



Black Serpent

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

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Black Serpent

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Autumn/Winter 2006

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From the Editor



Changes, Tolerance, Respect and Acceptance

This third issue of Black Serpent is actually the Autumn/Winter 2006 issue. We have decided that as of 2007, we're going bi-annually to free up the time of the DB Publishing staff for other projects. While you'll notice the change in the frequency of Black Serpent, hopefully you'll also see the quality of the magazine improving. You'll notice there is a large section on Rites and Celebration this time around since we're including four months worth. We are always seeking writers. Consider contributing your articles, fiction, and games.

With that out of the way, I want to tell you that in the last few months I've been contemplating the meaning of tolerance and acceptance and have come to conclude that many of us who practice Demonolatry, Theistic Satanism and other darker poly/pantheistic religions tend to want others to tolerate, respect and accept us and our beliefs, but some of us don't extend that same tolerance, respect, and acceptance to others within our own religions. This is our downfall and why we have no cohesive voice between us, nor a sense of community and friendship. While that community may never happen, we still can, individually, practice tolerance, respect for and acceptance of others' beliefs. Maybe if enough of us do this, in time, we will be able to build interfaith community within our own religions. It made me realize that I, too, can be intolerant. It's no secret that I have stood against reverse Christian Satanists in the past. But I've also recently realized that I have no right to not accept them as "true" Satanists. While I may not agree with their beliefs, they likely don't agree with mine either. To each of us, the other is wrong. But is that any reason to look down our noses at one another? My answer is decidedly, "No!" After all, we cannot condemn a man from drinking from the well that we drink from every morning.

Finally, I give you this issue of Black Serpent. This time around we have a wonderful article about people from numerous minority religions who came out with their beliefs. I am excited about this article because of its diversity in the people interviewed and the numerous faiths portrayed. We also have an article about group leadership from High Priest Delaney as well as information about Religious Freedom and why it's so important for Demonolators, Theistic Satanists, and others to care and get involved. We hope you enjoy this issue!

Adrianna, The Editor

<http://www.ofs-demonolatry.org>



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Rituals For the Seasons

Oleum and Incense of the Quarter: Leviathan

By J. Thorp

An oleum is a specialized oil made with herbs, flowers, roots, and resins that are used as offerings to the Demons/deities.

Incense is an herbal mixture that is used in ritual for a purpose, adoration/worship, or meditation. It is made of whole herbs, flowers, roots, and resins and is non-combustible.

Leviathan Oleum

Olive oil
Calamus root (course)
Frankincense resin
1 tsp Sea salt
1 tsp of rain/river/stream water

Leviathan Incense

Powdered Calamus root
Frankincense resin

Basic Rite To Leviathan

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The Alter must face the West most point of the ritual chamber. A candle is set at each elemental point. The elemental demons are invoked by use of the Enns with the dagger. Belial first and working clockwise leaving Leviathan for last. An incense of Calamus and Frankincense invokes atmosphere.

Light the candles from Belial to Leviathan. Then - Carrying a Chalice of water (with sea salt) in one hand and a dagger in the other (doesn't matter which) approach each point and kneel reciting the Enn for Leviathan and dip the dagger into the water and sprinkle it above each candle. Finally, invite the fifth element from the center of the ritual space.

Kneel at the altar in prayer: "We pray thee Leviathan, bestow upon us the strength of your design. Let the serpent wise deal death to the lies of our enemies. Allow our empathy to be our protection. Allow our anger to be swift with justice. Be present that our enemies will not conquer us. We are as the swift flowing tide ebbing to and fro. We humbly pay homage to thee in our offer of sea salt and water that you may know our respect for your vast strength. We offer requests of healing and emotional balance that we may employ your creation to do so. Hail Leviathan. Lord and Master of Water."

Then comes the typical ritual body in which requests of healing and emotional balance are burned within the alter or primary ritual space fire. (i.e. a bowl, incense burner, or bonfire.) Use the remaining water to put out the fire once the requests have been burnt. The ashes must be crushed to a fine

powder and later dispersed in running water (i.e. ocean, stream). Some sects choose to sing hymns and go into longer durations of prayer before the ritual closing.

The ritual is closed as thus: "Hail Leviathan. Lord and Master of Water. We thank thee for being present at our ritual. We bid you, go in peace."

Close the ritual as normal. If practicing solitary - change all "we" to "I" Also - the prayer can be done with a single candle if you lack the space, time, or supplies to do a drawn out ritual.

Oleum and Incense for Eurynomous

By J. Thorp

Eurynomous Oleum

Olive oil
Cumin seed
Poppy seed
Juniper Berry
Mandrake root
Hibiscus

Eurynomous Incense

Dittany of Crete
(Optional)
Balm of Gilead
Wormwood
Rose petals
Lavender
Lilac flowers or oil
White Willow Bark

Basic Rite To Eurynomous

This rite is from the book **Modern Demonolatry** by S. Connolly (©1999) and may not be reproduced in any form without prior written consent from the author. It has been reproduced here with permission.

This rite shall be done on the evening of October the 31st between the hours of 8pm and 2am November 1st. The person conducting the rite shall not eat or smoke or engage in sexual intercourse 12 hours minimum prior to the commencement of the rite.

This rite is particularly useful for cursing and banishing negativity. This is the prelude to the Rite of Belial which is the "New Beginning."

Use all black candles for elemental points. You may use a personal "power" candle of any color you choose on your alter if you choose. Place a chalice of sea salt mixed with water at each point (or water directly from the ocean). You may choose to have two chalices on the alter. One for the libation to Leviathan and one for the ceremonial drink/offering to the death demons. You should also place bowls of dirt on top of which charcoal should be placed for the ritual incense - at each of the elemental points and one on the alter for burning requests. Your alter should face either your elemental point or the North-West point of your circle.

***IMPORTANT NOTE - as you mix the salt and water with the dagger you must say the following for each chalice you mix - "Talot pasa oida Belial et Leviathan"

Invite the elemental demons as you normally would by employing their enns. Invite Satan from the center using the following enn: "Ave Satanis! Tasa reme laris Satan."

From the Northmost point you will invite both Baalberith and Eurynomous.

To invite Balberith employ the enn - "Avage secore on ca Baalberith."

To invite Eurynomous employ the enn - "Ayar secore on ca Eurynomous."

Then recite the prayer (or use one of your own if you prefer) -

"Into this circle I welcome death. Of Baalberith and Eurynomous come forth and be present. For this ritual is in your honor. This night you reign supreme. I pray you to assist me in my workings and to bless this rite."

Now is the time for either silent prayer or to make requests. On the black paper squares you write your request, one letter over another, focusing your energy on the square. Hold the square over the flame before burning and recite the appropriate verse depending on intention. For group Rites - each person writes and burns her own requests.

CURSING - "Blanae core sanada. Recta sabra naca Flereous."

DISPELLING NEGATIVITY - "Poco tasa helna rabac tasa. Recta sabra naca Flereous."

Burn all requests. The rite is then closed in the usual manner. The ashes of the requests and remaining wax is buried (within 24 hours) in the ground. As you are burying the remains of the ritual you must say: "Padar ast fo ehaoth pedar ganabel Berith."

Some people prefer to bury the requests in a graveyard. This is very symbolic not only from the cursing or death aspect, but also from the new beginnings aspect.

Oleum & Incense for Belial

By J. Thorp

Belial Oleum

Olive oil
Vetivert
Patchouli
Sandalwood
Cedar

Belial Incense

Vetivert
Patchouli
Sandalwood
Cedar
Mullein
Lemon Balm

Basic Rite To Belial

This rite is from the book **Modern Demonolatry** by S. Connolly (©1999) and may not be reproduced in any form without prior written consent from the author. It has been reproduced here with permission.

The Alter must face the North most point of the ritual chamber. A candle is set at each elemental point. The elemental demons are invoked by use of the Enns with the dagger. Lucifer first and working clockwise leaving Belial for last. An incense of patchouli and mullein invokes atmosphere.

Light the candles from Lucifer to Belial. Then - Carrying a bowl of sand in one hand and a dagger in the other (doesn't matter which) approach each point and kneel reciting the Enn for Belial and dip the dagger into the sand and sprinkle it at each point. (If you have carpet in your ritual chamber, place a bowl at each point and let the sand fall into each bowl) Finally, invite the fifth element from the center of the ritual space.

Kneel at the altar in prayer: "We pray thee Belial, bestow upon us the strength of your design. Give us the gift of stability. To start the new year free of past stalemates. Allow our thoughts

and actions to be our protection. Be present that we shall not falter in our decisions. We are as the stable earth. We humbly pay homage to thee in our offer of earth that you may know our respect for your vast strength. We offer requests of new beginnings, strength,

and mundane matters that we may employ your creation to do so. Hail Belial. Lord and Master of Earth."

Then comes the typical ritual body in which requests of new beginnings, strength, and mundane matters are burned within the alter or primary ritual space fire. (i.e. a bowl, incense burner, or bonfire.) Use the remaining sand to smother the fire once the requests have been burnt. The ashes must be crushed to a fine powder and later buried. Some sects choose to sing hymns and go into longer durations of prayer before the ritual closing.

The ritual is closed as thus: "Hail Belial. Lord and Master of Earth. We thank thee for being present at our ritual. We bid you, go in peace."

Close the ritual as normal. If practicing solitary - change all "we" to "I" Also - the prayer can be done with a single candle if you lack the space, time, or supplies to do a drawn out ritual.

Oleum & Incense for Lucifuge

By J. Thorp

Lucifuge Oleum

Olive oil
1 cup Black Olive
juice
1 tsp Alcohol (Vodka
or Everclear works
great)
Handful of Mandrake
(Poison!) You can
substitute Rue if you
prefer
Handful of Mullein

Lucifuge Incense

White Sage
Mullein
Pinch of Mandrake OR
Rue

Honoring Lucifuge

The Alter must face the East most point of the ritual chamber. A candle is set at each elemental point. The elemental demons are invoked by use of the Enns with the dagger. Lucifer first and working clockwise leaving Belial for last.

Light the candles from Lucifer to Belial. Then - Carrying a bowl of incense in one hand and a dagger in the other (doesn't matter which) approach each point and kneel reciting the Enn for Lucifuge. Finally, invite the fifth element, Satan, from the center of the ritual space.

Kneel at the altar in prayer: "We pray thee Lucifuge, bestow upon us the strength of your design. Give us the gift of strength and courage to defeat our enemies. Allow our thoughts and actions to result in victory. Be present that we shall not falter in our decisions. We are as warriors. We humbly pay homage to thee in our offerings that you may know our respect for your vast strength. We offer requests for victory and strength that we may employ your creation to do so. Hail Lucifuge. Lord and Master of War and Strength."

Then comes the typical ritual body in which requests of victory, strength, and wisdom are burned within the alter or primary ritual space fire. (i.e. a bowl, incense burner, or bonfire.) The ashes must be crushed to a fine powder and later buried. Some sects choose to sing hymns and go into longer durations of

prayer before the ritual closing.

The ritual is closed as thus: "Hail Lucifuge. Lord and Master of Victory. We thank thee for being present at our ritual. We bid you, go in peace."

Close the ritual as normal. If practicing solitary - change all "we" to "I" Also - the prayer can be done with a single candle if you lack the space, time, or supplies to do a drawn out ritual.



Recipes for the Celebration

An easy way to keep the celebration headache free is to delegate cooking responsibilities. Let people bring appetizers and desserts, and take care of the main course yourself. Of course getting the entire group involved in cooking (let everyone chop something up) can also be fun if you want to make a day of it. The following are simple ideas that even people who don't know how to cook can help with. With Autumn and Winter rites, comfort food is always a good choice. However, the following recipes might make things more interesting.



Appetizers

Stuffed Mushrooms

20 Large Mushrooms
Cream Cheese (or other cheese of choice)
Bacon Bits or ½ pound Ground Beef

Clean and remove the stems of the mushrooms. Place the mushrooms on a baking sheet. Mix together meat and cheese in a bowl. Fill each mushroom with some of the mixture. Bake at 325 until the cheese is melted and a light crust is formed. Let stand for 10 minutes, serve.



Main Course

Beef Roast

- One Beef Pot Roast
- 1 Packet of Lawry's Beef Stew Mix
- One bag pre-cleaned baby carrots
- 3 – 4 stalks of celery
- 4 Large Potatoes
- 1 Large Onion

Mix 3 cups of water with the beef stew mix. Place the roast in a slow cooker. Add the water and seasoning mixture. Cook on high for three hours. Add raw, chopped vegetables. Cook on high for 3 more hours. Serve.



Dessert

Easy Apple Pie

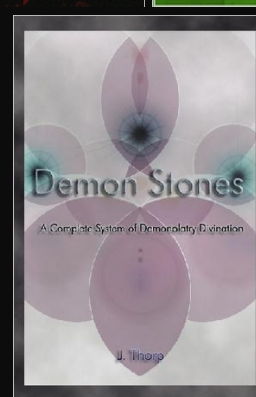
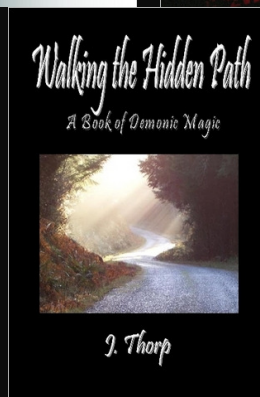
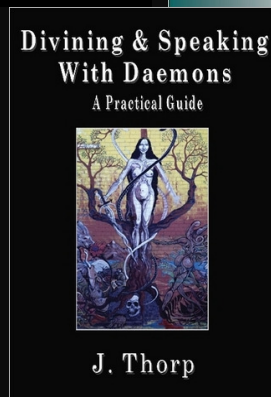
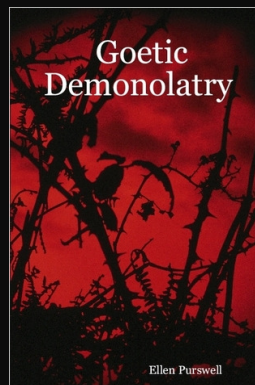
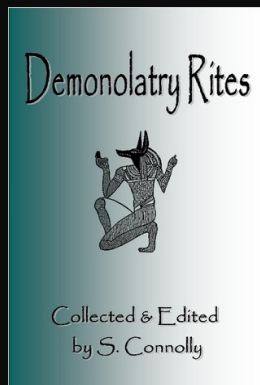
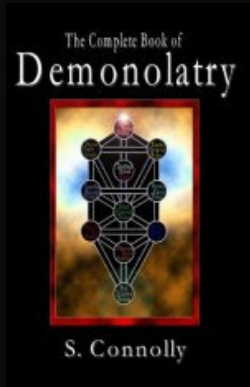
- 8 medium apples
- 1 T. butter
- 1 C. white sugar
- ½ C. culinary rose water
- grated nutmeg
- ½ C. butter
- 2 C. flour
- pinch salt
- cold water

Make your dough for this apple pie as follows: Rub butter into flour, add salt and mix in enough cold water to make a nice dough. Roll out enough dough to line a deep pie dish. Line dish with the dough and fill with apple mixture. Core apples, chop and stew til softened, about 15 minutes. Add butter, sugar, rose water and nutmeg - mix well. When you have poured this apple mixture into the pie dough, top with another layer of dough for the top - pierce a couple of knife holes in top. Glaze with beaten egg and bake for 30 minutes in moderate oven.

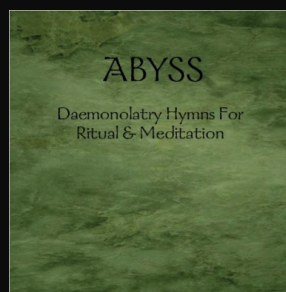
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Coming Out With Your Beliefs

By Ly Sabella



Religion. A touchy word in today's society, and more so in recent years. For there are more than a few people wondering just why it is that there seem, suddenly, so many devoutly religious Christians preaching end of days, and even children being targeted for preaching when purchasing a copy of 'Harry Potter' or going to see the movie.

In fact, many people will remember the famous 'Harry Potter book burning' in New Mexico that occurred in 2001. It is the viewpoint of Christian extremists that Harry Potter is 'evil' and leading young people into witchcraft, which is another story, but the strong point here is that it is considered such a bad, dreadful, horrible thing to be involved in an alternative religion like witchcraft, or any religion other than Christianity. Bad enough that a children's book is targeted in such a manner but even harder to swallow in a way is that the only way some Christians will accept Harry Potter is to consider that it teaches a Christian message. Because they cannot see that things like witchcraft and the occult are anything but evil. That the only way something is, or can be, good is if it pertains to Christianity or the Christian god.

And so we reach the point of my ramblings. In such a society where religions or beliefs that differ from the norm (usually Christianity) how then can one come out and announce they do, indeed, have such a belief that differs, and announce it openly, and get people to understand that neither their belief nor the ideas behind it are evil?

Here I will tell my own story, and the stories of others who have been through this exact thing. And it is my no means exclusive to people like Daemonolators and Satanists who experience poor treatment in general, being shunned, feared, and even having threats of violence made against them. Sometimes those threats are carried out. It is anyone who believes anything 'different'. Wiccans, Pagans, Agnostics, Buddhists, Hindu, Atheists etc and the list goes on. Anyone who is 'different'. Thus is it understandable that some people may wish to hide their beliefs, to never come out of the 'beliefs closet', and just mutter an evasive response when queried about beliefs or practices.

Society as a whole needs to learn to become more accepting, because, whether they like it or not, we're here and the plan is to stick around.

Society as a whole needs to learn to become more accepting, because, whether they like it or not, we're here and the plan is to stick around. So as hard as it is, it will make things easier for us if we approach this challenge head-on, and move to increase others' awareness and understanding of us, our beliefs and our practices, and encourage others of alternate faiths to do the same where possible.

A good example of getting past religious intolerance is to discourage as much as possible the pushing of certain views onto people as young as possible. The ACLU has recently been victorious over the push to bring intelligent design, which is in a nutshell creationism disguised as science, out of schools.

The following story from <http://www.aclu.org> details this:

Victory in the Challenge to Intelligent Design

"Intelligent Design" is a religious view, not a scientific theory, according to U.S. District Judge John E. Jones III in his historic decision in *Kitzmiller v. Dover*. The decision is a victory not only for the ACLU, who led the legal challenge, but for all who believe it is inappropriate, and unconstitutional, to advance a particular religious belief at the expense of our children's education.

The lawsuit was brought by the parents who objected to the decision by the school board in Dover, Pennsylvania to promote the teaching of intelligent design in their children's public school science classes.

Intelligent design, which cannot be tested by any scientific method, is a belief that asserts that a supernatural entity designed some complex organisms. Witnesses have demonstrated that such an assertion is inherently a religious argument that falls outside the realm of science.

As a longtime defender of religious liberty, the ACLU is leading the legal challenge against the activists and political lobbyists who are attempting to insert their personal religious beliefs into science education, as if it were science." (From the ACLU Website)

It is, of course, behavior like attempting to bring 'intelligent design', or to see it as it truly is, biblical creationism disguised as science which attempts to brainwash a young society into accepting mainly the one belief, Christianity, by teaching it alongside evolution as 'science'.

This, however, is a prime example of what we should all try to discourage. For if one religious theory of creation is allowed into a classroom, why none of the others? Why one and not the other?

The answer is simple, because of a society dominated by the one belief, a belief that teaches that all others are wrong.

As the ACLU is doing, efforts should be made by all of us who believe 'something else', to show, to educate people that there is no reason to shun us, to fear us, as this is typically done for all the wrong reasons.

A great deal of the problem for Demonolators and Satanists is that, as S. Connolly, author of the major Demonolatry titles has said, "We tend to be lumped in with those people who practice 'reverse Christian devil-worship', when a good number of us do not believe in any of the Christian mythos."

I have found myself that people are far more accepting once they realize that no, I don't want to eat their babies or skin their cats. And yes, folks, there really are people stupid enough to believe that.

Helping bring people like ourselves into the light, will truly help our cause. Showing people that we aren't to be feared or hated, but that we are normal people with normal lives, we have ordinary jobs and problems just like everyone else, and we do not seek to curse them if they should merely rub us the wrong way.

This is the problem with 'coming out of the religious closet', that with society the way it is, some people stand to lose so much. Their jobs. Custody fights. Even being disowned by people who are close to them. And so the list goes on.



My Story

This is a bit about my personal journey in terms of beliefs, but a bit more on people's reactions to those different stages.

I grew up in a catholic family and my parents of course saw it as their obligation to raise me thus. My mother in particular was not, and is not, tolerant towards others who hold alternate beliefs.

I had to go through the whole process, confirmation, communion, confession, everything. But, while I paid lip service, my mind would not, could not, blindly accept the teaching of this cold and distant god, nor the fact that the church seemed only to look at certain parts of the bible and skim through all the rest.

Though my mother was/is intolerant, I never shared this intolerance, though I did at first have a fear of things like witchcraft and the Pagan deities. I was never the kind to pray to the Christian god to save me from those 'oh so evil' deities, but I had a bit of a fear of them, and those who practiced occult or pagan ways.

At the age of about 10, I came to the realization that I neither believed in the Christian god nor in the Jesus they presented, nor in the bible. I viewed it much the same way as I did 'Aesop's Fables'.

Although at this stage, I did not know what my beliefs actually were, so I called myself an atheist, though in truth at that time, at that age, I was more Agnostic. I knew there was more than just this world, but I did not, at that stage, as a rather ignorant young girl, know what it was.

I was not shy about announcing my lack of belief in the Christian god either. I very firmly told my parents that I was 'an atheist' and that I did not believe in their god. My mother, of course, took this the hardest, and would not accept it or admit it. In her mind, I was baptized catholic therefore I was.

She would not get it through her head that one must believe in a religion in order to be classified as thus.

For awhile, I kept on in my atheist/agnostic mindset. However I did soon realize that whatever else I was, I was no atheist. Before I was a teenager, before I was even 12, is when I began to experience the spiritual.

I first started noting symbols and seemingly ordinary things that seemed somehow of significance, things that I can identify now as symbols connected to the Daemons I most work with.

Then it became more that that. To put it simply, the Daemons that I work with came into, and became a part of my life.

I did not know a name or title for what I believed, so I didn't choose any title. I did for a time dabble in Wicca but found that I was in no way Wiccan. I did not hold to the ideas and beliefs practiced, nor did I believe in or pray to a Wiccan Goddess. In short, I tried to balance Wiccan practices with the fact that I believed in, prayed to, and worked with Daemons.

Years later, after finally sifting through what I did and did not believe, I came to call myself Pagan/Luciferian and now, later still, Daemonolatress. I still use all three titles.

When I was in early years of high school I was sent, of course, to a catholic high school by my mother. I did not like it, nor the forced religion classes, nor the prayers said at certain times of day I had to endure, and the celebration of catholic 'holy days' masses etc. Not to mention I resented them putting oil on my forehead what with my acne at the time but that's another story!

I endured this but I did not like it, nor did I believe it.

I was always somewhat of an outcast there, and at one point one of my nastier classmates asked me where I wanted to go when I died, whether to heaven or hell. I replied quite frankly that I did not believe in either alternative.

From that point, the heckling began.

I was called some unbelievable names, devil, demon, evil, and the like. It went so far as people flashing crosses at me, and though I never knew how serious they were at the time, I did hear from others that I was thought and rumored to be really evil, to the point where new people who arrived were warned to stay away from me.

All of this because I had stated that I did not believe in their god, Jesus, the Christian devil, or heaven and hell. At the time I still labeled myself as atheist, though I wasn't. I was still, at that point, agnostic about titles anyway.

This nightmarish experience, though in part due to how cruel kids and teenagers can be, did not do much to help me, nor help me in becoming more secure in stating my beliefs.

Moving on from there I found people more accepting, though by this stage I did decide to censor some of the things I said. I was still labeled as 'weird and a witch' by some, though not anything nearly as offensive as previous experience.

Probably the hardest thing while discovering my own beliefs was a lack of support from those closest to me.

My mother could never accept my decision to leave the catholic belief, which, to be truthful, I had never really followed in the first place, although it was not easy for her to hear straight out that I was not, and never could be catholic. It was only in the past year that I have managed to tell her about what it is that I really do believe, and it has been a bit of an uphill struggle.

Most of my friends know what I believe, and they do not have an issue with it. I am fortunate enough to live in a society where religious freedom is fairly prevalent, but there is still, of course, intolerance.

I have been fortunate enough to not have encountered too much negativity in the wake of my beliefs in my adult life, however there have been instances.

One instance was a job interview. I was ideal for the part. I had all the experience they were looking for and then some. But, I wore an inverted pentacle necklace prominently to the interview, at the time thinking little of it except to notice the interviewers staring at it at certain times. [throughout the interview?]

I did not get the part, and the reason they claimed was 'not enough experience'. Needless to say the recruitment agent was stunned and questioned them about their decision, but they refused to reveal more.

And then there was another instance of a previous job I'd taken, where, due to my wearing jewelry like an inverted pentacle, nothing was said to my face, but I was, however, pointed at and whispered about, and when I had left that job someone there admitted to me that the staff had not been comfortable with my being there.

Thus, it has come to the sad state that nowadays any symbolic jewelry I wear is usually tucked neatly under a shirt, at least in the cases of symbols that are widely known and misunderstood. Though I do not wear much jewelry, I believe it would be nice to be able to wear a pentacle, and not have a bad reaction to it, the same as no one will look twice at someone who is wearing a crucifix.

This is, a bit of background on myself, and what it was like for me coming out as someone who has what is considered to have 'darker' beliefs. I'm still working on it, and I think that society has a lot to work on yet. So for those that are still nervous about 'making the announcement', don't think that you're alone.

All of us who've 'come out' have generally had a pretty rocky road to go down, and for a lot of us that road remains rocky.

Here I have presented a list of questions that I've asked others I know who hold what are considered to be alternative beliefs, to answer. And below, I have included their answers, their stories, told in their own words, as an example to share what the journey has been like for others.

First of all, here is the list of the questions I've asked people who have chosen to participate:

1. What are your personal beliefs (or lack thereof)?
2. How long have you held these beliefs?
3. When growing up, what were the beliefs of your family? Were these beliefs taught to you, and were you encouraged to follow them?
4. How tolerant were your family, growing up, of alternative beliefs to theirs? At the time, if you believed the same thing, how tolerant were you?
5. What events, circumstances etc contributed to your current beliefs if different to the ones you grew up with?
6. Are your friends/family aware of your beliefs? What are their own beliefs? At what point did you tell them, if you've told them? What were their reactions and were there any unpleasant results?
7. If you haven't told your family/friends, is it because you're afraid of their reactions? How do you think they would react? How do you hope they would react?
8. Do you work in an environment where people are religious?
9. Are the people you work with aware of your beliefs? Would you tell them? Why/why not.
10. What would you recommend to someone else who is looking to tell friends/family etc about their beliefs?

11. Do you think any steps should be taken by society in general in accepting beliefs other than the mainstream, to improve knowledge, tolerance, and minimize ignorant reactions?

S. Connolly's story:

S. Connolly is a traditional Demonolatress, and has held these beliefs for about 17 years now. Growing up, she was raised Jack Christian/Jack Catholic. She and her sister went to vacation bible school at their aunt's insistence that they get some sort of religious education. But their parents never forced religion down their throats. Going to church was something done to 'keep everyone else off your ass'.

In terms of her family's tolerance, her parents were freaked out by other-than-Christian religions. But mostly because they'd had it beaten into their heads that all other-than-Christian religion was satanic and only murderers, rapists, and evil people practiced other religions.

Events, circumstances etc that contributed to Ms Connolly's current beliefs were some childhood experiences with Daemons, a prayer to Satan that was answered, supernatural events, and all the intolerance and BS of Christianity "Which I saw right through from an early age," she told me.



Ms Connolly's family is aware of her beliefs. Everyone in her immediate family knows except her dad (he thinks she's either Jewish or Wiccan,) and both grandmothers. Some of her cousins and extended family know, others don't, all of her friends know. Her mom was uncomfortable with her beliefs for the first few years, but now that she better understands what her daughter believes, it doesn't freak her out as much. She really wigged out at first and feared for her daughter's immortal soul, as is a sadly typical reaction. Ms. Connolly stated that the only unpleasant result was having to deal with her mother's freak-out. Her friends all know, but it does not seem that any of them really care. Ms Connolly's closest friends are

Demonolators themselves, and her husband was made aware of her beliefs before they even moved in together. He loves telling jokes about the dead babies under the stairs and goats in the backyard to freak out his Catholic sister. He's an Atheist/recovering Catholic.

As for the people who Ms Connolly has not told about her beliefs, it is because some family members have not earned the right to know her business because she knows they'd behave very badly if they knew, and she is not close to the people who would behave the worst. She said that if they ever did find out, the typical 'exorcist' reaction would very probably be in her future.

She does not have to work in a religious environment; however she has had to deal with religious co-workers filled with the love of Jesus. Some of her coworkers are aware of her beliefs, others aren't. She does not make it a point to bring her religion into her job as she believes it has no place there.

In a recommendation to others looking to tell friends/family etc about their beliefs, she would recommend the following:

"First - whether or not you "come out" depends on what you have to lose. I think all Demonolators and Theistic Satanists should seriously consider this. Some people have more to lose than others by coming out of the closet. Some people stand to lose their jobs, custody of their children, standing within their community, home, help with college tuition, and so forth. I also recommend that if you're going to come out - do it by first explaining your beliefs without using the words "Satan" or "Daemons" or any Demonic name. Serious. Let them get used to your beliefs without the mention of Satan or Demons being involved. Then, once they seem comfortable with that, introduce Satan and Demons. Before you tell the super religious folks, tell your more open-minded friends. That way you have a support system to fall back on when the religious folks smite you. And you should use good judgment in whom to tell. If religion never comes up between you and a specific person - then why tell that person?"

And finally, her thoughts on what, if any steps should be taken by society in general in accepting beliefs other than the mainstream, to improve knowledge, tolerance, and minimize ignorant reactions, are the following:

"I think society, in general, needs to pull its pompous, self-righteous head out of its ass and all individuals need to be taught to get over themselves already. The reason we have such ignorance and intolerance is first - the biggest groups that people seem to think represent all of us, are out there preaching racism and reverse Christianity. And while I understand that some people are reverse Christian Satanists and I'm cool with that - I'm not cool with being lumped in with those people because I don't believe in Christian mythology at all.

Second, I think the media feeds the stereotypes with movies like The Covenant, The Craft, Satan's Cheerleaders, Brotherhood of Satan, etc.... Plus, the only time Satanists (theistic or other) get any press is when some murderer or criminal claims to be one.

Lastly, I think our current self-absorbed, possession-absorbed, I-make-more-money-than-you, keeping up appearances, Christian dominated society has bred a bunch of selfish, self-righteous people who were brought up to believe their way is the only way. And when they don't get their way, they throw a fit and cry that they're being persecuted because they learned that's how you get your way in this world (because mom and dad didn't want to deal with a tantrum). So - I'm not sure what the answer is. I guess educating the public. I've met far more people who are tolerant toward my religion rather than those who aren't though. So I think we live in a world that is changing. It's slow, but in the long run, maybe freedom of religion will really mean freedom of any religion."

It is not only people of religions considered darker who have a hard time of things. It is also those who merely disbelieve the Christian religion, or those who have merely a non-conventional belief. Below I have included the stories of some such people.

Glenn's story:

Glenn calls himself a highly curious, somewhat naive, very trusting individual who also happens to be skeptical as well. It's a weird combo, but it works for him. He does not believe



in God (God of the Bible, Judaism, Islam, etc.). He also does not believe in a paranormal God that interacts with humans in any way. He does not really believe necessarily that a higher being created the universe we inhabit, simply because it's just as feasible that the universe popped into existence as it is to say it was created by something all-powerful.

He has held these beliefs off and on his whole life. He was skeptical about some or most of the things regarding religion as a child, but didn't question his Catholic upbringing too much until college.

Growing up, Glenn's Mom was Roman Catholic. His Dad was a non-committal Catholic, having been raised Baptist in the Southern US. He didn't really seem to believe in God, although he never came out and said it. His mom was very liberal in her beliefs and they were only made to go to church for a little while growing up.

His Mom was very tolerant of other beliefs, and so was his dad, although he didn't say much. Glenn was wide open to anything that sounded good at the time!

Events, circumstances etc that contributed to Glenn's current beliefs were a long period of trying to find some religious beliefs that suited him. He tried the Catholic faith, non-denominational protestant, Southern Baptist, Independent Baptist, and Methodist. In the long run, as he learned more and more about the Bible, he just realized that it was all, to him, bullshit. The stories were just stories. There was no real Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, flood, etc. So if he couldn't believe some of the Bible, why should he believe any of it when people were telling him it was the infallible, inspired word of God?

The more he questioned, the more he found out it was just wrong. Full of contradictions and errors. "It didn't accurately give the answers to who we are, where we came from, where we're going, why we're here, etc...", he said. But science always led him further in the right direction, and accurately described the world and universe around him, so he kept pushing towards a more rational outlook on life.

Glenn's family is vaguely aware that he doesn't believe the same thing. They're all still RC. He has not outright told anyone in his family that he doesn't believe in God. Many of his friends know though.

However, about 12 years ago, his family had a falling out with the Baptist church they attended. He was a Sunday school teacher for high school kids and the pastor wanted him to teach Creationism. He said he'd study it first. When he studied it, he realized it was wrong. "It was full of outright lies," he said. He refused to teach it. They were ostracized and left the church, eventually moving away and rejoining a Catholic church where they now live.

They lost most of their friends from that town.

Glenn's wife knows he is not a big believer in faith anyway, but he is not comfortable going around saying he is an atheist (He doesn't use that term title anyway...He just says non-believer). He does not wish to say anything until his kids are all of an age to make good choices in that regard. They know he's a scientist in the way he thinks and he teaches them to question everything. "So they'll figure it out pretty quick," he said.

He hopes people react well to it obviously. If he's ever asked outright, he will tell people he doesn't really believe, but no one's ever asked. Yet.

Glenn works in a nominally religious environment. Some moreso than others. He works in a field where people pray a lot for healing, but with various background beliefs.

The people he works with are not aware of his beliefs in so far that he's aware of. He wouldn't tell them because it doesn't affect his work and is none of their business.

As a recommendation to others looking to tell friends/family etc about their beliefs, his advice is the following:

First, be honest with yourself. Then play it by ear with your family. Try to be honest, but be sensitive to the affect it will have on the lives of those around you.



Destiny's' story

Destiny is Agnostic, atheistic leanings, secular humanist, and not a total skeptic. The easiest answer is ex-Christian with no plans to have any religious affiliation again.

She has held these beliefs for approximately 2 years.

When she was growing up, Destiny was raised Christian. Direct teaching came through Sunday school and church attendance. Indirect teaching came through her observation and interaction with people in her life.

Growing up, Destiny never noticed intolerance to alternative beliefs. Personally she didn't remember intolerance creeping into her conscious awareness until she became born-again at the age of 14. That's when she became intolerant.

Events and circumstances that contributed to Destiny's current beliefs are as follows: After an 8 year stint in a very legalistic conservative evangelical fundamentalist church that was rife with spiritual abuse (read *The Subtle Power of Spiritual Abuse* by Jeff VanVonderen & David Johnson as a good example) and leaving that environment feeling like she'd been raped, she began a 10 year study of spiritual abuse trying to heal from the damage done to her entire being. In the process of reading what were to her very helpful books, she noticed that all of them written by Christians still varied in their individual denominational doctrines yet each claimed "absolute truth." This ignited her query into the variations within Christianity. It didn't take much to light this fuse because she had been a reader of Christian apologists being somewhat of an amateur apologist herself and she was always troubled by the obvious contradictions and disagreements amongst the Christian apologists. Where was the Christian unity? If God was the same yesterday, today & tomorrow, why wasn't it obvious in His one true religion, Christianity? A site by the name of The Jesus Puzzle, by Earl Doherty allowed her to start exploring the idea that Jesus never existed at all and this opened up the whole can of worms and that was the beginning of her slippery slide out of Christianity.

Destiny's friends and family are aware of her beliefs. Her friends are Evangelical Christians, extended family mostly Christian, and liberal Christians. Her Immediate family (spouse & children) all eventually left the church a few years after she did, clearly seeing the abuses and no longer willing to avail themselves of getting spiritually beat up on a regular basis.

Evangelical friends see her still as a Christian, in fact more so now then before. One friend said she gave her a lot to think about. Another friend just thinks Destiny's having a bit of a hiccup with 'herself' and God.' She lost most of her family's friends when they left the church, so of the few that remain they have been pretty good at letting her be herself.

"Extended family doesn't really say much. A little surprised but on the whole accepting," she said.

She says her immediate family is very accepting and listens intently. When she told her husband he told her he loved her no matter what she believes. Her adult children would no longer

consider themselves evangelical Christians. She is not sure where they'll end up on the belief/non-belief scale, the decision is of course in their hands.

Destiny does not work outside the home now but when she did there were religious people she worked with. There are lots of Christians in her area.

If Destiny still worked outside the home, she would tell people of her beliefs because she's a relationship orientated person and very verbal. It would just surface as it does now for her in general relationship conversation.

As a recommendation to someone else who is looking to tell friends/family etc about their beliefs, her advice is the following:

"Depends on their age & circumstances. I'd recommend that one be respectful and not do so out of rebellion against the parents and/or friends. Get comfortable with your new belief and/or non-belief in your own skin first. Remember, you were once in their skin and remember how you'd react if you were in their shoes.

Don't panic if they reject you (easier said than done I'm sure.) This would not be easy for a teenager still in the home so it might be in their best interest to ride it out until they are independently on their own before telling their family. There are all kinds of nasty things that can happen to children still under strict religious parents and community. You may have to gage just how much you want to reveal in situations that may be unsafe."

With regards to steps that could be taken by society in general in accepting beliefs other than the mainstream, to improve knowledge, tolerance, and minimize ignorant reactions, her thoughts are the following:

"Society in general can't do that until the individual does it themselves. Individuals chip away at the exterior and hopefully they penetrate the collective consciousness. Thing is I don't see it ever happening because the collective consciousness keeps affecting the individual."

Kat's story:

Kat is an Agnostic. Her beliefs are that anything is possible with proof. She has held these beliefs about a year or so.

When Kat was growing up, she was raised Pentecostal. It was never beat into her head or forced, really. She was never encouraged to follow the full beliefs of her religion, as her mother didn't agree with all of them.

Growing up, her family was very intolerant, as was she. She couldn't see any other religion as the right one. They were all going to Hell. If someone was Catholic that automatically meant that they were alcoholic Mary worshippers. If someone was Mormon that automatically meant they were too strict and weird.

Events, circumstances etc... that contributed to her current beliefs are the people she formed friendships with on the internet who began to teach her about the real meaning of the Bible. She did some research and found that they were right. She realized that she could think for herself.

Kat's friends and family are aware of her beliefs. Her family are all Christians. She has let hints drop here and there, and they weren't happy. She is preached to, felt sorry for, and argued with.

Kat has not experienced religiousness in the workplace, as her last boss was an Atheist. Her past workmates knew of her belief. In the future, if the conversation came up, she would have no qualms about stating her beliefs.



As a recommendation to someone else who is looking to tell friends/family etc about their beliefs, her advice is the following:

“Stand your ground, and be prepared for lectures and tears. Do not let someone make you feel guilty for having a mind of your own.”

With regards to steps that could be taken by society in general in accepting beliefs other than the mainstream, to improve knowledge, tolerance, and minimize ignorant reactions, her thoughts are as follows:

“Sadly, society, as a whole, will never be accepting. Steps have already been taken regarding homosexuals. Society will never accept them, just as society will never accept anyone who does not hold the Christian belief. This is life and we must accept it.”



Clint's story

Clint believes that individuals who defy what is considered acceptable (religion, philosophy, personal values, etc) to mainstream society and even non-mainstream groups have the potential to evolve into greater beings who can cause significant change in their world. He does not hold any one fixed religious belief.

His beliefs started to form when he was only 13 but at 15 it became what he has firmly believed in ever since.

Growing up, Clint was raised Protestant and his father is a Calvinist. The beliefs were taught to him but never really encouraged because his parents believe a person can only be a Christian if elected by the Abrahamic deity.

His parents have never had a problem with the beliefs of other people, but when it came to Muslims they were, and remain ardently intolerant.

Events, circumstances etc that contributed to Clint's current beliefs are as follows: The ideas of revolution and individualism are half of what influenced his beliefs. Hearing fundamental Christians speak for organizations like the Christian Coalition triggered his beliefs to grow. There was an evangelist in his life who wanted him to stop listening to his favorite artists and to dress differently. That man was like a spark of electricity that made the whole lamp of his beliefs shine brightly inside him.

Clint's friends and family are aware of his beliefs and they have no problem them. They may disagree but they respect his right, or rather his own authority, to believe whatever he chooses. He has never directly told anyone about his beliefs but rather they got the general idea on different occasions in conversations.

Clint works for a woman who is openly Christian, and displays some books that a Christian would typically have (e.g. Holy Bible, study bible, and something about God) but so far no communication about religion has come up for him.

As a recommendation to someone else who is looking to tell friends/family etc about their beliefs, his advice is the following: “If you feel you may lose something you absolutely need like shelter or food over telling your beliefs by your own free will, then don't.”

With regards to steps that could be taken by society in general in accepting beliefs other than the mainstream, to improve knowledge, tolerance, and minimize ignorant reactions, his thoughts are as follows: “This can be done but it would work best if organizations spoke up in

the media. Pointing out the follies of what they want to overcome is just one thing to be done from there.”

Chi's' story

Chi believes that spirituality lives within us. He has held these beliefs around 4 years.

When growing up, he was taught that the son of God died on the cross for us and he will come again to judge who gets into heaven. It was taught to him that it was important to live a sin free life.

His family was governed by their church, there was no tolerance for other beliefs, and theirs was considered the one true religion. At the time, he obeyed his parents/church, and shared their attitudes.

Events, circumstances etc contributed to his current beliefs areas follows:

He had not been practicing his religion for decades. Five years ago he was diagnosed with cancer and given five years to live. He chose to seek spiritual/alternative healing over medical healing and it worked for him.

He does not talk about beliefs to friends and family. They understand that he's at a different place in his life. One family member asked if he no longer believed in his family church, but they do accept his choice.

He is not really concerned what others think. He has come to terms with his beliefs and is disappointed that he was stifled for many years by organized religion. Chi does not work in a religious environment. He does not have a problem with telling coworkers what he believes if it were to come up, as he believes everyone has a right to worship/not worship, and to hold their own beliefs without interference from others, so long as their beliefs do not cause harm.

As a recommendation to someone else who is looking to tell friends/family etc about their beliefs, his advice is as follows:

“Everyone's reaction will be different depending how far away your new belief is from your traditional family beliefs. How open you find others helps. Love is un-conditional, but for others it's conditional so each person has to weigh the situation as they see it. There is no right or wrong way; it depends on your circle friends/family.”

With regards to steps that could be taken by society in general in accepting beliefs other than the mainstream, to improve knowledge, tolerance, and minimize ignorant reactions, his thoughts are as follows:

“In my part of the country I see that happening.”

He has seen beliefs used against people in society when growing up. He grew up in a society where the church/school you went to was held against you when getting a job. It was legal to state “Religion” as a reason for refusal to employ someone.





G.C's story

G.C's beliefs can be summed up in two simple sentences, the basic tenets of his spiritual path. 1- He believes all people with a spiritual path worship the same creative force in the universe. 2- He believes the most holy and sacred act any one person can do is learn to walk in the shoes of another. He does believe in magick and that it can actually bring about a greater form of being for the practitioner as long as the energies manipulated are of a positive nature.

He has held these beliefs around sixteen years. About the same time he discovered Wicca.

When growing up, G.C's mother had a very basic version of Christianity; they never went to church unless invited by friends. Later, his stepfather came into the scene and forced the entire family into Mormonism. He was twelve at the time and followed that for about five years. Then he discovered what everyone should know about any religion, there are hypocrites. He walked away from what he terms 'fundie crap' and was atheist for awhile. He dabbled in Satanism and finally rested on Agnosticism.

Growing up, his mother was very tolerant, though his stepfather was completely intolerant of anything that was not LDS. He himself has always accepted the beliefs due to having an overwhelming curiosity.

Events, circumstances etc contributed to his current beliefs are what he calls a bit of a weird story: When he was in the Army he was being trained to be the company clerk by his good friend Paul. He was showing G.C the company roster spreadsheet which has everyone's personal data, including religious preference. Paul updated his file with "agnostic" and G.C told him to change his to "pagan". After he did so G.C realized he should have an answer for anyone who might ask him about it.

So, he went to a bookstore/antique shop called 'Days of Yore', and told the proprietor that he was looking for info on pagan religions and 'where to start?'. The owner handed G.C a copy of Cunningham's 'Solitary Practitioner' and after reading it, he realized what it seemed his soul had been missing. He has been refining his beliefs ever since then.

Everyone who knows G.C. eventually finds out that he's a witch. He told his family almost immediately after finding the path. His mother is still a member of the LDS. His four younger sisters are either agnostic or a very pale version of Christianity. He has had only had one negative reaction; from his sister in law. When G.C and his wife were dating she was told by her sister that she shouldn't date G.C because he was evil. She quickly changed her mind after actually talking to G.C and observing how he interacted with her family.

G.C does work in an environment where people are religious; however there is a large amount of religious diversity. There is only one person G.C regularly converses with about spirituality, a friend at work who recently converted to Buddhism from Gnostic Christianity and G.C truly enjoys those conversations. If anyone asks about his faith he will happily tell them, but not volunteer the information. If a person is seeking a new path, he believes they will find it, though he is happy to be a stop on that path, or not, should the situation arise.

As a recommendation to someone else who is looking to tell friends/family etc about their beliefs, G.C's advice is as follows:

“Make a list of your beliefs and practice in the mirror or with someone who is open minded enough to help. Practice will make it easier and you won't come across as 'stumbling for the truth'. Also, do not attack anyone else's belief during your revelation. This will only shut down their minds and they will not be able to accept what you are trying to put across.”

With regards to steps that could be taken by society in general in accepting beliefs other than the mainstream, to improve knowledge, tolerance, and minimize ignorant reactions, G.C's thoughts are as follows:

“I think that a spiritual learning month, much like black history month would be instrumental in learning more about diversity in worship. We could have Hollywood produced infomercials and the History Channel could go nuts with special programs.”

G.F's story

G.F is a Discordian. He believes that 'Pure Chaos' (i.e. the counter push pull of imbalance/balance of Discord and Harmony.) is the driving force of the universe.

He has held these beliefs for seven years.

Growing up, G.F's family were Jehovah's Witnesses. These beliefs were forced on G.F and his siblings. His family had no tolerance what so ever for beliefs other than their own. G.F, however, did not hold to these beliefs himself.

Events, circumstances etc contributed to his current beliefs are as follows: Being forced into a faith caused him to study Religion and Spirituality from a very young age. It was this study that led him eventually to where he is now.

G.F's friends and family are aware of the beliefs that he holds. Their own beliefs vary from Wiccan to Baptist. He informed his friends and family of his own beliefs as soon as he was certain of them himself. The reaction he got were some very strange looks, for the most part. Most of his family will not have religious discussions in his presence anymore. He is happy to tell everyone about his beliefs, in particular those who don't want to hear them.

G.F is a stay-at-home father, and thus is not subjected to any kind of religion in any workplace, but, if he were in a work place, he would happily tell his coworkers of his beliefs, in his words, “More vehemently and enthusiastically than a TV Evangelist.”

As a recommendation to someone else who is looking to tell friends/family etc about their beliefs, G.F's advice is as follows:

“Be honest. If they can't accept you for who you are, they will never accept you for who they want you to be. Like the song says, 'Be yourself no matter what, because it's better to be hated for who you are than beloved for who you're not.'”

With regards to steps that could be taken by society in general in accepting beliefs other than the mainstream, to improve knowledge, tolerance, and minimize ignorant reactions, G.F's thoughts are as follows:

“I think people should stop worrying about everyone else, and start worrying about their own business.”

G.F says that many have tried to use his beliefs against him, however, all have failed.



Michael's Story



Michael's personal beliefs are, in his words, "a little hard to explain." He was raised in a Methodist family, and decided he was an atheist at about sixteen, and carried that viewpoint for a few years. He then decided he was an agnostic for a few years and kept wishing for a sense of spirituality. A couple of years ago, he was writing out a somewhat detailed accounting of just what it was that he believed. He had the epiphany that whether "It" was a being that was physical or not, with a describable appearance, that there were things about the Universe and everything that he could put no better description to than it was of God/dess. He dedicated himself to God/dess shortly thereafter, deciding that how he saw them was of no consequence and simply an avatar representing unknown and unanswerable things.

Growing up, Michael's family was Methodist. His mother had converted from Catholicism and he still had some of that influence from her and her family, as well as a Boy Scout troop he'd belonged to that was based at a Catholic church and where he attended Mass more than once. "Their religion" was talked about only to a small extent as a family; most of what they got came from Sunday school, etc. Everything went mostly unspoken as a family, like many American families, it was just what they were and not many people questioned those sorts of things in the 50s and 60s.

Among Michael's family members, alternative beliefs weren't really discussed, but nor was anything of a religious nature. His mother was the type that would have given someone the shirt off of her back if they were a black, bible-burning gargoyle probably, as long as they weren't hurting anyone. His dad didn't say much about it all, but like all the adults during their childhood, as long as they thought that their children thought that there was only a male God and they viewed Him as an old white man with a white beard then all was well. It was when anyone would mention that they were an atheist or something that family "strife" might begin, but that wasn't much to speak of.

Michael's current beliefs came from years of questioning beliefs. There was the epiphany of having a name for the unanswerable questions of the Universe, and recent internal debates with himself about death and the idea of there possibly being nothing afterwards that has made him consider atheism again, but other than that it hasn't been a very complex issue. A lot of Michael's influences have come from listening to other Pagans talk at the discussion boards the last five years or so.

Some of Michael's family knows he considers himself to be Pagan now. He believes it would be too much for his father and relatives from his mom's devout Catholic family to handle. He freely advises coworkers that he's Pagan if there is any reason the topic might come up. He tells almost anyone he knows that he's ordained by ULC (Universal Life Church), including the Ohio Secretary of State where he obtained a license to perform marriages.

The beliefs of Michael's friends are all varied, best represented by the beliefs of the people he meets through ULC and that can include any and everything. Michael has two sisters who he feels are questioning traditional Christian beliefs, one possibly considering going Pagan or witch. He has talked about anything he believes if the opportunity came up or was appropriate, but he does not force his beliefs upon anyone.

Michael admits to being afraid of making too big a deal out of beliefs at family gatherings as it could lead to arguments and bad feelings. He said Christmas gatherings are a good example. He sees nothing inherently evil or wrong about Christmas, just the way some

people participate in it. He does not believe there is anything wrong with celebrating the customs or religious practices of others, as he believes it all honors God/dess. And he does not see Christmas as a particularly religious holiday these days anyway.

Michael believes that some family members, friends, etc. would not be able to handle his beliefs. He fears some could get angry, whether vocal or silent. He believes there's no reason to present one's spiritual viewpoints to those who aren't ready to hear them, and that as a society we'd all be a little happier if we looked at actions over words. He hopes that each person would accept another based upon that premise.

Michael works in an environment where there are people of different beliefs; the majority consider themselves to be Christian. They do have people from other countries and heritages. Based upon their actions, he sees a large majority of his Christian coworkers to be hypocritical and they would not be tolerant of his beliefs either way.

Michael has told some coworkers of his beliefs. Not a lot is said about it. One of his coworkers recently read the Da Vinci Code and agrees with it and he and Michael have had some lengthy discussions over it. He has also had somewhat lengthy discussions with another coworker about his ULC ordination. He has told his supervisor, "I'm ordained."

He is a state employee, and has a sort of a particular kind of double-indemnity as far as their not being able to discriminate against him and his religious beliefs. He would not be bothered by it if they did. Overall, he believes he wouldn't make any new friends by expressing spiritual beliefs too much at work, but he does not seek friends at work anyway for the most part. Maintaining a sense of spirituality, to Michael, requires that "work" is very separate from his personal life.

Michael would advise anyone seeking to explain their beliefs to someone else to examine why they need to explain them to others. There might be legitimate reasons to tell others - as in if they were injured or hospitalized, or were even facing imminent death what their wishes were in the way of clergy - but overall the first question to ask might be "Does this person really have any need to know of my spiritual beliefs?" The next question might be "Will expressing my spiritual beliefs benefit my relationship with this person?"

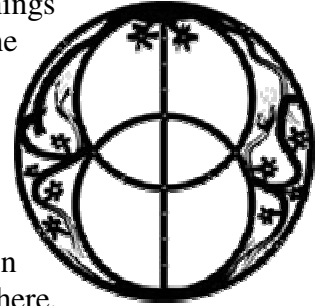
With regards to steps that could be taken by society in general in accepting beliefs other than the mainstream, to improve knowledge, tolerance, and minimize ignorant reactions, Michael's thoughts are as follows:

"I feel that if one religion is going to be taught about at school, then all of them should be, or they should be represented by at least making it clear that there are many religions and spiritualities a person can pursue. I feel that children are too young to have any one religion forced upon them and should be encouraged to explore what it is that they believe after being exposed to as many religions and spiritual concepts as possible. (Yes, go ahead and baptize them if it will make the adult feel better for the meantime! No harm done!) If exposure to various beliefs is begun at an earlier age the world might develop more tolerance over time, I'm not looking to see that in my lifetime, but I can still be an example when possible."

Michael has never had his beliefs used against him in any obvious manner that he is aware of. He is certain, however, that there have been subtle ways over the years in which they have influenced his interactions with people he's encountered.

Connie's story:

Connie believes in God/Goddess/Universe. She believes that all things are possible because she believes that she is one with her deities. She believes she is an important part of the Universe in which she lives and that anything she asks for is hers. She believes in synchronicity. She believes all things happen for a reason. She believes we learn lessons throughout our life, lessons we contracted to learn this lifetime during the interim between lifetimes. She believes that all roads, all paths lead to the same place in the end. She believes we will all find "enlightenment" in the end, it's just a matter of how many lifetimes it will take us to get there, how many lessons we contracted to learn, to teach.



She believes that all answers are within herself and that she can find them if she only asks the right questions. She believes the right questions come when it is the right time for her to learn that lesson.

She has held these beliefs for most of her adult life.

Growing up, Connie's family of origin were not church goers. They believed that they would live the way they wanted until they were ready to die and then they would repent. She never quite understood how they figured out they would have the time to do this. She remembers bringing ministers home from different churches she visited with friends as a teen and her parents were all but outright rude to them to keep them out of the house.

She was left to follow her own path, find her own way spiritually when she was growing up.

Events, circumstances etc that contributed to Connie's current beliefs were as follows: Years of questioning, searching for answers from the mainstream religions that could not be answered, contributed. After reading new age books and finding they resonated for her, Connie began seeking in earnest, looking for answers to why things happened the way they did in her life. Her ex-husband talked her into looking at witchcraft and after reading several books and studying it for a while, she realized that her path led in that direction.

Connie's friends are all aware of her beliefs since she has always been quite open about her beliefs and practices. Most are more curious than anything asking questions as they think of them. Her parents, (her mother now considers herself a Christian) recently found out about Connie's beliefs and they are more stunned and shamed than anything. Unfortunately she does not think it will ever be a topic they can discuss.

The only ones who do not know Connie's beliefs are her new father in law and her new sister in law and her husband. The first has not been told out of respect for her husband and the second out of respect for the brother in laws Catholic upbringing. She does not usually make it known unless it somehow comes up, like Christmas so it is not something she normally discusses anymore than she would bring up sexuality in a generic discussion.

Connie has, in the past, lived and worked in predominantly Mormon areas. She did not flaunt her beliefs but would answer if asked.

As a recommendation to someone else who is looking to tell friends/family etc about their beliefs, Connie's advice is as follows:

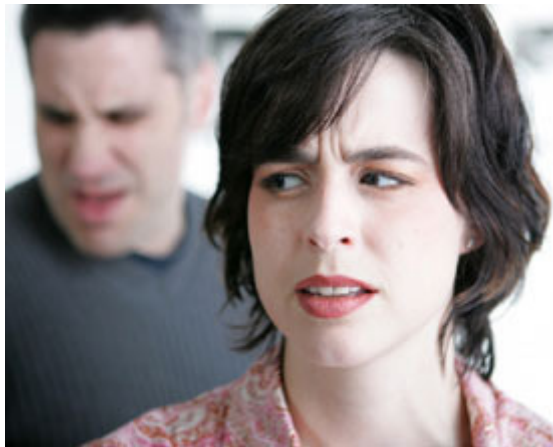
"Know your audience and know how much they care about you. Be honest. Answer questions as openly and honestly as you can. Know that you may lose some friends over

whatever beliefs you have that differ from theirs. Trust that all things happen for a reason and move on.”

With regards to steps that could be taken by society in general in accepting beliefs other than the mainstream, to improve knowledge, tolerance, and minimize ignorant reactions, Connie’s thoughts are as follows:

“I think ULC (Universal Life Church) is doing a great job with this. I think many non-denominational churches are. I think you can teach tolerance to the young. I think that’s where we need to start.”

Connie has not had her beliefs used against her. Her daughters and one of her granddaughters are on the Wiccan path. Her second granddaughter is Christian. Her son is pagan and considers himself a witch, and is walking that path. She considers herself lucky to be able to surround herself with people who mostly believe as she does.



So with examples like this, it is easy to see that religious tolerance, and acceptance of beliefs other than mainstream Christian/Abrahamic religions is still something to be worked on.

I have myself heard someone say they were having a conversation with someone who said “religious freedom means freedom to be whatever kind of Xian you want.” These are the attitudes that are stopping us moving forward.

What we need to focus on is letting people know about us, about our beliefs, and how we are not the ‘evil bogeymen’ who they have been led to

believe that we are, who sacrifice children, smear ourselves in the blood, and dance around a fire naked at the dead of night.

Those of us with ‘alternative’ beliefs also need to show people that we are not about ‘trying to get rid of Christianity, merely seeking to be acknowledged as equals, not as lesser creatures or citizens because we do not believe what’s considered, in our western world, the ‘proper, patriotic belief’.

Like the ACLU is trying to stress, no one should be treated the lesser because of their beliefs. But nor should anyone be given preferential treatment. On the forum, the idea has come up to look into charities that we might be part of, to present more of a public face, to let ourselves be a bit more known and, hopefully, a bit more understood.

Overall, the idea of ‘coming out’, my own personal suggestions are as follows: First, look at those you plan to tell, and consider their beliefs and their character. If it’s someone you know well, watch how they react to subjects that are somewhat controversial. A good way that I find to ‘test the waters’ is throwing a generalized question or comment out there.

For example, with a relative or friend, if I wanted to know how they’d react to a topic I’d say for instance ‘Oh, I heard about a Pagan alliance meeting being held later this month. Sounds interesting’, then I would wait to see their reaction. If it was along the lines of, “Oh yeah, sounds like you’d be interested in that” or “Meh, that’s okay but not really my thing”, I’d know this was someone who it would be okay to mention my beliefs to in the future.

If the answer was along the lines of “Those evil Pagans are going against god!” Then I would know to tread carefully around them in future.

Ultimately, look at the person, your relationship with them, and what you think you would have to lose or gain (if anything) by telling them about your beliefs. If you think it would impact things too much for the negative (for instance at work or in the family) then it might be better to simply leave it be, unless it comes up in conversation, in which case I usually either shrug such questions off or simply say, “I’m not a Catholic, Christian, etc...”

These days, however, I often use the title ‘Pagan’ when asked, because the term is so broad and tends to be more widely accepted.

If/when you make the decision to ‘come out’, if it is indeed a decision for you to make, then a good idea is to start slowly. Start off telling the people who are closest to you who you know would react well, and who would be able to advise you how to proceed with telling others you’re thinking of telling.

Remember, however, be careful of who you tell. Ignorance is still, sadly, for the moment, a problem.

If you’re living in the US, getting involved with organizations like the ACLU is a good idea, as they continue to press for positive changes to religious liberty. Get involved in such things in your area, if you can and if it’s something you think you’d like to do. Every bit makes a difference.

So, whatever you decide, I wish you the best of luck with it, and yes, it does get easier over time! ■



Coming Soon From DB Publishing...

The Complete Book of Demonolatry Magic by J. Thorp –

In this must-have companion to *The Complete Book of Demonolatry* J. Thorp discusses every aspect of Demonolatry Magic including the art of Demonolatry-based herbalism, divination, and how ascension can further one's Demonolatry practice. This book contains many never before published Magical Rites to help you in every facet of your life. If you want to learn how to effectively perform Demonolatry Magic and want a library of rituals and techniques to draw from, this book is a must have for Demonolators! (Will be available via Lulu, online booksellers, and orderable through your local bookstore.)

Religious Freedom: Why You Should Care

By S. Connolly



<http://www.ofs-demonolatry.org/religiousfreedom.htm>

As people who practice minority religions - Daemonolators, Theistic Satanists, and Darker Poly/Pantheists should get involved and support organizations and groups that are working to keep Church and State separate so that we can continue to have the right to practice our religions. For those of you who believe there should be a separation of Church and State, and who believe individuals should have the right to believe and practice their religion peaceably as they - get involved today. **We can do something to ensure we don't have to go underground again.**

I don't know about you, but in the past six years I've gotten more extremist Christian group mail and flyers than I have in the ten years prior to that. I've been witnessed to more in the past six years than in my entire life. There are groups out there who really do believe we are a Christian nation and literally believe that they should not allow "witches and sorcerers" or "those people in league with Satan" to live. Paranoid? Maybe. But consider this - many of the extremist Christian groups preaching this, believing this, and bringing up their children to be the next generation of Christian soldiers, are the same people to whom the current administration is pandering to. I am not over-exaggerating when I say that the extremist Christian right wants to control women's bodies in their attempt to reverse Roe vs. Wade, and teach abstinence education. It is no lie that they want to bring Christianity (their particular brand of extremist Christianity) into our public school systems, and use tax payer dollars to do it. Their agenda includes their want for people in public office whether politicians or judges to use Christian doctrine - and the ten commandments - to dictate governmental and judicial decision making. While the ten commandments may seem harmless, consider the first one: ***"Thou shall not have any other gods before Me."*** This commandment in and of itself excludes ANY religion whose God is not considered the

same God of the people in charge. If you really care about your religious beliefs and your right to practice those beliefs you can't be apathetic. You have to be pro-active and stand up for the rights you have.

Also consider that I've known Pagans, Satanists, and Demonolators who have had their religion used against them in the workplace, during child custody battles, and in divorce proceedings. This is not right. I don't expect you to believe what I've written here. Check it out for yourself by doing some research. Read articles from both sides. Learn the facts - then decide what you believe.

Care enough to vote and vote smart, educate yourself, educate others, respect others' rights to believe in and practice their own religions and lead by example (you can't expect others to respect your rights to believe and practice your religion if you don't respect their rights to do the same), and get involved by supporting groups that support your right to believe and worship your belief system peaceably. The reason the religious right has so much power here in the United States is because the extremist Christians DO care enough to get involved and vote. Their priests, ministers, and pastors rally them together and send them to the polls. This puts candidates who agree with them in positions of power, which means it gives them them leverage when they want the government to pass laws in their favor. This means the rest of us are poorly represented and could have certain freedoms taken from us because we didn't bother to care enough. Those of us who want to preserve religious freedom for everyone (whether you're a Satanist, Demonolator, Pagan, Hindu, Muslim, Jew, Buddhist, or whatever you label yourself) need to do the exact same thing!

Apathy won't make the problem disappear. If you're not part of the solution, you're likely part of the problem. If you've ever been vocal about your belief system, consider losing that. Consider the rights of your loved-ones and friends. Are you sure you don't have a loved one or good friend who practices a minority religion who **does** stand to lose something sacred to them? If they knew you refused to stand up for their rights because you were apathetic, how would they feel? How would you feel knowing you could have at least tried to do something? In the very least you could care enough to exercise your right to vote. Also consider that when we lose one right, the rest could very well follow. Are there any other rights you'd want to lose? If you live in the U.S. and interact with other people in society on a daily basis - this does have an effect on you. ▪



Whose Group is it Anyway?

Leadership Advice & Tips

By M. Delaney H.P.

What does it mean to lead? Having been the High Priest of a Demonolatry group for many years now, I feel I have a unique perspective. Over the years I like to think I've become wiser with group dynamics and have come to understand what it really means to be a group leader. I've created a list of ten things that I feel are the most important aspects of being a group priest or priestess, coordinator, or leader.



A leader must be able to:

- Organize
- Delegate Responsibility
- Be objective
- Be compassionate
- Be a guide
- Help everyone feel included
- Deal with all different types of people
- Deal with conflict diplomatically
- Be available to help and answer questions
- Inspire others

Without these ten attributes guiding them, a group can literally fall apart at the seams.

Let's look at these attributes to see how they all work together to make a group function. Without organization, meetings, rites, and celebrations just won't happen. Someone has to take the initiative to organize every group event. This starts with the leader and his "council". All leaders should have a council of volunteers he or she works with to organize meetings and rites. All leaders should keep information about group members in a certain place so members can be contacted about events.

The easiest way to do this is to organize your group in a way where setting up meetings or worship isn't a chore. Now, most people aren't going to have groups of 25+ members, but even keeping seven people on the same page can be a difficult task if you're not organized. The first step to organization is delegation.

Being a leader does not mean you're completely in charge and everyone in the group bows down to you. You can't do everything and you should help everyone feel included. If each member feels included, they will be inspired to give back to the group by helping out. I think this is where good groups become strong. By working together in a positive environment they become good friends. So this is where delegation comes in. Sometimes it's best to let someone else take over the tasks that you're not as good at. Leaders are not perfect and can't do everything. Good leaders have enough wisdom to know when someone else is more qualified to deal with certain issues. In my group, my wife is far more organized than I am. So I let her and her friends deal with sending out ritual invitations, keeping group members informed of meeting dates, preparing meals or snacks, and decorating the temple. That doesn't mean I sit back and do nothing. I will write the group rituals, perform them, keep up with how she's doing on RSVP's, and see if she needs my help setting anything up. When internal group conflicts arise, I have long since lost my patience for such things. I will often have my assisting priest or priestess attempt to deal with conflicts and only step in if I absolutely have to. I will delegate initiate training to adepts who might have more time to devote to helping others. We have several women who put together incenses and oleums and other members who will sew robes or altar cloths as needed. Our group works together with everyone getting involved in something they're good at. Because of this we have kept it together for many years.

Good leaders are always available to group members and make it a point to talk to each of them during meetings and rites. This gives the leader a good idea of each person's personality. It's important to know each group member's personality so that when conflict arises you can better deal with the situation taking into account a more aggressive/timid personality or background situation that might have contributed to the conflict.

I think it is also important to make sure everyone in the group has a chance to give their input before the group "council" and leader make a decision affecting the whole group. If a leader just comes out and says, "We're meeting every Saturday and everyone needs to wear a red robe to such and such a ritual," it alienates the group. For those who can't participate on Saturdays or who don't have red robes, they might feel excluded or anxious or even pushed around.

Another difficult task for any group leader is to remain objective and open minded. Not all group members are going to agree about every aspect of everyone else's personal theology. This means that while the core beliefs are the same, some of the specifics may not be. Some debates that have arisen in my group include which hierarchy is better, the nature of a certain demon, and the best offering for any particular demon to name a few. Group leaders lead by example. The more open minded and objective you are to individual experiences and beliefs, the more likely your group members will emulate that. ■



Per Contra

Music & Movie Reviews



By DeSang & Aramon

A review of “World Trade Center” (2006), Iron Maiden: A Matter of Life and Death, and Slayer: Christ Illusion.

Desang Says World Trade Center



A lot of people, (myself included) have debated on if WTC is a film that we actually wanted to go and see because of the intense emotions that a film about 9/11 would bring up inside of us. Yes, this movie will remind you of that day, however it is a movie about heroes, friendships and triumphs.

Surprise, surprise this may be the least political movie Stone has ever made, it's not about the roots of terror, or who's to blame for what. It's not about villains. It's about heroes.

Oliver Stone did a fantastic job in directing this ... It is like you're right there, on the street, looking up and watching the chaos unfold in 35mm and THX surround sound. If you didn't know any better, you'd think Stone had a crew shooting in Lower Manhattan that day. You have to struggle to remind yourself everything you're seeing was recreated on a sound stage on inside a computer. Don't worry ... WTC isn't Hollywoodized like Pearl Harbor was. However, the movie was made in good taste, respectfully and with great care. Everyone rightfully has questions about that day ... This film doesn't attempt to try to answer those questions, instead it looks at the spirit of people, of the American people.

After the movie, on the drive home I remembered the unity of purpose we all had on 9/11 and pondered whether we can ever get it back. Later that evening I went to watch my 12 year old nephew pitch at a baseball game, before the first inning the National Anthem was played, and I found my answer ... Yes, we can.

WTC ... A must see movie.



5 out of 5 possible Serpents!!!

Aramon Says

Iron Maiden: A Matter of Life & Death



Over the course of 30 years Steve Harris and company have given music to the world which has the ability to make one enjoy life and. With classic and influential albums such as “Number of the Beast” and “Piece of Mind” and “Powerslave” the Maiden machine let us know what being young really is- a trying time but that there is a future. With albums such as “Somewhere In Time” and “Seventh Son of a Seventh Son” we heard epic stories. So too with Iron Maiden’s latest release “A Matter of Life and Death” we have the opportunity to hear stories and realize we should stay young at heart- always whilst being aware of some of the hardships we have to face.

This album once again shows strong lyrical content and musicianship from a musical powerhouse. “A Matter of Life and Death” is replete with epic songs which are sure to please long time fans and new listeners alike, in my honest opinion. The songs, while unique and fresh, are easily recognizable as the work of these incomparable kings of metal after one hears the first few notes.

A must have for any collection.

4 out of a possible 5 serpents



4 out of 5 possible Serpents!!!

Aramon Says:
Slayer: Christ Illusion



When I first heard this album, I was honestly disappointed by how annoyingly similar this album is to earlier Slayer offerings such as “Hell Awaits”. After listening to it several times, I am sad to say, it is nothing more than a rehash of those classic albums.

Musically, “Christ Illusion” is the same aural assault fans have come to know and love from Slayer. But that’s the problem- it is no different than their earlier releases. Slayer, as much as I love their music, has shown little growth in their writing on this album. That’s not to say one shouldn’t listen to it, just don’t expect anything new.

There really is not much else that I can say other than “Well, it is a Slayer album. What did you expect?” Sad to say, but overall, Christ Illusion was a disappointment for me.



2.5 out of 5 possible Serpents!!!

Pagan Pride Day 2006- Denver, Co.
Mother Earth Trapped In a Plastic Orange Jack-O-Lantern
An Opinion Piece By Aramon



Imagine if you will, an event so poorly organized and conducted it causes one to leave with a headache and feeling as if they had just fallen into raw sewage and were in dire need of a shower to remove the funk. You are about to enter- the crappy zone.

September 16, 2006 member of O.F.S. attended the festivities in Denver , Colorado 's Washington Park with expectations of a well organized festival. What we got instead was one of the most poorly planned and administered farces I have ever seen. To say that the events' organizers put on something bad would be an understatement.

To begin, the folks planned this farce seemed to stick together in small groups and ignore people walking past. The information tables were not distinguishable from private tables and were haphazardly spread around with what looked like nothing more than piles of unsupervised debris consisting of waste paper and picnic fare. There were a handful of vendors selling various items but lacking in professionalism. No signs present, nothing to identify from a distance what these individuals were peddling. There was a person selling CDs and videos which, quite honestly, looked as if they had been packaged by a kindergarten class at the Braille Institute.

While the organizers stood around, only a couple of people took any time to greet us and hand us goodie bags with some business cards and other items. In my opinion, this was the highlight of the day. Though they were nice enough, I couldn't shake the feeling of being annoyed by their clammy hands and overly happy presentation.



But the piece de resistance was a young woman walking around wearing a fairy costume. Blissfully ignorant of her pathetic appearance, she spread her fabric wings and bounced around from group to group looking like a kid playing dress up and in dire need of professional help.

After a span of agonizingly slow amount of time, the call came out for the ritual to start. Like cattle the attendees formed a circle, which I can say was about the best-organized part of the day. But then it all went downhill from there. The main person went into a diatribe describing how we all need to give to the community in what I found to be nothing more than a sermon telling others how to live their lives.

Soon thereafter, I spotted a familiar looking person standing with the group conducting the ritual- fairy girl. She had shed her wings to help lead the rite. I nearly started screaming in hysterics at the sight of this person in a position of authority. It was at this time, more than before, I knew I could not take these people seriously.

But wait! It gets more interesting. The folks leading this event, then walked around with trick-or-treat jack-o-lantern with stones for everyone to transfer their negative energy into. Personally, I think they should have used wicker baskets instead of these toys and making fools of themselves. After the energy transference was complete, the stones were collected in buckets which everyone was told "Mother Earth" was.

As if the events had not yet been just plain silly, things went from pathetic to horrid as these folks actually participated in the act of communion! Needless to say, my companions and I were now doing all we could from bursting out in laughter.



Never before have I witnessed an event which was such a waste of time. The only thing good that came from the day was the collection of food for the Rocky Mountain Food Bank. ■

