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DEFINING TWIN CITIES WICCA: THE EMERGENCE OF
WICCA AS A POLYAFFILIATED PAGAN MOVEMENT

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DEFINING TWIN CITIES WICCA: THE EMERGENCE OF
WICCA AS A POLYAFFILIATED PAGAN MOVEMENT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
PREFACE.....	x
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Thesis.....	2
Background Information.....	3
Literature Review.....	4
Methodology.....	4
Definitions.....	5
Paganism.....	5
Neopaganism.....	5
Pagan.....	5
Wicca.....	5
Wiccans.....	5
Witch.....	6
Magic.....	6
Coven.....	6

Chapter	Page
Esbats.....	6
Sabbats.....	6
Limitations and Delimitations.....	6
Conclusion.....	7
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
Demonstrating Primary Literature in the Wiccan Tradition.....	9
Bibliographical Study.....	10
Narrative Study.....	12
Summary Comparison of Bibliographical and Narrative Studies.....	13
Organizing Wiccan Literature into Historical Stages.....	14
Organizing the Literature by its Emic-Etic Relationship to Wicca.....	15
Review of Primary and Secondary Wiccan Sources.....	15
British Occult Sources (1888-1954).....	15
Gardnerian Wiccan Sources (1954-1964).....	19
Wiccan Denominational Sources (1964-1979).....	21
Solo-Practitioner Wiccan Sources (1979-1999).....	32
Polyaffiliated Wiccan and Pagan Sources (2000-2019).....	34
Review of Tertiary Sources in the Wiccan Tradition.....	37
Review of Quaternary Sources in the Wiccan Tradition.....	41
3. ORIGINS: FROM BRITISH OCCULTISM TO PAGANISTAN.....	44
Introduction: Myth or History?.....	44
Precursors to Wicca: British Occult Groups.....	49

Chapter	Page
Precursors to Wicca: British Occult Individuals.....	55
The Birth of Wicca: Gerald Gardner.....	61
The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in America.....	64
The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in the Twin Cities.....	68
4. CONTEMPORARY WICCA AS A POLYAFFILIATED PAGAN MOVEMENT.....	72
The Erosion of Gardnerian Wicca as the Cohesive Core of Paganism.....	73
Demonstrating Polyaffiliation in Paganism Today.....	80
5. THE FUTURE OF WICCA.....	98
Proposition 1: Continuity with Cultural Faiths.....	99
Proposition 2: Non-Empirical Doctrine.....	101
Proposition 3: Strictness.....	105
Proposition 4: Leadership.....	107
Proposition 5: Volunteerism.....	110
Proposition 6: Fertility Rates.....	116
Proposition 7: Religious Competition.....	121
Proposition 8: Internal and External Relationships.....	124
Proposition 9: Environmental Tension.....	126
Proposition 10: Socialization of Young.....	128
6. TOWARD AN EFFECTIVE GOSPEL WITNESS TO PAGANS.....	136
Four Principles for Christians Studying Non-Christian Religions.....	136
Principle 1: Accuracy.....	138
Principle 2: Fairness.....	141

Chapter	Page
Principle 3: Objectivity.....	145
Principle 4: Respect.....	146
Challenges to Evangelizing Pagans.....	149
Problem Behaviors of Christians Toward Pagans.....	150
Problem Behaviors of Pagans Toward Christians.....	155
Nine Perspectives on Christians Engaging Pagans with the Gospel.....	167
Perspective 1: Christians and Pagans have Worldview Differences.....	167
Perspective 2: Christians and Pagans have Theological Differences.....	169
Perspective 3: Christians and Pagans have Political Differences.....	172
Perspective 4: Each Pagan is Unique.....	173
Perspective 5: Pagans have Rejected Christianity.....	174
Perspective 6: Pagans are Often Victims of Abuse.....	176
Perspective 7: Christians and Pagans are Both Created the Image of God.....	178
Perspective 8: Christians and Pagans Both Respect the Environment.....	179
Perspective 9: Christians and Pagans Can be Friends.....	181
7. CONCLUSIONS.....	183
Summary of Research.....	183
Implications of Research.....	184
Avenues for Further Research.....	185
Ethnographical Studies.....	186
Pagan Conferences, Seminars, Gatherings.....	186
Pagan Websites.....	187

	Page
Paganism, Abuse, Mental Health, and the Spiritual Realm.....	188
Religious Scholarship.....	188
Philosophical Foundations of the Pagan Worldview.....	189
Missiological Issues and Paganism.....	189
Witchcraft and Paganism in Popular Culture.....	190
Biblical Critique of Paganism.....	190
Conclusion.....	191
APPENDIX.....	192
1. ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT BOOKS USED IN BIBLIOGRPHICAL STUDY.....	192
2. PRINCIPLES OF WICCAN BELIEF.....	200
3. PAGANICON 2018 SEMINARS.....	202
4. PAGANICON 2019 SEMINARS.....	204
5. PAGANICON 2020 SEMINARS.....	207
6. FULL EMAIL FROM ELYSIA GALLO, SEPTEMEBER 19, 2017.....	210
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	213

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. Five Historical Stages of Wiccan Literature.....	14
2. Worldview Comparison.....	164

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
1. Pagan Authors Most Cited (by Percent) in Bibliographies.....	10
2. Secular Authors Most Cited (by Percent) in Bibliographies.....	11
3. British Occult Authors Most Cited (by Percent) in Bibliographies.....	11
4. Wiccan and Pagans Most Cited (by Percent) in Historical Narratives.....	12
5. British Occultists Most Cited (by Percent) in Historical Narratives.....	13
6. Decline of Citing British Occult Sources in Bibliographies.....	82
7. Decline of Citing Traditional Wiccan Sources in Bibliographies.....	82

PREFACE

I want to express my gratitude to my dear wife of thirty years, Tami Konold, for her continual support during many long hours of research and writing. I want to thank my doctoral advisor, professor, and treasured friend, Dr. George Martin. Dr. Martin has relentlessly pushed me to do better in writing and research. Special thanks to my Pastoral Assistant, Mrs. Kelly Knickerbocker, for entering data and serving as a sounding board for ideas, and thanks to Mrs. Jessica Casique for many hours spent proofreading. Thanks to my son, Max Konold, for rescuing me technically on the finer points of Microsoft Word. I also need to thank Dr. Murphy Pizza for her friendship, scholarly opinions that helped me immensely, and her willingness to be a reader for this dissertation. Finally, I want to thank the Witches and Pagans of the Coffee Cauldron for putting up with my questions and ideas for hundreds of hours! At least the coffee was good!

Bruce Douglas Konold

Eagan, Minnesota

December 2020

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Paganism has been one of the fastest growing religions in the United States since 1990.¹ Of the many Pagan² groups in the United States, the largest and most influential is Wicca.³ Silver RavenWolf claims that Wicca is the fastest growing religion in the United States.⁴ The actual number of Wiccans and the growth of Wicca are difficult to assess. Estimates of practicing Wiccans in America range from 8,000 to over one million.⁵ Numerous Wiccan groups

¹ The rapid growth of Paganism is reported by many authors. Gus diZerega, “Paganism and Neopaganism: Adherent Essay,” in *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices*, ed. Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland, and Gerald R. McDermott (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 543. Gary F. Jensen, Ashley Thompson, “‘Out of the Broom Closet’: The Social Ecology of American Wicca,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47 no. 4 (2008): 753–66. William E. Gordon, Jr., “Occult Practices and Beliefs of Wicca,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 46 no. 2 (2004): 31–42. Douglas E. Cowan, *Cyberhenge: Modern Pagans on the Internet* (New York: Routledge, 2005). Cowan agrees that Wicca is growing, yet he cautions against saying Wicca is the fastest growing religion, suggesting that numbers may be higher due to social acceptance and Wiccans coming out of the broom closet.

² Pagan is capitalized to denote a modern religious movement.

³ So claims Ethan Doyle White, “The Meaning of ‘Wicca’: A Study in Etymology, History, and Pagan Politics,” in *Pomegranate* 12 no. 2 (2010): 185-207. Helen Berger, “Contemporary Paganism by the Numbers,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 167. Berger cites her 2003 Pagan Census results in which 63.8% of Pagans considered themselves a Wiccan.

⁴ Silver RavenWolf, *Teen Witch: Wicca for a New Generation* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1998), 22.

⁵ Helen A. Berger, *A Community of Witches: Contemporary Neo-Paganism and Witchcraft in the United States* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 9. Berger, “Contemporary Paganism by the Numbers,” 153-5. Berger notes that in 1992 the National Survey of Religious Identification found there were about 8,000 Wiccans in the United States. By 2001 the same study showed the number of Wiccans had risen to 134,000! Brandon Showalter, “Witches Outnumber Presbyterians in the US: Wicca, Paganism Growing ‘Astronomically,’” *Christian Post*, Oct. 11, 2018, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/witches-outnumber-presbyterians-in-the-us-wicca-paganism-growing-astronomically-227857>. Showalter cites recent research showing that U.S. Wiccans have grown from 8,000 in 1990 to 340,000 in 2008. Further, he cites a 2014 Pew Research study, which shows that 1 to 1.5 million people identify as Wiccan or Pagan in the United States.

are known to exist on both the east and west coasts of the United States. Yet, as Hugh Urban points out, most Americans are “astonished to know that the Midwest is also one of the largest hubs of neopagan activity in the United States.”⁶

The Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the focus of this study, have such a significant Pagan population that the Twin Cities have been nicknamed *Paganistan*.⁷ An estimated 20,000 witches meet in 334 groups or covens in the thirteen counties of Paganistan.⁸ Lewellyn Worldwide, located in Woodbury (a suburb of the Twin Cities), is the largest Pagan publishing house in the world.⁹

Thesis

Wicca is a fast-growing religious movement in America and is largely unstudied by Evangelicals. While a few popular level books by Evangelicals have been written on Wicca and Paganism, I have not been able to locate a dissertation devoted to exploring Wicca by an Evangelical. My goal is to fill in this gap by providing a scholarly synopsis of Wiccan belief and practice and explain ways in which Wicca has been changing through interaction within the broader Pagan community.

Specifically, an exploration of the origins, development, and contemporary emergence

⁶ Hugh A. Urban, *New Age, Neopagan & New Religious Movements: Alternative Spirituality in Contemporary America* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015), 1.

⁷ Murphy Pizza, *Paganistan: Contemporary Pagan Community in Minnesota's Twin Cities* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 201), 39. Pizza attributes the nickname “Paganistan” to Steven Posch, who she describes as a “priest, ritualist and storyteller, and one of the most respected creators of the community’s reflexive lore.” Pagans in the Twin Cities commonly describe themselves as belonging to Paganistan.

⁸ John A. Mayer, *CityView Report: Strategic Data for Effective Ministry*, 16th ed. (Minneapolis, MN: City Vision, 2015), 26–7. According to Mayer, Minnesota has more covens than any other state. The top five states by covens are: Minnesota 334, Texas 226, California 178, Florida 161, and Pennsylvania 141.

⁹ Mayer, *CityView Report*, 39.

of Wicca will demonstrate that it, as found in the Twin Cities, is a polyaffiliated¹⁰ Pagan movement. That is, contrary to the view held by many Evangelicals, contemporary Wicca is not comprised of a single, focused tradition; rather it draws from many different traditions. Practically, this fact presents Evangelicals with a different challenge than that which they might expect. I wish to address not only the misunderstanding of Wicca but also to address the challenges that come from such a misunderstanding.

Background Information

I have served as the pastor of Eagan Hills Alliance Church for twenty-seven years, and as Adjunct Professor of Theology at Crown College for twelve years.

In a course at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on nineteenth- and twentieth-century new religious movements,¹¹ I read and presented research on Wicca. During this research, I discovered that a significant Wiccan community lives in the Twin Cities.

As part of my evangelistic ministry, in October 2017, I began attending the Coffee Cauldron, a bi-monthly meeting of Wiccans and Pagans at a Caribou Coffee, for discussion. These Pagans invited me to attend Paganicon, a regional meeting of Pagans in March 2018 and again in March 2019. I attended and have developed a friendship with several Pagans. My interest in studying Wicca is to seek to discover effective ways to reach Wiccans with the gospel.

¹⁰ The term “polyaffiliated” was coined by Wiccan scholar Murphy Pizza in her ethnographical study of Paganism in the Twin Cities. Pizza writes, “Paganism’s cultural norm, I argue, is polyaffiliation, the sort of swearing allegiance to one tradition that was common in decades past is of little interest anymore to modern Pagans.” Pizza, *Paganistan*, 75. What Pizza asserts through qualitative research, I confirm through a mixed-methods approach utilizing both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Furthermore, I build on Pizza’s work to forecast the future of Wicca as a polyaffiliated Pagan movement, and ways in which Evangelicals can effectively share the gospel with polyaffiliated Pagans.

¹¹ Fall 2013 with Dr. George Martin.

Literature Review

I will demonstrate from the tradition the most significant authors, and categorize the source material into primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary categories. I will categorize the material in five historical stages and present a full literature review of the sources.

Methodology

To explore the origins, development, and emergence of Wicca and Paganism in the Twin Cities in the twenty-first century, a mixed-methods content analysis of Wiccan and Pagan literature will be conducted. Specifically, I plan to follow the mixed-method content analysis approach of Klaus Krippendorff, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.¹²

The qualitative portion involves compiling a primary source list of the most cited Wiccan and Pagan literature. I also compile a secondary source list of social science, popular news, and Evangelical literature concerning Wicca and Paganism. I review the primary and secondary literature to discover themes relevant to the origins, development, and emergence of Wicca and Paganism in the Twin Cities. The themes will be coded in NVivo software and analyzed for patterns. I confirm the emerging patterns by anecdotal interaction with Pagans from my personal ministry experience.¹³ An iterative cycle of coding, refining, recoding, and refining will continue until all relevant texts have been coded. The quantitative portion involves utilizing

¹² Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013).

¹³ “Personal pastoral ministry experience” refers to my interaction with Pagans in the Twin Cities that is not formally part of my PhD work as a student at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I have engaged in hundreds of hours of pastoral interaction-observation with Pagan leaders over the past three years. I will use insights from my pastoral ministry with Wiccans and Pagans to augment the content analysis.

the NVivo software to test the hypothesis concerning the emergence and growth of Wicca and Paganism in the Twin Cities. Finally, based on this research and my personal interaction with Wiccans and Pagans, I will suggest some ideas for effective gospel witness to Wiccans and Pagans.

Definitions

Every religion has a set of terms that are important for those involved in the religion. Throughout this study, I will provide definitions for Wiccan terms that are unfamiliar to Evangelicals. At the outset, ten terms need to be defined.

Paganism describes a variety of esoteric, magical, and nature-based spiritualities in the twentieth- and twenty-first-century Western world. Paganism is a collective noun for these spiritualities, much like Hinduism is a collective noun for the religious spiritualities in India. Paganism may be from the Latin word *paganus*, indicating a rural, rustic, or country dweller, or from *pagani* or *pagus*, indicating a follower of old or traditional religion.¹⁴ Paganism is capitalized in this dissertation out of deference to Paganism as a religion.

Neopaganism is a synonym for contemporary Paganism. Neopaganism is sometimes used to differentiate modern Paganism from ancient Paganism.

Pagan describes a practitioner of Paganism.

Wicca is an old Saxon word for a male witch adopted by Gerald Gardner as a synonym for the religion of Witchcraft. Wicca comprises the largest group of Pagans today.¹⁵

Wiccans are male or female initiates into Wicca.

¹⁴ Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshipers, and Other Pagans in America Today*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1986), 9. Adler is a leading authority on Paganism.

¹⁵ Berger, “Contemporary Paganism by the Numbers,” 166–7. According to her “Pagan Census.”

Witch is a broader term than Wiccan, and generally refers to any practitioner of witchcraft regardless of his or her group affiliation. All Wiccans consider themselves witches, but not all Witches consider themselves Wiccans.

Magic describes the techniques used to influence the energy in nature. Wiccan magic is sometimes spelled “magick” to distinguish it from stage magic.

Coven refers to a group of two to thirteen initiated Witches who do magic together.

Esbats are sacred days that occur thirteen times each year when there is a full moon or new moon. Witch covens gather on each esbat to perform ritual magic.

Sabbats are the eight holidays in the ritual Wiccan calendar. Sabbats correspond to the solar cycles and seasonal changes throughout the year. The eight Sabbats are Brigid or Imbolc (February 2), Eostar or Spring Equinox (March 21/22), Beltane (April 30/May 1), Litha or Summer Solstice (June 22), Lammas or Lughnasad (July 31/August 1), Mabon or Fall Equinox (September 21/22), Samhain or Halloween (October 31), and Yule or Winter Solstice (December 21/22). The different dates reflect different Wiccan traditions.

Dozens of unique words have been coined or adopted by Wiccans and will be defined throughout this study.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study has two significant limitations. First, I am an outsider to Wicca and cannot fully appreciate the manner in which Wiccans experience their faith. Second, this study is primarily based on literature, and it is difficult to grasp the fullness of religion from texts.

This study has important delimitations or boundaries. First, to avoid participating in the Occult as a Christian, I will not be participating in Wiccan rituals. Second, I will not be formally interviewing and researching practicing Pagans as part of this study, though I will

informally interact with Pagans.¹⁶ Third, I will focus on the state of Wicca and Paganism in the Twin Cities in 2019 and 2020. These limitations and delimitations provide focus and boundaries for this research.

Conclusion

Chapter one is an introductory chapter in which I state my goal of describing the origins, development, and emergence of Wicca in the Twin Cities as a polyaffiliated Pagan movement. I describe my background as a pastor in a metropolitan area in which many Wiccans live. The methodology I plan to use in this dissertation is presented. I define some important terms as well as some limitations and delimitations in this study.

In chapter two I demonstrate from the tradition the most significant authors and categorize the source material into historical stages and in primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary categories. Finally, I present a review of the sources.

In chapter three I explain the means in which nineteenth- and twentieth-century British occultism provided the cultural milieu for the origins of Wicca. The Occult movements and individuals that played a major role in setting the stage for Wicca is described. I explain the development of Wicca as a twentieth-century new religious movement in Western Europe and the United States. The life and significance of Wicca's founder, Gerald Gardner, will be discussed. I also sketch the development of the Occult, Wicca, and Paganism in the Twin Cities. Most significant for this study, the state of Wicca today as a polyaffiliated Pagan movement, drawing from these groups, is discussed.

In chapter four I demonstrate by what methods contemporary Wicca is a polyaffiliated

¹⁶ See note 13.

Pagan movement. The erosion of Gardnerian Wicca as the cohesive core of Paganism is described. The polyaffiliation of Wiccans and Pagans is demonstrated through a bibliographical study, book title study, narrative study, and reviewing recent Paganicon conference materials.

In chapter five I utilize Rodney Stark's ten-point propositional model for evaluating the likely success or failure of new religious movements.¹⁷ I list and briefly describe each of Stark's propositions and offer some potential directions for the future success or failure of Wicca.

In chapter six I explore challenges and strategies for the effective evangelization of Wiccans with the gospel. In chapter seven I summarize the research presented, reflect on the implications, and explore avenues for further research of Wiccans by Evangelicals.

¹⁷ Rodney Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," in *Cults and new Religious Movements: A Reader*, ed. Lorne L. Dawson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003). 259-70.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

My research will focus on Pagan literature that is largely unfamiliar to Evangelicals; therefore, a substantive literature review is essential. I focus on books because Wiccans rarely publish in mainstream academic journals, preferring to write books and publish articles in a popular Pagan journal.¹

At the beginning of my research I recognized the importance of a substantive literature review, since the literature I was reading is largely unfamiliar to Evangelicals. As I progressed in my research, I became familiar with prominent authors in the Pagan movement. Yet, I wondered if I was missing important authors or leaders and began to think about ways to demonstrate primary literature in the Wiccan tradition.

Demonstrating Primary Literature in the Wiccan Tradition

To demonstrate primary literature in the Wiccan tradition, I conducted two studies of the literature; a bibliographical study and a historical narrative study. I then organized the literature into five historical stages and by their emic-etic relationship to Wicca. The goal is to demonstrate the primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary sources for my research.

¹ Scholarly Pagans generally publish articles in *The Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies*, edited by Chas Clifton, and published biannually by Equinox Publishers, Sheffield, England. *The Pomegranate* is a peer-reviewed academic journal that has been published since 1997.

Bibliographical Study

First, utilizing NVivo software, I conducted a bibliographical study by comparing the bibliographies of one hundred and eight books; seventy-five books by Pagan authors, twenty-one books by religious sociologists, and twelve books by Christian authors, to discover which authors, as a percentage of the whole, are most frequently cited in the literature.²

Figure 1 illustrates the Pagan authors most cited (by percentage) in the bibliographies. Figure 2 illustrates the social science authors most cited in the bibliographies. Figure 3 illustrates the British magic and occult authors most cited in the bibliographies. Christian authors are not a significant factor in the bibliographies. Only three Christian authors are cited more than three

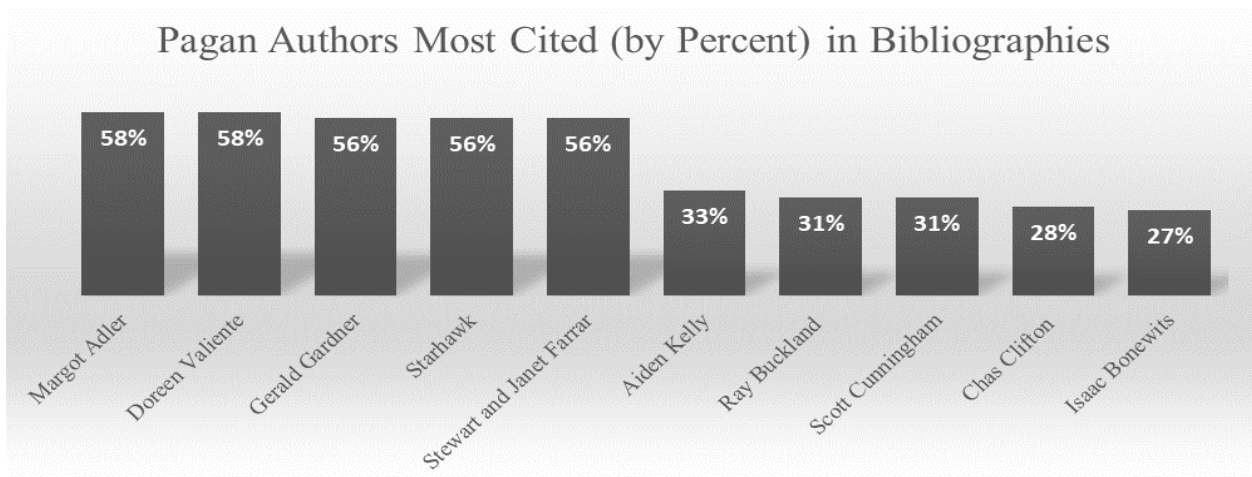


Figure 1. Pagan authors most cited (by percent) in bibliographies

² The bibliographies of 108 books were entered in NVivo 12 Pro qualitative data analysis software. The bibliographies cited a total of 5,067 authors. The Figure shows the percentage of the 108 books to cite specific authors. Appendix 1 provides a list of the books used for this study.

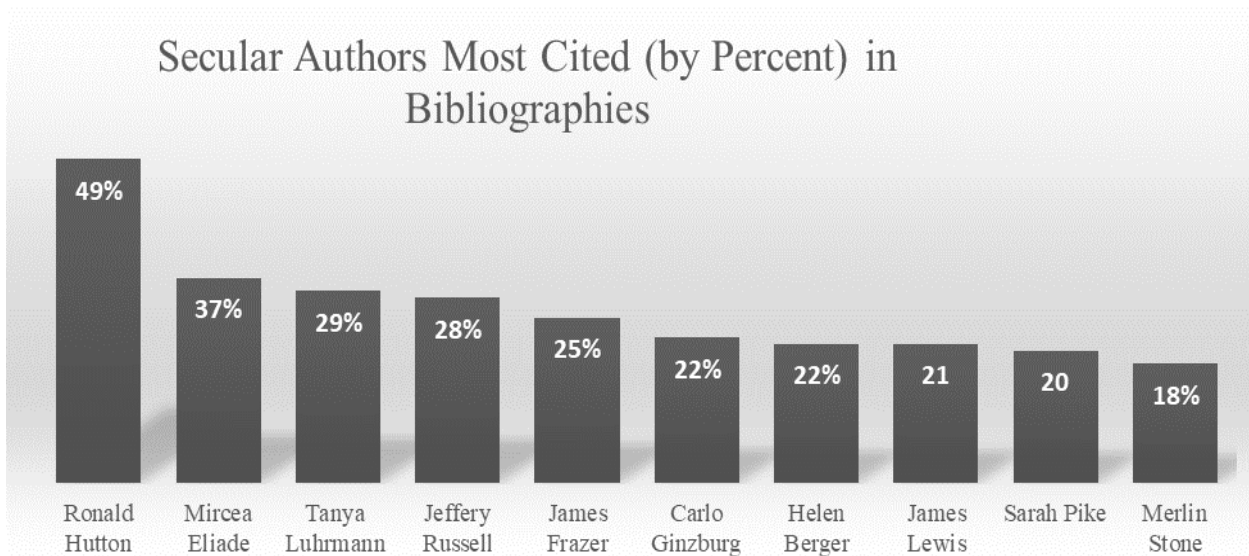


Figure 2. Secular authors most cited (by percent) in bibliographies

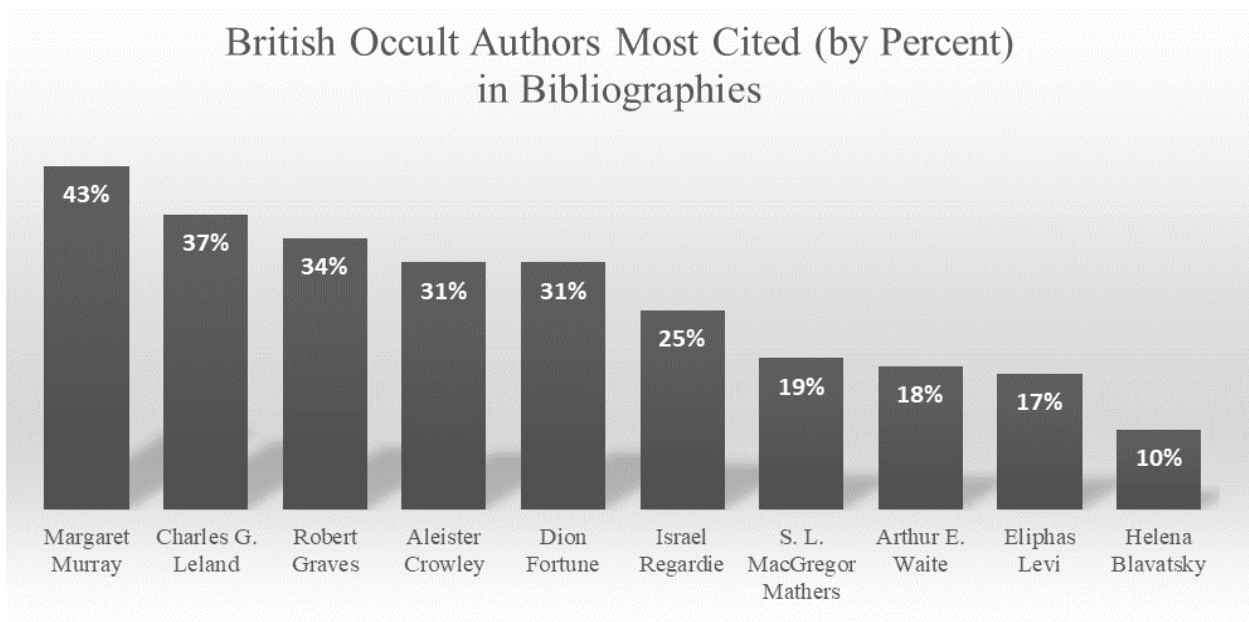


Figure 3. British occult authors most cited (by percent) in bibliographies

times: J. Gordon Melton, Brooks Alexander, and Craig Hawkins.

The combined data from the bibliographical study shows that six authors are cited in more than one-half of the bibliographies. The six authors cited most in the bibliographies are:

Margot Adler (58%), Doreen Valiente (58%), Gerald Gardner (56%), Starhawk (56%), Stewart and Janet Farrar (56%), and Ronald Hutton (49%).

Narrative Study

Second, utilizing NVivo software, I conducted a historical narrative study by comparing the narratives in twenty-eight books dealing with Wiccan history to discover the authors and individuals, as a percentage of the whole, most frequently cited in the tradition. Figure 4 illustrates the top ten Wiccans and Pagans cited in the historical narratives. Figure 5 illustrates the top ten British occultists cited in the historical narratives. The narratives generally confirm the bibliographical study with exceptions for three individuals known for leading groups more than authoring books.³

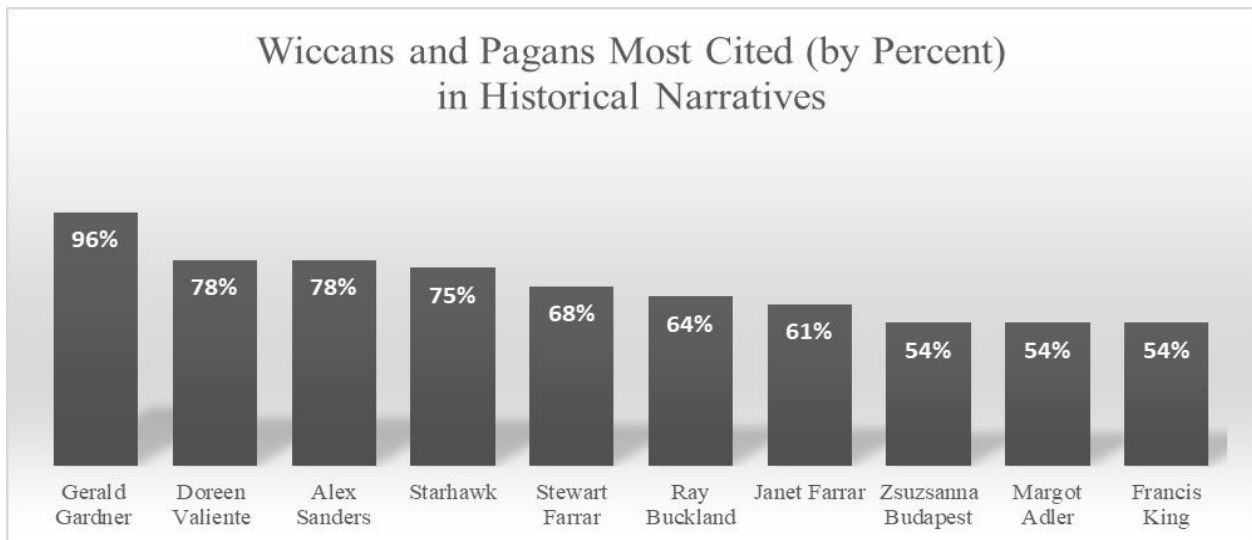


Figure 4. Wiccan and Pagans most cited (by percent) in historical narratives

³ Notably, William Yeats, Alex Sanders, and Zsuzsanna Budapest.

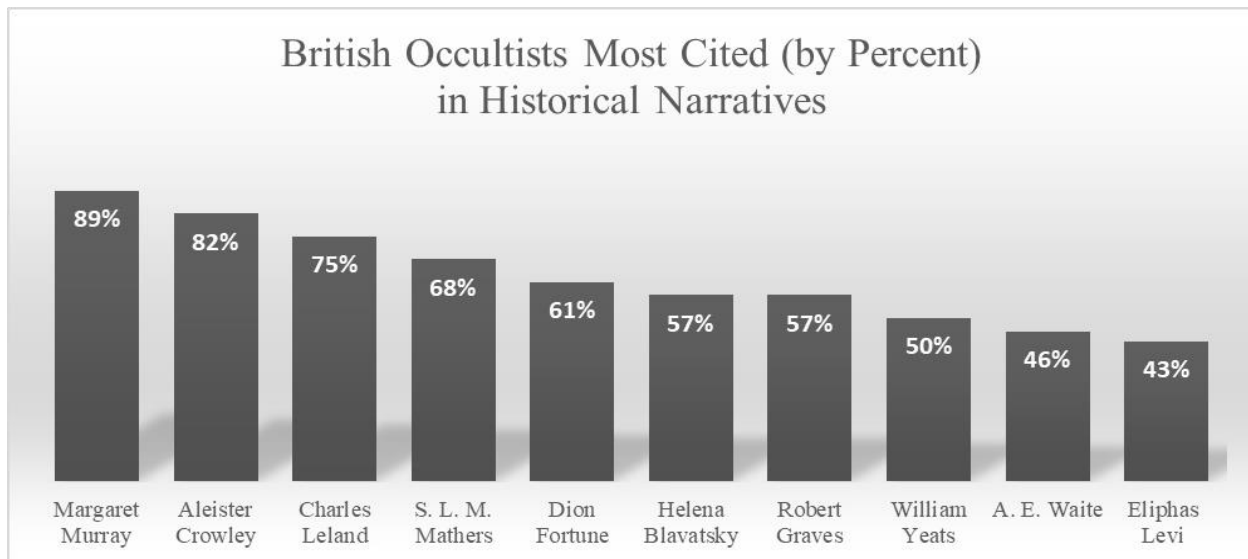


Figure 5. British Occultists most cited (by percent) in historical narratives

Summarizing the findings in the historical narrative study, the top ten Wiccans cited are Gerald Gardner, Doreen Valiente, Alex Sanders, Starhawk, Stewart Farrar, Ray Buckland, Janet Farrar, Z. Budapest, Margot Adler, and Francis King. The top ten British occultists cited in the historical narratives are Margaret Murray, Aleister Crowley, Charles Leland, S. L. Mathers, Dion Fortune, Helena Blavatsky, Robert Graves, William Yeats, A. E. Waite, and Eliphas Levi.

Summary Comparison of Bibliographical and Narrative Studies

Comparing the bibliographical study and the narrative study demonstrates that twelve authors are central to the Wiccan literary tradition. The following six British Occult authors are cited the most in the literature: Margaret Murray, Charles Leland, Robert Graves, Dion Fortune, S. L. Mathers, and Aleister Crowley. The following six Wiccan authors are cited the most in the literature: Margot Adler, Doreen Valiente, Gerald Gardner, Starhawk, Stewart and Janet Farrar, and Ray Buckland.

Organizing Wiccan Literature into Five Historical Stages

Drawing from the bibliographical and narrative studies, I divide Wiccan sources into five historical stages as shown in Table 1.⁴

The first stage is British occultism (1888-1954) and includes authors like Margaret Murray, Charles Leland, Robert Graves, Dion Fortune, S. L. Mathers, Aleister Crowley, William Yeats, A. E. Waite, Israel Regardie, Eliphas Levi, and Helena Blavatsky.

The second stage is Gardnerian Wicca (1954-1964) and includes Gerald Gardner and Doreen Valiente. The third stage is Wicca Denominations (1964-1979) and includes authors like Stewart and Janet Farrar, Starhawk, Margot Adler, Alex Sanders, Isaac Bonewits, and Z. Budapest.

The fourth stage is Solo-Practitioner Wicca (1980-1999) and includes authors like Scott Cunningham, Ray Buckland, Aiden Kelly, and Francis King. The fifth stage is Polyaffiliated Wicca and Paganism (2000-2019) and includes authors like Chas Clifton, Murphy Pizza, Sabina Magliocco, and Susan Greenwood.

Table 1. Five historical stages of Wiccan literature

Historical Stages	Authors
British Occultism (1888-1954)	Margaret Murray, Charles Leland, Robert Grave, Dion Fortune, S. L. Mathers, Aleister Crowley, William Yeats, A. E. Waite, Israel Regardie, Eliphas Levi, Helena Blavatsky.
Gardnerian Wicca (1954-1964)	Gerald Gardner, Doreen Valiente
Wicca Denominations (1964-1979)	Stewart and Janet Farrar, Starhawk, Margot Adler, Alex Sanders, Z. Budapest, Isaac Bonewits
Solo-Practitioner Wicca (1979-1999)	Ray Buckland, Scott Cunningham
Polyaffiliated Wicca and Paganism (2000-2019)	Chas Clifton, Murphy Pizza, Sabina Magliocco, Susan Greenwood

⁴ In this chapter, I merely list the stages and authors. Chapter 3 will develop the five stages and their importance to understanding the development of Wicca.

Organizing the Literature by its Emic-Etic Relationship to Wicca

The sources can also be organized by their emic-etic relationship to Wicca. Wiccan and Pagan authors are fully emic and, therefore, will be treated as primary source literature in this study. British occult sources that Wiccans draw upon in forming Wicca will be treated as secondary source literature. Secular historical and sociological authors (while etic, are generally friendly toward Wicca and Paganism) will be considered tertiary source literature. Christian authors (fully etic, and generally unfriendly toward Wicca and Paganism, writing from an apologetic perspective) will be considered quaternary literature.

Review of Primary and Secondary Wiccan Sources

Based upon the bibliographical and narrative studies, and following the five historical stages above, I have identified primary and secondary sources to review. I will begin with the secondary source material because it is first historically. Again, because these Occult and Pagan sources are largely unfamiliar to Evangelicals; a more thorough review is appropriate.

British Occult Sources (1888-1954)

Six British occult authors who influenced the formation of Wicca are Samuel Mathers, Charles Leland, Dion Fortune, Robert Graves, Aleister Crowley, and Margaret Murray. Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers (1854-1918) is cited by nineteen percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by sixty-eight percent of the authors in the narrative study. Mathers was an occultist and author, and one of the founders of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (HOGD) in London, England.⁵ HOGD became the most influential occult society in England in

⁵ The other founders were William Wynn Wescott and W. F. Woodman, both members of the Rosicrucians, and A. F. A. Woodford, a member of the Masonic Lodge.

the final decade of the nineteenth century, as well as one of the most important influences on modern Wicca.⁶ The famous occultist, Aleister Crowley, was initiated into the HOGD in 1898, and was promoted to leadership by Mathers in 1903. Mathers later gave himself the name “MacGregor” in honor of his Scottish heritage. Mathers established himself as an occult academic by publishing *The Kabbalah Unveiled* in 1887. He also published both *The Tarot* and *The Key of Solomon the King* in 1888. In 1900, he wrote *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*. He co-authored *The Lesser Key of Solomon* in 1904 with Aleister Crowley. Mathers’ writings are still in print and have influenced occultism and witchcraft for over one hundred years.

Charles Godfrey Leland (1824-1903) is cited by thirty-seven percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by seventy-five percent of the authors in the narrative study. Leland was an American scholar, folklorist, lecturer, and author. Born to an affluent family in Philadelphia, Leland was educated at Princeton and in the universities of Munich and Heidelberg. Leland moved to England, studied English Gypsies, and became a leading authority on their culture and language. In 1888, Leland met an Italian witch named “Maddalena” through whom he met other Italian witches and learned Italian hereditary witchcraft. He published *Aradia: or the Gospel of the Witches* in 1889. *Aradia* contains magical spells and folklore supposedly from antiquity. Leland’s claims are often disputed, yet his work played a formative role in Gardner and other early Wiccans.

Dion Fortune (1890-1946) is cited by thirty-one percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by sixty-one percent of the authors in the narrative study. Fortune is

⁶ Rosemary Ellen Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, 3rd ed. (New York: Checkmark Books, 2008), 161. Guiley provides a succinct history of HOGD.

the magical name taken by the British occultist, ceremonial magician, and author, Violet Mary Firth. Her pen name, “Dion Fortune” is adapted from the magical motto, “*Deo Non Fortuna*,” which means, “by God, not chance.” Fortune was a leading occultist during the first half of the twentieth century. Born into a family of Christian Scientists, Fortune studied the psychology of Freud and Jung, yet found answers to her questions in occultism. In 1919, she joined the Alpha and Omega Lodge of the Stella Matutina, an offshoot of HOGD. In 1924, she left to establish her own order, the Fraternity of the Inner Light. Fortune was a prolific author of both fiction and non-fiction. Her twenty non-fiction works include: *Machinery of the Mind* (1922), *Sane Occultism* (1929), *Psychic Self-Defense* (1930), *The Training and Work of the Initiate* (1930), *Through the Gates of Death* (1932), and *The Mystical Qabalah* (1936). Fortune wrote seven novels, four of which contain occult themes, including: *The Demon Lover* (1927), *The Winged Bull* (1936), *The Goat-Foot God* (1936), and *The Sea Priestess* (1938). While not a witch herself, Fortune’s books, especially her novels, are influential and widely read by Wiccans and Pagans today.

Robert Graves (1895-1985) is cited by thirty-four percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by fifty-seven percent of the authors in the narrative study as an influence on Wicca. Graves was a British poet and novelist who authored 140 works. He is best known for his speculative work *The White Goddess* (1948) in which he attempts to reconstruct history through a feminist or matriarchal perspective. Some Wiccans have thought that Graves provides support for Murray’s hypothesis of Witch cults during the Middle Ages.⁷ *The White Goddess*, with its feminist reinterpretation of history, is popular with some feminist Wiccans.

⁷ The Murrayite hypothesis for the origins of the modern Witch cult is discussed on pages 43-6.

Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) is cited by thirty-one percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by eighty-two percent of the authors in the narrative study. Crowley, also known as “the Beast” and “the wickedest man in the world,” was the most famous occultist of his day. He was born into a wealthy and conservative Plymouth Brethren Christian home. His dad died when he was eleven years old. He studied at Trinity College in Cambridge, yet pursued poetry, the occult, and mountain climbing. Crowley joined the HOGD in 1898 and rose quickly through the ranks, yet after conflict with Mathers, Crowley was expelled from HOGD. He traveled widely, studying Eastern mysticism, the occult, Tantric Yoga, and Buddhism. In 1904, he claimed a deity dictated to him *The Book of the Law* (1904). He joined the German occult group Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) in 1912. Crowley lived in the United States from 1915 to 1919, moved to Sicily in 1920 to establish the Abbey of Thelema at Cefalu, and in 1922 accepted an invitation to head O.T.O. in Italy. The Italian dictator Benito Mussolini expelled the notorious Crowley from Italy. Crowley, by this point addicted to heroin, wandered through Germany before returning to England. In his later years, Crowley met with Gerald Gardner and Arnold Crowther. These meetings have led to much speculation about the role Crowley played in the formation of Wicca. Crowley was a prolific writer; among his most influential books for Wiccans are: *The Book of Lies* (1912), *Diary of a Drug Friend* (1922), *Magick in Theory and Practice* (1928), *The Heart of the Master* (1938), and *The Book of Thoth* (1944).

Margaret Alice Murray (1863-1963) is the most cited British occultist in both studies, being cited by forty-three percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by eighty-nine percent of the authors in the narrative study. Murray was a British anthropologist, archaeologist, and Egyptologist, yet is best known for her controversial writings on European witchcraft. Murray was born in Calcutta, attended University College in London, and became a fellow at the

college with a specialty in Egyptology. She eventually became assistant professor of Egyptology. She participated in numerous archeological excavations in Egypt, Palestine, and England. Murray published three books on witchcraft: *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921), *The God of the Witches* (1933), and *The Divine King of England* (1954). In her first book she argued that European witchcraft was rooted in Pagan fertility cults that pre-dated Christianity, and that witchcraft had survived during the Middle Ages. Murray described witch rituals and covens consisting of 13 members, all surviving from ancient Europe. Her second book advanced her theories, while her third book described in what way English kings were secretly witches. Murray's views have been discredited academically, but her influence on Gardner should not be underestimated. She wrote the forward to his 1954 classic, *Witchcraft Today*. As James Lewis writes, "[Murray gave] a reasonably detailed description of a Pagan religion that she called Witchcraft—and it was only a matter of time until someone would attempt to re-create that religion."⁸ As it turned out, Gerald Gardner would be the person to re-create the religion Murray described.

Six British occultists; Mathers, Leland, Fortune, Graves, Crowley, and Murray, were, and continue to be, significant influences for modern Wicca and Paganism.

Gardnerian Wiccan Sources (1939-1964)

Two individuals are primary sources for the establishment of modern Wicca, Gerald Gardner, and Doreen Valiente. Gerald Gardner (1884-1964) is generally considered the father of

⁸ James Lewis, *Witchcraft Today: An Encyclopedia of Wiccan and Neopagan Traditions* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 191.

Modern Wicca.⁹ Gardner is cited by fifty-six percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by ninety-six percent of the authors in the narrative study. He is the author of four books on Witchcraft.¹⁰ In Gardner's most influential work, *Witchcraft Today* (1954), he describes Wicca's founding historical myth, that is, that in 1939 Gardner was initiated by "Old Dorothy" into a witch coven that had survived from medieval times. Gardner describes his experiences and the rituals he claims to have learned from the coven. He wrote liturgy (which he insisted was based on the old traditions), initiated witches and high priestesses, and oversaw the spread of "Gardnerian Wicca" to the United States in the early 1960s. Gardner claims an actual historical connection to medieval witchcraft and their liturgies. While Wiccans hotly dispute this claim, Gardner's influence has permeated every stream of Wicca for 65 years.

Doreen Edith Valiente (1922-1999) is often called "the Grandmother of Witchcraft." Valiente is cited by fifty-eight percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by seventy-eight percent of the authors in the narrative study. Valiente rejected Christianity as a teenager and read widely in occult literature, especially Theosophy, Crowley, and Fortune. Shortly after the British Witchcraft laws were repealed in 1951, Valiente noticed a newspaper article about the opening of the Museum of Witchcraft and the existence of local covens. Valiente contacted the museum and eventually met Gardner who initiated her into his coven in 1953. During her initiation, Gardner used material that he said came from hereditary Witches, but which Valiente recognized as taken from Leland, Crowley, and Mathers. After she respectfully mentioned this to

⁹ Gerald Brosseau Gardner was born in England and worked as a British civil servant in Malaysia and India until his retirement in 1936. After his retirement, Gardner returned to England and settled down in New Forest. Gardner was also the director of the Museum of Magic and Witchcraft on the Isle of Man. Gardner's life and influence will be detailed in chapter three.

¹⁰ *A Goddess Arrives* (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1939), *High Magic's Aid* (London: Aurinia, 1949), *Witchcraft Today* (London: Rider, 1954), *The Meaning of Witchcraft* (London: Aquarian, 1959).

Gardner, he gave her the rites and invited her to rewrite them. A talented poet and writer, Valiente reworked the *Book of Shadows*, the basis for Gardnerian Wicca. She wrote “The Charge of the Goddess” and several other liturgies for Gardner that are common to Wiccans worldwide. Valiente authored her first book, *Where Witchcraft Lives*, in 1962. After Gardner’s death in 1964, she received initiation into The Clan of Tubal Cain by the flamboyant Witch, Robert Cochrane. Cochrane died three years later, and thereafter Valiente decided to practice as a solitary Witch. She devoted herself to writing several books including *An ABC of Witchcraft* (1973), *Natural Magic* (1975), *Witchcraft for Tomorrow* (1978), and *The Rebirth of Witchcraft* (1989). While Gardner launched the witchcraft revival, Valiente artistically shaped its liturgies and rituals.

Wiccan Denominational Sources (1962-1979)

During the 1960s and 1970s several denominations of Wicca emerged in Europe and America. Three couples and four individuals founded denominations and are primary sources for this period. In addition, a journalist and publisher will also be considered primary sources. The three couples and the denominations they founded are Alex and Maxine Sanders (Alexandrian Wicca), Stewart and Janet Farrar (Traditional Wicca), and Victor and Cora Anderson (Feri Wicca). The four individuals and the denominations they founded are Robert Cochrane (Hereditary Wicca), Z Budapest (Dianic Wicca), Starhawk (Reclaiming Wicca), and Isaac Bonewits (Druids). In addition to the denominations, the journalist, Margot Adler, and the owner of Llewelyn Publications, Carl Weschcke, were of special significance to the growth and popularity of Wicca in America. Because each of these leaders are important for the literary development of the Wiccan tradition, I am including them in the literature review.

Robert Cochrane (1931-1966) did not author a book, and his letters have only recently been published; therefore, he is not cited in the bibliographical study, yet he is cited by twenty-nine percent of the authors in the narrative study. Cochrane was born Roy Bowers in London, England. Cochrane is significant because he was the first Witch to promote a different modern witchcraft than Gardner, called variously “Traditional Witchcraft,” “Hereditary Witchcraft,” and even “Cochranism.” Cochrane disdained Gardner, coining “Gardnerians” as a term of abuse for his followers.¹¹ Little is known about Cochrane’s early life; even the year of his birth is disputed.¹² Cochrane claimed that he was a hereditary Witch who learned witchcraft from his grandmother. He claims to have started The Clan of Tubal Cain coven in the early 1950s. Wicca historians debate Cochrane’s claims. Hutton writes, “What is certain is that he came to the public attention on 9 November 1963, with an article in the spiritualist newspaper, *Psychic News*. This defended witchcraft as the last survivor of the ancient mystery religions of Europe, a complex and sophisticated body of philosophy.”¹³ This, of course, is essentially the Murrayite hypothesis, popularized by Gardner, that has been discredited.¹⁴ Howard points out, “Although Robert Cochrane claimed to belong to a long line of hereditary witches, he also received second-degree

¹¹ So claims Michael Howard, *Modern Wicca: A History from Gerald Gardner to the Present* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2009), 196.

¹² Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 313. In Hutton’s authoritative history of Witchcraft, he follows Justine Glass, *Witchcraft: The Sixth Sense—And Us* (London: Spearman, 1965), 135-6, that Cochrane was born in 1936. However, in a letter to William S. Gray, Cochrane claimed to have provided Glass with fake material. Further, in a letter to Joe Wilson in 1965 Cochrane said he was 35 years old, claiming to be born on January 26, 1931. Evan John Jones and Michael Howard, eds. *The Robert Cochrane Letters: An Insight into Modern Traditional Witchcraft* (Somerset, UK: Capall Bann Publishing, 2001).

¹³ Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 314.

¹⁴ See pages 44-7.

initiation into Gardnerian Wicca from a couple living in West London.”¹⁵ Cochrane’s rituals reflect Gardnerian Wicca in many ways, yet are different in important ways. Hutton helpfully explains,

The basic pattern of his rites is recognizably that of Gardner: the sacred circle, the quarters with elemental associations, the veneration of a nature-goddess and horned god, the leadership by a man and woman, and the prominence of symbolic working tools. Valiente, however, was more impressed by the differences: that his people worked in black robes instead of nude, that they never used the scourge, that they preferred to hold rituals out of doors (around a fire) if at all possible, and that the elemental correspondences were fire to east, earth to south, water to west, and air to north. He dominated the coven, as Magister, whereas Gardner’s had been led by high priestesses. The emphasis upon the god as lord of death was more pronounced, and the working tools were distinctive, consisting of one knife, a cord, a cup (preferably of horn), a stone, and a forked staff known as a ‘stang.’ Like Gardnerians, Cochrane’s coven ceremonially consumed cakes and wine, but again it did so in its own way, with different words of blessing and prefacing the dipping of knife in wine by the Magister with a rite in which the moon was reflected into the cup by use of a mirror.¹⁶

Several of Cochrane’s rituals are commonly practiced by witches of various denominations today, especially his love for outdoor gatherings, wearing robes, and not using a scourge. Cochrane committed suicide by overdosing on sleeping pills and alcohol in 1966. Clifton describes Cochrane’s influence on Wicca: “In those years of the late 1960s, Cochrane’s letters would be endlessly recopied and circulated, adding their flavor to various new traditions of Witchcraft, often with their origins stripped away.”¹⁷ Eventually, a collection of Cochrane’s letters was published in 2001.¹⁸

¹⁵ Howard, *Modern Wicca*, 195.

¹⁶ Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 314.

¹⁷ Chas Clifton, *Her Hidden Children: The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in America* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2006), 22.

¹⁸ Jones and Howard, *The Robert Cochrane Letters*.

Alexander Sanders (1926-1988) did not author any books or articles, yet he is cited by seventy-eight percent of the authors in the narrative study. Like Cochrane, Sanders' influence on the Wiccan literary tradition is significant. Only Gerald Gardner, Margaret Murray, and Aleister Crowley were referenced more than Sanders in the historical narrative study. In the 1960s, Sanders was the face of Wicca in Europe and America. Sanders was born in Manchester, England. Little is known about his early life, except his claim that his father was an alcoholic. Without formal education, Sanders moved from one low-level job to another. When he was 21, he married a coworker named Doreen, had two children, and divorced her after five years of marriage. Sanders continued bouncing from job to job, eventually turning to witchcraft in the early 1960s. He was refused entrance into a popular Gardnerian coven, but eventually joined a lesser known coven and obtained a copy of Gardner's Book of Shadows.¹⁹ He rearranged and edited Gardner's work and claimed that he obtained it from his grandmother. While Gardner only initiated people who were twenty-one or older, Sanders initiated anyone over eighteen years of age. A charismatic, flamboyant, and gifted psychic, Sanders targeted teenagers for his self-styled covens, and by 1965 claimed to have initiated 1,623 people into 100 covens. Later that year, Sanders became famous when he invited the British press to his Wiccan hand-fasting ceremony where he married the beautiful 18-year-old Maxine Morris (b. 1946). This was not the first Wiccan wedding; that honor goes to Arnold and Patricia Crowther, but this was the first public Wiccan wedding. His followers proclaimed the couple "the King and Queen of the Witches" and the brand of Wicca was named "Alexandrian" after his first name. The British media could not get enough of photographing the naked and beautiful Maxine during rituals. The

¹⁹ A Book of Shadows is a Witch's personal book of spells and liturgies.

couple divorced in 1973 because of Alex's homosexuality. Wiccan historian Michael Howard comments,

This [homosexuality] is why they divorced, and another reason why the homophobic Gardnerians were opposed to him. In fact, Stewart and Janet Farrar were among the first prominent Wiccans to say there was nothing wrong with gay people joining covens, although Stewart did have some reservations about all-male or all-female covens because of problems with the gender polarity of Wiccan rites.²⁰

After their divorce, both Alex and Maxine continued to be active, leading covens. The rift between Gardnerian Wicca and Alexandrian Wicca created the first two major denominations of Wicca. Sanders' funeral in 1988 was an international media event involving Wiccans and Pagans from around the world. Twenty years after Alex's death, Maxine Sanders wrote an autobiography detailing her life with Alex and her life since in witchcraft.²¹

Stewart Farrar (1916-2000)²² is cited by fifty-six percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by sixty-eight percent of the authors in the narrative study. He was raised as a Christian Scientist but became agnostic when he turned twenty. He studied journalism at the University College, London. He served in the British Army from 1939 to 1946 during the Second World War. After the war he returned to journalism as an editor at Reuters. Farrar authored novels and worked as a freelance writer for the British Broadcasting Corporation. He was assigned to write a story on Alex Sanders, the "King of the Witches." Farrar became enamored with Sanders and met his future wife, Janet Owen (b. 1950), who was also exploring witchcraft at a coven meeting. Stewart and Janet were both initiated in London by Alex and

²⁰ Howard, *Modern Wicca*, 213.

²¹ Maxine Sanders, *Fire Child: The Life and Magic of Maxine Sanders 'Witch Queen'* (Oxford, UK: Mandrake, 2008).

²² Born Frank Stewart Farrar but commonly known as Stewart Farrar.

Maxine Sanders into Alexandrian Wicca in 1970. Stewart and Janet Farrar rose quickly to third level witches and led several covens in London. The Farrars moved to Ireland in 1976 and established several covens, initiating many into what became known as “Reformed Alexandrian,” “Post-Alexandrian,” or even “Traditional” Wicca. Stewart most famously authored *What Witches Do* (1971). Stewart and Janet authored *Eight Sabbats for Witches* (1981), *The Witches Way* (1984), *A Witches Bible* (1984), *The Witches’ Goddess* (1987), *The Witches’ God* (1989), *Spells and How they Work* (1990). Stewart and Janet Farrar worked with Gavin Bone to author *The Pagan Path* (1995), *The Healing Craft: Healing Practices for Witches, Pagans, and the New Age* (1999), and *The Complete Dictionary of European Gods and Goddesses* (2001). Wiccan historian Ronald Hutton describes the way in which Stewart and Janet Farrar became one of the “most influential partnerships in the history of modern witchcraft, and produced one of its major bodies of literature.”²³ After Stewart’s death in 2000, Janet Farrar married Gavin Bone and they authored *Progressive Witchcraft: Spirituality, Mysteries & Training in Modern Wicca* (2003), later renamed *The Inner Mysteries: Progressive Witchcraft and Connection with the Divine* (2012). In *Progressive Witchcraft*, Farrar and Bone describe important developments within Paganism central to my thesis that I will present in chapter four.

Victor Henry Anderson (1917-2001) is cited by thirty-six percent of the authors in the narrative study. Anderson was born in Clayton, New Mexico but raised in Ashland, Oregon. He suffered an accident in his childhood that left him nearly blind. Anderson related to Adler in an interview, how at the age of nine, he met an old woman of the fairy race who sexually initiated

²³ Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 329.

him into witchcraft.²⁴ In 1932, at the age of 15, he claimed to have been initiated into the Harpy Coven in Ashland, Oregon. Anderson described the coven as consisting of folk magicians and shamans who worshiped the Devil.²⁵ Anderson met Cora Cremeans in person in 1944, (though he claims they had met for years on the astral plane), and they were married after three days. The Andersons settled down in the San Francisco Bay area, where Victor met a friend of his son named Thomas DeLong (1946-1982) and began to teach him witchcraft. DeLong changed his name to Gwydion Pendderwen. Pendderwen went on to become a key figure in the Faery tradition. After Anderson read Gardner's *Witchcraft Today* and learned some rituals taught by Alex Sanders, he and his wife and Pendderwen began the Faery²⁶ witchcraft tradition, named after the old woman who initiated Victor at nine years of age. Anderson deviated from Gardnerian Wicca by using art and stories to communicate and inspire rituals. Further, Anderson taught that there is no gender, race, or culture in Witchcraft, all that matters is ecstasy. Anderson's most famous student was Miriam Simos, or as she is popularly known, Starhawk. Anderson wrote two books of poetry, *Thorns of the Blood Rose* (1970), and published posthumously *Lilith's Garden: The Further Poetry of Victor H. Anderson* (2004). Based on Victor's teachings, his wife also published *The Heart of the Initiate: Feri Lessons* (2010). Anderson's main contribution to the literary tradition of modern witchcraft is through his

²⁴ Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshippers, and other Pagans in America Today*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1986), 75.

²⁵ Storm Faerywolf, *Betwixt & Between: Exploring the Faery Tradition of Witchcraft* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 2019). Faerywolf provides an extensive survey of Anderson's life.

²⁶ Faerywolf, *Betwixt and Between*, 12. Sometimes Faery is spelled "Faerie," "Fairy," or "Feri," because the tradition has been taught orally.

students²⁷ and his promotion of gender and sexual inclusivity.

Z. Budapest (b. 1940) is cited by fifty-four percent of the authors in the narrative study. Budapest was born Zsuzsanna Mokcsay in Budapest, Hungary. When she was nineteen, her family emigrated to the United States. She attended the University of Chicago, married, and divorced, and moved to Venice, California in 1970. In California she changed her name to Z. Budapest in honor of her country's capital. Disillusioned with men, she started the Susan B. Anthony Coven, an all-women spirituality group practicing Dianic Wicca. Dianic Wicca, or feminist witchcraft, was a significant deviation from Gardnerian Wicca. Dianic Wicca focused on goddess worship and women's empowerment. James Lewis writes, "By 1976, the core of the Susan B. Anthony Coven consisted of 20-40 women; up to 300 participated in some activities."²⁸ In 1980, Budapest left the Venice Coven under the leadership of Ruth Barrett and moved to Oakland, California where she began a new Susan B. Anthony Coven. She also wrote *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries: Feminist Witchcraft, Goddess Rituals, Spellcasting, and Other Womanly Arts* (1980). Her writings and Dianic Wiccan tradition have helped to empower the feminist movement in America. Like Victor Anderson, Budapest's most famous student was Starhawk.

Starhawk (b. 1951)²⁹ is cited by fifty-six percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by seventy-five percent of the authors in the narrative study. Starhawk, or her given name, Miriam Simos, was born into a Jewish family in St. Paul, Minnesota. Simos moved to the

²⁷ His most famous student was Starhawk, and other authors in the Faery tradition like Storm Faerywolf.

²⁸ James Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, 280.

²⁹ Simos earned a BA degree from UCLA (1973) and a MA in Psychology focusing in feminist therapy from Antioch University West (1982). She is a religious columnist for Newsweek and the Washington Post.

San Francisco Bay area and was initiated as a Gardnerian Witch, then trained by Victor Anderson in the Faery Wicca tradition, and by Z. Budapest in the Dianic Wicca tradition. Starhawk is Simos' "Craft" name. A gifted author and thinker, Starhawk has authored or co-authored thirteen books, notably for witchcraft: *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (1979), *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, and Politics* (1982), *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority, and Mystery* (1988), *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising* (2003), *The Earth Path: Grounding Your Spirit in the Rhythms of Nature* (2004), *The Empowerment Manual: A Guide for Collaborative Groups* (2011). Her first book, *The Spiral Dance*, became a classic in the Wiccan literary tradition. In 1999, Hutton wrote that *The Spiral Dance* "became the best-selling work on the subject yet written and replaced *Witchcraft Today* as the model text for would-be witches."³⁰ In 1980, Starhawk founded Reclaiming Collective, a Wiccan tradition emphasizing feminist neopaganism, ecofeminism, earth-based spirituality, and politics. Starhawk remains one of the most influential authors and thinkers in the Pagan movement.

Philip Emmons Isaac Bonewits (1949-2010) is cited by twenty-seven percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by thirty-six percent of the authors in the narrative study. Born in Michigan, his family moved to San Clemente, California when he was 12 years old. A year later he met a young Creole woman from New Orleans who practiced Voodoo. Her magic so impressed Bonewits that he read and studied books on magic through his teens. As a student at the University of California at Berkeley, his roommate, Robert Larson, had been exposed to Druidism at Carleton College in Minnesota in 1963. Larson initiated Bonewits and the two

³⁰ Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon*, 345.

established a grove of Druids in Berkeley. Berkeley's group study program permitted Bonewits to create his own degree program, and in 1970 he became the first person in America to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Magic and Thaumaturgy. The negative publicity caused the University to ban witchcraft and magic from future degree programs. Bonewits published *Real Magic* (1971) and shortly thereafter moved to Minneapolis to become the editor of the pagan journal *Gnostica*, published by Carl Weschcke of Llewellyn Publications. Bonewits became a prolific author on Druidism, Paganism, and magic. His major Pagan works include *Real Magic* (1971), *The Druid Chronicles (Evolved)* (1976), *Rites of Worship: A Neopagan Approach* (2003), *Witchcraft: A Concise Guide or Which Witch Is Which?* (2003), *The Pagan Man: Priests, Warriors, Hunters, and Drummers* (2005), *Bonewits's Essential Guide to Witchcraft and Wicca* (2006), *Bonewits's Essential Guide to Druidism* (2006), *Real Energy: Systems, Spirits, And Substances to Heal, Change, And Grow* (2007), and *Neopagan Rites: A Guide to Creating Public Rituals that Work* (2007). One of his main contributions to the Wiccan literary tradition is that he incorporated Druidry into Wicca and Paganism, opening the door for further groups to be included in the Pagan fold.

Margot Adler (1946-2014) is cited by fifty-eight percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by fifty-four percent of the authors in the narrative study. Adler was born to a Jewish home in Little Rock, Arkansas. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of California at Berkeley and a Master of Arts in Journalism from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. She was a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University in 1982, and was a Gardnerian Wiccan High Priestess, author, and journalist with National Public Radio in New York. Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshipers, and other Pagans in America Today* (1979) has become one of the

foundational texts for Wicca today. A journalist by vocation, Adler provides a detailed overview of Wiccan history, theology, practices, festivals, and profiles several Pagan groups. The initial and revised editions of her seminal work are based on two extensive surveys Adler conducted of Pagans attending festivals across the United States in 1975 and 1985. Adler also authored *Heretic's Heart: A Journey Through Spirit and Revolution* (1997), *Our Way to the Stars* (2000), *Out for Blood* (2013), and *Vampires Are Us* (2014). Adler and Starhawk are often compared in Wicca literature. Both *The Spiral Dance* and *Drawing Down the Moon* were published on October 31, 1979. Adler is from the central south (Arkansas) and represents the traditional Gardnerian, New York, heterosexual, intellectual, and non-political activist. Starhawk is from the central north (Minnesota) and represents the progressive Reclaiming Collective, San Francisco, lesbian, feminist, poetic, artistic, and political activist. Adler and Starhawk are the most influential Pagan authors since Gerald Gardner.

Carl Llewellyn Weschcke (1930-2015) is cited by twenty-one percent of the authors in the narrative study. While Weschcke is not a Wiccan author, he has done more to publish Pagan books in America than anyone. Weschcke was born into a Roman Catholic and Pagan family in St. Paul, Minnesota. His grandfather was the president of the American Theosophical Society. Passionate about publishing, he bought Llewellyn Publications in 1961 and moved it from Los Angeles to St. Paul, Minnesota. He purchased occult books from around the world for resale at Llewellyn. In 1970, he opened Gnostica Bookstore and the School of Self-Development in Minneapolis. In 1971, Weschcke sponsored The First American Aquarian Festival of Astrology and the Occult Sciences. The festival drew hundreds of Witches, Pagans, magicians, astrologers, and others from around the world. The next year Weschcke sponsored the festival again, but simply called it Gnosticon. Weschcke was initiated into the American Celtic tradition in 1972.

He also was initiated as a Gardnerian, Tantric, and magician. Llewellyn published *Gnostica*, a Pagan Journal. In 1973, Weschcke organized and chaired the Council of American Witches. The Council affirmed “The Thirteen Principles of Belief,” which was used to commission chaplains in the U.S. military. Through the efforts of Weschcke and Llewellyn Publications, the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul became a major center for the Wiccan and Pagan movement in America. By the late 1970s, Weschcke focused on publishing books and closed the bookstore and pulled back from Gnosticon festivals. Today, Llewellyn Publications employs over one hundred people and publishes an average of 150 new titles annually. Llewellyn Publications is the largest occult and witchcraft publisher in the world.

Solo-Practitioner Wiccan Sources (1974-1999)

Two primary sources for the development of Solo-Practitioner Wicca are Raymond Buckland and Scott Cunningham. Raymond Buckland (1934-2017) is cited by thirty-one percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by sixty-four percent of the authors in the narrative study. Buckland is often considered the father of American Wicca. He is of Romani Gypsy descent, and this heritage became important in many of his literary works. Raymond married Rosemary Moss (1936-2013) in 1955 and the couple moved from London to New York in 1962. That year, after reading books by Margaret Murray and Gerald Gardner, he initiated contact with Gardner. In 1963, Buckland traveled to England to meet Gardner and underwent a ten-day crash course in Wicca, after which he was initiated into Wicca. Buckland was commissioned by Gardner to take Wicca to America. Buckland initiated his wife Rosemary, and the two initiated dozens in America to Gardnerian Wicca. In 1973, the Bucklands divorced. In 1974, Buckland founded a new Wiccan denomination he called Seax-Wicca, loosely based on Anglo-Saxon mythology. Seax-Wicca was essentially Gardnerian Wicca made more egalitarian,

wearing clothes, and focusing on Germanic and Norse deities. The most significant deviation from Gardnerian, Alexandrian, or the Traditional Witchcraft of Cochrane was Buckland's acceptance of self-initiation. Before this point, witchcraft denominations controlled who was recognized as a witch by specific initiation rituals. Buckland's acceptance of self-initiation opened the door for the solitary practitioner, and for anyone to declare themselves a Witch. In chapter four I will discuss the way in which self-initiation transformed Wicca. Buckland became a prolific author, publishing over forty books. His most significant non-fiction works related to witchcraft are: *A Pocket Guide to the Supernatural* (1969), *Witchcraft Ancient and Modern* (1970), *Practical Candle-burning Rituals* (1970), *Witchcraft From the Inside: Origins of the Fastest Growing Religious Movement in America* (1971), *The Tree: Complete Book of Saxon Witchcraft* (1974), *Here is the Occult* (1974), *The Anatomy of the Occult* (1977), *Practical Color Magick* (1983), *Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft* (1986), *Secrets of Gypsy Fortune Telling* (1988), *Secrets of Gypsy Love Magick* (1990), *Secrets of Gypsy Dream Reading* (1990), *Scottish Witchcraft: The History and Magick of the Picts* (1991), *Doors to Other Worlds* (1993), *The Truth About Spirit Communication* (1995), *Gypsy Witchcraft & Magic* (1998), *Gypsy Dream Dictionary* (1999), *Wicca For Life* (2001), *The Witch Book: The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft, Wicca, and Neo-Paganism* (2001), *Buckland's Book of Saxon Witchcraft* (2005), *The Spirit Book: The Encyclopedia of Clairvoyance, Channeling, and Spirit Communication* (2005), and *Buckland's Book of Gypsy Magic* (2010). Both as a practitioner and author, Buckland is one of the most significant voices in the spread and development of American Wicca.

Scott Cunningham (1956-1993) is cited by thirty-one percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by fourteen percent of the authors in the narrative study. The authors in the narrative study may be showing some bias against Cunningham's solo-practitioner Wicca.

Cunningham believed that Wicca had become a closed tradition and he wanted it to become more open to new people. Therefore, he wrote for new and solo practitioners. His work *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* (1999) is a basic text on Wiccan ritual and practice and has been widely received as the best single volume for new practitioners of Wicca. Cunningham wrote over twenty books; the most important for Wicca are: *Earth Power: Techniques of Natural Magic* (1983), *Cunningham's Encyclopedia of Crystal, Gem, and Metal Magic* (1987), *The Truth About Witchcraft Today* (1988), and *Living Wicca: A Further Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* (1993). Cunningham died of AIDS-related meningitis at the age of 36.

Polyaffiliated Wiccan and Pagan Sources (2000-2019)

The four primary sources for Polyaffiliated Wicca and Paganism are academics. Three of the four have doctorate degrees in their fields.

Chas Clifton (b. 1951) is cited by twenty-eight percent of the authors in the bibliographical study and by eighteen percent of the authors in the narrative study. Clifton is a Gardnerian Witch and a leading academic in the Wiccan and Pagan movements. He earned a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Colorado and is professor of English at Colorado State University-Pueblo. He specializes in English and Pagan studies. He has edited several books.³¹ His most notable work is *Her Hidden Children: The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in America* (2006). Since 2001, Clifton has served as the editor of the peer-reviewed academic journal *The Pomegranate: The International Journal of Pagan Studies*, which is

³¹ Notable works that Clifton edited or co-edited are: *Witchcraft Today, Book One: The Modern Craft Movement* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1992), *Witchcraft Today, Book Two: Modern Rites of Passage* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1993), *Witchcraft Today, Book Three: Shamanisms and Witchcraft* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1994), and *Witchcraft Today, Book Four: Living Between Two Worlds: Challenges of the Modern Witch* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1996), and co-edited with Graham Harvey, *The Paganism Reader* (London: Routledge, 2004).

published biannually by Equinox Publishing. He also edits the AltaMira Press Pagan Studies Series of academic books. Clifton is the co-chair of the American Academy of Religion's Pagan Studies Group. Clifton describes in what ways Gardnerian Wicca, with its strict initiation rituals and clergy, is giving way to a new generation of self-initiated congregational forms of governance.³²

Murphy Pizza is a Pagan and cultural anthropologist with a specialization in comparative religion.³³ Pizza is significant for this research in that she has written a dissertation and book on Pagans in Minnesota. Her book, *Paganistan: Contemporary Pagan Community in Minnesota's Twin Cities* (2014), is the result of Pizza's ten-year participant-observation experience with Twin Cities Pagans. Pizza presents a first-hand ethnographical account of Paganistan. She argues that Midwestern Paganism is unique and reflects Midwestern culture. Significantly, Pizza argues that Twin Cities Pagans commonly blend a variety of Pagan traditions to create their own personalized religious belief systems. Pizza herself became a Pagan in 1995 through reading Cunningham, Adler, and Starhawk. Yet, she coined the term polyaffiliation to describe her own experience of incorporating elements of Wicca, Shamanism, Shinto, Heathenry, and other practices into her own religious practice.³⁴ Pizza has co-edited one book and contributed to two other books.³⁵

³² Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 166.

³³ Murphy Pizza earned a PhD in Religious Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee under James Lewis and is an adjunct professor at St. Catherine University, St. Paul, Minnesota.

³⁴ Personal conversation with Pizza on August 28, 2019, at Merlin's Pub, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁵ Pizza co-edited with James Lewis *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism* (Boston: Brill, 2009) and contributed to two works edited by Lewis, *Sacred Schisms: How Religions Divide* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and *Handbook of Nordic New Religions* (Boston: Brill, 2015).

Sabina Magliocco (b. 1959) is cited by fourteen percent of the authors in the bibliographical study. She is a Gardnerian Witch and anthropologist.³⁶ Magliocco is the author of four books for Pagan studies. She authored *Neo-Pagan Sacred Art and Altars: Making Things Whole* (2001), and her most important work, *Witching Culture* (2004). Magliocco utilizes anthropology and folklore to evaluate the formation of Wicca. In *Witching Culture*, she dismisses Enlightenment rationalism and reclaims Western mysticism, imagination, and the spiritual experiences of Wiccans as primary for a life of meaning. She sees Paganism creating an identity in contrast with the dominant culture, especially political culture. She argues for identity politics as central for revealing meaning for oneself and for creating one's religious experience.

Susan Greenwood (b. 1950) is cited by sixteen percent of the authors in the bibliographical study. Greenwood is a Witch and anthropologist.³⁷ She has authored eight books on witchcraft.³⁸ In *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld: An Anthology* (2000), Greenwood writes in response to Tanya Luhrmann's *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft* (1989). Greenwood argues against studying magic from a western rationalist perspective like Luhrmann's and insists on studying magic from a phenomenological and relativistic approach. As a practitioner of a

³⁶ Sabina Magliocco earned a PhD in Folklore at Indiana University in 1988 and is Professor of Anthropology and Religion at the University of British Columbia. She is an honorary fellow of the American Folklore Society.

³⁷ Susan Greenwood is a Senior Research Fellow at the University of Sussex, United Kingdom. Greenwood earned a PhD in Anthropology from Goldsmith College, University of London. *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld: An Anthology* (Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers, 2000) is based on her doctoral research.

³⁸ *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld: An Anthology* (Oxford, UK: Oxford International Publishers, 2000), *The Encyclopedia of Magic and Witchcraft* (London: Lorenz, 2001), *The History of Early Witchcraft* (London: Anness Publishing, 2002), *Contemporary Magic and Witchcraft* (London: Anness Publishing, 2003), *The Nature of Magic: An Anthropology of Consciousness* (Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers, 2005), *The Anthropology of Magic* (Oxford, UK: Berg Publishers, 2009), *The Illustrated History of Magic and Witchcraft* (London: Lorenz, 2012), *Witchcraft: A History: The Study of Magic and Necromancy through the Ages* (London: Lorenz, 2013).

feminist-oriented Kabbalistic-Wicca, Greenwood blends various religious and cultural influences to create her own religion.

Clifton, Pizza, Magliocco, and Greenwood are four examples of Pagans syncretizing or polyaffiliating various Pagan traditions together to create their own spiritual path rather than following the more traditional path of a Wiccan denomination.

Review of Tertiary Sources in the Wiccan Tradition

Secular anthropologists, historians, and sociologists of religion will be treated as tertiary sources. Anthropologists, historians, and sociologists of religion seek to describe Wiccan communities, beliefs, culture, and practices. The bibliographical study shows eight secular scholars are cited frequently in the literature: Ronald Hutton, Mircea Eliade, Tanya Luhrmann, Jeffrey Russell, Carlos Ginzburg, Helen Berger, James Lewis, and Sarah Pike.

Ronald Hutton (b. 1954)³⁹ is cited by forty-nine percent of the authors in the bibliographical study. Hutton is a historian and folklore specialist who has authored sixteen books, seven on British Paganism, notably, *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles: Their Nature and Legacy* (1991), *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (1999), *Witches, Druids, and King Arthur* (2003), *The Druids: A History* (2007), *Blood and Mistletoe: The History of Druids in Britain* (2009), *Pagan Britain* (2013), and *The Witch: A History of Fear, from Ancient Times to the Present* (2017). Hutton's *The Triumph of the Moon* (1999) is respected by Wiccans as an authoritative history of witchcraft.

³⁹ Ronald Hutton earned a PhD from Oxford University and is Professor of British Folklore and Contemporary Paganism at the University of Bristol.

Mircea Eliade (1907-1986)⁴⁰ is cited by thirty-one percent of the authors in the bibliographical study. Eliade was a prolific author over several decades. His main contribution to the study of Witchcraft is *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions: Essays in Comparative Religions* (1976). Eliade understood European Witchcraft to be the product of India. He writes,

For instance, even a rapid perusal of the Indian and Tibetan documents will convince the unprejudiced reader that European witchcraft cannot be the creation of religious or political persecution or be a demonic sect devoted to Satan and the promotion of evil. As a matter of fact, all the features associated with European witches are—with the exception of Satan and the Sabbath—claimed also by Indo-Tibetan yogis and magicians.⁴¹

Eliade also criticized Margaret Murray's work, writing that "historians have pointed out the countless and appalling errors that discredit Murray's reconstruction of European witchcraft."⁴²

Tanya Marie Luhrmann (b. 1959)⁴³ is cited by twenty-nine percent of the authors in the bibliographical study. She is a social anthropologist and author of four books, one on Witchcraft. Her book *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft* (1989) is the result of her ten-year participant-observation of the Pagan community in London. Luhrmann's work is the first serious evaluation of Wiccan practices from outside scholarship. Her research aim was to discover by what means rational people could be persuaded to believe in the irrationality of magic. She concluded that people are motivated to believe in magic by a want or need to cope with life.

⁴⁰ Mircea Eliade earned a PhD from the University of Calcutta in 1933 and later became a historian of religion and professor of religion at the University of Chicago.

⁴¹ Mircea Eliade, *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions: Essays in Comparative Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 71.

⁴² Eliade, *Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions*, 73.

⁴³ Luhrmann earned a PhD from Cambridge University in Social Anthropology and is the Watkins University Professor in the Anthropology department at Stanford University.

Luhrmann's position is clear; she never has, nor does she now believe in magic.⁴⁴

Jeffrey Russell (b. 1934)⁴⁵ is cited by twenty-eight percent of the authors in the bibliographical study. Russell is the author of eighteen books, including the respected *A History of Witchcraft: Sorcerers, Heretics, and Pagans* (1980). Brooks Alexander updated Russell's classic work and retitled it *A New History of Witchcraft: Sorcerers, Heretics, and Pagans* (2007).

Carlo Ginzburg (b. 1939)⁴⁶ is cited by twenty-one percent of the authors in the bibliographical study. Ginzburg is a historian and author of fourteen books, two dealing with Witchcraft, notably, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1983), and *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath* (1991).

Helen A. Berger (b. 1949)⁴⁷ is cited by twenty-one percent of the authors in the bibliographical study. Berger is a sociologist and author of four important books on Wicca: *A Community of Witches: Contemporary Neo-Paganism and Witchcraft in the United States* (1999), *Voices from the Pagan Census: A National Survey of Witches and Neo-Pagans in the United States* (2003), *Witchcraft and Magic in the New World: North America in the 20th Century* (2005), and *Teenage Witches: Magical Youth and the Search for Self* (2007). Berger studied Pagans and Witches on America's east coast for ten years and published her findings in

⁴⁴ Tanya Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 18.

⁴⁵ Russell earned a PhD from Emory University in 1960 and is Professor Emeritus of History at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

⁴⁶ Ginzburg earned a PhD in history from the University of Pisa in 1961 and was Professor of History at the University of California, Los Angeles.

⁴⁷ Berger earned a PhD in Sociology from New York University and is Associate Professor of Sociology at West Chester University in Pennsylvania.

her first book, *A Community of Witches*. Berger is sympathetic to Witches and has done excellent statistical and demographic research on Witches.

James R. Lewis (b. 1959)⁴⁸ is cited by twenty-one percent of the authors in the bibliographical study. Lewis specializes in New Religious Movements and has authored, co-authored, or edited over thirty books. Notable works on witchcraft include *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*, editor (1996), *Witchcraft Today: An Encyclopedia of Wiccan and Neopagan Traditions* (1999), *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism* co-edited with Murphy Pizza (2009), and *Controversial New Religions* (2014).

Sarah M. Pike (b. 1959)⁴⁹ is cited by twenty percent of the authors in the bibliographical study. Pike specializes in comparative religion and has authored two notable books on witchcraft: *Earthly Bodies, Magical Selves: Contemporary Pagans and The Search for Community* (2001) and *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America* (2004). Pike traces the development and relationship between the New Age and Neo-Pagan movements in America. She pays special attention to the way in which these movements interact with gender and identity politics, especially their antagonistic relationship with Christianity. While sympathetic to both movements, she is an outsider to these movements and is critical in her analysis of both.

⁴⁸ Lewis earned a PhD in Religious Studies at the University of Wales, Lampeter, United Kingdom and is Lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Wisconsin. He is co-founder of the International Society for the Study of New Religions, editor in-chief of *Alternative Spirituality & Religion Review* (ASSR), and co-edits Brill Handbooks on Contemporary Religion, Ashgate's New Religions series, and Palgrave-Macmillan Palgrave's Studies in New Religions and Alternative Spirituality Series.

⁴⁹ Pike earned a PhD in Religious Studies at Indiana University and is Professor of Comparative Religion and Director of the Humanities Center at California State University, Chico.

Review of Quaternary Sources in the Wiccan Tradition

Christian apologists and journalists will be treated as quaternary sources. Christian writers seek to critique and warn about the dangers of Witchcraft. Christian authors are not significant in the bibliographical and narrative studies. Seven Evangelicals who have written books on Wicca are Craig Hawkins, David Burnett, Brooks Alexander, Tim Baker, Philip G. Davis, Steve Russo, and Catherine Sanders.

Craig S. Hawkins (b. 1958) is the leading Evangelical scholar to engage Wicca.⁵⁰ His *Witchcraft: Exploring the World of Wicca* (1996) may be the best volume interacting with Wicca by an Evangelical today. Hawkins shows knowledge of every major Wiccan thinker at the time of writing. Impressively, his bibliography lists sixty-three pagan works.

David Burnett (b. 1943)⁵¹ was the academic dean at All Nations Christian College, Ware, UK. Burnett has served as a missionary in India and is an author of several books, notably for Witchcraft, *Drawing Down the Pagan Moon* (1991). Burnett was one of the first Evangelicals to write on Western Paganism. His work is compassionate and well-researched.

Brooks Alexander (b. 1936) interacts with Wicca in *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream: Uncovering Its Alarming Impact on You and Your Family* (2004).⁵² Alexander interacts with a

⁵⁰ Hawkins is the president of Apologetics Information Ministry. He holds a Master of Arts in Apologetics from Simon Greenleaf University and a Master of Arts in Faith and Culture from Trinity International University. He has written three books on Wicca: *Goddess Worship, Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), *Witchcraft: Exploring the World of Wicca* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), and *The Witch Next Door: Separating Fact from Fiction about Witchcraft, Wicca, Goddess Worship, and Neo-Paganism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006).

⁵¹ David Burnett, *Dawning of the Pagan Moon: Understanding the Roots, Characteristics, and Influences of Western Paganism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991).

⁵² Brooks Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream: Uncovering Its Alarming Impact on You and Your Family* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2004). Alexander was one of the three founding members of the Spiritual Counterfeits Project (SPC).

wide variety of Wiccan authors and strikes a more pastoral tone than Hawkins.

Tim Baker (b. 1966) wrote *Dewitched: What You Need to Know About the Dangers of Wicca and Witchcraft* (2004) as a youth pastor.⁵³ The book is written at the popular level.

Philip G. Davis (b. 1950)⁵⁴ specializes in Western Neopaganism. His *Goddess Unmasked: The Rise of Neopagan Feminist Spirituality* (1998) is a scholarly evaluation of the goddess movement in Western culture.

Steve Russo (b. 1953), a popular speaker at youth events, has authored several books on Witchcraft, *What's the Deal with Wicca: A Deeper Look into the Dark Side of Today's Witchcraft* (2005).⁵⁵ Catherine Edwards Sanders (b. 1973) authored *Wicca's Charm* (2005) as an appeal to young women to find Jesus, not Wicca, as their source of life and joy.⁵⁶

Beyond books, two Evangelicals have written scholarly journal articles,⁵⁷ and several have contributed chapters on Wicca in various texts.⁵⁸ Evangelicals writing about spiritual

⁵³ Tim Baker, *Dewitched: What You Need to Know About Wicca and Witchcraft* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004).

⁵⁴ Davis holds a PhD from McMaster University, Ontario and is Professor and Chairman of Religious Studies at the University of Prince Edward Island, Canada.

⁵⁵ Steve Russo, *What's the Deal with Wicca: A Deeper Look into the Dark Side of Today's Witchcraft* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2005).

⁵⁶ Catherine Edwards Sanders, *Wicca's Charm: Understanding the Spiritual Hunger Behind the Rise of Modern Witchcraft and Pagan Spirituality* (Colorado Springs, CO: Shaw Books, 2005).

⁵⁷ William E. Gordon, Jr. "Occult Practices and Beliefs of Wicca." *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 46 no. 2 (2004): 35-42. Richard G. Howe, "Modern Witchcraft: It May Not Be What You Think," *Christian Research Journal* 28 no. 1 (2005).

⁵⁸ John W. Morehead, "Paganism and Neopaganism: History, Beliefs, Practices" in *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices*, ed. Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland, and Gerald R. McDermott (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 535-8. John Peck, "Neopaganism" in *A Guide to New Religious Movements* ed. Ronald Enroth (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 135-54. Larry A. Nichols, George A. Mather, and Alvin J. Schmidt, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 335-42. Bob Larson, *Larson's Book of Spiritual Warfare* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 156-70. Bob Larson, *Larson's New Book of Cults* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1989), 464-7.

warfare, demons, and witchcraft do not interact with Pagan and Wiccan authors,⁵⁹ and show little understanding of Pagan and Wiccan authors.⁶⁰ The general failure of Evangelical scholarship to engage Pagan or Wiccan authors when writing about spiritual warfare, demons, magic, and witchcraft is lamentable.

⁵⁹ Merrill F. Unger, *Biblical Demonology: A Study of the Spiritual Forces Behind the Present World Unrest* (Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press, 1952). C. Fred Dickason, *Demon Possession & The Christian* (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1991). Clinton E. Arnold, *Power and Magic: The Concept of Power in Ephesians* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1989). Clinton E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness: Principalities & Powers in Paul's Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992). Sydney H. T. Page, *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan & Demons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995). Timothy M. Warner, *Spiritual Warfare: Victory Over the Powers of This Dark World* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991). Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1990). James K. Beilby, and Paul Rhodes Eddy, *Understanding Spiritual Warfare: Four Views* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012).

⁶⁰ Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, rev. ed., ed. Ravi Zacharias (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2003). John Ankerberg, and John Weldon, *Cult Watch: What You Need to Know About Spiritual Deception* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1991). Ankerberg and Weldon do cite one Wiccan, Margot Adler. The reference is footnote 57 on page 155 and it is unclear why they even reference Adler. Ron Rhodes, *The Culting of America: The Shocking Implications for Every Concerned Christian* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994). Ron Rhodes, *The Challenge of the Cults and New Religions: The Essential Guide to their History, their Doctrine, and our Response* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001). Ruth A. Tucker, *Another Gospel: Cults, Alternative Religions, and the New Age Movement* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1989), 340-1. Rhodes and Tucker both mistakenly list Miriam Simos (her Craft name is Starhawk) as Miriam Starhawk in their respective bibliographies.

CHAPTER 3

ORIGINS: FROM BRITISH OCCULTISM TO PAGANISM

Introduction: Myth or History?

Two stories concerning the origins of Wicca are popular today. In 1921, Egyptologist Margaret Murray proposed a theory for the origins of modern Witchcraft in her book, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*.¹ Murray's theory drew early criticism, and today it is viewed as false. In 1999, historian Ronald Hutton produced the definitive work on the historical origins for modern witchcraft in *The Triumph of the Moon*. Hutton's work is widely accepted by Wiccans today as a trustworthy explanation of Wiccan origins.²

Murray's 1921 proposal argues that before Christianity arrived in Europe, the religion of the common people was Paganism or Witchcraft. When Christianity came to Europe, the upper ruling classes received it, but the common rural classes continued to practice Paganism. The upper-class Christians persecuted the common rural Pagans and Witches during the late medieval period, but Paganism survived. In the twentieth century the surviving Paganism, or Old Religion, became popular again in the form of modern Witchcraft. Here is Murray's theory in her words.

¹ Margaret Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1921). See also, Margaret Murray, *The God of the Witches* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co, 1933).

² James R. Lewis and Murphy Pizza, eds. *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 2. Lewis and Pizza regard Hutton and Clifton as two of the most reliable historians of modern Wicca and Paganism.

Ritual witchcraft—or, as I propose to call it, the Dianic cult—embraces the religious beliefs and rituals of the people known in late medieval times as ‘Witches.’ The evidence proves that underlying the Christian religion was a cult practiced by many classes of the community, chiefly, however, by the more ignorant or those in the less thickly inhabited parts of the country. It can be traced back to pre-Christian times and appears to be the ancient religion of Western Europe. The god . . . was worshiped in well-defined rites; the organization was highly developed, and the ritual is analogous to many other ancient rituals. The dates of the chief festivals suggest that the religion belonged to a race which had not reached the agricultural stage; and the evidence shows that various modifications were introduced, probably by invading peoples who brought in their own beliefs.³

In 1986, Gardnerian Witch Margot Adler retold the Murrayite myth in her journalistic style,

It goes something like this: Witchcraft is a religion that dates back to Paleolithic times, to the worship of the god of the hunt and the goddess of fertility. One can see remnants of it in cave paintings and in the figurines of goddesses that are many thousands of years old. This early religion was universal. The names changed from place to place, but the basic deities were the same. When Christianity came to Europe, its inroads were slow. Kings and nobles were converted first, but many folk continued to worship in both religions. Dwellers in rural areas, the “Pagans” and “Heathens,” kept to the old ways. Churches were built on the sacred sites of the Old Religion. The names of the festivals were changed but the dates were kept. The old rites continued in folk festivals, and for many centuries Christian policy was one of slow cooptation. During the times of persecution, the Church took the god of the Old Religion and—as is the habit with conquerors—turned him into the Christian devil. The Old Religion was forced underground, its only records set forth, in distorted form, by its enemies. Small families kept the religion alive and, in 1951, after the Witchcraft Laws in England were repealed, it began to surface again.⁴

The Murrayite theory concerning the origins of witchcraft has been challenged and discredited by a wide array of religious and historical scholars.⁵ Halliday, a medieval historian, points out

³ Murray, *The Witch-cult in Western Europe*, 6.

⁴ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshippers, and other Pagans in America Today*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1986), 45-6.

⁵ William R. Halliday, “Review of *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* by Margaret Murray,” in *Folk-Lore*, vol. 33 (1922): 224-30, accessed May 30, 2018, https://en.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=Folk-Lore/Volume_33/Review//The_Witch_Cult_in_Western_Europe&oldid=5626535. C. L’Estrange Ewen, *Some Witchcraft Criticism: A Plea for the Blue Pencil* (London: self-pub., 1938). Mircea Eliade, *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions: Essays in Comparative Religions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 69-92. Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Elliott Rose, *A Razor for a Goat: A Discussion of Certain Problems in the History of Witchcraft and Diabolism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962).

the way in which Murray repeatedly took quotations out of context and interpreted her sources through the lens of her theory.⁶ Ewen, an expert on the European witch trials, criticized nearly every detail in Murray's theory of medieval Witchcraft.⁷ Rose, an English historian, was highly critical of her theory.⁸ Hutton describes the manner in which Murray treated her sources with "reckless abandon."⁹ A final blow to Murray's thesis involved the scholarly rejection of linking medieval Witches with modern Witchcraft. Hutton cites nine scholars from seven countries writing in the 1970s who "left no doubt that the people tried for witchcraft in early modern Europe were not practitioners of a surviving pagan religion."¹⁰ Further, Eliade claims that "historians have pointed out the countless and appalling errors that discredit Murray's reconstruction of European witchcraft."¹¹ In Eliade's judgment, modern European Witchcraft does not resemble medieval European witchcraft as Murray advances; rather, it resembles Indian and Tibetan magic.¹² The consensus view of Wiccans today is that the roots of modern European Witchcraft are in India, not medieval Europe. Adler admits, "Modern Wicca, while retaining the use of such terms as *esbat*, *sabbat*, and *coven*, bears no resemblance to . . . [Medieval] European

⁶ Halliday, "Review of The Witch-Cult," 224-30.

⁷ C. L'Estrange Ewen wrote three important books on the European Witch trials: *Witch hunting and Witch Trials: The Indictments for Witchcraft from the Records of 1373 Assized Held for the Home Circuit A.D. 1559 to 1736* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. 1929); *Witchcraft and Demonianism: A Concise Account Derived from Sworn Depositions and Confessions Obtained in the Courts of England and Wales* (London: Heath Cranton, 1933); and *Some Witchcraft Criticism* (1938). Ewen demonstrated from the records, contrary to Murray, that the Witches tried in the trials were not Pagans.

⁸ Rose, *A Razor for a Goat*, 200-20. The entire book is a harsh critique of Murry and Gardner. Rose describes Murray's medieval goddess myth as a twentieth century literary construct.

⁹ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 198.

¹⁰ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 362.

¹¹ Eliade, *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions*, 72.

¹² Eliade, *Occultism, Witchcraft and Cultural Fashions*, 71.

witchcraft.”¹³ Writing in 1979, Adler described the way in which many Wiccans just a decade before took the Murrayite theory as literal history but now few continued to believe this theory for Wiccan origins.

Hutton describes the historical emergence of Wicca as a new religious movement in England.¹⁴ British academics in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries blended Indian religious and magical ideas with Western occultism. This blending of Eastern religious and magical traditions with European occult magical traditions provided the cultural milieu for Western occult groups to form and occult individuals to rise to prominence.

British occult groups and individuals gradually influenced the acceptance of Witchcraft within British culture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ultimately leading to the repeal of the 1734 Witchcraft Laws in 1951.¹⁵ Gerald Brosseau Gardner is believed to have drawn upon British occult groups and individuals, and his own experiences in the Far East, to create modern Wicca in 1954.¹⁶ Gardnerian Wicca, as it became known, was

¹³ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 56.

¹⁴ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*. Hutton’s entire book is devoted to the thesis; the only religion England has given to the world is modern Pagan Witchcraft.

¹⁵ Doreen Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft* (London: Robert Hale, 1989), 9-11. Valiente describes how a medium, Helen Duncan (1897-1956), was arrested in 1944 and found guilty under the Witchcraft Act of 1735 and sentenced to nine months imprisonment. The trial garnered sympathetic support from the public and Parliament, and in June 1951, the Witchcraft Act was repealed.

¹⁶ Gerald B. Gardner, *Witchcraft Today* (London: Rider and Company, 1954). Wiccan scholars universally point to Gardner as the founder of the modern Wiccan movement. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 80-6. Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 205-52. Chas Clifton, *Her Hidden Children: The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in America* (New York: Alta Mira Press, 2006), 14-5. Tanya Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch’s Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 37. Sabina Magliocco, *Witching Culture: Folklore and Neo-Paganism in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 48-54. James R. Lewis, *Witchcraft Today: An Encyclopedia of Wiccan and Neopagan Traditions* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), xii. Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 174. Aiden Kelly, *Inventing Witchcraft: A Case Study in the Creation of New Religion* (Loughborough, UK: Thoht, 2007). Kelly’s whole book is devoted to showing Gardner as the creator of Wicca.

eventually exported to America and to the world. According to Hutton, “pagan witchcraft . . . is the only religion which England has ever given to the world.”¹⁷

The historical spread of Wicca to and within the United States is told by the Wiccan academic Chas Clifton in *Her Hidden Children*.¹⁸ Clifton describes the emigration of Raymond and Rosemarie Buckland from London to Long Island, New York in 1962. Clifton goes on to relate that on a return trip to England in 1963, Raymond was initiated and trained by Gardner to train and initiate Americans into Gardnerian Wicca.¹⁹

Gardnerian Wicca grew and expanded quickly across the United States along with many other Pagan groups that formed almost spontaneously during the hippie movement of the 1960s. By 1979, Adler estimates the movement had grown to about ten thousand Pagans belonging to dozens of groups including Gardnerian, Alexandrian, Georgian, Dianic, the New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn (NROOGD), Susan B. Anthony Coven No. 1, Covenant of the Goddess (COG), School of Wicca, Church of Aphrodite, Feraferia, Church of the Eternal Source, Odinism, Asatru, Norse Paganism, Heathens, Church of All Worlds, Reformed Druids of North America (RDNA), and Radical Faeries.²⁰

Murphy Pizza describes the reach of Wicca into Minnesota in the 1970s and was blended with a pre-existing robust, occult, and Pagan community.²¹ The Minnesotan Pagan

¹⁷ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, vii.

¹⁸ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 11-36.

¹⁹ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 16-9.

²⁰ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 108, 118-30, 243-8.

²¹ Murphy Pizza, *Paganistan: Contemporary Pagan Community in Minnesota's Twin Cities* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2014), 30-7.

community grew quickly and became a major center of Witchcraft in America, even being nicknamed *Paganistan*.²²

Neopagan Witchcraft continued to grow rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s, and by 2000, Lewis states that “scholarly insiders have been able to estimate the size of the movement at around 300,000 serious adherents.”²³ In 2006, Clifton asserted that a conservative estimate of practitioners of Pagan Witchcraft in the early 2000s was about 800,000 persons.²⁴ Sociologist Helen Berger, working from census data and survey data, placed the number of American Pagans significantly lower, at about 134,000.²⁵ Admittedly, the solo and secretive nature of Witchcraft makes it difficult to count adherents. Whatever the total, Berger agrees that Paganism is growing in the United States.²⁶ In fact, one study concludes that Wicca and Paganism are the fastest growing religious categories in America.²⁷ Paganism seems to be especially popular among Millennials on college campuses.²⁸

Precursors to Wicca: British Occult Groups

The emergence of ritual magic groups, according to religion researcher J. Gordon Melton, “is understandable only in light of the blending of several traditions that emerged

²² Pizza, *Paganistan*, 2. Pizza provides a thorough ethnography of Paganistan.

²³ Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, xiii.

²⁴ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 11.

²⁵ Helen Berger, “Contemporary Paganism by the Numbers,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 153-7.

²⁶ Berger, “Contemporary Paganism by the Numbers,” 156.

²⁷ Gary F. Jensen, and Ashley Thompson, “Out of the Broom Closet: The Social Ecology of American Wicca,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (2008) 47 no. 4: 753-4.

²⁸ John Paul Ferguson, “More Students, Young Americans Turn to Paganism,” *The College Fix*, University of Notre Dame, Oct. 31, 2017.

forcefully in mid-nineteenth century England.”²⁹ Lewis points to British intellectuals combining Western traditions such as medieval Kabbalah, Tarot, and various magical and esoteric traditions with Eastern traditions such as Theosophy to form new Western occult groups.³⁰ Philip Davis, in his massive history of Western goddess worship, traces the development of dozens of esoteric, occult, and magical groups and individuals in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe.³¹ Five Western occult groups deserve attention as significant precursors to Wicca.

First, according to Lewis, the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* (SRIA) was founded in 1865 by Robert Wentworth Little as an offshoot of Masonic-Rosicrucian.³² The origins of Rosicrucianism allegedly go back to Christian Rosenkreutz (1378-1484). Whether historical or fictional, Melton describes that Rosenkreutz purportedly traveled from Spain to Arabia, learning a variety of esoteric and mystical practices, from Hinduism to Kabbalah, which he blended into Rosicrucian teachings.³³ Little blended older Rosicrucianism with Masonic and Eastern teachings to form SRIA. The result was a group practicing a blend of Eastern reincarnation, yoga, psychic, and meditative practices with Western spiritism, Masonic, and occult practices.³⁴

Second, the Theosophical Society was founded in New York by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) and Henry Olcott (1832-1907). Theosophy combined Western science

²⁹ J. Gordon Melton, *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 8th ed. (Detroit: Gale, Cengage Learning, 2009), 816.

³⁰ Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, xiv-xv.

³¹ Philip G. Davis, *Goddess Unmasked: The Rise of Neopagan Feminist Spiritualities* (Dallas: Spence Publishing, 1998), 198-240.

³² Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, xvi.

³³ Melton, *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 690-2.

³⁴ Melton, *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 690-2.

with Eastern spiritualism. According to Luhrmann, “Theosophy was claimed to be Tibetan spiritual teaching which was truly scientific and deeply spiritual.”³⁵ Henrik Bogdan asserts, “The Theosophy of Blavatsky was to a large extent a Western interpretation of Hinduism and Buddhism, and it was through Theosophy that many Westerners first came in contact with Eastern religious thought.”³⁶ Theosophy was exported to England, and the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society was formed in 1883.³⁷ Theosophy’s Indian spiritual philosophy did not connect with everyone, and “Anna Kingsford (once a Theosophist) founded the Hermetic Society in 1884 as a forum for her mixture of Christianity, Renaissance magic, Eastern mysticism, and late Victorian feminism.”³⁸ Theosophy’s major contribution to modern Witchcraft is the importing of Eastern spiritual ideas like reincarnation into a Western context.³⁹

Third, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (HOGD) was formed in 1888 by members of SRIA and the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society.⁴⁰ Following the Hermetic Society founded by Anna Kingsford, the founding of HOGD was partly a Western reaction to Eastern mysticism which permeated the Theosophical Society. Bogdan writes, “The Golden Dawn was actually created in part as a response to the Eastern emphasis of the Theosophical

³⁵ Luhrmann, *Persuasion of the Witch’s Craft*, 39.

³⁶ Henrik Bogdan, “The Influence of Aleister Crowley on Gerald Gardner and the Early Witchcraft Movement,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 103. See also, Philip Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs*, 41-2.

³⁷ Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, xvi. Lewis provides a brief but detailed historical description.

³⁸ Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch’s Craft*, 39.

³⁹ A conclusion reached by Kelly, *Inventing Witchcraft*, 43-4. See also Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*, 18. Gardner claims to believe in reincarnation “as most people do who have lived in the East.”

⁴⁰ Nevill Drury, “The Modern Magical Revival,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 30. Drury provides an extensive survey of the HOGD.

Society: the Golden Dawn was founded in 1888, a year after Blavatsky had settled in London.”⁴¹

All but one of the founding members of HOGD were active members of SRIA and Theosophy and were influenced by Eastern thought.⁴² Nevill Drury argues that the Western character of HOGD is especially clear in its dependence on Kabbalistic mysticism, medieval Tarot, and Hermetic magical traditions.⁴³

An Interesting factor that Davis points out, is that in both HOGD and Theosophy women were not only members but prominent members. The involvement of women is noteworthy given that traditional Rosicrucianism and Masonry were more patriarchal than most religious groups.⁴⁴ Davis accounts for the significant involvement of women in HOGD as more than a mere opportunity for women to be sex partners for men doing magic. He writes,

Here in the Golden Dawn, the first significant magical order to admit women alongside men, we find key elements of traditional esotericism, from Neoplatonic spirituality and divine immanence to ceremonial magic, all thoroughly blended with the Romantic idealization of women as spiritually pure channels of love, intuitively connected to nature. The GD and its successors and imitators were not just ‘any port in a storm’ to their serious female members; they were more like functioning temples of womanhood, where men had surrendered their spiritual autonomy.⁴⁵

Egalitarianism and feminism became powerful influences for future Witchcraft and Pagan groups, especially Wicca.

⁴¹ Bogdan, “The Influence of Aleister Crowley on Gerald Gardner,” 104.

⁴² Drury, “The Modern Magical Revival,” 30. Drury lists among the founding members: W. R. Woodman, A. F. A. Woodford, W. L. Westcott, and S. L. Mathers. All but Woodward had been members of SRIA.

⁴³ Drury, “The Modern Magical Revival,” 13-32. Drury seems to be writing an apologetic to show the Western origins of HOGD. Curiously, he barely mentions the Eastern influences that scholars like Eliade see as obvious.

⁴⁴ Davis, *Goddess Unmasked*, 249.

⁴⁵ Davis, *Goddess Unmasked*, 249-50.

More than any other British occult group, HOGD is viewed as a major influence on the formation of Wicca. Drury observes,

In terms of actual historical beginnings . . . the story of the 20th-century magical revival commences with the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, arguably the most influential esoteric organization in modern history. All modern occult perspectives—including Wicca, Goddess spirituality and the Thelemic magick of Aleister Crowley—owe a debt to the Golden Dawn for gathering together the threads of the Western esoteric tradition and initiating a transformative process that continues in the 21st century.⁴⁶

Crowley was HOGD's most famous and most scandalous member. He was initiated in 1898 and expelled in 1900.⁴⁷ Crowley and others who left HOGD formed other groups that also played a significant role as precursors to Wicca.⁴⁸ Kelly argues that the magical system used by modern Witchcraft can be traced directly to HOGD and SRIA and that these groups are major influences on modern Witchcraft.⁴⁹

Fourth, Carl Kellner (1850-1905) founded Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.) in the 1890s as a ritual sex magic group.⁵⁰ Bogdan notes that there is some debate about the founding of O.T.O. and prefers to see Theodor Reuss (1855-1923) as the founder in 1902, assisted by Kellner.⁵¹ Reuss was a former member of the Theosophical Society and Freemasonry.⁵² Bogdan refers to O.T.O. as an “irregular form of Freemasonry which admitted both men and women” and

⁴⁶ Drury, “The Modern Magical Revival,” 13.

⁴⁷ Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, 215. Lewis describes how Crowley was expelled for attempting to attack William Butler Yeats.

⁴⁸ Luhrmann, *Persuasion of the Witch's Craft*, 38-9.

⁴⁹ Kelly, *Inventing Witchcraft*, 46.

⁵⁰ Pointed out by Melton, *Melton's Encyclopedia of American Religions*, 817. See also, Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, 215.

⁵¹ Bogdan, “The Influence of Aleister Crowley on Gerald Gardner,” 90.

⁵² Bogdan, “The Influence of Aleister Crowley on Gerald Gardner,” 85.

focused on sexual magic.⁵³ After leaving HOGD, Crowley joined O.T.O. in 1904 and shortly after that became its leader. When Reuss died in 1923, Crowley became the Outer Head of the Order (OHO).⁵⁴ Crowley claims that his system of sex magic found in O.T.O. is based on his study of Eastern teachings.⁵⁵ As with SRIA, Theosophy, and HOGD, O.T.O. incorporated Eastern thought in a Western context. Bogdan cautions against seeing the practices in O.T.O. as simply Indian tantra. Rather, O.T.O. blended Eastern tantra within a Western occultic tradition. Bogdan argues,

The Eastern references in connection with the sexual magic of the O.T.O. . . . should not be interpreted as a *real* Tantric (sic) or Eastern origin of the sexual magic of the Order. Instead, the references should be interpreted in the occultist context which at this time was characterized by a fascination and admiration for the East. Eastern religious traditions, and in particular Hinduism, was widely held in occultist circles to be the oldest still existing religious tradition and the source of a perennial wisdom to be found in the West.⁵⁶

O.T.O. is a sexual magic occult group that incorporated Eastern teachings in a Western context.

Fifth, the Alpha et Omega (AEO) was founded between 1901 and 1905 by Samuel Mathers (1854-1918) and John William Brodie-Innes (1848-1923) after the breakup of HOGD in 1901.⁵⁷ When Mathers died, his widow Moina Mathers (1865-1928) took over leadership of AEO. In 1919, AEO received its most famous member, Dion Fortune (born Violet Firth), who was initiated by Moina Mathers. Hutton argues that Fortune's writings make her the foremost female figure in British occultism and a major influence on the formation of Pagan witchcraft.⁵⁸

⁵³ Bogdan, "The Influence of Aleister Crowley on Gerald Gardner," 85-6.

⁵⁴ As described by Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, 215.

⁵⁵ Asserted by Bogdan, "The Influence of Aleister Crowley on Gerald Gardner," 93.

⁵⁶ Bogdan, "The Influence of Aleister Crowley on Gerald Gardner," 103.

⁵⁷ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 81.

⁵⁸ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 180-1.

The five groups, SRIA, Theosophy, HOGD, O.T.O., and AEO, provided a network for Western occultists to experiment with blending Eastern religious and sexual magic with Western occult magic in Europe from 1865 to 1925. Through these occult groups, five individuals rose to prominence as precursors to Wicca.

Precursors to Wicca: British Occult Individuals

The five individuals who had a significant influence on the formation of modern Pagan Witchcraft are Charles Godfrey Leland (1824-1903), Aleister Crowley (1875-1947), Dion Fortune (1890-1946), Robert Graves (1895-1985), and Margaret Murray (1862-1963).⁵⁹ Hutton states that Crowley, Firth, Graves, and Murray “had a direct and obvious influence on modern pagan witchcraft and have been acknowledged by many modern witches as sources of inspiration.”⁶⁰ Doreen Valiente (1922-1999), a close associate of Gerald Gardner, points to the influence of Leland, Murray, and Graves as the most significant forerunners to modern witchcraft.⁶¹ Clifton points out that the main significance of these individuals for modern Witchcraft is their writings.⁶² Witchcraft is primarily a textual tradition, not an organized religion. The five individuals who serve as significant precursors to Wicca were introduced in

⁵⁹ Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 19-33. Valiente lists three forerunners to modern witchcraft: Leland, Murray, and Graves. Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 171-201. Hutton lists four influences on modern witchcraft: Crowley, Fortune, Graves, and Murray. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 59. Adler says Murray, Leland, and Graves were “very influential in the modern Witchcraft revival.” Drury, “The Modern Magical Revival,” 45-50. Drury describes the notable roles of Crowley and Fortune as forerunners of modern Wicca.

⁶⁰ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 171.

⁶¹ Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 19-33. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 59. Curiously, Valiente and Adler do not include Crowley as an important forerunner, perhaps because of his notoriously negative behaviors and reputation for extreme sex magic.

⁶² Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 13.

the literature review in chapter two; here, their occult involvement and influence on Wicca is explored.

While Charles Leland is an American, his extensive travels and work in Europe place him in the British occult movement. He authored several books on Witchcraft, the most important being *Aradia: The Gospel of the Witches*, published in 1899.⁶³ In *Aradia*, Leland claims to have been initiated into an Italian witch cult in 1886. The cult taught that the most important deity is the goddess Diana. Diana had a brother named Lucifer and a daughter named Aradia. Diana sent Aradia to be the first witch on earth and to teach witchcraft to those who would listen. Aradia taught her followers to meet on full moons and worship Diana in secret meetings called an *esbat* and to eat a sacred meal of cakes and wine.⁶⁴ Leland's terms and descriptions of Witchcraft as the "Old Religion" were followed by Murray and Gardner.⁶⁵ Additionally, Magliocco argues that Leland influenced modern Witchcraft in the following ways: treating witchcraft as a religion, calling for witches to meet under a full moon, asserting the name "Aradia" for the goddess, providing the charge of the goddess, insisting upon the practice of naked worship, and equating peasant culture with Witchcraft.⁶⁶ Leland is a significant precursor to Gardnerian Wicca.

Edward Alexander Crowley was born in Warwickshire, England to a wealthy father and to a mother devoted to a conservative Christian denomination called the Plymouth Brethren.

⁶³ Charles Leland, *Aradia: The Gospel of the Witches*, ed. Tarl Warwick (Milton Keynes, UK: Lightning Source Ltd, 2018).

⁶⁴ Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 19-24.

⁶⁵ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 58.

⁶⁶ Magliocco, *Witching Culture*, 46.

The young Crowley was raised in an all-male boarding school where he became an active homosexual. He became so rebellious that his mother called him “the Beast 666.”⁶⁷ Crowley attended Cambridge where he experimented with sex and magic, which ultimately led to him leaving without a degree. His father died when he was young and left him a substantial inheritance allowing him to forego work and explore sex magic. In 1898, Crowley was initiated at the age of 23 into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (HOGD).⁶⁸ Crowley’s abrasive personality led to him being dismissed from HOGD in 1900, which in turn led internal strife and to HOGD’s eventual collapse in 1901. Crowley married Rose Kelly in 1904 and traveled to Egypt. After his trip to Egypt, Crowley joined the Ordo Templi Orientis (O.T.O.), an organization that shared his interests in tantra sex magic. Crowley became the leader of O.T.O. between 1904 and 1912.⁶⁹ Crowley moved to America in 1905, and from 1914 to 1919, he brought O.T.O. to the United States.⁷⁰ Due to Crowley’s extreme sexual magic views, O.T.O. was banned in England in 1923.⁷¹ As Davis puts it, Crowley “reveled in the press descriptions of him as ‘the wickedest man in the world.’”⁷² The Eastern influences on Crowley are unmistakable. In his own words, he sought “to bring oriental wisdom to Europe and to restore paganism in a purer form.”⁷³ Crowley writes,

⁶⁷ Davis, *Goddess Unmasked*, 251.

⁶⁸ Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, 141. In describing Crowley, I am indebted to Lewis.

⁶⁹ Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, 215.

⁷⁰ Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, 215.

⁷¹ Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, 215.

⁷² Davis, *Goddess Unmasked*, 253.

⁷³ Aleister Crowley, *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley: An Autohagiography*, 5th ed. (New York: Penguin, 1989), 839.

I also studied all the varieties of Asiatic philosophy, especially with regard to the practical questions of spiritual development, the Sufi doctrines, and *Upanishads*, the *Sankhya*, *Veda* and *Vedanta*, the *Bhagarad-Gita* [sic] and *Purana*, *The Dhammapada*, and many other classics, together with numerous writings on the Tantra and Yoga of such men as Patanjali, Vivekananda, etc. etc. Not a few of these teachings are as yet wholly unknown to scholars. I made the scope of my studies as comprehensive as possible omitting no school of thought however unimportant or repugnant.⁷⁴

Crowley's influence on Wicca is unmistakable, even if Wiccans are often uncomfortable looking to Crowley as a precursor.⁷⁵ Crowley's famous dictum "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" seems to be an early version of the popular Wiccan Rede, "An' it harm none, do what ye will." Crowley's spelling of magick with "k" to distinguish ritual magick from stage magic is still used by many Wiccans today. Crowley's famous definition of magick as the "art of causing change in conformity to will" also influenced the Wiccan view of magic. Perhaps Crowley's most significant legacy for Wicca was his focus on ritual sexual magic.

Dion Fortune was initiated by Moina Mathers into Alpha et Omega (AEO), a HOGD offshoot. Like Crowley, Fortune went on to establish her own meditative group in 1922 called The Christian Mystic Lodge of the Theosophical Society, later renamed The Fraternity of the Inner Light.⁷⁶ Utilizing a Masonic system, the Inner Light initiated members through three degree levels of initiation.⁷⁷ In distinction from Crowley, who had a Cambridge education and traveled widely, Fortune had little education and no apparent interest in traveling.⁷⁸ Fortune may be described as an unorthodox Christian mystic who believed sex belonged in marriage and that

⁷⁴ Aleister Crowley, *Magick Without Tears* (Tempe, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1991), 231-2.

⁷⁵ Kelly, *Inventing Witchcraft*, 80-1. According to Kelly, Doreen Valiente told Gardner to erase Crowley's influence on Wicca "for the simple reason that Crowley's name and reputation stank to the heavens."

⁷⁶ Drury, "The Modern Magical Revival," 47. My comments are based on Drury's historical sketch.

⁷⁷ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 181. Hutton details the Masonic initiation system.

⁷⁸ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 181. I am indebted to Hutton in my description of Fortune.

homosexual relationships were wrong.⁷⁹ In her later years, she appears to have abandoned Christ and turned more explicitly to goddess devotion. Fortune wrote dozens of books and articles that contributed to the rise of goddess devotion in Pagan Witchcraft.⁸⁰

Robert Graves, a respected writer in academic circles, wrote *The White Goddess: A Historical Grammar of Poetic Myth* in 1948.⁸¹ According to Valiente, Graves argued that “the original deity worshiped in Europe and the countries around the Mediterranean was not a god but a goddess. She was the goddess of the moon and poetry.”⁸² Further, Valiente notes that the magical number thirteen, according to Graves, is based on the thirteen lunar months, or thirteen moons or *esbats* when the goddess is to be worshiped.⁸³ Graves is viewed as a “sloppy scholar” by Adler, but one whose ideas about the goddess were inspirational to many modern Wiccans.⁸⁴

The respected Egyptologist Margaret Murray argued in her books that Witchcraft should be identified with the worship of Diana. Curiously, according to Valiente, Murray never mentions Leland’s works, but insists that she is basing her research on ancient traditions.⁸⁵ Yet, Murray follows Leland’s idea that European witchcraft is a surviving mystery religion from ancient times. Murray also follows Leland in describing local witch covens holding esbat meetings on full moons. Murray further follows Leland’s idea of a coven as consisting of thirteen

⁷⁹ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 182.

⁸⁰ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 183-8.

⁸¹ Robert Graves, *The White Goddess: A Poetic Grammar of Poetic Myth* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1948).

⁸² Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 27.

⁸³ Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 28.

⁸⁴ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 59-60.

⁸⁵ Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 24.

witches meeting to do magic. Valiente suggests that the idea of a thirteen-member coven may have led to the popular superstitious dread of the number thirteen in the West.⁸⁶ Unlike Leland, Murray describes four great festivals in which several covens gather for special meetings: Candlemas (February 2), Walpurgis Night (April 2), Lammas (August 1), and Halloween (October 31). Valiente notes that “present-day witches observe all four of these ritual occasions as their Great Sabbats.”⁸⁷ According to Magliocco, Murray’s major contributions to modern Witchcraft are the ideas of Witchcraft as a revived ancient fertility religion; the terms *coven*, *esbat*, and *sabbat*; the circle dance; sexual relations as part of fertility magic; Christian misunderstandings about the Witch trials; the idea of Witchcraft as Celtic; and the persistence of Witchcraft in medieval Europe.⁸⁸

Adler sums up the influences of Murray, Leland, Graves, and Gardner on modern Witchcraft:

If much modern scholarship has dismissed Murray as a crank, Leland as a satirist, and Graves as a writer of poetic fancy, Gerald B. Gardner is usually put down as a “fraud” or a “dirty old man.” And yet it is impossible to understand the revival of Witchcraft without coming to terms with Gardner and his influence – an influence that is much greater than one would think from reading about his life or reading his works.⁸⁹

As mentioned above, Gardner is the clear founder of Wicca and modern Witchcraft. Therefore,

⁸⁶ Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 26.

⁸⁷ Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 25.

⁸⁸ Magliocco, *Witching Culture*, 47-8.

⁸⁹ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 60.

his life and influence have rightly received a great deal of attention.⁹⁰ Gardner's legacy as Wicca's founder deserves special attention.

The Birth of Wicca: Gerald Gardner

Gerald Brosseau Gardner (1884-1964) was born in Lancashire, England. He did not receive a university education but worked as a British Civil Servant in the Far East. In 1927, at the age of 43, he married Donna Rosedale.⁹¹ He retired in 1936 and settled in an area of Hampshire, England known as New Forest. Gardner's life-long interest in the occult led him to collect many magical implements and pamphlets from his time in the Far East.⁹² Kelly describes that Gardner became active in the occult community in New Forest (involving Theosophists, Rosicrucians, and Co-Masons) and met a woman named Dorothy Clutterbuck Fordham.⁹³ Gardner claims that he was initiated into a surviving Witch coven where he learned Witchcraft but was forbidden to describe everything publicly, though he was asked to photograph some rites.⁹⁴ Gardner describes these Witches as "people who call themselves the Wica,⁹⁵ the 'wise people,' who practice the age-old rites and who have, along with much superstition and herbal

⁹⁰ For detailed and scholarly treatments of Gardner see J. L. Bracelin, *Gerald Gardner: Witch* (London: Octagon Press, 1960), and Philip Heselton, *Wiccan Roots: Gerald Gardner and the Modern Witchcraft Revival* (Somerset, UK: Capall Bann Publishing, 2000). Kelly, *Inventing Witchcraft*, is a scholarly and critical study of Gardner's life and the founding of Wicca. See also: Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 205-40; Davis, *Goddess Unmasked*, 327-43; Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 60-70; Magliocco, *Witching Culture*, 48-54; Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 14-8. I will not seek to repeat or assess the massive research on Gardner's life, but simply overview the common story of Gardner as the founder of Wicca.

⁹¹ It should be noted that Donna did not participate in Gardner's occult activities. Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 213.

⁹² Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*, 18.

⁹³ Kelly, *Inventing Witchcraft*, 61.

⁹⁴ Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*, 13, 24-6, 40-2, 64, 73, 138, 155-7.

⁹⁵ Gardner spelled (or misspelled) Wicca with one "c."

knowledge, preserved an occult teaching and working processes which they themselves think to be magic or witchcraft.”⁹⁶ According to Gardner, Witches learned their eclectic craft from European history, African voodoo, Kabbalistic magic, Freemasonry, Roman and Greek mystery religions, and the Near and Far East.⁹⁷

Whether Gardner’s claims of an existing witch coven are true, or if he, Dorothy, Dolores North, Louis Wilkinson, Dafo, and perhaps a few others formed a Witch-cult modeled after Murray’s 1921 book is debated by scholars.⁹⁸ What is clear is that Gardner and his associates formed the New Forest Coven in 1939. They created rituals that formed the basis of Gardner’s *Book of Shadows* (a set of liturgies), which was later edited and improved by Valiente.⁹⁹ Drury observes that an important Gardner innovation was Witches working ‘sky-clad’ or nude.¹⁰⁰ Drury cites Francis King’s criticism that Gardner was a “somasochist with a taste for flagellation and marked voyeuristic tendencies.”¹⁰¹ Drury thinks that King probably overemphasizes this point.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*, 102.

⁹⁷ Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*, 93-6, 135.

⁹⁸ Magliocco, *Witching Culture*, 48-54. Magliocco provides an excellent overview of the scholarly debate.

⁹⁹ Kelly, *Inventing Witchcraft*, 80-7. Drury, 58-60. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 60-1. Valiente describes the process of her rewriting Gardner’s liturgies, “Gerald began to realize that he had a real chance of reviving the Old Religion, and he wanted to gain popular acceptance for it. I pointed out to him that in my opinion, he would never succeed in doing this so long as the influence of the late Aleister Crowley was so prevalent and obvious within the cult. Crowley’s name stank . . . Gerald’s reaction was, ‘Well, if you think you can do any better, go ahead.’ I accepted the challenge and set out to rewrite the ‘Book of Shadows’, cutting out the Crowleyanity as much as I could and trying to bring it back to what I felt was, if not so elaborate as Crowley’s phraseology, at least our own and in our own words.”

¹⁰⁰ Drury, “The Modern Magical Revival,” 60.

¹⁰¹ Francis King, *Ritual Magic in England* (London: Spearman, 1970), quoted by Drury, “The Modern Magical Revival,” 61.

¹⁰² Drury, “The Modern Magical Revival,” 61.

In 1939, Gardner joined the Folklore Society in which he became friends with Margaret Murray, who would later write the forward to Gardner's *Witchcraft Today*.¹⁰³ Gardner claims to have been a member of O.T.O. when he met Crowley.¹⁰⁴ Drury asserts that Gardner had several meetings with Crowley before Crowley's death in 1947.¹⁰⁵ Crowley's influence on Gardner has been well-documented.¹⁰⁶ In 1952, Doreen Valiente described meeting Gardner in the home of a woman named Dafo, and noted that Gardner gave her a copy of his book, *High Magic's Aid*.¹⁰⁷ In 1953, Valiente was initiated by Gardner into his coven and later became his high priestess.¹⁰⁸ In 1964, shortly before his death, Gardner initiated Raymond Buckland to bring Gardnerian Witchcraft to the United States.

Gardner's lasting influence on modern Witchcraft involves casting a circle, raising a cone of power, the preeminence of the goddess, ritual sex, an egalitarian non-dogmatic approach to ritual structure and leadership, working magic, creativity, liturgies, and many terms and phrases.¹⁰⁹ Modern Witchcraft as it is practiced today was invented by Gardner.

¹⁰³ Noted by Drury. Drury, "The Modern Magical Revival," 59.

¹⁰⁴ Gardner, *Witchcraft Today*, 41.

¹⁰⁵ Drury, "The Modern Magical Revival," 59.

¹⁰⁶ Bogdan, "The Influence of Aleister Crowley on Gerald Gardner," (81-107). Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 47. Valiente described the various ways Gardner was dependent on Crowley, something Gardner was not too pleased about.

¹⁰⁷ Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 37-9. Gerald Gardner, *High Magic's Aid* (New York: Michael Houghton, 1949).

¹⁰⁸ Valiente, *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, 40. Drury, "The Modern Magical Revival," 59.

¹⁰⁹ Gardner's influence on specific rituals is discussed by; Kelly, *Inventing Witchcraft*, 268-80. Davis, *Goddess Unmasked*, 337-41. Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, xxiv.

The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in America

In his celebrated work, *Mystics and Messiahs*, Philip Jenkins observes, “Some eras were particularly fertile for religious innovation.”¹¹⁰ Jenkins argues that the cultural unrest in America during the 1920s and 1970s provided especially rich climates for new religions.¹¹¹ As Gardnerian Wicca from England entered the hippie movement in America, new Pagan and Witchcraft groups formed. Drury explains,

In the United States the late-1960s psychedelic counterculture, associated especially with the Bay Area around San Francisco, fueled a fascination with diverse wisdom traditions and various forms of ‘alternative spirituality’ and esoteric teachings from around the world. The psychedelic revolution itself was short-lived but in its aftermath, during the early 1970s, the eclectic fusion of Eastern mysticism, Western esoterica, indigenous spirituality, metaphysics and popular self-help psychology, gave rise in turn to what is now known as the New Age movement. This was a socio-religious movement with identifiable characteristics, and its international influence is still felt today. Within the context of this burgeoning ‘alternative spirituality,’ variations on imported Gardnerian witchcraft began to emerge in the United States in the 1970s. In particular, the blending of feminism and modern witchcraft gave rise to a more broad-based spiritual movement known as Goddess worship or Goddess spirituality.¹¹²

Beyond the New Age movement and Goddess spirituality, Clifton emphasizes how Americans transformed British Wicca into a nature religion that supported environmentalist causes in the 1960s and 1970s. Clifton asserts:

When the new Pagan religion of Wicca arrived in the United States from England in the 1960s, it presented itself as the Old Religion, the ancestral Paganism of the British Isles, and as a mystery cult of both fertility and magic. Americans, in turn, would add the label of ‘nature religion’ or ‘earth-based religion,’ which fit well with the rising environmentalism of the mid-twentieth century and also with the new Paganism’s roots in the Romantic literary movement as well as in Neoplatonic astrology and magic.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs*, 7.

¹¹¹ Jenkins, *Mystics and Messiahs*, 8.

¹¹² Drury, “The Modern Magical Revival,” 71-3.

¹¹³ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 41.

Clifton argues that Earth Day 1970 was a watershed moment for the Pagan movement to see itself as an earth-based spirituality movement.¹¹⁴

Neopagan groups began forming at a high rate in America during the social upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s. Clifton, Adler, and Lewis describe the following Pagan groups as starting in this era.¹¹⁵ In 1962, Tim Zell, Lance Christie, and their wives founded the Church of All Worlds in Fulton, Missouri. In 1963, Raymond and Rosemarie Buckland brought Gardnerian Wicca to Long Island, New York. In the early 1960s, Alex and Maxine Sanders launched the Alexandrian tradition of Witchcraft, which according to Adler was like Gardnerian.¹¹⁶ In 1964, the Reformed Druids of North America was started by students at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. In 1967, the New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn, NROOGD, was established by Aiden Kelly and friends in San Francisco, California. Also, in 1967, Frederick and Svetlana Adams formed Feraferia in Pasadena, California. In 1968, Gavin Yvonne Frost started the Church and School of Wicca in Hinton, West Virginia. In 1969, the Viking Brotherhood, later named Asatru Free Assembly, was a Norse Heathen group started by Stephen McNallen. Also, in 1969, the Odinist Fellowship was started as a Heathen group by Else Christenson.¹¹⁷ In 1970, George Patterson started Georgian Wicca in Bakersfield, California. In 1971, Zsuzsanna “Z” Budapest founded the Susan B. Anthony feminist witch coven for women

¹¹⁴ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 43.

¹¹⁵ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 8-10. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 118-30. Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, xxxii-vi.

¹¹⁶ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 120.

¹¹⁷ Jeremy Blain and Robert J. Wallis, “Heathentry,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 413-31.

in southern California. In 1972, the Covenant of the Goddess (GoG)¹¹⁸ was founded in California. In 1978, the Radical Faeries was founded as a gay Pagan movement by Arthur Evans in Tucson, Arizona.

In addition to the formation of these Pagan groups, Clifton notes the following Pagan activity in American culture.¹¹⁹ In 1962, the influential Pagan magazine, *Green Egg*, was first published by Tim Zell and continued until 1976. In 1964, Joseph Wilson began publishing a newsletter titled *The Waxing Moon*. In 1968, the Council of Themis was established as a Pagan umbrella organization in America with Feraferia, Church of All Worlds, and Ordo Templi Astartes. In 1970, the first Earth Day was celebrated.¹²⁰ In 1972, the Council of Earth Religions replaced the Council of Themis, and Llewellyn Publications sponsored the first “Gnosticon” gathering of Pagans in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 1973, Herman Slater began publishing the magazine *Earth Religion News* in New York City. In 1974, *Playboy* magazine covered the Gnostic Aquarian Festival hosted by Llewellyn Publications in Minnesota. In 1979, *People* magazine profiled two witches, Jim Allen and Selena Fox, of Circle Sanctuary in Wisconsin. In 1979, Pan Pagan Festival held its first gathering on a farm in Indiana. Adler describes that Witchcraft in America was firmly established in twenty years and grew from a few adherents into a movement of over ten thousand.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ In Pagan literature, Covenant of the Goddess is abbreviated CoG.

¹¹⁹ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 8-10.

¹²⁰ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 8-10. Clifton points to this as the significant moment where Wicca became an earth-spirituality.

¹²¹ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 108.

During the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, Pagans published many significant books.¹²² Pagan books during this period focused on introducing magic and Paganism as a movement or a collection of movements. Clifton has rightly observed that Pagan and Wiccan thought has developed in the United States through a rich textual tradition and not primarily through organizations.¹²³

During the 1980s and 1990s, Lewis estimates that the American Pagan movement grew to 300,000 adherents.¹²⁴ Pagan books during this period focused on practical how-to guides for those interested in practicing Paganism, scholarly discussions within Paganism, and ethnographical studies.¹²⁵

In the twenty-first century, American Paganism came of age as a polyaffiliated world religion. Pagan books in this period have focused on scholarly discussions within Paganism,

¹²² Significant Pagan books published during the 1960s and 1970s are Isaac Bonewits, *Real Magic* (Berkeley: Creative Arts Book Company, 1971). Doreen Valiente, *An ABC of Witchcraft: Past and Present* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1973). Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*.

¹²³ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 3. While conceding Clifton's point, the role of occult and metaphysical bookstores facilitating the spread of Wicca and Paganism was crucial during this period.

¹²⁴ Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, xiii.

¹²⁵ Significant Pagan books published during the 1980s and 1990s are Janet and Stewart Farrar, *The Witches Way* (London: Robert Hale, 1984). Raymond Buckland, *Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1986). Stuart Piggott, *The Druids* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986). Scott Cunningham, *Wicca for the Solitary Practitioner* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1988). Scott Cunningham, *Living Wicca* (St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications, 1993). James R. Lewis, ed., *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996). Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft*. Davis, *Goddess Unmasked*. Valiente, *The Rebirth of Magic*. Graham Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism: Listening People, Speaking Earth* (New York: New York University Press, 1997). Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*. Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*. Helen A. Berger, *A Community of Witches: Contemporary Neo-Paganism and Witchcraft in the United States* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999).

ethnographical studies, and Paganism as a world religion.¹²⁶

The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in the Twin Cities

As noted above, the Pagan community in Minnesota is called Paganistan.¹²⁷

Approximately 20,000 Pagans live in Paganistan, placing it alongside San Francisco, New Orleans, New York City, and Salem, Massachusetts as one of the major centers for Paganism in the United States.¹²⁸ John Mayer, a religion researcher in the Twin Cities, lists 334 witch-covens in Minnesota, by far the most of any state in the United States.¹²⁹

The question of why Paganistan developed as a major center for American Paganism is debated by scholars. Twin Cities Pagans see themselves differently than the East Coast Wiccan community in New York, which they understand to be more traditional, intellectual, less political, and more heterosexual. Yet, according to Pizza, Twin Cities Pagans also see themselves differently than the West Coast Wiccan community in San Francisco, which they understand to be more progressive, mystical, political, and aggressively feminist and

¹²⁶ Significant Pagan books published in the twenty-first century include: Magliocco, *Witching Culture*; Kelly, *Inventing Witchcraft*; Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*; Pizza and Lewis, *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*; Pizza, *Paganistan*; Gus DiZerega, *Pagans & Christians: The Personal Spiritual Experience* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2001); Michael York, *Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Jenny Blain, Douglas Ezzy, Graham Harvey, eds., *Researching Paganisms* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004); Hugh B. Urban, *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic, and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006); Hugh B. Urban, *New Age, Neopagan, & New Religious Movements: Alternative Spirituality in Contemporary America* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015); Susan Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld: An Anthropology* (New York: Oxford International Publishers, 2000); Sarah M. Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Joyce and River Higginbotham, *ChristoPaganism: An Inclusive Path* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2009).

¹²⁷ Tim Miejan, “2018 Paganicon: An Interview on Paganistan’s Big Event, with Laurie Froberg,” *The Edge: Holistic Living* (March 2018), 18. Froberg notes that the “name Paganistan was coined by one of our elders, Steven Posch” in the 1970s.

¹²⁸ Miejan, “2018 Paganicon” 16. Froberg is a respected elder with knowledge of Paganicon.

¹²⁹ John A. Mayer, *CityView Report: Twin Cities*, 16th ed. (Minneapolis: City Vision, 2015), 26–7.

homosexual, rooted in the Haight-Ashbury scene in the mid to late 1960s.¹³⁰ Twin Cities Pagans see themselves as their own unique Pagan community. Pizza describes the culture well when she writes,

Paganistan's lore, in addition to its history, is characterized just as much by the legends of Scandinavian grandmothers in the kitchen growing up, Lake Wobegon stories' stereotyping, Lutherans-turned-Pagans who will have potlucks on freezing days complete with "hot dishes" (Minnesotan colloquialism for casseroles), as well as gradually absorbed lore and sacred stories of the local Ojibwe and Dakota nations.¹³¹

Twin Cities Pagans developed a bit of attitude toward East and West Pagan communities viewing the Midwest as "flyover country" and constructed their own innovative Pagan traditions.¹³²

Paganistan received the impetus it needed when the owner of Llewellyn Publications, Carl Weschcke, opened the Gnostica Bookstore specializing in the occult and witchcraft in 1970. More importantly, from 1971 to 1976, Weschcke and Gnostica sponsored an annual gathering of Occultists, Witches, and Pagans called Gnosticon. This event was marketed nationally and drew hundreds of Pagans from across America to Minnesota. Pizza observes that "the influence of Llewellyn Publications and the Gnosticon events putting the Twin Cities on the occult map is immeasurable."¹³³ Indeed, I have spoken to several Pagans who moved to the Twin Cities because of the apparent Pagan revival occurring in the Twin Cities in the 1970s.¹³⁴ On the other

¹³⁰ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 31.

¹³¹ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 32.

¹³² Pizza, *Paganistan*, 32-4. Pizza describes Midwest Pagans as feisty and independent.

¹³³ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 113.

¹³⁴ Coffee Cauldron, November 2017. Volkhvy and Maggie Sterba, and Robin Reyburn all told me that they moved to Minnesota in the 1970s because of the Wiccan revival going on in the Twin Cities.

hand, according to Froberg, the popularity of the Gnosticon conferences helped make Llewelyn Publications the largest independent occult publisher in the world.¹³⁵

Another event that Weschcke sponsored was the formation of the American Council of Witches. In the fall of 1973, Weschcke invited seventy-three Witches from different traditions to Minneapolis to form the Council. Paganistan member Laurie Froberg proudly describes that “in 1973 the first American Council of Witches was formed, and the Council convened at the first Great American Witchcraft in 1974, right here in Minnesota.”¹³⁶ Over the winter the Witches corresponded in an “attempt to create an ecumenical definition of modern Wicca that would be acceptable to many traditions.”¹³⁷ The Council of American Witches held the Spring meeting on April 11-14, 1974 in Minneapolis and hammered out a statement of principles.¹³⁸ Unfortunately, soon after the statement was adopted, differences emerged. According to Adler, several other groups of Witches across the nation tried to define modern Witchcraft, attempts that also eventually failed.¹³⁹

Pizza speculates about “Minnesota-nice” and Midwestern eclecticism being factors for the growth of Paganistan.¹⁴⁰ Minnesotan Pagans are indeed eclectic and religiously diverse, adapting elements from Gardnerian, Alexandrian, Dianic, Fairy, Druid, Norse, and Heathen

¹³⁵ Miejan, “2018 Paganicon,” 18.

¹³⁶ Miejan, “2018 Paganicon,” 18.

¹³⁷ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 95.

¹³⁸ Appendix 2 presents the “Principles of Wiccan Belief” as presented by Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 97-9.

¹³⁹ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 99-105.

¹⁴⁰ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 113-5.

traditions with their indigenous occult traditions to form a uniquely Midwestern tradition of Paganism that Pizza calls polyaffiliation.¹⁴¹ Pizza explains,

Paganism's cultural norm . . . is polyaffiliation, the sort of swearing allegiance to one tradition that was common in decades past is of little interest anymore to modern Pagans—especially to feisty innovators like those in Paganistan. The desires to address multi-ethnic identity, fluid identities of gender and sexuality and exposure to many categories of religious praxis and knowledge by virtue of living in a major pair of cities are solved by dissolving firm barriers of personal Pagan identity and making that identity more complex, fluid and permeable.¹⁴²

Pizza's observations about polyaffiliation is a helpful way to view Paganistan's success. Perhaps one of the significant factors in Paganistan's growth is the way in which Pagans work together organizationally. *Pagan Pride Day* is an annual festival held since 1998. *Paganicon* is an annual Pagan conference held since 2011.¹⁴³

In summary, the success of the Pagan community in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul is due to several factors. Pagans in Paganistan work together in a polyaffiliated network. Llewelyn Publications in the Twin Cities is the largest independent occult publisher in the world and is a frequent sponsor of Pagan events and conferences. Pagan groups are active in organizing events like Pagan Pride Day and Paganicon. The high concentration of Witch-covens in Minnesota and, perhaps, Minnesota-nice are factors in the success of Paganistan. Regardless of how one accounts for the success of the Minnesotan Pagan community, Paganistan is one of the nation's largest and most vibrant Witchcraft communities in the United States today.

¹⁴¹ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 73-5.

¹⁴² Pizza, *Paganistan*, 75.

¹⁴³ Micjan, "2018 Paganicon," 16.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEMPORARY WICCA AS A POLYAFFILIATED PAGAN MOVEMENT

From the days of Gerald Gardner to the early 1970s, Wicca was a secretive religion with its beliefs, rituals, and magic only known to the properly initiated coven members. Only a high-priestess could initiate a new male witch, and only a high-priest could initiate a new female witch into a coven. Gardnerian Wicca and Wiccan denominations in the 1960s had three levels of initiation, following the Masonic model. Strict control over who was initiated and introduced to beliefs, rituals, and magical practices maintained a cohesive core to the Wiccan movement. In the early 1970s, several factors set in motion a process to erode this cohesive core over the following decades. Today, the cohesive core, if one can still claim one exists, is Pagans affirming Pagans to create whatever sort of individualized belief system they like from multiple Pagan or religious sources. Instead of being initiated into one secret society of Pagans, today, Pagans freely see themselves as affiliating with multiple groups at the same time, hence, polyaffiliation. Murphy Pizza writes, “Paganism’s cultural norm, I argue, is polyaffiliation, the sort of swearing allegiance to one tradition that was common in decades past is of little interest anymore to modern Pagans.”¹ Yet, if every individual Pagan practices polyaffiliation, what becomes of the older traditions that demanded initiation, secrecy, and fidelity? I will explore that question in

¹ Murphy Pizza, *Paganistan: Contemporary Pagan Community in Minnesota’s Twin Cities* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2014), 75.

chapter five. In this chapter I will explore what happened in the early 1970s, and afterward, to erode the cohesive core of Gardnerian Wicca. I will also explore some qualitative and quantitative results of polyaffiliation today.

The Erosion of Gardnerian Wicca as the Cohesive Core of Paganism

In the early 1970s, at least eight factors contributed to the erosion of Gardnerian Wicca being the cohesive center of the modern Pagan movement. Like a cultural tidal wave, the following eight factors swept over the Gardnerian Wiccan movement in the early 1970s: new Wiccan denominations, the publishing of Lady Sheba's Grimoire,² self-initiation and solitary practitionership, environmentalism, feminism, homosexuality, the proliferation of Pagan literature, and Gnosticon conferences held in Minneapolis.

The first factor to erode Gardnerian Wicca as the core of modern Paganism was the proliferation of Wiccan denominations and Pagan groups. During the 1960s and 1970s, numerous Wiccan and Pagan groups were started in what is sometimes called the Pagan Revival in America. Combing lists from Chas Clifton³ and James Lewis,⁴ the following groups began in the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1960s, Robert Cochrane started Traditional or Hereditary Wicca, Alex and Maxine Sanders started Alexandrian Wicca, students at Carleton College started- the Reformed Druids of North America, Aiden Kelly formed the New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn (NROOGD), Frederick and Svetlana Adams formed Feraferia, Gavin Yvonne

² A Grimoire, or Book of Shadows, is a Witch's personal book of spells and is traditionally kept secret.

³ Chas S. Clifton, *Her Hidden Children: The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in America* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2006), 7-10.

⁴ James R. Lewis, *Witchcraft Today: An Encyclopedia of Wiccan and NeoPagan Traditions* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 329-36.

Frost started the Church and School of Wicca, Stephen McNallen formed the Viking Brotherhood, a Norse Heathen group, Else Christenson formed the Odinist Fellowship as a Heathen group,⁵ Anton LeVey started the Church of Satan, and Oberlin Zell founded the Church of All Worlds. In the 1970s, Donald Harrison, Elaine Amiro, and Harold Moss started The Church of the Eternal Source, George Patterson started Georgian Wicca, Leo Martello began the Witches International Craft Associates (WICA), Jessie Bell started American Celtic Wicca, Zsuzsanna Budapest founded feminist or Dianic Wicca, Daniel Inesse started The Tayu Fellowship, John Score began the Pagan Front, Richard Clark began the Calumet Pagan Temple, Nelson White began the Temple of Truth (TOT), Selena Fox and Jim Alan started Circle Sanctuary Wicca, Arthur Evans started the Radical Faeries, Ray Buckland started Seax-Wicca, and Michael Aquino started the Temple of Set. With numerous denominations and groups came an expanded core idea, beyond simply Gardnerian Wicca, of what it meant to be Pagan.

The second factor to erode Gardnerian Wicca as the core of modern Paganism was the publishing of Lady Sheba's Grimoire. In 1972, Jessie Wicker Bell (1920-2002), known as Lady Sheba, was the first Wiccan to publish her personal *Book of Shadows*.⁶ The Gardnerian practice was to reveal Wiccan liturgies only to duly initiated witches. Bell broke with Gardnerian tradition and made Wiccan rituals available to the public. As Farrar and Bone lament, once the proverbial "cat was out of the bag," others published their liturgies, rituals, and magical spells, so

⁵ Jeremy Blain and Robert J. Wallis, "Heathenry," in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 413-31. Blain and Wallis provide an excellent overview of Heathenry.

⁶ Jessie Wicker Bell, *The Grimoire of Lady Sheba* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn, 1972).

that today virtually nothing is secretive any longer.⁷ The public nature of liturgies and ritual eroded the secretive and controlling nature of Gardnerian Wicca for other Pagan groups.

The third factor to erode Gardnerian Wicca as the core of modern Paganism was the acceptance of self-initiation and the solitary practitioner. Prior to the 1970s, Wiccan denominations controlled who had access to liturgies and rituals through a strict initiation process. In 1973, a year after Lady Sheba published her *Book of Shadows*, the Gardnerian High Priest Ray Buckland, who introduced Seax-Wicca, followed her example, and made his personal Wiccan liturgies public. Most significantly, Buckland broke from the traditional practice of only accepting Witches initiated by other Witches, and Buckland recognized self-initiation as legitimate.⁸ Clifton writes that, in the early 1970s, “a great deal of energy and ink would be expended on the question of initiation and what constituted a valid initiation, until Ray Buckland broke ranks with Gardnerian tradition and declared self-initiation could be perfectly valid.”⁹ Debates over what constitutes a valid initiation continued for a decade. The publication of Scott Cunningham’s *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* (1988) changed Wicca for good. Cunningham believed that traditional initiation rituals into covens inhibited the advance of Wicca around the world. Therefore, Cunningham wrote to introduce Wicca to the world and gave examples of how anyone can initiate him or herself and practice Wicca as a solitary

⁷ Janet Farrar and Gavin Bone, *The Inner Mysteries: Progressive Witchcraft and Connection with the Divine*, 2nd ed. (Portland, OR: Acorn Guild Press, 2012), 33.

⁸ Raymond Buckland, *Buckland’s Complete Book of Witchcraft*, rev. ed. (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2003), 313.

⁹ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 22.

practitioner.¹⁰ Cunningham's book continues to grow in popularity.¹¹ The issue of self-initiation remains contentious. For example, in 2009, when asked about self-initiation, Gardnerian High Priestess Patricia Crowther responded, "I cannot see how self-initiated witches can be 'valid,' as you put it. Certainly not in the sense of having been initiated into the Craft by an ordained priest or priestess, whereby the blessing is given and, later, Passing of the Power."¹² Through self-initiation and solitary practitionership Wicca is made available to anyone to practice Wicca as one pleases without any controls from traditional Wiccans or membership in a coven. As a result, Clifton claims that most Witches are solitary practitioners today.¹³

The fourth cultural factor to erode Gardnerian Wicca as the core of modern Paganism was the American environmental movement. On April 22, 1970, Earth Day was celebrated in America. Clifton explains,

The spirit of Earth Day 1970 did not just happen; its roots could include the gradual stirring of environmental consciousness that accelerated in the 1960s, but that stirring itself had deeper roots in an American consciousness of its special relationship with the land, even if that relationship often was abusive. Still, if there was a year when Wicca (in the broad sense) became "nature religion," as opposed to the "mystery religion" or "metaphoric fertility religion" labels that it had brought from England, that year was 1970.¹⁴

The wedding of the American environmental movement with Wicca produced a whole new wave of reflection on nature itself. Clifton proposes three categories for nature: Cosmic, Gaian, and

¹⁰ Scott Cunningham, *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1999), 73-96.

¹¹ See graph on page 81.

¹² Patricia Crowther, *Covensense* (Marlborough, UK: Robert Hale, 2009), 85.

¹³ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 106.

¹⁴ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 43.

Embodied.¹⁵ Cosmic Nature is “a more abstract nature whose laws generations of astrologers, magicians, philosophers, and the founders of occult schools and orders perceived as demonstrated in the movement of the heavenly bodies.”¹⁶ Wiccans and Pagan magicians work with the energy inherent in Cosmic Nature. Cosmic Nature enables the Wiccan to do magic. By contrast, Gaian Nature involves recognizing the earth as goddess. More than doing magic utilizing the energy in Cosmic Nature, Wicca becomes a nature religion involving the worship and wonder of the goddess of nature. To capture the wonder of goddess worship, Clifton quotes Carl Jones:

[To the Wiccan practitioner,] Nature is suddenly more than the lives of the trees, ferns, and mosses, the bird and untamable wild ones who rustle through the woods; nature seems to breathe a vibrant magical life of her own, and that life is reflected within the heart of the person sensing it. It is this sudden awakening to nature, this unspeakable communion with her mysteries, that is really the essence of Wicca.¹⁷

Notice how Jones describes the essence of Wicca as connecting with the goddess of nature. This would have sounded odd to Gerald Gardner who understand Wicca as primarily a fertility religion involving the polarity of god and goddess. Clifton’s third category for Nature is Embodied or Erotic. This notion fits well with Wicca’s practice of conducting their rituals “sky-clad” or nude, involving the performance of ritual sex. While Gardnerian Wicca involved the polarity of heterosexuality, the 1970s introduced a wildness and freedom to include all forms of sexuality in Embodied Nature. Thus, the feminist and homosexual movements of the 1970s were welcomed and incorporated into the changing face of Wicca.

¹⁵ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 44-66. Clifton consistently capitalizes these categories, as well as the term “Nature,” so I will follow his practice.

¹⁶ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 46.

¹⁷ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 53. Carl Jones, “Rising Goddess: The Nature Religion in the Modern World,” *Gnostica*, May–June 1979.

The fifth cultural factor to erode Gardnerian Wicca as the core of modern Paganism was the American feminist movement. Traditional Gardnerian initiation involved a High Priestess initiating a male, and a High Priest initiating a female. As a feminist, Salomonsen views such rituals as patriarchal and not egalitarian.¹⁸ Feminist and Witch Budapest invited a few women to join her in starting the Susan B. Anthony Coven No. 1 in Venice, California on the Winter Solstice of 1971, which was the first all-women coven. No male High Priest was necessary for initiation rites; women were empowered to do everything necessary. Women were free to be initiated into a coven or practice as solitary practitioners. Zsuzsanna Budapest initiated women into a coven study for a year and a day (like Gardnerian covens), yet the initiation process lasted several hours.¹⁹ Budapest also affirmed a woman's choice to practice as a solitary Witch.²⁰ Salomonsen describes some of the differences in initiation between Gardnerian and the feminist Reclaiming tradition:

[A] person initiated to traditional Gardnerian Witchcraft is bestowed with certain social and ritual privileges, such as being ordained a priestess or a priest and thus entitled to start a new coven. In Reclaiming, however, initiation does not lead to any sort of entitlement or new formal positions. For any Reclaiming Witch can start a new coven whenever she wants to, and anybody can call herself a priestess and Witch—initiated or not. Therefore, while Gardnerian initiation seems to conform more with a sociological approach, emphasizing the passage from one social group to another, the Reclaiming rite is more focused on the person undergoing ritual initiation, that she may actually experience a real transformation through the process. Consequently, their initiation rites are accommodated to the individual seekers. They are also more akin to psychotherapy and the yearning for personal growth through bonding, transference and displacement than to the building of social circles within circles and the maintenance of power and knowledge by a chosen few.²¹

¹⁸ Jone Salomonsen, "Witches' Initiation—A Feminist Cultural Therapeutic," *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 365.

¹⁹ Zsuzsanna Budapest, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries: Feminist Witchcraft, Goddess Rituals, Spellcasting, and Other Womanly Arts* (Berkeley, CA: Wingbow Press, 1980), 218-20.

²⁰ Budapest, *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries*, 221-5.

²¹ Salomonsen, "Witches' Initiation," 369-70.

Feminist forms of Witchcraft have redefined nearly every element of Gardnerian Wicca, thus shifting the core of Wicca from Gardnerian to a more general Paganism.

The sixth cultural factor to erode Gardnerian Wicca as the core of modern Paganism was the homosexual movement in America. Gardnerian Wicca celebrated both genders in sexual polarity and therefore was not an easy setting for homosexual witches. Adler writes,

There were always gay men and women in other Wiccan and Pagan groups. But back in the 1970s, many gay Pagans found themselves in a strange position. Some gay men were initiated Gardnerian, and they had women working partners in covens that emphasized the belief in male-female sexual polarity. Many of them functioned very well, and many continue to do so. But as Michael Lloyd (Garan du), a founding member of the Green Faerie Grove, a worship group for queer Pagan men in Columbus, Ohio, observed, there was something ironic in gay people escaping the intolerance of their childhood religions and “entering a path that preached ‘all acts of love and pleasure are my rituals,’ only to be confronted with denunciations that some acts of love were still considered to be perversions.”²²

To expand the core of Paganism to be inclusive of the LGBTQ movement, several groups of Wiccans and Pagans since the 1970s have sought to transform Gardnerian Wicca. In the 1970s, Gardnerian High Priest Edmund Buczynski and Gardnerian High Priestesses Carol Bulzone, and Lady Rhea rewrote Gardnerian liturgies to make them friendly to gay Witches. Shelly Rabinovitch and James Lewis describe how Buczynski and Bulzone started the Minoan Brotherhood for gay men and Minoan Sisterhood for lesbians in 1977.²³ Adler notes that since the 1970s, Dianic Wiccan covens have promoted feminism and lesbianism.²⁴ Michael Lloyd started The Radical Faeries as an openly gay Pagan tradition. The Faery Tradition started by

²² Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshipers, and other Pagans in America Today*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1986), 365.

²³ Shelly Rabinovitch and James Lewis, *The Encyclopedia of Modern Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism* (New York: Citadel Press, 2002), 113-4.

²⁴ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 367.

Victor Anderson, while not specifically homosexual, did not exclude homosexuals and focused on sexual ecstasy. The Faery Tradition was open to gay, bisexual, lesbian, and transgendered people. The homosexual movement in America has transformed the core of Wicca away from the Gardnerian view of gender polarity.

The seventh factor to erode Gardnerian Wicca as the core of modern Paganism was the proliferation of Wiccan and Pagan literature.²⁵ Llewellyn Publications has grown significantly since the 1970s when it was a small bookseller. In the 1980s, the Pagan publishing boom began, and Llewellyn published 50 new titles annually. By the 1990s, Llewellyn averaged 100 new titles annually, and in the 2000s, they are averaging 150 new titles annually.²⁶ Llewellyn published a wide variety of occult books that exposed its readers to the broader Pagan movement, well beyond Gardnerian Wicca.

The eighth factor to erode Gardnerian Wicca as the core of modern Paganism was the Gnosticon conferences in Minneapolis. Gnosticon conferences created a forum for Pagans from different groups to socialize, learn, and create new groups. Gnosticon conferences, asserts Clifton, established Minneapolis as an emerging headquarters for American Paganism.²⁷

In summary, new Wiccan denominations, the publishing of Lady Sheba's Grimoire, self-initiation and solitary practitionership, environmentalism, feminism, homosexuality, the proliferation of Pagan literature, and Gnosticon conferences were significant factors in the 1970s eroding Gardnerian Wicca as the cohesive center of the modern Pagan movement.

²⁵ See chapter 3, notes 122, 125, and 126 on pages 66-7.

²⁶ Rosemary E. Guiley, *The Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft, and Wicca*, 3rd ed. (New York: Checkmark Books, 2008), 368.

²⁷ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 45-6.

Demonstrating Polyaffiliation in Paganism Today

The erosion of Gardnerian Wicca as the core of the modern Pagan movement has created an opportunity for a new core of Paganism to emerge. Since 2000, an emerging new core of Paganism can be demonstrated through a bibliographical study, book title study, narrative study, Pagan icon schedule study, and personal interviews with Pagans.

Studying recent bibliographies in the literature tradition and comparing them to older bibliographies indicates a movement away from traditional Occult and Wicca sources. Of the 108 books in the bibliographical study in chapter two, 32 were written prior to 2000, 45 were written between 2000-2010, and 31 were written after 2010. Significantly, the five most common British occult sources—Murray, Crowley, Leland, Fortune, and Graves—are most often cited in the bibliographies prior to 2000, less between 2000-2010, and still less after 2010. Figure 6 illustrates the decline in the bibliographies citing British Occult sources. Similar trends occur with the six most common Wiccan sources with some interesting exceptions. The citing of Gardner, Starhawk, and Farrar in the bibliographies all decline with each successive decade. The citing of Valiente and Adler in the bibliographies increased in 2000-2010, only to decrease sharply after 2010. Curiously, the citing of Cunningham in the bibliographies increased with each decade. The increase of citing Cunningham in the bibliographies may be related to him being the only major author to be a proponent of self-initiation and solitary practitioner Wicca.

Figure 7 illustrates the general decline in the bibliographies citing traditional Wiccan sources. The three-decade decline within the bibliographies citing traditional British Occult and traditional Wiccan sources may itself be attributed to many factors and does not necessarily demonstrate a shift away from Gardnerian Wicca to polyaffiliated Paganism. The decline could represent a lack of historical scholarship in recent decades, citing less sources in general, or a

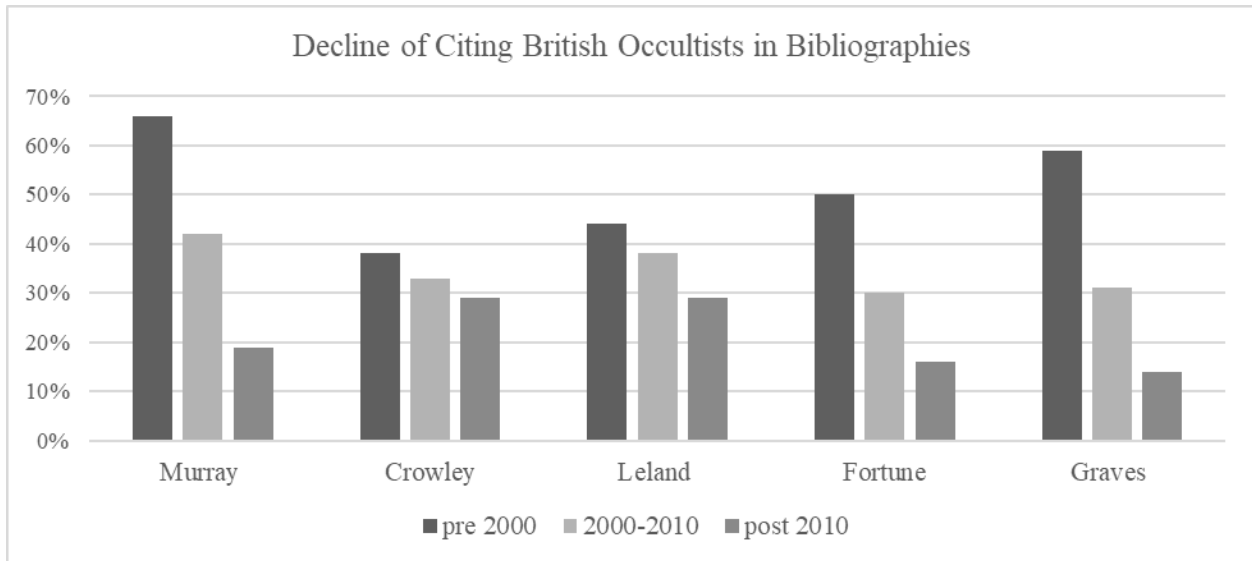


Figure 6: Decline of citing British occult sources in bibliographies

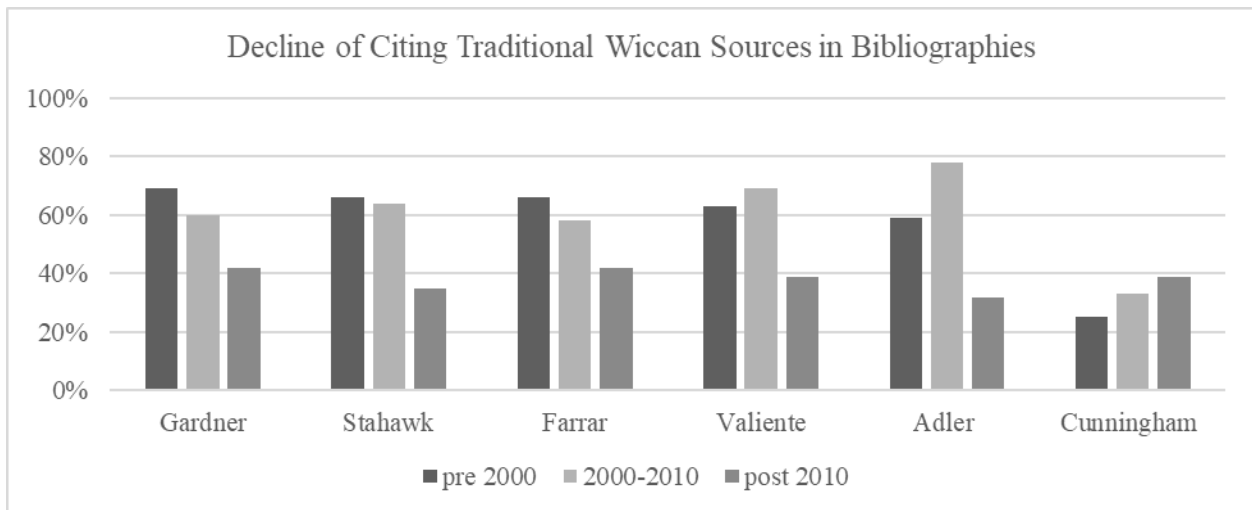


Figure 7: Decline of citing traditional Wiccan sources in bibliographies

general tendency to cite more recent literature. Yet, when the three-decade decline of citing traditional sources is combined with the eight factors above and the four studies below it seems that the erosion of Gardnerian Wicca toward a polyaffiliated Paganism gains probability.

Another way of demonstrating the shift from Gardnerian Wicca to polyaffiliated Paganism may be seen by comparing the titles of the books in this study by decade. The books written prior to 2000 use the term “Wicca” in the title or subtitle eighteen percent of the time. The books written between 2000-2010 use “Wicca” in the title or subtitle thirty-two percent of the time. Books written after 2010 use “Wicca” in the title or subtitle eight percent of the time. While there is an increase in the use of “Wicca” during the 2000-2010 period over the pre-2000 literature, there is significant decrease after 2010 of using “Wicca” in the titles or subtitles. Recent literature not using “Wicca” in the titles does seem to reinforce the trends in this chapter away from Gardnerian Wicca toward a polyaffiliated Paganism.

Another way of demonstrating the shift from Gardnerian Wicca to polyaffiliated Paganism may be seen by studying the narratives in recent literature. To demonstrate the trend away from Gardnerian Wicca to polyaffiliated Paganism in the narratives, I will survey some recent literature with representative quotations.²⁸

Janet Farrar and Gavin Bone wrote *Progressive Witchcraft: Spirituality, Mysteries, and Training in Modern Wicca* (2002). In 2012, they revised and renamed the book *The Inner Mysteries: Progressive Witchcraft and Connection with the Divine*. Curiously, they dropped “Wicca” from the subtitle in the 2012 revision. The authors see Witchcraft evolving from Wicca to modern Witchcraft spirituality. They write,

The modern Witchcraft revival can be compared to a child growing to maturity. The child Wicca was born in the 1940s, and started to crawl in the 1950s. Still very influenced by monotheism, Wicca began to totter to its feet in the 1960s, when it began to explore the world for the first time. By the 1970s, Wicca was at school, beginning to learn about its lengthy and inspiring history. In the 1980s, Wicca entered its rebellious adolescence and

²⁸ Determining the importance of recent literature in Paganism is difficult. Not enough time has passed for books to be cited enough in bibliographies or narratives to be recognized as significant works. The books selected for this list are based on my interactions with Pagans, conversations with booksellers, and recommendations on the best books at the Paganicon conferences in 2018 and 2019.

challenged all of its previously established sacred cows and shibboleths. By the 1990s and into the new millennium, Wicca is finally looking up to the stars in the night sky in wonder, and asking the question “Why am I here?”²⁹

Farrar and Bone describe the process from Witchcraft to Wicca, and from Wicca into the new millennium. In the new millennium, “a new type of Witch has appeared who rejects the concepts of lineage and tradition [central to Gardnerian Wicca]. Many have decided just to label themselves *Witches* rather than *Wiccans*, because of Wicca’s associations with these twin dogmas.”³⁰ Farrar and Bone use the term “Progressive Witchcraft” to describe this new type of Witch. They describe,

Progressive Witchcraft is not a tradition, but a name describing the evolution of modern Witchcraft into a coherent magical and spiritual path for the next millennium. Those following this path may not necessarily even name themselves progressive Witches, and may classify themselves as belonging to one of the many traditions of Wicca that exist; it is their actions and beliefs that dictate their belonging to progressive Witchcraft.³¹

The actions and beliefs Farrar and Bone describe, see Witchcraft evolving, as spiritual, individualistic, esoteric, ethical, and focused on divinity in nature.³² In brief, the authors see Witchcraft as having evolved toward shamanism. They write, “To a certain degree, the mysteries within the more dogmatic traditions of Wicca had been lost in meaningless complicated ritual, and many initially attracted to Wicca rejected ritual dogma in favor of the spiritual trance experience of shamanism.”³³ For Farrar and Bone, Gardnerian Wicca represents an older

²⁹ Farrar and Bone, *The Inner Mysteries*, xi.

³⁰ Farrar and Bone, *The Inner Mysteries*, 29. Though the authors themselves believe the term Wiccan has evolved so that there is not a substantive difference between Witch and Wiccan.

³¹ Farrar and Bone, *The Inner Mysteries*, 41.

³² Farrar and Bone, *The Inner Mysteries*, 41-3.

³³ Farrar and Bone, *The Inner Mysteries*, 52.

dogmatic tradition of their youth, a tradition which they have outgrown today. They see themselves as Progressive or eclectic Witches drawing inspiration from shamanism and other spiritual traditions. Progressive Witchcraft is another way of saying polyaffiliated Paganism.

Murphy Pizza's *Paganistan* (2014) has already been discussed.³⁴ Her thesis is that the Twin Cities' Pagans do not follow a specific path like Gardnerian Wicca, rather Pagans in the Twin Cities affiliate with multiple Pagan traditions at the same time. Pizza calls this polyaffiliation. Pizza's work is based on her emic ethnographical study of Twin Cities' Pagans. My etic research of Pagan literature has confirmed Pizza's main thesis, but in chapter five I will seek to forecast the future of polyaffiliated Paganism, and in chapter six I will discuss the challenges of a polyaffiliated Paganism for an effective gospel witness.

In September 2019, on a visit to the occult and Pagan bookseller, Magnus Books of Minneapolis, I asked the manager to introduce me to some recent popular authors in Paganism. The manager pointed me to books by three authors: John Beckett, Christopher Penczak, and Storm Faerywolf. He described to me how Beckett's *The Path of Paganism* picked up where Adler's *Drawing Down the Moon* left off. John Beckett (b. 1962) authored *The Path of Paganism: An Experience-Based Guide to Modern Pagan Practice* (2017). Beckett describes Contemporary Paganism using a "Big Tent" approach.

Contemporary Pagan religion is not just one thing. It's a collection of many concepts, many practices, and many beliefs. It draws on the heritage of our ancient ancestors and it draws on the experiments of twenty-first-century chaos magicians. It is as old as the mountains and as fresh the morning rain. It is practiced in living rooms and back yards, public parks, and Unitarian Universalist (UU) churches, and occasionally in what remains of the ancient sites where our ancestors worshipped. Trying to come up with common definitions for all these people and our many approaches is impossible. But there are several models that help

³⁴ Pizza's work was discussed on pages 35, 68-72.

us understand the many variations of Paganism. The most important are the Big Tent model and the Four Centers model.³⁵

The Big Tent model and the Four Centers model are central to Beckett's construction of modern Paganism. Beckett sees Pagans of every kind under one Big Tent. He argues that no one thing unites Pagans, yet they still belong together. His Four Centers model argues that Pagans unite in varying degree around four centers or "tent poles" of nature, gods, community, and self. For example, one Pagan might be centered on the gods, another centered on self, and yet another leaning toward self but also have room for the gods. Beckett explains,

I like a "Big Tent" approach to Paganism. Druids and Wiccans, Heathens and Hellenists, Thelemites and chaos magicians, shamans and seers, kitchen witches and tree huggers—there's room for everyone. What do all these people have in common? Not a single thing. But there's still value in the Big Tent of Paganism.

Imagine, if you will, a huge circus tent. It's supported by four large poles. These are the four centers of Paganism: nature, the gods, the self, and community. To continue the circus metaphor, these aren't rings you're either inside or outside of—these are poles you're closer to or further away from. Some Pagans are so close to one pole (center), they're hugging them—they don't care about the other three centers. Others are close to two or three or even all four centers . . . Now, imagine this tent has lots of people moving around in it. Some are crowded tightly around one pole. Others bounce from pole to pole to pole. Eventually, though, most people find a spot they're comfortable with and they discover they're not alone—there are others who have the same interests and passions.³⁶

Beckett's description of Paganism today is very different than Gardnerian Wicca. He admits as such when he writes, "The reality is that a large number of Pagans are at a vague, Wiccanish (i.e., borrowing the forms and practices of Wicca without belonging to any established Wiccan tradition) and pop culture magic level."³⁷ The Gardnerian core of Paganism has eroded and has

³⁵ John Beckett, *The Path of Paganism: An Experience-Based Guide to Modern Pagan Practice* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2017), 35.

³⁶ Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 35-6.

³⁷ Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 37.

been replaced by a Big Tent or Four Centers polyaffiliated Paganism.

The second author the Magnus Books manager introduced me to was Christopher Penczak (b. 1973), a prolific young author of twenty-six books. The book he highly recommended to me was *The Inner Temple of Witchcraft* (2002). Penczak's other books are *Spirit Allies* (2002), *Gay Witchcraft* (2003), *The Outer Temple of Witchcraft* (2004), *Magick of Reiki* (2004), *The Witch's Shield* (2004), *The Temple of Shamanic Witchcraft* (2005), *Sons of the Goddess* (2005), *Instant Magick* (2006), *The Mystic Foundation* (2006), *The Temple of High Witchcraft* (2007), *Ascension Magick* (2007), *The Witch's Coin* (2008), *The Living Temple of Witchcraft* (2009), *The Three Rays of Witchcraft* (2010), *The Witch's Heart* (2011), *The Plant Spirit Familiar* (2011), *Feast of the Morrighan* (2012), *Buddha, Christ, Merlin* (2012), *The Green Lovers* (2012), *City Magick* (2012), *The Gates of Witchcraft* (2012), *The Mighty Dead* (2013), *The Waters and Fires of Avalon* (2013), *Foundations of the Temple* (2014), and *The Casting of Spells* (2016). In 2002, Penczak acknowledged that most teachers of Witchcraft taught a traditional Wiccan path. By contrast, he wrote, "I encourage an eclectic, personal tradition with a solid foundation."³⁸ Concerning initiation, Penczak contrasted traditional Witches with eclectic Witches, writing, "Traditionalists believe that it takes a witch to make a witch, meaning you must find and study with a witch. After a period of training, you are formally initiated."³⁹ By contrast, "Eclectic witches often state that only the Goddess and God can make you a witch, and your initiation is a personal matter between you and them. You can train from books and initiate

³⁸ Christopher Penczak, *The Inner Temple of Witchcraft: Magick, Meditation and Psychic Development* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2002), 41.

³⁹ Penczak, *The Inner Temple of Witchcraft*, 62.

yourself when you feel ready. Many witches of the world are self-initiated.”⁴⁰ Penczak’s view of initiation is a clear break from Gardnerian Wicca and demonstrates how Witchcraft and Paganism have moved beyond such traditionalism to a more inclusive eclectic Witchcraft. Penczak’s book is structured for an eclectic Witchcraft student to study for “a year and day,” the traditional preparation time prior to initiation, to self-initiate into eclectic Witchcraft.

The third author the manager at Magnus Books recommended to me was Storm Faerywolf. Faerywolf is a popular teacher within the Faery tradition of Witchcraft. For Faerywolf, only a properly initiated Faery can initiate someone into the Faery tradition. Yet, according to Penczak, Faerywolf’s teaching will help “Witches on any path find their way deeper into the mysteries.”⁴¹ Faerywolf holds that people can be initiated into a Witchcraft tradition (like Faery, Alexandrian, or Gardnerian) or self-initiate into their own personal Witchcraft. His books include *The Stars Within the Earth* (2003), *By Witch Eye* (2005), *Awakening the Blue Lotus* (2011), *Becoming the Blue Lotus* (2011), *Betwixt and Between: Exploring the Faery Tradition of Witchcraft* (2017), and *Forbidden Mysteries of Faery Witchcraft* (2018).

Silver RavenWolf (b. 1956) is currently a popular author of fifteen books on Witchcraft. Her most notable books are *Teen Witch: Wicca for a New Generation* (1998), and *Solitary Witch: The Ultimate Book of Shadows for the New Generation* (2003). RavenWolf “has been interviewed by the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *US News & World Report* as an expert on modern Witchcraft.”⁴² However, the Witches I meet with in the Coffee Cauldron

⁴⁰ Penczak, *The Inner Temple of Witchcraft*, 62.

⁴¹ Storm Faerywolf, *Betwixt and Between: Exploring the Faery Tradition of Witchcraft* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2017), quote on the book’s back cover.

⁴² Silver RavenWolf, *Solitary Witch: The Ultimate Book of Shadows for the New Generation* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2003), quote on book’s back cover.

often describe RavenWolf as fluffy. Her work seems to be aimed at a younger, popular audience. RavenWolf is an eclectic Witch. She claims her work is “a collection of magick, spells, rituals, and definitions related specifically to modern Witchcraft, yet is grounded in the magickal work of people who lived in the ancient world.”⁴³ RavenWolf likens her book to a “magickal cookbook” representing a wide variety of Witches.⁴⁴ Her other non-fiction books include *Hex Craft: Dutch Country Pow-wow Magick* (1997), *Halloween: Spells, Recipes & Customs* (1999), *American Folk Magick: Charms, Spells & Herbals* (1999), *Silver's Spells for Protection* (2000), *Silver's Spells for Love* (2001), *Angels: Companions in Magick* (2002), *To Light a Sacred Flame: Practical Witchcraft for the Millennium* (2002), *To Ride a Silver Broomstick: New Generation Witchcraft* (2002), *Silver's Spells for Abundance* (2004), *A Witch's Notebook: Lessons in Witchcraft* (2005), *To Stir a Magick Cauldron: A Witch's Guide to Casting and Conjuring* (2005), *Mindlight: Secrets of Energy, Magick & Manifestation* (2006), and *HedgeWitch: Spells, Crafts & Rituals For Natural Magick* (2008).

Arin Murphy-Hiscock is the popular author of more than a dozen books. Her book, *The Green Witch: Your Complete Guide to the Natural Magic of Herbs, Flowers, Essential Oils, and More* (2017) is currently the #1 Best Seller on Amazon for Wicca, Witchcraft, and Paganism.⁴⁵ In a couple of passages, Murphy-Hiscock describes what she does and does not mean by Green Witchcraft.

Witchcraft is frequently confused with Wicca, which is a modern, alternative, nature-based religion. While Wicca and witchcraft possess many similarities, including reverence for

⁴³ RavenWolf, *Solitary Witch*, ix.

⁴⁴ RavenWolf, *Solitary Witch*, ix.

⁴⁵ Accessed November 1, 2019. https://www.amazon.com/Best-Sellers-Books-Wicca-Witchcraft-Paganism/zgbs/books/11309334011/ref=zg_bs_nav_b_4_12480. Murphy-Hiscock has four books on Amazon's top ten best sellers in Wicca, Witchcraft, and Paganism.

nature, Wicca is a specific, formal religion. There is a wide variety of forms of witchcraft, with varying degrees of structure. For the sake of this book, the term “witchcraft” refers to the practice of working with natural energies to attain goals, without a specific religious context . . . Green Witchcraft is not a formal tradition in the sense of Gardnerian Wicca, Dianic Wicca, Feri Tradition, or other established forms. When we use the phrase “the green witch tradition,” we do not refer to an unbroken line of initiates or an established body of lore. Instead, we are referring to the various practices from diverse places that come together to inform the modern green witch and wisewoman.

Because the path of the green witch is an individualized solo practice, any modern book on green witchcraft is simply a single author’s way of interpreting the practice. Initiation into green witchcraft is technically impossible. There exists no body of formal knowledge passed on through careful training, no established group mind to which you are connected by sacred ceremonies performed by elders. Some modern eclectic groups may base their regular practice on the ideals of green witchcraft, but it’s not the same thing.⁴⁶

For Murphy-Hiscock, a Green Witch may learn from another Green Witch, but this course of study is merely an apprenticeship at most and not an initiation because no formal tradition exists into which one is initiated. In Green Witchcraft, modern Paganism has moved well beyond Gardnerian Wicca. Murphy-Hiscock’s other books include, *Solitary Wicca for Life* (2005), *Power Spellcraft for Life* (2005), *The Way of the Green Witch* (2006), *Passages Pagan Pregnancy* (2008), *The Way of the Hedge Witch* (2009), *Birds—A Spiritual Field Guide* (2012), *The Green Witch* (2017), *Protection Spells* (2018), *The House Witch* (2018), *The Witch’s Book of Self-Care* (2018), *Wicca: A Modern Practitioner’s Guide* (2019), and *The Hidden Meaning of Birds—A Spiritual Field Guide* (2019).

Tonya A. Brown is the Editor in Chief of *Witch Way Magazine*⁴⁷ and author of *The Door to Witchcraft: A New Witch’s Guide to History, Traditions, and Modern-Day Spells* (2019).

⁴⁶ Arin Murphy-Hiscock, *The Green Witch: Your Complete Guide to the Natural Magic of Herbs, Flowers, Essential Oils, and More* (New York: Adams Media, 2017), 14-5.

⁴⁷ *Witch Way Magazine* has been published monthly since June 2015 in Dallas, Texas.

Brown's book is #14 on Amazon's best seller list for Wicca, Witchcraft, and Paganism.⁴⁸ In Brown's survey of different types of Witches today, she lists Green Witches, Glam Witches, Folk Witches, Traditional Witches, Eclectic Witches, and Necromancers.⁴⁹ Brown describes Green Witches as working with nature and herbals. Glam Witches draw attention to or away from themselves primarily for seduction magic. A Folk Witch works with traditions passed down from previous generations. A Traditional Witch works with structured paths like Gardnerian or Alexandrian and is focused on ceremonial magic. Eclectic Witches use what works for them and discard the rest. A Necromancer works with the dead and spirits of the deceased.⁵⁰ Brown, herself, is an Eclectic Witch and celebrates the rise of Eclectic Witches. She writes, "Recently there's been an explosion of eclectic witches—witches who do not feel the need to label themselves within a group. In a wonderful way, this makes it harder for people to divide us. We're becoming one big, wonderful, unique, magical melting pot of goodness."⁵¹ Indeed, Eclectic Witches exemplify the modern trend away from Gardnerian Wicca toward the polyaffiliation of Witches.

Two rising authors with Llewellyn Publications in the Witchcraft tradition are Laura Tempest Zakroff and Jason Mankey. Mankey is a third degree Gardnerian High Priest. Zakroff is a Traditional Witch. Zakroff has authored *The Witches Cauldron: The Craft, Lore & Magick of Ritual Vessels* (2017), *Sigil Witchery: A Witches Guide to Crafting Magick Symbols* (2018), and

⁴⁸ Accessed November 1, 2019. https://www.amazon.com/Best-Sellers-Books-Wicca-Witchcraft-Paganism/zgbs/books/11309334011/ref=zg_bs_nav_b_4_12480.

⁴⁹ Tonya A. Brown, *The Door to Witchcraft: A New Witch's Guide to History, Traditions, and Modern-Day Spells* (Emeryville, CA: Althea Press, 2019), 9-10.

⁵⁰ Brown, *The Door to Witchcraft*, 10.

⁵¹ Brown, *The Door to Witchcraft*, 21.

Weave the Liminal: Living Modern Traditional Witchcraft (2019). Mankey has written *The Witches Athame: The Craft, Lore & Magick of Ritual Blades* (2016), *The Witches Book of Shadows: The Craft, Lore & Magick, of the Witches Grimoire* (2017), *Witches Wheel of the Year: Rituals for Circles, Solitaries and Covens* (2019), and *Transformative Witchcraft: The Greater Mysteries* (2019). Zakroff and Mankey coauthored *The Witches Altar* (2018). Each author writes praise for each other's work that is quoted in their books.

I attended the annual Witch and Pagan conference in Minneapolis on March 22-24, 2019, called Paganicon. I met both Mankey and Zakroff and attended seminars they each led. Both authors are young, dynamic, and popular speakers. Zakroff and Mankey both advocated creating one's own Witchcraft traditions. Mankey was fond of saying, "Whatever works for you, do that." Likewise, Zakroff repeated, "an authentic Witch practices what works for them."

In the Paganicon seminar that Zakroff led, she described the "Witchcraft wars" of the 1990s, which debated who should be considered a true Witch. In her view, true Witches are authentic to themselves and do not need anyone else to validate them. The Witchcraft wars revealed the tension between traditional Wicca and modern Witchcraft. Zakroff explains,

If you are coming at Witchcraft from a Wiccan perspective, then of course you're going to say that "this is my religion." Wicca, as it has developed from Gardner to today, has been based on the concept of reviving both Witchcraft/cunning folk practices and ancient beliefs in respecting the land and deities of old. It's rooted in a participant, group-working, structure based on its more ceremonial magic roots (Golden Dawn, Freemasonry, the O.T.O., etc.) and purposefully was developed as a religion. It's recognized today in many places as a legitimate world religion under the umbrella of Neo-Paganism. (I would argue that it pretty much provided the skeleton structure of said umbrella, along with Druidry.)

But then there's another perspective where you view Witchcraft as a magical practice that is not necessarily tied to any specific belief system. You could be a P-word (Pagan, Polytheist, Pantheist) of some sort, but maybe you're an atheist, animist, or agnostic, or maybe you identify more comfortably as a Christian, Jew, or Buddhist. You are not going

to feel in any way that Witchcraft is your religion. It's a thing you do.⁵²

For Zakroff, each Witch forms his or her own opinion of what it means to be a Witch and what is an authentic Witchcraft. She states, "To be authentic means 'to be real, genuine, verified, representing one's true nature or beliefs, to be true to oneself.'"⁵³ Zakroff does not believe Witches today are bound to some form of Gardnerian or other Witchcraft tradition, but are free to create their own expression of Witchcraft by combining whatever sources they like into a Witchcraft that works for them as individuals.

In Mankey's book, *Transformative Witchcraft* (2019), he describes the developmental changes in Witchcraft, writing,

By the early 1960s the words Wicca and Wiccan began to be commonly associated with the Witchcraft first written about by Gerald Gardner. Generally, use of the terms Wicca and Wiccan was limited to those initiated into the tradition of Gardner and its various offshoots. By the late 1980s the word Wicca was being used to describe any variation of Gardner's Witch religion, whether that tradition was initiatory or eclectic and homegrown.⁵⁴

For Mankey, anyone today can identify as a Witch and practice Witchcraft. However, only those who are properly initiated into a Wiccan tradition can claim to be part of that tradition. He explains, "You don't need to be initiated to be a Witch, but you can't initiate yourself into a Witchcraft tradition."⁵⁵ As a Gardnerian, Mankey sees the value in being part of a tradition, but again, he freely affirms that everyone does not need to practice Witchcraft as he does. He writes,

Elevations, initiations, and dedications are markers on one's individual journey as a Witch. Not every Witch will seek out such ceremonies (nor should they), but for those who

⁵² Laura Tempest Zakroff, *Weave the Liminal: Living Modern Traditional Witchcraft* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2019), 37-8. Parenthetical comments original.

⁵³ Zakroff, *Weave the Liminal*, 47.

⁵⁴ Jason Mankey, *Transformative Witchcraft: The Greater Mysteries* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2019), 4.

⁵⁵ Mankey, *Transformative Witchcraft*, 131.

celebrate with a coven or a circle, group rites indicating the individual Witch's progress are a nice public statement on how far they've come in their studies. One thing about Modern Witchcraft is that we are always trying to further our understanding of things. We continually look to deepen our magicks, sharpen our skills, and grow closer to our gods. Rites of passage help us do that.⁵⁶

Mankey represents modern Gardnerian Witchcraft by having it both ways. He affirms that to be part of a tradition like Gardnerian Wicca, one needs to be initiated into Gardnerian Wicca. He also affirms that anyone can be a Witch and practice Witchcraft any way they like. For Mankey, Gardnerian Wicca exists as one of many options, and not as the core of the Pagan movement.

This survey of recent literature demonstrates a movement away from Gardnerian Wicca or other traditional forms of Wicca as the core of Paganism, and a movement toward eclectic or polyaffiliated Paganism.

Contemporary, popular Eclectic, or polyaffiliated Paganism, may also be demonstrated by surveying the seminars offered at Paganicon 2018⁵⁷ and Paganicon 2019.⁵⁸ Paganicon is an annual conference of Pagans in the Twin Cities that began in 2011. According to the website,

Paganicon is a Pagan conference offering workshops, panels, discussions, social space, music, a ball, vendors, and much more. Paganicon is organized by Twin Cities Pagan Pride and a host of volunteers to provide an educational and social venue for Pagans, Wiccans, Heathens, Druids and people of other folk, craft, indigenous or magickal traditions.⁵⁹

I attended both Paganicon 2018 and Paganicon 2019. The conference materials demonstrated an

⁵⁶ Mankey, *Transformative Witchcraft*, 131.

⁵⁷ Paganicon 2018 was held on March 16-18, 2018, at the Double Tree Park Hotel by Hilton in St. Louis Park, Minnesota. Approximately 600 Pagans attended the conference. The theme was "Fire and Ice."

⁵⁸ Paganicon 2019 was held on March 22-24, 2019, at the Crown Plaza Hotel West Minneapolis in Plymouth, Minnesota. Approximately 800 Pagans attended the conference. The theme was "Sacred Groves."

⁵⁹ Accessed on November 2, 2019. <http://www.paganicon.org/>

inclusivity toward all Pagan paths. The best way to understand the variety of seminars offered at Paganicon 2018 and 2019 is to survey the seminar schedule. Appendix 3 provides a list of the Paganicon 2018 seminars that were offered.⁶⁰ Appendix 4 provides a list of the Paganicon 2019 seminars that were offered.⁶¹ Appendix 5 provides a list of the Paganicon 2020 seminars offered.⁶²

Paganicon conference schedules demonstrate the wide variety of Pagan interests. While Gardnerian Wicca is represented in a few seminars, it is no longer the cohesive core of modern Paganism. The core of Paganism today, as represented in the Paganicon conference schedule, is an eclectic and polyaffiliated Paganism. Participants pick and choose what appeals to them and incorporate new ideas and practices into their own Pagan paths.

My personal interaction with Pagans at the Coffee Cauldron affirms the polyaffiliated nature of their practice today.⁶³ What follows is a summary of some informal conversations at the Coffee Cauldron.

Noel, a woman in her 50s, told me that she became a Wiccan in 2004 after reading *Wicca for the Solitary Practitioner* by Cunningham. While she started out as a Wiccan, she describes herself today as an eclectic Witch with a micro-pantheon she follows. She is familiar with Pizza's polyaffiliation and agrees that the term describes her practice.

⁶⁰ Paganicon 2018 conference schedule.

⁶¹ Paganicon 2019 conference schedule.

⁶² Paganicon 2020 conference schedule.

⁶³ At the Coffee Cauldron meeting at Caribou Coffee in Roseville, Minnesota on August 19, 2019, I informally asked several Pagans to describe the way by which they became interested in Paganism and to describe their practice today. I am not using their real names to protect the privacy of the individuals.

Amy is a woman in her 40s who is proud that she served in the United States Navy. Like Noel, Amy read *Wicca for the Solitary Practitioner* by Cunningham in 1994 and became a Wiccan. Amy has explored many spiritual paths, and today she attends a Quaker congregation in Minneapolis, and describes herself as a “Quagan” (Quaker-Pagan). She is also familiar with Pizza’s polyaffiliation concept and she says it accurately describes her as she forges her own Pagan spiritual path.

Trudy is a High Priestess in her 60s and leader of the Coffee Cauldron. She said she became a Wiccan in 1998 after reading *Drawing Down the Moon* by Adler. Today she describes herself as an American Eclectic Bastard Wiccan, or as a Wiccan-flavored, generic Pagan. She is familiar with Pizza’s polyaffiliation and describes herself as serving a poly-cultural audience.

Tom is a Priest in his late 60s who says he became an Alexandrian Witch in 1968 in the Margaret Murray tradition after reading a book by Gareth Knight. In the 1970s, he became a Wiccan and, today, he views himself as a Wiccan Magical Priest. He is cautious about the ideas of polyaffiliation and thinks people adopt many ideas uncritically without really studying them. He says he appreciates logic, structure, and more serious thought about his craft.

Tony is a guy in his 40s who says he became a Druid in 1994. He is unfamiliar with Pizza’s polyaffiliation and considers himself a Druid.

Susan became a Neo-Pagan in 1999 with friends from her Lutheran youth group. She and her friends read *Essential Wicca* by Este Danielson and *Drawing Down the Moon* by Adler. Susan is familiar with Pizza’s book and terminology, and she says polyaffiliation describes her attempts to forge her own Pagan spiritual path.

I met with Murphy Pizza, a woman in her 40s, at Merlin’s Pub in Minneapolis on

August 8, 2019. Pizza described how she became a Wiccan in 1994 after reading Cunningham, Adler, and Starhawk. During her doctoral work studying Pagans in Minnesota, she coined the term polyaffiliation to describe her own experience and the experiences of others she was studying.

In summary, eight factors eroded Gardnerian Wicca as the cohesive center of modern Paganism in the 1970s: new Wiccan denominations, the publishing of Lady Sheba's Grimoire, self-initiation and solitary practitionership, environmentalism, feminism, homosexuality, the proliferation of Pagan literature, and Gnosticon conferences. The erosion of Gardnerian Wicca as the core of the Modern Pagan movement created an opportunity for a new core of Paganism to emerge. I have argued that Wiccans and other Pagans are best described by the terms eclectic or polyaffiliation. Each Wiccan or Pagan practitioner affiliates with a variety of traditions to form his or her own self-styled paths. The polyaffiliation of Wiccans was demonstrated through a bibliographical study, book title study, narrative study, Paganicon 2018 and 2019 conference schedules, and my personal interactions with Pagans. The bottom line is that Gardnerian Wicca with its controlled leadership, initiations, and liturgies has been replaced in the past three decades with an eclectic, progressive, polyaffiliated Paganism. It may be too early to pronounce Gardnerian Wicca dead as a movement, but the trends certainly seem to be heading in that direction, with a new progressive Paganism evolving in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 5

THE FUTURE OF WICCA

Will polyaffiliated Wicca and Paganism in the Twin Cities thrive or fail in the future? Forecasting the success or failure of a new religious movement is difficult. Rodney Stark,⁶⁴ a leading expert on the sociology of religion, has proposed a *Revised General Model* to gauge the likelihood of a new religious movement's future success or failure.⁶⁵ A full exploration of Wicca in light of Stark's model is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, a general overview and application of Stark's ten-point model suggests some potential directions for the future of Wicca. In this chapter I will list and briefly explain each of Stark's ten propositions, then considering chapters one through four of this study combined with additional research and my pastoral interaction with Wiccans, I will offer some perspectives for the future success or failure of Wicca in the Twin Cities.

⁶⁴ Rodney William Stark (b. 1934) was professor of sociology and comparative religion at the University of Washington and is currently Distinguished Professor of the Social Sciences at Baylor University. The author of over thirty books including *The Future of Religion* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986) with William Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987) with Roger Finke, *The Churching of America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

⁶⁵ Rodney Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," in *Cults and new Religious Movements: A Reader*, ed. Lorne L. Dawson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 259-70.

Proposition 1: Continuity with Cultural Faiths

Proposition 1: “New religious movements are likely to succeed to the extent that they retain cultural continuity with the conventional faith(s) of the societies in which they seek converts.”⁶⁶ Sociologically, people tend to seek the most gain in a culture while giving up the least. Religiously, Stark asserts, people tend to join groups that require minimal social capital investment.⁶⁷ Stark gives the example of a Christian being more likely to join Mormonism than Hare Krishna because Mormonism retains much of the conventionalities to which the Christian is accustomed. Joining Hare Krishna is a bigger jump away from the conventionalities from which the Christian is familiar.

On the surface, Wicca seems dissimilar to a nominal American Christian cultural context. Yet, Wicca aligns well with the leftist American cultural milieu of LGBTQ+,⁶⁸ feminism,⁶⁹ egalitarianism, spirituality,⁷⁰ liberal progressivism,⁷¹ veganism,⁷² pluralism,⁷³

⁶⁶ Stark, “Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model,” 261.

⁶⁷ Stark, “Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model,” 261.

⁶⁸ For Pagans affirming LGBTQ+, see Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshippers, and other Pagans in America Today*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1986), 365-71; Chas S. Clifton, *Her Hidden Children: The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in America* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2006), 100.

⁶⁹ For Pagan affirmation of feminism, see Cynthia Eller, “The Roots of Feminist Spirituality,” in *Daughters of the Goddess: Studies of Healing, Identity, and Empowerment*, ed. Wendy Griffin (New York: AltaMira Press, 2000), 25-41.

⁷⁰ For Pagan affirmation of egalitarian spirituality, see Graham Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism: Listening People, Speaking Earth* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 69-86.

⁷¹ For Pagan affirmation of liberal progressivism, see Susan Greenwood, “Feminist Witchcraft,” in *Daughters of the Goddess: Studies of Healing, Identity, and Empowerment*, ed. Wendy Griffin (New York: AltaMira Press, 2000), 136-50.

⁷² For Pagan affirmation of veganism, see Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism*, 140.

⁷³ For Pagan affirmation of pluralism, see Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism*, 211-28.

environmentalism,⁷⁴ and inclusivity.⁷⁵ Even if the idea of “witches” seems counter-cultural to the dominant religious culture in America, a polyaffiliated Wicca embracing nature spiritualities seems to nestle acceptably into the broader liberal American cultural context.

When Wicca came to America from Britain it found a home in many elements of American culture. Wicca found a home in the American environmental movement. Clifton describes,

When the new Pagan religion of Wicca arrived in the United States from England in the 1960s, it presented itself as the Old Religion, the ancestral Paganism of the British Isles, and as a mystery cult of both fertility and magic. Americans, in turn, would add the label of “nature religion” or “earth-based religion,” which fit well with the rising environmentalism of the mid-twentieth century and also with the new Paganism’s roots in the Romantic literary movement as well as in Neoplatonic astrology and magic.⁷⁶

Wicca has found a home in the American feminist movement. Greenwood describes how she was involved in the feminist movement in the late 1970s when she was first exposed to “the Goddess” or feminist Witchcraft from Britain spreading across California. She initially joined a feminist Witchcraft coven in San Francisco, and soon after started her own coven using Starhawk’s *The Spiral Dance* as a guide to combine her interests in feminism and Witchcraft.⁷⁷

Wicca has also found a home in an increasingly pluralistic America. Harvey points out how dialogue with other religionists is easier for Pagans than members of other religions concerned with proving the truthfulness and exclusivity of their religion. By contrast, Pagans are pluralist

⁷⁴ For a Pagan affirmation of environmentalism, see Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 37-70.

⁷⁵ For a Pagan affirmation of inclusivity, see John Beckett, *The Path of Paganism: An Experience-Based Guide to Modern Pagan Practice* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2018), 35-53.

⁷⁶ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 41.

⁷⁷ Greenwood, “Feminist Witchcraft,” 137.

and embrace diversity among themselves and others. Paganism is more accepting of others and a better fit for the American pluralist religious context than exclusivist religions like Christianity.⁷⁸

In summary, Alexander describes how Witchcraft is a perfect fit for the wider secular culture. He writes, “And for the wider secular world, Witchcraft’s environmentalism, feminism, and benediction of homosexuality make it a perfect fit as well. Modern Witchcraft has a bright future as a vehicle for the ‘Spirit of the Age’—assuming, that is, that the ‘Age’ itself has a future at all.”⁷⁹ Therefore, given Wicca’s cultural continuity with the progressive elements in America’s religious culture, Stark’s first proposition seems to favor the future success of Wicca in the Twin Cities.

Proposition 2: Non-Empirical Doctrine

Proposition 2: “New religious movements are likely to succeed to the extent that their doctrines are non-empirical.”⁸⁰ The sociological exchange theory of religion, according to Stark and Bainbridge, validates religious experience with rewards or compensators.⁸¹ In this theory compensators are experiential and not empirically verifiable; therefore religious movements that are not subject to empirical disconfirmation are viewed as more likely to succeed. Since, according to Stark, magic can be empirically disproved, sociologically speaking, this lack of confirmation is potentially problematic for the success of a religion like Wicca. Significantly, magic is an important sociological compensator for Wiccan practitioners. Therefore, according

⁷⁸ Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism*, 214-7.

⁷⁹ Brooks Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream: Uncovering Its Alarming Impact on You and Your Family* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2004), 236.

⁸⁰ Stark, “Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model,” 262.

⁸¹ Stark and Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion*, 25-53.

to Stark and Bainbridge, the potential to empirically disconfirm magic might be bad news for the future success of Wicca as a religious movement.⁸²

Sian Reid thinks Stark and Bainbridge are being inconsistent in how they view science, religion, and magic. Reid argues,

Sociologists and anthropologists, and to certain extent theologians, have gone to extraordinary lengths to distinguish between the often blurred and overlapping concepts of science, religion, and magic, as though to avoid delegitimizing the former two by some accidental association with the latter.⁸³

Reid explains how, in the Western worldview, science is empirically verifiable, religion is not empirically verifiable and therefore not subject to disconfirmation, while magic is caught in the middle between science and religion, with claims of affecting the natural world, and is therefore subject to disconfirmation scientifically in ways that religion is not.⁸⁴ Reid challenges Stark and Bainbridge's understanding of magic. She argues,

By defining magical belief and practice in the way in which they do, Stark and Bainbridge drastically limit the possible explanations for magic's persuasiveness. They reduce magic to being an instrumental procedure, a means of obtaining a certain specified goal. They focus their attention on the end of a magical working: whether or not the stated aim was achieved and whether there could be a scientific explanation for that achievement. They view magic as an isolated act. This is a very traditional approach, but in terms of examining modern Western magic, probably a very misleading one. It assumes that magic is performed in order to achieve the ends set out in the working, and that the desirability of those ends accounts for the persuasiveness of magical practice. However, it would appear that, in the case of magic as it is performed within the context of Neo-Pagan Witchcraft, although the ends are desired, it is nonetheless the process of becoming magical and performing magic that is of the greatest significance, and not necessarily the achievement of the specified ends of any given working.⁸⁵

⁸² Stark and Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion*, 110, 456, 528.

⁸³ Sian Reid, "As I Do Will, So Mote it Be," in *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*, ed. James R. Lewis (Boston: Brill, 2009), 142-3.

⁸⁴ Reid, "As I Do, So Mote It Be," 143.

⁸⁵ Reid, "As I Do, So Mote It Be," 145.

Reid's argument is analogous to a Christian view of prayer. While Christians may desire what they pray for, a far more significant result from praying is the Christian growing in dependence upon Christ and in personal sanctification. An affirmative answer to prayer is desired, but a non-affirmative answer does not disconfirm the role of prayer in the Christian life.

Tanya Luhrmann, like Stark and Bainbridge, wonders how rational Londoners could believe in something irrational like magic.⁸⁶ Her seminal study showed that even in the face of doctrines like magic being empirically falsifiable from a scientific perspective, practitioners chose to believe because they want to believe. Luhrmann explains,

I turn . . . [to] a process I call 'interpretive drift': the slow shift in someone's manner of interpreting events, making sense of experiences, and responding to the world. People do not enter magic with a set of clear-cut beliefs which they take to their rituals and test with detachment. Nor is their practice mere poetry, a new language to express their feelings. Rather, there seems to be a slow, mutual evolution of interpretation and experience, rationalized in a manner which allows the practitioner to practice. The striking feature, I found, was how *ad hoc*, how seemingly unmotivated, this transformation became. Magicians did not deliberately change the way they thought about the world. Becoming involved in magic is exciting, and as the neophyte read about the practice and talked to other practitioners, he picked up intellectual habits which made the magic seem sensible and realistic. He acquired new ways of identifying events as significant, of drawing connections between events, with new, complex knowledge in which events could be put into context. At the same time his involvement embraced rich phenomenological experience which he found deeply important, experience labeled and understood with the practice but not outside. Hard to abstract, hard to verbalize, these dynamic experiences became part of the business of engaging in magic, and they made the magic real for its participants, because they consent to its ideas. To protect his involvement, the magician engaged in a range of 'patch-up-job' arguments which allowed his commitment without violating his skepticism. The rationalizations again were *ad hoc* and not necessarily coherent, but they served the purpose of justifying and reinforcing involvement.⁸⁷

Luhrmann argues that the manner in which one empirically verifies religious experiences is conditioned by one's religious commitments. Luhrmann's research, therefore, may add a caveat

⁸⁶ Tanya M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 3-18.

⁸⁷ Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft*, 12.

to Stark's second proposition, that is, that empirical justification shifts for those on the *inside* of a religious movement. Yet Stark's proposition may hold for potential converts on the *outside* of a religious movement.

Susan Greenwood, however, thinks there are difficulties with Luhrmann's position. First, Pagans distinguish between this world and the otherworld, between the profane and the sacred. She sees nothing inconsistent with this distinction; in fact, she views it as essential to the ontological reality of Pagans. Therefore, belief in magic is not irrational, it is merely part of the existential otherworld experience of magicians.⁸⁸ Second, Greenwood thinks Luhrmann's position is limited by her positivistic view of science, that is, that real knowledge is limited to what science can demonstrate. Greenwood critiques Luhrmann,

In other words, otherworldly experiences—magic—do not form a basis for a scientific knowledge for an understanding of the world. In this view magic must be irrational and necessarily false, because it does not conform to Western scientific criteria; she equates reason with a positivistic view of science. Luhrmann cannot examine the magical otherworld because it does not fit into her theoretical framework. She therefore conflates magicians' experiences of the otherworld with the intellectualist tradition of magic as pseudo-science.⁸⁹

Greenwood's critique of Luhrmann is like Reid's critique of Stark and Bainbridge with one caveat; Luhrmann holds to a scientific naturalism that makes no allowances for religious experiences. Stark and Bainbridge hold that religion is not subject to scientific disconfirmation, while they hold that magic is subject to scientific disconfirmation.

In summary, the weight of Stark's second proposition will depend on one's

⁸⁸ Susan Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld: An Anthology* (Oxford, UK: Oxford International Publishers, 2000), 40-2.

⁸⁹ Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld*, 42.

epistemology and religious commitments. A scientific naturalist is not likely to favor Wicca's future success *as a magical movement*. By contrast, if magic can be viewed as part of religious experience, Wicca can be viewed, like any other religion, as enjoying future success *as an esoteric movement* with non-verifiable doctrine.

Proposition 3: Strictness

Proposition 3: "New religious movements are likely to succeed to the extent that they maintain a medium level of tension with their surrounding environment—are strict, but not too strict."⁹⁰ The idea is for a religious culture to be set apart from secular culture. Stark explains strictness in terms of a religious group enforcing a distinctive lifestyle "in such areas as dress, diet, drinking, entertainment, uses of time, sex, child rearing, and the like."⁹¹ Stark describes the problem of "free riders" who enjoy the benefits of the religious movement but who do not adhere to the strictness rules or contribute to the movement. Stark gives the example of liberal Protestant churches whose members draw upon the group for a variety of services but who rarely contribute to the congregation.⁹² The decline into irrelevance of mainline denominations in America was documented by sociologist Tex Sample thirty years ago.⁹³ If a religious movement raises the bar for participation, ironically, Stark argues that it will generally increase participation, and help the

⁹⁰ Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," 262.

⁹¹ Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," 262.

⁹² Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," 262.

⁹³ Tex Sample, *U.S. Lifestyles and Mainline Congregations: A Key to Reaching People in the 90s* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1990).

religious movement toward future growth and success.⁹⁴

The concept of strictness as Stark describes it, is almost non-existent in modern Wicca. While the rituals and beliefs of Witchcraft have tension with their surrounding environment, the lifestyles of Witches are in line with mainstream leftist American culture. Further, Witches are fiercely independent and egalitarian, and any strictness rules imposed from other sources are sure to be met with resistance. While the cults of personality and specific denominations dominated the early decades of Wicca with the Gardnerianism of Gerald Gardner and Doreen Valiente and the Alexandrianism of Alex and Maxine Sanders, those days are past. Farrar and Boone describe the death of dogma, personalities, kings and queens, and debates about initiation and tradition.⁹⁵ Today, solitary practitioners and polyaffiliation are both on the rise, and run counter to a movement attempting to enforce strict rules on its adherents. Farrar and Bone conclude that those who join traditional Wiccan denominations do so voluntarily with a high degree of independence.⁹⁶

On occasion, I have witnessed this fierce independence at Coffee Caldron meetings. Once, a man was stating his views concerning how Gardnerian Wicca is the gold standard of Wicca. An older woman got up from the table and walked out of the Caribou Coffee in anger, saying, “I did not join Paganism to have someone tell me what to believe!”

My interaction with Witches reveals that they are nearly all free riders, to use Stark’s

⁹⁴ Thom Rainer, *High Expectations: The Remarkable Secret for Keeping People in Your Church* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1999). Rainer points out that high expectation evangelical churches are doing better in terms of growth than low expectation churches.

⁹⁵ Janet Farrar and Gavin Bone, *The Inner Mysteries: Progressive Witchcraft and Connection with the Divine*, 2nd ed. (Portland, OR: Acorn Guild Press, 2012), 22-30.

⁹⁶ Janet Farrar and Gavin Bone, *The Inner Mysteries*, 30.

terminology. For example, the Coffee Cauldron is sponsored by the Earth House Project. The Coffee Cauldron meets twice monthly, and after two years, I am among its most faithful attendees. While I have met several dozen Pagans at the Cauldron, the meeting attendance varies from about five to fifteen. It is fair to say that nearly everyone who participates does so by occasionally dropping in for the evening with little apparent commitment to the group. Further, the Earth House Project was founded in 2000 with the goal of raising funds to build a Pan-Pagan Community Center for Pagans in the Twin Cities to have a permanent sacred space for rituals, offices, meetings, and outreach. After nineteen years, \$30,000 has been raised, less than ten percent of their projected need. At this rate, it will take about two hundred years to raise the necessary funds for the project. Besides the Coffee Cauldron, the Earth House Project sponsors events, camps, and party rooms at conferences like Paganicon. The members and friends enjoy all the benefits of the Earth House Project and yet give little in return.

Stark's third proposition, therefore, does not seem to favor Wicca's future success as a movement unless Pagans can figure out a way of describing and enforcing strictness for their members, something which seems highly unlikely in their current environment.

Proposition 4: Leadership

Proposition 4: "Religious movements will succeed to the extent that they have legitimate leaders with adequate authority to be effective."⁹⁷ Stark describes how doctrine can help or hurt establish leaders that a group needs to function. Stark writes,

That doctrines can directly cause ineffective leadership is widely evident in contemporary New Age and 'metaphysical' groups. If everyone is a 'student' and everyone's ideas and insights are equally valid, then no one can say what must be done or who is to do what,

⁹⁷ Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," 264.

when. The result is the existence of virtual non-organizations—mere affinity or discussion groups incapable of action.⁹⁸

For religious groups to succeed they need to have doctrines that justify the selection of their leaders and explain how they relate to others in the movement. Without doctrines justifying leadership, the religious movement will not have legitimate leadership that can effectively lead the movement to grow.

The strength of traditional Wiccan denominations like Gardnerian, Alexandrian, and Feary Witchcraft is that these groups had founders, initiation rites, levels of initiation that defined leaders, and liturgical traditions to be followed. The rise of solo-practitioner Witchcraft that is egalitarian, feminist, anti-structural, do-it-yourself religion, has sought to free itself from the structures of traditional Wiccan denominations. Witches who once belonged to a dogma-driven traditionally initiated Witchcraft of Gardner, Cochrane, Valiente, Sanders, or even Starhawk, today, argue Farrar and Bone, initiate themselves by their own self-authenticating experience into a Witchcraft they create.⁹⁹ As modern Wiccans have self-initiated and polyaffiliated with other Pagan traditions, the individual Witch becomes the leader for him or herself. Individual Witches decide what is useful or not to them in the creating of their own spiritual paths. As Farrar and Bone point out, it is “an example of the new Witchcraft movement coming of age as Witches reject dogma they find to be outdated and of no use.”¹⁰⁰ From a modern Pagan perspective, spiritual experience, not dogma, defines entrance into the Pagan community much like a spiritual experience, not dogma, defines entrance into the evangelical

⁹⁸ Stark, “Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model,” 265.

⁹⁹ Farrar and Bone, *The Inner Mysteries*, 22-43.

¹⁰⁰ Farrar and Bone, *The Inner Mysteries*, 52.

community.¹⁰¹ Farrar and Bone observe,

Gavin does point out one thing that is of importance: he became aware that there is very little difference between real spiritual initiation in Witchcraft and the experience an evangelical Christian goes through when they “born again.” They are, in fact, the same experience: that of the death and rebirth of the individual’s persona as part of a spiritual experience.¹⁰²

With each Witch creating his or her own spiritual path based on unique spiritual experiences, there does not seem to be much to hold Paganistan or any Pagan community together. How can such a broad-based religious movement have leaders?

Twin Cities Wiccans are aware of the need and challenge for community leadership. Murphy Pizza describes the formation of the Mentoring Elders Forum, a discussion group engaged in reading and discussing the responsibilities of elders in Paganistan.¹⁰³ A founder of the Mentoring Elders Forum is Volkhvy,¹⁰⁴ a respected Wiccan with over forty years in Paganistan. Elders are recognized within Paganistan by their age and experience. Since the beginning of the Mentoring Elders Forum a decade ago, the elders have taken an active role through participating and speaking into the various groups and individuals within Paganistan. Pizza describes the role of the elders as ensuring “that Paganistan’s important values are passed on to younger members and that the members newest to the community get the support and mentorship that they need.”¹⁰⁵ The Mentoring Elders have nicknamed themselves “Meddling Elders” because of their

¹⁰¹ Evangelicals rightly disagree with this Pagan perspective. Evangelicals believe that orthodox profession and orthodox spiritual experience define the new birth or entrance into the evangelical community.

¹⁰² Farrar and Bone, *The Inner Mysteries*, 58.

¹⁰³ Murphy Pizza, *Paganistan: Contemporary Pagan Community in Minnesota’s Twin Cities* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2014), 105.

¹⁰⁴ Volkhvy is a gentle and elderly Wiccan-Shinto-priest who I regularly interact with at the Coffee Cauldron.

¹⁰⁵ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 106.

teaching and preservation of the cultural patterns within Paganistan. Yet, I do not know of a legitimizing disciplinary structure whereby the Meddling Elders enforce or discipline Pagans who believe or practice things inconsistent with the values and traditions of Paganistan.

Pizza believes that Paganistan thriving without a confessional theology or membership structure should be viewed as a achievement.¹⁰⁶ In other words, a community that can recognize itself as a community held together by a voluntary spiritual anarchy that affirms everyone creating their own path is the strength of Paganistan. Perhaps this is so, but it seems to me that a loosely defined leadership structure and a community with practices and beliefs that anyone is free to reject as outdated is a tentative and fragile community. Without a clearer rationale for community identity and leadership, I think Paganistan is likely to splinter. Therefore, according to Stark's fifth proposition, Wicca and Paganistan are likely to struggle without leaders invested with authority to lead.

Proposition 5: Volunteerism

Proposition 5: "Religious movements will grow to the extent that they can generate a highly motivated, volunteer, religious labor force, including many willing to proselytize."¹⁰⁷ Stark states, "In order to grow, religious movements need missionaries. Other things being equal, the more missionaries there are seeking converts, and the harder these missionaries work, the faster a religious movement will grow."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 106.

¹⁰⁷ Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," 265.

¹⁰⁸ Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," 265.

Two topics need to be discussed regarding proposition five: proselytization and volunteerism. First, Wicca is opposed to proselytization. From a Wiccan perspective, individuals become Wiccans or Pagans through their own paths of self-discovery. Adler explains, “In most cases, word of mouth, a discussion between friends, a lecture, a book, or an article provides the entry point.”¹⁰⁹ On pages 95-96, I introduced seven individuals who have converted to Paganism. Each of these individuals described to me how they met someone at work, a party, or in a bookstore and were encouraged to read a book. After reading the book, each of them decided to become a Pagan. Typically, they described how a metaphysical bookstore helped to connect with other Pagans and provide seminars and classes. Bookstores also provided information about Pagan Pride Day, Paganicon, and other events within the Minnesotan Pagan community. Pagans describe their conversations as a coming home or finding one’s true self. Paganism often describes what a person is not as much as what a person believes. For example, Brown asserts, “So, a pagan is anyone who doesn’t follow the teachings of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Judaism. Anyone else, witch or not, is a pagan.”¹¹⁰

Adler emphasizes that individuals do not convert to Witchcraft as a belief system; rather, individuals begin to practice Witchcraft. Therefore, for Adler, Wicca has no converts, only practitioners. Sian Reid is the lead researcher of the Canadian Pagan Survey Project and has conducted extensive surveys on Canadian Pagans since 1990.¹¹¹ Based on her research, Reid challenges Adler’s position, writing, “Superficially, Adler’s assertion that people do not convert

¹⁰⁹ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 14.

¹¹⁰ Tonya A. Brown, *The Door to Witchcraft: A New Witch’s Guide to History, Traditions & Modern-Day Spells* (Emeryville, CA: Althea Press, 2019), 4.

¹¹¹ Sian Reid (b. 1966) is a lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology at Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from Carleton University.

to contemporary paganism is problematic because it is clear that most people do not begin their lives as pagans.”¹¹² Reid describes how the accounts of people becoming Pagans parallels that of how people become adherents of other religious traditions. Reid’s survey data shows that the most common ways for people to hear about Paganism is through books (30.2%) and people (28.8%).¹¹³ Survey respondents indicated that books (62.4%) and people (38.7%) were very important to getting involved with Paganism.¹¹⁴ Consistent with solitary practitionership, only 5.4% of survey respondents indicated that working with people was “very important” to staying in Paganism and 45.7% indicated that working with people was “not at all” important.¹¹⁵ Reid’s research demonstrates that while books are central to people becoming Pagans, people play a significant role in introducing Paganism to others. Yet, Reid, like Adler, rejects the language of proselytization and conversion in Paganism. She explains,

The decentralization that has been characteristic of contemporary paganism is a fundamental part of its vitality and its ability to provide people with a sense of identity not dependent on the organizing structures of power in society. Finally, it suggests that the traditional language of conversion is rejected by pagans because of its absolute linearity, its implication that there is both a starting place and an ending place, when what pagans perceive is a continuous unfolding of narrative potentials.¹¹⁶

In the end, both Reid and Adler agree that Pagans do not proselytize and they both reject the idea of conversion. In response, Beckett has colorfully written, “Pagans don’t proselytize, but we damn well better publicize. We need to let people know who we are, what we do, what we teach,

¹¹² Sian Reid, “‘A Religion Without Converts’ Revisited: Individuals, Identity and Community in Contemporary Paganism,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 171-91.

¹¹³ Reid, “A Religion Without Converts,” 180.

¹¹⁴ Reid, “A Religion Without Converts,” 180.

¹¹⁵ Reid, “A Religion Without Converts,” 181.

¹¹⁶ Reid, “A Religion Without Converts,” 190.

and how to find us.”¹¹⁷ Beckett suggests that Pagans need to be active with websites, public rituals, and in environmental and interfaith work to get the word out about Paganism. Paganistan Pagans are active in getting the word out about Paganism in the Twin Cities. Llewellyn Publications, located in suburban Twin Cities, is the largest Pagan publisher in the world. Twin Cities Pagan Pride is a non-profit organization that sponsors an annual Pagan Pride Fall Festival at Minnehaha Falls State Park, and Paganicon, an annual Pagan conference that attracts hundreds of Pagans each Spring. Pagan Newswire Collective lists 32 Pagan shops and bookstores in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.¹¹⁸ Several online Pagan dating sites are available to promote Pagan relationships: Pagan Dating Site,¹¹⁹ Pagan Dating Service,¹²⁰ Pagan Singles,¹²¹ Pagan Partners,¹²² Pagan Singles Dating,¹²³ and Pagan Harmony.¹²⁴ A website even exists to rate the online Pagan dating services.¹²⁵ Several Facebook sites serve Paganistan. The Twin Cities Pagan Pride and Paganicon Facebook page have 4,438 followers.¹²⁶ The Twin Cities Pagans Facebook group has

¹¹⁷ Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 297.

¹¹⁸ *Pagan Newswire Collective*, accessed August 4, 2020, <https://pncminnesota.com/tc-pagan-shops/>

¹¹⁹ *Pagan Dating SITE*, 2020, accessed August 4, 2020, www.PaganDatingSite.com

¹²⁰ *Pagan Dating Service*, 2020, accessed August 4, 2020, www.pagandatingservice.com

¹²¹ *Pagan Singles*, 2020, accessed August 4, 2020, www.pagan.singles

¹²² *Pagan Partners*, 2020, accessed August 4, 2020, www.paganpartners.com

¹²³ *Pagans Dating Singles*, 2020, accessed August 4, 2020, www.pagansinglesdating.com

¹²⁴ *Pagan Harmony*, 2020, accessed August 4, 2020, www.paganharmony.com

¹²⁵ Chelsea King, “Top 6 Best Pagan Dating Sites in 2020,” *Romance Scams: Scam Busters and Dating Site Reviews*, accessed August 4, 2020, www.romancescams.org/best-pagan-dating-sites

¹²⁶ TC Pagan Pride & Paganicon, Facebook page, accessed August 4, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/PaganPridePaganicon>

3,100 members.¹²⁷ The Wiccans of Minnesota Facebook Group has 1,544 members.¹²⁸ The Southern MN Pagan Pride Facebook group has 1,356 followers.¹²⁹ Earth House Project of Minnesota Facebook page has 392 followers.¹³⁰ The Wiccan Church of MN Facebook page has 318 followers.¹³¹ The American Pagans for Trump Facebook page has 987 followers.¹³² Pagans are actively getting the word out about Paganism.

While Beckett encourages Pagans to get the word out, he disdains proselytization because of the perceived motives and methods involved in proselytization. Beckett explains,

Proselytization—the aggressive and often coercive attempt to convert others to your religion—is rooted in arrogance and exclusivity. Those who do it assume that because they’ve had a strong religious experience or found a religion that is meaningful to them, everyone else needs exactly the same thing. Or they assume that their religion is the one true way and all others are false. These assumptions ignore the essential mystery and uncertainty of religion, mystery and uncertainty that are expressed in the wide and beautiful diversity of religious belief and practice throughout the world. Pagans and other followers of non-exclusivist religions find proselytization offensive and we work to keep it out of our religions.¹³³

To balance his rejection of proselytization and the need he senses to tell others about Paganism, Beckett proposes a middle way between proselytization and being secretive about religion. He

¹²⁷ Twin Cities Pagans, Facebook group, accessed August 4, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TwinCitiesPagans>

¹²⁸ The Wiccans of Minnesota, Facebook group, accessed August 4, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/156819897664011/>

¹²⁹ Southern MN Pagan Pride, Facebook group, accessed August 4, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/southernmnpaganpride>

¹³⁰ Earth House Project of Minnesota, Facebook page, accessed August 4, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/EarthHouseMN/?ref=page_internal

¹³¹ The Wiccan Church of Minnesota, Facebook page, accessed August 4, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/WiCoMORg>

¹³² American Pagans for Trump, Facebook page, accessed August 4, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanPagansForTrump>

¹³³ Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 298.

writes, “There is a huge difference between saying ‘convert to my religion or else’ and ‘here we are, if you’re interested.’”¹³⁴ Beckett goes on to say, “Public religions are a middle way between proselytizing religions and secretive religions. Public religions don’t proselytize. Instead, they let people know who they are, what they teach, and how to find them.”¹³⁵ Pagans recognize that for their religion to grow they need to get the word out, yet their discomfort with proselytizing, or imposing their beliefs on others, will likely hinder their future growth.

Second, solitary practitioner Wiccans have created a highly individualized Paganism that does not produce dedicated volunteers to serve the needs of any particular organization. Chas Clifton cites two estimates from the 1990s that suggest seventy to eighty percent of Wiccans are solitary practitioners.¹³⁶ While Pagans enjoy interacting with other Pagans and volunteer at conferences like Paganicon, they seem less likely to volunteer and to give financially in order to ensure the success of an organization. Further, as described in proposition four, polyaffiliated Pagans enjoy free riding by loosely enjoying the benefits of various groups and contributing to the success of none. By way of analogy, if a Christian attends several activities and services at a variety of churches and Christian organizations, occasionally volunteering at an event, but not committing to volunteer she does not help one organization succeed. Therefore, with respect to Stark’s fifth proposition, the modern trends within Wicca toward solitary practitioners and polyaffiliation work against any organizational success. Further, the Pagan bias against proselytization ensures that the movement will not grow as successfully as it might.

¹³⁴ Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 299.

¹³⁵ Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 299.

¹³⁶ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 12.

Proposition 6: Fertility Rates

Proposition 6: “Religious movements must maintain a level of fertility sufficient to at least offset member mortality.”¹³⁷ Stark describes how the Amish have not attracted converts for centuries but have enough fertility rates to sustain and grow their religion. Ellie Gardy reports a recent study showing that over the past century, the Amish population has doubled every 19.63 years. Further, the American Amish population has grown from 6,300 in 1901 to 324,900 in 2018. The average American family has 1.9 children, while the average Amish family has 6-7 children.¹³⁸ By contrast, Stark observes that Christian Science attracted older single women and failed to have enough children born into the religion, creating a serious decline in adherents.¹³⁹ Christian Science membership fell from 270,000 in 1936 to 100,00 in 1990.¹⁴⁰ Christian Science does not publish membership numbers, therefore fertility rates are unavailable. Stark does cite one study showing that only thirty-three percent of those raised by Christian Scientists became Scientists themselves.¹⁴¹

In the 1970s and 1980s, Berger’s Pagan census showed that Wicca largely attracted an adult population.¹⁴² After comparing various surveys, Berger concludes that “it seems reasonable

¹³⁷ Stark, “Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model,” 265.

¹³⁸ Ellie Gardey, “Amish Projected to Overtake the Current US Population in 215 Years, If Growth Rates Continue,” *Daily Caller*, July 31, 2019, <https://dailycaller.com/2019/07/31/amish-population-america-growth-rates/>.

¹³⁹ Rodney Stark, “The Rise and Fall of Christian Science,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion*. No. 13 (1998): 189–214. Stark observes that marriage and family were not priorities in Christian Science.

¹⁴⁰ Stark, “The Rise and Fall of Christian Science,” 190-1.

¹⁴¹ Stark, “The Rise and Fall of Christian Science,” 202, 208.

¹⁴² Helen Berger, “Contemporary Paganism by the Numbers,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 158.

to estimate that about one-third of the Pagan population are men and two-thirds women.”¹⁴³ However, by the late 1990s, when Helen Berger conducted the Pagan Census, forty-one percent of Pagans said they had children, leading Berger to conservative estimate that 82,600 children were growing up Pagan in the United States.¹⁴⁴ The rise of “witchlings,” as Witches affectionately call their children, surfaced many issues within the Pagan movement concerning children. For example, should children be permitted in rituals? Should children be socialized into Wicca or permitted to explore other religious traditions? Should children participate in ritual nudity and sex and, if so, at what age? What about adults in the community being too friendly with minors? Should parents keep their children from experimenting sexually? If parents do prohibit their children from teenage sex, are they reinforcing “Christian morality” instead of the sexual freedom that they have enjoyed in Wicca? What are the legal implications of involving children in sexual rituals? If rituals are made “age appropriate,” does the ritual lose its power? The questions challenged many core practices within the Pagan community.

Pagans developed several rituals to celebrate the birth of children, notably “wiccaning,” which may be compared to a child baptism or dedication in a Christian context. Berger describes how wiccaning rituals are unique to parents and their Pagan community, but normally involve presenting the child in a ritual circle for a blessing by the gods and community.¹⁴⁵ Graham Harvey explains, “In child blessing ceremonies there is thus a balance between the individuality of children who must make their own choices later in life and the

¹⁴³ Berger, “Contemporary Paganism by the Numbers,” 159.

¹⁴⁴ Helen A. Berger, *A Community of Witches: Contemporary Neo-Paganism and Witchcraft in the United States* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 83.

¹⁴⁵ Berger, *A Community of Witches*, 90.

community life of which they are an integral part.”¹⁴⁶ Pagans want to raise their children within Paganism but also want each child to determine for him or herself what to believe. Berger notes that Pagan parents affirm that each child must explore his or her own spiritual path.¹⁴⁷ Pizza argues that her ethnographic fieldwork in Paganistan shows the effectiveness of this approach since most of the children raised by Pagans become Pagans themselves.¹⁴⁸

Witches believe that children possess special magical ability and label them, as Pizza describes, as “magical children.”¹⁴⁹ Therefore, children are often involved in casting a magical circle and other basic ritual elements at festivals. Pizza describes her observations in Paganistan, writing,

The presence of babies, children and teenagers at Pagan festivals in the Midwest is increasingly common. Festivals like Harmony Tribe’s Sacred Harvest Festival have had a family-friendly policy since their first event some 10 years ago. This was a deliberate decision: members of Harmony Tribe, many of whom are parents themselves, shared with me experiences of being excluded from Pagan events and rituals in the past because the presence of their children was not considered appropriate. Consequently, the harvest festival is filled with children and teens of all ages, and many families camp together in unofficial family sites in order to keep an eye on each others’ (*sic*) children and to let them play together.

But rather than turn the festival into a strictly “family-oriented” event, Harmony Tribe acknowledges that there is a true need for adult-only campsites, spaces and rituals as well. So, while an all-ages evening ritual winds down at sunset at the festival, starting up simultaneously are rite-of-passage rituals for children becoming teens and for teens becoming adults: bonding rituals based on gender, Pagan-style bachelor and bachelorette parties, and elderhood/croning rituals. All of this occurs with the rhythm of the evening drum circle pulsing in the background.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism*, 198.

¹⁴⁷ Berger, *A Community of Witches*, 84-5.

¹⁴⁸ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 100-1.

¹⁴⁹ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 102.

¹⁵⁰ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 102-3.

Pagan parents make choices regarding the involvement of their children in Pagan festivals and rituals. Pizza notes, “Some organizations have implemented the equivalent of movie ratings for their public rituals—a ritual can be G, PG, PG-13, or R, with regard to its adult appropriate content or the level of emotional engagement.”¹⁵¹ Ratings help guide parents in choosing whether to involve their children in specific Pagan rituals.

Pagans recognize that socializing the next generation helps Paganism succeed where other religions have failed.¹⁵² Berger observes that a growing number of Pagan books are being written for children.¹⁵³

Some Pagans, admits Berger, see the presence of children as disruptive to authentic Pagan rituals.¹⁵⁴ The challenges are particularly poignant when it comes to sexual matters.

Berger captures the concerns well, writing,

What constitutes a healthy notion of sexuality for children and youth in our society is being questioned in parents’ magazines, schools, and at times the law courts. As heirs to the counterculture, the Neo-Pagan community is on the whole sexually permissive—accepting open sexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, and nontraditional family forms, such as group

¹⁵¹ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 104.

¹⁵² Berger, *A Community of Witches*, 86. Berger points out that part of the decline of Shakers is due to being dependent on converts rather than socializing their children to their religion.

¹⁵³ Berger, *A Community of Witches*, 87. Here is a small sampling of the many self-published Pagan Children’s books available today. Jessica M. Hauptmann, *Paganism for Kiddos: A Kids and Parents’ Guide to Pagan and Wiccan Practice*, Spiral Tree Publishing, 2013. Brigid Ashwood, *The Earth Child’s Handbook: Crafts and Inspiration for the Spiritual Child*, Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2012. Nikki Van De Car, *The Junior Witch’s Handbook: A Kid’s Guide to White Magic, Spells, and Rituals*. Running Press Kids, 2020. Catherine Fet, *Magic Potions and Elixirs: Recipes and Spells for Kids in Magic Training*. Independently Published, 2018. Jennifer K. Clark, *The Wizard’s Workshop*, Plain Sight, 2018. Michael Gonzalez, *The Unofficial Harry Potter Spellbook: Wizard Training*, Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2017. Becky Cummings, *The Magic of Me: A Kids’ Spiritual Guide to Health and Happiness*, Boundless Movement, 2018. J. C. Artemisia *Look to the Moon: A Pagan Bedtime Blessing*. Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2018. Jennifer Adams, *I Am a Warrior Goddess*, Sounds True, 2018. Mathias Nordvig, *Norse Mythology for Kids: Tales of Gods, Creature, and Quests*, Emeryville, CA: Rockridge Press, 2020.

¹⁵⁴ Berger, *A Community of Witches*, 88.

marriages and open marriages. Witches exalt both homosexuality and heterosexuality as magical acts.¹⁵⁵

Neo-Pagan parents, most of whom have participated in the campsite dances and open sexuality, are reevaluating the appropriateness of that environment for their children. A forty-year-old woman expressed her concern that her fourteen-year-old daughter might be “hit-up” at a festival they were about to attend. The child had reached puberty, and though still a minor, she looked like a woman. As more Neo-Pagan children reach puberty, more adults are concerned about protecting them from unsolicited sexual advances.¹⁵⁶

Berger describes a situation in which popular Wiccan leaders and authors, Gavin and Yvonne Frost, advocated ritual sex for minors as an initiatory rite of passage into adulthood. While numerous Pagans have strongly decried such practices as sexual abuse, I have listened to Pagans at the Coffee Cauldron bemoan Pagans in Wisconsin practicing ritual sex with minors—so it does happen.¹⁵⁷ Berger describes that minor sexual activity and ritual nudity has led to many Pagan parents rightly being concerned about the courts and or child protection agencies removing children from their homes.¹⁵⁸

Witches or Pagans are concerned about children being known as Witches and Pagans in the public-school setting. To avoid social rejection and even persecution, Berger reports that many children keep their religious views secret, living in the proverbial “broom-closet.”¹⁵⁹

I have attended several Pagan gatherings over the past three years and only seen a few children. I have attended about fifty Coffee Cauldron meetings since 2017. Two or three times I have witnessed a Pagan parent bring a child along. Each time, the parent placed the child at a

¹⁵⁵ Berger, *A Community of Witches*, 92.

¹⁵⁶ Berger, *A Community of Witches*, 94.

¹⁵⁷ The Pagans related to me that the Wisconsin police were involved in making arrests.

¹⁵⁸ Berger, *A Community of Witches*, 96.

¹⁵⁹ Berger, *A Community of Witches*, 98.

different table to color or do homework. Out of the two or three hundred Pagans who attended the 2017 and 2018 Pagan Pride Day events held at the Minnehaha Falls State Park, I did not see more than twenty children. Out of the six or seven hundred participants at Paganicon 2018 and Paganicon 2019, I did not see more than twenty or thirty children. The majority of the Pagans I have interacted with in these meetings and events were single, older married couples, and those committed to an LGBTQ+ lifestyle. Indeed, it would be a rare exception for a family of say, four or five, to attend one of these events.

In what I have observed in Paganistan, fertility rates appear to be too low to sustain Paganistan in the future. Therefore, Stark's sixth proposition seems to indicate a future decline for Paganistan.

Proposition 7: Religious Competition

Proposition 7: "Other things being equal, new religious movements will prosper to the extent that they compete against weak, local conventional religious organizations within a relatively unregulated religious economy."¹⁶⁰ In other words, a new religious movement will thrive when little religious competition is present.

Wicca and Paganism have thrived in three major centers in the United States: New York (East), San Francisco (West), and the Twin Cities (North-Central).¹⁶¹ It is significant that these three centers are known for political liberalism, LGBTQ+ sympathies, and spiritual apathy.

While the three major centers have individual histories and cultural distinctives, American Pagans actively travel to festivals and gatherings and share ideas with one another.

¹⁶⁰ Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," 266.

¹⁶¹ The development of Wicca in New York, San Francisco, and Minneapolis-St. Paul was discussed on pages 62-6.

Therefore, Hutton cautions against making too much of regional differences.¹⁶² With that caveat, the following observations about each major regional center of Paganism in America reveal a uniquely receptive cultural milieu for Paganism.

Long Island, notes Hutton was home to the Pagan Church of Aphrodite, founded in 1938.¹⁶³ The progressive and intellectual culture was a ready receptor for the Gardnerian Witches, Ray and Rosemary Buckland, who moved from London to Long Island in 1962 and started a coven.¹⁶⁴ In many ways, Hutton argues, Margot Adler's first edition of *Drawing Down the Moon*, in 1979, represented a progressive and intellectual East Coast Gardnerian Witchcraft.¹⁶⁵

By contrast, Pizza stresses, Magliocco and Salomonsen trace the history of the San Francisco Bay area Pagan movement to the Haight-Ashbury scene in the mid-1960s.¹⁶⁶ The San Francisco Bay area is well known for its liberalism, LGBTQ+ movement, and was therefore a ready receptor politically and culturally for Paganism. Hutton agrees, affirming that it is no surprise that Victor and Cora Anderson (Feri Wicca), Zsuzsanna Budapest (Dianic Wicca), and Starhawk (Reclaiming Collective), blossomed on the West Coast with a poetic, feminist, LGBTQ+ friendly, and politically activist Witchcraft.¹⁶⁷

Howard affirms the stereotypical contrast between the East Coast and West Coast

¹⁶² Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), 370. Yet even Hutton agrees that “the distinction to some degree stands up” between New York and California Witchcraft.

¹⁶³ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 340.

¹⁶⁴ Clifton, *Her Hidden Children*, 14-5.

¹⁶⁵ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 370.

¹⁶⁶ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 31.

Witchcraft is that the East Coast is Gardnerian, intellectual, rational, and heterosexual,¹⁶⁸ while Pizza affirms that the West Coast is eclectic, poetic, feminist, activist, radical, and sexually open.¹⁶⁹ Yet, given the growth, publication of books, and cross-pollinating of American Wicca, Hutton is right to caution against making too much of these differences between East and West Coast Witchcraft.¹⁷⁰ The point, here, is that the East and West Coasts of America were culturally ready receptors for Paganism in the 1960s and 70s.

Located between the East and West Coasts, it is perhaps not surprising that Minnesota is diverse, syncretistic, liberal, and even mundane.¹⁷¹ The Twin Cities is politically,¹⁷² religiously, and socially liberal Lutheran and Roman Catholic.¹⁷³ Minneapolis boasts the fourth largest LGBTQ+ population as a percentage of city population in the USA.¹⁷⁴ Pizza has pointed out that Twin Cities Paganism is not shaped by a charismatic figure but grows out of the diverse

¹⁶⁷ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 350-1.

¹⁶⁸ Michael Howard, *Modern Wicca: A History from Gerald Gardner to the Present* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2009), 213. Howard describes Gardnerians as “homophobic” in their opposition to Sanders’ being bisexual. Howard also notes that “Stewart and Janet Farrar were among the first prominent Wiccans to say there was nothing wrong with gay people joining covens, although Stewart did have reservations about all male or aa-female covens because of problems with the gender polarity of Wiccan rites.”

¹⁶⁹ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 31.

¹⁷⁰ Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 370. Pizza, *Paganistan*, 31.

¹⁷¹ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 31-2. Mundane includes “Minnesota nice” according to Pizza.

¹⁷² Minnesota has voted for the Democratic candidate in US presidential elections since 1968, longer than any other state in America.

¹⁷³ John Mayer, *City View Report: Twin Cities*, 16th ed. (Minneapolis: City Vision, 2015), 26-7. The two largest Christian denominations in the Twin Cities are Roman Catholicism with 254,489 members attending 222 congregations, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) with 72,492 members attending 285 congregations. Both denominations tend to be politically and socially liberal. The ELCA openly ordains gay and lesbian pastors.

¹⁷⁴ Wikipedia LGBT Demographics of the United States. Accessed December 12, 2019. Gary Gates (October 2018) “Same-sex Couples and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Populations. New Estimates from the American Community Survey.” The Williams Institute, UCLA. The four US cities with the highest percentage of LGBT populations are: San Francisco (15.4%), Seattle (12.9%), Atlanta (12.8%), and Minneapolis (12.5%).

Scandinavian culture.¹⁷⁵ Paganism seems to culturally align with the Twin Cities and does not face serious religious competition from conservative Christian denominations. Therefore, with respect to Stark’s seventh proposition, Wicca will likely continue to enjoy success in Paganistan.

Proposition 8: Internal and External Relationships

Proposition 8: “New religious movements will succeed to the extent that they sustain strong internal attachments, while remaining an open social network, able to maintain and form ties to outsiders.”¹⁷⁶ Religious movements that can develop strong internal relationships and assimilate new people will succeed. Stark points out that one of the failures of liberal Protestantism is a breakdown of internal congregational life. Stark argues that people join religious movements for relationships not doctrines. He explains, “People do not join religious groups because they suddenly found the doctrine appealing. They convert when their ties to members outweigh their ties to non-members—for most people, conversion consists of aligning their religious behavior with that of their friends.”¹⁷⁷ As many researchers have shown, successful religious movements build a meaningful community for members that is welcoming and able to assimilate newcomers.¹⁷⁸

A curious tension exists between solo-practitionership and the act of belonging to a coven or community. As Beckett puts it, “Unless you’re the rare bird who really is the Witch in

¹⁷⁵ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 31-2.

¹⁷⁶ Stark, “Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model,” 267.

¹⁷⁷ Stark, “Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model,” 267.

¹⁷⁸ Leith Anderson, *Dying for Change: An Arresting Look at the New Realities Confronting Churches and Para-Church Ministries* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1990), 83-99. Ed Stetzer, and Thom S. Rainer, *Transformational Church: Creating A New Scorecard for Congregations* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2010), 99-122.

the Forest, sooner or later you're going to reach the end of what you can accomplish on your own. Continuing your learning and spiritual growth will require a group."¹⁷⁹ Yet religious groups create difficult dynamics—especially Pagan groups. Beckett describes the volatility, unpredictability, and rapid changes in Pagan groups.¹⁸⁰ So, while Paganistan boasts 324 Witch covens, more than any other state,¹⁸¹ this high number of covens does not necessarily indicate a strong internal social network. Pizza reports the internal unrest in Paganistan was so extreme, that as a researcher, she had to step away for two years and focus on her teaching career until some of the divisions quieted down.¹⁸² Pizza describes the way in which Pagans, 25 to 30 years ago, met and were trained through occult experience and that newer Pagans are now more interested in the content of occult teachings.¹⁸³ Book learning does not confer what experience can give in terms of community life. One might say that Paganistan is transitioning from covens to classrooms, and internal community life is suffering as a result. Pizza described that Pagan Pride Day 2012 showed signs of community withdrawal and siloed organizations.¹⁸⁴ With the loss of physical community, Facebook has helped to connect some Pagans. Though Pizza thinks Facebook has caused damaged to the idea of true community. Pizza explains,

Though it is not very effective as true cultural and civil connection—it is arguably damaging in fact . . . it is seductive to reduce a community to a social network. It feels safer and provides a chosen tribe of people who are already just like oneself. If there is a conflict or a

¹⁷⁹ Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 232.

¹⁸⁰ Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 237.

¹⁸¹ Mayer, *City View*, 26. Mayer lists the top five states with Witch covens: Minnesota (324), Texas (226), California (178), Florida (161), and Pennsylvania (141). Mayer says there is a total of 2,833 Witch covens in the United States.

¹⁸² Pizza, *Paganistan*, 119.

¹⁸³ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 123.

¹⁸⁴ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 119.

problem with getting along, rather than do the hard work of resolving it and working it out for the community's benefit, one can simply "unfriend" and ignore.¹⁸⁵

While groups may struggle to facilitate community and help welcome newcomers to Paganistan,

Pizza points out the crucial role occult bookstores have in the Pagan community. Pizza explains,

Pagans love their metaphysical stores. As discussed earlier in this book, from Gnostica to Evenstar, to Magnus, to the Eye of Horus and now Keys of Paradise, the occult store has an important entry and sustenance point for Pagan communities, as well as knowledge and service providers. What is overlooked is just how successful they are at being repositories and transmitters of cultural capital—spatially, economically and in the arena of knowledge and learning. While the average coven life is still under 5 years, and organizations are still rising and falling under fluctuating membership and involvement, the stores have endured as Pagan sacred space for decades in the Twin Cities.¹⁸⁶

Metaphysical and occult bookstores are often both the glue that holds a community together and a welcoming place for newcomers to Paganism. The bookstores offer classes, seminars, and advice on ways to connect with the broader Pagan community. Therefore, if Paganistan has metaphysical and occult bookstores, internal and external networks are being facilitated, and Stark's eighth proposition seems to indicate continued success for Wicca in the Twin Cities.

Proposition 9: Environmental Tension

Proposition 9: "Religious movements will continue to grow only to the extent that they maintain sufficient tension with their environment—remain sufficiently strict."¹⁸⁷ The point here is that turnover in a religious movement is generally positive. The slower a movement grows, the more it will depend on those who are second and third generation members, and this dependence will likely lower the strictness and the movement's ultimate success. Stark writes,

¹⁸⁵ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 119.

¹⁸⁶ Pizza, *Paganistan*, 124.

¹⁸⁷ Stark, "Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model," 267.

“When groups do not grow or grow very slowly, they will soon be made up primarily of those who did not choose to belong, but simply grew up belonging. Conversion selects people who find the current level of a movement’s ‘strictness’ to be satisfactory.”¹⁸⁸ Maintaining the strictness helps the movement to grow.

Pagans are aware of the potential for religious apathy with their children being raised Pagan as opposed to individuals finding Paganism as adults. Michael Sontag expresses his concern; “By bringing people [i.e., children] on to the magickal path, as opposed to them finding the path themselves, we run the risk of finding ourselves dealing with an increasingly apathetic magickal community.”¹⁸⁹ Sontag’s concern goes to the heart of Stark’s ninth proposition. However, every Pagan I have met and interacted with personally chose Paganism and was not raised Pagan by parents. Whether at the Coffee Cauldron, Pagan Pride Day, or at Paganicon, I have yet to meet a Pagan who was raised by Pagan parents. However, the research of Fennell and Wildman-Hanlon shows that 45% of children raised in Paganism choose Paganism as adults, and an additional 25% spiritually identify as Pagans when they become adults.¹⁹⁰ Pizza describes the ways in which organizers of Pagan festivals commonly make allowances for children in the community.¹⁹¹ Yet the growth through individuals choosing Paganism, rather than Paganism relying on their children being raised Pagan, bodes well for Paganistan’s future success.

¹⁸⁸ Stark, “Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model,” 268.

¹⁸⁹ Berger, *A Community of Witches*, 84. Quotes Michael Sontag.

¹⁹⁰ Julie Fennell, and Laura A Wildman-Hanlon, “The Children of Converts: Beyond the First Generation of Contemporary Pagans,” *Social Compass*, No. 2, (2017): 288-306.

¹⁹¹ Murphy Pizza, “Magical Children and Meddling Elders: Paradoxical Patterns in Contemporary Pagan Cultural Transmission,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 500-3.

Proposition 10: Socialization of the Young

Proposition 10: “Religious movements must socialize the young sufficiently well to minimize both defection and the appeal of reduced strictness.”¹⁹² Keeping the young engaged in Wicca might cause the movement to lose its strictness (proposition nine), which raises concerns about properly socializing the young. If the young are properly socialized, enlisted, and commissioned effectively as Pagans, they can be a huge benefit to the movement.

Pagan parents typically socialize their children to Paganism through involvement in Pagan rituals and practices rather than religious instruction. Interestingly, popular media culture is arguably the most powerful tool socializing young Pagans. Hannah Johnston observes, “many scholars of teen paganism (myself included) have commented that the Western media culture is the single most important influence in the development of teen Paganism across the world.”¹⁹³ Indeed, *Harry Potter* books by J. K. Rowling and the eight movies based on the books (2001-2011) glamorizing Witchcraft among the young have become a global phenomenon for teens with record-breaking audiences.¹⁹⁴

Willem De Blecourt argues that Rowling was influenced by the television series *Bewitched* (1964-1972), T. W. White’s *Once and Future King*, made into a Disney movie in 1963, Jill Murphy’s 1974 *Worst Witch* books, which were also made into a television show in 1986, and Diana Jones’s book *Witch Week* (1982).¹⁹⁵ De Blecourt also argues that movies like

¹⁹² Stark, “Why Religious Movements Succeed or Fail: A Revised General Model,” 268.

¹⁹³ Hannah E. Johnston, “Of Teens and Tomes: The Dynamics of Teenage Witchcraft and Teen Witch Literature,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 509-38.

¹⁹⁴ Willem De Blecourt, “Witches on Screen,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Witchcraft and Magic*, ed. Owen Davies (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), 253-80.

¹⁹⁵ De Blecourt, “Witches on Screen,” 253.

Snow White (1937),¹⁹⁶ *The Wizard of Oz* (1939),¹⁹⁷ *I Married A Witch* (1942),¹⁹⁸ *Bell, Book and Candle* (1958),¹⁹⁹ *Night of the Eagle* (1962),²⁰⁰ *Rosemary's Baby* (1968),²⁰¹ *Satan's School for Girls* (1973),²⁰² *The Initiation of Sarah* (1978),²⁰³ *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987),²⁰⁴ *The*

¹⁹⁶ Released December 21, 1937, Walt Disney Production's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* grossed \$418 million at the Box Office.

¹⁹⁷ Released August 25, 1939, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's *The Wizard of Oz* starring Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, Bert Lahr, Jack Haley, Billie Burke, Margaret Hamilton, and Charlie Grapewin, grossed \$21.1 million at the Box Office and was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Art Direction, and Best Effects, Special Effects, and won Academy Awards for Best Music, Original Score, Best Music, Original Song, and Academy Juvenile Award. *The Wizard of Oz* is widely regarded as one of the greatest cinema films of all time. De Blecourt, "Witches on Screen," 259-260, observes that *The Wizard of Oz* introduced and popularized the idea of a "good Witch" and a "beautiful Witch" in American culture. He quotes an exchange between Glinda (the Good Witch of the North) and Dorothy. "Glinda: What the Munchkins want to know is, are you a good witch or a bad witch? Dorothy: But I've already told you, I am not a witch at all. Witches are old and ugly. What was that? Glinda: The Munchkins. They're laughing because I am a witch. I'm Glinda, the witch of the North. Dorothy: You are? I beg your pardon. But I've never heard of a beautiful witch before. Glinda: Only bad witches are ugly."

¹⁹⁸ Released October 30, 1942, Paramount Pictures' *I Married A Witch* starring Veronika Lake grossed \$1.1 million at the Box Office and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Music Score.

¹⁹⁹ Released November 11, 1958, Columbia Pictures' *Bell, Book and Candle* starring Kim Novak, Jimmy Stewart, and Jack Lemmon, grossed \$2.5 million at the Box Office and was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Art Direction and Best Costume Design.

²⁰⁰ Released April 25, 1962, Independent Artists' *Night of the Eagle* starring Janet Blair, Peter Wyngarde, Margaret Johnson, and Colin Gordon.

²⁰¹ Released June 12, 1968, Paramount Pictures' *Rosemary's Baby* starring Mia Farrow, John Cassaveles, Ruth Gordon, Sidney Blackmer, Maurice Evans, and Ralph Bellamy, grossed \$33.4 million at the Box Office and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay, and won an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.

²⁰² Released September 19, 1973, ABC's made-for-television *Satan's School for Girls* starred Pamela Franklin, Kate Jackson, Cheryl Ladd, Lloyd Bochner, Jamie Smith Jackson, Roy Thinnes, and Jo Van Fleet.

²⁰³ Released February 2, 1978, ABC's made-for-television *The Initiation of Sarah* starred Kay Lenz, Shelley Winters, Tony Bill, and Morgan Fairchild.

²⁰⁴ Released June 12, 1987, Warner Bros. Entertainment's *The Witches of Eastwick* starring Jack Nicholson, Cher, Susan Sarandon, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Veronica Cartwright grossed \$63.8 million at the Box Office and was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Original Score, Best Sound, and Best Special Visual Effects.

Witches (1990),²⁰⁵ *Hocus Pocus* (1993),²⁰⁶ *The Craft* (1996),²⁰⁷ *Lord of the Rings* (2001, 2002, 2003),²⁰⁸ *Stardust* (2007),²⁰⁹ and television series like *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (1996-2003),²¹⁰ *Charmed* (1998-2006),²¹¹ and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003)²¹² make Witchcraft attractive to younger audiences. Witches in popular movies and on television are portrayed by beautiful young women, rather than the classic image of a Witch as an ugly old

²⁰⁵ Released May 25, 1990, Warner Bros. Entertainment's *The Witches* starring Mia Zetterling, Anjelica Huston, and Rowan Atkinson grossed \$15.3 million at the Box Office.

²⁰⁶ Released July 16, 1993, Walt Disney Pictures' *Hocus Pocus* starring Bette Midler, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kathy Najimy, Omri Katz, Thora Birch, and Vinessa Shaw grossed \$39.5 million at the Box Office.

²⁰⁷ Released May 3, 1996, Columbia Pictures' *The Craft* starring Fairuza Bulk, Robin Tunney, Neve Campbell, and Rachel True grossed \$55.7 million at the Box Office.

²⁰⁸ Released December 19, 2001, December 18, 2002, and December 17, 2003, New Line Cinema's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy featured three films, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), *The Two Towers* (2002), and *The Return of the King* (2003) which together grossed \$2.919 billion at the Box Office. *The Fellowship of the Ring* was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Supporting Actress, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Art Direction, Best Costume Design, Best Film Editing, Best Original Song, Best Sound Mixing, and won Academy Awards for Best Cinematography, Best Makeup, Best Original Score, and Best Visual Effects. *The Two Towers* was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Art Direction, Best Film Editing, and Best Sound Mixing, and won Academy Awards for Best Sound Editing and Best Visual Effects. *The Return of the King* won eleven Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Art Direction, Best Costume Design, Best Film Editing, Best Makeup, Best Original Score, Best Original Song, Best Sound Mixing, and Best Visual Effects.

²⁰⁹ Released August 10, 2007, Paramount Pictures' *Stardust* starring Claire Danes, Sienna Miller, Michelle Pfeiffer, Robert DeNiro, Charlie Cox, Ricky Gervais, Jason Flemyng, Rupert Everett, and Peter O'Toole grossed \$137 million at the Box Office.

²¹⁰ An American sitcom television series on ABC and The WB starring Melissa Joan Hart aired for seven seasons (September 27, 1996 – April 24, 2003).

²¹¹ An American fantasy television series on The WB starring Shannen Doherty, Holly Marie Combs, Alyssa Milano, T. W. King, Dorian Gregory, Greg Vaughan, Karis Paige Bryant, Brian Krause, Julian McMahon, Rose McGowan, Drew Fuller, and Kaley Cuoco aired for eight seasons (October 7, 1998 – May 21, 2006).

²¹² An American supernatural drama television series on The WB and UPN starring Sarah Michelle Gellar aired for seven seasons (March 10, 1997 – May 20, 2003).

woman.²¹³ Witches portrayed by beautiful young women add to the media portrayal of Witchcraft as positive, desirable, fun, sexy, and powerful. While Wiccans and Pagans view many of these movies and television shows as inaccurate, Witchcraft in popular media has mainstreamed Witchcraft for teenage America.

Movies featuring Witchcraft socialize a young American audience to Witchcraft.

Popular examples of Witchcraft in movies include: *Spellbinder* (1988),²¹⁴ *The Little Mermaid*

²¹³ Veronika Lake starred in *I Married A Witch* (1942); Kim Novak starred in *Bell, Book and Candle* (1958); Janet Blair and Margaret Johnson starred in *Night of the Eagle* (1962); Elizabeth Montgomery starred in *Bewitched*; Mia Farrow starred in *Rosemary's Baby* (1968); Pamela Franklin, Kate Jackson, Cheryl Ladd, and Jo Van Fleet starred in *Satan's School for Girls* (1973); Kay Lenz, Shelley Winters, and Morgan Fairchild starred in *The Initiation of Sarah* (1978); Cher, Susan Sarandon, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Veronica Cartwright starred in *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987); Mia Zetterling starred in *The Witch* (1990); Sarah Jessica Parker, Kathy Najimy, Omri Katz, Thora Birch, and Vinessa Shaw starred in *Hocus Pocus* (1993); Fairuza Bulk, Robin Tunney, Neve Campbell, and Rachel True starred in *The Craft* (1996); Melissa Joan Hart starred in *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* (1996-2003); Sarah Michelle Gellar starred in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997); Sandra Bullock, Nicole Kidman starred in *Practical Magic* (1998); Shannon Doherty, Holly Combs, Alyssa Milano, Karis Paige Bryant, Rose McGowan, Kaley Cuoco starred in *Charmed* (1998-2006); Heather Donahue starred in *The Blair Witch Project* (1999); Nicole Kidman, Kristin Chenoweth, and Heather Burns starred in *Bewitched* (2005); Agnew Bruckner, Lauren Birkell, and Rachel Nichols starred in *The Woods* (2006); Laura Ramsey and Jessica Lucas starred in *The Covenant* (2006); Claire Danes, Sienna Miller, and Michelle Pfeiffer starred in *Stardust* (2007); Selena Gomez starred in *Wizards of Waverly Place* (2007-2012); Nina Dobrev, Sara Canning, Kat Graham, Candice King, and Kayla Ewell starred in *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017); Britt Robertson, Phoebe Tonkin, Shelley Hennig, Jessica Parker Kennedy, Ashley Crow, and Natasha Henstridge starred in *The Secret Circle* (2011-2012); Isabella Castillo, Kimberly Dos Ramos, Sol Rodriguez, and Maria de la Fuente starred in *Grachi* (2011-2013); Sheri Moon Zombie, Dee Wallace, Maria Conchita Alonso, and Judy Geeson starred in *The Lords of Salem* (2013); Gemma Arterton and Famke Janssen starred in *Hansel & Gretel* (2013); Emma Thompson and Emmy Rossum starred in *Beautiful Creatures* (2013); Taissa Farmiga, Lily Rabe, Emma Roberts, and Jessica Lange starred in *American Horror Story: Coven* (2013-2014); Claire Holt, Phoebe Tonkin, Daniella Pineda, Leah Pipes, Danielle Campbell, Riley Voelkel, Danielle Rose Russell starred in *The Originals* (2013-2018); Julia Ormond, Madchen Amick, Jenna Dewan, and Rachel Boston starred in *Witches of East End* (2013-2014); Emily Blunt and Anna Kendrick starred in *Into the Woods* (2014); Janet Montgomery, Tamzin Merchant, Ashley Madekwe, and Elise Eberle starred in *Salem* (2014-2017); Paola Andino, Paris Smith, Daniela Nieves, Autumn Wendel, Denisea Wilson, Rahart Adams, Elizabeth Elias, and Zoey Burger starred in *Every Witch Way* (2014-2015); Rose Leslie and Julie Engelbrecht starred in *The Last Witch Hunter* (2015); Anya Taylor-Joy starred in *The Witch* (2015); Catherine Bell, Bailee Madison, Catherine Disher, Kylee Evans, and Sarah Power star in *Good Witch* (2015-present); Dakota Johnson, Mia Goth, Sylvie Testud, Renee Soutendijk, Malgosia Bela, Jessica Harper, and Chloe Moretz starred in *Suspiria* (2018); Melonie Diaz, Madeleine Mantock, Sarah Jefferey, Ellen Tamaki, and Poppy Drayton star in *Charmed* (2018-present).

²¹⁴ Released September 23, 1988, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's *Spellbinder* starring Timothy Daly, Kelly Preston, and Rick Rossovich grossed \$657,446 at the Box Office.

(1989),²¹⁵ *The Crucible* (1996),²¹⁶ *Practical Magic* (1998),²¹⁷ *Halloweentown* (1998),²¹⁸ *The Blair Witch Project* (1999),²¹⁹ *The Chronicles of Narnia* (2005),²²⁰ *Bewitched* (2005),²²¹ *The Woods* (2006),²²² *The Covenant* (2006),²²³ *Season of the Witch* (2011),²²⁴ *The Lords of Salem*

²¹⁵ Released November 17, 1989, Walt Disney Pictures' *The Little Mermaid* grossed \$233 million at the Box Office.

²¹⁶ Released November 27, 1996, 20th Century Fox's *The Crucible* starring Daniel Day-Lewis, Winona Ryder, Paul Scofield, Joan Allen, Bruce Davison, Rob Campbell, Jeffrey Jones, and Peter Vaughan grossed \$7 million at the Box Office and was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Supporting Actress.

²¹⁷ Released October 16, 1998, Warner Bros. Entertainment's *Practical Magic* starring Sandra Bullock, Nicole Kidman, Dianne West, Stockard Channing, and Aidan Quinn grossed \$68.3 million at the Box Office.

²¹⁸ Made for Disney Channel, Singer-White Productions' *Halloweentown* starring Debbie Reynolds, Judith Hoag, Kimberly J. Brown, Joey Zimmerman, and Emily Roeske first aired on October 17, 1998.

²¹⁹ Released July 14, 1999, Artisan Entertainment's *The Blair Witch Project* starring Heather Donahue, Michael G. Williams, and Joshua Leonard grossed \$248.6 million at the Box Office.

²²⁰ Released December 9, 2005; May 16, 2008; and December 10, 2010, Walt Disney Pictures' *The Chronicles of Narnia* trilogy featured three films, *The Lion, the Witch and Wardrobe* (2005), *Prince Caspian* (2008), and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (2010) which together grossed \$1.580 billion at the Box Office.

²²¹ Released June 24, 2005, Columbia Pictures' *Bewitched* starring Nicole Kidman, Will Ferrell, Shirley MacLaine, Michael Caine, Jason Schwartzman, Kristin Chenoweth, Heather Burns, Jim Turner, Stephen Colbert, David Alan Grier, Steve Carell grossed \$131.4 million at the Box Office.

²²² Released September 26, 2006, Sony Pictures' *The Woods* starred Agnew Bruckner, Patricia Clarkson, Bruce Campbell, Lauren Birkell, and Rachel Nichols.

²²³ Released September 8, 2006, Lakeshore Entertainment's *The Covenant* starring Steven Strait, Sebastian Stan, Laura Ramsey, Taylor Kitsch, Toby Hemingway, Jessica Lucas, Chace Crawford, and Wendy Crewson grossed \$37.6 million at the Box Office.

²²⁴ Released January 7, 2011, Atlas Entertainment's *Season of the Witch* starring Claire Foy, Nicolas Cage, Ron Perlman, Robert Sheehan, Stephan Campbell Moore, Stephen Graham, Ulrich Thompson, and Christopher Lee grossed \$91.6 million at the Box Office.

(2013),²²⁵ *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters* (2013),²²⁶ *Beautiful Creatures* (2013),²²⁷ *Into the Woods* (2014),²²⁸ *The Last Witch Hunter* (2015),²²⁹ *The Witch* (2015),²³⁰ and *Suspiria* (2018).²³¹

Television has also played a major role in promoting Witchcraft to Americans.

Popular examples of Witchcraft in television include: *Witches of East End* (2013-2014),²³² *The Vampire Diaries* (2009-2017),²³³ *The Originals* (2013-2018),²³⁴ *The Secret Circle* (2011-

²²⁵ Released April 19, 2013, Anchor Bay Films' *The Lords of Salem* starring Sheri Moon Zombie, Bruce Davison, Jeff Daniel Philipps, Ken Foree, Patricia Quinn, Dee Wallace, Maria Conchita Alonso, Judy Geeson, Andrew Prine, and Meg Foster grossed \$1.5 million at the Box Office.

²²⁶ Released January 25, 2013, Paramount Pictures' *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters* starring Jeremy Renner, Gemma Arterton, Famke Janssen, and Peter Stormare grossed \$226.3 million at the Box Office.

²²⁷ Released February 14, 2013, Warner Bros. Pictures' *Beautiful Creatures* starring Alden Ehrenreich, Alice Englert, Jeremy Irons, Emma Thompson, Viola Davis, Emmy Rossum, Thomas Mann, and Eileen Atkins grossed \$60.1 million at the Box Office.

²²⁸ Released December 8, 2014, Walt Disney Pictures' *Into the Woods* starring Meryl Streep, Emily Blunt, James Cordan, Anna Kendrick, Chris Pine, Tracey Ullman, Christine Baranski, and Johnny Depp grossed \$213.1 million and was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Supporting Actress, Best Production Design, and Best Costume Design.

²²⁹ Released October 23, 2015, Summit Entertainment's *The Last Witch Hunter* starring Vin Diesel, Elijah Wood, Rose Leslie, Julie Engelbrecht, and Michael Caine grossed \$146.9 million at the Box Office.

²³⁰ Released February 19, 2015, A24's *The Witch* starring Anya Taylor-Joy, Ralph Ineson, Kate Dickie, Harvey Scrimshaw, Ellie Granger, and Lucas Dawson grossed \$40.4 million at the Box Office.

²³¹ Released October 28, 2018, Amazon Studios' *Suspiria* starring Dakota Johnson, Tilda Swinton, Mia Goth, Angela Winkler, Ingrid Caven, Elena Fokina, Sylvie Testud, Renee Soutendijk, Christine LeBoutte, Fabrizia Sacchi, Malgosia Bela, Jessica Harper, and Chloe Grace Moretz grossed \$7.7 million at the Box Office.

²³² An American television series on Lifetime starring Julia Ormond, Madchen Amick, Jenna Dewan, Rachel Boston, Daniel Di Tomasso, Eric Winter, and Christian Cooke airing for two seasons (October 6, 2013 – October 5, 2014).

²³³ An American supernatural teen drama television series on The CW starring Nina Dobrev, Paul Wesley, Ian Somerhalder, Steven R. McQueen, Sara Canning, Kat Graham, Candice King, Zach Roerig, Kayla Ewell, Michael Trevino, Matt Davis, Joseph Morgan, and Michael Malarkey airing for eight seasons (September 10, 2009 – March 10, 2017).

²³⁴ An American fantasy supernatural drama television series on The CW starring Joseph Morgan, Daniel Gillies, Claire Holt, Phoebe Tonkin, Charles Michael Davis, Daniella Pineda, Leah Pipes, Danielle Campbell, Yusuf Gatewood, Riley Voelkel, Danielle Rose Russell, and Steven Krueger airing for five seasons (October 3, 2013 – August 1, 2018).

2012),²³⁵ *Salem* (2014-2017),²³⁶ *Good Witch* (2015-),²³⁷ *Charmed* (2018-),²³⁸ *Every Witch Way* (2014-2015),²³⁹ *American Horror Story: Coven* (2013-2014),²⁴⁰ *Grachi* (2011-2013),²⁴¹ and *Wizards of Waverly Place* (2007-2012).²⁴²

Considering Stark's tenth proposition, the popular media socialization of children and teens to Witchcraft through television and movies is so significant that the future of Wicca seems bright indeed!

I started this chapter with the question: Will polyaffiliated Wicca and Paganism in the Twin Cities thrive or fail in the future? I suggested that forecasting the future of a new religious movement is complex. *Stark's Revised General Model*, involving ten propositions to assess why

²³⁵ An American fantasy supernatural teen drama television series on The CW starring Britt Robertson, Thomas Dekker, Gale Harold, Phoebe Tonkin, Shelley Hennig, Jessica Parker Kennedy, Ashley Crow, Louis Hunter, Natasha Henstridge, and Chris Zylka aired for one season (September 15, 2011 – May 10, 2012).

²³⁶ An American supernatural horror television series on WGN America starring Janet Montgomery, Shane West, Seth Gabel, Tamzin Merchant, Ashley Madekwe, Elise Eberle, Iddo Goldberg, Xander Berkeley, Joe Doyle, and Oliver Bell airing for three seasons (April 20, 2014 – January 25, 2017).

²³⁷ An American and Canadian fantasy comedy-drama television series on the Hallmark Channel starring Catherine Bell, Bailee Madison, James Denton, Rhys Matthew Bond, Catherine Disher, Anthony Lemke, Kylee Evans, Peter MacNeill, Sarah Power, Dan Jeannotte, and Dan Payne airing for five seasons and is currently in its sixth season (February 28, 2015 – present).

²³⁸ An American fantasy drama television series on The CW starring Melonie Diaz, Madeleine Mantock, Sarah Jefferey, Ser'Darius Blain, Ellen Tamaki, Rupert Evans, Nick Hargrave, Jordan Donica, and Poppy Drayton airing for two seasons (October 14, 2018 – present).

²³⁹ An American teen sitcom series on Nickelodeon starring Paola Andino, Nick Merico, Paris Smith, Daniela Nieves, Tyler Alvarez, Autumn Wendel, Denisea Wilson, Kendall Sanders, Mavrick Moreno, Rahart Adams, Elizabeth Elias, and Zoey Burger airing for four seasons (January 1, 2014 – July 30, 2015).

²⁴⁰ An American horror television series on FX starring Sarah Paulson, Taissa Farmiga, Frances Conroy, Evan Peters, Lily Rabe, Emma Roberts, Denis O'Hare, Kathy Bates, and Jessica Lange aired for one season (October 9, 2013 – January 29, 2014).

²⁴¹ An American fantasy series on Nickelodeon starring Isabella Castillo, Andres Mercado, Kimberly Dos Ramos, Mauricio Henao, Sol Rodriguez, Lance Dos Ramos, Willy Martin, Maria de la Fuente, Danilo Carrera, Jesus Neyra airing for three seasons (May 2, 2011 – May 10, 2013).

²⁴² An American fantasy teen sitcom on the Disney channel starring Selena Gomez aired for four seasons (October 12, 2007 – January 6, 2012).

religious movements succeed or fail, was described, and applied to Wicca in the Twin Cities. My research suggests that Stark's propositions 1, 7, 8, 9, and 10 favor Wicca's future success, while propositions 3, 4, 5, and 6 do not. Proposition 2 was inconclusive. Wicca is a young religious movement, less than sixty years old in America, and its multifaceted development makes it difficult to describe, and even more difficult to predict its future.

CHAPTER 6

TOWARD AN EFFECTIVE GOSPEL WITNESS TO PAGANS

While the Christian literature on Paganism is limited,¹ the Christian literature offering help toward an effective gospel witness to Pagans is essentially non-existent. This chapter, therefore, is based, not on extant literature but on general sociological and biblical and missiological principles combined with my pastoral interaction with Pagans over the past three years. In the first section of this chapter, I describe five principles for Christians studying religions like Paganism. In the second section, challenges to evangelizing Pagans are discussed. In the final section of this chapter, I propose nine positive strategies for Christians effectively communicating the gospel to Pagans.²

Four Principles for Christians Studying Non-Christian Religions

The overall Christian goal for studying other religions flows from the great commandment to love God and to love our neighbors (Mark 12:30-31) by making disciples of all

¹ See chapter 2, pages 41-3.

² I use the broad terms “Christian” and “Pagan” throughout this chapter rather than more specific denominational labels on either side. I am speaking to a more general engagement between Christians and Pagans, rather than a more particular engagement, say, between Baptists and Gardnerian Wiccans, or Evangelicals and Progressive Wiccans.

nations (Matt 28:18-20).³ Making disciples of all nations involves Christians engaging non-Christians with an effective gospel witness. A gospel witness, asserts Paul Metzger, should not involve disrespecting cultures, colonialism, coercion, or manipulation.⁴ Metzger admits, “Christianity has often been guilty of oppression in its evangelistic proclamation throughout the world, such oppression and erosion of cultures does not arise from the heart of the gospel but runs counter to it.”⁵ Dubious motives and methods have left many non-Christians hostile toward Christians studying, interacting with, and evangelizing non-Christians. Metzger helpfully describes the situation,

Hostility toward evangelism today is often bound up with views of the gospel and connotations with proclamation that are coercive, manipulative, and framed in terms of power politics. With that in mind, evangelistic proclamation today must entail concern for dialogue and neighborliness, and this regardless of whether someone comes to Christ. People who do not yet know Christ personally by faith are often increasingly cynical of evangelistically minded Christians’ attempts to be cordial and friendly, viewing these efforts as a ruse for converting them to their position. . . . Our approach to discipleship and evangelism must also be framed relationally, so much so that we never look at people as a means to an end of a certain state of transformation, whether it be Christian perfection or conversion, but rather that we love the people we engage regardless of whether they ever realize what we hope for them.⁶

The Christian goal in studying other religions, therefore, is to love God and to love one’s neighbor by sharing the gospel with them so they can become a disciple of Jesus. David Rogers,

³ Terry Muck, “The Study of Religion” in *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices*, ed. Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland, and Gerald R. McDermott (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 18. Muck emphasizes glorifying God as the primary goal, stating, “The Christian scholar of religion admits that his or her final goal in any of life’s endeavors, including the study of religion, is to be a better follower of the Creator God and the Creator God’s Son. Faithfully followed, this goal, we believe, helps make Christians better scholars of religion than if they were following some more temporal goal.”

⁴ Paul Lewis Metzger, “Christian Interaction with Other Religions” in *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices*, ed. Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland, and Gerald R. McDermott (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 27-30.

⁵ Metzger, “Christian Interaction with Other Religions,” 29.

⁶ Metzger, “Christian Interaction with Other Religions,” 29.

in a response to the editorial “Proselytizing faithful of other religions misdirected” by Richard Stanford, clarifies a Christian perspective:

In conclusion, Christian evangelism should always be respectful, loving and kind, yet faithful to the truth of the gospel. Christians should always present the gospel in a winsomely persuasive manner. To be sure, Christians have not always done so. But evangelism at its best is carried out with the heartfelt desire and hope that others would enter into the abundant life and salvation found only in Christ. From the Christian perspective, there is nothing of greater value for any person than knowing Christ as Lord. Such a view is not "pointless." It is the point.⁷

Regardless of whether one’s neighbor responds to the gospel by becoming a disciple, a Christian must relationally love their non-Christian neighbor. The following four principles for Christians studying non-Christian religions flow from the desire to relationally love one’s neighbor.⁸

Principle 1: Accuracy

Christians studying non-Christian religions like Paganism must be accurate in their descriptions. Taking the time to accurately learn and understand the religions of others is an expression of love. When a Christian does not accurately understand the religion of someone it can hinder an effective gospel witness to that person. For example, Christians commonly believe that Pagans worship Satan, while in reality, Pagans believe that Satan is a Christian construct–

⁷ David Rodgers, “Knowing Jesus Christ as Lord is Point of Christianity,” *The Greenville News (SC)*, June 21, 1998.

⁸ Terry Muck, “The Study of Religion,” 16-7. Muck describes four principles as basic to religious studies: accuracy, fairness, objectivity, and respect. Muck also describes a distinctively Christian approach to studying other religions, writing, “Yet there is such a thing as a Christian religious studies, distinctive from a Buddhist religious studies, a Hindu religious studies, and agnostic religious studies, a humanist religious studies. And its distinctiveness lies in three main areas: (1) a Christian brings a distinctive outlook to his or her study, an imagination that supplies a distinctive motivation for studying other religions; (2) a Christian, because he or she is a Christian, will ask and focus on certain kinds of questions about other religions that others may or may not ask; and (3) a Christian seeks a distinctive payoff for his or her study of religion, which is to say that a Christian has a distinctive goal for the study of religion.” In this chapter, I have chosen to conflate Muck’s three points under a fifth principle for studying religions; Christians should study non-Christian religions as Christians.

which they reject.⁹ Therefore, Christians talking to Pagans about how Satan is deceiving them is not an effective approach to a gospel witness, nor is it lovingly or accurately studying the religion of Paganism.

Accurately studying the religions of others goes beyond misunderstandings like whether Pagans believe in Satan. From a history of religions perspective, Robert Bellah has described how religions have evolved from their premodern forms as part of an undifferentiated tribal culture, to modern differentiated forms where religion is relegated to a part of culture, to radically differentiated postmodern forms where religions, especially new religious movements, are evident in each sphere of society.¹⁰ Muck describes the process of “doing a religious audit” concerning how a religion has become dominant within a particular culture, and how new religious movements have evolved as a result of modernity and postmodernity.¹¹ The point here is that describing religions accurately is a highly complex process as religions evolve and adapt within various cultures.

Paganism is an esoteric new religious movement with a wide variety of expressions and, therefore, it is nearly impossible to accurately describe in a way in which everyone will agree. In attempting to describe Paganism, Michael York explains that Paganism has no god and

⁹ John W. Morehead, “Paganism and Neopaganism: History, Beliefs, Practices” in *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices*, ed. Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland, and Gerald R. McDermott (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 540. Morehead explains, “This is the idea that pagans worship the Christian devil, a claim that has found its way into many Christian conceptions and depictions of their spiritual pathway. Pagans are quick to point out that they do not believe that Satan exists, and that this is a Christian belief that finds no place in their religious system. Thus, they do not worship Satan.”

¹⁰ Robert Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). Bellah’s four spheres of society are the political, economic, social, and cultural.

¹¹ Terry Muck, “The Christian Study of World Religions” in *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices*, ed. Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland, and Gerald R. McDermott (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 6.

many gods, that Paganism is about what is done not necessarily what is believed, and that Paganism is evolving and creating new forms.¹² York states,

The fundamental pagan *ethos* is and remains one of freedom. Differing from much institutional religion, paganism is not a practice that is based on Credo but rather is one that, as Adler discerned, is determined more by what is *done* rather than what is *believed*. And what is done is something that for the most part is done personally—whether solo, with a few others, in conjunction with a coven or grove, or as member of a tribe or community.¹³

With such elasticity concerning the contours of Paganism, York asks, “what is the theology, if any, that could be detected behind such personal and diversified practice?”¹⁴ York suggests that the core of Pagan theology is nature. He explains,

Perhaps foremost of all is the point that paganism is primarily a nature religion—one that either honors nature as the supreme embodiment of godhead or divinity or draws its deities essentially as personifications of different aspects of and features of nature or both. The natural register is the primal source for the metaphors and understandings of cyclical rhythms used by pagan orientation—its ‘bible’ so to speak.¹⁵

If a Pagan theologian like York struggles to accurately describe Paganism, Christians should be cautious and avoid dogmatism when describing Paganism.

Another complicating factor in accurately describing a religious tradition is the members’ varying degrees of religious adherence. Adherents to various religions generally range from fundamentalist to nominal. Lawrence Davidson observes that fundamentalist Muslims and fundamentalist Christians both tend to read their holy books literally, and to adhere strictly to the

¹² Michael York, “Pagan Theology” in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 283-6.

¹³ York, “Pagan Theology,” 287-8. Emphasis original.

¹⁴ York, “Pagan Theology,” 288.

¹⁵ York, “Pagan Theology,” 292.

ultimate foundations of their respective religions.¹⁶ Religious nominalism generally describes those who identify with a religious tradition they are not currently practicing. The terms fundamentalism and nominalism are not normally used to describe Pagans. Yet, I remember hearing a Wiccan high priestess at the Coffee Cauldron once describe how a certain man present was a true believer. I understood her to mean that she thought he was a particularly zealous and spiritually powerful Pagan. Paganism's broad boundaries, explains Reid, provide room for those whom other religions might consider nominal.¹⁷ The varying degree of religious adherence or participation among Pagans makes it complex for Christians to accurately describe a practicing Pagan or the contours of Paganism.

Accurately describing the religions of others, notably Paganism, is complex and difficult work. Yet love compels Christians to study and accurately seek to understand Paganism, realizing that inaccuracy can hinder an effective gospel witness.

Principle 2: Fairness

Christians studying non-Christian religions like Paganism must be fair in their approach and judgments. Fairness involves at least four things: listening, experiencing, appreciating, and understanding the quintessence of the other religion.

First, fairness involves Christians listening to practitioners of a non-Christian religion describe their religion. A Christian listening only to Christians describe another religion will likely hear a biased or unfair assessment. Likewise, a Muslim hearing only a fellow Muslim

¹⁶ Lawrence Davidson, *Islamic Fundamentalism: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 15.

¹⁷ Sian Reid, "A Religion Without Converts' Revisited: Individuals, Identity and Community in Contemporary Paganism" in *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, ed. James Lewis and Murphy Pizza (Boston: Brill, 2009), 171-91.

describe Christianity, will likely hear a biased or unfair assessment. The worst scenario is a Christian writing about another religion without demonstrating familiarity with the other religion.¹⁸ The portrayal of the non-Christian religion is unlikely to be fair. A fairer approach to Christians studying other religions is modeled by the *Handbook of Religion*.¹⁹ The three Christian editors welcomed fifty-five Christian and non-Christian scholars to contribute essays. Significantly, the editors included an adherent essay from each religion studied in the book. Another example of fairness is modeled by *Beyond the Burning Times*.²⁰ The book features a substantive dialogue between a Pagan and a Christian and is a model for interfaith dialogue, discussion, and learning.

Second, fairness involves Christians experiencing something of the of the non-Christian religion they describe. My study of Paganism is limited by being an outsider and by not participating in Wiccan rituals.²¹ Studying a given religion while not experiencing it should lead a fair-minded researcher to exercise caution describing the religion. A popular textbook on world religions describes the challenge of portraying religious experience from an outsider's perspective,

¹⁸ Steve Russo, *What's the Deal with Wicca? A Deeper Look into the Dark Side of Today's Witchcraft* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2005). Tim Baker, *Dewitched: What you Need to Know about the Dangers of Wicca and Witchcraft* (Nashville, TN: Transit, 2004). Roberta Blankenship, *Escape from Witchcraft* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972). Baker cites three Pagan sources but does not meaningfully interact with them. Russo and Blankenship do not cite Pagan sources. All three books are written in a highly polemic and exaggerated manner and are not fair engagements with Paganism.

¹⁹ Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland, and Gerald R. McDermott, eds., *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014).

²⁰ Philip Johnson and Gus diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times: A Pagan and Christian in Dialogue* (Oxford, UK: Wilkinson House, 2008).

²¹ On pages 6-7, I described the limitation of being an outsider, and the delimitation of not participating in Wiccan rituals for my research.

Some such elements are tangible and readily observable and describable, such as a ritual like exchange of marriage vows or the procession of pilgrims to a shrine. Others are highly personal and therefore hidden from the outsider's view. One of the great challenges of studying religions rests precisely in this personal, private quality. Modes of experience such as Buddhist nirvana are by definition beyond the reach of empirical observation and description. Rudolf Otto throughout his analysis, emphasizes the impossibility of describing the "numinous" experience fully. Even common practices such as prayer and meditation tend to involve an inner aspect that is highly personal and quite inaccessible to anyone who is not sharing the experience. A book such as this one can do its best to illustrate and to explain these experiential phenomena but cannot be expected to provide a dull disclosure at certain points. Such is the nature of religion.²²

Limitations exist in describing a religion one has not experienced. A fair approach for a Christian studying Paganism is to describe what can be known but to admit that they do not understand what an individual Pagan may experience during rituals.

Third, fairness involves Christians appreciating some of the positive contributions the non-Christian religion provides its members. Stark and Bainbridge argue that some people follow a religion that comforts them for missing out on societal rewards, while others follow a religion that provides its own set of rewards.²³ Either way, religions compensate adherents. People follow a religion for a reason and receive a benefit from the religion. A fair approach for a Christian studying Paganism is to understand the positive benefit Paganism provides for the Pagan.

Fourth, fairness involves Christians understanding the quintessence of Christianity and of the non-Christian religion. The quintessence of Christianity involves faith in the gospel of

²² Jeffrey Brood, et.al., *Invitation to World Religions*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 21.

²³ Rodney Stark and Williams S. Bainbridge, *A Theory of Religion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 51.

Jesus Christ. Christians rightly evaluate others claiming to be Christian by their adherence to the gospel and to historic biblical orthodoxy.²⁴ However, when Christians apply this same evaluation process to non-Christian religions two results occur. First, if the quintessence of the non-Christian religion is doctrinal in nature like Christianity, this may be a helpful approach to understand the other religion. If, however, the other religion is concerned with practice—even affirming a wide range of practice, and is not concerned with doctrinal matters, then evaluating the non-Christian religion through a Christian doctrinal lens is unhelpful—even unfair, to understanding the other religion.²⁵ Morehead helpfully explains,

Many treatments of paganism, and new religions in general, from a Christian perspective approach the topic from the starting point of various core beliefs that are then presented in summary form in relation to categories of Christian doctrinal concerns. This gives Christian readers the impression that paganism is primarily a system of beliefs, whereas in reality it is focused on ritual—to which diverse beliefs are connected. In addition, the beliefs in question do not have a direct connection to Christian doctrinal concerns. In order to provide a more accurate understanding of paganism, Christian authors would do well to describe it in ways that represent the terminology and priorities of praxis for practitioners, even as they also strive to communicate the essence of paganism.²⁶

For a Christian to gain a fair understanding of a non-Christian religion, therefore, it is important to evaluate the non-Christian religion considering its own quintessence. Second, considering Christianity’s quintessence, it is not only fair but essential to judge the truthfulness of non-Christian religions considering Christian doctrinal confession. Therefore, to gain a fair

²⁴ It should be noted that if a religious group claims to belong to the Christian tradition (e.g., Mormonism or Jehovah Witnesses), then it is a legitimate approach for a Christian to show in what ways the other group is heterodox and different than orthodox Christianity.

²⁵ For example, Bob Larson, *Larson’s New Book of Cults* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1989), 464–7. Walter Martin, Jill Martin Rische, and Kurt Van Gordon, *The Kingdom of the Occult* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008). Both books are examples of Christian writers showing that the problem with other religious groups is that they are not orthodox Christians.

²⁶ Morehead, “Paganism and Neopaganism: History, Beliefs, Practices,” 540.

understanding of a non-Christian religion like Paganism, a Christian will need to evaluate Paganism by the quintessence of Paganism and not Christian orthodoxy. To make a judgment concerning the truthfulness of Paganism, Christians will need to evaluate Paganism by the quintessence of Christian orthodoxy and not Paganism.

Principle 3: Objectivity

Christians studying non-Christian religions like Paganism must be as objective as possible in their analysis, admitting biases. By way of illustration, Muck describes a conversation he had with a religious scholar about biases, which sums up the challenge of objectivity nicely.

Muck recounts,

I remember having a conversation a number of years ago with a scholar of religion about this very topic. At one point in our conversation he said, “What really scares me about evangelical Christians is that they bring a theology to the study of religion.” My response was this, “What really scares me are scholars who study religion and think that they don’t bring a ‘theology’ to their study of religion.”²⁷

Everyone brings a theology, perspective, or bias to the study of religion. Objectivity, in the sense of no bias, therefore, is unrealistic and unobtainable. The most obvious bias each person brings to the study of religion is being an insider or an outsider to the religion. An insider, or emic perspective, represents one who practices the religion being studied. An outsider, or etic perspective, represents one who studies the religion but does not practice it.²⁸ The insider is primarily concerned with practicing her religion and writes from a bias favorable to her religion. The outsider does not have an internal bias but lacks firsthand experience with the religion. The situation may be analogous to trying to understand a goldfish in a pond. Brood, Little, Nystrom,

²⁷ Terry C. Muck, “The Study of Religion,” 16.

²⁸ Jeffrey Brood, et. al., *Invitation to World Religions*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 24.

Platzer, Shek, and Stiles, explain that an outsider can describe the size, color, and movements of the fish, but cannot describe what it is like to be a goldfish.²⁹ The academic study of religions seeks to objectively balance both the insider and outside perspectives to accurately and fairly describe a religion.

Antidotally, in my pastoral ministry I have observed a tendency for those studying other religions to see the rich diversity and nuance in one's own religion, while viewing the religious views of others monolithically (e.g., the common claim that "all Muslims are terrorists"). Recognizing our own biases and aiming for objectivity is a better and more loving approach to studying the religions of others like those in Paganism.

Principle 4: Respect

Christians studying non-Christian religions like Paganism must show respect for the people they are studying. Respect involves seeking to understand the beliefs of others, cordial interfaith dialogue, and not mocking the beliefs of others.

Respect involves seeking to understand the beliefs of others before offering a critique of them. While several authors model respect for the beliefs of others,³⁰ the most respectful work I have read by a Christian evaluating Paganism is *Drawing Down the Pagan Moon* by David Burnett.³¹ Burnett compassionately writes a Postscript to his Pagan readers, which in part reads,

As a student of anthropology, I have tried to keep an academic detachment while seeking to appreciate the effect which anthropology itself has had upon the growth of the movement. I have sympathetically endeavored to understand the neopagan worldview and therefore the

²⁹ Brood, *Invitation to World Religions*, 24.

³⁰ Notably, Johnson and diZerega, *The Burning Times*, and diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*.

³¹ David Burnett, *Drawing Down the Pagan Moon: Understanding the Roots, Characteristics, and Influences of Western Paganism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991).

logic which is behind your beliefs and practices. Even so, I know that you will always consider me as an outsider. I hope, however, you will consider me to be a person who has listened to your voice and read your words, and who has not merely reacted to some stereotype.

I feel as though I have sensed something of your emotions and that which drives you to look for answers in the pagan way. I am conscious also of the hurt that many of you have known from establishment Christianity, and for that I apologize.³²

As one of the first Christian authors to study and write on Paganism, Burnett offers a winsome and respectful approach.

Respect involves cordial interfaith dialogue. Christians engaged in interfaith dialogue are often liberal Catholics and Protestants. Timothy Tennent has described three common presuppositions of liberal Christians involved in interreligious dialogue.³³ First, participants need to suspend their own faith commitments. Second, participants need to deny the existence of absolute truth. Third, participants need to avoid the topic of conversion. The problem, of course, with the liberal Christian approach, is that no one serious about their faith will suspend their faith commitments, and conservative Christians generally believe in absolute truth and the necessity of evangelization. Tennent affirms that respectful interfaith dialogue is possible while holding to our faith commitments; including a belief in absolute truth and the necessity of evangelization.³⁴ An example of a Pagan writer who has engaged in respectful interfaith dialogue with Christians is Gus diZerega. diZerega in no way suspends his own faith commitments as he engages with

³² Burnett, *Drawing Down the Pagan Moon*, 274.

³³ Timothy Tennent, *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable: Evangelicalism in Conversation with Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 13-5.

³⁴ Tennent, *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable*, 15-6. Paul Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward World Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1985), 207-11. Knitter, a pluralist, believes interfaith dialogue must be grounded in personal religious experience and truth claims, the recognition that truth in all religions, and being open to the possibility of genuine conversion.

Christians. In *Pagans and Christians*, diZerega does not suspend his faith commitments as he engages with Christians, he argues for them!³⁵ In *Beyond the Burning Times*, diZerega dialogues with evangelical Christian, Philip Johnson, again, each holding firmly to their faith commitments, and dialoging with respect.³⁶ In the Christian book, *Handbook of Religion*, diZerega contributes an essay on being a Pagan.³⁷ His essay is a respectful contribution to the book from a Pagan perspective. Burklo contends that interfaith dialogue where religious adherents hold to and respectfully argue for their respective religious beliefs can help reduce misunderstandings and promote meaningful discussion between those of differing religious beliefs.³⁸

Respect involves not making light of the beliefs of others. Eileen Barker argues that social science scholars must not allow themselves “to slip into facile generalizations for the sake of a good sound bite . . . [or to] pass judgment about which are the ‘good’ and which are the ‘bad’ cults.”³⁹ Instead she argues for balanced and accurate constructions.⁴⁰ Respect certainly

³⁵ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*.

³⁶ Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*.

³⁷ Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland, and Gerald R. McDermott, eds, *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices*.

³⁸ Jim Burklo, “Seven Principles of Interfaith Engagement,” *Huffington Post*, April 13, 2016, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/seven-principles-of-interfaith-engagement_b_9672996. Burklo’s seven principles are: (1) The world’s religions are different from each other, (2) The differences between religions are different, (3) Religions, and sects of religions, have different ways of understanding religious differences, (4) Different issues make for surprising interfaith bedfellows, (5) It’s good to know something about the world’s religions: at least enough to know just how much you don’t know, (6) In America today, ‘innerfaith’ exploration is part of interfaith engagement, and (7) You can grow in your faith tradition through deep exposure to other traditions.

³⁹ Eileen Barker, “The Scientific Study of Religion? You Must be Joking” in *Cults and New Religious Movements: A Reader*, ed. Lorne Dawson (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 20.

⁴⁰ Barker, “The Scientific Study of Religion? You Must be Joking,” 23.

does not include mocking, yelling, or spitting at those who hold differing beliefs than oneself.⁴¹

Challenges to Evangelizing Pagans

The substantive differences between Christians and Pagans are so significant that meaningful interaction of any kind is challenging.⁴² I know of only one book in which a Christian and Pagan attempt meaningful dialogue.⁴³ Given our substantive differences, later in this chapter I will discuss some strategies for Christians to engage Pagans with the gospel. Yet, before considering strategies, Christians often exhibit some problem behaviors toward Pagans, and Pagans have similar problem behaviors toward Christians, which must be addressed.

My pastoral interaction over the past three years with Pagans concerning Christians and with Christians concerning Pagans has surfaced several challenges for Christians seeking to engage Pagans with the gospel. Specifically, I have observed a pattern of problem behaviors concerning the way Christians relate to Pagans and the way in which Pagans relate to Christians. For Christians to engage Pagans effectively with the gospel these problem behaviors must be addressed.

⁴¹ Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 14-16. Johnson calls for dialogue to move beyond ignorance, bigotry, and distrust. I have listened to dozens of Pagans tell me stories of being yelled at, spit upon, or in many ways disrespected by Christians.

⁴² Graham Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism: Listening People, Speaking Earth* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 222-3. Harvey writes, “For some Pagans Christianity is total anathema, with its hierarchy, patriarchy, demonization of the physical and long history of persecution. . . . A number of Christians have participated in Pagan festivities with apparent pleasure. Nonetheless, in dialogue with Christians, however ‘liberal’, it is usually clear that bridges are illusory. . . . There is a world of difference Christianity, which encourages a radical distinction from nature as experienced now, and Paganism which is at home in nature – and recognizing this has the advantages of permitting a real dialogue.”

⁴³ Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*. The authors sense a need for dialogue and want their attempt to be understood as a bold step away from a legacy of suspicion toward a thoughtful engagement of one another (14-5). Dialogue seeks to reduce misconceptions and increase mutual understanding; evangelism seeks to present the gospel and lead sinners to repentance and faith in Jesus.

Problem Behaviors of Christians Toward Pagans

Christians express several problem behaviors toward Pagans. Following Morehead, I will discuss five problem behaviors Christians have concerning Pagans: disliking, mistrusting, mischaracterizing, treating Pagans as evil, and treating Paganism as a belief system.⁴⁴

First, Christians behave with a general dislike toward Pagans.⁴⁵ Christians often behave differently toward Pagans than participants in other religions.⁴⁶ In my pastoral interaction with Christians I have observed a similar behavior toward Witches. Burnett observes the way in which Christians tend to view Pagans as deviant, sexually perverse, and evil.⁴⁷ Pagans, of course, realize that Christians and society in general think they are strange.⁴⁸ Many Pagans I have interacted with at the Coffee Cauldron or at one of the Paganicon conferences enjoy being thought of as odd or eccentric. It seems to be part of the mystique of Paganism to wear tattoos,

⁴⁴ Morehead, "Paganism and Neopaganism" 539-41. Morehead describes several problem attitudes of Christians engaging Pagans including dislike, mistrust, mischaracterizations, viewing Pagans as evil, and Paganism as a belief system. Burnett, *Drawing Down the Pagan Moon*, 225-30. Burnett describes Christians stereotyping Pagans as evil, foolish, deviant, destructive, sexually perverse, primitive, naïve, and simple in lifestyle. Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 15. Johnson wants Christians to move beyond ignorance, bigotry, and distrust.

⁴⁵ Morehead, "Paganism and Neopaganism," 539-40. Morehead describes Christians commonly ignoring Pagans. Burnett, *Drawing Down the Pagan Moon*, 223-240. Burnett devotes a whole chapter to Christian prejudice and discrimination toward Pagans. Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon, Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and other Pagans in America*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), 3-12. In a chapter devoted to prejudice toward Pagans, Adler observes the way in which intellectuals tend to have a more negative attitude discussing Witchcraft and the occult compared to other religions.

⁴⁶ Brooks Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream: Uncovering Its Alarming Impact on You and Your Family* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2004), 227. Alexander describes the way many in which Christians view a neighbor who is a Witch worse than they may a Buddhist or a Mormon because of the negative stereotypes involved with Witchcraft.

⁴⁷ Burnett, *Drawing Down the Pagan Moon*, 225-6.

⁴⁸ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 5. Adler comments, "But words like witch and pagan do not rest easily in the mind or on the tongue. Although reporting on Paganism and Wicca has improved in the last decade, pop journalists often still present a Neo-Paganism composed of strange characters and weird rites."

clothing, and jewelry that others find offensive.⁴⁹ If Christians do not like Pagans and continue to behave negatively toward them, Christians will find it difficult to engage Pagans effectively with the gospel.

Second, Christians behave with a general mistrust toward Pagans. Burnett argues that Christians commonly view Pagans as deviant in behavior.⁵⁰ As discussed in chapter 3, Adler has described a scholarship tendency of not looking favorably on some of the founders of Wicca, writing, “If much modern scholarship has dismissed Murray as crank, Leland as a satirist, and Graves as a writer of poetic fancy, Gardner is usually put down as a ‘fraud’ or a “dirty old man.””⁵¹ Pagan writers have been critical of Gardner as socially deviant.⁵² Further, secret initiations, claims of ritual magic and nudity, and stories about dancing around a fire naked at night certainly feed a narrative of social deviance and mistrust.⁵³

Skepticism toward Pagans as being untrustworthy is not entirely without merit. In chapter three I explained that Margaret Murray’s account of Wicca’s founding has been discredited. Further, Gerald Gardner’s account of being initiated into an existing Witch coven has also been discredited. Adler and Clifton both bemoan the tendency of Witches to fabricate “grandmother stories” as the means by which someone learned Witchcraft. Pagans seem to have difficulty telling the truth concerning their origins, and this dishonesty contributes toward others not trusting them. Engaging socially deviant people who occasionally have challenges telling the

⁴⁹ Anyone who has attended a Pagan conference like Paganicon in Minnesota or attended a Pagan Pride Day celebration cannot miss the delight with which Pagans enjoy dressing up in strange and eccentric ways.

⁵⁰ Burnett, *Drawing Down the Pagan Moon*, 225-7.

⁵¹ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 60.

⁵² See comments concerning Gardner described as a sadomasochist on page 62.

⁵³ See chapter 4, pages 73-75.

truth is not easy. Christians engaging Pagans will need to wary of Pagan deviance and seek to develop trusting relationships.

Third, Christians often mischaracterize Pagans. Christians commonly mischaracterize Pagans as Satanists,⁵⁴ as performing animal sacrifices,⁵⁵ or even as performing child sacrifice.⁵⁶ Stephen Stein has observed the ways by which mischaracterization and persecution of religious minorities is often due to ignorance. Stein explains,

Often people who attack religious dissenters are ignorant of the ideas and practices of those whom they attack. Sometimes the attackers imagine that the people who hold the alleged religious views or engage in the ascribed spiritual practices are dangerous and threatening to the attackers' own religious values. Ignorance and misunderstanding regularly fuel uniformed responses—whether hateful feelings, verbal threats, or physical assaults.⁵⁷

Every Pagan I have interacted with at the Coffee Cauldron has described to me the manners in

⁵⁴ Morehead, "Paganism and Neopaganism," 537-40. Morehead asserts that the belief that Pagans worship the Christian devil is one of the most common misconceptions of Pagans. Marian Green, *A Witch Alone: Thirteen Moons to Master Natural Magic* (London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 2. Green writes, "It is often thought that witchcraft involves the worship of a character which Christians call 'Satan', but this is *not true*." (italics original). Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism*, 218. Harvey explains, "By now, however, it should be possible to simply state that Paganism is not Satanism, it has no place for a devil or for belief in ontological evil. Its cosmology has no room for a battle between the forces of 'good' and 'evil' fought over the 'souls' of humans who might be enticed towards heaven or hell. Most Pagans consider Satanism to be a branch of Christianity." Christopher Penczak, *The Inner Temple of Witchcraft: Magick, Meditation and Psychic Development* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2002), 44. Penczak states, "Witches have nothing to do with the Christian Devil. To believe in the Devil, one must already believe in the Christian mythos, and most witches feel their spiritual roots predate Christianity." Probably one of the most widely held misperceptions is that Witches are Satanists.

⁵⁵ Penczak, *The Inner Temple of Witchcraft*, 45. Penczak labels this charge as one of the false stereotypes concerning Witches, asserting, "Witches do not perform animal sacrifice, though it may have been a part of our distant history, as it was in Judaism and many other religions. Many Wiccans are animal rights activists and environmentalists, subscribing to a theory of 'harm ye none.' Witches do not abuse children in or out of ritual as a part of their faith."

⁵⁶ James Lewis, *Witchcraft Today: An Encyclopedia of Wiccan and Neopagan Traditions* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 252. Lewis comments, "It should be noted that part of the negative stereotype of Satanists (and, in the minds of some conservative Christians, contemporary Witches as well) is that they practice blood sacrifices of both animals and humans. However, no group of organized Satanists, much less Neopagan Witches, has ever been apprehended for carrying out such sacrifices." See note 52.

⁵⁷ Stephen J. Stein, *Communities of Dissent: A History of Alternative Religions in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), xi.

which Christians have mischaracterized their beliefs and practices and mistreated them. If Christians persist in mischaracterizing and mistreating Pagans, Christians will find it difficult to engage Pagans effectively with the gospel.

Fourth, Christians generally avoid Pagans. Christian theologian, John Morehead, writes,

Pagans have come to represent “inverted beings” inhabiting a subversive subculture that are believed (*sic*) to embody heresy, evil, and the greatest fears of Christians. In this way pagans have become a social construction of the evil “other” that is to be opposed. This conception of pagans as the embodiment of religious and social inversion serves as the foundation out of which Christian descriptions and critiques of paganism emerge.⁵⁸

Christians living in a predominantly Christian culture do not need to interact with minority religions like Paganism. Pagans living in a predominately Christian culture cannot avoid interacting with members of the Christian majority religion.⁵⁹ While I have met a few Christians who know a Pagan, every Pagan I know works with and has friends who are Christians. As I described in chapter three, many Pagans I know regularly attend Christian churches with family and friends.⁶⁰ Nearly every Pagan I know grew up as a Christian. The result of this situation is that Pagans are generally familiar with Christianity, and Christians are generally unfamiliar with

⁵⁸ Morehead, “Paganism and Neopaganism: Theological Exchanges, Current Issues,” 540.

⁵⁹ Gus diZerega, *Pagans and Christians: The Personal Spiritual Experience* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2001), xiii. diZerega explains, “Pagans live within a Christian culture, and our friends and neighbors view religion through the lenses that have been crafted by 2,000 years of Christian thought and practice. This is so even when they do not consider themselves Christian. From such a perspective it is hard to enter into a sympathetic understanding of Pagan spirituality.”

⁶⁰ See pages 95-6.

Paganism. If Christians avoid Pagans because they view them as evil,⁶¹ it is going to be difficult for Christians to engage Pagans effectively with the gospel.

Fifth, Christians generally treat Paganism as a belief system.⁶² The problem here is, argues diZerega, that Paganism is primarily esoteric, that is, it is a religion based on practice and experience more than doctrine.⁶³ Morehead helpfully summarizes,

Many treatments of paganism, and new religions in general, from a Christian perspective approach the topic from the starting point of various core beliefs that are then presented in summary form in relation to the categories of Christian doctrinal concerns. This gives Christian readers the impression that paganism is primarily a system of beliefs, whereas in reality it is focused on ritual—to which diverse beliefs are connected. In addition, the beliefs in question do not have a direct connection to Christian doctrinal concerns. In order to provide a more accurate understanding of paganism, Christian authors would do well to describe it in ways that represent the terminology and priorities of praxis for practitioners, even as they also strive to communicate the essence of paganism.⁶⁴

A significant problem is that Paganism is primarily concerned with ever-evolving practices, liturgies, and rituals, not doctrine.⁶⁵ Further, Paganism is not a monolithic movement, rather as I have shown in chapter four, Wicca is a polyaffiliated Pagan movement with a wide variety of beliefs and practices. Specific beliefs or doctrines are not significant in a polyaffiliated Wiccan

⁶¹ Christians are certainly justified to view Pagans as adherents of a false religion, like say, Islam or Hinduism. My contention here, is that Christians tend to view Pagans as not merely erroneously holding to a false religious belief, but as fundamentally evil people. Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1965), 397-98. Martin offers a helpful reminder, “Since our warfare as Christians is not against flesh and blood (the cultist), but against the spiritual forces of darkness that rule this world (Satan and his emissaries), it is possible to love the cultist, endure his abuses, perversions, and recriminations, while at the same time faithfully bearing witness for Christ.”

⁶² See chapter five, pages 101-5 concerning Paganism being esoteric not dogmatic.

⁶³ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, xv.

⁶⁴ Morehead, “Paganism and Neopaganism: Theological Exchanges, Current Issues,” 540-1.

⁶⁵ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 20. Adler writes, “But *belief* has never seemed very relevant to the experiences and processes of the groups that call themselves, collectively, the Neo-Pagan movement” (emphasis original). Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 19. diZerega writes, “Pagan spirituality is primarily a spirituality of practice, not belief.”

community like Paganistan. As Beckett has argued, individual Pagans are free to identify as Druids, Wiccans, Heathens, Fairies, Norse, Shinto, Shamans, or Cristo-Pagans.⁶⁶ Pagans may identify as heterosexual or LGBTQ+. Pagans may identify as monotheists, polytheists, pantheists, animists, or atheists. As I have shown in chapter four on polyaffiliated Paganism, a Pagan is free to identify any way she wishes and be part of the community.⁶⁷ If Christian engagement of Pagans is focused on showing how specific Pagan beliefs, which the Pagan may or may not hold, is unorthodox from a Christian doctrinal perspective, it is going to be difficult for Christians to effectively engage Pagans with the gospel.

The five problem Christian behaviors toward Pagans hinder Christians effectively engaging Pagans with the gospel.

Problem Behaviors of Pagans Toward Christians

While Christians have problem behaviors toward Pagans that hinder gospel ministry, Pagans also have problem behaviors toward Christians that interfere with a Christian witness of the gospel to Pagans. Therefore, if Christians are to engage Pagans with the gospel, Christians will not only need to overcome their own behavioral problems toward Pagans, they will need to be sensitive toward the behavioral problems Pagans express toward Christians.

First, Pagans generally do not trust Christians. North American Pagans live and work in a largely Christian culture and realize that Christians want to proselytize them.⁶⁸ While some

⁶⁶ John Beckett, *The Path of Paganism: An Experience-Based Guide to Modern Pagan Practice* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2017), 35-8.

⁶⁷ See chapter four, pages 80-97.

⁶⁸ Janet and Stewart Farrar, *The Witches' Way: Principles, Rituals and Beliefs of Modern Witchcraft* (Custer, WA: Phoenix Publishing, 1984), 177. Farrar and Bone admit what every Pagan knows, they live in a culture dominated by Christianity.

Christians may be sympathetic and respectful in their evangelizing methods, Pagans still believe they are an evangelistic target. Therefore, Pagans are suspicious of any interaction with Christians.

In seeking to make connections in the Pagan community to research Witchcraft in the Twin Cities, I encountered this understandable suspicion through a valuable email exchange. The story and emails illustrate the problem with Pagans mistrusting Christians and are worth quoting even though they are lengthy. On September 17, 2017, I made a phone call to Llewellyn Publications and asked to speak with someone about researching Paganism. I was connected to Elysia Gallo, Senior Acquisitions Editor at Llewellyn. We talked for about twenty minutes and she explained how Christians frequently study Pagans undercover only to emerge and write a tell-all book. Elysia mentioned one such book by Alex Mar.⁶⁹ She also recommended a book by Murphy Pizza on Paganism in the Twin Cities.⁷⁰ I agreed to send her an email about my research interests and a resume. I naively⁷¹ sent the following email on September 18, 2017.

Dear Elysia, Thanks for taking the time to talk with me on the phone today. I really appreciated your friendly and helpful spirit. I ordered both books you suggested (Mar and Pizza), and I read the reviews on Amazon about Mar—wow, bummer! Unprofessional, and a lack of integrity on Mar’s part. I am so sorry for everyone involved. Thanks for the recommendations. So, please do not write me off because I am a Christian pastor, professor, and scholar. Worse, I am even a conservative one! Lol. I’m including a brief resume so I’m totally transparent with you. I realize that like nearly everyone in the Craft, you have probably been treated poorly by Christians—and I would understand if you do not even want to read my email. Elysia, I am sorry for how Christians have treated Pagans, it is not acceptable. Again, I am sorry. So, I am not entirely certain what I am asking you. How’s that for clarity? As an outsider to Witchcraft, I can read a bunch of books, and then write a dissertation. Obviously, I can only learn so much from books alone. What I wish, is for a

⁶⁹ Alex Mar, *Witches of America* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2015).

⁷⁰ Murphy Pizza, *Paganistan: Contemporary Pagan Community in Minnesota’s Twin Cities* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2014).

⁷¹ I write “naively” because at the time I was unaware of the sensitivities of Pagans interacting with Christians.

Christian like me to respectfully talk with someone like you about witchcraft. If I just read books, there will not be any real dialogue between our faiths. So, my first question is- are you at all open to talking with me? If not, do you know anyone who might be? What does talk with me mean? It can mean whatever you like. It could mean occasionally trading some emails where I ask you some questions and you help me understand things I am researching. Even your recommendation of a couple books today was hugely helpful. It could mean that you invite me (I promise to be good!) to a group meeting of whatever kind you think ok. I am not expecting to attend any covens (I realize that you wouldn't want me there!), but perhaps a seminar or something. It could mean that I write a brief book on some of what I am researching and that you edit and publish it (perhaps under a pseudonym) where you have primary ownership rights. This could help avoid the nonsense of what happened with Mar. Perhaps you can allow me access to the library at Llewellyn, I am told that it is amazing. If I had my dream, I would get to know a few of you at Llewellyn or in the Craft. I would love to have a few friends (who would be kept absolutely confidential) who I could discuss my research with and have you speak into it, redirect it, and/or- correct it. My goal in all of this is to (1) earn a PhD, duh, (2) learn about a religion that few outside the religion know much about, (3) perhaps write a book that can help outsiders like me view Modern Paganism with a more amiable spirit, and/or (4) write a book that Pagans could think is a fair description of their practices. Elysia, I know you are busy. Thanks for reading this email. If you are willing to work with me at all, and at any point are tired of me—you can tell me to go away. Respectfully, Bruce Konold.

The following day, September 19, 2017, I received the following response from Elysia,

Dear Bruce, I don't think I can give you the help you seek unless you can be completely honest with me about your goals. When we first spoke, I assumed you were attending a local university such as the University of Minnesota or some such institution. I wasn't aware of how deeply your conservative Christian roots inform and guide your academic studies. Now, I know you said on the phone that you just want to get to know Pagans, to hopefully write a book that can help bridge the gap between Pagans and Christians, perhaps by showing Christians that Pagans are not "all that bad." I even trust that you would be completely ethical with your contacts, rather than trying to profit monetarily off of them and betraying their confidence. However... I have to say that the number one reason evangelical Christians are interested in the Pagan movement (or other new religious movements) is to find a better way to convert them. Many books have been written from exactly that perspective. Here is an example of that type of writing – completely sympathetic, but indeed the main reason for befriending and acting very politely with these Pagans is to be able to witness to them: <http://www.christiananswers.net/evangelism/beliefs/wicca.html> To be sure, this is a fine ideal for Christians whose fundamental mission it is to spread the Word. I'm sure many Pagans and Wiccans are much more open to having a respectful conversation with people who've put effort into understanding their views than to being screamed at, preached at, or given cheap Chick tracts. However, there is still the fundamental disconnect: Christians believe that their religion is the best and only way to salvation, while Pagans don't believe we are in need of salvation. Christians (of this type) believe they can only better the world by insisting, no matter how politely, that everyone should just come around to their way of thinking. No matter how "nice" it is, this is still coercive behavior. What's more, it's abusive. Imagine living in a culture where there is one

“right way” that you’ve been hearing about since childhood; you feel drawn to another way, but friends, family, even random strangers feel the need to constantly invade your space and try to influence your free will, by telling you you’re wrong, mistaken, gaslight you basically about your own inner truth and experiences. This is abuse. It’s similar to a totalitarian state, in which everyone is told there is one way to behave, to think, and those who simply can’t get on board are constantly being pressured to be re-educated, corrected. It’s quite frankly an obstruction of the human will and the human spirit. So why do I think you may be approaching your PhD dissertation with this goal of finding new ways to reach out to Pagans and Wiccans? (1) Your institutional affiliation. The goal of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is to spread the Word and evangelize to others, whether through pastors, missionaries, thinkers, writers, policy-makers, etc. I took a look at the page about your PhD in World Religions. Part of the description of one of the required courses clearly states that the objective of studying New Religious Movements is “To develop an understanding of the relationship of New Religious Movements with the Christian Mission and to *develop strategies for evangelistic encounter with persons involved in New Religious Movements.*” (Italics mine.) It is also part of the Billy Graham School, which requires no further comment. (2) Your previous writings. While not speaking about Pagans, you did write about homosexuals with a very strong evangelical message – again, befriending, respecting, and being gentle with the persons, but always with the ultimate goal of gaining a convert who will feel horrible about themselves and seek redemption. “The goal is to win people, not arguments. Rather than focusing on homosexuality, focus on their general need to repent for sins and trust Jesus as Savior.” I have countless gay, bi, lesbian, and trans friends and I have seen the damage inflicted on their lives from childhood to adulthood that directly stems from these teachings. The enemy of my friend is not necessarily my enemy, but I do have a strong moral conviction to stand up for them and their absolute rights to be who they are without the shame imposed by one certain religious path. There have been many different cultural responses to homosexuality across the millennia, some more positive, some more negative, but I believe these are all relative and not absolute. Telling someone that who they are is a sin is not “respectful” nor does it engender dialogue. (3) In that same post, you mention that being a witch was also a sin punishable by death in the OT. Again, this statement requires no further comment. But I do wonder why a person like you would then be interested in befriending witches, unless your ultimate goal was conversion. I can’t and don’t want to stop you from learning about Paganism—but I don’t see a strong chance for collaboration if my suspicions are correct. As Cheryl told you, I’m very busy with my own wonderful authors and their books, and I don’t have resources to help an outside project that is antithetical to what Llewellyn stands for, and whose final purpose may be one I deeply oppose. That said, it would be great if you did approach the community with a sincere desire to learn—but not to convert, not to evangelize, and not to pass on “helpful hints” to others who seek to gain more converts. As a famous musician once sang, “But if your faith needs to conquer the world; If your God needs more converts; If you've been told there'll be no peace on Earth, As long as there are unbelievers; That's not religion. It's politics.” . . . I wish you the best of luck on your path, and all good things. Best, Elysia⁷²

⁷² See appendix 6, pages 205-7, for the full text of Elysia Gallo’s email.

I thanked Elysia for her kind and informative email. The brief email exchange was a profound and humbling learning experience for me. Elysia's words were kind, direct, and rang truer about me than I wanted them to ring. In my desire to be accepted, I realized the potential for me to be deceptive and not clearly express who I am and what my motivations are for studying Paganism. Unsure how to proceed, I remembered that in our phone conversation Elysia told me about the Coffee Cauldron meetings at the Roseville Caribou Coffee.

I decided to begin attending the Coffee Cauldron. Over time I was naturally asked about my own beliefs, I said I was a Christian studying Witchcraft in the Twin Cities. To my surprise I was welcomed openly, though I said very little about my own faith at this time. After about a year, I had become friends with several of the Pagans at the Cauldron. I decided I needed to be more forthright about myself, and I asked to meet privately with the high priestess who led the Coffee Cauldron. I told her that I did not want to be deceptive in any way, but that I wanted to be honest with her about myself and that if she asked me to leave and not return that I would understand. I explained that I am an evangelical pastor writing a dissertation on Witchcraft and Paganism. I apologized for not telling her a year before. I made it clear that I meant no harm to anyone in the Coffee Cauldron and that I appreciated the welcome they had shown me and for all I had learned. She told me that I was welcome to stay and participate, but that she would talk to the others to see if anyone was uncomfortable with me participating. Every single person welcomed me openly. It was encouraging and humbling to be welcomed, and I have prayerfully sought to be respectful with the trust they had given to me.

Since that time, because I am an outsider, I have twice been asked to help mediate internal conflict situations among Pagans. To my surprise I was able to help the individuals involved to respect one another. On one occasion, my wife and I privately gave a grocery gift

card to a Coffee Cauldron member who had a financial need. Over time, I came to discover that several of the Pagans at the Coffee Cauldron were viewed by the Pagan community in the Twin Cities as respected elders. One of the participants is the scholar, Murphy Pizza, whom I have interacted with throughout this dissertation. Pizza and I have enjoyed getting to know one another, and she invited me to co-lead a seminar with her at the 2020 Paganicon on studying Witchcraft from etic and emic perspectives. I gave her a resume, and she shared it with the Pagan Pride Council that oversees Paganicon, and they have graciously extended me an invitation to co-lead the seminar with Pizza. To my knowledge, I am the first evangelical ever invited to speak at Paganicon.

After three years I have earned the trust of the Pagans at the Coffee Cauldron.⁷³ On several occasions I have shared elements of my faith as a Christian. My story illustrates how Pagans are understandably cautious about Christians merely seeking to proselytize them, but that they are willing to talk to a Christian who respects them and takes the time to get to know them in relationship.

Second, Pagans generally do not like Christians. As discussed in chapter three, the Christian persecution of Pagans is central to Wicca's founding myth.⁷⁴ While Murray's historical argument for a surviving medieval Witch-cult has been discredited, Adler describes that Pagans nevertheless claim a spiritual lineage going back thousands of years with Christians as their primary persecutor.⁷⁵ diZerega makes it clear that the Christian persecution of Pagans is

⁷³ I have not yet reconnected with Elysia Gallo. I hope to connect with her and earn trust with her at the next Paganicon.

⁷⁴ See page 44.

⁷⁵ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 87-9.

fundamental to their spiritual history and informs their problem attitude with Christianity.⁷⁶ The Pagan attitude toward Christian persecution may be considered analogous to the manner in which Muslims view Christian persecution during the medieval crusades. diZerega expresses a common sentiment when he writes, “‘Some Pagans’ response to the Church is hostile. Christianity is the religion of ‘the patriarchy.’ It was responsible for the killing of countless Witches and other Pagans throughout the world.”⁷⁷ Rita Voltmer has detailed the European Witch trials of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, estimating over 30,000 individuals accused of Witchcraft were persecuted by “Christians” in the Holy Roman Empire and associated territories.⁷⁸ Adler puts the number of Witches persecuted at 40,000 to 50,000.⁷⁹ Pagans refer to this persecution as the burning times. In the introduction to the dialogue between diZerega and Johnson, Johnson describes the problem Christians need to overcome, writing,

The ‘Burning Times’ is an expression that refers to the grim and horrible events that occurred from time to time in the late Medieval, Renaissance and Post-Reformation eras when Christians persecuted Witches in Europe and North America. The Witch trials loom large among many ignominious and shameful deeds done in the name of Jesus Christ by Roman Catholics and Protestants. Although we cannot alter the past, we can surely be repentant about what happened, just as King Josiah asked forgiveness for the serious spiritual neglect and oversights of his ancestors. Today many Christians and Pagans retain deep heartfelt suspicions about one another and some nasty and misleading folk stories still circulate that readily fuel appalling social panics. *Beyond the Burning Times* signifies that Gus and I are acutely aware of these problems and that we want to move beyond the ignorance that nourishes bigotry and distrust.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 15.

⁷⁷ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, xviii.

⁷⁸ Rita Voltmer, “The Witch Trials,” in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Witchcraft and Magic*, ed. Owen Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 97-133.

⁷⁹ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 51-2.

⁸⁰ diZerega and Johnson, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 15.

On several occasions I have listened to Pagans describe how Christians still persecute them by spitting and yelling at them. A common fear Pagans have is that a Christian employer will fire them if they discover they are Pagan.⁸¹

Pagan hostility toward Christianity has a long history. Alexander argues that “the consistency of anti-Christian bias among those who have made major contributions to modern Witchcraft is really quite remarkable.”⁸² For example, Alexander asserts that Julius Michelet loathed Catholicism, Charles Leland was anti-Christian, Margaret Murray described Christians as hounding Pagans, Robert Graves resented Christianity for its “Father-God” worship, and how Gerald Gardner described Witchcraft as a victim of Christianity.⁸³ Pagans generally regard Christians with hostility and suspicion, which certainly presents a problem for Christians seeking to engage Pagans.

Third, Pagans generally detest the social and political conservatism of Christians. As described in chapter five, Pagans are overwhelmingly, socially and politically, liberal Democrats.⁸⁴ Magliocco states that most Pagans espouse a liberal political viewpoint involving LGBTQ+, feminism, egalitarianism, and pluralism.⁸⁵ Pagans view Christians as heterosexual,

⁸¹ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 135. Adler writes, “Witchcraft is not accepted as a valid minority religion by most people in the United States, and many of those I interviewed told me of persecution they had encountered once they were identified as Witches. There were stories of firings from jobs, of children taken away from parents and placed in the custody of others, of arrests for practicing divination. There were stories of stones thrown through windows, and several tales of people who moved away from an area after fundamentalist groups decided to take literally the biblical injunction: ‘Thou shall not suffer a witch to live.’”

⁸² Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream*, 229.

⁸³ Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream*, 229-30.

⁸⁴ See chapter five, pages 99-101.

⁸⁵ Sabina Magliocco, “Ritual is My Chosen Art Form: The Creation of Ritual as Folk Art among Contemporary Pagans” in *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*, ed. James R. Lewis (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 113.

hierarchical, exclusivist, and narrow-minded moralists. Tara Burton describes how Pagans hexed Justice Kavanaugh during his confirmation hearings, and hex President Trump monthly.⁸⁶ My wife, Tami, and I attended a seminar on “Political Magick” at Paganicon 2019. The presenter, Ivo Dominguez, assumed the room of about 50 attendees were liberal Democrats and taught them how to hex President Trump and other Republicans. My wife was surprised by the blatant partisanship of the seminar. At the Coffee Cauldron I regularly encounter open disdain for conservatives and Republicans. There is an implicit assumption by Pagans that Christians, especially evangelicals, are conservative and Republican. Further, Pagans assume that Christians hate feminists and anyone identifying with the LGBTQ+ movement; therefore, Pagans assume that Christians hate Pagans. Pagans see themselves as liberals engaged in a social and political cultural war against conservative Christians.⁸⁷

Fourth, Pagans view Christians as anti-environmentalist and work against them. diZerega devotes a chapter in *Pagans and Christians* to the blindness of Christians toward the environment.⁸⁸ In *Beyond the Burning Times*, Johnson and diZerega debate the importance of caring for the natural environment.⁸⁹ Clifton argues that environmentalism and Paganism are

⁸⁶ Tara Isabella Burton, “Witchcraft Becomes a Political Stance—and a Booming Business,” *Religion News Service* (February 14, 2019): 1-4, <https://religionnews.com/2019/02/14/witchcraft-becomes-a-political-stance-and-a-booming-business>.

⁸⁷ Johnson, and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 142-57. Johnson and diZerega devote chapter 6 of their book to debating the culture war between Pagans and Christians.

⁸⁸ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, 173-89.

⁸⁹ Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 67-90.

inseparably wed as movements.⁹⁰ Pagans see the cultural war for environmentalism as primarily one against Christians.

Harvey lays out the key issue between Pagans and Christians concerning the natural world centers on whether the natural world and the spiritual world are one or separate.⁹¹ Pagans view the natural and spiritual world as one reality, while Christians view the natural world and the spiritual realm as separate realities. The Pagan view leads to venerating (even worshiping) the natural-spirit realm as sacred, while Pagans believe that the Christian view leads Christians to worship in the spiritual and to take dominion over the natural world using it for the good of humanity. Worse, as diZerega and Harvey explain, Pagans believe the Christian doctrine of original sin describes the natural world as fallen, defective, and hostile.⁹² From the Pagan viewpoint, Christians view the natural world from a consumerist mindset. diZerega writes, “Trees, animals, air, water, earth, and even human beings are valued for their convertibility into cash—the ultimate idol before which the modern world prostrates itself.”⁹³ Further, diZerega claims that,

“Christianity’s loudest representatives emphasize that . . . nature is to be dominated and used up. This appears to be particularly the case with Fundamentalism and evangelicals who see themselves as the front line against Wiccan Paganism, and who are sometimes active in the so-called “Christian” Right. Anyone who believes in nature’s intrinsic value, they contend, is “Pagan.”⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Chas Clifton, *Her Hidden Children: The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in America* (New York: Alta Mira Press), 2006), 43. On the one hand, Clifton and diZerega seem to represent a typical liberal Democratic position concerning the environment, on the other hand they seem to enjoy all the benefits of mining, refining, manufacturing which degrade the environment. I am not aware of any concrete list of proposals for environmentally sensitive living for Pagans.

⁹¹ Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism*, 126-42.

⁹² diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, 173-4. Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism*, 223.

⁹³ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, 176.

⁹⁴ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, 177.

While diZerega realizes that every Christian does not hold such consumerist anti-environmental perspectives, he contends that this is the common view of Christians. diZerega expresses appreciation for the “honorable exception” to Christian exploitation of the environment described by Loren Wilkinson in his *Christianity Today* article.⁹⁵ In the article, Wilkinson describes his participating in the protest against the logging industry in Canada. Wilkinson describes his experience,

After the dawn arrests—by this time arrests had become almost a ritual—we returned from our brief time in jail to the bright, late-morning light of "The Circle." We decided to teach the group a song of our own, the words from Isaiah 55: "You will go out with joy, and be led forth in peace, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands." Many of the protesters seemed surprised that the words were in the Bible—as they seemed surprised at the Scripture texts we had posted: "The Earth is the Lord's," "Creation groans," and "in Christ ... a new creation." But the biggest surprise—always a pleased response—for this earnest group of protesters was that Christians were even present at the protest. "Do Christians care about the earth?" was a common inquiry. A common tenet of neopagan religion is the belief that neither Christians nor the Christian God are concerned or connected with the earth. To neopagans, "Christian culture" seems to act as though the earth were merely raw material to be used up in getting somewhere else (either to heaven or to a golden future).⁹⁶

It seems reasonable to concede diZerega's point that Wilkinson's involvement in such a protest is not typical of Christians.

The significant point here, Lipp contends, is that Pagans view nature as spiritual, sacred, even deity.⁹⁷ Therefore, from a Pagan viewpoint, Christians not only see nature and spirit as separate realms, but Christians are anti-environmentalists disrespecting what Pagans view as sacred. The typical Christian view toward nature, therefore, is offensive to Pagans, and creates a

⁹⁵ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, 177. diZerega appreciably notes the position of Loren Wilkinson, "The Bewitching Charm of Neo-Paganism," *Christianity Today*, November 15, 1999.

⁹⁶ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, 177.

⁹⁷ Deborah Lipp, *The Study of Witchcraft: A Guidebook to Advanced Wicca* (San Francisco, CA: Weiser Books, 22007), 127-8.

problem attitude for Christians engaging Pagans with the gospel.

Fifth, Pagans reject Christian exclusivism.⁹⁸ Pagans are pluralistic, accepting other pluralistic religions, and strongly rejecting exclusivist religions.⁹⁹ Pagans see exclusivist religions like Christianity as not only rejecting the views of Pagans, nor as merely seeking to convert Pagans to the exclusivist religion, but as abusive to Pagans. Elysia's email captures the problem attitude from a Pagan perspective:

Christians believe that their religion is the best and only way to salvation, while Pagans don't believe we are in need of salvation. Christians (of this type) believe they can only better the world by insisting, no matter how politely, that everyone should just come around to their way of thinking. No matter how "nice" it is, this is still coercive behavior. What's more, it's abusive. Imagine living in a culture where there is one "right way" that you've been hearing about since childhood; you feel drawn to another way, but friends, family, even random strangers feel the need to constantly invade your space and try to influence your free will, by telling you you're wrong, mistaken, gaslight you basically about your own inner truth and experiences. This is abuse. It's similar to a totalitarian state, in which everyone is told there is one way to behave to think, and those who simply can't get on board are constantly being pressured to be re-educated, corrected. It's quite frankly an obstruction of the human will and the human spirit.¹⁰⁰

From the perspective of Pagans, proselytization by Christians is abusive and is a continuation of persecution began under the medieval Witch trials. diZerega devotes a whole chapter to this issue.¹⁰¹ Christians rarely seem to appreciate the ways in which evangelism feels harmful from a

⁹⁸ Of course, everyone, except Christian exclusivists, reject Christian exclusivism.

⁹⁹ Vivianne Crowley, *Wicca: The Old Religion in the New Age* (San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins Publishers, 1989), 29, 32. Morning Glory and Otter G'Zell, "Who on Earth is the Goddess?" in *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*, ed. James R. Lewis (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 29. Glory and G'Zell comment, "The three great monotheistic religions of the West, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, have from their beginning actively suppressed the worship of the Goddess, and have tortured and brutally murdered millions of her people." Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism*, 224. Harvey notes that "Islam is rarely seen positively by Pagans." Michael York, *Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion* (New York: New York University Press, 2003), 141. York asserts, "Islam is not a pagan religion. In fact, of virtually all major world religions, it is perhaps the most diametrically opposed to paganism." From a Pagan perspective, Christianity and Islam are the two major exclusivist world religions opposed to Paganism.

¹⁰⁰ See appendix 6, pages 205-7, for full text of Elysia Gallo's email.

¹⁰¹ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, chapter 9.

Pagan point of view.

Nine Perspectives on Christians Engaging Pagans with the Gospel

In view of the problem behaviors of Christians toward Pagans and Pagans toward Christians, the Christian engagement of Pagans with the gospel is challenging. In the remainder of this chapter, I offer nine perspectives on engaging Pagans with the gospel. The first three perspectives acknowledge our substantive differences. The next three perspectives encourage respect in areas of sensitivity. The final three perspectives seek common ground between Christians and Pagans.

Perspective 1: Christians and Pagans have Worldview Differences

Substantive worldview differences exist between Christianity and Paganism. While a full worldview discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is helpful to overview basic differences between the Christian and Pagan worldviews. Worldview comparisons are commonly presented as binary discussions of “Eastern vs. Western;” however, I think it is helpful to broadly consider worldviews involving a tertiary discussion of Western (Enlightenment traditions), Middle Eastern (Abrahamic traditions), and Eastern (Indian traditions).¹⁰² The chief advantage of a broad tertiary presentation is appreciating Abrahamic traditions apart from secular Enlightenment thought. Paganism flows from an Eastern worldview, while Christianity originally flows from a Middle Eastern worldview. Christians are monotheists, with a linear view of history, are guided by the textual tradition of Scripture, hold to objective morality and reason, believe prime reality is spiritual, hold that post-fall

¹⁰² I first proposed a tertiary worldview scheme as part of my research in *Trends and Development in Buddhist Thought* (Fall 2014) with Dr. Martin.

Table 2: Worldview comparison

Worldviews	<i>Modern Enlightenment (Western)</i>	<i>Abrahamic Traditions (Middle Eastern)</i>	<i>Indian Traditions (Eastern)</i>
Religion	Secular/Atheist	Monotheist	Polytheist, Pantheist, Animist
History	Linear	Linear	Cyclical
Morality	Scientific	Textual	Oral, Esoteric
Knowledge	Empirical (verifiable)	Objective (the world)	Subjective (my world)
Reality/world	Natural	Spiritual	Mythical
What's wrong?	Lack of Education	Sin	Ignorance
Humanity	Evolution	Made in God's Image	Part of Eternal Cosmos
Death	Mortalism	Heaven or Hell	Reincarnation

humanity is sinful, affirm that humanity is created in God's image, and believe that ultimately humans die and go to either heaven or hell. Pagans are commonly pantheists, polytheists, or animists; view history as eternal and cyclical; are guided by oral tradition and esotericism; hold that morality and truth claims are subjective; believe prime reality is mythical; hold that the problem with humanity is ignorance; believe that humanity is part of the eternal cosmos; and affirm that when humans die they are reincarnated.¹⁰³

Christians seeking to engage Pagans with the gospel will need to understand the Eastern worldview common among Pagans. Further, Christians will need to remember that most Pagans formerly held and rejected either a Western or Middle Eastern worldview and have consciously sought to adopt an Eastern worldview. Pagans generally view a transition from a Western worldview to an Eastern worldview as a transition from a restrictive worldview to a more flexible Eastern worldview.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Chapter 3 explores the Eastern foundations of Western Paganism. See pages 49-63.

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion on Pagans rejecting Christianity, see pages 162, 169-71.

Eastern religions, according to Ubolwan Mejudhon, are fond of showing the wisdom and moral beauty of religious teachers.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, in speaking to Pagans I have found it helpful to present Jesus as the archetype of moral beauty and excellence. For example, while out for pie at a Baker's Square restaurant after a Coffee Cauldron meeting, one Witch said that all religions teach that we should love everybody. I quietly whispered, "That's not true." A Wiccan high priestess sitting across from me asked, "What was that, Bruce?" I explained how Jesus is unique among the world's religions in teaching his followers to "love their enemies." I further explained how Jesus' followers have taken this command and sought to love non-Christians by starting orphanages, rescue missions, homeless shelters, hospitals, schools, relief agencies, and charities. I said this does not demonstrate that Christianity is true, but it certainly shows the beauty of Jesus' teaching over others who only focus on loving those within their own communities. I went so far as to say that I did not know of a Pagan teacher who said we should love our enemies and asked if any of them knew of any. The Wiccan High Priestess across from me smiled and genuinely said, "That is so fascinating." The above example demonstrates the power of showing the moral excellence of Jesus to those committed to an Eastern worldview.

Perspective 2: Christians and Pagans have Theological Differences

Substantive theological differences exist between Christianity and Paganism. For example, historical Christianity affirms exclusivism and Paganism affirms pluralism. These different perspectives present a real and undeniable tension between the two religions. Alexander

¹⁰⁵ Ubolwan Mejudhon, "Life Exegesis" in *Communicating Christ in the Buddhist World*, ed. Paul De Neui and David Lim (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2006), 24. Because of the Asian context, Mejudhon advocates methods and sermons that do "life exegesis" which focus on "oral tradition, narration, and lives rather than concepts." Stories that show the living excellence of biblical characters resonate better in an Eastern context than classical exegesis of texts common in Western contexts.

explains,

There is a tension between Christianity and modern Witchcraft that is very real and that is *not* based on misunderstanding—even though it is often misunderstood. In fact, there is more than a “tension” between Christianity and Witchcraft—there is an outright conflict over their respective visions for personal development and social progress.¹⁰⁶

Fundamental religious differences, like the tension between the positions of exclusivism and Pluralism, are not unique to Christianity and Paganism. In his popular work, *God is Not One*, Stephen Prothero argues that the differences in the world’s religions are real and that attempts to portray religions as different paths to the same God fail.¹⁰⁷ Meaningful dialogue between religions must acknowledge the significant theological differences between religions. When differences are acknowledged, then discussions concerning the relative values of the differences can be assessed.

Christians seeking to engage Pagans with the gospel will need to honestly appreciate and not mischaracterize the differences between Christians and Pagans. Alexander observes, “In any honest conversation between Witches and Christians, both sides need to acknowledge they are opposed in fundamental ways.”¹⁰⁸ A challenge when strong differences exist between religious groups is the tendency to mischaracterize each other and to talk past one another. However, mischaracterizations will not help a Christian to engage in an effective gospel witness. When Johnson engaged diZerega in dialogue, he affirmed one of his aims as being “to increase understanding between the two spiritual communities and to clear away potential misconceptions

¹⁰⁶ Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream*,” 227.

¹⁰⁷ Stephen Prothero, *God Is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions that Run the World* (San Francisco, CA: Harper One, 2010).

¹⁰⁸ Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream*, 228.

that either side may unwittingly be prone to.”¹⁰⁹ Yet Johnson rightly acknowledges, “This book does *not* issue a call for Christians and Pagans to downplay significant differences in belief. There are some very clear and profound differences in their beliefs and practices.”¹¹⁰ While differences in belief should be honestly acknowledged, mischaracterizations must be avoided.

In my interaction with Christians concerning Pagans, and Pagans concerning Christians, I have found the tendency toward mischaracterizing one another to be the norm. For example, on the one hand, I have found that Christians commonly mischaracterize Pagans as people who sacrifice children and worship Satan. On the other hand, I have found that Pagans commonly mischaracterize Christians as hostile persecutors only interested in proselytizing Pagans to Christian exclusivism. While dialogue between Christians and Pagans has a potential to reduce mischaracterizations, it cannot erase the substantive differences between Christianity and Paganism. From a Christian theological perspective, Paganism is a false religion under the bondage of Satan and involves doing evil. Further, biblical orthodox Christians are exclusivist and do seek to proselytize Pagans and all unbelievers in obedience to the command of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. Therefore, mischaracterizations may be best understood in terms of what Christians *think* Pagans do—sacrifice children and worship Satan, and what Pagans *think* Christians do—persecute and proselytize. When differences are acknowledged and mischaracterizations reduced; one can hope to improve the potential for an effective gospel witness.

¹⁰⁹ diZerega and Johnson, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 15.

¹¹⁰ diZerega and Johnson, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 16. Emphasis original.

Perspective 3: Christians and Pagans have Political Differences

As observed in chapter three, substantive political differences exist between Christians and Pagans.¹¹¹ In general, Pagans are politically liberal while Christians are politically conservative.¹¹² Given the current polarization between the liberal left and the conservative right in American politics, this difference presents a real challenge for effective communication. Pagans, according to Lipp, are generally pro-choice, support the LGBTQ+ movement,¹¹³ and have hexed Republicans, especially President Trump. Christians are generally pro-life, do not support the LGBTQ+ movement, and generally support Republicans, including President Trump.

In my interaction with Witches at the Coffee Cauldron and at the Paganicon conferences, I have encountered such a bitter hatred for conservative politics that I have decided to forego the discussion of politics with Pagans. In an otherwise cordial dialogue between diZerega and Johnson, the most combative tones in the book were sounded when discussing political polarization.¹¹⁴ diZerega describes the ways in which public evangelicals like Pat Buchanan, Jerry Falwell, and Pat Buchanan are divisive and offensive to Pagans. Johnson agrees with diZerega concerning the tensions created by politics between Pagans and Christians.

Gus and I agree that Christians and Pagans face the challenge of learning to peaceably coexist, and this is highlighted by debates on religion in the public square, gender, and sexuality, interfaith relations and cultural change. In the midst of rapid cultural change these topics generate tensions between the two communities.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ See comments on pages 76-80.

¹¹² See comments on pages 159-60.

¹¹³ Lipp, *The Study of Witchcraft*, 124-6.

¹¹⁴ Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 142-67.

¹¹⁵ Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 155. Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream*, 227. Alexander describes the conflict, “There is more a ‘tension’ between Christianity and Witchcraft—there is an outright conflict over their respective visions for personal development and social progress.”

Given the political polarization between Christians and Pagans, Christians seeking to engage Pagans with the gospel might be wise to avoid politics completely.

Perspective 4: Each Pagan is Unique

As discussed in chapter four on polyaffiliated Paganism, Christians need to be sensitive to the reality that the self-styled polyaffiliation of Pagans renders mass evangelism of Pagans ineffective.¹¹⁶ Given the unique nature of each Pagan’s belief system, the Christian engagement of Pagans with the gospel should be person specific. Alexander offers wise counsel here.

First and foremost: Assume nothing and be prepared for anything. Bring no stereotypes to the encounter. Determine to find out first-hand about the Witch you are dealing with. Most Witches who are open to talking to outsiders about Witchcraft are open to an honest inquiry about what they believe. But be prepared for anything . . . Witches are much like anyone else—they will give respect if they are given respect. If you can approach the conversation without being fearful, hostile, dismissive, condescending, or disdainful, it will further open doors of communication.¹¹⁷

Every Pagan with whom I have interacted has created her own unique set of beliefs and practices. One simply cannot assume anything about the beliefs and practices of Pagans. Tanya Brown describes the eclectic nature of Witches today, “Recently there’s been an explosion of eclectic witches – witches who do not feel the need to label themselves within a group. In a wonderful way, this makes it harder for people to divide us. We’re becoming one big, wonderful, unique, magical melting pot of goodness.”¹¹⁸ Likewise, Farrar and Bone describe the progressive nature of Witches today, “Witchcraft is in a continual growth process subject to evolution. In

¹¹⁶ See chapter 4, pages 80-97, for ways each Pagan develops his or her own practices and beliefs.

¹¹⁷ Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream*, 255.

¹¹⁸ Tonya A. Brown, *The Door to Witchcraft: A New Witch’s Guide to History, Traditions, and Modern-Day Spells* (Emeryville, CA: Althea Press, 2019), 21.

some cases, aspects of it are becoming extinct as they cease to have any purpose. Wicca is, quite simply, dynamic – as all living spiritual paths are. It does not remain still: it is continually changing and going through cycles.”¹¹⁹ Whether a Witch is described as polyaffiliated, eclectic, or progressive, the point is that every Witch is unique.

On the positive side, most Pagans are proud of the religion they have created for themselves and enjoy discussing their beliefs and practices with others. DiZerega claims, “We welcome interested people and are happy to share what is closest to our hearts.”¹²⁰ The openness of Pagans to conversation about their unique beliefs presents an opportunity for dialogue and gospel witness.

Perspective 5: Pagans have Rejected Christianity

Christians seeking to engage Pagans need to be sensitive to the fact that most Pagans have rejected Christianity. Most of the Pagans discussed in chapter three on the history of Wicca specifically rejected Christianity.¹²¹ Pagans in Western culture have often grown up in Christian homes, attended Christian colleges, and have rejected Christianity.¹²²

Through my involvement with the Coffee Cauldron, I have met many Pagans with Christian backgrounds. Murphy Pizza describes herself as a recovering Roman Catholic. Susan rejected her Lutheran background in favor of Witchcraft.¹²³ Trudy likewise rejected her

¹¹⁹ Farrar and Bone, *The Inner Mysteries*, 40.

¹²⁰ Gus diZerega, “Paganism and Neopaganism: Adherent Essay” in *Handbook of Religion: A Christian Engagement with Traditions, Teachings, and Practices*, ed. Terry C. Muck, Harold A. Netland, and Gerald R. McDermott (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 546.

¹²¹ See pages 56-8 for descriptions of Aleister Crowley and Dion Fortune rejecting Christianity.

¹²² See pages 162, 169-71.

¹²³ I introduced Susan, the leader of the Coffee Cauldron, on page 96.

Lutheran upbringing.¹²⁴ Amy grew up Roman Catholic but rejected the deity of Jesus Christ and now attends a Quaker congregation as a Pagan and identifies as a “Quagan.”¹²⁵ Edith graduated from North Central Bible College, affiliated with the Assemblies of God, but has now rejected Christianity. Edith is now a Wiccan high priestess who is an expert at reading Tarot Cards.¹²⁶

As I presented in chapter three, several of the Pagans who rejected traditional Christianity nevertheless attend Christian churches or identify as Christian-Witches. Thomas is a Wiccan high priest who currently attends a Lutheran congregation with his children.¹²⁷ Wendy graduated from the University of Northwestern in St. Paul with a degree in Bible. Wendy describes herself as a Christian-Witch, and her boyfriend, Carl, describes himself as a Satanist.¹²⁸

Pagans frequently discuss their need for healing from their Christian past. For example, at Paganicon 2019 I attended a seminar on “Blasphemy as a Healing Tool.” The main idea was that blaspheming and renouncing Jesus and Christianity is a means of freeing oneself from the bondage of one’s Christian upbringing. The practice might be analogous to Christian baptism where a baptismal candidate may be led to renounce the devil and his ways.

Pagans also see Christianity as empty of spiritual power and mystery. For example, at Paganicon 2019 I attended a seminar titled, “Drawing Down the Moon: The Magick and Mystery.” The leader, Jason Mankey, described his growing up as an evangelical Christian in California. Mankey left the Christian faith and has become a Gardnerian high priest. He

¹²⁴ I introduced Trudy on page 95.

¹²⁵ I introduced Amy on page 95.

¹²⁶ Consistent with chapter four, note 63, on page 95, I am not using the real names.

¹²⁷ Consistent with chapter four, note 63, on page 95, I am not using the real names.

¹²⁸ Consistent with chapter four, note 63, on page 95, I am not using the real names.

described the emptiness of his evangelical upbringing and the excitement he feels in Witchcraft. Mankey described ways in which the Christian church he grew up in was boring and did not even get excited about celebrating Easter. He said he did not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, but if he did, he thinks it would be something worth truly celebrating. Mankey saw Christians as apathetic and turned away to something more exciting for him, Witchcraft.¹²⁹

In summary, many Pagans have rejected Christianity as boring, morally restrictive, and oppressive. If Christians are going to engage Pagans with the gospel, they will need to understand and be sensitive to ways that Pagans view Christianity and that they many of them have rejected the Christian faith.

Perspective 6: Pagans are Often Victims of Abuse

Christians seeking to engage Pagans need to be sensitive to the reality that many Pagans are victims of abuse. In her study of Canadian Pagans, Shelley Rabinovitch discovered high rates of childhood abuse among Pagans. Rabinovitch writes, “Of the 40 women interviewed, only 2.5 percent did not undergo some sort of severe trauma as they grew up (one out of 40). Of the 27 men interviewed, only 22 percent did not undergo similar experiences (seven out of 27).”¹³⁰ When I read Rabinovitch’s work, I had an emotional paradigm shift in the way I view Pagans and have become more compassionate and a better listener to Pagans as they tell me about their lives. Perhaps not surprising, considering Rabinovitch’s research, many of the

¹²⁹ Jason Mankey, *Transformative Witchcraft: The Greater Mysteries* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2019), 2.

¹³⁰ Sian Reid, “As I Do Will So Mote It Be: Magic as Metaphor in Neo-Pagan Witchcraft” in *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*, ed. James R. Lewis (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 148. Reed cites Rabinovitch’s 1992 ““An It Harm None, Do What Ye Will’: Neo-Pagans and Witches in Canada.” M.A. thesis, Department of Religion, Carleton University. Unpublished.

Pagans I have met at the Coffee Cauldron are regularly seeing mental health professionals for a variety of mental health disorders.

Paganism, for whatever reason, seems to appeal to victims of abuse. Discerning what draws victims of sexual abuse and other disorders to Paganism is beyond the scope of this study. John Beckett observes the way psychology became popular at the same time as British occultism and influenced magical and esoteric traditions.¹³¹ Beckett admits that “The boundaries between magic, religion, and psychology can be rather hazy at times.”¹³² Beckett carefully encourages Pagans to seek both mental health professionals and good religion, opining,

Depression is a real condition that needs professional treatment and occasionally medication. But much of what we colloquially call “depression” is simply the result of a life that is disconnected from the earth, from our gods, and from each other. Neither therapy nor drugs will correct that. Good, dedicated spiritual practice in the context of a good, healthy religion—such as Paganism in its many forms—will.¹³³

Healing is a central motif in Wicca, asserts Vivianne Crowley, with the Wiccan Witch as a healer.¹³⁴ Crowley describes the way in which several Pagan rituals are designed to bring healing and new identity to victims of abuse.¹³⁵

Christians seeking to engage Pagans must be sensitive to the mental health needs and pain within the Pagan community. The needs within the Pagan community also present Christians with a unique opportunity to bring hope, healing, and love.

¹³¹ John Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 205.

¹³² John Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 205.

¹³³ John Beckett, *The Path of Paganism*, 205-6. I describe his comment as opining, because Beckett is a Druid, blogger, and engineer, not a physician or therapist.

¹³⁴ Vivianne Crowley, “Healing in Wicca” in *Daughters of the Goddess: Studies of Healing, Identity, and Empowerment*, ed. Wendy Griffin (New York: AltaMira Press, 2000), 151.

¹³⁵ Crowley, “Healing in Wicca,” 151-65.

Perspective 7: Christians and Pagans are Both Created in the Image of God

From a Christian theological perspective, Christians and Pagans share common ground as humans created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, rather than seeing Pagans as the unclean “other,” Christians need to respect Pagans as people created in God’s image. Alexander wisely advises that Christians should take “Neopagans seriously as people, not just as the ‘opposition’ or as potential converts.”¹³⁶ Respecting Pagans as people is fundamental to seeing Pagans as fellow humans and not as the opposition. Pagans are people whom God created and loves, and Christians must reorient their thoughts to seeing Pagans in this light. In fact, Pagans are a very religious people who are willing and open to conversations when they are respected, not stereotyped in negative and false ways. Alexander describes the opportunity for Christians to have an effective gospel witness, writing,

The good news about talking to Neopagans is that if you can maneuver past the rhetorical landmines and barriers to communication, they can be quite open to the full, industrial-strength supernaturalism of the gospel message. The bad news is that there is a lot maneuvering to do—and a lot of distortions to dispel—before your communication can reach that level. What’s needed is for enough Neopagans to encounter enough knowledgeable, articulate Christians to discredit the stereotypes and misunderstandings they have of Christianity. As Witchcraft goes mainstream, the opportunities multiply for such encounters to happen. Christians should be preparing now to play their role effectively when those occasions occur.¹³⁷

While the “landmines,” “barriers,” and “maneuvering” that Alexander describes are real, the opportunities for effective gospel engagement are also real when stereotypes are disarmed, and Pagans are lovingly respected as people.

¹³⁶ Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream*, 254.

¹³⁷ Alexander, *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream*, 256.

Perspective 8: Christians and Pagans Both Respect the Environment

Christians and Pagans share a common respect for the environment. Pagans view nature as a living manifestation of God, while Christians view nature as a creation of God for which humans have been entrusted to care of and protect. Both Pagans and Christians respect nature and want to care for the environment. Gus diZerega explains the Pagan perspective.

In keeping with their shamanic roots, Pagan religions generally—and Wicca certainly among them—emphasize the Sacred as it manifests in and through Nature. In the sharpest possible contrast with the dominant secular and monotheistic worldviews, we view Nature as a direct living manifestation of the Divine. Nature is neither a creation nor the brute result of insensate natural forces. The material world is a world of sense, of awareness and of value, and it is all three to its very core.¹³⁸

Pagans do not worship nature, rather they “respect, honor, serve, and love the Sacred as it manifests *in and through* Nature.”¹³⁹ Nature is like a sacred text for Pagans much like Scripture is a sacred text for Christians. With such a high view of nature as sacred, Pagans are naturally devoted to caring for the environment.

Christian theologian Mark Coppenger expresses the Christian view of nature as a creation by God that is to be cared for and protected by humans.

The Christian is second to none in his healthy appreciation for the environment. He knows that God created it and declared it “good”—land and sea, vegetation and living creatures in the ocean, on the earth, and in the sky. And above all, he made man, giving him orders to “be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth” (Gen. 1:28). This was a call to procreation and stewardship. This meant not cutting down fruit-bearing trees during war (Deut. 20:19-20) and protecting mother birds (22:6-7).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 68.

¹³⁹ Johnson and diZerega, *Beyond Burning Times*, 68. Emphasis original. diZerega capitalizes “Sacred” and “Nature” as a way of respecting the natural world with its elements as subjects.

¹⁴⁰ Mark Coppenger, *Moral Apologetics for Contemporary Christians: Pushing Back Against Cultural and Religious Critics*, B & H Studies in Christian Ethics, ed. Daniel R. Heimbach (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011), 67.

The Christian view is that the environment is created by God and is to be cared for by humans.

DiZerega is aware of Christian theology and politely challenges that practice does not always follow belief. DiZerega states, “While Christianity is genuinely capable of honoring nature, historically it has not to any great degree.”¹⁴¹ Prominent Christian ecologist, Ghilleen T. Prance agrees, writing, “It is a great pity that Christian teaching has neglected creation and been slow to enter into environmentalism.”¹⁴² Christian theologian Phillip Johnson also agrees, and humbly responds to diZerega’s charge that Christians need to own up to their consumerist lifestyles that are hurting the environment.

As human sensitivities to ecological degradation have widened over the past 40 years a negative judgment has been persistently made about Christianity. The same point is repeated by secular scientists, ecological ethicists and animal rights campaigners: Christians hold to a dualist view of humans separated from nature, promote an arrogant speciesist view that the Earth exists solely for people, and believe that the Bible mandates exploiting the Earth.

There is undeniable evidence of anthropocentric and negative attitudes towards the Earth among Christians. . . . Some evangelicals today believe that the Earth is ultimately doomed, and that as Christians will go to heaven, what happens to the creation is not very important. . . . The lifestyles of many modern-day Christians follow the patterns of consumerism that contribute to ecological harm. Clearly heartfelt repentance is warranted, values and attitudes must change, and Christians must accept that our spiritual credibility and integrity has been undermined by following deviant beliefs and acting unwisely.¹⁴³

Johnson strikes the right tone here by admitting our mistakes and calling Christians to do better in relation to the environment.

¹⁴¹ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, 177.

¹⁴² G. T. Prance, “Environmentalism” in *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*, ed. W. C. Campbell-Jack and Gavin J. McGrath (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 237.

¹⁴³ diZerega and Johnson, *Beyond the Burning Times*, 80-1.

Especially humbling for Christians in this context is that a Pagan writer like diZerega critiques Christian behavior in view of Christian Scripture and calls for Christians to live out their Scripture. diZerega writes,

A religion whose adherents claim the authority of sacred writings should pay more attention to what those writings actually say, rather than playing pick and choose among texts taken from context. Here, I think, thoughtful Christians can learn from many Pagans—not to become Pagans themselves, but to appreciate neglected elements within their own tradition—and so to become better Christians.¹⁴⁴

In summary, Pagans and Christians both respect the environment—yes, for different reasons—but our mutual respect for the environment provides common ground for both religions to work cooperatively on environmental issues and perhaps create opportunities for gospel conversations.

Perspective 9: Christians and Pagans Can Be Friends

Christians and Pagans have real differences, but people with real differences can still be friends. Over the past three years I have built credible friendships with Witches and Pagans through my participation at the Coffee Cauldron and at the Paganicon conferences. We have spent many hours enjoying dinners together and sharing about our families and showing pictures from weddings and vacations. We have talked about sports, hunting, leisure, and coffee. I have given and received gifts from Pagans at Christmas. Curiously, my Pagan friends like to show me pictures of their Christmas trees.

Christians and Pagans have fundamental differences that cannot and should not be minimized. Christians seeking to engage Pagans will need to understand and be sensitive to some of the unique challenges involved in engaging Pagans. Yet, there are some real opportunities for Christians to establish common ground with Pagans as people and friends. In my view,

¹⁴⁴ diZerega, *Pagans and Christians*, 188.

Christians who understand and appreciate the differences they have with Pagans, and who are willing to learn specific means to be sensitive to the challenges inherent in dialogue with Pagans, and are willing to establish credible friendships with Pagans, will be in a position to engage Pagans with the gospel effectively.

In this chapter, I have drawn from Pagan and Christian literature, general sociological and biblical and missiological principles, and my pastoral interaction with Pagans over the past three years. I have sketched out five principles for Christians studying religions like Paganism, described challenges Christians face to evangelizing Pagans, and then proposed nine positive strategies for Christians effectively communicating the gospel to Pagans. What I have presented is programmatic, yet it cannot be emphasized too strongly that an effective gospel witness to Pagans, like a gospel witness to anyone, involves first and foremost a loving relationship.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Research

The research in this dissertation was limited in two important ways. First, I am an outsider to Paganism. Second, my research is primarily based on literature and secondarily based on my personal interaction with Pagans. To overcome these limitations, I designed a detailed process to surface the most important literary works within the Pagan literary tradition. First, I entered the bibliographies of 108 books on Paganism into a social science software program to discover the most cited literature. I discovered the most cited British occult authors who influenced the emergence of Paganism. I also discovered the most important Wiccan and Pagan authors. Additionally, I discovered the most important secular authors writing on Paganism. Second, I studied 28 historical texts concerning Wicca and Paganism to discover the most cited individuals in the historical development of Wicca and Paganism. Influential Pagans who did not write, but who influenced the development of Paganism, surfaced through this second study. I also conducted a third study on who recent authors cited most and discovered some interesting trends away from Gardnerian Wicca to a more progressive, eclectic, or polyaffiliated Paganism. The bibliographical, narrative, and recent trends studies helped me to clarify which authors have been the most significant in the Pagan literary tradition. I was then able to arrange the literature on its emic-etic relationship to Wicca. Once I had categorized the Pagan literary tradition, I was able to conduct an extensive literature review of the Pagan literary tradition.

Based on the literary tradition, I provided an overview of the historical development of Wicca and Paganism. I showed the ways in which the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century British Occultism provided the origins for Gerald Gardner to found Wicca at the mid-point of the twentieth century. I further traced the development of Wicca to the United States, and specifically, to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul in Minnesota.

In chapter four I sought to build on Murphy Pizza's ethnographical study of Paganism in the Twin Cities. Pizza asserted that each Twin Cities Pagan polyaffiliated with multiple streams of Paganism to form their own unique religious tradition. My research confirmed Pizza's hypothesis in a variety of ways.

In chapter five I utilized Rodney Stark's theoretical model to predict the future success or failure of a new religious movement. I restated each of his ten propositions and then sought to forecast the future of Wicca and Paganism considering his propositions.

In chapter six I developed perspectives toward an effective gospel witness to Pagans based on my research of Pagans.

Implications of Research

As far as I know, I am the first evangelical to formally explore Paganism through writing a doctoral dissertation. As the first evangelical to conduct doctoral research into Paganism, my research is both ground-breaking and conducted without the benefit of other evangelical scholars against which to compare my research. My hope is that as other evangelicals do research on Paganism and compare their studies with mine, they will graciously remember that I did not have other evangelicals with which I could compare my research. In other words, I recognize that an implication of my research is that as the first to write, I am certain to be critiqued!

Second, my research has demonstrated that evangelicals have a lot of work ahead of them if they are to engage the vast body of extant Pagan literature. To date, few evangelicals have seriously interacted with Pagan literature.¹ One of my goals in writing was to introduce Pagan literature to evangelical scholarship. My hope is that my research will serve as a general foundation upon which others can launch into more specialized research.

Third, my research has demonstrated ways in which evangelicals are generally ignoring interacting and evangelizing Witches and Pagans. I do not know of any evangelical ministries seeking to engage Wiccans and Pagans with the gospel. I do know of two individual evangelicals who have sought to interact with and study Pagans: Bill Honsberger in Colorado and Carl Teichrib in Manitoba. The three of us have become friends. Bill and Carl have participated more extensively in Pagan gatherings than I have, though I have conducted more extensive academic research into Paganism. While studying and interacting with Pagans is important, evangelicals must seek to engage Wiccans and Pagans effectively with the gospel.

Witchcraft and Paganism remain largely unstudied by evangelicals, and Witches and Pagans remain almost completely unreached by evangelicals. My hope is that my research has helped to shine a light on the Pagan movement, which will serve as a catalyst for further research to help increase our understanding of Pagans and help to promote an effective gospel witness to Witches and Pagans.

Avenues for Further Research

As the first evangelical to write a doctoral dissertation on Wicca and Paganism, I have only scratched the surface of the Pagan movement. Numerous areas exist where further research

¹ I reviewed the evangelical literature on Witchcraft and Paganism on pages 40-3.

needs to be conducted to understand Paganism from an evangelical perspective. As I conducted my research, I became acutely aware of the limitations of my research and the vast array of opportunities for others to conduct further research into Paganism. Based on my research, I think the following eight areas will be particularly fruitful for further research.

Ethnographic Studies

Two secular scholars have conducted notable ethnographical research on Pagans: Tanya Luhmann² and Helen Berger.³ The challenge for evangelicals doing ethnographical research will involve the level of participant-observation with which the researcher is comfortable. For example, because of the spiritual dynamics I perceive to be involved, I chose not to participate with Pagans gathered in a ritual circle doing magic. On several occasions I was invited to participate in evening ritual gatherings in which Pagans dance around a fire naked to raise energy for magical purposes. Ethnographical researchers will need to decide at what level they are comfortable participating in Witchcraft and Paganism to conduct their research. Certainly, room exists for different approaches and other researchers may choose different research boundaries than I did. If evangelicals are going to understand Pagans and effectively reach them with the gospel, they are going to need to get close enough to Pagans to study them and do informed ethnographical research on Pagans.

Pagan Conferences, Seminars, Gatherings

To gain a real sense of the diversity of Witchcraft and Paganism, participating in

² See page 38.

³ See page 39.

Pagan gatherings will be essential. Pagan festivals, gatherings, camping trips, and conferences are at the heart of the Pagan experience. My participation in the Coffee Cauldron for three years has been foundational for me to understand a small group of Pagans. Participating in the Paganicon 2018, 2019, and 2020 conferences and interacting with hundreds of Pagans has given me a much broader appreciation for the Pagan movement. Likewise, participating in the Pagan Pride Day 2018 and 2019 at the Minnehaha Falls State Park with hundreds of Pagans has also enriched my understanding of Paganism. As with the study of most religions, a researcher needs to see, hear, smell, and visit with Pagan vendors. Dozens of Pagan events are held across the nation every year that involve thousands of Pagans. Pagan events can provide an amazing research opportunity to observe, learn, and interact with Pagans.

Pagan Websites

My research has focused on Pagan literature. One of the primary ways in which Pagans connect with one another and share ideas is through a variety of internet sites and forums. Online Pagan sites and discussion groups remain largely unstudied by social science researchers.⁴ The opportunity to discover emerging trends, topics, and resources seems nearly endless for an online researcher. Naturally, credibility challenges are inherent with many internet sites. Yet, a Pagan online research project may prove to be a fruitful area for further research into Paganism.

⁴ A notable exception is Douglas E. Cowan, *Cyberhenge: Modern Pagans on the Internet* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

Paganism, Abuse, Mental Health, and the Spiritual Realm

As already noted, a disproportionate number of Pagans seem to be victims of various forms of abuse.⁵ Crowley seems to suggest that a relationship might exist between the high numbers of abuse victims and the focus on healing within Pagan studies.⁶ Further, a relationship might exist between abuse, healing, and mental health issues. In my interaction with Pagans, I have been somewhat surprised at the number of Pagans who have described to me their struggles with mental health issues. Is there a connection between abuse, mental health, healing, and the spiritual realm in Paganism? What is it about Paganism that appeals to victims of sexual, physical, and verbal abuse? What is about Paganism that seems to attract mentally unhealthy individuals? A rich area exists for further research, perhaps even interdisciplinary research involving psychological, spiritual, and medical professionals.

Religious Scholarship

The academic study of religions seems to include nearly every religion, except Paganism. A curious divide exists between mainstream religious scholarship and Pagan scholarship. Pagan scholars write books and contribute to their own Pagan Journals. Yet, Pagan scholars do not generally interact with mainstream religious scholarship or contribute to academic religious journals. Is there a way to invite Pagan scholars to contribute to mainstream religious academic journals? I believe academic interaction will help reduce negative fears and stereotypes about Pagans. Exploring ways to include Pagan studies in mainstream religious studies may be a fruitful avenue for further research.

⁵ See pages 153-4.

⁶ Vivianne Crowley, "Healing in Wicca" in *Daughters of the Goddess: Studies of Healing, Identity, and Empowerment*, ed. Wendy Griffin (New York: AltaMira Press, 2000), 151-65.

Philosophical Foundations of the Pagan Worldview

The philosophical foundations of Paganism are largely unstudied by evangelicals. Craig Hawkins has written a chapter on Pagan epistemology⁷ and another on the Pagan problem of evil.⁸ Besides Hawkins, I do not know of an evangelical who has explored the philosophical foundations of Paganism. Pagans are rigorous philosophical thinkers and have produced an impressive array of philosophical and worldview writings.⁹ Evangelicals have not yet interacted with Pagan philosophical literature and offered a critique. In my view, this is the most needed and difficult area for evangelicals to explore and will prove a fruitful avenue for research.

Missiological Issues and Paganism

In general, evangelicals have not sought to engage Pagans with the gospel. I know of no ministry or literature exploring the missiological issues involved in engaging Pagans with the gospel. In chapter six (pages 136-56) I attempted to sketch out some of the missiological challenges and opportunities to engaging Pagans with the gospel. One of the more obvious issues that I did not explore involves spiritual warfare. In what ways should one's view of demonization influence the evangelism of Witches and Pagans? Evangelicals have a lot of research to do in developing strategies and missions to Pagans.

⁷ Craig Hawkins, *Witchcraft: Exploring the World of Wicca* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 145-65.

⁸ Hawkins, *Witchcraft*, 166-78.

⁹ For example, Michael York, *Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Jone Salomonsen, *Enchanted Feminism: The Reclaiming Witches of San Francisco* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Nevill Drury, *Stealing Fire from Heaven: The Rise of Modern Western Magic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Graham Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism: Listening People, Speaking Earth* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Susan Greenwood, *Magic, Witchcraft, and the Otherworld* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 2000); Jenny Blain, Douglas Ezzy, and Graham Harvey, *Researching Paganisms* (Oxford, UK: AltaMira, 2004).

Witchcraft and Paganism in Popular Culture

On pages 118-24 the role of movies and television in socializing young Americans to Witchcraft and Paganism was described. Much more research needs to be devoted to the way in which movies and television socialize and even promote Paganism to Americans. Research needs to be done on the role of popular culture with respect to music, sports, politics, and celebrities in promoting and socializing Americans to Paganism. The role of popular culture in forming religious beliefs in general, and Paganism in particular, will be a fruitful avenue for evangelicals doing research into ways in which Paganism is influencing Americans.

Biblical Critique of Paganism

Not surprisingly, evangelicals have critiqued Wicca and Paganism from biblical and theological perspectives.¹⁰ The typical approach to a critique involves describing Wicca and Paganism, showing ways in which Paganism deviates from the Bible, and then condemns Paganism. The approach might work as an apologetic for a Christian audience, but it does little to engage Wiccans and Pagans who reject the Bible and Christianity. In his book, *Pagans and Christians*,¹¹ Pagan scholar Gus diZerega makes over 150 references to Scripture, challenging Christian theology on numerous points. An opportunity exists here for an evangelical response exploring diZerega's hermeneutics and use of Scripture.

¹⁰ Hawkins, *Witchcraft*, 89-142. David Burnett, *Drawing Down the Pagan Moon: Understanding the Roots, Characteristics, and Influences of the Western Paganism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 257-73. Walter Martin, Jill Martin Rische, and Kurt Van Gorden, *The Kingdom of the Occult* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2008), 435-71. Marcia Montenegro, "Wicca and Witchcraft," in *World Religions and Cults: Moralistic, Mythical, and Mysticism Religions*, vol. 2, ed. Bodie Hodge and Roger Patterson (Green Forest, AZ: Master Books, 2016), 181-207. Philip Johnson and Gus diZerega, *Beyond the Burning Times: A Pagan and Christian in Dialogue* (Oxford, UK: Lion Books, 2008).

¹¹ Gus diZerega, *Pagans and Christians: The Personal Spiritual Experience* (St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn, 2001).

Furthermore, *Wicca and the Christian Heritage*¹² and *Cristo-Paganism*¹³ by Joyce and River Higginbotham await a Christian response exploring the biblical and theological challenges in such approaches. In brief, many opportunities exist to explore and interact with the various hermeneutical approaches Pagans use when citing Scripture.

Conclusion

Wicca and Paganism remain largely unstudied by evangelicals, therefore there are numerous avenues for further research to be done by evangelicals to better understand and interact with Pagans. My prayer is that this dissertation will serve as a catalyst for many more evangelicals to explore the world of Wicca and Paganism and to offer winsome ideas on methodologies to effectively reach Pagans with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

¹² Joanne Pearson, *Wicca and the Christian Heritage: Ritual, Sex, and Magic* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

¹³ Joyce and River Higginbotham, *Cristo-Paganism: An Inclusive Path* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2009).

APPENDIX 1

THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT BOOKS USED IN BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

As described on pages 10-12, the bibliographies of 108 books were compared to discover the Pagan authors most cited in the literature. The bibliographies of seventy-five Pagan books, twenty-one social science books, and twelve Christian books were compared.

Seventy-Five Pagan Books

1. Adler, Margot. *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshipers, and other Pagans in America Today*. Rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 1986.
2. Aradia, Lady Sable. *The Witch's Eight Paths of Power: A Complete Course in Magick and Witchcraft*. San Francisco, CA: Weiser Books, 2014.
3. Barton, Blanche. *The Secret Life of a Satanist: The Authorized Biography of Anton Szandor LaVey*. Rev. ed. Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2014.
4. Beckett, John. *The Path of Paganism: An Experience-Based Guide to Modern Pagan Practice*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2018.
5. Blain, Jenny, Douglas Ezzy, and Graham Harvey, eds. *Researching Paganisms*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004.
6. Bonewits, P. E. I. *Real Magic: An Introductory Treatise on the Basic Principles of Yellow Magic*. Rev. ed. York Beach, ME: Weiser, 1989. Originally published by Weiser in 1971.
7. Brown, Tonya A. *The Door to Witchcraft: A New Witch's Guide to History, Traditions and Modern-Day Spells* (Emeryville, CA: Althea Press, 2019).
8. Buckland, Raymond. *Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft*. 2nd ed. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2002.
9. Budapest, Zsuzsanna. *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries: Feminist Witchcraft, Goddess Rituals, Spellcasting, and Other Womanly Arts*. Berkeley, CA: Wingbow Press, 1980.
10. Cavendish, Richard. *The Black Arts, 50th Anniversary Edition: An Absorbing Account of Witchcraft, Demonology, Astrology, and Other Mystical Practices Throughout the Ages*. New York: Tarcher Perigee, 2017.

11. Chamberlain, Lisa. *Wicca Crystal Magic: A Beginner's Guide to Practicing Wiccan Crystal Magic, With Simple Crystal Spells*. Published by Wicca Shorts, 2015.
12. Clifton, Chas S. *Her Hidden Children: The Rise of Wicca and Paganism in America*. New York: AltaMira Press, 2006.
13. Clifton, Chas, and Graham Harvey, eds. *The Paganism Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
14. Cochrane, Robert. *The Robert Cochrane Letters: An Insight into Modern Traditional Witchcraft*. Edited by Evan John Jones and Michael Howard. Somerset, UK: Capall Bann Publishing, 2002.
15. Crowley, Vivianne. *Wicca: The Old Religion in the New Age*. San Francisco, CA: HarperCollins, 1989.
16. Crowther, Patricia. *Covensense*. Wiltshire, UK: Robert Hale, 2009.
17. Cunningham, Scott. *Earth Power: Techniques of Natural Magick*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1998.
18. Cunningham, Scott. *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner*. Llewellyn's Practical Magick Series. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1999.
19. Currott, Phyllis. *Witch Crafting: A Spiritual Guide to Making Magic*. New York: Broadway Books, 2001.
20. d'Este, Sorita, and David Rankine. *Wicca Magickal Beginnings: A Study of the Possible Origins of the Rituals and Practices Found in this Modern Tradition of Pagan Witchcraft and Magick*. London: Avalonia, 2008.
21. DiZerega, Gus. *Pagans and Christians: The Personal Spiritual Experience*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2001.
22. Eller, Cynthia. *Living in the Lap of the Goddess: The Feminist Spirituality Movement in America*. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1993.
23. Farrar, Janet and Stewart. *A Witches Bible: The Complete Witches Handbook*. London: Robert Hale, 1981.
24. Farrar, Janet and Stewart. *The Witches Way: Principles, Rituals and beliefs of Modern Witchcraft*. London: Robert Hale, 1984.
25. Farrar, Janet, and Gavin Bone. *The Inner Mysteries: Progressive Witchcraft and Connection with the Divine*. 2nd ed. Portland, OR: Acorn Guild Press, 2012.

26. Faerywolf, Storm. *Betwixt & Between: Exploring the Faery Tradition of Witchcraft*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2019.
27. Gardner, Gerald B. *Witchcraft Today*. New York: Kensington Publishing, 2004. Originally published in Great Britain by Rider & Company, 1954.
28. Gardner, Gerald B. *The Meaning of Witchcraft*. Boston: Weiser Books, 2004. Originally published in London by Aquarian, 1959.
29. Green, Marian. *A Witch Alone: Thirteen Moons to Master Natural Magic*. Hammersmith, UK: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.
30. Greenwood, Susan. *Magic, Witchcraft, and the Otherworld: An Anthropology*. Oxford, UK: Oxford International Publishers, 2000.
31. Greywolf, Anastasia. *Witchcraft: A Handbook of Magic, Spells, and Potions*. New York: Wellfeet Press, 2016.
32. Griffin, Wendy, ed. *Daughters of the Goddess: Studies of Healing, Identity, and Empowerment*. New York: AltaMira Press, 2000.
33. Grimassi, Raven. *Spirit of the Witch: Religion & Spirituality in Contemporary Witchcraft*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2003.
34. Guiley, Rosemary E. *The Encyclopedia of Witches, Witchcraft & Wicca*, 3rd ed. New York: Checkmark Books, 2008.
35. Hall, Claudia. *Jesus and the Goddess: Living into a ChristoPagan Theology*. San Bernardino, CA: Self-published, 2017.
36. Harrow, Judy, Alexi Kondratiev, Geoffrey W. Miller, and Maureen Reddington-Wilde. *Devoted to You: Honoring Deity in Wiccan Practice*. New York: Citadel Press, 2003.
37. Harvey, Graham. *Contemporary Paganism: Listening People, Speaking Earth*. New York: New York University Press, 1997.
38. Heselton, Philip. *Witchfather: A Life of Gerald Gardner, Vol. 1 – Into the Witch Cult*. Loughborough, UK: Thoth Publications, 2012.
39. Higginbotham, Joyce and River. *CristoPaganism: An Inclusive Path*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2009.
40. Howard, Michael. *Modern Wicca: A History from Gerald Gardner to the Present*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2009.
41. Huson, Paul. *Mastering Witchcraft: A Practical Guide for Witches, Warlocks, and Covens*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 1970.

42. Johnson, Philip, and Gus diZerega. *Beyond the Burning Times: A Pagan and Christian in Dialogue*. Oxford, UK: Lion Hudson, 2008.
43. Jones, Evan John, and Michael Howard. *The Robert Cochrane Letters: An Insight into Modern Traditional Witchcraft*. Milverton, UK: Capall Bann Publishing, 2002.
44. Kelly, Aiden A. *Inventing Witchcraft: A Case Study in the Creation of a New Religion*. Loughborough, UK: Thoth Publications, 2007.
45. King, Francis. *Modern Ritual Magic: The Rose of Western Occultism*. Dorset, UK: Prism Press, 1989. Originally published in England by Neville Spearman Limited, 1970.
46. Leek, Sybil. *The Best of Sybil Leek*. Edited by Glen A. Hilken. New York: Popular Library, 1974.
47. Lewis, James R, ed. *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1996.
48. Lewis, James R., and Murphy Pizza, eds. *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*. Boston: Brill, 2009.
49. Lipp, Deborah. *The Study of Witchcraft: A Guidebook to Advanced Wicca*. San Francisco, CA: Weiser Books, 2007.
50. Lipp, Deborah. *Magical Power for Beginners: How to Raise & Send Energy for Spells That Work*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2017.
51. Lister, Lisa. *Witch: Unleashed, Untamed, Unapologetic*. New York: Hay House, 2017.
52. Magliocco, Sabina. *Witching Culture: Folklore and Neo-Paganism in America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.
53. Mankey, Jason. *Transformative Witchcraft: The Greater Mysteries*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2019.
54. McColman, Carl. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Paganism*. New York: Alpha Books, 2002.
55. Mooney, Thorn. *Traditional Wicca: A Seeker's Guide*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2018.
56. Orapello, Christopher, and Tara-Love MaGuire. *Besom, Stang, & Sword: A Guide to Traditional Witchcraft, the Six-fold Path & the Hidden Landscape*. Newburyport, MA: Weiser Books, 2018.

57. Pearson, Joanne. *Wicca and the Christian Heritage: Ritual, Sex, and Magic*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
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60. Prakash, Swati. *The Global Wicca Revolution: Magick and Witchcraft to Heal our World*. Published by Global Wicca Tradition, 2015.
61. Rabinovitch, Shelly, and James Lewis. *The Encyclopedia of Modern Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism*. New York: Citadel Press, 2002.
62. RavenWolf, Silver. *Teen Witch: Wicca for a New Generation*. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1998.
63. RavenWolf, Silver. *Solitary Witch: The Ultimate Book of Shadows for the New Generation*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2003.
64. Regardie, Israel. *The Golden Dawn: The Original Account of the Teachings, Rites, and Ceremonies of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn*. 6th ed. Llewellyn's Golden Dawn Series. St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1997.
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72. Whitehurst, Tess. *You Are Magical*. Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 2018.

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75. Zimmerman, Denise, Katherine Gleason, and Miria Liguana. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Wicca and Witchcraft*. 3rd ed. New York: Alpha Books, 2006.

Twenty-One Social Science Books

1. Berger, Helen A. *A Community of Witches: Contemporary Neo-Paganism and Witchcraft in the United States*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999.
2. Berger, Helen A., and Douglas Ezzy. *Teenage Witches: Magical Youth and the Search for the Self*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007.
3. Bogdan, Henrik. *Western Esotericism and Rituals of Initiation*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2007.
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6. Davies, Owen, ed. *The Oxford Illustrated History of Witchcraft and Magic*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017.
7. Davis, Philip G. *Goddess Unmasked: The Rise of Neopagan Feminist Spirituality*. Dallas: Spence Publishing, 1998.
8. Djurdjevic, Gordan. *India and The Occult: The Influence of South Asian Spirituality on Modern Western Occultism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
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11. Evans-Pritchard, E.E. *Witchcraft Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976. Originally published by Oxford University Press in 1937.
12. Hutton, Ronald. *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999.

13. Jenkins, Philip. *Mystics and Messiah: Cults and New Religions in American History*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000.
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20. Urban, Hugh B. *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic, and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006.
21. Urban, Hugh B. *New Age, Neopagan, & New Religious Movements: Alternative Spirituality in Contemporary America*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015.

Twelve Christian Books

1. Alexander, Brooks. *Witchcraft Goes Mainstream: Uncovering Its Alarming Impact on You and Your Family*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 2004.
2. Baker, Tim. *Dewitched: What You Need to Know About the Dangers of Wicca & Witchcraft*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2004.
3. Burnett, David. *Dawning of the Pagan Moon: Understanding the Roots, Characteristics, and Influences of Western Paganism*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992.
4. Enroth, Ronald, ed. *A Guide to New Religious Movements*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.
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10. Rhodes, Ron. *The Challenge of the Cults and New Religions: The Essential Guide to their History, their Doctrine, and Our Response*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
11. Russo, Steve. *What's the Deal with Wicca? A Deeper Look into the Dark Side of Today's Witchcraft*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2005.
12. Sanders, Catherine Edwards. *Wicca's Charm: Understanding the Spiritual Hunger Behind the Rise of Modern Witchcraft and Pagan Spirituality*. Colorado Springs, CO: Shaw Books, 2005.

APPENDIX 2

PRINCIPLES OF WICCAN BELIEF¹⁴

The Council of American Witches finds it necessary to define modern Witchcraft in terms of the American experience and needs.

We are not bound by traditions from other times and other cultures, and owe no allegiance to any person or power greater than the Divinity manifest through our own being.

As American Witches we welcome and respect all Life Affirming teachings and traditions, and seek to learn from all and to share our learning within our Council.

It is in this spirit of welcome and cooperation that we adopt these few principles of Wiccan belief. In seeking to be inclusive, we do not wish to open ourselves to the destruction of our group by those on self-serving power trips, or to philosophies and practices contradictory to those principles. In seeking to exclude those whose ways are contradictory to ours, we do not want to deny participation with us to any who are sincerely interested in our knowledge and beliefs, regardless of race, color, sex, age, national or cultural origins or sexual preference.

1. We practice rites to attune ourselves with the natural rhythm of life forces marked by the Phases of the Moon and the Seasonal Quarters and Cross Quarters.
2. We recognize that our intelligence gives us a unique responsibility towards our environment. We seek to live in harmony with Nature, in ecological balance offering fulfillment to life and consciousness within an evolutionary concept.
3. We acknowledge a depth of power far greater than that apparent to the average person. Because it is far greater than ordinary it is sometimes called "supernatural," but we see it as lying within that which is naturally potential to all.
4. We conceive of the Creative Power in the Universe as manifesting through polarity – as masculine and feminine – and that this same Creative Power lives in all people, and functions through the interaction of the masculine and feminine. We value neither above the other, knowing each to be supporting of the other. We value Sex as pleasure, as the symbol and embodiment of life, and as one of the sources of energies used in magickal practice and religious worship.
5. We recognize both other worlds and inner, or psychological, worlds – sometimes known as the Spiritual World, the Collective Unconscious, the Inner Planes, etc. – and we see in the interaction of these two dimensions the basis for paranormal phenomena and magickal exercises. We neglect neither dimension for the other, seeing both as necessary for our fulfillment.

¹⁴ Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshipers, and Other Pagans in America Today*, rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1986), 97-9. Shortly after the American Council of Witches affirmed this statement in 1974, differences surfaced and the Council disbanded.

6. We do not recognize any authoritarian hierarchy, but do honor those who teach, respect those who share their greater knowledge and wisdom, and acknowledge those who have courageously given of themselves in leadership.
7. We see religion, magick and wisdom-in-living as being united in the way one views the world and lives within it – a worldview and philosophy-of-life which we identify as Witchcraft, the Wiccan Way.
8. Calling oneself "Witch" does not make one a witch – but neither does heredity itself, or the collecting of titles, degrees and initiations. A Witch seeks to control the forces within him/herself that make life possible in order to live wisely and well, without harm to others, and in harmony with Nature.
9. We acknowledge that it is the affirmation and fulfillment of life, in a continuation of evolution and development of consciousness, that gives meaning to the Universe we know, and to our personal role within it.
10. Our only animosity towards Christianity, or toward any other religion or philosophy-of-life, is to the extent that its institutions have claimed to be "the only way" and have sought to deny freedom to others and to suppress other ways of religious practice and belief.
11. As American Witches, we are not threatened by debates on the history of the Craft, the origins of various terms, or the origins of various aspects of different traditions. We are concerned with our present, and our future.
12. We do not accept the concept of absolute evil, nor do we worship any entity known as "Satan" or "The Devil", as defined by the Christian tradition. We do not seek power through the suffering of others, nor do we accept that personal benefit can only be derived only by denial to another.
13. We acknowledge that we seek within Nature for that which is contributory to our health and well-being.

APPENDIX 3

PAGANICON 2018 SEMINARS

The titles of the 41 seminars presented at Paganicon 2018 illustrate the wide variety of topics addressed at a Pagan conference.

1. Offerings to Osiris: Sharing with the Dead
2. Solar Magick
3. Hekate & Yahweh: The Gnostic Connection
4. Wyrd 101: A Look at the Heathen Worldview
5. Exploring Heathenism: Through A Queer Lens
6. Pagan Enough: The Dance Between Individualism and Community
7. Practicing Safe Sects
8. Women in Heathenry: Story, Craft, and Lived Experience
9. The Conception and Construction of Pagan Prayer Books
10. Hearth and the Sacred Flame
11. Reiki Drumming Introduction
12. Keeping it Real: Expectations as You Enter Non-Wiccan Pagan Paths
13. Cree First Nation and Norse First Contact
14. We Are Aradia: Empowerment Workshop and Ritual
15. Gnostic Mass
16. Healing Roots: Reconnecting to a Healthy Sense of Cultural Identity
17. Creating Safe Communities: Abuse, Predation, Coercion, and Addressing Complaints Ethically
18. Death Midwifery: Caring for the Actively Dying
19. People of the Entire Earth: Clearing Up Confusion About Pagan Cultural Adoption and Appropriation
20. Ritual on Banishing Bad Dreams
21. The Art of Sigil Witchery: The Power of Symbol and Line
22. Honoring Sante Muerte
23. The Magic of Conflict: Trauma-Informed Conflict Engagement
24. Nordic Folk Dance: The Spirit of Culture
25. Diverse Perceptions of Tarot
26. Alexandria Reborn: Pagans and Polytheists in a Multicultural Society
27. Creating Affirming Goddess Spirituality Spaces
28. Spiritual Decluttering
29. Experiencing Auras
30. Traversing the Realm of Fire and Ice
31. Political Magick
32. Magick in the Paranormal
33. Birthing Healthy Covens: Thriving with Purpose

34. Using the Symbols of the 7 Elder Planets for Empowering Your Magick
35. Invoking Our American Ancestors
36. Bringing Earth Religions Back to Earth: A Historical and Critical Call to Rid Paganism Again of Fantasy
37. Pseudo-Science, Conspiracy Theories, Immature Theologies, and Other Ridiculous Substitutes for Knowledge
38. The Pagan Future; Grith and Frith: Boundary Setting in Nordic Ways
39. The Six Principles of Divination
40. An Introduction to Filianism: Approaching God as Mother
41. Tarot and Social Activism

APPENDIX 4

PAGANICON 2019 SEMINARS

The titles of the 81 seminars presented at Paganicon 2019 illustrate the wide variety of topics addressed at a Pagan conference. Seminar offerings increased 97% over the previous year.

1. The Horned Gods: A Global History
2. Beginning Traditional Witchcraft
3. Healthy Boundaries 101: A Sacred Trust
4. Death Midwifery 201
5. Healing Roots Culture and Spirituality
6. Elements of Transformation
7. Blasphemy as a Healing Tool
8. Ogham: The Wisdom of Whispering Trees
9. Bal Anat: Dance of the Mother Goddess—The Intersection of Paganism and Modern Bellydance
10. The Pagan Way of Death: The Body Issue
11. Love Spells: The Bad, The Good, and the Beautiful
12. Satanism 101
13. Gratitude Ritual for Women and Girls
14. Sacred Trees for Bards
15. Acknowledging the Ancestors
16. Psychic Self-Defense: An Intro to Shielding
17. Greco-Buddhist Ritual (Meditation and Devotion)
18. Anglo-Saxon Witchcraft
19. Weave the Liminal: Crafting Authentic Witchcraft
20. Basic Rhythm
21. The Dead Pagan: The Quandary of Quiddity
22. Drawing Down the Moon: The Magick and Mystery
23. Saints, Samhain, and Syncretism: How Being Pagan Raised/Culturally Catholic Colors our Pagan Practice and Culture
24. Queen Up Your Magick: Everyday Rituals to Connect with the Tarot Queens for Transformation
25. Doll Babies and Mojo Bags
26. Purification at the Sacred Grove
27. The Crossroads: Center of the World
28. Discernment for Magickal Folks
29. Tai Chi: Gentle Movement for Health
30. What's in a Deck? Modern Evolutions of Tarot
31. String Magic
32. Rite of the Fifty Names

33. Morning Tree Ritual: Summoning of the Trees
34. Introduction to Familiar Spirits
35. Spiritual Boundaries: Salt Circles for Mental and Spiritual Wellness
36. Atheist Paganism
37. Paganism and Devotional Polytheism
38. Create Your Own Wand
39. Finding Your Voice: The Alchemical Power of Singing
40. Devotion in Druidry
41. Beyond the Drawn Circle: How to Work with Ancient Themes and Archetypal Stories to Create Immersive and Powerful Ritual
42. Our Heathen Grove in Lithuania
43. Feminist Witchcraft for the 21st Century and Beyond
44. Pagan Polyaffiliation: A Panel and Discussion about Identifying and Practicing Multiple Religious Paths—Just Like the Rest of the World Does
45. Embracing the Groves of the Gods
46. Root Wisdom from the Elders Circle
47. Sacred Waters: The Spiritual Baths of Hoodoo
48. What's So Great About the Great Rite?
49. The Art of Sigil Witchery
50. The Cauldron of Posey: A Modern Way of Working with Ancient Teachings
51. Weaving the Web of Destiny: Working with the Gods to Reclaim Your Personal Power
52. The Magic of Conflict: Courageous Conversations
53. The Healing Grace of Kuan Yin
54. The Magickal Art of Baking
55. Law Trees: Sacred Groves of the North
56. Resurrecting the Goddess: Inanna, the Queen of Heaven and Earth
57. Sacred Trees for Ovates
58. Sacrifice Revisited
59. Dancing in the Grove of Apollo
60. Exploring Sacred Texts
61. Chant Writing for Ritual Devotion
62. Discovering Spiritual Gifts for Teens
63. Journey to Avalon Ritual
64. Egyptian Trance Dancing
65. Druid Magic
66. Building the Cone of Power
67. Between Forest and the Hearth
68. Into the Labyrinth: Change Through Movement
69. Best Practices in Magickal Hygiene
70. Pagan Teens in Today's World
71. Hardship, Fear, and Power: A Deep Wild Magick of Connection
72. Drum Circle
73. Fun with Fungus: The Lore and Use of Mushrooms in Spiritual Practice
74. Qigong: Breath Work for Relaxation
75. Of Air and Fire: Crafting Sacred Incense Blends
76. Follow Your Heart: Learning to Awaken Your Intuition for Teens

77. Uniting our Groves: A Druid Diversity Ritual
78. Cerridwen and the Magical Landscape of Wales
79. Under the Sky Within the Halls: Sacred Space in Kemetic Temples
80. 22 Acts of Magic: A Journey thru the Major Arcana
81. The Gorgon Network

APPENDIX 5

PAGANICON 2020 SEMINARS

The titles of the 115 seminars scheduled at Paganicon 2020 illustrate the wide variety of topics addressed at a Pagan conference. Seminar offerings increased 42% over the previous year.

1. Bridging the Gap Between Earth-Based Spiritualities & Sacred Responsibility to Non-Human Animals
2. Using Technology to Manifest
3. Introduction to Reiki Drumming
4. Finding Your Voice: The Alchemical Power of Singing
5. Apollonian Creativity
6. Folk Magic: Spell and Charms in Traditional Witchcraft
7. Healthy Boundaries
8. A Ritual to Wake the Body & Spirit
9. The Faery Queen
10. Aphantasia Discussion Group
11. Folk Religions and the Essentialists' Dilemma
12. Introduction to Practical Shadow Work
13. Introduction to Tea Leaf Reading
14. Rune Yoga
15. Shamanism: Healing the Sacred Seeker
16. Art and Altars of Africa and Beyond
17. Identifying Spirits: A Meditation/Exploration
18. Our Sacred mission: Working with the Elements for Pagan Activists
19. Witchery on a Budget
20. Journey with Epona, Horse Goddess
21. Illuminating the Shadow: Journeys of Healing through Art
22. The Magic of Nature
23. Enochian Evocation
24. Songs and Tales of Wonder
25. Hearthkeepers: Druidic Hearth Practice
26. Inter-dimensional Magic
27. Paganism and the Hero's Journey
28. Transgender, Non-binary, Gender non-conforming and Gender Meet and Greet
29. Rites of Death
30. Running with the Bulls of Heaven
31. Demons and Jinn: the Legacy of Solomon
32. Pagan Speed Friending
33. Queen of Heaven
34. The Left-Hand Path to Addiction Recovery

35. The Shadow House—Healing in the Darkness
36. A Light in the Shadows: The Path of the Psychopomp
37. Astrological Herbalism: From Temple Magicians to Your Home Altar
38. Greco-Buddhist Ritual II
39. Opening Ritual: Now the Green Blade Riseth: A Rite of Welcoming
40. Interfaith Work in Paganism
41. Will the Real Threefold Law Please Stand Up?
42. All Around the Wheel: Sacred Song and Dance with the Midwest’s Oldest Coven
43. Frith and Grith
44. Nordic Shamanic Drumming
45. Pagan Journeys and Mental Health
46. Witchcraft and Sorcery of the Balkan Region
47. Ritual for Healing Self, Country, and Planet
48. String Magic
49. The Temple of the Seven Rays
50. Trauma-Informed Practices for Ritual Facilitators
51. Urban Magic: Ways to Connect with your City Spirit
52. EmryAnu’s Ethics Playground: Finding Peace and Compassion in an Adversarial World
53. Advanced Herbal Magick: A Witch’s Guide to the Dark Side of Plants
54. Journey into the Eleusinian Mysteries
55. Beginner Wand Crafting
56. Voodoo and Afro-Caribbean Paganism
57. Intuition in the Age of Information Overload
58. Perfection isn’t real, so where does that leave our perfect love and perfect trust?
59. Lady J Griot and Her Root Doctors
60. I’m not White- Can I do X tradition?
61. Dream Magick: Journey through the Nocturnal Underworld
62. Bright Hearth- Deep Well- Great Heart Ritual
63. Witch Blood, Watchers, and the Myth of Magickal Lineage
64. How to Not Suck at Art: Intentional Creativity as a Magical Practice
65. Intuitive Witchcraft
66. Rituals for Resistance: Magick for social Justice
67. The Pagan Way of Death
68. Archetypes: The Magician
69. Keepers of the Veil: Queer as Sacred and Reclaiming our Spiritual Heritage
70. The “Indians” of Old Europe
71. The Art of Sigil Witchery
72. Hermes’ Dilemma: Research on Modern Pagans and the Diversity of Perspectives
73. Ritual Facilitation with Shauna Aura Knight
74. Taking Your Spiritual Business Online
75. Discussing the Left-Hand Path
76. Celebrating and Honoring Ancestors, Community and Descendants
77. The Collective Path Labyrinth
78. Baneful Flower Essences and Plant Spirits
79. Alchemical Healing Through the Elements
80. Devotion and Druidry

81. A Queerness of Divinity
82. Tree ID for Ritual and Meditation
83. Devotional Deipnon for Hermes and Hekate
84. The Myth of Persephone
85. Creative Writing for Pagans: An Introduction
86. The Journey of the Little Red Riding Hood
87. The Ties that Bind: Loosening the Grip of Unhealthy Ancestral Roots
88. Nordic Roots: Movement and Dance
89. Braided Journeys
90. Herbal Cauldron Witchcraft
91. Liberation of Prometheus
92. Clear and Cleanse: Make Your Own Incense
93. Psychic Development: Learn Your Own Style
94. Do Conflict Better: Engaging with Conflict with a Trauma-Informed Lens
95. Lightening Your Heart: Offloading the Baggage that Weighs You Down
96. Khoomii? Yes, You Too Can Learn Throat Singing
97. Fundraising Toolbox for Pagans
98. The Morrigan: Celtic Goddess of Magic and Might
99. Magick, Poetry, Wisdom: A Journey into Power
100. Warrior Goddesses and Queens of Africa
101. Who's Got Two Thumbs and Can Talk to Spirits?
102. Cat Magic
103. In the Steps of Ancestors- The Way of Ifa/Orisha
104. Spell Casting Through Yoga
105. How to Form a Legal Non-Profit
106. Intentional Tarot
107. Self-Love Ritual with Aphrodite
108. In the Spirit of the Earth
109. Singing the Heart Song
110. Dinner with the Gods
111. From Christianity to Where?
112. Tarot Trio of Transformation
113. Palmistry Tarot Mashup: How to Read the Hands in the Cards
114. Voices of the Invisible Among Us
115. Finding the Kemetic: Gnosis of the Christ

APPENDIX 6

FULL EMAIL FROM ELYSIA GALLO, SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

Dear Bruce, I don't think I can give you the help you seek unless you can be completely honest with me about your goals. When we first spoke, I assumed you were attending a local university such as the University of Minnesota or some such institution. I wasn't aware of how deeply your conservative Christian roots inform and guide your academic studies. Now, I know you said on the phone that you just want to get to know Pagans, to hopefully write a book that can help bridge the gap between Pagans and Christians, perhaps by showing Christians that Pagans are not "all that bad." I even trust that you would be completely ethical with your contacts, rather than trying to profit monetarily off of them and betraying their confidence. However... I have to say that the number one reason evangelical Christians are interested in the Pagan movement (or other new religious movements) is to find a better way to convert them. Many books have been written from exactly that perspective. Here is an example of that type of writing – completely sympathetic, but indeed the main reason for befriending and acting very politely with these Pagans is to be able to witness to them: <http://www.christiananswers.net/evangelism/beliefs/wicca.html> To be sure, this is a fine ideal for Christians whose fundamental mission it is to spread the Word. I'm sure many Pagans and Wiccans are much more open to having a respectful conversation with people who've put effort into understanding their views than to being screamed at, preached at, or given cheap Chick tracts. However, there is still the fundamental disconnect: Christians believe that their religion is the best and only way to salvation, while Pagans don't believe we are in need of salvation. Christians (of this type) believe they can only better the world by insisting, no matter how politely, that everyone should just come around to their way of thinking. No matter how "nice" it is, this is still coercive behavior. What's more, it's abusive. Imagine living in a culture where there is one "right way" that you've been hearing about since childhood; you feel drawn to another way, but friends, family, even random strangers feel the need to constantly invade your space and try to influence your free will, by telling you you're wrong, mistaken, gaslight you basically about your own inner truth and experiences. This is abuse. It's similar to a totalitarian state, in which everyone is told there is one way to behave, to think, and those who simply can't get on board are constantly being pressured to be re-educated, corrected. It's quite frankly an obstruction of the human will and the human spirit. So why do I think you may be approaching your PhD dissertation with this goal of finding new ways to reach out to Pagans and Wiccans? (1) Your institutional affiliation. The goal of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is to spread the Word and evangelize to others, whether through pastors, missionaries, thinkers, writers, policy-makers, etc. I took a look at the page about your PhD in World Religions. Part of the description of one of the required courses clearly states that the objective of studying New Religious Movements is "To develop an understanding of the relationship of New Religious Movements with the Christian Mission and to *develop strategies for evangelistic encounter with persons involved in New Religious Movements.*" (Italics mine.) It is also part of the Billy Graham School, which requires no further comment. (2) Your previous writings. While not speaking about Pagans, you did write about

homosexuals with a very strong evangelical message – again, befriending, respecting, and being gentle with the persons, but always with the ultimate goal of gaining a convert who will feel horrible about themselves and seek redemption. “The goal is to win people, not arguments. Rather than focusing on homosexuality, focus on their general need to repent for sins and trust Jesus as Savior.” I have countless gay, bi, lesbian, and trans friends and I have seen the damage inflicted on their lives from childhood to adulthood that directly stems from these teachings. The enemy of my friend is not necessarily my enemy, but I do have a strong moral conviction to stand up for them and their absolute rights to be who they are without the shame imposed by one certain religious path. There have been many different cultural responses to homosexuality across the millennia, some more positive, some more negative, but I believe these are all relative and not absolute. Telling someone that who they are is a sin is not “respectful” nor does it engender dialogue. (3) In that same post, you mention that being a witch was also a sin punishable by death in the OT. Again, this statement requires no further comment. But I do wonder why a person like you would then be interested in befriending witches, unless your ultimate goal was conversion. I can’t and don’t want to stop you from learning about Paganism—but I don’t see a strong chance for collaboration if my suspicions are correct. As Cheryl told you, I’m very busy with my own wonderful authors and their books, and I don’t have resources to help an outside project that is antithetical to what Llewellyn stands for, and whose final purpose may be one I deeply oppose. That said, it would be great if you did approach the community with a sincere desire to learn—but not to convert, not to evangelize, and not to pass on “helpful hints” to others who seek to gain more converts. As a famous musician once sang, “But if your faith needs to conquer the world; If your God needs more converts; If you've been told there'll be no peace on Earth, As long as there are unbelievers; That's not religion. It's politics.” . . . Here are three last resources I can point you towards: Jesus through Pagan Eyes – a book that we did publish because it was quite clear about looking for mutual understanding and conversation, not conversion. <https://www.amazon.com/Jesus-Through-Pagan-Eyes-Perspectives-ebook/dp/B0081JFG9C> It was very well received in trade publications and even Amazon reviews, but was not a huge financial success because it served a very niche market. Eye of Horus and Magus Books and Herbs are two local metaphysical stores that constantly offer classes and workshops. If you want to meet others in a public, non-coven atmosphere, as well as learning about beliefs and practices, they offer full calendars of events, some of which are even free. http://www.magusbooks.com/calendar_page.asp <https://www.eyeofhorus.biz/Calendar/> These are both extremely reputable places with good, solid teachers – I wouldn’t send you to charlatans, don’t worry. The Parliament of World Religions <https://parliamentofreligions.org/parliament/2018-toronto/toronto-2018>. This is an amazing, outstanding organization, I just can’t say enough good things about them. It truly is about interfaith works, involving people coming together, learning about and from each other’s religions, and tackling some of the planet’s toughest issues, including climate change, the empowerment of women, poverty, sustainability, etc. In other words, it’s a gathering of spiritual professionals coming to work on solutions to huge issues and bring the message back to their congregations. It is not about one person trying to convince another that they are right or wrong. So if you are truly coming to this work in that spirit, there is nothing better you could do than attend. It has taken place all over the world, including Barcelona, South Africa, Australia, etc. but the 2018 Parliament will take place relatively nearby, in Toronto Canada. There is always a very strong Pagan delegation there, whose lectures, rituals, and workshops you could attend, and with whom you could collaborate in good faith. These are people absolutely dedicated to interfaith dialogue, which is why it would

be such a great place to start. I wish you the best of luck on your path, and all good things. Best,
Elysia

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ABSTRACT

DEFINING TWIN CITIES WICCA: THE EMERGENCE OF WICCA AS A POLYAFFILIATED PAGAN MOVEMENT

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An exploration of the literature associated with Wicca and Paganism. Bibliographies and narratives are studied to determine the most influential authors and practitioners in the Wiccan and Pagan tradition. The history of Wicca from England to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, the focus of this study, is outlined. Building on Murphy Pizza's ethnographical research of Wicca in Paganistan (the Twin Cities), I confirmed Pizza's hypothesis of Paganistan Wiccans polyaffiliating with a variety of Pagan traditions. Eight factors contributing to the erosion of Gardnerian Wicca are introduced, and recent trends of Wiccans polyaffiliating are detailed. Rodney Stark's theoretical model for predicting the future success or failure of a new religious movement is utilized to forecast Wicca and Paganism in the Twin Cities. Challenges for Christians evangelizing Wiccans and Pagans are discussed, and nine perspectives are offered for Christians seeking to engage Wiccans and Pagans with the gospel. Avenues for further research into Wicca and Paganism are suggested.

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