and painful journey. You don’t start off by choosing a

religion and then grow accordingly. You do the growing first and then you realise where your spiritual centre is and your beliefs are only then named.

I have been home for nearly 14 years and have not regretted one bit of the search or the riches I have found.”

Amanda Rykaart, Gauteng

PAGAN SYMBOLS

PENTACLE vs. PENTAGRAM

The symbol most commonly associated with Modern Paganism is what is called the *Pentacle*; a five-sided star constructed of five intersecting lines, all enclosed in a circle. However, the name *pentacle* for this symbol is a misnomer. The symbol of the five-sided star is a *pentagram*, even when it is enclosed in a circle. It is only when the symbol is inscribed onto a tablet or jewellery that it becomes a *pentacle*, which is why when commonly worn as a pendant it is called a pentacle.

The pentagram is an ancient symbol with its earliest use been as a pictogram in Ancient Sumeria. It was also used by, and of significance to, Ancient Greek Pythagoreans, Ancient Babylonians, and it could be found in Ancient China in the form of Wu Xing. At one stage the pentagram was even used as a Christian symbol where it represented the five wounds of Christ.

In the 16th century, notable Alchemist and Occultist, Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, attributed the five classic elements (Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Spirit) to the points of the pentagram. The symbol of the pentagram continued to be used by Occultists, including 20th century Occultist, Aleister Crowley, whose works in turn greatly influenced Wicca's founder, Gerald Gardner.

Today, within Paganism, the pentagram is the religious symbol of Wicca where each point corresponds to a classic element and the circle surrounding it represents life, eternity, and feminine divinity. It is worn and used by Wiccans in the same way that Christians wear or use the symbol of the cross.

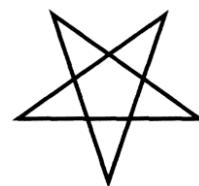
However, the symbol of the pentagram is one which is still widely misunderstood, especially when it comes to variations of the traditional design. The most common myth is that an inverted pentagram is 'evil' and associated with Satanism. Within Wicca the inverted pentagram is commonly used as a symbol for the second degree of clergy training, specifically in the Gardnerian tradition, where it symbolizes finding balance between the spiritual and material worlds. In Satanism an inverted pentagram is overlaid over a goat's head and enclosed in two circles. Named *The Sigil of Baphomet*, it is the official symbol of The Church of Satan (LaVeyan Satanism), and is not a Pagan symbol.



Pentagram in circle



Pentagram



Inverted Pentagram

PAGAN SYMBOLS



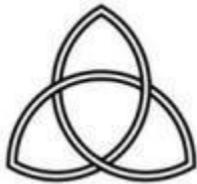
The **Septagram**, or Elven Star, is a seven-sided star created with seven intersecting lines. It is a symbol sacred to the Faery traditions with each point being symbolic of a quality: knowledge, connection, trust, honour, magick, joy, inspiration.



The symbol of **Awen** is used to represent Druidry traditions. Amongst the various paths of Druidry there are numerous interpretations of this symbol. In some the three dots represent the triple aspect of deity and the three positions the sun rises at the solstices and equinoxes, with the three lines representing the sun's rays. Other interpretations include the three lines representing the Celtic triad of Earth, Sea and Sky. The name *Awen* is Welsh for 'inspiration' and forms a core principle in Druidry.



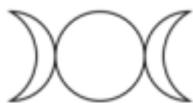
In Wiccan traditions **Goddess symbols** are used to represent The Goddess and Her various attributes of the divine feminine polarity- fertility, nurturing, wisdom, love.



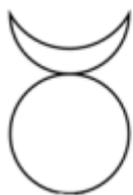
The **Triquetra** is an ancient symbol that was used by Germanic and Celtic cultures, and later in history, by Christians as a symbol of the Holy Trinity. Today modern Pagans of various traditions use the Triquetra to symbolise triads such as the Wiccan, 'Maiden, Mother, Crone' of the Triple Goddess.



The **Triskele**, much like the triquetra, is an ancient Celtic symbol that was later adopted by Christianity to represent the Holy Trinity. Today it is used as the symbol of the Celtic Reconstructionist path, where it symbolises a variety of triplicities in their cosmology and theology; most notably 'Earth, Sea and Sky'.



The **Triple Moon** is used in Wiccan traditions to symbolise the Triple Goddess with the waxing moon representing the Maiden aspect, the full moon the Mother aspect, and the waning moon the Crone aspect of The Goddess.



The **Horned Moon** is used as a symbol of The Horned God in Wiccan traditions; a deity related to the ancient Gods of vegetation, animals and hunting, and who represents the masculine polarity in the universe.



The **Ankh** is an ancient Egyptian symbol that was mainly used as a symbol for eternal life. Today it is the symbol to represent the Egyptian Pagan tradition, Kemetism, and it is commonly found in many different Pagan traditions.



The **Eye of Horus** is an ancient Egyptian symbol of protection, royal power and good health, and personifies the Egyptian Goddess, Wadjet. It is still used today by Pagans who follow an eclectic or Egyptian path.



Mjolnir, is known as Thor's Hammer and is a symbol for the Norse God, Thor. Today it is used as a symbol of the Asatru faith and as a protection symbol.



The **Helm of Awe**, or *Aegishjalmur*, is an ancient Norse Protection symbol that is steeped in deeper symbolism. This symbol is used to exert dominance over one's enemies, including 'enemies' or obstacles in a metaphorical sense, and one's own fear.



The **Laurel Wreath** is an ancient Greek symbol for victory and an actual laurel wreath was presented to the victors in the ancient Greek Olympics. Today the symbol of the Laurel Wreath is used to represent Hellenistic Reconstructionism.



The symbol of an **Eight Spoked Wheel**, or *solar wheel*, is used to represent the Wiccan *Wheel of the Year* with each spoke of the wheel representing a Sabbat.



The *Strophalos*, more commonly known as **Hecate's Wheel**, is an ancient Greek symbol of the Goddess Hecate. Today Hecate's Wheel is used by Pagans who follow Greek or Hellenic traditions as a symbol of religious identification and a symbol of power and knowledge.

PAGAN PATHS & TRADITIONS

Most Pagan traditions have many of the following factors in common:

- Paganism was almost wiped out in the past and has since been reconstructed from mostly historical and esoteric sources.
- Paganism is a duotheistic or polytheistic belief system.
- Many followers are solitary practitioners, others are involved in small groups, which various traditions call circles, covens, garths, groves, hearths, kindreds, etc.
- Most Pagans celebrate four main seasonal days of celebrations each year, associated with the equinoxes and solstices.
- Many Pagans also celebrate four additional days, each between a solstice and equinox.
- Pagans prefer to conduct their religious rituals outdoors where practical.
- Many Pagans do not practice their religion publicly because of the danger of abuse from misinformed non-Pagans who have associated them with Satanism.
- Pagans have a minimal or no hierarchical structure.
- Pagans have a concern for the environment.
- Pagans feel close to nature and its cycles.
- Many Pagans follow a behavioural code that requires them to avoid hurting themselves or others.

Pagan traditions and paths seem to be legion nowadays. Here is a list of the most well-known traditions and paths (self-defined paths such as Religio-Romano, etc who do not identify as Pagan are listed for information only):

ALGARD WICCA - In 1972, Mary Nesnick combined the Gardnerian tradition with the Alexandrian to form the Algard tradition. Some people think that in practice this combination ends up being very close to the Gardnerian tradition because much of Alexandrian ritual is similar to Gardnerian to begin with.

ALEXANDRIAN - Originated in England in the 1960's, by Alex Sanders. The rituals are said to be of modified Gardnerian. Although similar to Gardnerian Wicca, Alexandrian Wicca tends to be more eclectic, and liberal.

AMERICAN CELTIC WICCA - The American Order of the Brotherhood of the Wicca covens stem from Jessica Bell (Lady Sheba), a self-styled Witch Queen. The tradition's rites are virtually the same as Gardnerian, though covens work robed. They follow the same practice of Gardnerian in preferring couples; preferably husband and wife. Ceremonial Magic is the primary work of the American Celtic tradition.

ANGLO-ROMANY TRADITION - A tradition based upon the beliefs of the Gypsy people of Britain and Ireland, commonly called Tinkers. This tradition often is blended with the more mystical aspects of European Catholicism.

ANGLO-SAXON TRADITION - An English path combining the practices of the Celts with those of the southern Teutons, whose Pagans are also sometimes called witches. Though the popular word Wicca is Anglo-Saxon in origin, the followers of this path discard it as a label for themselves. There are many followers of this tradition, and many varied expressions of its teachings.

ARTHURIAN TRADITION - A tradition from Wales and Cornwall based upon the Arthurian myths which each of the figures in his stories as individual divine images.

AUSTRALIAN WICCA - Australia has just about every version of Craft in healthy existence; the only significant difference is that Australians celebrate the Sabbats in opposite order (as is done by many in South Africa) from those in the Northern hemisphere, in keeping with their own seasons.

BLUE STAR WICCA - Blue Star Wicca is one of a number of Wiccan traditions created in the United States in the 1970s based loosely on the Gardnerian and Alexandrian traditions. It continues to be practiced today in areas of the USA, as well as having members in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Canada.

BREZONEK TRADITION (Bray-zone-AY'K) - This is the little-known Celtic tradition of Brittany. It has most likely been influenced by both Roman and Celtic Gaul, and by the Celts of the British Isles, though its followers think of themselves first and foremost as Celtic.

BRITTABIC TRADITION - An Anglo-Celtic tradition which encompasses the beliefs brought to England by the invading Romans, as well as those of the Celts.

BRITISH TRADITIONAL - Influenced heavily by Gardnerian Wicca and Celtic traditions. Covens are co-ed and members train through a degree process.

BRYTHONIC TRADITIONS - A generic label often applied to traditions of Wales, Cornwall, and England. Though the Bretons also speak a Brythonic language, this name is usually not applied to their spiritual practices.

CALENDONNI TRADITION - This Scottish tradition receives little publicity in the Pagan press. The name Caledonii is Roman in origin and may indicate that it, like the Hibernian tradition of Ireland, has strong Roman influences.

CELTIC TRADITION - A branch of Paganism originating in Celtic Gaul, western and northern England, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Brittany, and the Isle of Man. Generally they share much in common, but, specifically, they have many differences. A basic overview of shared Celtic Pagan beliefs can be found in D.J Conway's book, Celtic Magic.

CELTIC RECON - This varies somewhat from both Celtic Wicca and Neo-Druidry. Celtic Recon differs from Wicca in that specific Celtic deities are venerated and worshipped in an approximation of historical context. There are overlaps between Celtic Recons and Neo-Druidic groups, but Celtic recon groups tend to reserve the title of Druid for an initiated priesthood, in contrast to the Neo-Druid preference for graded initiations.

CELTIC WICCA - Based upon old Celtic/Druidic practices, and ritual Gardnerian design. The emphasis is placed heavily upon Celtic deities, the elements, nature and the magic of trees.

CEREMONIAL: Less religion, more emphasis on the art and science of magick. Rituals are generally complex and practices lean towards the esoteric side of Wicca. Not geared towards the solitary practitioner, but can easily be adapted for those who choose to work alone.

CHURCH OF ALL WORLDS - Promotes celebration and honouring of all life and the planet as a living, divine organism: Gaea. Combination of worldwide Goddess traditions.

CHURCH OF THE CRESCENT MOON - The Church, serving the Goddess and the God, offers many paths for practitioners to follow. It honours Ireland's ancient religion, deities, practices and history.

CIRCLE WICCA - Was founded in 1974 in Madison, Wisconsin, USA. Its name, logo, and focus are conceived by Selena Fox. Circle sponsors its first Sabbat gathering. This small gathering is a Yule celebration hosted by Selena Fox and Jim Alan in their home in Madison, Wisconsin and includes Pagans from the USA and UK.

COVEN OF THE FOREST, FAR AND FOREVER – Formed by a Priestess and Priest, with backgrounds in Gardnerian, Egyptian, Dianic, hereditary Spanish and Quabbalism, this religion emphasises the Book of Shadows, balances between female and male and the Goddess and the God as living forces manifested on different levels

CREABH RUADH TRADITION (Crahv ROO-Ah) - The "Red Branch" tradition is highly secretive, initiatory, male mysteries Irish path based upon the myths and exploits of the Red Branch warriors of Ulster. It is highly stratified in character, much like Celtic society.

CUNNING LORE - In English history, the cunning man or cunning woman were professional or semi-professional folk magick user up until the 20th century and, to a lesser degree, to the present day. Such people were also frequently known as wizards, wise men, wise women, witch doctors or conjurers. The term 'white witch' was infrequently used for cunning folk until recent times.

CYMRI TRADITION (KIM-ree or KEEM-ree) - The principal Pagan tradition of Wales. It claims to be a pre-Celtic path which may antedate many of the Arthurian legends, though Arthur and his legions figure heavily in the teachings and mythology of this tradition.

DARK PAGANISM - A movement within Paganism which aims to reclaim the dark portion of the light-dark polarity that has been denied or ignored by those who have confused this polarity with the ethical dualism of the Judeo-Christian culture.

DEBOREAN TRADITION (Deb-OR-ee-awn) - This American eclectic tradition has Celtic ties in the sense that they use names from the Anglo-Celtic mythos to designate their leaders. They are an initiatory tradition which attempts to reconstruct Wicca as it was before the witch persecutions. They view their principal purpose as being to help all humans find their inner spiritual home.

DIANIC TRADITION - Tradition pinpointed by Margaret Murray in 1921 in "The Witch-Cult in Western Europe". There are several feminist traditions which are considered Dianic. This tradition tends to emphasise the female aspect of the Goddess, sometimes to the exclusion of the male God. Dianic covens tend to be more politically active. It is also a mix of many traditions, but its focus is on the Goddess.

DRUIDIACTOS - A Druidic path, as much cultural as it is magickal and religious, which devotes itself to Celtic study and accurate as possible a reconstruction of past practices. The teachings and beliefs of the Druidiactos are outlined in The Sacred Cauldron, by Tadhg MacCrossan.

DRUIDIC TRADITIONS - Another complex term with a variety of meanings that could refer to historical Druids of ancient Celtic Europe or a variety of contemporary spiritual paths. Historically, the function of Druids were those of priests, judges and teachers. During the 18th century the notion of Druidry became heavily romanticised and thusly reinvented. This revival influenced modern Pagan Druidry.

DRYAD TRADITION - A feminist tradition of female Druidesses who were given their name by the tree faeries of the Celtic lands, who are also known as Dryads. Faery lore plays a strong role in their practices, and the majority of their other teachings are Druidic with a modern feminist slant.

ECLECTIC WICCA - Basically a loosely based tradition which uses any practices of other paths and incorporates them into their own path. It is now quite a common and popular form of Wicca, as the followers use what works best for them regardless of its source.

ECO-PAGANISM - Eco-Paganism and Eco-magick, which are offshoots of direct action environmental groups, have a strong emphasis on fairy imagery and a belief in the possibility of intercession by the fae (fairies, pixies, gnomes, elves, and other spirits of nature and the Otherworlds).

EIREANNACH TRADITION (AIR-un-n'yock) - Several distinct traditions claiming this label seem to be operating in North America. The name simply means "Irish". Eireannach is probably best described as a catch-all term for the various Irish paths rather than the name of any one single expression.

ERISIAN TRADITION (Discordia) - A philosophy which believes that the universe is uncertain and that natural laws are not everywhere and constant. Eris is the Goddess of chaos. Discordia was rediscovered in 1960's by Californians Kerry Thornley and Gregory Hill, who published a book called *Principia Discordia* on their experiences. The tradition also involves humour in its rituals. Similarly Englishman, Austin Osman Spare, often called the father of chaos magic, took chaos to a more scientific plateau.

FAERY TRADITION - An environmentally-minded path which claims its origins in the oral teaching of the Tuatha De Dannan of Ireland, the deities who became the faery folk. Once a secretive, Californian-based group, their beliefs and practices have been made public in the Faery Wicca series of Books by Kisma K Stepanich.

FAMILY TRADITIONS - Various traditions passed down through individual families are usually tossed together under this label. Some of these are secretive for reason of personal security; others openly combine their Celtic Pagan beliefs with those of mainstream religions. A Family Tradition can be a part of any culture's indigenous religion, not just Celtic.

FERI TRADITION - A modern witchcraft practice founded by Victor Anderson and his wife Cora. It is an ecstatic tradition with strong emphasis is placed on sensual experience and awareness, including sexual mysticism, which is not limited to heterosexual expression.

FENNIAN TRADITION - An initiatory Irish path which takes its name from Fionn MacCumhal's warriors, the Fianna.

FOLKLORISM - In the early 2000s, a "Traditionalist" or "Folklorist" current of Paganism emerged in Scandinavian Neopaganism, advocated by Jon Julius Filipusson (of Foreningen Forn Sed, Norway), Paul Jenssen (Denmark) and Keeron Ögren (Samfälligheten för Nordisk Sed, Sweden), which rejects reconstructionism and syncretism alike, advocating a strict focus on regional folklore and folk religion.

FROST'S WICCA (aka Church and School of Wicca) - This is one of the many Welsh-based traditions. It was originally founded by Gavin and Yvonne Frost in the early 1970's. As The Church and School of

Wicca the material is presented to students by correspondence, though the course is virtually the same as the material presented in their book *The Witches Bible*.

Gaelic Tradition - A generic label sometimes applied to the traditions of Ireland and Scotland.

Gardnerian Tradition - One of the first traditions in witchcraft to emerge into the public eye during the 1950's. The teachings are based upon the works of Dr Gerald Brosseau Gardner, who researched much of the history of the Craft and added them to his famous *Book of Shadows*. Many traditions use his *Book of Shadows*, in a modified form, as a basis for ritual practice.

Georgian Wicca - An eclectic Wicca tradition founded by George E. Patterson in 1970. This tradition is influenced mostly by Alexandrian and Gardnerian teachings and leans towards Goddess and God worship at an eclectic level. Individuals work either skyclad or robed and are encouraged to write their own rituals.

GLBT Paganism - The inclusive and non-discriminatory nature of Paganism means that there is a representation of Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual and Transgender Pagans right across the spectrum. There are also many Pagan traditions and groups dedicated to address the needs of GLBT Pagans. The Radical Faeries is a well-known men's group from North America. Dianic paths are very popular amongst women.

Goddess Traditions - All paths where there is a strong reverence for female divinity.

God Traditions - Less common, but happening concurrently with Goddess Traditions, are paths where there is a strong reverence for Gods and masculine divinity.

Green Witchcraft - This craft, based on family tradition, has its roots in the Celtic/Iberian. Its approach is a mix of Pagan and mainstream. Practitioners may invoke Pagan deities, the Holy Spirit, angels and saints. Old Religion and mainstream holidays may be observed. The Goddess and the God are identified as female and male in balance and as one.

Hereditary - This is a person that can trace the Craft back on their family tree and was also taught the craft by a living relative.

Hebridean Tradition - A secretive Scottish tradition which is based on the Irish myths.

Hedge Witchery - Also known as Hedgecraft, a spiritual path and considered a form of European witchcraft. It is most commonly practiced by Pagans and some people consider it an offshoot of Wicca. Some adherents have claimed that it is the religion of the traditional cunning folk of England.

Hellenismos, Greek Recon - "Hellenismos" means quite literally both Greek and Pagan, and refers of course to a reconstructed practice of ancient Greek Paganism.

Hibernian Tradition - This Irish tradition probably developed during the Middle Ages which shows Roman influence.

Hybrids - For a lack of a better term, are a combination of two already existing religions but they are not exactly traditions. Still, many will classify them under Paganism because one of the two religions is polytheistic. Due to this syncretic nature, hybrids do not necessarily share all the

characteristics of other Pagan groups. Vodoun, Santeria and Candomble are examples where Roman Catholicism mixed with African and other indigenous religions as a result of slavery.

IRISH TRADITION - A generic term used to identify traditions native to Ireland and her people. Many individual traditions come under this broad heading, though some believe the only true Irish tradition is one which is pre-Celtic.

JUDEO PAGANISM - Jewish Paganism is a modern syncretic Pagan religion based on the union of concepts from Judaism and Mesopotamian and Egyptian Paganism.

KEMETISM, EGYPTIAN RECON - The name "Kemet" means "black earth" and refers to the traditional Egyptian name for Egypt. The origins of Kemet (or Kemetism) are somewhat unclear, as several similar traditions originated in the US in the early 1970s. The Kemetic umbrella stretches to include Usar Auset, an Afrocentric variation.

KINGSTONE TRADITION - An English tradition with Celtic roots.

KITCHEN WITCHCRAFT - This type is one that practices by home and hearth concentration on the practical side of religion, magick and the earth and elements. A more convenient form of practice for those who have limited space and resource, mainly suburbanite and city witches.

MAIDENHILL TRADITION - This initiatory path was founded in England in the late 1970s and worships a generic Mother Goddess, sometimes called Rhiannon, and the Horned God.

MAJESTIC TRADITION - An English tradition which views the long succession of ruling monarchs as sacrificial kings and fertility queens

MANX TRADITION - An Irish tradition which traces its roots to the mystical Isle of Man. Lots of faery lore-based beliefs and ritual workings are part of this path. Manann Mac Llyr, God of the Sea, and Fand, a Faery Queen, are its principal deities.

NORTH COUNTRY TRADITION - The Pagan tradition of Yorkshire region of England. The principal influences on it were from England (which was heavily influenced by Pagan Rome) and from the Scottish lowlands.

NORTHERN ISLES TRADITION - A combined path which follows the old Norse and Celtic ways - sometimes labelled Astra. A Pagan group which calls itself "Northern Way" incorporated in Chicago in 1982.

NORTHERN EUROPEAN PATHS (HEATHENRY) - This covers a wide variety of cultural groups: Scandinavia, Germany, the Netherlands, the Baltic regions, England, indeed anywhere where a Germanic tongue (such as English) is spoken. The most well-known of the modern Northern paths is Ásatrú (meaning essentially, 'true to the Aesir'), however there are many more ever-evolving paths. Followers of such paths generally identify as 'Heathen' as it is a Germanic word. These are usually strongly polytheistic paths devoted to the Aesir and/or Vanir. Honour, truthfulness and hospitality are considered as important character traits. Runes also play an important cultural role. Despite the stereotypical portrayal of 'macho' Vikings, the male and female are equally important in Northern paths.

NORTHERN WAY TRADITION - A non-initiatory tradition, works robed. They say: "We try to emulate as authentic and traditional re-creation as possible of Old Norse garb. Our God-names are all Old Norse, not Teutonic. We do cast a Circle; we do not call Quarters. Our tradition is Norse."

NOVA WICCA - This eclectic denomination, based on Gardnerian, usually uses this tradition's deities' names. It has a degree system and offers in-depth training. Covens may invite the public to Grand Sabbats.

OBOD - The Order of the Bard, Ovates and Druids, a tradition of Celtic Druidry based in England. The OBOD offers correspondence courses, a newsletter and networking.

PAGANISM, MODERN CONTEMPORARY AND NEO - Commonly used for those spiritual constructs formed in the latter half of the 20th century. Academically, paganism is used to refer to the genre of polytheistic religions that existed before the Christian Era, while Paganism is for the later reconstructions in the post Judeo-Christian-Islamic era. Paganism and Neopaganism are often used synonymously.

PECTI-WITA - This is the solitary path of the pre-Celtic people known as the Picts. The inhabited northern Scotland and warred frequently with the Celts before being absorbed by them. The beliefs and practices of this path are recorded by Raymond Buckland in his 1991 book, *Scottish Witchcraft*.

OCCULTISM AND ETHNIC MYSTICISM - Historically the earliest self-identified revivalist pagans were inspired by Renaissance occultism. Notably in early 20th century Germany with Germanic mysticism, which branched into Ariosophy and related currents of Nazi occultism. Outside Germany, occultist Neopaganism was inspired by Crowleyan Thelema and Left-Hand Paths, a recent example being the "Dark Paganism" of John J. Coughlin.

PAGAN RECONSTRUCTIONISM - A subset of modern Paganism. Recon religions differ from so-called "eclectic" varieties of Paganism such as Wicca, in that they attempt to reconstruct the actual historical practices of a specific pagan culture. In contrast to Wicca and its relations, Pagan Reconstructions rely on historical religious scholarship rather than occult sources. One may find multiple autonomous groups within each Reconstructionist "Family".

PICTISH WITCHCRAFT - Scottish witchcraft with a strong connection to nature in all of its forms. The practice is actually mostly magickal with little emphasis on the religious aspect. This is practiced as a solitary tradition.

POW-WOW - This is a system, not a religion, based on 400 year old German magick. In this day and time it has lost much of its concentrations and is basically now into simple faith healing.

REFORMED DRUIDS - This flourishing tradition was organised at Carleton College in Minnesota in 1963 in protest against a school rule which required Sunday chapel attendance. The original group rituals were based on the Episcopal form of worship, but its splinter groups have since tried to revise their rituals in line with the old Celtic ways.

ROMANO-GAULISH TRADITION - This tradition combines Celtic and Roman Pagan practices in the same way that they merged and blended in Gaul many centuries ago.

RELIGIO ROMANA, ROMAN RECON - Religio Romana literally means “Roman religion”. Followers of the Religio rely as often as possible on primary theological sources, with some flexibility to account for modern ideals - for example, animal sacrifice is almost invariably avoided.

ROMUVA, LITHUANIAN RECON - Although Romuva (“Sanctuary”) is one of the smallest of the Pagan Recon, its claim to fame may be that it is the most faithful resurrection of ancient paganism, as well as the oldest, by about fifty years. Lithuanian Baltic pagans were not Christianised until the early seventeenth century, leaving a window of just four hundred years between the end of Lithuanian paganism and its official resurrection in the nineteen-twenties. Unlike other Reconstructionists, there may be some evidence of continuity between the old and the new Romuva.

SACRED WHEEL TRADITION - An eclectic neo-Pagan path which was organised in Delaware within the past decade. Calling themselves Wiccan, they focus on balance and learning. Celtic beliefs are a part of their teachings. Still concentrated in the eastern states, covens are formed from study groups which include both old-timers and novices. Notice about the formation of Sacred Wheel study groups can be found in Pagan periodicals, especially those based in the north-eastern United States.

SCOTIA TRADITION - A tradition for which little public information exists. It is a path which attempts to reconstruct the early Milesian faith as practiced about the time the Celts came to Britain. This would of necessity seek to include old Iberian (Spanish) Pagan beliefs which are virtually extinct thanks to the efficiency of the Spanish Inquisition.

SCOTTISH TRADITION - A generic term used to identify traditions native to Scotland and her people. Many individual traditions come under this broad heading, though some believe that the only true Scottish tradition is one which is pre-Celtic.

SHAMANISM - A wide range of traditional beliefs and practices concerned with communication with the spirit world. Shamanism is based on the premise that the visible world is pervaded by invisible forces or spirits which affect the lives of the living. In contrast to organised religions such as animism or animatism which are led by priests and which all members of a society practice, shamanism requires individualised knowledge and special abilities. Shamans operate outside established religions, and, traditionally, they operate alone. Shamans can gather into associations, as Indian tantric practitioners have done.

SEAX-WICCA TRADITION - Founded in 1973 by Raymond Buckland, this tradition incorporates Saxon lore. Covens have co-ed open rituals and are either performed robed or skyclad. Buckland developed this tradition without breaking his Gardnerian oath.

STREGHERIA (Wiccan) - Strega is an Italian-based witchcraft religion popularised in the 1980s by Raven Grimassi, who claims that it evolved within the ancient Etruscan religion of Italian peasants who worked under the Catholic upper classes. Other scholars argue that it is a religion largely based upon Charles Godfrey Leland’s *Aradia*, or the Gospel of the Witches, which was also used as a basis for Wicca.

STREGHERIA (also known as LA VECCHIA RELIGIONE - the Old Religion) – Etruscan form of folk witchcraft/sorcery not seen as a religion by its exponents. Usually passed down over generations, from parent to child. Streggha is used to define a female witch while Stregonone denotes a male witch, although Italians themselves usually use Stregoneria which actually means enchantress/enchanter. Originally one Tradition it branched off into three. They are known as Fanarra, Janarra and Tanarra collectively known as The Triad Traditions.

SEID - An Old Norse term for a type of sorcery or witchcraft which was practiced by the pre-Christian Norse. Sometimes anglicised as “seidhr”, “seidh”, “seidr”, and seithr” or “seith”, the term is also used to refer to Pagan reconstructions or emulations of the practice

SOLITAIRE - A designation used to describe what seems to be the preferred method of practice - solitary. For those who prefer to practice in groups can do so in covens, brotherhoods, orders, societies, families, churches, etc.

TECHNO-PAGANISM – Pagans who have their feet in a tradition older than the human race, but their heads and hands in the present and the future.

TEUTONIC WITCHCRAFT - A tradition based on Germanic culture; can come from English, Dutch, Icelandic, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish traditions. Also known as the Nordic tradition; sometimes separated into a different part of Paganism different from Wicca.

TUATHA DE DANANN (TOO-ah Day THAY-nan or DAWN-an)- An Irish tradition based upon the mythic tales of the Tuatha De Danann, the last race to hold power in Ireland before the Milesian (human) invasion. The mythic figures of the Tuatha constitute most of the Irish pantheon and serve as a divine foundation for virtually all of the Irish traditions.

UELEDA TRATION (WEE-lay-dah) - Ueleda was a name sometimes broadly applied to female Druids, and today it is the name for an all-female, initiatory Druidic tradition.

WELSH TRADITION - A catch-all term for the several different Pagan traditions which came out of Wales.

WEST COAST TRADITION - The principal Pagan tradition of Cornwall and Devonshire in southwestern England. West Country Wicca, By Rhiannon Ryall, discusses the Anglo-Celtic practices of the West Country Pagans before the influence of Gerald Gardner.

WICCA - Wicca is a modern religion first publicized in 1954 by Gerald Gardner. Gardner said that the religion was a modern survival of an old witch cult, originating in the pre-Christian Paganism of Europe and existing in secret for centuries. Various forms of Wicca have since evolved or been adapted from Gardner's British Traditional Wicca or Gardenerian Wicca such as Alexandrian Wicca. Other forms loosely based on Gardner's teachings are Faery Wicca, Kemetic Wicca, Judeo-Paganism or “Jewitchery”, Dianic Wicca or “Feminist Wicca”. The common denominator amongst all the variants of Wicca are a reverence for nature and active ecology, veneration of the Goddess with or without a consort, such as the Horned God, elements of a variety of ancient mythologies, a belief in and practice of magick and sometimes the belief in reincarnation and karma.

WICCE - The old English word for Wicca. It is sometimes used to refer to an English Tradition where the Saxon influences, but not the Celtic ones, have been eliminated wherever possible.

WITAN TRADITION - An eclectic Scottish path which combines the Scottish, Celtic, Pictish, and Norse traditions. Like the Irish Witta, it values the many influences upon itself as an asset to be cherished rather than eliminated. Modern Wita has done away with much of the stratification of Celtic society and accepts self-initiation.

WITCHCRAFT - This is another broad term which encompasses several, rather than any single, Pagan tradition. All witches are Pagans, but not all Pagans are witches. The term “witch” seems to have

become a term exclusively reserved for practitioners of any of the Celtic or Anglo traditions, or less often, for the Teutonic paths (this latter is probably because the Saxons and the Norse had such a great impact on Celtic Paganism). You will find witch used occasionally instead of the word Pagan.

WITTAN TRADITION (WEED-an) - An eclectic Irish path which keeps very old Irish traditions and combines them with the influences of the Norse. Witta values Irish Pagan history and recognises that at each stage in its development, over many centuries, each generation has been able to add something of value. Until recent times Witten covens were characterised by strict stratification and one-on-one teaching for its apprentices. Today most Witten covens operate on a consensus basis and will accept self-initiation and the solitary life as valid. The precepts of the Witten tradition are outlined in Edain McCoy's *Witta: An Irish Pagan Tradition*.

Y TYLWUTH TEG TRADITION (Ee TEE-Loo-eeth Tay'g) - A Welsh-based tradition names for the faery folk of that land, a people who roughly correspond to the Tuatha De Danann in Ireland. Though the Tradition was officially founded in the United States, it maintains deep Celtic roots and very humanistic philosophy. Students of this path are asked to place heavy emphasis on the study of Welsh myth, folklore, and faery lore.

PAGAN GROUPS, COVENS & ORGANISATIONS

NATIONAL

South African Pagan Rights Alliance	Damon Leff	info@paganrightsalliance.org
South African Pagan Council	Morgause Fonteleve	info@sapagancouncil.org.za
Penton Independent Pagan Media	Damon Leff	editor@penton.co.za
Clan of Kheper Temple	Rev Raene Packery	raene@clanofkhephertemple.co.za
Celestine Circle	Fey Fand	feyfand@gmail.com
Notrelim Phoenix Tradition	Rev Zeo Frost	zeowitch@yahoo.com

GAUTENG

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Coven of the Whispering Wolf	Lucia Smith	Sportyhd1200@yahoo.co.uk
Temple of Celestial Paths	Kelthor	inneshealy@mweb.co.za
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EASTERN CAPE

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NORTH WEST PROVINCE

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MPUMALANGA

Lunaguardia Tradition	Morgause Fonteleve	mize.negrao@gmail.com
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KWA-ZULU NATAL

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House of Ouroborus	Arias Faglar	info@vuya.net
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PAGAN RELIGIOUS MARRIAGE OFFICERS

If you require a Religious/Marriage Officer to solemnize your marriage or civil union, please contact a Pagan RMO in your area for further information.

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SAPRA- South African Pagan Rights Alliance

SAPC- South African Pagan Council

CNTSA- Correllian Nativist Tradition South Africa

SOUTH AFRICAN PAGAN RIGHTS ALLIANCE



The South African Pagan Rights Alliance (SAPRA) was formed in 2004 as a faith-based (Pagan) human rights activist alliance and fulfils several important functions in line with its constitutional mandate, namely, to promote the guaranteed liberties and freedoms enshrined for all South African Pagans in the Bill of Rights and assist South African Pagans, whose constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms have

been infringed due to unfair discrimination, to obtain appropriate redress.

Several successive elected Executive Committees have executed their mandate in a number of ways, including addressing and challenging media prejudice against Paganism, promoting positive media coverage of Paganism in general, challenging institutional, political and legislative prejudice against Witchcraft, and offering non-legal assistance to Pagans seeking advice or assistance in dealing with incidences of discrimination.

HAVE YOUR RIGHTS BEEN INFRINGED? DO YOU REQUIRE NON-LEGAL ADVICE OR ASSISTANCE?

CONTACT: The Chief Executive Officer
E-mail: info@paganrightsalliance.org
Tel/Fax: (044)8501297
P.O. Box 184
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30 DAYS OF ADVOCACY AGAINST WITCH-HUNTS 27 MARCH – 27 APRIL

The words witch and witchcraft are used predominantly as an accusation throughout Africa, either to describe a number of clearly defined traditional religious practices that do not self-define as witchcraft, as well as a number of variable urban legends perpetuated by religious leaders, churches and traditional healers, or to identify women, children and men who are not actual Witches.

In rare instances where alleged confessions of being a witch or practising witchcraft are made by the accused, reported testimony is either irrational or coerced through torture or threat. The 'witchcraft' most often referred to as accusation, allegation and harmful superstition, exists only in the minds of those who believe that witchcraft is the embodiment of evil and that witches are responsible for misfortune, disease, accident, natural disaster and death.

Witch-hunts occur in every country in Africa, and they are increasing in occurrence and brutality. Perhaps few other words has elicited more hatred, hostility and suffering in twentieth and twenty first century South Africa than the word witch. Since the 1980's thousands of innocent men and women have been accused of being witches or of using witchcraft. Many have been murdered by

their communities without trial. Many more have been banished from their villages, their homes destroyed and members of their families murdered or forced to flee in fear of their lives.

South Africa is the only African country in which actual Witches have identified themselves as Pagans. South Africans who are self-identified Witches, by virtue of their very existence, publicly challenge firmly entrenched and prejudicial African beliefs concerning witchcraft, and they contradict attempts to eradicate a belief in witchcraft in Africa by claiming, "there are no witches".

In response to witch-hunts in our own country, and on the continent of Africa, the South African Pagan Rights Alliance launched a '30 day advocacy campaign against witch-hunts in Africa' in 2008. This campaign targeted the South African government (Parliament and the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development), the South African Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality, and South African political parties.

In 2009 the advocacy campaign focused on highlighting the role of institutionalized prejudice against witchcraft and witches within South African legislation, by politicians, the South African Police Service, the South African Human Rights Commission and the Commission for Gender Equality.

The 2010 campaign was aimed at petitioning the African Union General Assembly and the Pan-African Parliament, as well as the United Nations, to address the ongoing witchcraft hysteria in Africa, through constructive and humane programs that seek to entrench and strengthen human rights and human dignity, instead of seeking to suppress witchcraft or ignore ongoing human rights abuses within member countries.

In March 2011 the South African 'Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities' publicly announced its support for this advocacy.

In January 2012 the CRLRC publicly condemned "the ongoing violent victimization and the killing of elderly persons labelled as witches" and called on Traditional leaders, community councils and government departments to "assist in deepening peace, friendship, tolerance and respect for human dignity and communal cohesion among all the people of South Africa in pursuit of social justice and equality, irrespective of suspicions that would not be proven in the court of law."

The CRLRC launched 2012's advocacy campaign in Maupye (Limpopo), one of three identified refugee villages occupied by South African citizens who have been falsely accused of either being witches or of engaging in witchcraft.

The 'witchcraft epidemic' in Africa is fuelled by religious extremism. Practitioners of traditional African religions, traditional healers, witch-doctors and Christian missionaries and religious leaders incite witch-hunts on this continent.

There are comparisons to be made between Africa's current witch-craze, European Inquisitions and American witch-hunts. Perhaps the lessons to be learned in Africa are the same as those that needed to be learned by Europeans and Americans; there is no 'culture' without human rights.

All men and women, including Witches, have the right to live without being falsely accused, assaulted, persecuted or murdered.

Say NO to witch-hunts in Africa!

Support or participate in this campaign?

Contact: info@paganrightsalliance.org

This advocacy campaign is sponsored by the South African Pagan Council and the South African Pagan Rights Alliance, and is supported by Pagan Federation International, Pagan Federation England and Wales, the Correllian Nativist Tradition (U.S. & S.A.) and Circle Sanctuary.

PAGAN FREEDOM DAY MOVEMENT



The Pagan Freedom Day initiative was birthed on 11.11.2003 to facilitate an annual national and regional celebration of 10 years of Pagan Religious Freedom in South Africa on Freedom Day 27 April 2004.

In January 2004, this initiative was formerly chartered as the Pagan Freedom Day Movement (PFDM).

Since its inception, Pagans across the country have willingly embraced the ideal of Pagan Freedom Day, namely to encourage Cooperative Community building amongst Pagans and between Pagans and non-Pagans. It is hoped that by fostering a positive and holistic South African Pagan identity, we can promote understanding and tolerance amongst Pagans and between Pagans and non-Pagan South Africans.

Regional Communities have been formed to facilitate these ideals and to foster both Pagan identity and consolidate cooperative community building. Diverse Pagan individuals and groups have rallied together under the banner of Freedom and Unity in Diversity.

For more information and updates on regional Pagan Freedom Day events:
<http://www.pagancouncil.co.za/node/805>
info@pagancouncil.co.za

TERMINOLOGY & PHRASES

TERMINOLOGY



Altar

The use of an altar is found in many Pagan traditions where it forms the focal point of ritual. Most altars are decorated with a cloth and important ritual tools, candles, incense and natural items are placed upon it. Altars can be set up temporarily, and specifically, for a ritual, or they can act as a permanent shrine.

Animism

Animism is the belief that animals, plants, natural phenomenon (like weather) and other inanimate aspects of the natural world possess a living soul or spirit.



Athame (pronounced *ath-em-ay*)

A ritual tool used in Wiccan traditions. The Athame is traditionally a black-handled, double edged dagger that represents either the *element* of Air or Fire (elemental association differs from tradition to tradition). While used in rituals to create the *circle*, consecrate (bless), invoke, summon and direct *magick*, the athame is never used to draw blood or physically cut.

Besom

A besom is a broom made from natural materials and it can either be in the form of a traditional witch's broom, or a small handheld broom. Common to the Wiccan tradition as a ritual tool, the besom is used to clear away negativity in the working area before ritual. The besom is also used in handfasting ceremonies where couples 'jump the broom'.



Book of Shadows

Namely found in Wiccan-based traditions, the Book of Shadows acts as a journal for an individual or coven/group. Contained within a Book of Shadows will be rituals, information about the Sabbats and Esbat, spells, lore, recipes and any knowledge that is pertinent to the individual's or group's beliefs and practices.



Cauldron

The cauldron is a ritual tool used by many Pagan traditions, most commonly Wiccan-based traditions. Within Wicca the cauldron is seen as representative of the womb, and as such is associated with life and creativity.

Circle

With its roots in Ceremonial Magic, the *circle* is an energy barrier cast with an *athame* prior to *ritual*. The *circle* is not so much a circle as it is a sphere of energy that is used to create a sacred space for *ritual* or spellwork. For a solitary, the *circle* traditionally measures 2.7m in circumference but for group or coven needs it will be much larger in circumference. The *circle* also passes through the four cardinal points, each of which is home to an *element*; each of which are usually invoked as part of the process of 'casting a circle'. After *ritual* or spellwork, the process of 'casting the circle' is reversed to 'close the circle'.

Coven

A coven is the term given to a working group of Witches or Wiccans. It is believed that the term *coven* originates from the Latin *coventus*, meaning 'an assembly'; another possible origin of the term may also lie in the French *convent*, referring to a religious community.



Chalice

Traditionally made of silver, the chalice or goblet is a ritual tool used in many traditions, but predominantly Wiccan-based traditions. Associated with the *element* of water, the chalice is used to hold consecrated wine (or water, milk, fruit juice etc) in a ritual setting. A chalice can be of any shape and is also found made from many other materials such as clay, glass, crystal, stone etc.

Elements

With roots in Ancient Greek philosophy, the concept of five elements- Air, Water, Earth, Fire and Spirit- was incorporated into Ceremonial Magic, and from there was infused in Modern Paganism. Each element is associated with specific traits and meanings and is allocated a position on the compass. The elements are used in ritual and spellwork.



Esbat

A Wiccan term for a coven/group meeting at the full moon to honour the deity referred to as The Goddess (although individual goddesses may also be honoured, depending on tradition) by way of *ritual*. Esbats are also held by solitaires.

God

Within Wiccan-based traditions, The God is the male aspect of divinity. He is the son and the lover of the Goddess. He teaches us about manhood and fatherhood. As the Horned One, He reigns over the crops of the field for harvest and the wild animals for hunting.

Goddess

Within Wiccan-based traditions, The Goddess is the female aspect of divinity. As Maiden, She is the perfect innocent child who shows us the simple joys in life. As Mother, She is the perfect mate and provider who nourishes and guards us. As Crone, She is the perfect grandmother who teaches us wisdom and leads us into the next world. The Goddess loves all of us as Her children; all life comes from Her and eventually returns to Her.



Handfasting

In Wiccan traditions, a *handfasting* is a ritual that joins a couple together in marriage. The vow taken by the couple is to remain in partnership as long as love lasts, after which, each is permitted to go their separate ways.



Pentacle, ritual tool

A flat disc of clay, wood or copper, and inscribed with the symbol of a pentagram, the pentacle is a ritual tool traditional to Wiccan-based traditions. Averaging a hand-span in size, the pentacle is used to represent the *element* of Earth and is used in ritual for blessings/consecrating.

Pantheism

Pantheism is the belief that the Universe is permeated by the presence of divinity, and within Paganism this is extended to the belief that because of this all-encompassing spirit all within the universe is connected.

Polytheism

Polytheism is the belief and worship of multiple deities. Usually polytheistic beliefs include the veneration of pantheons of deities, with each pantheon having its own cultural grouping of deities, mythologies and rituals. The vast majority of Pagan traditions are polytheistic.



Priest/ess

'Priest' is the title most commonly given to a man who leads religious worship or ritual, while 'priestess' is the title given to a woman who leads a ritual or religious worship. The title of priest or priestess is most commonly found in Wiccan based traditions. It is also commonly held within such traditions that each individual is a priest or priestess in their own right as the individual is the spiritual master of their own path.



Ritual

As in any other religion, within Paganism there are religious ceremonies that consist of specific, symbolic actions that constitute formal worship. However, unlike mainstream religions, the actual term for worship is often simply 'ritual' or 'rite'; as in 'Lammas ritual' or 'Beltane rite'.

Robe

While not mandated, many Pagan groups chose to wear ceremonial robes for worship and religious practices. In a group setting, the wearing of similar or matching robes by members adds to a feeling of group identity. Religious robes may also be worn by solitary practitioners in the belief that they help the practitioner shift to a more spiritually-inclined mindset that is required for religious worship or ritual. However it should be noted that the wearing of robes is not mandated by all traditions and many Pagans chose to worship and practice in civilian clothes.



Sabbat

The term given to the eight seasonal holy days within the Wiccan Wheel of the Year; these Sabbats include: Samhain, Yule, Imbolc, Ostara, Beltane, Litha, Lughnassadh, and Mabon.

Solitary

A pagan who either by choice or circumstances practices or studies their tradition or path alone. Solitaries may occasionally join on an informal basis with Pagan groups or covens to celebrate important religious holidays.

Spell

A ritual where intent is directed to bring about a desired outcome, and is often termed as working *magick*. Items such as herbs, crystals and candles may be used in the belief that each has a specific correspondence for a desired outcome, e.g. using green candles to increase wealth or salt for protection.



Summerlands

In many paths the *Summerlands* are the highest astral plane; a paradise where the spirits of the dead are transported after death. The Summerlands are considered the lands of eternal youth where the spirit, or soul, is rejuvenated and prepared for rebirth (reincarnation) in the physical world.



Wand

The wand is traditionally handcrafted from wood. A ritual tool found in Wiccan-based traditions, the wand is associated with the *element* of Fire or Air (depending on the tradition or personal preference of the individual).

Traditionally the wand is roughly the width from its owner's inner elbow to the tip of their index finger, but some wands may not adhere to this rule of length and some may have a crystal attached to their tip. The wand is used in ritual to direct will/*magick*/energy, summoning and consecration/blessing.

Wicca

A common misconception held by the general public is that Paganism is Wicca and that the two terms are interchangeable. Wicca is a tradition that falls under the umbrella term 'Pagan' in much the same way Baptist is a denomination under Christianity.

Witch

Although the word 'witch' has been used as a term of accusation and malice in European history, it is a word that is being reclaimed as something positive by Paganism. Within Wiccan and Witchcraft traditions adherents, both male and female, are termed 'Witches' and the term is also applied to practitioners of sympathetic magick.



Witchcraft

Within the confines of modern Paganism, 'witchcraft' can refer to the practice of folk healing, divination, spiritual healing and sympathetic magick. This is in addition to Wicca and similar traditions being self-identified by Pagans as Witchcraft religions.

PHRASES

An it harm none, do what ye will

The sole moral tenet of Wicca, the Wiccan Rede encourages personal accountability by advising adherents to fully consider the possible consequences of proposed actions with an emphasis on doing no harm first and foremost.

As Above, So Below

Widely used by various traditions within the Pagan community, *As Above, So Below*, has its origins in Hermeticism where the original text states: "That which is Below corresponds to that which is Above, and that which is Above, corresponds to that which is Below, to accomplish the miracles of the One Thing."

In meaning the phrase relates to concepts of macrocosm and microcosm; the belief that if the individual is the microcosm and the universe is the macrocosm, then the key to understanding either lies in understanding its opposite.

Blessed Be

Although traditional to Wiccan-based traditions, the phrase *Blessed Be* is used as a farewell greeting that wishes the recipient good and positive things upon them. The term is actually a part of Gardnerian Wiccan initiation rites, and is found in the *Five Fold Kiss* which states:

*Blessed be thy feet, which have brought thee in these ways,
Blessed be thy knees, that shall kneel at the sacred altar,
Blessed be thy womb, without which we would not be,
Blessed be thy breasts, formed in beauty,
Blessed be thy lips, that shall utter the Sacred Names of the gods.*

In perfect love and perfect trust

A phrase found predominantly in Wiccan-based or eclectic traditions, *in Perfect Love and Perfect Trust* is used in ritual liturgy. Love is the cohesive force which binds people one to the other and to the Gods. The word perfect in Latin means accurate. Trust implies that someone will behave as we expect or hope them to do. We do not trust our Brothers and Sisters in the Craft to behave perfectly, but we trust them to behave in accordance with their character and nature. Perfect Love is not blind devotion, dedication and complete, unquestioning obedience. It is accurate and unconditional love, like that of a mother for her child.

Merry Meet

Used as a term of greeting within Wiccan traditions, but is used widely used throughout the Pagan community. It is part of a longer greeting: *Merry Meet, Merry Part, and Merry Meet Again*. In the longer context, it roughly means, 'nice to have met you, take care and I hope to see you again'.

So mote it be

Originally a ritual phrase used in Freemasonry, *So mote it be* has been adopted by Modern Pagans. In a Modern Pagan context, the phrase is used at the end of a ritual, prayer or spellwork in the same way Christians use the word 'Amen'.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Is there a difference between Wicca and Paganism?

Paganism is an all-comprising, all-encompassing term which functions as umbrella to many Nature-based Paths, very much like Christianity is the "housing term" for Catholicism, Protestantism, the Charismatic Movement, Methodism, etc. Wicca refers to British Traditional Witchcraft the etymology of which is "the Craft of the Wise".

Do Pagans worship Satan?

The vast majority of Pagans do not believe in an entity called Satan, which automatically excludes the possibility that they worship this Christo-Judaic entity.

Is the Wiccan horned God the Devil?

Certainly not! Firstly it is important to understand that Pagans do not believe in an ultimate source of evil. Cosmos and Chaos are equal in nature. The Horned God has horns to represent his connection with Nature. Neo-Paganism is largely based on pre-Christian Fertility belief structures, in which, the bull, the goat, the ram, the antlered Lord were worshiped as the bringers of fertility, as the consorts of the Mother Goddess, and their union was viewed as the Sacred Guarantee that life on Earth would continue, despite the harsh seasons, the ailments, and the inevitable death of everything. In these beliefs the God was responsible for the fertility of the woods, the fields, domestic and wild animals.

In ancient Greece, the fertility God, Pan, was a Satyr: half goat, half man. He was horned, and played enticing melodies on his pipes in order to seduce females. 'Despite the fact the Gods of the old Religion became the Devils of the New Christian Faith, the Pagan God is not evil; he is viewed as the playful protector of those in need, the masculine counterpart of the all-comprising divinity which ensures the continuity of life.

Is it True That Wicca is the training ground for Satanism?

No. Pagans do not believe in the Universal Battle between Good and Evil, but rather in a Universe which perpetuates and maintains the Balance of things.

Why do Pagans Practice in secret if they have nothing to hide?

Even if South African Society is very conservative, a lot of Pagans and Witches hold public rituals in an attempt to sensitize the public to our Spiritual Cause. But those Pagans and Witches who chose to practice in secrecy do so to avoid being ostracized, being treated with prejudice and contempt. This could mean anything from losing your job, missing out on a well-deserved promotion, losing your "respectability" within society, becoming a scapegoat for the persecution by the bigoted "fathers of the city", Child Welfare taking your children away because you're not suited to being a parent, etc. Essentially speaking they have nothing to hide; the secrecy is dictated by the need for economic, social and self-preservation.

Is Paganism a Cult?

Paganism is a loose network of individuals who share the same belief in the interconnectedness of humans and Nature. Pagans believe that there is no "Right Path". The individual must find and work on his own personal Path to self-realization.

The Pagan community is united by the common belief in respect for Nature, the tenet of "harm ye none", freedom of thought, religious tolerance, and respect for the individual within the collective in a group.

For this reason Pagans do not proselytize. Each individual pursues his own path and becomes his own priest. Pagans do not believe that any one person has the right to tell any other person what to think or how to feel. As long as 'harm none' is adhered to, freedom of thought and expression is encouraged. For these reasons Paganism cannot be considered a Cult.

Do Pagans try to 'recruit' new members or convert people of other religions?

No. Paganism is not an evangelical faith, so it does not require any of its adherents to convert people to Paganism.

What does the Union of the Lord and Lady represent?

Together the Goddess and the God bring us blessings and challenges according to our needs. Their eternal dance marks the changing seasons, as They each change form and show us Their different faces.

Should children be raised as Pagans?

Pagan parents believe that it is advisable to allow children to learn about various religious paths so as to enable them to make an informed choice when they are old enough to do so. Besides being the just and fair thing to do, it also lays the foundations for the development of religious tolerance in the heart and mind of the child. It is not considered correct to force children to participate in religious practices they are not interested in being part of. Pagan parents want their children to maximize their spiritual experiences. Most children enjoy being part of the drumming, chanting, dancing and feasting which takes place in Pagan Circles.

How do you become a Pagan?

Most people start off by hearing and reading about it; in books, magazines and on the internet. Pagans believe that those who ought to be on the Path, will unmistakably find it. As a matter of fact, it is a bit like finding the correct terms of reference for things that you have always believed in, related to and done. A sort of homecoming. .

Is there recommended reading?

There is a plethora of information and very many good books that can be bought over the internet or at some of our leading book stores across the country. Raymond Buckland's "A Complete Course on Witchcraft", Margot Adler's "Drawing Down the Moon", Donna Darkwolf Vos' "Under And African Moon", Scott Cunningham's "A Guide For the Solitary Practitioner, and Raven Grimassi's "Encyclopaedia of Witchcraft" are but some of those titles that one can recommend.

How do I find other Pagans/Witches in my Area?

You can get into contact with other Pagans in your area through sites on the net dedicated to the networking of Pagans.

How do I find a teacher and how do I evaluate him/her?

'When the pupil is ready, the teacher will arrive" and the Universe has its way of allowing this maxim to come true. Listen to your intuition when you do meet those on the Path and wait until you are inspired to Love and Trust. Do not make overhasty decisions and don't be in a hurry to find a teacher; any teacher. Compatibility is of vital importance. In the interim, read as much as you can, study, and commence figuring out what practices and beliefs you're most at home with, without outside pressure. You will instinctively know that you have found your teacher, when it finally happens.

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