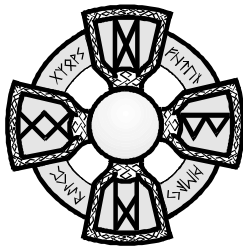


# Overview And Guide for Wiccans In the Military

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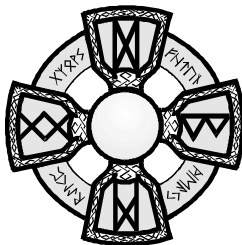
David L. Oringderff, Ph.D.  
Rev. S. Drake Fey

# Overview and Guide for Wiccans in the Military

David L. Oringderff, Ph.D.  
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## Acknowledgements

This work developed out of an identified need for clear and concise information regarding the practice of Wicca, particularly as it pertains to US military members and their families, friends, commanders, and chaplains. Many people were significantly involved this effort. The authors would particularly like to thank Reverend Selena Fox and Circle Sanctuary and Reverend Rene Deleare of Greencraft and the Sacred Well for their direct and substantial contributions. We would also like to recognize the energy, love and support given by the International Executive Council of Clerics of the Sacred Well Congregation, Hera, Odinda, Itárilde, Arghuicha, and Gayomard, and by Tempest, Rev Fey's life mate.



## The Sacred Well Congregation

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# Overview and Guide for Wiccans in the Military

David L. Oringderff, Ph.D.  
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## INTRODUCTION

***This is an unofficial publication.***

This pamphlet was prepared as an introduction to the Wiccan religion for those service members who are exploring Wicca as a spiritual path. It may also serve as a source of information about Wicca for commanders, supervisors, and chaplains who may have questions and concerns about specific aspects of the religion. It is hoped that this information may help facilitate the efforts of military chaplains to accommodate the spiritual needs of Wiccans in military service. The material presented here reflects the perspectives of the authors and their Tradition. It does not necessarily reflect the views of all Wiccans or all Wiccan Traditions. No single person, group, or organization can claim to be the final authority or spokesperson for the Wiccan community. This material does not claim to be the official view or carry the official endorsement of any US Government agency, the Department of Defense or any military service. This pamphlet is presented as an overview and a point of departure for further study and exploration.

## NEO-PAGANISM AND WICCA

Neo-pagan religions are modern reconstructions of what their adherents believe to be the ancient, pre-Christian Neolithic religions practiced in Classical and tribal Europe, and the Near and Middle East. However, Neo-pagan religions are distinct from religions such as Lukumi, Santeria and Native American and African tribal religions in that Neo-pagan religions have no clear lines of demarcation back to their original sources. It should be noted that some groups or individuals reject the term "Neo-pagan" and refer to themselves simply as "Pagans." This is largely a matter of semantics. Most Neo-pagan religions have far less in the way of definitive texts and archaeological evidence on which to base their religious practice than do some of the more contemporary, organized world religions. In this context, "contemporary" refers to those religious movements that have evolved and gained prominence in the last four thousand years. As those religions have grown, they have inevitably gone through many permutations

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over time, at least with regard to their more public and exoteric aspects. For instance, it is readily apparent that that Judaism as practiced today is different from what Moses did in the wilderness, though modern Judaism appears to embody the intent and essential beliefs of the ancient Hebrews. Similarly, the external forms of Christianity as practiced today are different from those of Christianity as practiced by the church at Jerusalem in the first century. While some remote, indigenous tribal religions have, on the other hand, survived as fairly cohesive practices despite the onslaught of Western civilization, virtually none of the hundreds (perhaps thousands) of localized tribal religions of pre-Christian Europe survived completely intact. However, vestiges of the Old Religions survive in myth, folklore, superstition, legend, and even our calendars. The precise forms and practices of our ancestors, however, have been lost or convoluted through centuries of oppression, persecution, and the simple vicissitudes of time. While we may believe essentially the same way our ancient ancestors believed, few of us are under any illusion that we do exactly the same things in exactly the same manner as they were done in ancient times.

The last several decades have witnessed dramatic increases in the numbers of people seeking spirituality outside of traditional organized religions. They are experiencing a phenomenon described by C. G. Jung in his book entitled *Modern Man in Search of His Soul*. Specifically, many thousands of people today are seeking alternatives to what they perceive to be the dogmatic and rigid orthodoxy of religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, principally because they find these religions to be lacking in their ability to foster a tangible, personal connection to a sense of divinity inherent in the earth itself. Those closest to their roots are returning to the tribal religions of Africa, Australia, and the Americas, or to the Eastern spiritual paths of Asia. Others, who have difficulty finding clearly defined spiritual heritage, are turning to the various branches of Neo-paganism. Neo-paganism acknowledges and reveres the old religions of distant antiquity and attempts to bring those ancient forms of spirituality into the modern world. Even if these reconstructed or reinterpreted religious movements cannot be fully authenticated as continuous traditions with direct links to ancient times, they nevertheless serve as sources of genuine spiritual and existential fulfillment to their adherents. A familiar chant often heard at Wiccan and Pagan gatherings embodies this attitude:

**We are an old people,  
We are a new people,  
We are the same people,  
Stronger, wiser than before.**

There is, then, no demonstrable reason to reject the validity and legitimacy of Neo-paganism out of hand, or to dismiss its multi-faceted

spirituality as frivolous. However, further debate over the antiquity or modernity of Neo-Paganism would take this discussion well beyond the scope of this pamphlet and would be better left to scholars and antiquarians. We (i.e. the authors) view Wicca in particular as a faith which is rooted in the Old Religions, re-created and re-structured for contemporary times, and looking with penetrating gaze toward the future. It is an old religion. It is a new religion. It is a living religion.

Wicca is probably the largest and most diverse of all of the Neo-pagan religions. No accurate figures are available, but some estimates place the number of people in the world who claim to be Wiccan at well over two million. There are probably as many "traditions" within Wicca as there are denominations within Christianity. The tenets, practices, and politics vary as much among the Wiccan traditions as they do among the Christian denominations. Wiccans can be liberal or conservative, vegetarian or omnivore, a career military member or a conscientious objector, a prison warden or a prison inmate. What sets Wicca apart from most other world religions is that Wiccans have no evangelical mandate. Wiccans generally regard religion and spirituality as an individual endeavor, and they make no effort to recruit or convert other people to their belief system(s). Intrinsic in this attitude is a shared sense of openness, respect, and tolerance for each other's varied beliefs and practices, as well as for those of practitioners of other religions.

## DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN WICCA

Wicca, as practiced today, is a modern interpretation of ancient tribal religions of Northern Europe, with few reservations about drawing on source material of other times and other cultures. Modern Wicca or "Witchcraft" owes much to the writings of Margaret Murray, a cultural anthropologist, who authored *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* and *The God of the Witches* earlier this century. These books promoted the concept that some of the "witches," who were victims of the so-called "Burning Times" (circa 1450-1792), represented remnants of an earlier religion that was practiced in Europe before the takeover of Christianity. Dr. Murray posited that there was a single, unified witch cult with branches throughout Europe. Although this theory has been examined by other researchers and rather convincingly refuted, it is important to note that Wiccans around the world have utilized her work as a springboard for synthesizing modern forms of Pagan spirituality from remnants of old traditions. A century and a half before, scholars in France and Germany independently examined evidence from a number of "witch trials" and also concluded that the "witchcraft" as identified by the Inquisition in all probability actually contained the residual elements of old

agrarian religions. While Murray may not be literally correct regarding the presence of a unified, pan-European witch cult, there is ample evidence of scattered groups in pre-Christian times who shared similarities of beliefs, practices, and deities.

Dr. Gerald B. Gardner, a retired British civil servant, is recognized alternatively either as the originator of Wicca (Wicca) in total, or as the principle orchestrator of its “revival.” To this day, this issue remains a source of contention among various “authorities.” Gardner, according to his own account, was initiated into an “old Coven” in the New Forest area in Southern England in 1939. In 1949, he published a novel entitled ***High Magic’s Aid***. This book purported to be a reasonably accurate account of Witchcraft in fictionalized form. In 1951, the last remaining laws against witchcraft were repealed in England. In 1954, Gardner wrote ***Witchcraft Today*** in which he allegedly made public some of the “secret” beliefs and practices of the “Old Religion.” His last work published in 1959 was ***The Meaning of Witchcraft***, which he presented as a “factual” history of Wicca in Northern Europe. This book included many rituals and symbols of “Witchcraft” as Gardner defined it at that time. With regard to his description of the actual rituals and practices of Wicca, he was honest enough to admit that he was compelled to “fill in the blanks” of much of what had been lost of the Old Religion over the ages. He drew elements and concepts from ceremonial magic, the Golden Dawn, Freemasonry, and Eastern Religions and philosophy. Much of the material in older Gardnerian “books of shadows” was formulated by Gardner and one of his close associates, Doreen Valiente.

After Gardner initiated the public movement, Wicca evolved in several (and sometimes apparently contradictory) directions. Dr. Raymond Buckland and his wife brought “organized” Wicca to the United States in 1963. They trained and initiated dozens of people in the Gardnerian Tradition. Buckland was heavily criticized for training too many people too quickly and subsequently leaving them to their own devices. Some of Buckland’s initiates “canonized” the Book of Shadows and held so closely to the letter of the law that their practices are hardly recognizable to the “Old School” Gardnerians in Europe. Others interpreted Buckland’s and Gardner’s ideas more liberally, and from them other traditions evolved, notably the original American versions of the Faërie and later the Elven Traditions. Buckland himself modified Gardnerian practice to suit his own convictions, and he later founded other traditions of his own. Nonetheless, it was Buckland who was the primary catalyst for the growth and development of Wicca in the United States.

Another key player in the “revival” appeared in the early 1960s. Alexander Sanders, and his then wife Maxine, founded the “Alexandrian” tradition. Sanders first claimed to have been initiated by his grandmother



into a "family tradition," but later dropped the claim. The Alexandrian Tradition uses the Gardnerian as the basic foundation and incorporated more theatrics and ceremonial magic. The Alexandrian Tradition remains smaller than the Gardnerian Tradition. Alexandrian Wicca was strong in Europe, particularly on the Continent, but it did not take root in the US until the mid to late 1960s. Like the Gardnerian Tradition before it, Alexandrian Wicca evolved in innovative ways with many discernible changes.

This rapid evolution in several branches of Wicca contributed in part to a unique phenomenon which sets Wicca apart from many other religions. Wicca has no system of dogma or infallible doctrines, no "absolute" orthodoxy, and no national or international hierarchical structure per se. There is no pope, prophet, or prelate who categorically speaks for all traditions. Individual practitioners and covens are largely autonomous and answer to no organization or authority other than themselves.

## **WICCA OR WITCHCRAFT?**

Prior to any discussion of the various traditions of Wicca, one source of significant confusion and contention warrants some clarification. The terms "Wicca" and "witchcraft" have often been assumed to refer to the same thing, though in actuality they do not. Witches and witchcraft were in existence long before recorded history. We find references to them in the Greek Classics, in the Bible, and in the myth and folklore of every civilization.

Witchcraft is simply the application of the magical arts to work weal or woe. Witches are those individuals (female or male) who employ witchcraft and may or may not utilize it as part of a specific religious practice. "Wicca" is a term brought into popular usage by G. B. Gardner some fifty years ago. Its etymological derivation is thought to be from an Anglo-Saxon word which means "to bend" or another similar word which means "wise one," depending upon the source consulted. Wicca is an organized system of religious beliefs and practices that incorporate magic (witchcraft). Wicca, then, is a proper subset of witchcraft, and many Wiccans commonly refer to themselves as Witches (with a capital "w"), and refer to Wicca as simply "the Craft."

Given the sheer multiplicity of traditions which currently incorporate the word "Wicca" as part of their name, it is simply not feasible for any one of them to assume exclusive rights to the term. Although it was Gardner who first coined the term, Wicca has grown so diverse that its definition has grown arguably more complex. But that is often the case with any religion as it evolves over time, as noted above with regard to the various Christian denominations as well as the sects of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Moreover, Wicca has benefited in this regard from modern technology and a highly mobile world population. Wiccan traditions, in their

current and varied forms, have developed rapidly -- in a matter of decades as opposed to centuries.

## THE MAJOR TRADITIONS OF WICCA

Vivianne Crowley (1994, pg 102) points out that the various traditions of Wicca,

“although different, share sufficiently similar deities, forms of worship, language, symbolism and philosophy to make them recognisable as one religion.”

Using this as a broad working definition, Dr. Crowley cites four main branches of the Craft: Traditional, Hereditary, Gardnerian and Alexandrian. To that, we will add a fifth: Eclectic.

- Traditional: “different and separate localized traditions which have brought in outsiders, some of whom subsequently transplanted the tradition to other countries many thousands of miles away from the original source.”
- Hereditary: “similar to traditional but are passed down through the bloodline or sometimes through marriage.”
- Gardnerian
- and Alexandrian: “derived largely from one particular tradition, based in the New Forest area of the South of England; although this has been cross fertilized by contact with other traditions.” These, together with their variants which include Danann, Whitecroft (European version), and some segments of the American Elven traditions, form the core of what we call “Traditional Craft Wicca” or TCW.
- Eclectic: these are essentially American variants, although there are some eclectic traditions in Europe. Some were begun by people who had been initiated into one of the “British Traditions” as they were known at the time. For a variety of reasons, the organizers of these traditions felt compelled to reorganize or reform the traditions through which they were brought into the Craft. A similar phenomenon takes place in virtually all religions as they begin to take root in a popular base. Some of these Eclectic traditions were formed by people with little or no formal “coven”

training. Perhaps they could not find a traditional coven, perhaps they chose not to. As more and more material became openly available, more and more interest was generated in Wicca and Witchcraft. People began to read and explore on their own, and incorporated whatever they felt particularly drawn to in their own unique practice of Wicca. Many of what are called “Eclectic” traditions incorporate elements of Santeria, African or Native American tribal religions, or Hinduism and other Eastern philosophies into their practice of Wicca. Some of these Eclectic traditions draw so heavily on these other elements that they no longer appear to share “similar deities, forms of worship, language, symbolism and philosophy to make them recognisable as one religion.” Nevertheless, they continue to identify themselves as Wiccan.

## **ELEMENTS COMMON TO TRADITIONAL CRAFT WICCA (TCW) and OTHER WICCAN TRADITIONS**

Traditional Craft Wicca (TCW), the Tradition in which the authors currently practice, and most other Wiccan traditions contain several key elements which may be also be found in other spiritual, religious, and social contexts. These are:

1. **Ceremonial or High Magic**, which derived basically from Renaissance/Neo-Platonic magic. This includes the use of the magic or ritual circle, the assigning of correspondences to directions and elements, and the utilization of complex divinatory systems. Ceremonial magic may or may not contain religious elements. Astrological horoscopes have little or nothing to do with the spiritual practice of either the astrologer or the person for whom the horoscope was prepared. The alchemist would often end his work with “in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” While this probably made little difference in transmuting lead to gold, it was certainly insurance against the Inquisitor’s stake. The mediaeval and Renaissance sorcerer or sorceress would “summon, stir, and call” upon demons or angels depending on intent, which usually depended upon who paid the fee.
2. **Shamanistic techniques**, including, but not limited to, active or passive meditation, visual imagery, controlled breathing, drumming, dancing, chanting, sensory deprivation, or sensory overload. Shamanistic techniques are designed to shift the focus of consciousness from ordinary to non-ordinary perceptual states. Shamanism, as such, is not a religion, though it has sometimes been referred to as the world’s oldest religion. Shamanistic techniques, however, are integral parts of many religions around the world. The word “shaman” itself comes from a Siberian

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dialect, but has been universally used by anthropologists and the general public to include tribal practices by “medicine people” and “witch doctors” all over the world. While many techniques are often similar, the religions of the various shamans are not. For instance, the Sami tribal religion of the Norwegian steppes is vastly different from the tribal religions found in Africa, the Americas, and Asia.

3. **Folk Magic**, which derived from folklore and country ways, the old “witchcraft” in its purest sense. Much of this survives in our present society as superstitions and cultural idiosyncrasies. Folk magic includes herbalism, charms, spells, and other forms of sympathetic magic. Folk magic, as with ceremonial magic and shamanistic techniques, may or may not have a specific religious content, or it may have a combination of religious content from diverse traditions. Examples of this can be found as recently as the 1950s. The story is told of a very old woman in rural Oklahoma who taught her grandson how to plant corn to insure a prosperous harvest. The old woman was part Cherokee and was the widow of a Primitive Baptist preacher to whom she had been married for over sixty years. She instructed her grandson on how to watch the moon for the proper season and how to prepare the soil for planting. She then instructed him to drop four seeds into each planting hole, reciting as he did: “one for the sun, one for the crow, one for the earth, and one to grow.” The soil was then raked over the seeds by hand while asking God’s blessing on the crop.
4. **Nature Religions**: As with other earth-based religions, Wicca practices its rites in harmony with nature. Religious festivals and worship are celebrated with the changing seasons of the year and in conjunction with lunar phases. In practice, this means an interest in--- and respect for--- all of Gaia's children: trees, animals, stones. All of life and all of creation, manifest and unmanifest, is revered as sacred.

## TRADITIONAL WICCAN HOLIDAYS

Modern Wiccans traditionally celebrate eight holidays based on the summer and winter solstice, the spring and vernal equinox, and the so-called “Cross-Quarter Days.” The Cross-Quarter Days are roughly midway between each solstice and equinox. Some groups add a ninth holiday, usually in November, at which they venerate ancestors and heroes of the tradition. The name by which the holiday is known, as well as the general theme of celebration, may vary widely from tradition to tradition. The following chart is presented by way of comparison:

Approximate Dates (Gregorian)	Kith & Public Rites	Kindred Rites
13-26 December	Rite of Midwinter Christmas St. John the Evangelist	Mütternacht * Yule Mother Night Secret of the Unhewn Stone
1-2 February	Rite of Awakening Candlemas St. Brigit	Erweckung * Imbolc Stirrings
19-22 March	Rite of Spring Easter St. Edward	Sommerzukunfts * Vernal Equinox Summer Findings
31 April – 2 May	Rite of Exultation May Day St. Sophia	Walpurgisnacht * Beltane Lady Day
19-23 June	Rite of Midsummer St. John the Baptist	Sonnenwende * Litha Midsummer
30 July - 2 August	Rite of Thanksgiving First Harvest St. Oswald	Erntezeit * Lughnassadh Lammas
19-24 September	Rite of Autumn Harvest Home Michaelmas	Winterzukunfts * Mabon Winter Findings
31 October - 2 November	Rite of Remembrance All Hallows All Saints Day	Urahnennacht * Samhain Ancestor Night
11 November	Martinmas	Einherjarfest Feast of the Fallen Warriors

**Note: The above chart reflects the celebrations and practices of the Sacred Well Congregation and should not be construed to be any “universal” statement reflecting all Wiccan groups. For more details concerning the various holidays, see the section “Philosophy, Ethics and Practices.”**

## rites of passage

Many religions place heavy emphasis on celebrating and ritualizing important transitions and rites of passages during the lifetime of an individual. In most cases, Wicca is no exception. Wiccan traditions uniquely observe rites of passage in ways that incorporate profound symbolism embodying the ways in which an individual deepens her or his relationship and connection with the earth, with their community, and with the divinity within themselves.

Note: Not all Wiccans celebrate rites of passage, but the following are typical for most traditions within Traditional Craft Wiccan (TCW) and many other groups. They may also be known by different names in different groups.

### *Handfasting*

- Handfasting is the Wiccan marriage ceremony. Traditionally, a Handfasting was for a specified period of time, usually a year and a day, and was not legally binding. In most countries, a civil marriage is required for a union to be recognized by law; any religious ceremony is optional. In the United States, however, an ordained minister of any religious faith may perform a legally binding wedding, and no civil ceremony is required. There is a growing number of legally ordained Wiccan ministers worldwide, and more and more Handfastings are being performed as legal marriage ceremonies. If a Handfasting is performed in this context, then any change in marital status must be handled as a legal civil process. Specific ceremonies vary from group to group and coven to coven, but the participants usually write or have significant input into the content.

### *Handparting*

- A Handparting ritual dissolves the Handfasting. Traditionally, at the end of the specified period, a couple decided whether or not they wanted to continue the union formed at the Handfasting. If they chose to remain in the relationship, then another Handfasting was performed, again for a specified period of time. The second Handfasting was usually for five, seven, or nine years or "for this and coming lifetimes." If they chose not to renew the relationship, then a Handparting was performed with the intent to allow the couple to separate amicably in love and harmony. If

the Handfasting was legally binding, the Handparting is usually not performed until after the marriage is dissolved through civil process.

### ***Wiccaning***

- Many couples now feel free to openly bring up their children in the Wiccan religion. Wiccaning is the ritual of blessing for a newborn. The ceremonies again vary widely from group to group, but are usually developed by collaboration between the parents and High Priestess and High Priest of the coven or group.

### ***Welcoming***

- This ritual welcomes a child into the extended family of the coven or group, and usually takes place around the age of 13. Many traditions have a standard ritual for this, but it may vary from group to group.

### ***Initiatory Rites***

- For covens that practice initiatory rites, these are the keystone rituals. They vary from tradition to tradition and always occur in a closed setting. Furthermore, most TCW groups regard "initiation" in its literal sense. It is a milestone that marks the beginning of a life-long process. Initiation is not a goal or an end in itself. See Vivianne Crowley's exposition cited in the "Annotated Bibliography" section.

### ***Crossing***

- These are Wiccan funeral rites. They range from very simple to very elaborate ceremonies depending on the tradition or group and the wishes of the deceased.

## MOON RITES (ESBATS)

Sabbats and Rites of Passage are festivals and celebrations which are generally open to family, friends, and often the public as well. Moon Rites, or Esbats, are "working" religious and magical rites and are usually restricted to the coven or a very small and intimate group. They generally take place in the evening or late night hours in an outdoor, natural setting where feasible, though indoor celebrations are frequent and preferable where the use of outdoor space is not a realistic option or where weather prevents. Some groups celebrate both open and closed Moon Rites. Moon Rites are held as close as possible to the Full Moon. Some groups celebrate Dark or New Moon rituals in addition to Full Moon rituals. Generally, leave is not required for these celebrations, as they take place after a normal duty day, though some personnel may conceivably request an accommodation to leave a bit earlier from work in order to be on time for the rite. However, in cases where irregular shift work is required, Wiccan personnel may sometimes request leave for an Esbat taking place during their night shift. This may cause some conflict if they are in a critical duty position or section. If possible, however, they should be granted the same consideration as members of other religious groups requesting leave for celebration of religious holidays.

It is primarily at Esbats where some traditions advocate the practice of ritual nudity, which they call being "skyclad". This practice stems largely from the idea that direct connection between the energy of the human body and that of the earth is most intense when the restrictions of clothing are not present. It also comes from a line in the "Charge of the Goddess" by Doreen Valiente, one of Gerald Gardner's students, which states that "Ye shall be free from all slavery, and as a sign that you be truly free, ye shall be naked in your rites." Wiccans often emphasize that they wish to avoid and overcome the perception of nudity as shameful, instead upholding the sanctity and beauty of the human body. Not all Wiccan groups prefer skyclad worship; some use robes of varying colors or materials, depending upon circumstances, traditions, weather, and climate.

It is important for both chaplains and Wiccan practitioners alike to participate in the understanding that it is not feasible under current regulations and emphases to have chapel space or military facilities available for skyclad practice. Reasonable alternatives should be actively sought.



## THE WICCAN REDE

The Wiccan Rede is a poem that is the embodiment of what many Wiccans use as a rule and guide in their faith and practice. There are several versions of this poem. The one that follows was probably written by Doreen Valiente and is certainly one of the most beautiful renditions.

**Bide ye Wiccan laws ye must in perfect love and perfect trust  
Live and let live, fairly take and fairly give  
Form the circle thrice about to keep unwanted spirits out  
To bind ye spell every time, let ye spell be spake in rhyme  
Soft of eye, light of touch, speak ye little, listen much**

**When the Lady's moon is new, kiss your hand to her times two  
When the moon rides at her peak, then ye heart's desire seek  
Heed the North wind's mighty gale, lock the door and trim the sail  
When the wind comes from the South, love will kiss thee on the mouth  
When the wind blows from the West, departed souls may have no rest  
When the wind blows from the East, expect the new and set the feast**

**Nine woods in ye cauldron go, burn them fast and burn them slow  
Elder be ye Lady's tree, burn it not or cursed ye'll be  
When the wheel begins to turn, soon ye Beltaine fire'll burn  
When the wheel hath turned a Yule, light a log the Horned One rules  
Heed ye flower, bush and tree, by the Lady blessed be  
Where the rippling waters flow, cast a stone and truth ye'll know  
When ye have and hold a need, harken not to others greed  
With a fool no season spend, nor be counted as his friend**

**Merry meet and merry part, bright the cheeks and warm the heart  
Mind ye threefold law ye should, three times bad and three times good  
When misfortune is anow, wear the star upon thy brow  
True in love ye must ever be, lest thy love be false to thee  
In these eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfill,  
'An ye harm none, do what ye will'.**

## **SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS, AND PRACTICES COMMON TO MOST WICCAN GROUPS AND TRADITIONS**

**Selena Fox, High Priestess, Circle Sanctuary (used by permission)**

This section was contributed by Selena Fox, High Priestess and Senior Minister of Circle Sanctuary. Reverend Fox is an internationally-recognized Elder and voice in the Pagan community. She facilitates networking of Pagans and like-minded individuals through the publication of a quarterly magazine known as Circle Network News (soon to be Circle Magazine) and the organization of the annual Pagan Spirit Gathering, a national gathering of individuals who practice varied forms of nature spirituality. With her life mate, Dr. Dennis Carpenter, she owns and operates a large nature preserve known as Circle Sanctuary. She has presented scholarly papers and participated in panel discussions at national and international conferences on inter-faith dialogue. She has appeared on numerous television and radio shows as a guest to speak about the practice of Wicca. She is a practicing transpersonal psychotherapist.

The topics that follow elaborate on the philosophy, ethics and practices common to most Wiccan Groups and Traditions. There are, of course, variations among groups, but the following information is generally consistent across Traditions. Material added as editorial notes are enclosed in <brackets>.

### ***Spiritual Principles***

- Honor the Divine, understanding it as immanent and transcendent, and as multifaceted and as a united and interconnected whole.
- Live life with consideration of others as well as oneself, endeavoring to be of service and to do no harm.
- Celebrate and attune to Nature and Nature's rhythms as central to Divine understanding and worship.

## ***Spiritual Values***

- Cultivate virtues, including integrity, honesty, responsibility, balance, perseverance, responsibility, empathy, kindness, compassion, knowledge, service, freedom.
- Cultivate balance and moderation, such as balancing intellect and intuition in cognitive processing; work and rest in daily life; time with others and time alone.
- Cultivate good communication and healthy relationships with family, friends, community, and the greater Circle of Life.

## ***Conceptualizing The Divine***

"The Divine" is a term often used to refer to what is known in other religions as "God" (Christianity, Judaism), "Allah" (Islam), "Tao" (Confucianism), and "Great Spirit" (Native American religions). Since The Divine is viewed as both immanent (indwelling) and transcendent (beyond the limits of humanness), spiritual philosophy is Pantheistic. In that The Divine is viewed as a Great Unity, spiritual philosophy has a monotheistic dimension. In that The Divine is also viewed as multifaceted, spiritual philosophy also is Polytheistic. The Divine is honored as both Mother Goddess and Father God, as well as Their Unity. In addition, The Goddess and The God have many sacred forms or aspects. The Divine also is acknowledged as manifest through the Five Elements of Nature (Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit). As with most other Nature religions, spiritual philosophy also is Animistic, in that The Divine takes the form of a spiritual dimension not only within living humans, but within ancestors, animals, plants, places, and all things.

## ***Nature***

Attunement to and communion with Nature are central to spiritual philosophy and practice. Humans are viewed as part of Nature, not as dominators or as owners of Nature.

## ***Circle***

The predominant ritual and social space form is the circle. As in ancient times, the circle represents many concepts, including wholeness, balance, the cycles of Nature, continuity, partnership, and interconnectedness. The circle is used by individuals in personal rituals as well as by large and small groups for group rituals and festivals. The circle form facilitates shared experience and encourages participation.

## ***Five Elements of Nature***

The Five Elements of Nature form a standard framework of spiritual symbology, teachings, and practice. Each Element, and its associated direction, is acknowledged in rituals. Associated imagery often is used in the creation of invocations, meditations, chants, and other ritual components.

### **I. Earth**

#### **direction: North**

- natural forms: soil, rocks, stones, sand, skin, fur, bones, food, the ground, minerals, plant roots <forests, fields, dales>.
- dimension: physical, physiological
- human realm: physical body, home/habitat, clothing and other possessions
- healing: physical health; nutrition, rest, massage and other body work therapies
- tools: salt, plate, pentacle disc, rock, plant, coins, drum, wooden dish, platter
- colors: green, brown, black
- animals: deer, cow <Black Bull in some traditions>, food creatures
- elemental form: gnome
- tarot suit: pentacles, diamonds
- season: winter
- daily phase: midnight
- lunar phase: dark moon
- life phase: death & rebirth, ancestors
- focus: being
- powers: strength, security, prosperity, manifestation, stillness

## II. Air

### direction: East

- natural forms: winds, breath, clouds, atmosphere
- dimension: mental, cognitive
- human realm: thinking, thoughts, intellect, analysis, knowledge, documentation, archives, records
- healing: mental health; counseling, psychoanalysis, breathing, cognitive therapies
- tools: incense burner, incense, feather, bells, athame, journal, words, books
- colors: yellow, golden radiance
- animals: hawk, eagle, other birds
- elemental form: sylph
- tarot suit: swords, spades
- season: spring
- daily phase: dawn
- lunar phase: waxing moon
- life phase: youth, young adulthood
- focus: thinking
- powers: communication, wisdom, intelligence, knowledge, swiftness

## III. Fire

### direction: South

- natural forms: lightning, fire, solar power, electricity, energy sources
- dimension: action, behavioral
- human realm: career, will power, creative endeavors, hobbies, occupation, projects
- healing: activity health; exercise, work, play, doing and movement therapies
- tools: candle, lamp, bonfire, wand, staff, rod, sword, rattle
- colors: red, orange
- animals: lion, dragon, <snake>, phoenix, unicorn, four-legged predators
- elemental form: salamander
- tarot suit: wands
- season: summer
- daily phase: noon/midday
- lunar phase: full moon
- life phase: adulthood
- focus: doing
- powers: will power, creativity, discipline, action, assertiveness

## IV. Water

### direction: West

- natural forms: oceans, lakes, rivers, rain, <wells>, springs, other waters, body fluids
- dimension: feeling, emotional
- human realm: feelings, intuitions, dreams, relationships
- healing: emotional health; friendship, empathy, music and art therapies
- tools: water, chalice, cup, liquids, mirror, basin, bowl
- colors: blues, aqua
- animals: water creatures <particularly salmon, dolphins and whales>
- elemental form: undine
- tarot suit: cups, hearts
- season: fall
- daily phase: sunset, twilight
- lunar phase: waning moon
- life phase: old age, late adulthood
- focus: feeling
- powers: intuition, understanding, compassion, relationships

## V. Spirit

### direction: Center

- natural forms: cycles, interconnectedness, community
- dimension: spiritual, soul
- human realm: synthesis, spiritual life, self-actualization
- healing: spiritual; ritual, meditation, auric work, shamanic therapies
- tools: crystal, amulet, mandala, cauldron, vestments, star, altar, web of interconnection, circle
- colors: white radiance, blackness of womb & outer space, rainbow
- animals: all creatures in community in ecosphere
- elemental form: animistic force in all Nature; personal/tribal totem
- tarot suit: major arcana
- season: wheel of the year
- daily phase: cycle of the day & night
- lunar phase: moon cycle
- life phase: cycle of the soul
- focus: integrating, balance of female and male, planet and heavens, all compass points, other elements
- powers: balance, wholeness, integration, truth, divinity

## ***Ceremonial Tools in Spiritual Practice***

Ceremonial tools are used to aid group and personal spiritual practice. The type, size, and form of ceremonial tools used depends on a variety of factors, including:

- (1) type of ritual, meditation, or other sacred activity,
- (2) number of participants,
- (3) time of day and year, and
- (4) setting.

For both group and for individual rituals it is customary to have the following:

### **Altar**

- usually a small table covered with a cloth; used to hold ceremonial objects.
- often is placed in the center or at a quarter point of the sacred Circle (ceremonial area)

### **Symbol(s) of the Divine**

- may take the form of an icon, such as a sacred painting, framed drawing, or sculpture.
- may also take the form of one to three white pillar candles on the altar.

### **Symbol of Earth**

- usually a pentacle, platter or dish containing salt, soil, corn meal, or herbs.
- sometimes a second platter is used to hold bread, fruit, cakes, or other ritual food.

### **Symbol of Air**

- usually an incense burner with burning incense (stick, powder, or gum resin form).
- may also be represented by an athame or feather by some practitioners.

### **Symbol of Fire**

- usually in the form of a lamp or special candle.
- may also be in the form of a wand.

## **Symbol of Water**

- usually in the form of a chalice or bowl containing water.
- sometimes a second chalice is used to hold juice, tea, or other ritual beverage.

## **Symbol of Spirit**

- varies; usually a personal or group symbol of spiritual wisdom
- may take the form of a divination meditation tools (Tarot, Runes, I Ching, other).
- may also take the form of a piece of sacred jewelry (such as pentagram) which is worn.

## **Symbol(s) of the Circle and its Directions**

- often takes the form of four lit candles placed at the quarter points of the circle, or on the altar, and when this is the case, candles usually are green (North), yellow (East), red (South), and blue (West). A white or purple candle representing the Divine unity of the sacred Circle may be in the center.
- in addition or instead, quarter points of the sacred Circle may each be marked with a stone, banner, or other symbol.
- sometimes the sacred Circle itself is marked with a cord, flowers, corn meal, stones, or other sacred objects.

## **Symbol(s) of the Season**

- varies with time of year and environment.
- examples: evergreen boughs for Yule; flowers for Spring Equinox.

## **Spiritual Writings**

- transcript or outline of the ritual/meditation/spiritual activity, often contained within a personal or group spiritual journal/workbook.
- also present may be songbooks, anthologies of prayers and proverbs, other texts.

## **Special Ceremonial Tools and other Ritual Items**

- varies with focus and type of ritual.
- examples: wedding rings; photos of deceased at funerals



## ***Types of Ceremonial Tools***

Sampling of some, but not all, used in individual and group spiritual practice

**Altar:** small table for holding ceremonial tools; often covered with an altar cloth. <Altars can range from quite simple to very ornate; often altars used outdoors in a relatively permanent space are constructed of stone>.

**Amulet:** sacred object consecrated and used for blessing, protection, healing.

**Athame:** sacred blade used for inscribing symbols but not cutting; a tool of Air. <usually a double-edged dagger or knife; composition is commonly tempered steel; some traditions prohibit steel and require that Athames be made of a non-ferrous metal, usually silver or pewter; some practitioners prefer to craft their Athames from flint or other stone>.

**Bell:** clear tone is rung in rituals to bless, invoke, and signal.

**Boline <also called a Curfane, or White Hilted Knife>:** sacred blade, usually with white handle, used for cutting herbs, food, candle wax, etc.

**Book of Shadows:** personal journal, workbook, and collection of rituals, meditations, chants, etc. <In addition to the personal Book of Shadows, Covens usually have a Coven Book of Shadows that new initiates are charged to copy and maintain "by thine own hand.">

**Broom <or Besom>:** used for handfastings (Wiccan weddings), for purification; symbol of hearth and home.

**Candle:** made of wax and burned in rituals for a variety of purposes; a tool of Fire and Spirit.

**Candleholder:** used to secure candles and sometimes also to catch wax drippings.

**Cauldron:** often made of iron; can contain earth, incense, fire, water, or other substances used in rituals.

**Chalice:** cup, used for asperging, libations, drinking, and/or other purposes; a tool of Water.

**Censer:** incense burner, sometimes with covering and/or suspended from chains.

**Cord:** length of rope, ribbon, or cloth used as ritual belt, to mark a circle, for handfastings, other purposes.

**Cornucopia:** horn shaped basket used for offerings and to symbolize abundance.

**Drum:** used for sacred rhythm-making for chanting, dancing, inner journeying, and other ritual purposes.

**Feather:** used with incense for consecration; a tool of Air.

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**Herbs:** used in dried or fresh form as offerings, decorations, other purposes.

**Icon:** painting, illustration, photograph, sculpture, or other rendering of the sacred

**I Ching:** ancient sacred book of Nature wisdom, & 50 yarrow stalks or three coins for divination meditation.

**Keppen Rod:** forked wand; sometimes used to hold and bless rings in handfasting/wedding rites.

**Mirror:** silver or black mirror or scrying glass sometimes used in divination meditations.

**Pentacle:** five pointed star in a circle; in platter form, a tool of Earth; in jewelry form, Wiccan symbol.

**Pentagram:** interlaced five pointed star; used as a sacred gesture; also may adorn jewelry, garb, books.

**Poppet:** herb filled cloth soft sculpture usually used for healing.

**Quartz Crystal:** faceted stone used for healing, meditation, and other sacred purposes; a tool of Spirit.

**Rattle:** rhythm instrument used for healing, invocations, and other ritual purposes; a tool of Spirit.

**Robe:** ceremonial garment sometimes worn in rituals, celebrations, and on other spiritual occasions.

**Runes:** carved symbols on wood or ceramic used in divination meditations.

**Salt:** table salt or sea salt used for purification and protection; a tool of Earth.

**Sickle:** curved sacred blade used in harvesting herbs; symbol of harvest.  
<Many practitioners have a small sickle made of silver or gold.>

**Smudge Stick:** dried herbs on stalks bundled together and lit for use as incense.

**Spirit Bag:** spiritual growth amulet containing dried sacred herbs and a precious stone.

**Staff:** wooden branch or pole used for circle casting, directing energy, and sometimes for ritual walks.

**Sword:** large ceremonial blade used in circle casting and other work but not for cutting; a tool of Fire & Air.

**Tarot:** sacred cards with spiritual imagery used in divination meditation.

**Wand:** usually made of wood; may be used in circle casting, Morris dancing, etc.; a tool of Fire or Spirit.

**Other Tools:** This is not a complete list, but a sampling of the tools most often used.

## ***Sabbats and the Wheel of the Year: Sacred Cycle of Sun and Seasons***

There are eight Sabbats, or sacred festival celebrations, in the spiritual calendar, known as the Wheel of the Year. These consist of the Solstices and Equinoxes and the midpoints between, which are also known as the Cross Quarters and as the Celtic Fire Festivals. Because of secular calendar reconfigurations in recent centuries, dates of the Cross Quarter festivals may vary by several days. Some groups prefer to celebrate on what has become the traditional date across most Wiccan traditions; others try to celebrate at the actual midpoint between each Solstice and Equinox as was done in ancient times. <See the preceding table for general dates, agricultural and popular observances, and other common names>.

### **Samhain**

- also called: Halloween, All Hallows Eve, All Saints & All Souls Days, Days of the Dead
- dates: October 31, early November
- colors: black, orange, indigo
- special tools: votive candles, magic mirror, cauldron, pumpkins, divination special tools
- theme: death & transformation; Wiccan New Year
- ritual focus: honoring ancestors, releasing old, foreseeing future, understanding death and rebirth
- customs: jack o'lanterns, spirit plate, ancestor altar, divination, costumes

### **Winter Solstice**

- also called: Yule, Jul, Saturnalia, Christmas, solar/secular New Year
- dates: around December 21
- colors: red, green, white
- special tools: mistletoe, evergreen wreath, lights, gifts, holly, Yule log, Yule tree
- theme: regeneration & renewal
- ritual focus: personal renewal, world peace, honoring family & friends
- customs: wreaths, evergreens, lights, gift-giving, singing, feasting, resolutions

## **Candlemas**

- also called: Imbolc, Oimelc, Brigid's Day; merged with Lupercalia/Valentines Day
- dates: February 2, early February
- colors: white, red
- special tools: candles, seeds, Brigid wheel, milk
- theme: conception, initiation, inspiration
- ritual focus: creative inspiration, purification, initiation, candle work, house & temple blessings
- customs: lighting candles, seeking omens of Spring, cleaning house, welcoming Brigid

## **Spring Equinox**

- also called: Ostara, Easter, St. Patrick's Day
- dates: around March 21
- colors: green, yellow
- special tools: eggs, basket, green clothes
- theme: birthing, sprouting, greening
- ritual focus: breakthrough, new growth, new projects, seed blessings
- customs: wearing green, egg games, new clothes, egg baskets

## **Beltane**

- also called: May Eve, May Day, Walpurgis Night
- colors: rainbow spectrum, blue, green, pastels, all colors
- special tools: Maypole & ribbons, flower crowns, fires, bowers, fields
- theme: youthful play, exuberance, pleasure
- ritual focus: love, romance, fertility, garden and crop blessings, creativity endeavors
- customs: dancing Maypole, jumping fire, mating, flower baskets, flower crowns

## **Summer Solstice**

- also called: Midsummer, Litha, St. John's Day
- dates: around June 21

- colors: yellow, gold, rainbow colors
- special tools: bonfires, Sun wheel, Earth circles of stone
- theme: partnership
- ritual focus: community, career, relationships, Nature Spirit communion, planetary wellness
- customs: bonfires, processions, all night vigil, singing, feasting, celebrating with others

### **Lammas**

- also called: Lughnassad
- dates: August 2, early August
- colors: orange, yellow, brown, green
- special tools: sacred loaf of bread, harvested herbs, bonfires
- theme: fruitfulness, reaping prosperity
- ritual focus: prosperity, generosity, continued success
- customs: offering of first fruits/grains, games, country fairs

### **Fall Equinox**

- also called: Mabon, Michaelmas
- dates: around September 21
- colors: orange, red, brown, purple, blue
- special tools: cornucopia, corn, harvested crops
- theme: appreciation & harvest
- ritual focus: thanksgiving, harvest, introspection
- customs: offerings to land, preparing for cold weather, bringing in harvest

## SOME COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

From the material presented thus far and concluding with the erudite discussion of the general Wiccan philosophy, ethics, and practices contributed by Selena Fox, it should be evident that many popularly held conceptions of Wicca and Paganism are patently false. It is important to note that human sacrifice is not a practice found in the Wiccan context. Animal sacrifice, while common in religions such as Santeria or Palo, is also not a practice endorsed by Wicca. Wiccans generally respect the right of practitioners of religions which employ this practice to worship as they see fit, but they feel that for themselves effective magic does not need to entail the killing of animals. Wicca is, quite simply, based on reverence and respect for all life, guided by the principle of "harm none." The underlying moral concept of this principle is similar to the Christian concept of reaping what one sows. In Wicca, this concept is referred to as the "Three-fold Law" which holds that any action, positive or negative, will return in some way upon the doer three-fold or three times. This concept of three is interpreted literally or symbolically by Wiccans depending upon the tradition.

It should also be evident that worship of Satan, or a Christian conception of a Devil who is the source of ultimate evil, is most assuredly **not** an element of Wiccan traditions. This misconception persists without a reasonable basis primarily among conservative religious groups. Historically, it seems likely that a figure with cloven hoofs and horns, resembling the Horned God of the Woods found in many early Pagan traditions (a deity known at various times by names such as Pan, Cernunnos, Cerne, and later Herne the Hunter), came to be associated with the Devil, or Satan of Christian traditions. This "demonization" of the Horned God is not surprising, as efforts by the early Church to discourage worship of the old deities may have contributed to a tendency to view them in a negative light. Indeed, it is not historically uncommon for newcomers to a given region to view the gods of indigenous inhabitants as demons or evil entities. Whether the newcomers are invaders, immigrants, or missionaries, it does not seem to alter their perception of the indigenous culture.

Other, broader-based misconceptions are the notions that Wiccan and Pagan rites universally include the use of controlled or illegal substances, indiscriminate sexual promiscuity, and blatantly malefic magic. It is true that many people naively come to the Craft expecting to find pot parties, sex orgies, or some magical spell to turn an ex-lover into a toad. When they discover that discipline, dedication, and hard work are required to effectively practice the Craft, they usually become disillusioned quite early on. Most will then seek less demanding ways in which to gratify their needs. Those who persist long enough to work through the window dressing usually find a deep and rewarding spiritual practice that is more internally than externally focused.

## THE US MILITARY AND ALTERNATIVE RELIGIONS

Although this and the following section address areas specific to Service members, the material should also be of interest to a broader population, particularly the section citing Department of Defense Policy regarding religious pluralism.

To most people who have never experienced life in the military, mere mention of the word conjures up images of staunch conservatism, mindless robots, regimentation, blind obedience to orders, and social stagnation. Few realize that the US Military has been the avant-garde of every wave of social change and progress evident during the latter half of this century. The US Military recognized and accepted social and cultural diversity in its ranks long before those issues became "politically correct" and well before liberal causes were zealously embraced by the general American public. The US armed services implemented policies and change to insure social equities years before the first Civil Rights Act was passed by Congress. The military services were already fully integrated in the mid-Fifties when "Whites" and "Coloreds" signs were still posted on drinking fountains and lavatory doors. By the early 1970s, the Women's Army Corps had ceased to exist, and female soldiers were transitioned into all Branches of the Army except the Combat Arms. Desert Storm saw women pilots flying combat support missions.

The notion that the military is autocratic and repressive in regards to personal liberties and freedoms is another commonly held but grossly distorted myth. True, the military by its very nature demands of its members significant discipline and self-sacrifice, conditions which have been voluntarily accepted since the Draft was abolished in the 1970s. However, no individual is told when, how, or to whom to pray, or what to think, or what religious dogma he or she must believe. Service personnel are often afforded many opportunities to visit exotic and far-away places where the military and the civilian population are not granted those basic human rights. Consequently, military members tend to experience an enhanced sense of appreciation and respect for personal liberties. Despite the apparent rigidity of the military structure, no military service or command should knowingly infringe upon the right of an individual member to practice any legitimate religion he or she may choose, so long as it does not interfere with his or her ability to carry out the assigned mission.

Chaplains, regardless of their personal religious denomination or particular faith, have always been present in the ranks of the military services, and they have always endeavored to be responsive to the needs of

all the troops. Given the social, cultural, and ethnic diversity of the military population, our military chaplains have been required to look beyond their own seminaries and learn enough about other religions to serve all military personnel in times of need. The military is committed to the idea that the choice of religion is an individual's inalienable right. This is not propaganda; it is merely the statement of an observable and easily verifiable fact by the authors, who have over three decades of military service between them.

This is not to say that there have not been or do not continue to be difficulties which arise between some chaplains, commanders, and military supervisors on the one hand and service members who choose to practice non-mainstream religions on the other. Usually, however, these problems are confined to relatively minor misunderstandings of each other's positions and perspectives, or they may simply be due to crossed communications. It has been our experience that the majority of military chaplains are conscientious and supportive of all minority faith groups once they understand the needs and practices of that particular group. When reading the following section, it is important to note that efforts by military chaplains to accommodate the spiritual needs of Wiccans can best be facilitated by flexibility and readiness to compromise on the part of Wiccan practitioners or groups as well. For instance, in cases where the use of blades or open flames is contraindicated by regulations or safety conditions associated with specific spaces on military bases, acceptable substitutes should be discussed. Tools are, after all, a symbolic representation of the inner state of the practitioner, and a disciplined Wiccan should be able to be flexible and adaptable in spiritual practice when necessary.

Military personnel who work with or supervise Wiccans in their command structure should primarily be aware of the general dates of religious holidays, which are common to many different Pagan and Wiccan traditions. As emphasized above, names of holidays may vary, and different traditions may celebrate all or some of them. The time frame and dates of seasonal celebrations are nearly universal in Neo-Paganism. It is possible that for one or more of these Sabbats, Wiccan individuals in military service will request one or more days of leave to celebrate them, when such a request does not interfere with the mission of the military branch or service for which they work.

The Department of Defense establishes general policy for the military services through DoD Directives. Each service and subordinate command then issues regulations and instructions implementing that policy. Interpretation and implementation may vary widely from service to service and command to command. The service member is encouraged to meet with his or her servicing chaplain for local guidelines. What follows is the DoD Directive for Accommodation of Religious Practices within the Military



Services, and a citation of the appropriate regulation or instruction for each military service. This section concludes with excerpts from the US Army Chaplains' Handbook that provides information on selected religious faith groups.

***TITLE: DODD 1300.17, Accommodation of Religious Practices Within the Military Services, February 3, 1988, ASD(FM&P), thru Ch 1, October 17, 1988***

References:

- (a) DoD Directive 1300.17, subject as above, June 18, 1985 (hereby canceled)
- (b) Public Law 98-525, section 554(d), DoD Authorization Act, 1985, October 19, 1984
- (c) Public Law 100-180, section 508, DoD Authorization Act, 1988-89, December 4, 1987
- (d) Title 10, United States Code, chapter 47, Uniform Code of Military Justice

A. REISSUANCE AND PURPOSE

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

B. APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

1. This Directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Military Departments (including their National Guard and Reserve components), the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (OJCS), and DoD Field Activities.
2. The policies and procedures prescribed herein apply solely to the accommodation of religious practices in the Military Services and in no other context.

C. POLICY

1. A basic principle of our nation is free exercise of religion. The Department of Defense places a high value on the rights of members of the Armed Forces to observe the tenets of their respective religions. It is DoD policy that requests for accommodation of religious practices should be approved

by commanders when accommodation will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards or discipline.

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

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

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

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

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

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

f. Religious items or articles not visible or otherwise apparent may be worn with the uniform, provided they shall not interfere with the performance of the member's military duties, as discussed in subparagraph C.2.g.(5), below, or interfere with the proper wearing of any authorized article of the uniform.

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

(1) Under this Directive, "religious apparel" is defined as articles of clothing worn as part of the doctrinal or traditional observance of the religious faith practiced by the member. Hair and grooming practices required or observed by religious groups are not included within the meaning of religious apparel.

Jewelry bearing religious inscriptions or otherwise indicating religious affiliation or belief is subject to existing Service uniform regulations just as jewelry that is not of a religious nature.

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

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

(b) Do not replace or interfere with the proper wearing of any authorized article of the uniform.

(c) Are not temporarily or permanently affixed or appended to any authorized article of the uniform.

(3) The standards in subparagraph C.2.g.(2), above, are intended to serve as a basis for determining a member's entitlement under Public Law 100- 180, section 508 (reference (c)), to wear religious apparel with the uniform. For example, unless prohibited by subparagraph C.2.g.(6), below, a Jewish yarmulke may be worn with the uniform whenever a military cap, hat, or other headgear is not prescribed. A yarmulke may also be worn underneath military headgear as long as it does not interfere with the proper wearing, functioning, or appearance of the prescribed headgear.

(4) Exceptions to the standards in subparagraph C.2.g.(2), above, and other special accommodations for members of particular religious groups may be granted by the Military Departments under section D., below.

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

(a) Impair the safe and effective operation of weapons, military equipment, or machinery.

(b) Pose a health or safety hazard to the wearer or others.

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

(d) Otherwise impair the accomplishment of the military mission.

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

(7) The authority to approve the wearing of an item of religious apparel with the uniform, under the guidelines of this paragraph, shall be exercised at the command level specified by each Military Department. Denials of requests to wear religious apparel shall be subject to review at the Service Headquarters level. Final review shall occur within 30 days following the date of initial denial for cases arising in the United States, and within 60 days for all other cases. Exceptions to these deadlines shall be limited to exigent circumstances, such as extended deployment. Service members shall be obliged to comply with orders prohibiting the wearing of questionable items of religious apparel pending review of such orders under regulations issued by the Secretaries of the Military Departments.

h. Notwithstanding paragraphs C.2.f. and g., above, chaplains may wear any required religious apparel or accouterments with the uniform while conducting worship services and during the performance of rites and rituals distinct to their faith groups.

#### D. PROCEDURES

1. Under rules prescribed by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned, military commanders should consider the following factors along with any other factors deemed appropriate in determining whether to grant a request for accommodation of religious practices addressed in section C., above:

- a. The importance of military requirements in terms of individual and unit readiness, health and safety, discipline, morale, and cohesion.
- b. The religious importance of the accommodation to the requester.
- c. The cumulative impact of repeated accommodations of a similar nature.
- d. Alternative means available to meet the requested accommodation.
- e. Previous treatment of the same or similar requests, including treatment of similar requests made for other than religious reasons.

2. The factors in subsection D.1, above, are intended to promote standard procedure for resolving difficult questions involving accommodation of religious practices. In view of the different mission requirements of each command, individual consideration of specific requests for accommodation is necessary; With the exception of requests involving the wearing of visible items of religious apparel with the uniform, denials of which must be reviewed at the Service Headquarters level, the appropriate level of command for resolution of these issues shall be determined by each of the Military Departments, based on its particular requirements and circumstances.

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

#### E. RESPONSIBILITIES

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

2. The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall be responsible for issuance of appropriate implementing documents and administration of the rules thereunder within their respective Departments.

#### F. EFFECTIVE DATE AND IMPLEMENTATION

This Directive is effective immediately. The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall forward two copies of implementing documents to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Personnel) within 45 days of the issuance of this Directive or any subsequent change.

William I. Taft, IV Deputy Secretary of Defense

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***SPECIFIC REGULATIONS:***

**ARMY**

AR 165-1, Chaplain Activities in the United States Army  
DAM 600-75, Accommodating Religious Practices

**AIR FORCE**

AFI 52-1, Chaplain Service  
AFI 52-101, Chaplain Service Responsibilities and Procedures

**NAVY AND MARINES**

OPNAVINST 1730.1B, Religious Ministries in the Navy  
SECNAVINST 1730.8, Accommodation of Religious Practices

**US COAST GUARD**

COMDTINST M1730-4B, Religious Ministries within the Coast Guard

The above documents are usually available through your chaplain or the installation resource library.

**EXCERPTS FROM**  
**RELIGIOUS REQUIREMENTS AND PRACTICES OF CERTAIN SELECTED**  
**GROUPS**  
**A HANDBOOK FOR CHAPLAINS**

**DISCLAIMER:**

We will list only the sections pertinent to the Wiccan Religion: these sections were compiled from a variety of sources and ***do not necessarily represent the view of the Wiccan Religion held by either the authors or the Sacred Well Congregation.*** These two entries are presented for informational purposes only. They cannot in any way be considered universally authoritative, and no effort has been made by the authors of this pamphlet to correct factual or typographical errors or discrepancies in the presented material.

**NOTE:** the Sacred Well Congregation has been advised by the Department of Defense Armed Forces Chaplains Board that this document will not be revised, and the current volume will be obsolete by the time this pamphlet is published. The reason for this is that many of the diverse groups cited here strongly objected to being placed in an official document with other groups whom they considered objectionable. It has not yet been determined what, if any, policy guidance will be provided in the future.

The work involved in developing and producing this handbook was performed pursuant to contract number MDA903-90-C-0062 with the Department of Defense by

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF AMERICAN RELIGION  
J. Gordon Melton  
Project Director

James R. Lewis  
Senior Research Associate

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310-2700

Nothing herein shall be construed to reflect the official position, policy or endorsement of the Department of the Army, or of the Chief of Army Chaplains regarding the organization, beliefs, or doctrine of the religious groups described in this manual. It contains information on these selected religious groups provided by the groups themselves. Errors or changes may be reported through official channels to the Chief of Army Chaplains.

## PURPOSE

This Handbook has been prepared for the Office of Chaplains, Department of the Army, in order to provide information useful for chaplains on the beliefs and practices of certain "religious" groups.

Specifically, the purposes of this Handbook are three:

To facilitate the provision of religious activities which serve the needs of persons of certain faiths not otherwise represented by military chaplains and others;

To define the specific requirements and practices in such a way as to enable commanders at all levels to make effective personnel decisions in those instances when religious beliefs and practices are claimed to be in conflict with military directives and practices; and

To provide the specific information about each group in a form which has maximum utility for military purposes, yet is approved as normative or at least acceptable by the leaders of those various groups under study.

The Handbook is written as a guide for chaplains and, where appropriate, for commanders. Although it accurately reflects the positions of each group in general, chaplains are urged to consider the religious needs of each member individually.

The specific purposes of the Handbook also serve to limit the amount of information provided on each group. Thus, while the information provided is accurate (in most instances approved by authorities from the individual groups themselves), it is by no means comprehensive. Lay persons, particularly, are cautioned that the Handbook is not a guide to religion, and



that consideration of the implications of adopting a particular faith or belief system is best accomplished under the careful guidance of a chaplain or other religious leader.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE HANDBOOK

This Handbook is a thorough revision of the first edition of *Religious Requirements and Practices of Certain Selected Groups: A Handbook for Chaplains*. It was originally published in 1979, and a supplement was issued in 1980. The development of this new edition of the Handbook was accomplished in a series of steps, the first of which was the selection of the groups to be included. Beginning with the list of groups in the original edition, those which had dissolved were eliminated. From the possible 1,500 groups to be included, additional groups were chosen on the basis of the same criteria as the original selection, i.e., after answering three specific questions:

Given the size of the group and the nature of assignments of Army Chaplains, is it likely that members of the group will be found on military installations where no chaplain of that particular faith or of a related faith is stationed?

Is the group known to the Office of the Chief of Chaplains as one about which questions have been previously raised by existing chaplains or commanders?

Is the nature of the group such that questions about it may be raised by chaplains or commanders in the near future?

While the answers to these questions may well encompass many groups not covered in the Handbook, selection of the groups included represents an attempt to incorporate the largest possible percentage of such groups which might be addressed in a single Handbook.

The material presented in the Handbook was obtained through an extensive research effort. Pertinent literature was identified and surveyed, various coordinating bodies related to military chaplains were consulted, and open-ended interviews were conducted with active members of the various groups. Based on this research, draft descriptions of each group were developed and prepared for validation.

The process of validating the information included a review of the draft descriptions with officials of the groups. Where possible, approval of the final draft version was obtained from a church or group official. The final description was then completed, based on the information received from these officials in response to the final draft descriptions.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE HANDBOOK

The Handbook includes 51 different group descriptions, divided into seven categories. The categories are:

- Christian Heritage Groups
- Indian Heritage Groups
- Islamic Heritage Groups
- Japanese Heritage Groups
- Jewish Groups
- Sikh/Sant Mat Groups
- Other Groups

Each section has a brief introductory segment which provides general comments on the category. The 51 different groups are then divided according to the most appropriate category.

**the two sections of this document that are specific to Wicca:**

### ***GARDNERIAN WICCA***

ADDRESS: c/o Lady Rhiannon  
Box 6896  
New York, NY 10150

OTHER NAMES BY WHICH KNOWN: Witchcraft; Paganism; Neo-Paganism

LEADERSHIP: No formal leader

MEMBERSHIP: Not reported.

HISTORICAL ORIGIN: Witchcraft or Wicca is a reconstruction of the Old Religion, the tribal worship of ancient peoples based in magic, herbology, healing, and the worship (primarily) of the Mother Goddess and (secondarily) her consort, the Horned God. Witches believe they have existed throughout known history in many parts of the world. The term "witch," more properly "wicca," comes from the Anglo Saxon word for "wise." Wicca's marked revival in the 14th Century is due largely to the work of such scholars as Margaret A. Murray, who traced the existence of the Old Pagan Religion in pre-historic Europe. At the forefront of this revival was Gerald Gardner, the famous witch of the Isle of Man.

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

Gardnerian witchcraft was brought to the U.S. by Lady Rowena and her High Priest Robat from England in 1962. Raised in the Church of England, they began to read books on the Craft and eventually to correspond with Gardner. They traveled to the Isle of Man a number of times and were fully initiated, then began to form covens in the United States.

**BASIC BELIEFS:** Gardnerians worship the Mother Goddess and also the Horned God, symbols of the basic male/female polarity of all nature. They seek the balance within themselves, and with their environment. Worship is often done in pairs, masculine and feminine, and the power which is produced by magical ritual is directed by the High Priestess for its desired purpose. While devotion to the Wiccan deities is the main coven activity, magic, the control and use of natural cosmic forces which emanate from the human mind and body, is the secondary activity of the coven. It is done for healing and for aiding members in various endeavors. Most Witches believe in reincarnation; i.e., that the soul or spirit of the individual will progress through a number of subsequent Earthly lives as it evolves. Retribution for acts in this life will be returned threefold, good or evil, in this life. A reincarnated spirit starts afresh.

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

One book used by Gardnerian Wicca is authoritative: *The Book of Shadows*, or book of ritual. In the Gardnerian tradition, these are hand copied from High Priestess to High Priestess. Each High Priestess then shares the information with her coven. They are part of the traditional teachings of the Craft, and are

available only to initiates. From coven to coven, the rituals vary slightly. The Gardnerian tradition is an evolved and evolving tradition. Hence, each coven will start with the materials passed on to its High Priestess, and then experiment with new emphases, magical formulas and rituals. The books of Janet and Stewart Farrar (Eight Sabbats for Witches, The Witches' Way, The Witches' Goddess, and The Witches' God) are the best currently available sources on Traditional Wicca. For eclectic Wicca, the best source is Starhawk's The Spiral Dance. Margot Adler's Drawing Down the Moon is a useful survey of the larger neo-Pagan movement.

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

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

Eight sabbats, or festivals, important for witches to gather and attune themselves to natural rhythms and forces as the seasons change, are followed: February Eve (January 31), Spring Equinox (March 21), Beltane or May Eve (April 30), Summer Solstice or Midsummer (June 22), Lammas (July 31), Autumn Equinox (September 21), Samhain (October 31) and Yule or Winter Solstice (December 21).

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

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

**WORSHIP:** Wiccans usually worship as a group. Individual worship is possible, but not generally practiced. Worship takes place in a private location in which a circle can be drawn according to prescribed ritual formulas. Covens meet either weekly or bi-weekly (at the full and new moon),

always in the evening. Worship in some (but not all) groups occurs in the nude.

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

**DIETARY LAWS OR RESTRICTIONS:** None

**FUNERAL AND BURIAL REQUIREMENTS:** None. Recognition of the death of a coven member takes place in the coven, apart from the "body" of the deceased. Ritual tools or material found among the remains of the deceased should be immediately returned to members of the coven. It is not necessary for a priest or priestess to be present at the time of death.

**MEDICAL TREATMENT:** No restrictions, but Wiccans may want co-religionists to do healing rituals in the hospital in tandem with medical treatment. So members of patient's Circle should be permitted ICU visits as though they were immediate family.

**OTHER:** With respect to attitude toward service in the armed forces, members include the full range from career military personnel to conscientious objectors.

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

**GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:**

Margot Adler. *Drawing Down the Moon*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2nd, ed., 1986. 595pp.

Janet and Stewart Farrar. *Eight Sabbats for Witches*. London: Robert Hale, 1981. 192pp.

*The Witches' Way*. London: Robert Hale, 1984. 349pp.

*The Witches' Goddess*. Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing, 1987. 319pp.

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

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

Judy Harrow

1781 Riverside Drive, #3H  
New York, NY 10034  
(212) 942-5780

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## **WICCA**

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

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

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

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

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

**HISTORICAL ORIGIN:** Wicca is a reconstruction of the Nature worship of tribal Europe, strongly influenced by the living Nature worship traditions of tribal peoples in other parts of the world. The works of such early twentieth century writers as Margaret Murray, Robert Graves and Gerald B. Gardner began the renewal of interest in the Old Religion. After the repeal of the anti Witchcraft laws in Britain in 1951, Gardner publicly declared himself a Witch and began to gather a group of students and worshipers.

In 1962, two of his students Raymond and Rosemary Buckland (religious names: Lady Rowen and Robot), emigrated to the United States and began teaching Gardnerian Witchcraft here. At the same time, other groups of people became interested through reading books by Gardner and others. Many covens were spontaneously formed, using rituals created from a combination of research and individual inspiration. These self-created covens are today regarded as just as valid as those who can trace a "lineage" of teaching back to England.

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

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

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

Most Wiccan groups also practice magic, by which they mean the direction and use of "psychic energy," those natural but invisible forces which surround all living things. Some members spell the word "magick," to distinguish it from sleight of hand entertainments. Wiccans employ such means as dance, chant, creative visualization and hypnosis to focus and direct psychic energy for the purpose of healing, protecting and aiding members in various endeavors. Such assistance is also extended to non-members upon request.

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

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

**PRACTICES AND BEHAVIORAL STANDARDS:** The core ethical statement of Wicca, called the "Wiccan Rede" states "an it harm none, do what you will." The Rede fulfills the same function as does the "Golden Rule" for Jews and Christians; all other ethical teachings are considered to be elaborations and applications of the Rede. It is a statement of situational ethics, emphasizing at once the individual's responsibility to avoid harm to others and the widest range of personal autonomy in "victimless" activities. Wicca has been described as having a "high-choice" ethic.

Because of the basic Nature orientation of the religion, many Wiccans will regard all living things as Sacred, and to show a special concern for ecological issues. For this reason, individual conscience will lead some to take a pacifist position. Some are vegetarians. Others will feel that, as Nature's Way includes self-defense, they should participate in wars that they conscientiously consider to be just. The religion does not dictate either position, but requires each member to thoughtfully and meditatively examine her or his own conscience and to live by it.

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

Wiccans celebrate eight festivals, called "Sabbats," as a means of attunement to the seasonal rhythms of Nature. These are January 31 (Called Oimeic, Brig it, or February Eve), March 21 (Ostara or Spring Equinox), April 30 (Bulletin or May Eve), June 22 (Midsummer, Litha or Summer Solstice), July 31 (Lunacy or Lammas), September 21 (Hanest, Mabon or Autumn Equinox), October 31 (Samhain, Sowyn or Hallows) and December 21 (Yule or Winter Solstice.) Some groups find meetings within a few days of those dates to be acceptable; others require the precise date. In addition, most groups will meet for worship at each Full Moon, and many will also meet on the New Moon. Meetings for religious study will often be scheduled at any time convenient to the members, and rituals can be scheduled whenever there is a need (i.e. for a healing).

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



**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:** Most Wiccans meet with a coven, a small group of people. Each coven is autonomous. Most are headed by a High Priestess, often with the assistance of a High Priest. Some are headed by a High Priestess or High Priest without a partner, and some regard themselves as a gathering of equals. Covens can be of mixed gender, or all female or male, depending on the preferences of the members. Every initiate is considered to be a priestess or a priest. Most covens are small. Thirteen is the traditional maximum number of members, although not an absolute limit. At that size, covens form a close bond, so Wiccans in the military are likely to maintain a strong affiliation with their covens back home.

There are many distinct "Traditions" of Wicca, just as there are many denominations within Christianity. The spectrum of Wiccan practice can be described as ranging from "traditional" to "eclectic," with Traditions, covens and individuals fitting anywhere within that range. A typical difference would be that more traditional groups would tend to follow a set liturgy, whereas eclectic groups would emphasize immediate inspiration in worship.

These distinctions are not particularly important to the military chaplain, since it is unlikely that enough members of any one Tradition would be at the same base. Worship circles at military facilities are likely to be ad-hoc cross-Traditional groups, working out compromise styles of worship for themselves and constantly adapting them to a changing membership. Therefore, the lack of strict adherence to the patterns of any one Tradition is not an indicator of invalidity.

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

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

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

Some, but not all, Wiccan covens worship in the nude ("skyclad") as a sign of attunement with Nature. Most, but not all, Wiccan covens bless and share a

cup of wine as part of the ritual. Almost all Wiccans use an individual ritual knife (an "athame") to focus and direct personal energy. Covens often also have ritual swords to direct the energy of the group. These tools, like all other ritual tools, are highly personal and should never leave the possession of the owner.

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

**DIETARY LAWS OR RESTRICTIONS:** None

**FUNERAL AND BURIAL REQUIREMENTS:** None. Recognition of the death of a member takes place within the coven, apart from the body of the deceased. Ritual tools, materials, or writings found among the effects of the deceased should be returned to their home coven (typically a member will designate a person to whom ritual materials should be sent).

It is desirable for a Wiccan priest or priestess to be present at the time of death, but not strictly necessary. If not possible, the best assistance would be to make the member as comfortable as possible, listen to whatever they have to say, honor any possible requests, and otherwise leave them as quiet and private as possible.

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

**OTHER:** With respect to attitude toward military service, Wiccans range from career military personnel to conscientious objectors.

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

and are permitted to attend the services of other religions, should they desire to do so.

#### GENERAL SOURCE BOOKS:

The best general survey of the Wiccan and neo-Pagan movement is:

Adler, Margot. *Drawing Down the Moon*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1986. 595pp

For more specific information about eclectic Wicca, see:

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

For more specific information about traditional Wicca, see:

Farrar, Janet, and Stewart Farrar. *Eight Sabbats for Witches*. London: Robert Hale, 1981. 192pp.

*The Witches' Way*. London: Robert Hale, 1984. 349pp.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Pagan Military Newsletter c/o Terri Morgan, Editor 829 Lynnhaven Parkway  
114-198 Virginia Beach, VA 23452

Because of the autonomy of each coven and the wide variance of specific ritual practices, the best contact person would be the High Priestess or other leader of the member's home coven.

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Full electronic text of this document is available at

**<http://www.cgsc.army.mil/CHAP/>**

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In this section we present a brief treatment of what we consider to be some of the most significant works on Wicca and Neo-paganism. Our selection of these particular books was based on scholarship, authenticity, and utility. Some of the books, such as *Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft*, Crowley's *Wicca: the Old Religion*, Starhawk's *Spiral Dance*, and Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon* are among the earliest publicly available resources on the subject. Others are more recent but provide fresh insights and perspectives. As you read through the various books, you will find some differing accounts and opinions, but in the Wiccan religion, there is no single or "absolute" authority. Nevertheless, all of the books cited here are well worth the reading and study for the serious practitioner.

### *Principles of Wicca*

Vivianne Crowley  
London: Thorsons (1997).

Dr. Crowley presents a readable and concise introduction to the fundamental concepts of the Wiccan religion. The publisher's review cites this book as "The only introduction you will ever need." Unlike her earlier works, which were written expressly for Wiccans and Pagans, this book is aimed at a larger population. Anyone who is curious, who needs reliable information, or who is just beginning to explore the Wiccan path will find this book invaluable. It is also a very good primer for practitioners who are teaching neophytes. The book explores Wicca, past and present, presents an overview of the general cosmology, and provides practical and useful exercises at the end of each chapter. Particularly helpful in the understanding and teaching of the fundamentals of magic is her discussion of the concept of morphic resonance.

... Repetition is important for other reasons. There are traditional words that are used in Wiccan ritual, but we are not bound by these. We can write our own, or we can make them up spontaneously as we go along. Different groups and different individuals have different preferences. However, *morphic resonance* is an important concept for understanding how ritual works. *Morphic resonance* is a term coined by biologist Rupert Sheldrake (1990) to explain the phenomenon that every species appears to have a collective or group memory which each individual of the species can access. This is not only true for biological species, but for groups of crystals, molecules and cells.

Once a substance has crystallized a certain way, or a species has made an evolutionary leap, every member of the same substance or species is likely to experience the same sort of changes. This explains a well-known scientific fact: when something has been done once in the world, it can be done more easily a second time, and even more easily as time goes on. ...

Morphic resonance is a similar idea to what Carl Jung called the *collective unconscious*, the group mind of humanity. The collective unconscious is the level at which we lose partly our individual separateness and merge our minds with those of others. Plants called rhizomes appear to be separate, but deep beneath the soil is a common root. At the everyday conscious level, human beings appear separate, but there is a deeper level in which we are all connected. It is via this deeper level of ourselves that clairvoyance, telepathy and precognition occur. In some people the door between the conscious and unconscious mind is permanently open. They are constantly aware of all sorts of unseen thoughts and energies around them. Others can open and close that door at will. In some of us, the door only opens when there is great danger or emotion. Thus people who are never normally clairvoyant may have strong premonitions if a loved one is in danger, particularly when there is a deep connection such as between parent and child.

The knowledge hidden within the collective unconscious is available to all of us. What has been done once by a human being can more easily be done by others elsewhere. This means, of course, that we can communicate information between our own species in ways that are not yet understandable by science. It confirms telepathy. It also means that the sum of the total of human knowledge is where Witches have always said it was--- within us.

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### ***Phoenix from the Flame***

Vivianne Crowley  
London: Thorsons (1994).

In this 1994 compendium of pagan spirituality in the Western world, Dr. Crowley reviews the concepts and history of paganism and how the various traditions have evolved into their current forms. Again, as with most of her work, she approaches the material from a psychological as well as a spiritual perspective. She explores in depth the Way of the Celts, the Norse and German traditions, traditions of North-East Europe, and Wicca as a

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syncretistic contemporary tradition. Her treatment of The Way of the Goddess and the God is particularly insightful. She discusses the necessity of the return of the Goddess to restore the balance that has been stifled by pervasive patriarchy over the last four millennia; then she cautions against the danger of over-correction.

All extremes in religious, political and spiritual thought produce an equal and opposite reaction. The dominance of our spiritual life by a sterile maleness returned many to the worship of the Great Goddess. An imbalance in our outer society towards valuing only male activity and the male sex brought forth feminism and encouraged many, both men and women, to develop the feminine within themselves. This was of great value to men, because it returned them to a part of themselves which had been suppressed and repressed by Western society. This was male caring, creativity and joyfulness. This, however, is only one side of the lost male, which Pagan religion has needed to recover. The male is also hunter and warrior. This is not random violence or killing for the sake of it, but the use of male strength which is needed by Nature; the strength which protects, nurtures and guards the weak, and which prevents the powerful from oppressing the powerless. Having come to terms with the Goddess, many men now wish to come to terms with their own male energy. They are searching for the God.

In the 1980s we had the concept of The New Man. He changed nappies, wept buckets at the movies, and was never angry. He harboured a permanent guilt complex because his organ dangled, and hers did not, and he took upon himself the sins of the male world. It was man who had persecuted women, burned them at the stake, had unleashed the dogs of war. If his ancestors had done it, then he too had done it. He was guilty by birth. Many caring men emerged from this phase frustrated that by seeking to minimize their maleness, they had not found themselves. Men had found their inner feminine. They may have rejected the stereotypical male role in which they had been brought up to play, and chosen other careers and other patterns of life; but there was still something missing. In rejecting the Judaeo-Christian God, all masculine deity had been abolished. ...

To play their role in society, men must come to an understanding of how to use their male energy for greater good. The aim of the Pagan religion is not to produce men who think they are women, but men in touch with their maleness. For this, worship of God as well as Goddess is necessary. ...

In our modern era, both men and women have suffered from false images of what they should be. (pg 124-25) ...

On Paganism as a way of life as opposed to a Sunday morning religion:

Paganism may not have a complex set of commandments, but social ethics are strongly emphasized in many Pagan traditions. ... It was also important to help weaker members of society because to fail to provide for the needy was to fail in honor. The attitudes of hospitality and generosity which were encouraged in Pagan society were important for the well-being of the community, but they were also important for the spiritual evolution of the giver. Attachment to material possessions binds us to the world of the transient. These things are to be experienced and enjoyed, but they are not to be clung to; for in the end, all passes, all changes. Paganism teaches:

That in the darkest time,  
There is hope of another day;  
That in the time of suffering,  
We shall know release;  
That all beauty is transient,  
And though we honour it while it flowers,  
Yet do we give greater honour to that which endures and abides:  
Love, Honour, Wisdom, Truth, Courage and Compassion.

***Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess***

Starhawk

San Francisco: Harper (1989, 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition, revised).

High Priestess of the longstanding coven called Reclaiming and cultural icon of Dianic Witches and feminists since the early 1970s, Starhawk has had a tremendous impact on the contemporary evolution of Pagan and Goddess spirituality, especially in the United States. She is also a well-traveled lecturer who has made several appearances at conferences held by the Association of Humanistic Psychology and similar organizations. This book has repeatedly proven to be a valuable guide for those who are exploring Paganism, Wicca, or Goddess Spirituality for the first time. It is also a resource repeatedly consulted by long-time practitioners of Paganism for insights and for continued spiritual growth in this context. The book focuses on the symbolic, psychological, and spiritual implications of the

"return of the Great Goddess" in contemporary society. It also provides an articulate and intelligent explanation of the nature of magic and ritual.

Finally, ***Spiral Dance*** outlines a philosophical, political, and ideological critique of "power over," a concept which has traditionally fueled what she regards as typically patriarchal and hierarchical societies and power structures. While the military certainly falls within such a definition, it is possible for military Wiccans to derive much of value from this book for personal practice without jeopardizing their ability to accomplish their mission within the military context. Starhawk points out the ways in which our relationship with the earth and its flora and fauna has suffered as a consequence of attitudes which endorse exploitation and domination. In their place she advocates a way of living which emphasizes consensual validity, nonviolence, and "power from within." In this approach individuals rely on each other's strengths, compensate for each other's weaknesses, and share responsibility and power equally. It is a way which emphasizes reverence and respect for each other as well as for the earth and all of its inhabitants of the animal and plant kingdom.

In her emphasis on balance, Starhawk points out that each of us has within our psyches polar attributes which consist of qualities typically viewed by society as masculine and feminine. She departs from the idea that literal gender differences are required for effective magical work to attain balance, asserting that we may effectively utilize the polar relationship between opposite qualities within ourselves. Therefore, we can do effective magic alone, or with other individuals of the same gender. We need not always seek out magical partners of the opposite gender. This is an idea which empowers virtually anyone to be able to have confidence in his or her ability to work effective magic and connect with the Higher Self in ritual. She describes the importance of circles and spirals in magical work, as a symbolic analog for attunement to the cycles and seasons of nature as well as for spiritual evolution.

Starhawk's book also serves as an important guide and source of advice for individuals seeking groups with whom to study and work, as well as for those who ultimately opt to become "solitary practitioners" who work alone. It is not uncommon for individuals setting out on the path of Wicca to feel confused and overwhelmed by the complexity of information now available, and this book helps the practitioner to "gel" personal ideals and values, making it easier to find a matching context.

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### ***Circles, Groves, and Sanctuaries: Sacred Spaces of Today's Pagans***

Pauline and Dan Campanelli  
St. Paul, Minnesota: Llewellyn (1994).

This book is an excellent resource for both Wiccans and non-Wiccans alike, as it provides a candid and personal look at the private sacred spaces of Pagan individuals and groups throughout the world. It is a rare opportunity for those outside of this context to view, through photographic and textual evidence, just what exactly the shrines, altars, ceremonial tools, and sacred spaces of contemporary Pagans, actually look like. It also takes a look at how trees and stones may act as centerpieces of Pagan ritual and meditation. This book makes it possible for the reader to piece together the ideals, beliefs, and values which lie behind the external trappings of Paganism. Featured prominently are the authors of the book themselves in their private spaces, as well as Circle Sanctuary and Selena Fox, who is one of the contributors to this pamphlet. The book also describes how a military member managed to practice his own Pagan spirituality amid the fury of Desert Storm.

This book may serve as an excellent and easy introduction to Paganism and Wicca through the eyes of the camera and the words of practitioners themselves. It is appealing to those who dislike dry, scholarly, and encyclopedic descriptions and wish to get a more pragmatic and "hands-on" look at this religious phenomenon, which is arguably one of the fastest growing spiritual contexts in the world today. It may also be of interest to chaplains who would like to better understand how circles, altars, and ceremonial tools in Wicca are utilized.

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### ***Ancient Ways: Reclaiming Pagan Traditions***

Pauline and Dan Campanelli,  
St. Paul, Minnesota, Llewellyn (1991).

This book is a clearly-articulated description of traditions, customs, legends, and cultural factors associated with Neo-paganism. It is written in a forthright manner which allows practitioner and interested party alike to understand the sources of many Pagan traditions. It also provides easy-to-follow directions on how to implement and practice Pagan customs on a regular basis and throughout the year. In this respect it is an excellent adjunct to their book ***Wheel of the Year***. It is a valuable book for newcomers to Paganism as a means of gaining practical advice about how to think about setting up the external trappings of their own unique practice of their spiritual tradition in

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ways which are consistent with both the ancient and modern spirit of that tradition. Perhaps more importantly, it provides "hands-on," practical advice on how to live a magical life in harmony with the cycles nature on literally any budget. For those seeking to gain a better understanding of Paganism from the outside, this book enables the reader to comprehend how these practices serve as a source of continuing spiritual growth and fulfillment to the practitioners of Paganism.

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***Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and other Pagans in America Today.***

Margot Adler.

USA imprint: Penguin Books

1997, revised and expanded edition.

This book was written by a woman who is a National Public Radio News Correspondent, a practicing Wiccan priestess, and the granddaughter of the famous psychoanalyst Alfred Adler. Perhaps more than any other publication, this book has had an explosive impact on the growth of Paganism and Goddess/Earth-centered spirituality, especially in the United States. The first edition was written in the late 1970s and it has been updated twice since. It is essentially a survey of traditions which typically identify themselves as Neo-pagan or Pagan, through many hours of interviews with Pagan individuals and members and leaders of groups throughout the United States. Margot Adler, who became a Wiccan in the course of her research, admits that she encountered many responses which shattered her own biases and preconceptions about Paganism and what it actually is. She even vehemently disagreed with the viewpoints and perspectives of some she spoke with, and she concluded that identifying a list of values common to all Pagan individuals and groups is nearly impossible. She did determine that most Pagans would agree that Paganism is about an attitude of reverence for the divinity which is immanent and inherent in the earth and all on it, rather than advocating and worshiping a divine entity which is utterly transcendent from and outside of all of nature. Many she spoke to felt that Christianity in particular unfortunately gave rise to a tendency to espouse an attitude of exploitation and dominance over the earth, rather than one of stewardship over the earth and its creatures.

Despite the fact that the earliest edition of this book was written two decades ago, in its current edition it still provides the most comprehensive understanding of Paganism and Pagan groups/traditions available without complete, participatory immersion in the cultural context of Paganism. It also considers in an in-depth manner issues which remain at the center of

controversy and discussion within the Pagan community today. It offers a frank discussion of the role of ceremonial tools and practices in Paganism. It explains the role and purpose of ritual nudity, or worshiping "skyclad," as well as the reasons that some groups advocate such practice in specific contexts and others do not. It explains the development and impact of the "Charge of the Goddess" and its role as a mainstay of Wiccan ritual.

The importance of this book for those outside of Paganism who are actively seeking to gain a better understanding of this spiritual context is that the book actively seeks to address the concerns, misunderstandings, and misconceptions of "outsiders." It also provides candid statements from those within the context about what they wish others who are not Pagan would understand and be able to accept about them. Principal among these are the emphasis in Paganism on not proselytizing or making converts, as well as the wish to be treated in the same manner by those of other religions.

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***Living Wicca: A Further Guide for the Solitary Practitioner***

Scott Cunningham

St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications (1995).

Published posthumously in 1995 after the death of the author in 1993, this book expands upon and re-introduces concepts outlined in his earlier book ***Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner***. Mr. Cunningham's ***Guide*** was hailed as a long-awaited boon to Wiccans who were not affiliated with any tradition or group but were struggling to form a practice on their own. The first book enabled individuals to connect with and form their own traditions, ideologies, and to practice with self-confidence and authority. This follow-up book gives further concrete and useful advice about how to act as your own teacher, design sophisticated and meaningful personal rituals, create and enrich a personal book of shadows to serve as a ritual and ethical guide in present and future magical endeavors, deepen your relationship with the Goddess and God, teach others in a public way about what you do, perform a powerful and deeply meaningful self-initiation, delve deeply into "mysteries" of Wicca which enhance self-knowledge and strengthen the connection to the Higher Self, pray more effectively, and live daily life as a deeply spiritual path.

This book is ideal in helping those who may wish (for many possible reasons) to avoid practicing with others to be able to foster and maintain the self-discipline and inspiration necessary for working alone. It is also helpful for those outside of the contexts of Paganism or Wicca to gain a better

understanding of the issues and challenges faced by solitary practitioners of Wicca, whose needs may be different even from those affiliated with groups or traditions. Such individuals often find excellent support through attending large national gatherings, which may require several days of leave time if it does not interfere with the military mission.

The following is a quote from the book:

once we've learned the basics of Wiccan beliefs and practices, living our religion is, logically, the next step. How we allow it to affect our lives is completely up to us... I've written this book as a guide not only to Wiccan practice, but to Wiccan life. Still, its contents are merely ideas and suggestions. Each of us has to find the perfect path. May the Goddess and God assist you in this quest.

Scott Cunningham, originally initiated in the Gardnerian Tradition, practiced Wicca for over twenty years before his death at the young age of 37. He is credited with over thirty works of fiction and non-fiction.

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### ***Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft***

Raymond Buckland  
St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn (1997)

As mentioned earlier, Dr. Buckland's efforts probably provided the greatest single synergist to the development of the contemporary Wiccan movement in the United States. The ***Complete Book of Witchcraft***, now in its 24<sup>th</sup> printing, makes a significant contribution to the body of reliable Craft literature. The volume is arranged in workbook format to allow the reader to progress through various stages and aspects of study at his or her own pace. Dr. Buckland begins with a brief introduction, then presents thirteen somewhat general lessons.

One of the best reviews of this work comes from Ed Fitch, himself a practitioner and Elder in the Craft. Rather than paraphrase, we will provide unedited quotes from Mr. Fitch's review.

Ray's workbook takes a wholisitic approach to the vast body of knowledge that Witches work with, so that information on religion and ritual practices is interwoven in such diverse topics as healing, herbal lore, dream interpretation, sex magick the power of colors, runic alphabets, magickal tools, meditation, divination, amulets and talismans, magickal properties of gemstones, candle magick and so on.

In sharing this material, the author reflects a new era of openness. In the past, Craft secrets of this nature were highly guarded, and publication of them would have been unthinkable just a few years ago.

The lessons in this workbook are practical and ethical. Ray emphasizes that Witchcraft entails "acceptance of personal and social responsibility," and that "it is an acknowledgement of a wholistic universe and a means toward raising consciousness."

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### ***Book of Shadows.***

Phyllis Currott

New York: Broadway Books (1998).

Ms Currott is a very successful Manhattan attorney who has been involved with the Craft for over two decades, as an initiate, practitioner and High Priestess. Like many, she found the way (and the inner strength) to dance the delicate dance of living as a part of our materialistic society and yet living apart from it. She never hid her association with the Craft, but never put it on public display, either. With all of the trendy literature and media hyperbole of late, she felt it was time to bring some things back into perspective. This book is written in a novelized style that makes for both enjoyable and insightful reading. It is her personal chronicle of her journey along the path, her personal experiences, triumphs and tragedies-- her personal transformation. The book also contains an abundance of practical and useful material, chants and rituals. Here are some particularly striking passages.

There was one thing I suddenly knew with absolute certainty: magic is not something that you just do or make. It is something the universe does with you. It is our relationship to the divine. There is nothing more magical than the presence of the sacred in one's life. It changes everything. It is extraordinary, it is gorgeous and it defies the limitations within which we lead our daily lives. Magic is the art of living a creative life that is graced with divine presence. It isn't something one does *to* the universe; it's what a living universe does *with* us once we have awakened to its divinity. It is the sacred dance we share. It is joyous, it is erotic, it is ecstatic, and when it happens roses bloom in December snow, butterflies fill the trees in Costa Rica, and lovers find each other across a river of time. I thought about the last several years and my longing for love. Most people know intuitively that when you fall in love, the world is full of magic. What they don't know is that when you discover the universe if full of magic, you fall in love with the world. (pg 89)

These were the unnatural, man made consequences of a cultural shift that began thousands of years ago, away from the sacred earth to a distant sky god. The religious beliefs of a culture defines its values. Its cosmology has tremendous impact on social and economic institutions, culture, history, the status of women, sexuality and countless other facets of daily life. We have become disconnected from the divine, from the feminine, from the earth, and from each other, living in a millennial alienation from the sacred. God was separated from man, man was separated from woman, and all were separated from the earth. For too many centuries, each has existed in painful separation from the others, and the world we have created expresses this terrible alienation. It also expresses our longing for reunion. (pg 126)

In circle, and in my daily practices, I learned how the Old Religion of the Great Mother Goddess honors and expresses a connection to the earth, the moon, the sun and stars, and the animals and plants that share the planet with us. Its rituals reinforce and give expression to the constant awareness of sacred relationship to all that is and to the divine as it is embodied in all that exists. Perhaps here in the scorched wasteland beneath the burning warrior sun, deep within our culture's shadow, I had finally come to a source of insight, to a wellspring where the sacred flowed in healing waters. (pg 126)

The alchemy of spiritual transformation remained protected and hidden by country clans and urban magical orders who secretly practiced Western mysticism. The Masons arose from this magical and intellectual lineage and it was their revolutionary brotherhood that founded the United States. They believed in the brotherhood of man, the existence of a divinity, and the immortality of the soul. Many of the treasured secret rituals of the Masons reflected those of the Goddesses at Eleusis and Delphi, and the most overt symbols of those beliefs decorate our flag, dollar bills and seals of high office. So often these days, as right-wing politicians and conservative Christians appropriate history for their own exclusionary political ends, they assert that we were founded as a Christian country. In fact, we were founded by magicians as an astounding political experiment, reflecting their equally insurgent, and ancient, spirituality. (pg 126)

I used to think Witches cast spells over people. Now I understand that true Witches work only to gain power over themselves. They work to accomplish self-mastery-- to achieve healing, wisdom, compassion and freedom, and to liberate themselves from the constraints that the world, or their upbringing, have trapped them in. Magic is a part of this process of self-awareness and liberation. To do sacred magic, we

must come to know ourselves. And to see ourselves as we truly are, we must have a mirror. Among their many spiritual arts, Witches had long used a variety of mirrors to see into the deepest parts of their own souls, and those of others. They also looked into the heart of the universe. (pg 147).

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***Wicca: the Old Religion for the New Millennium***

Vivianne Crowley

London: Thorsons (1996)

The 1996 edition is the revised and updated version of Dr. Crowley's consummate work first published over a decade ago. This is an expository work that contains a wealth of ritual, rites and poetry and synthesizes it all into a practical framework. Dr. Crowley has sometimes been criticized for "psychologizing" Wicca; William James and C.G. Jung were the targets of similar criticisms in that they were often accused of "psychologizing" religion. There is, however, a very thin and permeable line between psychological reality and genuinely moving religious experience. Dr. Crowley brings insight and understanding to this paradox through her treatment of Wicca from this perspective. In discussing the rationale and realities of magic, she expands upon some concepts of Cade, Jung, and Le Shan on alternate realities. She examines four primary concepts: sensory reality, mythic reality, transpsychic reality and unitive reality. She then looks at the types, purposes and symbolism of initiations from the perspective of personal growth and wholeness. From there she moves into a discussion of the interrelationships of the Goddess and God as collective and as personal divine experiences. She discusses the Sabbats as a journey through the year and a journey through life. Finally, she explores the Third Initiation as the gateway to the self. The following are a few passages that exemplify the scope and depth of this book.

The Sabbats are a journey. The Spring Equinox celebrates the mating of the Goddess and the God. Beltane celebrates the coming of Summer and the marriage of the Goddess and God. Midsummer is the celebration of the Sun, the Lord of Life, and the coming of the God into his maturity and kingship. Lammas celebrates the harvest, the sacrifice of the God, which is necessary to fertilize the land, and his death which liberates him to the challenge of conquering a new kingdom--- that of the Underworld. The Autumn Equinox celebrates the return of the God from the Underworld as the conquering hero who comes to reclaim his Queen and take her with him to his Underworld kingdom. Samhain is the feast of the dead, and the worlds of matter and spirit draw close to one another and the dead may pass to and fro through the veils. Yule celebrates the birth of the Sun God and at

Imbolc the God releases the Goddess from the Underworld so that she may re-emerge into the world as a virgin once more.

Annual cycle, or lifetime round? It operates on both levels. The developing God, although linking with the Goddess on the annual fertility cycle, is also progressing around the circle on a lifetime quest. Jung calls myth that which is not objectively true but is psychologically true: *the bridge to all that is best in humanity*. It is the inner reality that our ancestors portrayed in ritual. The method of portrayal was to use allegories found in Nature; for it was in part through observation of the cycle of birth, death and rebirth in Nature that human beings understood that this, too was their own fate-- to be born, to die and to live again. The experience portrayed by the seasonal rituals is that of transcendence-- a sense of the enduring Self which though part of the Wheel of Life and Death is yet beyond it.

Again, in addition to the scholarly treatment of principles and concepts, this book contains vast amounts of material suitable for ritual, worship, and meditation. Much of this was previously unpublished material written by Dr. Crowley and her husband, Chris, who is also a transpersonal psychologist. One of the most striking examples is a poem she wrote in 1969. This poem is the header for Chapter 9.

#### The Pipes of Pan

In caverns deep the Old Gods sleep;  
But the trees still know their Lord,  
And it's the Pipes of Pan which call the tune,  
In the twilight in the wood.  
The leaves they dance to the Goat God's tune,  
And they whisper his name to the winds,  
And the oak tree dreams of a God with horns,  
And knows no other king.

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## SUGGESTED READING LIST

### ***Highly Recommended:***

- Campanelli, Pauline and Dan. (1990) Wheel of the Year.  
St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications.
- Campanelli, Pauline & Dan (1998) Pagan Rites of Passage.  
St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications.
- Campbell, Joseph. (1973). The Hero With a Thousand Faces. Princeton,  
NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Crowley, Vivianne. (1998). Celtic Wisdom. New York:  
Sterling Publishing, Inc.
- Crowley, Vivianne. (1997). Principles of Wicca. London: Thorsons.
- Crowley, Vivianne. (1996). Wicca: the Old Religion for the New Millennium.  
London: Thorsons.
- Crowley, Vivianne. (1994). Phoenix from the Flame. London: Thorsons
- Crowther, Patricia. (1992). Lid Off the Cauldron. York Beach, Maine:  
Samuel Weiser.
- Curott, Phyllis. (1998). Book of Shadows. New York: Broadway Books  
(1998).
- Farrar, Janet & Stuart. (1981). A Witches Bible Compleat. New York:  
Magickal Child.
- Fitch, Ed. (1984). Magical Rites from the Crystal Well. St. Paul, MN:  
Llewellyn.
- Scire (Gerald B. Gardner). (1949, 1994). High Magic's Aid. London:  
Pentacle Enterprises.
- Sheldrake, Rupert. (1990). The Rebirth of Nature: the Greening of Science  
and God. London: Century.

***Recommended:***

- Adler, Margot. (1997). Drawing Down the Moon: New York: Penguin Books
- Berman, Morris (1981). The Reenchantment of the World. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Bradley, Marion Z. (1982). The Mists of Avalon. New York: Ballantine.
- Broch, S. & MacLer, V. (1993). Seasonal Dance. York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser.
- Buckland, Raymond. (1997). Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn.
- Cabot, L. (1994). Celebrate the Earth. York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser.
- Campanelli, Pauline and Dan. (1994). Circles, Groves and Sanctuaries. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn.
- Campanelli, Pauline and Dan. (1994). Ancient Ways. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn.
- Campbell, J. & Moyers, B. (1988). The Power of Myth. New York: Doubleday.
- Campbell, Joseph (ed.). (1971). The Portable Jung. New York: Viking/Penguin.
- Cunningham, S. (1995). Living Wicca. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn.
- Gantz, J. (trans). (1996). The Mabinogion. New York: Barnes and Noble.
- Hope, Murry. (1988). The Psychology of Ritual. Worcester, GB: Element Books Ltd.
- Jung, C.G. (1933). Modern Man in Search of A Soul. Reprint. New York: Harcourt/Brace.
- Matthews, C., & Matthews, J. (1986). The Western Way: A Practical Guide to the Western Mystery Tradition. New York: Arkana.

Melton, J. G., & Moore, R. (1989). The Cult Experience: Responding to the New Religious Pluralism.

Moody, T. & Martin, F. (1994). The Course of Irish History. Boulder, CO: Roberts Rinehart Publishers.

Qualls-Corbett, Nancy. (1988). The Sacred Prostitute: Eternal Aspects of the Feminine. Toronto, Canada: Inner City Books.

Seligmann, Kurt. (1997). The History of Magic and the Occult. New York: Gramercy

Slater, H. (ed). (1974). A Book of Pagan Rituals. York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc.

Starhawk. (1989). Spiral Dance. San Francisco: Harper.

Stone, Merlin. (1990). When God Was A Woman. New York: Dorset Press.

Summers, M. (trans). (1971). The Malleus Maleficarum of Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger. New York: Dover.  
*recommended not for content but to better understand the misogyny, historical distortions, and hideous falsehoods perpetrated about witchcraft during the Middle Ages. The motives and agenda of the translator also raise serious questions about the validity of this work*

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### ***Not Recommended List***

The following books ***are not recommended*** because, despite the fact they are found in New Age and Occult sections of most bookstores, they have nothing to do with Wicca.

Simon (ed.). (1980). Necronomicon. New York: Avon.

LeVey, A.S. (1969). The Satanic Bible. New York: Avon.

LeVey, A.S. (1972). The Satanic Rituals. New York: Avon.

LeVey, A.S. (1989). The Satanic Witch. New York. Feral House.

LeVey, A.S. (1992). The Devil's Notebook. New York. Feral House.

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LeVey, A.S. (1998). Satan Speaks. New York. Feral House.

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Circle Sanctuary  
PO Box 219  
Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin 53572

Temple of Danann  
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Wicca Study Group  
BM Deosil  
London WC1N 3XX  
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Nordic Pagan Federation  
(Norsk Paginisk Forbund)  
PO Box 1814, Nordenes  
5024 Bergen  
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Pagan Federation  
BM Box 7097  
London WC1N 3XX  
England

***WEB SITES of interest:***

The Sacred Well Congregation: <http://www.sacredwell.org>

Greencraft v.z.w.: <http://www.free-host.com/greencraft/>

Circle Sanctuary: <http://www.circlesanctuary.org>

Military Pagan Network <http://www.milpagan.org>

Witch's Voice: <http://www.witchvox.com>

Ontario Center for Religious Tolerance: <http://www.religioustolerance.org>

***National Publications and Periodicals:***

Circle Magazine: available by subscription through Circle Sanctuary

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### **David L. Oringderff, Ph.D.**

Executive Director, Sacred Well Congregation

Dr. Oringderff is a graduate of Dallas Baptist University, and holds an M.A. in Counseling Psychology from Bowie State University (Maryland) and a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from The Union Institute School of Professional Psychology in Cincinnati, Ohio. Dr. Oringderff is an ordained minister and Wiccan Priest and has studied comparative religions for over thirty years. In 1995 he retired from the US Army as a Major in the Military Intelligence Corps. He is currently a consultant and trainer in organizational systems, forensics, profiling, and psychodiagnostics. Dr. Oringderff holds a Texas Peace Officer license with Advanced Certification, a Police Instructor license, and a Forensic and Investigative Hypnotist license. He has developed a number of in-service training programs for law enforcement and mental health professionals, notably courses on Cult Investigations, Cultural Diversity, and Special Investigative Topics. He serves as a consultant for many inter-faith organizations, including the Armed Forces Chaplains Board.

### **Rev. S. Drake Fey**

Director of Military Affairs, Sacred Well Congregation

Rev. Fey is a graduate of Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. He also holds an M.A. in Clinical Psychology and at the time of preparation of this pamphlet is preparing to defend his doctoral dissertation for a Psy.D. from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology in Chicago, Illinois. He is currently the Chief of Inpatient Psychology at a major medical center. His interests include Jungian and constructivist psychology, cross-cultural psychology, alternative healing modalities, and theology and comparative religions. Prior to his military experience, Rev. Fey worked in a setting for the treatment of survivors of torture and human rights abuses around the world. He is legally ordained by Circle Sanctuary and the Sacred Well Congregation. Though he has been a Wiccan Priest for seven years, his study and research in comparative religions spans a decade and a half. He has given several briefings and inservices about Paganism and Wicca to psychology residents, substance abuse counselors, and chaplains. These presentations were aimed at fostering increased sensitivity in military counseling contexts to issues germane to Pagan and Wiccan individuals in the military. He has also presented workshops and facilitated rituals at the annual national Pagan Spirit Gathering.

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**"Anyone who takes the sure road is as good as dead." --- Carl Jung**

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