

How Much of Our Life is Pagan?

Genesis 1:1: (KJV) In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Ours is a society of diversity and we as a society have made it that way. Now, there is a great value in diversity for it helps us to focus on, accept and appreciate the contributions given by those who may not be like us. This is good. The problem lies in how our diverse society promotes itself at the expense of some - perhaps at the expense of many - who believe that there is a God and He is our Creator. Our diverse culture does not like this and it is here where that which promotes diversity engages in perversity. What does this have to do with paganism?

We will start (literally!) at the beginning: Genesis 1:1-5, 26-28

Observations:

- There was a beginning of our heavens (our atmosphere) and our planet. It does not deal with the creation of the universe itself.
- God was there. He engineered and oversaw the development of earth.
- God created methodically and in stages. This implies a purpose for His work.
- Man was the culmination of God's earthly creation.
- Man was created "in God's likeness" with the ability for dominion and reason.
- God gave His earthly children His blessing.
- God was (and is) intentional.



Neopaganism defined, *Irish Pagan Culture, Jenny Butler*

- *What is "Neopaganism?" It can be defined as a nature religion or earth-based spirituality because characteristically pagans have a very deep spiritual connection to the natural landscape. But there is a problem in strictly defining it as a religion because many followers or practitioners of paganism would view it more as a philosophy or way of life. And also a lot of people have a problem with the term religion itself because they connect that more with institutionalized religion, and they see spirituality as something different to that.*

(Source: <http://www.crystalinks.com/paganism.html>) The words 'Paganism' and 'Pagan' come from the Latin *paganus*, meaning country dweller. In simplest terms - Paganism is a religion of place, or a native religion, for example the Native American's religion is Pagan, and Hinduism is a form of Paganism. All Pagan religions are characterized by a connection and reverence for nature, and are usually polytheistic i.e. have many Gods and/or Goddesses. Paganism is a religion of nature, in other words Pagans revere Nature. Pagans see the divine as immanent in the whole of life and the universe; in every tree, plant, animal and object, man and woman and in the dark side of life as much as in the light. Pagans live their lives attuned to the cycles of Nature, the seasons, life and death.

Where exactly does God fit within Paganism and how is that different from Christianity?

Romans 1:16-17: The Gospel is God-based.

(Source: <http://www.crystalinks.com/paganism.html>)

Unlike the patriarchal religions (Christianity, Islam, Judaism) the divine is female as well as male and therefore there is a goddess as well as a God. These deities are within us as well as without us (immanent); they are us.

Major and fundamental difference: Christians live by faith which means we believe in someone above us who is greater and more powerful. Pagans live by familiarity, meaning their focus on divinity is in that which is tangible.

Romans 1:18-25: Mankind should know better just by looking at the miracle of the natural creation.

They are not simply substitutes for the Muslim or Judeo-Christian God. This is because the gods of the major religions tend to be supernatural; i.e., above nature whereas pagan deities are natural, symbolizing aspects of nature or human nature. Having said that, god and goddess are split from the Great Spirit or Akashka, which probably equates to the God of the patriarchal religions.



So, the pagan explanation is that our "view" of God grew out of some spirit; whereas in reality, their gods and their deifying nature grew out of the obvious power and order of God's intentional creation. They do not recognize the obvious intelligence behind creation. There becomes a worship of the created rather than the worship of the Creator. This is the greatest single mistake anyone can make. *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*

The goddess represents all that is female and the god represents all that is male. But because nature is seen as female the goddess has a wider meaning. Often called Mother Earth or Gaia she is seen as the creatrix and sustainer of life, the mother of us all, which makes all the creatures on the planet our siblings.

To the pagan, God Almighty is not relevant. This has permeated our society. Paganism is not necessarily based on satanic worship. Paganism is thousands of years older than Christianity. **What is the result of this deviation from the truth that only God is worthy of our worship?** ²⁴*Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.* ²⁵*For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.* Without the acknowledgment of a higher source for our being and our guidance, we are left with a perspective that in many ways says everyone is right if they think they are right. In the long run, this can only divide and ruin us.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5: God has become irrelevant in so many facets of our culture. The war we are fighting is not just against our own sinfulness and that of those around us, but also against higher powers. Our walk is one of certain focus - we are engaged with spiritual weaponry and must fight against the trend that suggests everyone's belief is good and should be embraced. (That is what "political correctness" is all about!) This very fight provokes us to stand *against* what so many now stand *for*. How should we stand against things we do not believe are truth? Please see the program from August 16, 2015 called, *"The Gay Marriage Law - How Do We Respond?"* to understand the attitude we should have.

(Source: <http://www.crystalinks.com/paganism.html>) Ancient Pagans would have worshipped one or a small number of gods and goddesses, while often recognizing the validity of other people's deities.

People have a right to believe what they want, but do we have to embrace it? No. Should we embrace it? No. We should stand up for what we believe is right and true in a Christ-like manner.

Halloween is upon us and it is 100% built upon pagan thinking and ritual. It corresponds in time with a festival called Samhain. (Source: The Ancient Celtic Fire Festivals www.neopagan.net) There appear to have been four major holy days celebrated by the Paleopagan Druids, possibly throughout the Celtic territories... These four major holy days have been referred to as "fire festivals." These four major celebrations had to do with the cyclical changing of the seasons and therefore revolved around the earth as an object of worship. **Psalms 104:19-24** Samhain or "Samhuinn" is pronounced "sow-" (as in female pig) "-en"...is often said to have been the most important of the fire festivals, because (according to most Celtic scholars) it may have marked the Celtic New Year. Being "between" seasons or years, Samhain was (and is) considered a very magical time, when the dead walk among the living and the veils between past, present and future may be lifted in prophecy and divination.

(Source: religioustolerance.org) Samhain was a fire festival. Sacred bonfires were lit on the tops of hills in honor of the gods. The townspeople would take an ember from the bonfire to their home and re-light the fire in their family hearth. The ember would usually be carried in a holder - often a turnip or gourd. They felt nervous about walking home in the dark; they were afraid of evil spirits. So they dressed up in costumes and carved scary faces in their ember holders. They hoped the spirits would be frightened and not bother them.

Wiccans and some other Neopagans base their religious faith on the religion of the Celts. They continue to celebrate Samhain today.

Paganism takes away the honor and respect of the Creator and instead gives that honor and respect to the created. It removes the concepts of higher thinking, ethics, morals and guidance and leaves it to our individual (corrupted) judgment. Ironically, Christianity started by trying to convert pagans but they did so by watering down the principles of Christianity to make it more acceptable to the new converts. Unfortunately, the effect was to bring paganism into Christianity.



(Source: <http://www.crystalinks.com/paganism.html>) The concept of an overall, un-named goddess and god, the sum totals of all the others, appears to be a recent one but individual named deities represent particular human qualities or archetypes and are often used as a focus for celebrations and spiritual rites.

What follows is an example of how to properly deal with paganism and a particular focus on an unnamed god: Acts 17:22-31: (NASB) *²²So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects... The Apostle is respectful of the people's religious heritage.*

Paganism has developed alongside mankind for thousands of years; as cultures have changed so has Paganism, yet it is grounded in deep rooted genetic memories that go back to neolithic times and before. (Hmmm...as determined by whom? As proved by how?) Thus Paganism is not just a nature religion but a natural religion.

²³...For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you... The Apostle was clearly focused on understanding the people by studying what they worshiped.

To Pagans the four ancient elements, Earth, Air, Fire and Water have special significance. The importance of these is hard to define because they have so many correspondences; for example they are associated with the four directions, North, East, South and West.

²⁴...The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; Paul gently informs them that THE God is above ALL else and has given us life. ²⁶and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, ²⁷that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; Paul affirms the central position of God: God created one man and then the race is born through that one man. Everything comes from God. ²⁸for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, for we also are His children. ²⁹Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Again, God is far above all that has been created by Him! He is not in the idols of stone. Everything does NOT have a "spark of divinity" within it. ³⁰Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, ³¹because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead. Right and wrong exist and God's righteousness will rule as a result of Jesus' faithfulness. This is God's plan.

The texts we just read show a combination of reason, kindness, instruction and firmness. He said, "You are religious and that's good! There are things you do not know; I can help you with those things! I want you to look at their reasonability and I want you to understand you will need to change some things if you want to accept what I am about to tell you. Rise up to something higher. Let me explain the *Unknown God*."

Halloween's origin is a pagan ritual. Paganism was not devil worship. Having said that, it was all about spiritism. We are not against trick-or-treating, but you - knowing its origin - have to decide what to tell your children. For some people it is out of the question based on the principle. For others, it is as simple as children getting candy. We are responsible for what we know. Clearly over time, more evil and gore has come into Halloween. The devil has been drawn into it, for certain. How can we best glorify God in all we do?

Paganism in the west takes a number of forms including Wicca - Druidism, and Shamanism. The very basic seeds of what was done in the ancient pagan societies can be traced back to the history recorded in the Bible - however, there is a vast difference between those seeds and the path the majority of humanity took, leading them away from God. Exodus 34:12-17: There was a fundamental difference between their object of worship and the one God. It was only God with the power! God told the people to smash and cut down those objects because they were not to exist within their society. The danger did not stop at worshipping in a pagan way...it only started there. Israel was given strict instruction to NOT mix with others - why? Because



of racial prejudice? No! It was for spiritual safety! Anyone could have become a Jew regardless of their background. But they would have to adhere to the rules of God and not of man.

Another example of dealing with ancient paganism: Deuteronomy 12:2-3: It is amazing how often in the Old Testament there was instruction to not merely ignore or avoid pagan ritual, but to completely obliterate it from their midst. God was specific because He understood that sin can draw us away to follow enticing things. Paganism is all about imparting power and destiny to ME!

The thought pattern of being "spiritual but not religious" is acceptable, and on the surface this may sound like a good thing. But it removes God from the picture and ends up worshipping self and that which is around self. It includes everything in one big circle of life in which there are no constant/stable morals or ethics.

So, what is *Asherim*? (Source: Outside the Camp Vol. 1, No. 4) The Old Testament mentions a pagan goddess from which the festival of Easter is derived. This goddess was the goddess of fertility and sexual lust, known as Ashtaroth or Ashtoreth... Each spring, the pagans would set up phallic poles called Asherahs under trees on high hills and celebrate their fertility festival with unbridled sexual perversion. This is how the May Pole originated.

Observations:

- The pagan beliefs were founded in very real concerns about life and death, harvest cycles, etc.
- These real concerns were expressed through ritual and celebration towards multiple gods. They thanked the "gods" of earth for rain and getting them through another season, etc.
- They had the right concerns but with the wrong execution! It was all based on humans being like the Most High.

Paganism and political correctness go hand in hand in the sense that anybody who decides to worship, do, say or think all has to be acceptable. By nature that is a destructive force to humanity. Are we to revolt against political correctness? No. We give people the ability to believe what they want to believe in but take our opportunities to stand for what is right and true. This is what the Apostle Paul did with kindness, firmness, wisdom and Christ-likeness. Be faithful and stand for what we believe.

Any pattern of godlessness ALWAYS produces the same results, though in our day it is accelerated: 2 Timothy 3:1-4: How many of those end time prophecy descriptions describe paganism? All of them. So, what we see around us should not be a surprise. 2 Timothy 3:5-9: Paganism is *a form of godliness* under the label "spirituality," but it denies the true power of what godliness is supposed to be. What does it bring? Depravity!

All of this leaves us with some very specific choices to make:

- Choose the image to which you will conform: 1 Peter 1:14-16: Being "spiritual" is not being "holy." Holiness is being set apart for God's purpose.
- Know the sources of your belief: 1 John 1:5-6
- You have been delivered - live a delivered life! Colossians 1:12-14
- Beware the subtlety of sin: 2 Corinthians 11:14-15: Sin and righteousness can look the same, but they are not.
- Seek holiness: 1 Peter 1:14-16: We are set apart for God's purpose. God's holy purpose in your life is for you to be a bright shining light of God's truth in the darkness of this world.

Remember, the fallen human mind will always find ways to go from bad to worse, while the enlightened spiritual mind will always find ways to rise above the fray!

*So, how much of our life is pagan?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*