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## NewsNote: Paganism “Just Another Religion?”

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Samuel G. Freedman of *The New York Times* took a look at the resurgence of pagan religions and practices in postmodern America. He found Michael York, a serious-minded pagan who observes Samhain, “the autumnal new year for Pagans,” and the historic precursor to the modern holiday of Halloween. Reading the names of his ancestors while facing a pagan altar, Mr. York remarks that, on Samhain, “the veil between the worlds is understood to be thinnest.”



Freedman also found the Rev. Selena Fox, senior minister and high priestess of Circle Sanctuary, a Wiccan church in Barneveld, Wisconsin. Rev. Fox won a major legal battle when the Department of Veterans Affairs agreed to allow the Wiccan pentacle on the gravestones of dead Wiccan soldiers. “Our symbol was literally being carved in stone and taking its place alongside the symbols of other religions,” she said. “Our religion was at last getting equal treatment. It was one of those crossroads moments.”

The most significant feature of Samuel Freedman’s report is his recognition of how ancient paganism experienced a resurgence in postmodern America — now claiming as many as 500,000 to 1 million adherents of one sort or another:

*In several ways, though, Paganism was waiting for modernity to catch up with it. The emphasis on the worship of nature in virtually all variations of Pagan faith, and the embrace of a female divinity in many, situated the religion to mesh with the environmental and feminist movements that swept through the United States in the 1970s.*

Exactly. The resurgence of paganism in our times is not the recovery of ancient traditions simply reasserted in a new age, but a selective New Age embrace of pagan symbols, themes, and practices in order to add “spirituality” to ideological movements such as feminism and the radical ecologists. The gynecological and pantheistic focus of ancient paganism is exactly what Judaism and Christianity rejected in full — and the embrace of these ancient heresies is further evidence of the widespread rejection of Christianity.

“From academia to the military, in the person of chaplains and professors, through successful litigation and online networking, Paganism has done much in the last generation to overcome its perception as either Satanism or silliness,” Samuel G. Freedman writes. Well, whatever you want to call it, the resurgence of paganism is a keen reminder that old heresies never die; they just fade away only to return once again.

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See, “Paganism, Just Another Religion for Military and Academia,” by Samuel G. Freedman, *The New York Times*, Saturday, October 31, 2009.

